

BARBAROUS
• MEXICO •

JOHN KENNETH
• TURNER •



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BARBAROUS MEXICO

Barbarous Mexico

An Indictment of a Cruel
and Corrupt System

By

JOHN KENNETH TURNER

With 48 Full-page Plates

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PREFACE

THE bulk of the material embodied in this volume was gathered during two journeys through Mexico made in 1908 and 1909; the rest of it was gleaned from a careful study of current writings on Mexico, both in English and in Spanish, and from other sources.

My purpose is to give the reader a correct impression of President Diaz and his political and economic system, of the character of the Mexican people, and of the Diaz-American partnership, which has helped to enslave the Mexican nation on the one hand and has kept the American public in ignorance of the real facts on the other. Current illusions concerning Mexico and its President are exploded, and the American defenders of slavery and autocracy are made to appear in their true light.

The term "barbarous" which I use in my title is intended to apply to Mexico's form of government, and not to its people, who have my ungrudging sympathy in the afflictions under which they groan.

J. K. T.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

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BARBAROUS MEXICO

CHAPTER I

The Slaves of Yucatan

WHAT is Mexico?

In the United States it is commonly characterised as "a sister republic." It is vaguely pictured as inhabited by people a little different in temperament, a little poorer and a little less advanced, but still enjoying the protection of Republican laws—a free people in the sense that the denizens of the States are free.

Others who have seen the country through a car-window, or speculated a little in Mexican mines or Mexican plantations, paint the government of that country beyond the Rio Grande as a benevolent paternalism in which a great and good man orders all things well for his foolish but adoring people.

I found Mexico to be neither of these things. The real Mexico is a country with a written Constitution and written laws in general as fair and democratic as those of the United States, but with neither Constitution nor laws in operation. Mexico is a country without political freedom, without freedom of speech, without a free Press, without a free ballot, without a jury system, without political parties, without any of our cherished guarantees of life,

liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is a land where there has been no contest for the office of President for more than a generation, where the Executive rules all things by means of a standing army, where political offices are sold for a fixed price.

I found Mexico to be a land where the people are poor because they have no rights, where peonage is the rule for the great mass, and where actual chattel slavery obtains for hundreds of thousands. Finally, I found that the people do not idolise their President, that the tide of opposition, dammed and held back as it has been by army and secret police, is rising to a height at which it must shortly overflow that dam. Mexicans of all classes and groups agree that their country is on the verge of a revolution in favour of democracy; if not a revolution in the time of Diaz—for Diaz is old—then a revolution after Diaz.

My special interest in political Mexico was first awakened early in 1908, when I came in contact with four Mexican revolutionists who were at that time incarcerated in the county jail at Los Angeles, California. Here were four educated, intelligent Mexicans, college men all of them, who were being held by the United States authorities on a charge of planning to invade a friendly nation—Mexico—with an armed force from American soil.

Why should intelligent men take up arms against a republic? Why should they come to the United States to prepare for their military manœuvres? I talked with those Mexican prisoners. They assured

me that at one time they had peacefully agitated in their own country for a constitutional overthrow of the persons in control of their government.

But for that very thing, they declared, they had been imprisoned and their property had been destroyed. Secret police had dogged their steps, their lives had been threatened, and countless methods had been used to prevent them from carrying on their work. Finally, hunted as outlaws beyond the national boundaries, denied the rights of free speech, free Press and free assembly, denied the right to organise to bring about political changes, they had resorted to the only alternative—arms. Why had they wished to overturn their Government? Because it had set aside the Constitution, because it had abolished those civic rights which all enlightened men agree are necessary for the unfolding of a nation, because it had dispossessed the common people of their lands, because it had converted free labourers into serfs, peons, and some of them even into—slaves.

“Slavery? Do you mean to tell me that there is any real slavery left in the western hemisphere?” I scoffed. “Bah! You are talking like an American Socialist. You mean ‘wage slavery,’ or slavery to miserable conditions of livelihood. You don’t mean chattel slavery.”

But those four Mexican exiles refused to give ground. “Yes, slavery,” they said; “chattel slavery. Men, women and children bought and sold like mules—just like mules—and like mules they belong to their masters. They are slaves.”

“Human beings bought and sold like mules in America! And in the twentieth century! Well,” I told myself, “if it’s true, I’m going to see it.”

So it was that early in September, 1908, I crossed the Rio Grande bound for my first journey through the back yards of Old Mexico.

On this occasion I was accompanied by L. Gutierrez de Lara, a Mexican of distinguished family, whose acquaintance I had also made in Los Angeles. De Lara was opposed to the existing Government in Mexico, which fact my critics have pointed out as evidence of bias in my investigations. On the contrary, I did not depend on De Lara or any other biased source for my information, but took every precaution to arrive at the exact truth, and by as many different avenues as practicable. Every essential fact which I put down here in regard to slavery in Mexico I saw with my own eyes or heard with my own ears, and heard usually from those individuals who would be most likely to minimise their cruelties—the slave-drivers themselves.

Nevertheless, to the credit of De Lara I must say that he gave me most important aid in gathering my material. By his knowledge of the country and the people, by his genius as a “mixer,” and, above all, through his personal acquaintance with valuable sources of information all over the country—men on the inside—I was enabled to see and hear things which are practically inaccessible to the ordinary investigator.

Slavery in Mexico? Yes, I found it. I found it first in Yucatan. The peninsula of Yucatan is an elbow of

Central America, which shoots off in a north-easterly direction almost half-way to Florida. It belongs to Mexico, and its area of some 80,000 square miles is almost equally divided among the States of Yucatan and Campeche and the Territory of Quintana Roo.

The coast of Yucatan, which comprises the north-central part of the peninsula, is about a thousand miles directly south of New Orleans. The surface of the State is almost solid rock, so nearly solid that it is usually impossible to plant a tree without first blasting a hole to receive the shoot and make a place for the roots. Yet this naturally barren land is more densely populated than the United States. More than that, within one-fourth of the territory three-fourths of the people live, and the density of the population runs to nearly seventy-five per square mile.

The secret of these peculiar conditions is that the soil and the climate of northern Yucatan happen to be perfectly adapted to the production of that hardy species of century plant which produces henequen, or Sisal hemp. Hence we find the city of Mérida, a beautiful modern city claiming a population of 60,000 people, and surrounding it, supporting it, vast henequen plantations on which the rows of gigantic green plants extend for miles and miles. The farms are so large that each has a little city of its own, inhabited by from 500 to 2,500 people, according to the size of the farm. The owners of these great farms are the chief slave-holders of Yucatan; the inhabitants of the little cities are the slaves. The annual export of henequen from Yucatan approximates 250,000,000 lb. The

population of Yucatan is about 300,000. The slaveholders' club numbers 250 members, but the vast majority of the lands and the slaves are concentrated in the hands of fifty henequen kings. The slaves number more than 100,000.

In order to secure the truth in its greatest purity from the lips of the masters of the slaves, I went among them playing a part. Long before I put my feet upon the white sands of Progreso, the port of Yucatan, I had heard how visiting investigators are bought or blinded; how, if they cannot be bought, they are wined and dined and filled with falsehood, then taken over a route previously prepared—fooled, in short, so completely that they go away half believing that the slaves are not slaves, that the hundred thousand half-starving, overworked, degraded bondsmen are perfectly happy, and so contented with their lot that it would be a shame indeed to yield to them the freedom and security which are the rightful share of every human being born upon the earth.

The part which I played in Yucatan was that of an investor with much money to sink in henequen properties, and as such I was warmly welcomed by the henequen kings. I was rather fortunate in going to Yucatan when I did. Until the panic of 1907 it was a well understood and unanimously approved policy of the Camara de Agricola, the planters' organisation, that foreigners should not be allowed to invade the henequen business. This was partly because the profits of the business were huge and the rich Yucatecos wanted to "hog it all" for themselves, but more espe-



A HENEQUEN (SIZAL, HEMP) PLANT

cially because they feared that through foreigners the story of their misdeeds might become known to the world.

But the panic of 1907 wiped out the world's henequen market for a time. The planters were a company of little Rockefellers, but they needed ready cash, and they were willing to take it from anyone who came. Hence my imaginary money was the open sesame to their club, and to their farms. I not only discussed every phase of henequen production with the kings themselves, and while they were off their guard, but I observed thousands of slaves under their normal conditions.

The fifty kings live in costly palaces in Mérida, and many of them have homes abroad. They travel a great deal, usually they speak several different languages, and they and their families are a most cultivated class of people. All Mérida and all Yucatan, even all the peninsula of Yucatan, are dependent on the fifty henequen kings. Naturally, these men are in control of the political machinery of their State, and, naturally, they operate that machinery for their own benefit. The slaves are 8,000 Yaqui Indians imported from Sonora, 3,000 Chinese (Koreans), and between 100,000 and 125,000 native Mayas, who formerly owned the lands that the henequen kings now own.

The Maya people, indeed, form about 95 per cent. of the population of Yucatan. Even the majority of the fifty henequen kings are Mayas crossed with the blood of Spain. The Mayas are Indians—and yet they

are not Indians. They are not like the Indians of the United States, and they are called Indians only because their homes were in the western hemisphere when the Europeans came. The Mayas had a civilisation of their own when the Europeans "discovered" them, and it was a civilisation admittedly as high as that of the most advanced Aztecs or of the Incas of Peru.

The Mayas are a peculiar people. They look like no other people on the face of the earth. They are not like other Mexicans; they are not like Americans; they are not like Chinamen; they are not like Hindoos; they are not like Turks. Yet one might very easily imagine that a fusion of all these five widely different peoples might produce a people much like the Mayas. They are not large in stature, but their features are remarkably finely chiselled, and their bodies give a strong impression of elegance and grace. Their skins are olive, their foreheads high, their faces slightly aquiline. The women of all classes in Mérida wear long, flowing white gowns, unbound at the waist, and embroidered about the hem, and perhaps also about the bust, in some bright colour—green, blue or purple. In the warm evenings a military band plays, and hundreds of comely women and girls thus alluringly attired mingle among the fragrant flowers, the art statues and the tropical greenery of the city plaza.

The planters do not call their chattels slaves. They call them "people," or "labourers," especially when speaking to strangers. But when speaking confidentially they have said to me, "Yes, they are slaves."



A PEON IN THE HOT LANDS

But I did not accept the word slavery from the people of Yucatan, though they were themselves the holders of the slaves. The proof of a fact is to be found, not in the name, but in the conditions. Slavery is the ownership of the body of a man, an ownership so absolute that the body can be transferred to another, an ownership that gives to the owner a right to take the products of that body, to starve it, to chastise it at will, to kill it with impunity. Such is slavery in the extreme sense. Such is slavery as I found it in Yucatan.

The masters of Yucatan call their system enforced service for debt. "We do not consider that we own our labourers; we consider that they are in debt to us. And we do not consider that we buy and sell them; we consider that we transfer the debt, and the man goes with the debt." This is the way in which a most prominent member of the Camara de Agricola de Yucatan explained the attitude of the henequen kings in the matter. "Slavery is against the law; we do not call it slavery," various planters assured me again and again.

But the fact that it is not service for debt is proved by the habit of transferring the slaves from one master to another, not on any basis of debt, but on the basis of the market price of a man. In figuring out the purchase of a plantation I always had to provide cash for the slaves, exactly the same as for the land, the machinery and the cattle. Four hundred Mexican dollars apiece was the prevailing price, and that is what the planters usually asked me. "If you buy now

you buy at a very good time," I was told again and again. "The panic has put the price down. One year ago the price of each man was 1,000 dollars."

The Yaquis are transferred on exactly the same basis as the Mayas—the market price of a slave—and yet all people of Yucatan know that the planters pay only 65 dollars apiece to the Government for each Yaqui. I was offered for 400 dollars per head Yaquis who had not been in the country a month, and consequently had had no opportunity of rolling up a debt that would account for the difference in price. Moreover, one of the planters told me: "We don't allow the Yaquis to get in debt to us."

It would be absurd to suppose that the reason the price was uniform was because all the slaves were equally in debt. I probed this matter a little by inquiring into the details of the selling transaction. "You get the photograph and identification papers with the man," said one, "and that's all." "You get the identification papers and the account of the debt," said another. "We don't keep much account of the debt," said a third, "because it doesn't matter after you've got possession of the man." "The man and the identification papers are enough," said another; "if your man runs away, the papers are all the authorities require for you to get him back again." "Whatever the debt, it takes the market price to get him free again," a fifth told me.

Conflicting as some of these answers are, they all tend to show one thing, that the debt counts for nothing after the debtor passes into the hands of the planter.



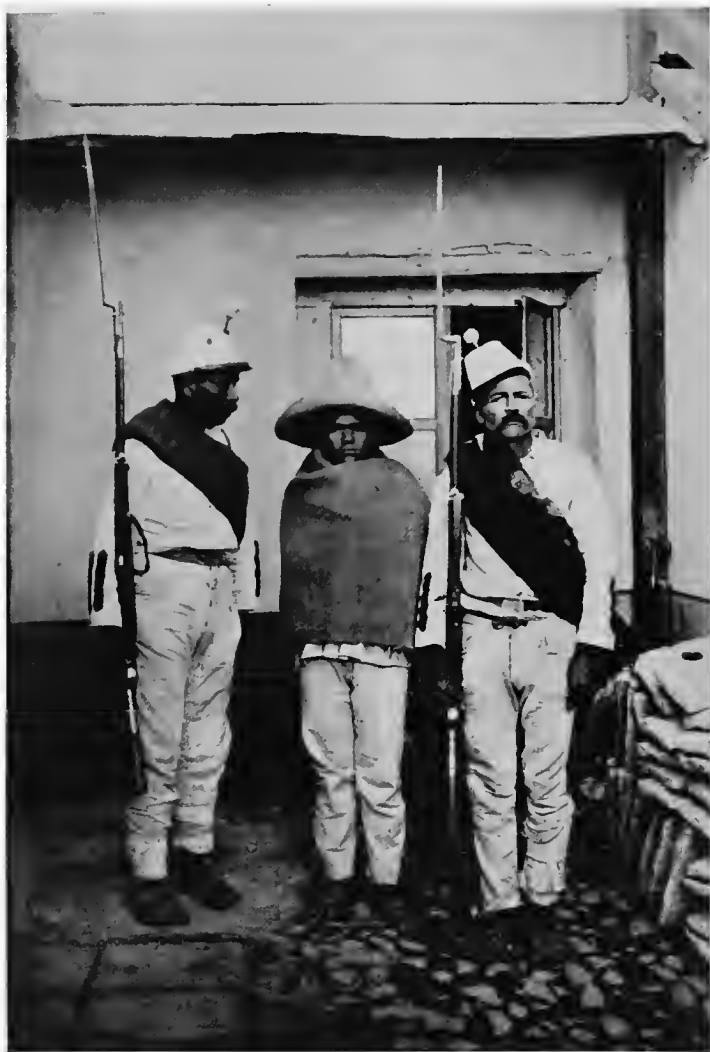
RICARDO FLORES MAGÓN

President of the Liberal Party, who has suffered imprisonment both in Mexico and in the United States



HERIBERTO BARRÓN

A Member of the Congress, who fled to the United States to escape arrest



A YAQUI BOY ON THE MORNING OF HIS EXECUTION

Whatever the debt, it takes the market price to get the debtor free again!

Even then, I thought, it would not be so bad if the servant had an opportunity of working out the price and buying back his freedom. Even some of our negro slaves before the Civil War were permitted—by exceptionally lenient masters—to do that.

But I found that such was not the custom. Said one planter to me: "You need have no fear, in purchasing this plantation, of the labourers being able to buy their freedom and leave you. They can never do that."

The only man in the country whom I heard of as having ever permitted a slave to buy his freedom was a professional man of Mérida. "I bought a labourer for 1,000 dollars," he explained to me. "He was a good man and helped me a lot about my office. After I got to liking him I credited him with so much wages per week. After eight years I owed him the full 1,000 dollars; so I let him go. But they never do that on the plantations—never."

Thus I learned that the debt feature of the enforced service does not alleviate the hardships of the slave by making it easier for him to free himself, neither does it affect the conditions of his sale or his complete subjection to his master. On the other hand, I found that the one particular in which this debt element does play an actual part in the destiny of the unfortunate of Yucatan militates against him instead of operating in his favour. For it is by means of debt that the Yucatan slave-driver gets possession of the free labourers of

his realm to replenish the overworked and underfed, the overbeaten, the dying slaves of his plantation.

How are the slaves recruited? One great planter informed me that the Maya slaves die off faster than they are born, another that two-thirds of the Yaquis die during the first year of their residence in the country. Hence the problem of recruiting the slaves seemed to me a very serious one. Of course, the Yaquis were coming in at the rate of 500 per month, yet I hardly thought that influx would be sufficient to equal the tide of life that was going out by death. I was right in that surmise, so I was informed, but I was also informed that the problem of recruits was not so difficult after all.

"It is very easy," one planter told me. "All that is necessary is that you get some free labourer in debt to you and then you have him. Yes, we are always getting new labourers in that way."

The amount of the debt does not matter, so long as it is a debt, and the little transaction is arranged by men who combine the functions of money-lender and slave-broker. Some of them have offices in Mérida, and they get the free labourers, clerks and the poorer class of people generally, into debt just as professional loan-sharks of America get clerks, mechanics and office-men into debt—by playing on their needs and tempting them. Were these American clerks, mechanics and office-men residents of Yucatan, instead of being merely hounded by a loan-shark they would be sold into slavery for all time, they and their children and their children's children, on to the third and fourth genera-

tion, and even farther, or to such a time as some political change puts a stop to slavery in Mexico.

These money-lending slave-brokers of Mérida do not hang out signs and announce to the world that they have slaves to sell. They do their business quietly, as people who are comparatively safe in their occupation, but as people who do not wish to endanger their business by too great publicity—like police-protected gambling houses in an American city, for example. These slave-sharks were mentioned to me by the henequen kings themselves, cautiously, as a rule. Other old residents of Yucatan explained their methods in detail. I was curious to visit one of these brokers and talk with him about purchasing a lot of slaves, but I was advised against it, and was told that they would not talk to a foreigner until the latter had established himself in the community and otherwise proved his "good faith."

These men buy and sell slaves. And the planters buy and sell slaves. I was offered slaves in lots of one up by the planters. I was told that I could buy a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, or a thousand of any of them, to do with them exactly as I wished, that the police would protect me in my possession of those, my fellow beings. Slaves are not only used on the henequen plantations, but in the city, as personal servants, as labourers, as household drudges, as prostitutes. How many of these persons there are in the city of Mérida I do not know, though I heard many stories of the absolute power exercised over them. Certainly the number is several thousand.

So we see that the debt element in Yucatan not only does not palliate the condition of the slave, but rather makes it harder. It increases his extremity, for while it does not help him to climb out of his pit, it reaches out its tentacles and drags down his brother too. Those of the people of Yucatan who are born free possess no "inalienable right" to their freedom. They are free only by virtue of their being prosperous. Let a family, however virtuous, however worthy, however cultivated, fall into misfortune, let the parents fall into debt and be unable to pay the debt, and the whole family is liable to pass into the hands of a henequen planter. Through debt, the dying slaves of the farms are replaced by the unsuccessful wage-workers of the cities.

Why do the henequen kings call their system enforced service for debt, instead of by its right name? Probably for two reasons—because the system is the outgrowth of a milder system of actual service for debt, and because of the prejudice against the word slavery, among both Mexicans and foreigners. Service for debt in a milder form than is found in Yucatan exists all over Mexico and is called peonage. Under this system police authorities everywhere recognise the right of an employer to take the body of a labourer who is in debt to him, and to compel the labourer to work out the debt. Of course, once the employer can compel the labourer to work, he can compel him to work at his own terms, and that means that he can work him on such terms as will never permit the labourer to extricate himself from his debt.

Such is peonage as it exists throughout all Mexico. In the last analysis it is slavery, but the employers control the police, and the fictional distinction is kept up all the same. Slavery is peonage carried to its greatest possible extreme, and the reason we find the extreme in Yucatan is that while in some other sections of Mexico a fraction of the ruling interests are opposed to peonage, and consequently exert a modifying influence upon it, in Yucatan all the ruling interests are in henequen. The cheaper the worker, the higher profits for all. The peon becomes a chattel slave.

The henequen kings of Yucatan seek to excuse their system of slavery by denominating it enforced service for debt. "Slavery is against the law," they say. "It is against the Constitution." When a thing is abolished by your Constitution it works more smoothly if called by another name; but the fact is, service for debt is just as unconstitutional in Mexico as chattel slavery. The plea of the henequen king of keeping within the law is entirely without foundation. A comparison of the two following clauses from the Mexican Constitution will show that the two systems are in the same class:—

"Article I., Section 1.—In the Republic all are born free. Slaves who set foot upon the national territory recover, by that act alone, their liberty, and have a right to the protection of the laws."

"Article V., Section 1 (Amendment).—No one shall be compelled to do personal work without just compensation and without his full consent. The State shall not permit any contract, covenant or agreement to be carried out

having for its object the abridgment, loss, or irrevocable sacrifice of the liberty of a man, whether by reason of labour, education, or religious vows. . . . Nor shall any compact be tolerated in which a man agrees to his own proscription or exile."

So the slave business in Yucatan, whatever name may be applied to it, is still unconstitutional. On the other hand, if the policy of the present Government is to be taken as the law of the land, the slave business of Mexico is legal. In that sense the henequen kings "obey the law." Whether they are righteous in doing so I will leave to hair-splitters in morality. Whatever the decision may be, right or wrong, it does not change, for better or for worse, the pitiful misery in which I found the hemp labourers of Yucatan.

The slaves of Yucatan get no money. They are half starved. They are worked almost to death. They are beaten. A large percentage of them are locked up every night in a house resembling a jail. If they are sick they must still work, and if they are so sick that it is impossible for them to work, they are seldom permitted the services of a physician. The women are compelled to marry, compelled to marry men of their own plantation only, and sometimes are compelled to marry certain men not of their choice. There are no schools for the children. Indeed, the entire lives of these people are ordered at the whim of a master, and if the master wishes to kill them, he may do so with impunity. I heard numerous stories of slaves being beaten to death, but I never heard of an instance in which the murderer was punished, or even arrested.

The police, the public prosecutors, and the judges know exactly what is expected of them, for the men who appoint them are the planters themselves. The *jefes politicos*, the rulers of the political districts corresponding to the counties of the United States, who are as truly czars of the districts as President Diaz is the Czar of all Mexico, are invariably either henequen planters or employees of henequen planters.

The first mention of corporal punishment for the slaves was made to me by one of the members of the Camara, a big, portly fellow with the bearing of an opera singer, and a great white diamond shining at me like a sun from his slab-like shirt-front. He told a story, and as he told it he laughed. I laughed, too, but in a rather different way. I could not help feeling that the story was made to order to fit strangers.

"Oh, yes, we have to punish them," said the fat king of henequen. "We even are compelled to whip the house servants of the city. It is their nature; they demand it. A friend of mine, a very mild man, had a woman servant who was always wishing to serve somebody else. My friend finally sold the woman, and some months later he met her on the street and asked her how she liked her new master. 'Finely,' she answered, 'finely. You see, my master is a very rough man, and he beats me nearly every day!'"

The philosophy of beating was made very clear to me by a leading official of the Camara.

"It is necessary to whip them—oh, yes, very necessary," he told me, with a smile, "for there is no other way to make them do what you wish. What other

means is there of enforcing the discipline of the farm? If we did not whip them they would do nothing."

I could make no reply. I could think of no ground upon which to assail this logic. For what, pray, can be done to a chattel slave to make him work but to beat him? With the wage-worker you have the fear of discharge or the reduction of wages to hold over his head and make him toe the mark, but the chattel slave would welcome discharge, and as to reducing his food supply, you don't dare to do that or you kill him outright. At least, that is the case in Yucatan.

I saw no punishments worse than beating in Yucatan, but I heard of them. I was told of men being strung up by their fingers or toes to be beaten, of their being thrust into black dungeon-like holes, of water being dropped on the hand until the victim screamed, of the extremity of female punishment being found in some outrage to the sense of modesty in the woman. I saw the black holes, and everywhere I saw the jail dormitories, armed guards and night guards who patrolled the outskirts of the farm settlements while the slaves slept. I heard also of planters who took a special delight in personally superintending the beating of their chattels. For example, speaking of one of the richest planters in Yucatan, a professional man of Mérida said to me :

"A favourite pastime of — was to sit on his horse and watch the 'cleaning-up' (the punishment) of his slaves. He would strike a match to light his cigar. At the first puff of smoke, the first stroke of the wet

rope would fall on the bare back of the victim. He would smoke on, leisurely, contentedly, as the blows fell, one after another. When the entertainment finally palled on him, he would throw away his cigar, and the man with the rope would stop, for the end of the cigar was the signal for the end of the beating."

The great plantations of Yucatan are reached by private mule-car lines, built and operated specially for the business of the henequen kings. The first plantation that we visited was typical. In the centre of the plantation is the farm settlement, consisting of a grass-grown *patio* or yard, surrounding which are the main farm buildings, the store, the factory, the house of the *administrador* or general manager, the house of the *mayordomo primero* or superintendent, the houses of the *mayordomos segundos* or overseers, and the little chapel. Behind these are the corrals, the drying-yard, the stables, the jail dormitory. Finally, surrounding all are the rows of one-room huts, set in little patches of ground, in which reside the married slaves and their families.

Here we found some 1,500 slaves and about thirty bosses of various degrees. A few of the slaves were Koreans, some were Yaquis, but the great majority were Mayas. The Maya slaves, to my eyes, differed from the free Mayas I had seen in the city principally in their clothing and their generally unkempt and overworked appearance. Certainly they were of the same clay. Their clothing was poor and ragged, yet generally clean. The women wore calico, the men the thin, unbleached cotton shirt and trousers of the

tropics, the trousers being often rolled to the knees. Their hats were, of course, straw or grass; their feet always bare.

Of the slaves, 700 are able-bodied men, the rest women and children. About half the men are married, and live with their families in the one-room huts. These huts are set in little patches of ground, which, rocky and barren as they are, are cultivated to some small purpose by the women and children. In addition to the product of their barren garden patch, each family receives daily credit at the plantation store for 25 *centavos*', or 12½ cents', worth of merchandise.* No money is paid; it is all credit, and this same system prevails on about one-half of the plantations. In the other half rations are dealt out, and that is all. I priced some of the goods at the stores—there were beans, corn, salt, peppers, clothing and blankets, and that was about all—and found that the prices were high. I could not understand how a family could live on 12½ cents' worth of them each day, a hard-working family especially.

The slaves on the plantations rise from their beds when the big bell in the *patio* rings, at 3.45 in the morning, and their work begins as soon thereafter as they can get to it. Their work in the fields ends when it is too dark to see, and about the yards it sometimes extends until long into the night.

The principal labour is harvesting the henequen leaves and clearing the weeds from between the plants.

* A *centavo* is, roughly, equivalent to half a cent; a Mexican dollar (a *peso*), to half an American dollar.

Each slave is given a certain number of leaves to cut or plants to clean, and it is the policy of the planters to make the "stint" so hard that the slave is compelled to call out his wife and children to help him. Thus nearly all the women and children of the plantation spend a part of the day in the field. The unmarried women spend all the day in the field, and when a boy reaches the age of 12 he is considered to be a man, and is given a "stint" of his own to do. On Sundays the slaves do not work for the master; they spend their time in their patches, rest, or visit. Sunday is the day on which the youths and maidens meet and plan to marry. Sometimes they are even permitted to go off the farm and meet slaves of a neighbouring farm; but never are they permitted to marry the slaves of other plantations, for this would necessitate the purchase either of the wife or of the husband by one or the other of the two owners, and that would involve too much trouble.

Such are the conditions in general that prevail on the plantations of Yucatan.

We spent two days and two nights on another plantation, and became thoroughly acquainted with its system and its people.

Neither the owners nor the managers of the great henequen farms of Yucatan live on the farms. Like the owners, the managers have their homes and their offices in Mérida, and visit the plantations only from two to half a dozen times a month. The *mayordomo primero* is ordinarily the supreme ruler of the plantation, but when the manager or *administrador* heaves

in sight, the *mayordomo primero* becomes a very insignificant personage indeed.

At least, that was the case on the plantation just referred to. The big *mayordomo* was compelled to bow and scrape before his boss just as were the lesser foremen, and at meal-time the *administrador*, I and my companion—the latter much to the disgust of the *administrador*, who looked upon him as an underling—dined alone in state, while the *mayordomo* hovered in the background, ready to flee instantly to do our bidding. At the first meal—and it was the best I had in all Mexico—I felt strongly impelled to invite the *mayordomo* to sit down and have something. I did not do it, and afterwards I was glad that I did not, for before I left the ranch I realised what an awful breach of etiquette I should have been guilty of.

In the fields we found gangs of men and boys, some gangs hoeing the weeds from between the gigantic plants, and some sawing off the big leaves with *machetes*. The harvesting of the leaves goes on unceasingly all the twelve months of the year, and during the cycle every plant on the farm is gone over four times. Twelve leaves are usually clipped, the twelve largest, the thirty smallest being left to mature for another three months. The workman chops off the leaf at its root, trims the sharp briars off the two edges, trims the spear-like tip, counts the leaves left on the plant, counts the leaves he is cutting, piles his leaves into bundles, and finally carries the bundles to the end of his row, where they are carted away on a movable track mule-car line.

THE SLAVES OF YUCATAN

I found the ground uneven and rocky, a punishment for the feet; the henequen leaves thorny and treacherous; and the air thick, hot and choking, though the season was considered a cool one. The ragged, bare-footed harvesters worked steadily, carefully, and with the speed of better-paid labourers who work "by the piece." They, too, were working "by the piece," the reward being immunity from the lash. Here and there among them I saw tired-looking women and children, sometimes little girls as young as eight or ten. Two thousand leaves a day is the usual "stint" on this plantation. On other plantations, I was told, it is sometimes as high as three thousand.

The henequen leaves, once cut, are carted to a large building in the midst of the farm settlement, where they are hoisted in an elevator and sent tumbling down a long chute and into the stripping machine. Here hungry steel teeth tear the tough, thick leaves to pieces, and the result is two products—a green powder, which is refuse, and long strands of greenish, hair-like fibre, which is henequen. The fibre is sent on a tramway to the drying yard, where it turns the colour of the sun. Then it is trammed back, pressed into bales, and a few days, or weeks, later the observer may see it at Progreso, the port of Yucatan, twenty-five miles north of Mérida, being loaded into a steamship flying the British flag. The United States buys nearly all the henequen of Yucatan.

Eight *centavos* per lb. was the 1908 price received for Sisal hemp in the bale. One slave-dealer told me that the production cost no more than one.

About the machinery we found many small boys working. In the drying-yard were boys and men. All the latter impressed me with their listless movements and their haggard, feverish faces. This was explained by the foreman in charge. "When the men are sick, we let them work here," he said, "on half pay!"

Such was the men's hospital. The hospital for the women we discovered in a basement of one of the main buildings. It was simply a row of windowless, earthen-floor rooms, half-dungeons, in each of which lay one woman on a bare board, without a blanket to soften it.

More than 300 of the able-bodied slaves spend the nights in a large structure of stone and mortar, surrounded by a solid wall twelve feet high, which is topped with the sharp edges of thousands of broken glass bottles. To this enclosure there is but one door, and at it stands a guard armed with a club, a sword and a pistol. These are the quarters of the unmarried men of the plantation—Mayas, Yaquis and Chinese—also of the "half-timers," slaves whom the plantation uses only about half of the year, married men, some of them, whose families live in little settlements bordering on the farm.

These "half-timers" are found on only about one-third of the plantations, and they are a class which has been created entirely for the convenience of the masters. They become "full-timers" at the option of the masters, and are then permitted to keep their families on the plantations. They are compelled to work longer than half the year if they are wanted, and during the time when they are not working they are not permitted to

go away on a hunt for other work. Generally their year's labour is divided into two sections—three months in the spring and three months in the fall—and during those periods they cannot go to visit their families. They are always kept in jail at night, they are fed by the farm, and their credit of $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents per day is kept back and doled out to their families a little at a time to prevent starvation.

A moment's figuring will show that the yearly credit for a "half-timer" who works six months is $22\frac{1}{2}$ dollars (American), and this is all, absolutely all, that the family of the "half-time" slave has to live on each year.

Inside the large, one-room building within the stone-and-mortar wall we found, swinging so close that they touched one another, more than three hundred rough hammocks. This was the sleeping place of the "half-timers" and the unmarried "full-timers." We entered the enclosure just at dusk, as the toilers, wiping the sweat from their foreheads, came filing in. Behind the dormitory we found half a dozen women working over some crude, open-air stoves. Like half-starved wolves, the ragged workers ringed about the simple kitchen, grimy hands went out to receive their meed of supper, and, standing there, the miserable creatures ate.

I sampled the supper of the slaves—that is, I sampled a part of it with my tongue, and the rest I sampled with my nostrils. The meal consisted of two large corn *tortillas*—the bread of the poor of Mexico—a cup of boiled beans, unflavoured, and a bowl of fish—putrid, stinking fish, fish that reeked with an odour that stuck in my nostrils for days. How could they ever eat it?

Ah, well! to vary a weary, unending row of meals consisting of only beans and *tortillas* a time must come when the most refined palate will water to the touch of something different, though that something is fish which offends the heavens with its rottenness.

"Beans, *tortillas*, fish! I suppose that they can at least keep alive on it," I told myself, "provided they do no worse at the other two meals." "By the way"—I turned to the *administrador*, who was showing us about—"what do they get at the other two meals?"

"The other two meals?" The *administrador* was puzzled. "The other two meals? Why, there aren't any others. This is the only meal they have!"

Beans, *tortillas*, fish, once a day, and a dozen hours under the hottest sun that ever shone!

"But, no," the *administrador* corrected himself. "They do get something else, something very fine, too, something that they can carry to the field with them and eat when they wish. Here is one now."

At this he picked up from one of the tables of the women a something about the size of his two small fists, and handed it to me triumphantly. I took the round, soggy mass in my fingers, pinched, smelt and tasted it. It proved to be corn dough half fermented and patted into a ball. This, then, was the other two meals, the rest of the substance, besides beans, *tortillas* and decayed fish, which sustained the toilers throughout the long day.

I turned to a young Maya who was carefully picking a fish-bone.

"Which would you rather be," I asked of him, "a half-timer or a full-timer?"

"A full-timer," he replied promptly, and then in a lower tone: "They work us until we are ready to fall, then they throw us away to get strong again. If they worked the full-timers like they work us they would die."

"We come to work gladly," said another young Maya, "because we're starved to it. But before the end of the first week we want to run away. That is why they lock us up at night."

"Why don't you run away when you're free to do it?" I asked; "when they turn you out, I mean?"

The *administrador* had stepped away to scold a woman. "It's no use," answered the man earnestly. "They always get us. Everybody is against us, and there is no place to hide."

"They keep our faces on photographs," said another. "They always get us, and give us a cleaning-up (beating) besides. When we're here we want to run away, but when they turn us out we know that it's no use."

I was afterwards to learn how admirably the Yucatan country is adapted to preventing the escape of runaways. No fruits or eatable herbs grow wild in that rocky land. There are no springs, and no place where a person can dig a well without a rock-drill and dynamite. So every runaway in time finds his way to a plantation or to the city, and at either place he is caught and held for identification. A free labourer who does not carry papers to prove that he is free is

always liable to be locked up and put to much trouble to prove that he is not a runaway slave.

Yucatan has been compared to Russia's Siberia. "Siberia," Mexican political refugees have told me, "is hell frozen over; Yucatan is hell aflame." But I did not see many points in common between the two countries. True, the Yaquis are exiles in a sense, and political exiles at that, but they are also slaves. The political exiles of Russia are not slaves. According to Kennan, they are permitted to take their families with them, to choose their own abode, to live their own life, and are often given a small monthly stipend on which to live. I could not imagine Siberia as being so bad as Yucatan.

The Yucatan slave gets no hour for lunch, as does the American ranch hand. He goes to the field in the morning twilight, eating his lump of sour dough on the way. He picks up his *machete* and attacks the first thorny leaf as soon as it is light enough to see the thorns, and he never lays down that *machete* until the twilight of the evening. Two thousand of the big green leaves a day is his "stint," and besides cutting, trimming and piling them, he must count them, and he must count the number of leaves on each plant and be sure that he counts neither too many nor too few. Each plant is supposed to grow just thirty-six new leaves a year. Twelve of these, the twelve largest, are cut every four months, but, whatever number is cut, just thirty leaves must be left after the clipping. If the slave leaves thirty-one or twenty-nine he is beaten, if he fails to cut his two thousand he is beaten, if he

trims his leaves raggedly he is beaten, if he is late at roll-call he is beaten. And he is beaten for any other little shortcoming which any of the bosses may imagine that he detects in his character or in his make-up. Siberia? To my mind Siberia is a foundling asylum compared with Yucatan.

Over and over again I have compared in my mind the condition of the slaves of Yucatan with what I have read of the slaves of the Southern States before the Civil War. And always the result has been in favour of the black man. The slaves of the South were almost always well fed, as a rule they were not overworked, on many plantations they were rarely beaten, it was usual to give them a little spending money now and then and to allow them to leave the plantation at least once a week. Like the slaves of Yucatan they were cattle of the ranch, but, unlike the former, they were treated as well as cattle. In the South before the war there were not so many plantations where the negroes died faster than they were born. The lives of the black slaves were not so hard but that they could laugh, sometimes—and sing. But the slaves of Yucatan do not sing!

I shall never forget my last day in Mérida. Mérida is probably the cleanest and most beautiful little city in all Mexico. It might even challenge comparison in its white prettiness with any other in the world. The municipality has expended vast sums on paving, on parks and on public buildings, and over and above this the henequen kings not long since made up a rich purse for improvements extraordinary. My last afternoon

and evening in Yucatan I spent riding and walking about the wealthy residence-section of Mérida. Strangers might expect to find nothing of art or architecture down on this rocky Central American peninsula, but Mérida has its million-dollar palaces like New York, and it has miles of them set in miraculous gardens.

Wonderful Mexican palaces! Wonderful Mexican gardens! A wonderful fairyland conjured out of slavery—slavery of Mayas and of Yaquis. Among the Yucatan slaves there are ten Mayas to one Yaqui, but of the two, the story of the Yaquis appealed to me the more. The Mayas are dying in their own land and with their own people. The Yaquis are exiles. They are dying in a strange land, they are dying faster, and they are dying alone, away from their families, for every Yaqui family sent to Yucatan is broken up on the way. Husbands and wives are torn apart, and babes are taken from their mothers' breasts.

CHAPTER II

The Extermination of the Yaquis

My purpose in journeying to Yucatan was to find out what became of the Yaqui Indians of Sonora. In common with thousands of other Americans who have lived for years in the South-West and near the borderline of Mexico, I knew something of the suffering of the Yaquis in their native State, of the means which had been taken to stir them to revolt, of the confiscation of their lands, of the methods of extermination employed by the army, of the indignation voiced by the decent element of Sonora, finally of President Diaz's sweeping order of deportation.

I knew that the order of deportation was being carried out, that hundreds of families were being gathered up monthly and sent away into exile. But what fate was awaiting them there at the end of that exile road? The answer was always vague, indefinite, unsatisfactory. Even well-informed Mexicans of the metropolis could not tell me. After the Yaqui exiles sailed from the port of Vera Cruz the curtain dropped upon them. I went to Yucatan in order to witness, if possible, the final act in the life drama of the Yaqui nation. And I witnessed it.

The Yaquis are being exterminated, and exterminated fast. There is no room for controversy as to that; the only controversy relates to whether or not the Yaquis deserve to be exterminated. It is undoubtedly true that a portion of their number have persistently refused to accept the destiny that the Government has marked out for them. On the other hand, there are those who assert that the Yaquis are as worthy as other Mexicans, and deserve as much consideration at the hands of their rulers.

The extermination of the Yaquis began in war; it is being finished in deportation and slavery.

The Yaquis are called Indians. Like the Mayas of Yucatan, they are Indians and yet they are not Indians. In the United States they would not be called Indians, for they are workers. As far back as their history can be traced, they have never been savages. They have been an agricultural people. They tilled the soil, discovered and developed mines, constructed systems of irrigation, built adobe towns, maintained public schools, had an organised government and their own mint. When the Spanish missionaries came among them they were in possession of practically the whole of that vast territory south of Arizona which to-day comprises the state of Sonora.

"They are the best workers in Sonora," Colonel Francisco B. Cruz, the very man who has charge of their deportation to Yucatan, told me. "One Yaqui labourer is worth two ordinary Americans and three ordinary Mexicans," I was told by E. F. Trout, a Sonora mine foreman. "They are the strongest, soberest

and most reliable people in Mexico," another told me. "The Government is taking our best workmen away from us and destroying the prosperity of the State," said another. "The Government says it wants to open up the Yaqui country for settlers," S. R. de Long, secretary of the Arizona Historical Society, and an old resident of Sonora, told me, "but it is my opinion that the Yaquis themselves are the best settlers that can possibly be found."

Such expressions are heard very frequently in Sonora, in the border States and in border publications. The Yaqui certainly has an admirable physical development. During my journeys in Mexico I learned to pick him out at a glance, by his broad shoulders, his deep chest, his sinewy legs, his rugged face. The typical Yaqui is almost a giant, the race a race of athletes. Perhaps that is just the reason why he has not bent his head in submission to the will of the masters of Mexico.

American mine-owners and railroad men of Sonora are repeatedly complaining of the deportation of the Yaquis, and it is because they are such good workmen. Another matter which I have heard much remarked about by border Americans is the regard of the so-called renegade, or fighting Yaquis, for the property of Americans and other foreigners. When the Yaquis first took up arms against the Government some twenty-five years ago, they did so because of a definite grievance. Usually they fought on the defensive. Driven to the mountains, they have been compelled at times to sally forth and plunder for their stomachs' sake. But

for many years it was known to all men that they seldom attacked Americans, or any people but Mexicans. And for a long time they never committed any depredations on railroads or railroad property, which in Sonora has always been American.

The Yaquis seem to have had a pretty good title to their lands when Corral, Yzabal and Torres came upon the scene. At the time of the Spanish conquest they were a nation of from 100,000 to 200,000 people, supposed by some authorities to have been an offshoot from the Aztecs. The Spanish were never able to subdue them completely, and after 250 troublous years a peace was entered into whereby the Yaquis gave up a part of their territory and, as acknowledgment of their rightful ownership of the rest of it, the King of Spain gave them a patent signed by his own hand. This was nearly 150 years ago, but the royal patent was honoured by every ruler and chief executive of Mexico down to Diaz. During all that time the Yaquis were at peace with the world. Their reputation as a naturally peaceful nation was established.

During these years of peace the Yaquis became part and parcel of the Mexican nation. They lived like other Mexicans. They had their own personal farms, their own homes, and they paid taxes on their property like other Mexicans. During the war against Maximilian they sent soldiers to help Mexico, and many of them distinguished themselves by brilliant service.

But their lands were wanted. Moreover, there was a fine opportunity for graft in bringing a large body of soldiers into the State. So the Yaquis were

harassed. Agents were sent through the Yaqui Valley to mark out the land, and tell the people that the Government had decided to give it to foreigners. Armed men were sent to arrest Chief Cajeme, and when these could not find him they set fire to his house and those of his neighbours. The women of the village were assaulted, even Cajeme's wife not being respected. Finally the victims were goaded into war.

Since that day, some five-and-twenty years ago, the Mexican Government has maintained an army almost perpetually in the field against the Yaquis, an army ranging in numbers from 2,000 to 6,000 men. Thousands of soldiers and tens of thousands of Yaquis have been killed in battle, and many hundreds of the latter have been executed after being taken prisoner. After a few years Chief Cajeme was captured and publicly executed in the presence of a large body of his people who had been taken prisoner with him. Tetabiate, another Yaqui, was promptly elected to Cajeme's place, and the fight went on. Finally, in 1894, at one fell swoop, as it were, the ground was literally taken from under the feet of the rebels. By act of the Federal Government the best of their lands were taken from them and handed over to one man, General Lorenzo Torres, who is now Chief of the army in Sonora, but at that time was second in command.

The Government is credited with having been guilty of the most horrible atrocities. Two examples are cited by Santa de Cabora, a Mexican writer. On the 17th of May, 1892, the imprisonment of the Yaquis, men,

women and children, in the town of Navajoa, was ordered, and so many of these people were hanged that the supply of rope in the town was exhausted, it being necessary to use each rope five or six times. In the same year a Mexican colonel took 200 Yaquis, men, women and children, prisoners, and carried them in a gunboat and dropped them in the ocean between the mouth of the Yaqui river and the seaport of Guaymas, all of them perishing.

A report was circulated along the Mexican border of the United States that an incident similar to the last-mentioned one happened in February, 1908. Colonel Francisco B. Cruz, who was in charge of the exiles and who was on board the gunboat and witnessed what really occurred, declared to me, however, that this report was not true. The Yaquis were drowned, he averred, but not by the authorities, and, since at that time the Government was not killing any Yaquis whom it could catch and sell, I accept the version of Colonel Cruz as the correct one.

“Suicide—nothing but suicide,” asseverated the colonel. “Those Indians wanted to cheat us out of our commission money, and so they threw their children into the sea and jumped in after them. I was on board myself and saw it all. I heard a loud cry, and, looking, saw some of the crew running to the starboard side of the vessel. I saw the Yaquis in the water. Then there was a cry from the port side, and I saw the Yaquis jumping overboard on that side. We lowered boats, but it was no use; they all went down before we got to them.”



BODIES OF YAQUIS HANGED IN SONORA

“Every soldier who kills a Yaqui,” I was told by an army physician who served two years with the troops against the Yaquis, and whom I met in Mexico City, “is paid a reward of a hundred dollars. To prove his feat the soldier must show the ears of his victim. ‘Bring in the ears,’ is the standing order of the officers. Often I have seen a company of soldiers drawn up in a square, and one of their number receiving one hundred dollars for a pair of ears.

“Sometimes small squads of the Indians are captured, and when I was with the army it was customary to offer the men freedom and money to lead the troops over the secret mountain trails to the fastnesses of their friends. The alternative was the rope, yet I never knew of one of these captives turning traitor. ‘Give me the rope,’ they would cry, and I have seen such a man run, put the rope round his own neck, and demand that it be tightened quickly, that he might not again be subjected to so base an insult.”

I have before me a letter signed by a former member of the Mexican Liberal party and editor of one of the papers in the United States, who is said to have afterwards gone over to the cause of the Government. Commenting on a photograph showing a lot of Yaquis hanging from a tree in Sonora, the letter says:

“This picture resembles very much another one that was taken when General ——— was in command of the Mexican army of occupation. It was a custom of this general to hang men because they could not tell him where the *insurrecto* Yaquis were at the time, and he went so far as to lasso the women of the Yaquis and to hang them also.

It went on so until the chief of the geographical commission reported the facts to the city of Mexico, and threatened to resign if the practice continued. Then this monster of a general was removed.

“ But later on — (it must have been in 1902) made a raid on an island where some peaceful Yaquis had taken refuge, and then and there ordered the Seri Indians to bring to him the right hand of every Yaqui there, with the alternative of the Seris themselves being exterminated. Doctor — took a snapshot with a kodak, and you could see in it — laughing at the sight of a bunch of hands that had been brought to him and that were dangling from the end of a cane. This picture was even published in derision of the exploits of — in the newspaper *El Imparcial*, of Mexico City.”

In 1898 the Government troops were armed for the first time with the improved Mauser rifle, and in that year they met and wiped out an army of Yaquis at Mazacoba, the killed numbering more than a thousand. This ended warfare on anything like an equal footing. There were no more large battles; the Yaqui warriors were merely hunted. Thousands of the Indians surrendered. Their leaders were executed, and they and their families were granted a new territory to the north, to which they journeyed as to a promised land. But it proved to be a barren desert, entirely waterless, and one of the most uninhabitable spots in all America. Hence the peaceful Yaquis moved to other sections of the State, some of them becoming wage-workers in the mines, others finding employment on the railroads, and still others becoming peons on the farms. Then and there this portion of the Yaqui nation lost its identity



REBEL YAQUIS AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES
A Peace Conference in the Mountains of Sonora

and became merged with the peoples about it. But it is these Yaquis, the peaceful ones, who are sought out and deported to Yucatan.

A few Yaquis, perhaps 4,000 or 5,000, refused to give up the battle for their lands. They found inaccessible peaks and established a stronghold high up in the Bacetete Mountains, which border upon their former home. Here flow never-ceasing springs of cold water. Here, on the almost perpendicular cliffs, they built their little homes, planted their corn, raised their families, and sang, sometimes, of the fertile valleys which once were theirs. The army of several thousand soldiers still hunted them. The soldiers could not reach those mountain heights, but they could wait for the Indians in the gorge and shoot them as they came down in search of meat, of clothes, and of other comforts which they yearned to add to their existence.

Many small bands of these so-called renegades have been killed. Others have been captured and executed. Rumours of peace have travelled the rounds only to prove untrue a little later. Peace conferences with the Government have been held, but have failed because the "renegades" could secure no guarantee that they would not be either executed or deported after they laid down their arms. In January, 1909, the report was officially sent out by Governor Torres that Chief Bule and several hundreds of his warriors had surrendered on conditions. But later troubles showed this announcement to be premature. There are at least a few hundred Yaquis among those Bacetete crags. They

refuse to surrender. They are outlaws. They are cut off from the world. They have no connection with the peaceful element of their nation that is scattered all over the State of Sonora. Yet the existence of this handful of "renegades" is the only excuse the Mexican Government has for gathering up peaceful Mexican families and deporting them—at the rate of 500 per month!

Why should a lot of women and children and old men be made to suffer because some of their fourth cousins are fighting away off there in the hills? The army physician with whom I talked in Mexico City answered the question in very energetic terms.

"The reason?" he said. "There is no reason. It is only an excuse. The excuse is that the workers contribute to the support of the fighters. If it is true, it is true only in an infinitesimal minority of cases, for the vast majority of the Yaquis are entirely out of touch with the fighters. There may be a few guilty parties, but absolutely no attempt is made to find them out. For what a handful of patriotic Yaquis may possibly be doing, tens of thousands are made to suffer and die. It is as if a whole town were put to the torch because one of its inhabitants had stolen a horse."

The deportation of Yaquis to Yucatan and other slave sections of Mexico began to assume noticeable proportions about 1905. It was carried out on a small scale at first, then on a larger one.

Finally, in the spring of 1908, a despatch was published in American and Mexican newspapers saying that the Government had issued a sweeping order

decreeing that every Yaqui, wherever found—men, women and children—should be gathered up by the War Department and deported to Yucatan.

During my journeys in Mexico I inquired many times as to the authenticity of this despatch, and the story was confirmed. It was confirmed by men in the public departments of Mexico City. And it is quite certain that such an order, wherever it may have come from, was carried out. Yaqui working men were taken daily from mines, railroads and farms—old working men who never owned a rifle in their lives—women, children, babes, the old and the young, the weak and the strong. Guarded by soldiers and *rurales* they travelled together over the exile road. And there are others besides Yaquis who travelled over that road. Pimas and Opatas, other Indians, Mexicans, and any dark people found who were poor and unable to protect themselves, were taken, tagged as Yaquis, and sent away to the land of henequen. What becomes of them all there? That is what I went to Yucatan to find out.

The secret that lies at the root of the whole Yaqui affair was revealed to me, and the whole matter summed up in a few words by an officer of the Mexican army, in one of the most remarkable interviews which I obtained during my entire trip to Mexico.

This officer is one of those who for the past four years have been in charge of transporting the Yaqui exiles to Yucatan. I was fortunate enough to take passage on the same steamer with him returning from Progreso to Vera Cruz. The steamship people put us in the same stateroom, and, as the officer had

some Government passes which he hoped to sell me, we were soon on the most confidential terms.

"In the past three and a half years," he told me, "we have delivered just 15,700 Yaquis in Yucatan—delivered, mind you! for you must remember that the Government never allows enough expense money to feed them properly, and from 10 to 20 per cent. die on the journey.

"These Yaquis," he said, "sell in Yucatan for sixty-five dollars apiece—men, women and children. The greater part of the money is turned over to the Secretary of War. This, however, is only a drop in the bucket, for I know this to be a fact, that every foot of land, every building, every cow, every *burro*, everything left behind by the Yaquis when they are carried away by the soldiers, is appropriated to the private use of authorities of the State of Sonora."

These little confidences were given me merely as bits of interesting gossip to a harmless foreigner. My informant had no notion of exposing the officials and citizens whose names he mentioned. He expressed no objection whatever to the system, rather gloried in it.

"In the past six months," he told me, "we have handled 3,000 Yaquis—500 a month. We have just been given orders to hurry 1,500 more to Yucatan as quickly as we can get them there. And there are at least 100,000 more Yaquis to come! Of course, they're not all really Yaquis, but——"

My interlocutor passed me a smile which was illuminating.

CHAPTER III

Over the Exile Road

YAQUIS travelling to Yucatan, after arriving at the port of Guaymas, Sonora, embark on a Government war-vessel for the port of San Blas. After a journey of four or five days they are disembarked and are driven by foot over some of the roughest mountains in Mexico, from San Blas to Tepic, and from Tepic to San Marcos. As the crow flies the distance is little more than a hundred miles; as the road winds it is twice as far, and requires from fifteen to twenty days to travel. "Bull pens," or concentration camps, are provided all along the route, and stops are made at the principal cities. All families are broken up on the way, the chief points at which this is done being Guaymas, San Marcos, Guadalajara and Mexico City. From San Marcos the unfortunates are carried by train over the Mexican Central Railway to Mexico City, and from Mexico City over the International Railway to Vera Cruz. Here they are bundled into one of the freight steamers of the "National" Company, and in from two to five days are disembarked at Progreso and turned over to the waiting consignees.

On the road to Yucatan the companion of my

journeys, L. Gutierrez de Lara, and I, saw gangs of Yaqui exiles, saw them in the "bull pen" in the midst of the army barracks in Mexico City; finally we joined a party of them at Vera Cruz and travelled with them on ship from Vera Cruz to Progreso.

There were 104 of them shoved into the unclean hole astern of the freight steamer *Sinaloa*, on which we embarked. We thought it might be difficult to obtain the opportunity to visit this unclean hole, but, luckily, we were mistaken. The guard bent readily to friendly words, and before the ship was well under way my companion and I were seated on boxes in the hold with a group of exiles gathered about us, some of them, tobacco-famished, pulling furiously at the cigarettes which we had passed among them, others silently munching the bananas, apples and oranges which we had brought.

There were two old men past 50, one of them small, active, sharp-featured, talkative, dressed in American overalls, jumper, shoes and slouch hat, with the face and manner of a man bred to civilisation; the other tall, silent, impassive, wrapped to the chin in a gay-coloured blanket, the one comfort he had snatched from his few belongings as the soldiers were leading him away. There was a magnificent specimen of an athlete under 30, with a wizened baby girl of 2 held in the crook of one arm; an aggressive-faced woman of 40, against whom was closely pressed a girl of 10, shivering and shaking from a malarial attack; two overgrown boys, who squatted together in the background and grinned half foolishly at our questions; bedraggled women,



YAQUIS ON THE WAY TO YUCATAN

nearly half of them with babies; and an astonishingly large number of little chubby-faced, bare-legged boys and girls, who played uncomprehendingly about the floor, or stared at us from a distance out of their big, solemn black eyes.

"Revolutionists?" I asked of the man in overalls and jumper.

"No; working men."

"Yaquis?"

"Yes, one Yaqui," pointing to his friend in the blanket. "The rest are Pimas and Opatas."

"Then why are you here?"

"Ah, we are all Yaquis to General Torres. It makes no difference to him. You are dark. You dress in my clothes and you will be a Yaqui—to him. He makes no investigation, asks no questions—only takes you."

"Where are you from?" I asked of the old man.

"Most of us are from Ures. They took us in the night and carried us away without allowing us to make up bundles of our belongings."

"I am from Horcasitas," spoke up the young athlete with the babe on his arm. "I was ploughing in the field when they came, and they did not give me time to unhitch my oxen."

"Where is the mother of your baby?" I inquired curiously of the young father.

"Dead in San Marcos," he replied, closing his teeth tight. "That three weeks' tramp over the mountains killed her. They have allowed me to keep the little one—so far."

"Did any of you make resistance when the soldiers came to take you?" I asked.

"No," answered the old man from Ures. "We went quietly; we did not try to run away." Then with a smile: "The officers found more trouble in looking after their men, their privates, to prevent them from running away, from deserting, than they did with us.

"We were 153 at the start, we of Ures," went on the old man. "Farm labourers, all of us. We worked for small farmers, poor men, men with not more than half a dozen families each in their employ. One day a Government agent visited the neighbourhood and ordered the bosses to give an account of all their labourers. The bosses obeyed, but they did not know what it meant until a few days later, when the soldiers came. Then they knew, and they saw ruin coming to them as well as to us. They begged the officers, saying: 'This is my peon. He is a good man. He has been with me for twenty years. I need him for the harvest.'"

"It is true," broke in the woman with the ague-stricken child. "We were with Carlos Romo for twenty-two years. The night we were taken we were seven; now we are two."

"And we were with Eugenio Morales for sixteen years," spoke another woman.

"Yes," went on the spokesman, "our bosses followed us, begging, but it was no use. Some of them followed us all the way to Hermosillo. There was Manuel Gandara, and Jose Juan Lopez, and Franco Tallez, and Eugenio Morales and the Romo brothers,



EXILED YAQUI WOMEN AND CHILDREN DISEMBARKING AT HERMOSILLO

Jose and Carlos. You may go and see them, and they will tell you that what we say is true. They followed us, but it was no use. They had to go back and call vainly at our empty houses for labourers. We were stolen—and they were robbed!

“They died on the way like starving cattle,” went on the old man from Ures. “When one fell ill he never got well again. One woman was deathly sick at the start. She begged to be left behind, but they wouldn’t leave her. She was the first to fall—it happened on the train between Hermosillo and Guaymas.

“But the cruellest part of the trail was between San Blas and San Marcos. Those women with babies! It was awful! They dropped down in the dust again and again. Two never got up again, and we buried them ourselves there beside the road.”

“There were *burros* in San Blas,” interrupted a woman, “and mules and horses. Oh, why didn’t they let us ride? But our men were good. When the little legs of the *niños* were weary our men carried them on their backs. And when the three women who were far gone in pregnancy could walk no more our men made stretchers of twigs and carried them, taking turns. Yes, our men were good, but now they are gone. We do not see them any more!”

“The soldiers had to tear me away from my husband,” said another; “and when I cried out they only laughed. The next night a soldier came and tried to take hold of me, but I pulled off my shoes and beat him with them. Yes, the soldiers bothered the women

often, especially that week we starved in Mexico City, but always the women fought them back."

"I have a sister in Yucatan," said a young woman under 20. "Two years ago they carried her away. As soon as we arrive I shall try to find her. We will keep each other company, now that they have taken my husband from me. Tell me, is it so terribly hot in Yucatan as they say it is? I do not like hot weather, yet if they will only let me live with my sister I will not mind."

"To whom do all these bright little lads, these *muchachos*, all of the same size, belong?" I inquired.

"*Quien sabe?*" answered an old woman. "Their parents are gone, just as are our babes. They take our children from us and give us the children of strangers. And when we begin to love the new ones, they take them away too. Do you see that woman huddled over there with her face in her hands? They took her four little boys at Guadalajara and left her nothing. Myself? Yes, they took my husband. For more than thirty years we had never been parted for a single night. But that made no difference; he is gone. Yet perhaps I am lucky; I still have my daughter. Do you think, though, that we may meet our husbands again in Yucatan?"

As we breasted the Vera Cruz lighthouse, the shoulder of a norther heaved itself against the side of the vessel, the ocean streamed in at the lower port-holes, and the quarters of the unhappy exiles were flooded with water. They fled for the deck, but here were met by flying sheets of rain, which drove them

back again. Between the flooded hold and the flooded poop the exiles spent the night, and when, early the next morning, as we drove into the Coatzacoalcos river, I strolled aft again, I saw them lying about the deck, all of them drenched and shivering, some of them writhing in the throes of acute sea-sickness.

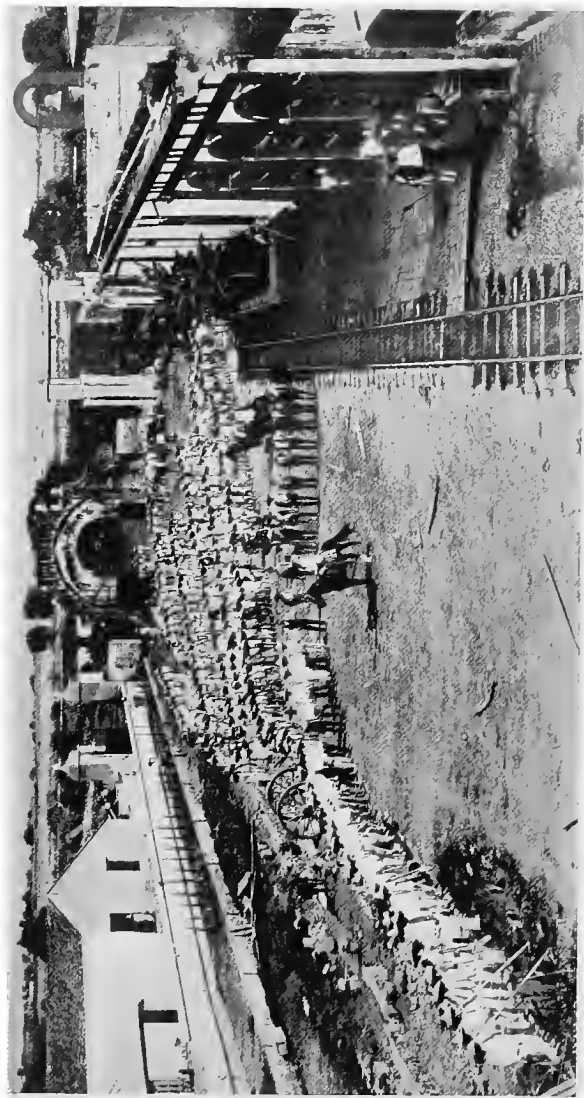
We steamed thirty miles up the Coatzacoalcos river, then anchored to the shore and spent a day loading jungle bulls for the tough-beef market of New Orleans. Two hundred ordinary cattle may be coaxed through a hole in the side of a ship in the space of two hours, but these bulls were as wild as wolves, and each had to be half butchered before he would consent to walk in the straight and narrow way. Once inside, and ranged along the two sides of the vessel, they fought, trampled each other, bawled as loud as steam whistles, and in a number of instances broke their head-ropes and smashed through the flimsy railing which had been erected to prevent them from over-running other portions of the lower deck. In a bare space at the stern of the vessel, surrounded on three sides by plunging, bawling bulls, were the quarters of the "Yaquis." It was stay there and run the risk of being trampled, or choose the unsheltered deck. For the remaining four days of the journey, one of which we spent waiting for the norther to pass, the "Yaquis" chose the deck.

At last we arrived at Progreso. As we entered the train for Mérida we saw our friends being herded into the second-class coaches. They left us at the little station of San Ignacio, on their way to a plantation, and we saw them no more.

In Yucatan I soon learned what becomes of the Yaqui exiles. They are sent to the henequen plantations as slaves, slaves on almost exactly the same basis as are the hundred thousand Mayas whom I found on the plantations. They are held as chattels, they are bought and sold, they receive no wages, but are fed on beans, *tortillas* and putrid fish. They are beaten, sometimes beaten to death. They are worked from dawn until night in the hot sun beside the Mayas. The men are locked up at night; the women are required to marry Chinamen or Mayas. They are hunted when they run away, and are brought back by the police if they reach a settlement. Families, broken up in Sonora or on the way, are never permitted to reunite. After they once pass into the hands of the planter the Government cares no more for them, takes no more account of them. The Government has received its money, and the fate of the Yaquis is in the hands of the planter.

I saw many Yaquis in Yucatan. I talked with them. I saw them beaten. One of the first things that I saw on a Yucatan plantation was the beating of a Yaqui.

The act, though not intentionally so, perhaps, was theatrically staged. It was at 3.45 in the morning, just after roll-call of the slaves. The slave gang was drawn up in front of the plantation store, the fitful rays of the lanterns sputtering high on the store front playing uncertainly over their dusky faces and dirty-white forms. There were 700 of them. Now and then a brighter lantern-beam shot all the way to the tower-



CALLING THE ROLL AT SUNRISE
A Typical Plantation Scene

ing tropical trees, which, standing shoulder to shoulder, walled in the grass-grown *patio*. Under the hanging lanterns and facing the ragged band stood the *administrador* or general manager, the *mayordomo primero* or superintendent, and the lesser bosses, the *mayordomos segundos*, the *majocol* and the *capataces*.

A name, squeaked out by the voice of the *administrador*, brought from the crowd a young Yaqui, medium-sized, sinewy-bodied, clean-featured, with well-formed head erect on square shoulders, bony jaw, fixed, dark, deep-set eyes darting rapidly from one side to another of the circle which surrounded him, like a tiger forced out of the jungle and into the midst of the huntsmen.

“Off with your shirt!” rasped the *administrador*, and at the words, superintendent and foremen ringed closer about him. One reached for the garment, but the Yaqui fended the hand, then, with the quickness of a cat, dodged a cane which swished at his bare head from the opposite direction. For one instant—no more—with the hate of his eyes he held the circle at bay, then with a movement of consent he waved them back, and with a single jerk drew the shirt over his head and bared his muscular bronze body, scarred and discoloured from previous beatings, for the whip. Submissive but dignified he stood there, for all the world like a captive Indian chief of a hundred years ago, contemptuously awaiting the torture of his enemies.

Listlessly the waiting slaves looked on. A regiment of toil, they stood half a dozen deep, with soiled calico trousers reaching half-way to the ankles or rolled

to the knees, shirts of the same material with many gaping mouths showing the bare bronze skin beneath, bare legs, bare feet, battered grass hats held deferentially in the hands—a tatterdemalion lot, shaking the sleep from their eyes, blinking at the flickering lanterns. Three races there were, the sharp-visaged, lofty-browed Mayas, aborigines of Yucatan, the tall, arrow-backed Chinamen, and the swarthy, broad-fisted Yaquis from Sonora.

At a third command of the *administrador* there stepped from the host of waiting slaves a giant Chinaman. Crouching, he grasped the wrists of the silent Yaqui. The next moment he was standing straight with the Yaqui on his back in the manner of a tired child being carried by one of its elders.

Not one of that throng who did not know what was coming, yet not until a *capataz* reached for a bucket hanging high on the store front did there come a tension of nerves among those seven hundred men. The whipper extraordinary, known as a *majocol*, a deep-chested, hairy brute, bent over the bucket and soused his hands deep into the water within. Withdrawing them, he held high for inspection four dripping ropes, each three feet long. The thick writhing things in the dim lamplight seemed like four bloated snakes, and at sight of them the tired backs of the ragged seven hundred straightened with a jerk and an involuntary gasp rippled over the assemblage. Laggard slumber, though unsated, dropped from their eyes. At last all were awake, wide awake.

The ropes were of native henequen braided tight

and thick and heavy for the particular purpose in hand. Water-soaked, to give them more weight and cutting power, they were admirably fitted for the work of "cleaning up."

The hairy *majocol* selected one of the four, tossed back the remaining three, the pail was carried away, and the giant Chinaman squared off with the naked body of the victim to the gaze of his fellow bondsmen. The drama was an old one to them, so old that their eyes must have ached many times at the sight, yet for them it could never lose its fascination. Each knew that his own time was coming, if it had not already come, and not one possessed the self-command to turn his back upon the spectacle.

Deliberately the *majocol* measured his distance, then as deliberately raised his arm high and brought it swiftly down again; the bloated snake swished through the air and fell with a spat across the glistening bronze shoulders of the Yaqui.

The *administrador*, a small, nervous man of many gestures, nodded his approval and glanced at his watch, the *mayordomo*, big, stolid, grinned slowly, the half-dozen *capataces* leaned forward a little more obliquely in their eagerness, the regiment of slaves swayed bodily as by some invisible force, and a second gasp, painful and sharp like the bursting air from a severed windpipe, escaped them.

Every eye was riveted tight upon that scene in the uncertain dimness of the early morning—the giant Chinaman, bending slightly forward now, the naked body upon his shoulders, the long, uneven, livid welt

that marked the visit of the wet rope, the deliberate, the agonisingly deliberate *majocol*, the *administrador*, watch in hand, nodding endorsement, the grinning *mayordomo*, the absorbed *capataces*.

All held their breath for the second blow. I held my breath with the rest, held it for ages, until I thought the rope would never fall. Not until I saw the finger signal of the *administrador* did I know that the blows were delivered by the watch, and not until it was all over did I know that, in order to multiply the torture, six seconds were allowed to intervene between each stroke.

The second blow fell, and the third, and the fourth. I counted the blows as they fell, ages apart. At the fourth the strong brown skin broke and little pin-heads of crimson pushed themselves out, burst, and started downward in thin trickles. At the sixth the glistening back lost its rigidity and fell to quivering like a jelly-fish. At the ninth a low whine somewhere in the depths of that Yaqui found its devious way outward and into the open. Oh, that whine! I hear it now, a hard, hard whine, as if indurated to diamond hardness by drilling its way to the air through a soul of adamant.

At last the spats ceased—there were fifteen—the *administrador*, with a final nod, put away his watch, the giant Chinaman released his grip on the brown wrists, and the Yaqui tumbled in a limp heap to the ground. He lay there for a moment, his face in his arms, his quivering, bleeding flesh to the sky, then a foreman stepped forward and put a foot roughly against his hip.

The Yaqui lifted his head, disclosing to the light a pair of glazed eyes and a face twisted with pain. A moment later he rose to his feet and staggered forward to join his fellow bondsmen. In that moment the spell of breathless silence on the seven hundred snapped, the ranks moved in agitation, and there rose a hum of low speech from every section of the crowd. The special "cleaning up" of the morning was over. Five minutes later the day's work on the farm had begun.

Naturally I made inquiries about the victim, to find out what crime he had committed to merit fifteen lashes of the wet rope. I ascertained that he had been only a month in Yucatan, and but three days before had been put in the field with a harvesting gang to cut and trim the great leaves of the henequen plant. Two thousand a day was the regular "stint" for each slave, and he had been given three days in which to acquire the dexterity necessary to harvest the required number of leaves. He had failed. Hence the flogging. There had been no other fault.

"It's a wonder," I remarked to a *capataz*, "that this Yaqui did not tear himself from the back of the Chinaman. It's a wonder he did not fight. He seems like a brave man; he has the look of a fighter."

The *capataz* chuckled.

"One month ago he was a fighter," was the reply, "but a Yaqui learns many things in a month in Yucatan. Still, there was a time when we thought this dog would never learn. Now and then they come to us that way; they never learn; they're never worth the money that's paid for them."

"Tell me about this one," I urged.

"He fought; that's all. The day he came he was put to work loading bundles of leaves on to the elevator which leads to the cleaning machine. The *mayordomo*—yes, the *mayordomo primero*—happened along and punched the fellow in the stomach with his cane. A half minute later a dozen of us were struggling to pull that Yaqui wolf away from the throat of the *mayordomo*. We starved him for a day, and then dragged him out for a cleaning up. But he fought with his fingers and with his teeth until a *capataz* laid him out with the blunt edge of a *machete*. After that he tasted the rope daily for awhile, but every day for no less than a week the fool fought crazily on until he kissed the earth under the weight of a club. But our *majocol* is a genius. He conquered the wolf. He wielded the rope until the stubborn one surrendered, until that same Yaqui came crawling, whimpering, on hands and knees and licked with his naked tongue the hand of the man who had beaten him!"

During my travels in Yucatan I was repeatedly struck with the extremely human character of the people whom the Mexican Government calls Yaquis. The Yaquis are Indians, they are not white, yet when one converses with them in a language mutually understood, one is struck with the likenesses of the mental processes of white and brown. I was early convinced that the Yaqui and I were more alike in mind than in colour. I became convinced, too, that the family attachments of the Yaqui mean quite as much to the Yaqui as the family attachments of the American mean to the

American. Conjugal fidelity is the cardinal virtue of the Yaqui home, and it seems to be so, not because of any tribal superstition of past times, nor because of any teachings of priests, but because of a constitutional tenderness, sweetened more and more with the passing years, for *the one* with whom he had shared the meat and the shelter and the labour of life, the joys and sorrows of existence.

Over and over again I saw this exemplified on the exile road and in Yucatan. The Yaqui woman feels as keenly the brutal snatching away of her babe as would the cultivated American woman. The heart-strings of the Yaqui wife are no more proof against a violent and unwished-for separation from her husband than would be the heart-strings of the refined mistress of a beautiful American home.

The Mexican Government forbids divorce and remarriage within its domain, but for the henequen planters of Yucatan all things are possible. To a Yaqui woman a native of Asia is no less repugnant than he is to an American woman, yet one of the first barbarities the henequen planter imposes upon the Yaqui slave woman, freshly robbed of the lawful husband of her bosom, is to compel her to marry a Chinaman and live with him!

"We do that," explained one of the planters to me, "in order to make the Chinaman better satisfied and less inclined to run away. And besides, we know that every new babe born on the place will some day be *worth anywhere from 500 to 1,000 dollars cash!*"

The cultivated white woman, you say, would die of

the shame and the horror of such conditions. But so does the brown woman of Sonora.

"If the Yaquis last out the first year," one great planter told me, "they generally get along all right and make good workers, but the trouble is, *at least two-thirds of them die off in the first twelve months!*"

On the ranch of one of the most famous henequen kings we found about two hundred Yaquis. One-third of these were men, who were quartered with a large body of Mayas and Chinamen. Entirely apart from these, and housed in a row of new one-room huts, each set in a tiny patch of uncultivated land, we discovered the Yaqui women and children.

We found them squatting around on their bare floors or nursing an open-air fire and a kettle just outside the back door. We found no men among them, Yaquis or Chinamen, for they had arrived only one month before—all of them—from Sonora.

In one house we found as many as fourteen inmates. There was a woman past 50 with the strength of an Indian chief in her face, and with words which went to the mark like an arrow to a target. There was a comfortable, home-like woman with a broad, pock-marked face, pleasant words, and eyes which kindled with friendliness despite her troubles. There were two women who watched their fire and listened only. There was a girl of 15, a bride of four months, but now alone, a wonderfully comely girl with big eyes and soft mouth, who sat with her back against the wall and smiled and smiled—until she cried. There was a sick woman, who lay on the floor and groaned

feebly but never looked up, and there were eight children.

"Last week we were fifteen," said the home-like woman, "but one has already gone. They never get well." She reached over and gently stroked the hair of the sister who lay on the floor.

"Were you all married?" I asked.

"All," nodded the old woman with the face of a chief.

"And where are they now?"

"*Quien sabe?*" And she searched our eyes deep for the motive of our questions.

"I am a Papago," reassured De Lara. "We are friends."

"You are not working," I remarked. "What are you doing?"

"Starving," said the woman.

"We get that once a week—for all of us," explained the home-like one, nodding at three small chunks of raw beef—less than a five-cent stew in the United States—which had just been brought from the plantation store. "Besides that we get only corn and black beans, and not half enough of either of them."

"We are like hogs; we are fed on corn," put in the old woman. "In Sonora we made our *tortillas* of wheat."

"How long will they starve you?" I asked.

"Until we marry Chinamen," flashed the old woman unexpectedly.

"Yes," confirmed the home-like one. "Twice they

have brought the Chinamen before us, lined them up, and said: 'Choose a man.' Twice."

"And why didn't you choose?"

This question several of the women answered in chorus. In words and wry faces they expressed their abhorrence of the Chinamen, and with tremulous earnestness assured us that they had not yet forgotten their own husbands.

"I begged them," said the old woman, "to let me off. I told them I was too old, but they said I must choose too. They will not let me off; they say I will have to choose with the rest."

"Twice they have lined them up," reiterated the home-like one, "and said we must choose. But we wouldn't choose. One woman chose, but when she saw the rest hang back she pushed the man away from her. They threatened us with the rope, but still we hung back. They will give us but one more chance. Then if we do not choose, they will choose for us. And if we do not consent, we will be put in the field and worked and whipped like the men."

"And get 12 *centavos* a day (6 cents American) to live on," said the old woman. "Twelve *centavos* a day, with food at the store twice as dear as in Sonora!"

"Next Sunday morning they will make us choose," repeated the home-like woman. "And if we don't choose——"

"Last Sunday they beat that sister there," said the old woman. "She swore she'd never choose, and they beat her just like they beat the men. Come, Refugio, show them your back."

But the woman at the fire shrank away and hung her head in mortification.

"No, no," she protested, then after a moment she muttered: "When the Yaqui men are beaten they die of shame, but the women can stand being beaten; they cannot die."

"It's true," nodded the old woman; "the men die of shame sometimes—and sometimes they die of their own will."

When we turned the talk to Sonora and to the long journey the voices of the women began to falter. They were from Pílares de Teras, where are situated the mines of Colonel Garcia. The soldiers had come in the daytime while the people were in the field picking the ripe corn from the stalks. They had been taken from their harvest labour and compelled to walk all the way to Hermosillo, a three weeks' tramp.

The Yaqui love for the one who suckled them is strong, and several of the younger women recounted the details of the parting from the mother. Then we spoke of their husbands again, but they held their tears until I asked the question, "How would you like to go back with me to your homes in Sonora?"

That opened the flood-gates. The tears started first down the plump cheeks of the cheery, home-like woman, then the others broke in, one at a time, and at last the listening children on the floor were blubbering dolefully with their elders. Weeping, the unhappy exiles lost their last modicum of reserve. They begged us piteously to take them back to Sonora, or to find their husbands for them. The old woman implored us to

get word to her "boss," Leonardo Aguirre, and would not be content until I had penned his name in my note-book. The bashful woman at the fire, aching for some comforting, hopeful words, parted her dress at the top and gave us a glimpse of the red marks of the lash upon her back.

I looked into the face of my companion; the tears were trickling down his cheeks. As for me, I did not cry. I am ashamed now that I did not cry!

CHAPTER IV

The Contract Slaves of Valle Nacional

VALLE NACIONAL is undoubtedly the worst slave-hole in Mexico. Probably it is the worst in the world. When I visited Valle Nacional I expected to find it milder than Yucatan. I found it more pitiless.

In Yucatan the Maya slaves die off faster than they are born, and two-thirds of the Yaqui slaves perish during the first year after their importation into the country. In Valle Nacional all of the slaves, all but a very few—perhaps 5 per cent.—die within a space of seven or eight months.

This statement is almost unbelievable. I would not have believed it, possibly not even after I had seen the whole process of working them and beating them and starving them to death, were it not the fact that the masters themselves told me that it was true. And there are 15,000 of these Valle Nacional slaves—15,000 new ones every year!

“By the sixth or seventh month they begin to die off like flies at the first winter frost, and after that they’re not worth keeping. The cheapest thing to do is to let them die; there are plenty more where they came from.”

Word for word, this is a statement made to me by the general manager of a large tobacco farm in Valle Nacional.

“I have been here for more than five years, and every month I see hundreds and sometimes thousands of men, women and children start over the road to the valley, but I never see them come back. Of every hundred who go over the road, not more than one ever sees this town again.” This assertion was made to me by a station agent of the Vera Cruz al Pacifico railroad.

“There are no survivors of Valle Nacional—no real ones,” a Government engineer told me. “Now and then one gets out of the valley and gets beyond El Hule. He staggers and begs his way along the weary road toward Cordoba, but he never gets back where he came from. Those people come out of the valley walking corpses, they travel on a little way, and then they fall.”

This man's work has carried him much into Valle Nacional, and he knows more of the country, probably, than does any Mexican not directly interested in the slave trade.

“They die; they all die. The bosses never let them go until they're dying.” Thus declared one of the police officers of the town of Valle Nacional, which is situated in the centre of the valley.

And everywhere, over and over again, I was told the same thing. Civic officials said it. The “bosses” themselves said it. The Indian dwellers of the mountain sides said it. The slaves said it. And when I had seen, as well as heard, I was convinced that it was the truth.

The slaves of Valle Nacional are not Indians, as are the slaves of Yucatan. They are Mexicans. Some are skilled artisans. Others are artists. The majority of them are common labourers. As a whole, except for their rags, their bruises, their squalor and their despair, they are a very fair representation of the Mexican people. They are not criminals. Not more than 10 per cent. were even charged with any crime. The rest of them are peaceful, law-abiding citizens. Yet not one came to the valley of his own free will, not one would not leave the valley at an instant's notice if he or she could get away.

Do not entertain the idea that Mexican slavery is confined to Yucatan and Valle Nacional. Conditions similar to those of Valle Nacional are the rule in many parts of the country, and especially in the States south of the capital. I cite Valle Nacional because it is most notorious as a region of slaves, and because, as I have already suggested, it presents just a little bit the worst example of chattel slavery that I know of.

The secret of the extreme conditions of Valle Nacional is mainly geographical. Valle Nacional is a deep gorge from two to five miles wide, and twenty miles long, tucked away among impassable mountains in the extreme north-western corner of the State of Oaxaca. Its mouth is fifty miles up the Papaloapan river from El Hule, the nearest railroad station, yet it is through El Hule that every human being passes in going to or coming from the valley. There is no other practicable route in, no other one out. The magnificent tropical mountains

which wall in the valley are covered with an impenetrable jungle, made still more impassable by jaguars, pumas and gigantic snakes. Moreover, there is no waggon road to Valle Nacional; only a river and a bridle path—a bridle path which carries one now through the jungle, now along precipitous cliffs where the rider must dismount and crawl, leading his horse behind him, now across the deep, swirling current of the river. It takes a strong swimmer to cross this river at high water, yet a pedestrian must swim it more than once in order to get out of Valle Nacional.

The equestrian must cross it five times—four times in a canoe, alongside which his mount swims laboriously, once by fording, a long and difficult route, over which large rocks must be avoided and deep holes kept away from. The valley itself is as flat as a floor, clear of all rank growth, and down its gentle slope winds the Papaloapan river. The valley, the river and its rim form one of the most beautiful sights it has ever been my lot to look upon.

Valle Nacional is three days' journey from Cordoba, two from El Hule. Stray travellers sometimes get as far as Tuxtepec, the chief city of the political district, but no one goes on to Valle Nacional who has not business there. It is a tobacco country, the most noted in Mexico, and the production is carried on by about thirty large plantations owned and operated almost exclusively by Spaniards. Between El Hule and the head of the valley are four towns, Tuxtepec, Chiltepec, Jacatepec and Valle Nacional, all situated on the banks of the river, all provided with policemen to hunt runaway

slaves, not one of whom can get out of the valley without passing the towns. Tuxtepec, the largest, is provided with ten policemen and eleven *rurales* (mounted country police). Besides, every runaway slave brings a reward of 10 dollars to the man or policeman who catches and returns him to his owner.

Thus it will be understood how much the geographical isolation of Valle Nacional accounts for its being just a little worse than most other slave districts of Mexico. Combined with this may be mentioned the complete understanding that exists with the Government and the nearness to a practically inexhaustible labour market.

Just as in Yucatan, the slavery of Valle Nacional is merely peonage, or labour for debt, carried to the extreme, although outwardly it takes a slightly different form—that of contract labour.

The origin of the conditions in Valle Nacional was undoubtedly contract labour. The planters needed labourers. They went to the expense of importing labourers, with the understanding that the labourers would stay with their jobs for a given time. Some labourers tried to jump their contracts, and the planters used force to compel them to stay. The advance money and the cost of transportation were looked upon as a debt, which the labourer could be compelled to work out. From this it was only a step so to order the conditions of labour that the labourer could in no circumstances ever hope to get free. In time Valle Nacional became a word of horror with the working people of all Mexico. They refused to go there for any price. So

the planters felt compelled to tell them they were going to take them somewhere else. From this it was only a step to playing the workman false all around, to formulating a contract not to be carried out, but to help get the labourer into the toils. Finally, from this it was only a step to forming a business partnership with the Government whereby the police power should be put into the hands of the planters to help them carry on a traffic in slaves.

The planters do not call their slaves slaves. They call them contract labourers. I call them slaves, because the moment they enter Valle Nacional they become the personal property of the planter, and there is no law or government to protect them.

In the first place the planter buys his slave for a given sum. Then he works him at will, feeds or starves him to suit himself, places armed guards over him day and night, beats him, pays him no money, may kill him, and from beginning to end the labourer has no remedy. Call it by another name if it pleases you. I call it slavery only because I do not know of a word that will fit the conditions better.

I have said that no labourer sent to Valle Nacional to become a slave travels the road of his own free will. There are just two ways employed to get them there. They are sent over the road either by a *jefe politico* or by a "labour agent" working in conjunction with a *jefe politico* or other officials of the Government.

A *jefe politico*, as I have said, rules a political district. He is appointed by the President or by the Governor of his State, and is also mayor, or *presidente*,

of the principal town or city in his district. In turn he usually appoints the mayors of the towns under him, as well as all other officers of importance. He has no one to answer to except his Governor—unless the national President feels like interfering—and altogether is quite a little tsar in his domain.

The methods employed by the *jefe politico* working alone are very simple. Instead of sending petty prisoners to terms in jail he sells them into slavery in Valle Nacional. And as he pockets the money himself, he naturally arrests as many persons as he can. This method is followed more or less by the *jefes politicos* of all the leading cities of southern Mexico.

The *jefes politicos* of some of the largest cities in southern Mexico, so I was told by "labour agents," as well as by others whose veracity in the matter I have no reason to question, pay each an annual rental of 10,000 dollars for their posts. The office would be worth no such amount were it not for the spoils of the slave trade and other little grafts which are indulged in by the holder. Lesser *jefes* pay their Governors lesser amounts. They send their victims over the road in gangs of from ten to a hundred, or even more. They get a special Government rate from the railroads, send along Government-salaried *rurales* to guard them; hence, the selling price of 45 or 50 dollars per slave is nearly all clear profit.

But only 10 per cent. of the slaves are sent directly to Valle Nacional by the *jefes politicos*. There is no basis in law whatsoever for the proceeding, and the *jefes politicos* prefer to work in conjunction with labour

agents. There is also no basis in law for the methods employed by the labour agents, but the partnership is profitable. The officials are enabled to hide behind the labour agents, and the labour agents are enabled to work under the protection of the officials, and absolutely without fear of criminal prosecution.

In this partnership of the Government and the labour agent—popularly known as an *enganchador* (snarer)—the function of the labour agent is to snare the labourer, the function of the Government to stand behind him, help him, protect him, give him low transportation rates and free guard service, and finally, to take a share of the profits.

The methods employed by the labour agent in snaring the labourer are many and various. One is to open an employment office and advertise for workers, who are to be given high wages, a comfortable home, and plenty of freedom somewhere in the south of Mexico. Free transportation is offered. These inducements always cause a certain number to take the bait, especially men who want to move with their families to a more prosperous region. The husband and father is given an advance fee of 5 dollars, and the whole family is locked up in a room as securely barred as a jail.

After a day or two, as they are joined by others, they come to have misgivings. Perhaps they ask to be let out, and then they find that they are indeed prisoners. They are told that they are in debt, and will be held until they work out their debt. A few days later the door opens and they file out. They find that *rurales* are all about them. They are marched through

a back street to a railway station, where they are put into the train. They try to get away, but it is no use; they are prisoners. In a few days they are in Valle Nacional.

Usually the labourer caught in this way is taken through the formality of signing a contract. He is told that he is to get a good home, good food, and one, two or three dollars a day wages for a period of six months or a year. A printed paper is pushed under his nose, and the *enganchador* rapidly points out several alluring sentences written thereon. A pen is put quickly into his hand and he is told to sign in a hurry. The five dollars advance fee is given him to clinch the bargain and put him in debt to the agent. He is usually given a chance to spend this, or a part of it, generally for clothing or other necessaries, in order that he may be unable to pay it back when he discovers that he has been trapped. As a rule, the blanks on the printed contract—fixing the wages, etc.—are filled in afterwards by the labour agent or the consignee.

In Mexico City and other large centres of population there are permanently maintained places called *casas de los enganchadores* (houses of the snarers). They are regularly known to the police and to large slave-buyers of the hot lands. Yet they are nothing more nor less than private jails into which are enticed labourers who are held there against their will until such time as they are sent away in gangs guarded by the police of the Government.

A third method employed by the labour agent is outright kidnapping. I have heard of many cases of

the kidnapping of women and of men. Hundreds of half-drunken men are picked up about the *pulque* shops of Mexico City every season, put under lock and key, and later hurried off to Valle Nacional. Children, also, are regularly kidnapped for the Valle Nacional trade. The official records of Mexico City say that during the year ended September 1, 1908, 360 little boys between the ages of 6 and 12 disappeared from the streets. Some of these have later been located in Valle Nacional.

During my first Mexican journey, *El Imparcial*, a leading daily newspaper of Mexico, printed a story of a boy of 7 who had disappeared while his mother was looking into the windows of a pawn-shop. A frantic search failed to locate him; he was an only child, and, as a result of sorrow, the father drank himself to death within a few days, while the mother went insane and also died. Three months later the boy, ragged and foot-sore, struggled up the steps, and knocked at the door that had been his parents'. He had been kidnapped and sold to a tobacco planter. But he had attained the wellnigh impossible. With a boy of 9 he had eluded the plantation guards, and, by reason of their small size, the two had escaped observation, and by stealing a canoe had reached El Hule. By slow stages, begging their food on the way, the baby tramps had reached home.

The typical life story of a labour agent I heard on my way to the Valle Nacional. It was told me first by a negro contractor from New Orleans who had been in the country for about fifteen years. It was told me again by the landlord of my hotel. Later it was con-

firmed by several tobacco planters in the valley. The story is this :

Five years ago —, an unsuccessful Spanish adventurer, arrived penniless in Cordoba. In a few days he was having trouble with his landlord over the non-payment of rent. But he had learned a thing or two in those few days, and he set about to take advantage of his knowledge. He went for a stroll about the streets, and, coming upon a farm labourer, thus addressed him :

“Would you care to earn *dos reales* (25 centavos) very easily, my man ?”

Of course the man cared, and in a few minutes he was on his way to the Spaniard's room carrying a “message.” The wily fellow took another route, arrived first, met the messenger at the door, took him by the neck, and, dragging him inside, gagged and bound him, and left him on the floor while he went out to hunt up a labour agent. That night the adventurer sold his prisoner for 20 dollars, paid his rent, and immediately began laying plans for repeating the operation on a larger scale.

The incident marked the entrance of this man into the business of “labour contracting.” In a few months he had made his bargain with the political powers of Mexico City, of Vera Cruz, of Oaxaca, of Tuxtepec and other places. To-day he is El Señor —. I saw his home, a palatial mansion. He uses a private seal, and is said to be worth a hundred thousand dollars, all acquired as a “labour agent.”

The prevailing price in 1908 for men was 45

dollars each; women and children half-price. In 1907, before the panic, it was 60 dollars per man. All slaves entering the valley must wait over at Tuxtepec, where the *jefe politico* counts them and exacts a toll of 10 per cent. of the purchase price.

The open partnership of the Government in the slave traffic must necessarily have some excuse. The excuse is the debt—the 5 dollars advance fee usually paid by the labour agent to the labourer. It is unconstitutional, but it serves. A *Presidente* told me, “There is not a police official in all southern Mexico who will not recognise that advance fee as a debt, and acknowledge your right to take the body of the labourer where you will.”

When the victim arrives in the valley of tobacco, he learns that the promises of the labour agent were made merely to entrap him. Moreover, he learns also that the contract—if he has been lucky enough to get a peep at that instrument—was made exactly for the same purpose. As the promises of the labour agent belie the provisions of the contract, so the contract belies the actual facts. The contract usually states that the labourer agrees to sell himself for a period of six months, but no labourer with energy left in his body is by any chance set free in six months. The contract usually states that the employer is bound to furnish medical treatment for the labourers; the fact is that there is not a single physician for all the slaves of Valle Nacional. Finally, the contract usually binds the employer to pay the men 50 *centavos* (25 cents American) per day as wages, and the women 3 *pesos* a month

(1 dollar 50 cents American), but I was never able to find one who ever received a copper *centavo* from his master—never anything beyond the advance fee paid by the labour agent.

The bosses themselves boasted to me—several of them—that they never paid any money to their slaves. Yet they never called their system slavery. They claimed to “keep books” on their slaves, and juggle the accounts in such a way as to keep them always in debt. “Yes, the wages are 50 *centavos* a day,” they would say, “but they must pay us back what we give to bring them here. And they must give us interest on it too. And they must pay for the clothing that we give them—and the tobacco, and anything else.”

This is exactly the attitude of the tobacco planters of Valle Nacional. For clothing, and tobacco, and “anything else,” they charge ten prices. It is no exaggeration. The proprietor of one farm, for example, showed me a pair of unbleached cotton pyjama-like things that the slaves use for pantaloons. His price, he said, was 3 dollars a pair. A few days later I found the same thing in Vera Cruz priced at 30 *centavos*.

Trousers at 3 dollars, shirts the same price; suits of clothes so flimsy that they wear out and drop off in three weeks' time. Eight suits in six months at 6 dollars is 48 dollars. Add 45 dollars, the price of the slave, 5 dollars, the advance fee, and 2 dollars for discounts, and there are the 90 dollars wages of the six months gone, and more besides.

Such is keeping books to keep the slave a slave. On the other hand, when you figure up the cost of the

slave to yourself, it is quite different. "Purchase price, food, clothes, wages—everything," I was told, "costs from 60 dollars to 70 dollars per man for the first six months of service."

Add your purchase price, advance fee and suits at cost, 60 *centavos* each, and we discover that between 5 dollars and 15 dollars are left for both food and wages for each six months. It all goes for food—beans and *tortillas*.

Yes, there is another constant item of expense that the masters must pay—the burial fee in the Valle Nacional cemetery. It is 1½ dollars. I say this is a constant item of expense because practically all the slaves die, and are supposed to be buried. The only exception to the rule occurs when, in order to save the fee, the masters bury their slaves themselves, or throw them to the alligators of the neighbouring swamps.

Every slave is guarded night and day. At night he is locked up in a dormitory resembling a jail. In addition to its slaves, each and every plantation has its *mandador*, or superintendent, its *cabos*, who combine the functions of overseer and guard, and several free labourers to run the errands of the ranch and help to round up the runaways in case of a slave stampede.

The jails are large barn-like buildings, constructed strongly of young trees set upright and wired together with many strands of barbed wire fencing. The windows are iron barred, the floors dirt. There is no furniture, except sometimes long, rude benches which serve as beds. The mattresses are thin grass mats. In such a hole sleep all the slaves—men, women and children—

the number ranging, according to the size of the plantation, from 70 to 400.

They are packed in like sardines in a box, crowded together like cattle in a freight car. You can figure it out for yourself. On one ranch which I visited the dormitory measures 75 ft. by 18 ft., and it accommodates 150. On another ranch the dormitory is 40 ft. by 15 ft., and it accommodates 70. On a third the dormitory is 100 ft. by 50 ft., and it accommodates 350. On a fourth the dormitory is 90 ft. by 80 ft., and it accommodates 400. From nine to eighteen square feet for each person to lie down in—so runs the space. And on not a single ranch did I find a separate dormitory for the women or the children. Women of modesty and virtue are sent to Valle Nacional every week, and are shoved into a sleeping-room with scores and even hundreds of other persons—most of them men—the door is locked on them, and they are left to the mercy of the men.

Often honest, hard-working Mexicans are taken into Valle Nacional with their wives and children. If the wife is attractive in appearance she goes to the planter, or to one or more of the bosses. The children see their mother being taken away, and they know what is to become of her. The husband knows it, but if he makes objection he is answered with a club. Time and time again I have been told that this was so, by masters, by slaves, by officials.

One-fifth of the slaves of Valle Nacional are women; one-third are boys under 15. The boys work in the fields with the men. They cost less, they last well, and at some parts of the work, such as planting the tobacco,

holiday every Sunday. I happened to be there on a Sunday afternoon. That half-holiday! What a grim joke! The slaves spent it in jail, locked up to keep them from running away!

And they fall, very fast. They are beaten, and that helps. They are starved, and that helps. They are given no hope, and that helps. They die anywhere from one month to a year, the time of greatest mortality being between the sixth and eighth months. Like the cotton planters of the Southern States before the war, the tobacco planters seem to have their business figured down to a fine point. It was a well-established business maxim of the cotton planters that the greatest amount of profit could be wrung from the body of a negro slave by working him to death in seven years and then buying another. The Valle Nacional slave-holder has discovered that it is cheaper to buy a slave for 45 dollars, and work and starve him to death in seven *months*, and then spend 45 dollars for a fresh slave, than to give the first slave better food, work him less sorely, and stretch out his life and his toiling hours over a longer period of time.

CHAPTER V

In the Valley of Death

I VISITED Valle Nacional in the latter part of 1908, spending a week in the region and stopping at all the larger plantations. I passed three nights at various plantation houses and four more at one or another of the towns. As in Yucatan, I visited the country in the guise of a probable purchaser of plantations. Consequently, I put the authorities and planters as completely off their guard as it would be possible to do, and was able to secure my information, not only from what I saw of and heard from the slaves, but from the mouths of the masters themselves. Indeed, I was more fortunate here than in Yucatan. I chummed with bosses and police so successfully that they never once became suspicious, and for months some of them were doubtless looking for me to drop in any fine day with a few millions in my pocket, prepared to buy them out at double the value of their property !

The nearer we approached Valle Nacional the greater horror of the place we found among the people. None had been there, but all had heard rumours, some had seen survivors, and the sight of those walking corpses had confirmed the rumours. As we got off the



YAQUIS IN A "BULL PEN" ON THE EXILE ROAD

train at Cordoba we saw crossing the platform a procession of fourteen men, two in front and two behind with rifles, ten with their arms bound behind them with ropes, their heads down. Some were ragged, some well dressed, and several had small bundles on their shoulders.

"On their way to the Valley!" I whispered. My companion nodded, and the next moment the procession disappeared through a narrow gateway on the opposite side of the street, the entrance to a most conveniently situated "bull-pen" for the accommodation overnight of the exiles.

After supper I mingled with the crowds in the leading hotels of the town, and was aggressive enough in my rôle of investor to secure letters of introduction from a wealthy Spaniard to several slave-holders of the valley.

"You'd better call on the *jefe politico* at Tuxtepec as soon as you get there," advised the Spaniard. "He's a friend of mine. Just show him my signature and he'll pass you along all right."

When I arrived at Tuxtepec I took the advice of the Señor, and to my good fortune, for the *jefe politico* not only passed me along, but gave me a personal letter to each of his subordinates along the road, the *Presidentes* of Chiltepec, Jacatepec and Valle Nacional, instructing them to neglect their official business, if necessary, to attend to my wants. Thus it was that during some of my days in the Valley of Death I was the guest of a *Presidente*, and on the nights which I spent in the town a special police escort was appointed to see that I came to no harm.

In Cordoba a negro building contractor, an intelligent fellow who had sojourned in Mexico for fifteen years, said to me :

"The days of slavery ain't over yet. No, sir, they ain't over. I've been here a long time and I've got a little property. I know I'm pretty safe, but sometimes I get scared myself—yes, sir, I get scared, you bet!"

Early next morning as I was dressing I glanced out of my window and saw a man walking down the middle of the street, with one end of a *riata* around his neck and a horseman riding behind at the other end of the *riata*.

"Where's that man going?" I inquired of the servant. "Going to be hanged?"

"Oh, no, only going to jail," answered the servant. "It's the easiest way to take them, you know. In a day or two," he added, "that man will be on his way to Valle Nacional. Everybody arrested here goes to Valle Nacional—everybody except the rich."

"I wonder if that same gang we saw last night will be going down on the train to-day," my companion, Le Lara, said, as we made for the depot.

He did not wonder long, for we had hardly found seats when we saw the ten slaves and their *rurale* guards filing into the second-class coach adjoining. Three of the prisoners were well dressed and had unusually intelligent faces; the others were of the ordinary type of city or farm labourers. Two of the former were bright boys under twenty, one of whom burst into tears as the train pulled slowly out of Cordoba toward the dreaded valley.

Down into the tropics we slid, into the jungle, into the dampness and perfume of the lowlands known as the hot country. We flew down a mountain, then skirted the rim of a gash-like gorge, looking down upon coffee plantations, upon groves of bananas, rubber and sugar-cane, then into a land where it rains every day except in mid-winter. It was not hot—not real hot, like Yuma—but the passengers perspired with the sky.

We watched the exiles curiously, and at the first opportunity we made advances to the chief of the *rurale* squad. At Tierra Blanca we stopped for dinner, and, as the meal the *rurales* purchased for their charges consisted only of *tortillas* and chilli, we bought a few extras for them, then sat and watched them eat. Gradually we drew the exiles into conversation, carefully nursing the goodwill of their guards at the same time, and presently we had the story of each.

The prisoners, unlike the vast majority of Valle Nacional slaves, were being sent over the road directly by the *jefe politico* of the district to which they belonged. The particular system of this particular *jefe* was explained to us two days later by a corporal of *rurales* as follows :

“The *jefe politico* has a contract with the owner of a certain tobacco plantation, whereby he agrees to deliver 500 able-bodied labourers a year for 50 *pesos* each. The *jefe* gets special nominal Government rates on the railroads, his guards are paid for by the Government, so the four days’ trip from Pachuca costs him only 3½ *pesos* per man. This leaves him 46½ *pesos*. Out of it he must pay something to his Governor, and

something to the *jefe politico* at —. But even then his profits are very large.

“How does he get his men? He picks them up on the street and puts them in jail. Sometimes he charges them with some crime, real or imaginary, but in either case the man is never tried. He is held in jail until there are enough others to make up a gang, and then all are sent here. Why, men who may be safely sent to Valle Nacional are getting so scarce in that part that the *jefe* has even been known to take young boys out of school and send them here just for the sake of the 50 pesos!”

Of our ten friends, all had been arrested and put in jail, but not one had been taken before a judge. Two had been charged with owing money that they could not pay, one had been arrested when drunk, another had been drunk and had discharged a firearm into the air, the fifth had shouted too loudly on Independence Day, another had attempted a criminal assault, the seventh had had a mild-mannered quarrel with another boy over the sale of a 5 cent ring, two had been musicians in the army and had left one company and joined another without permission, and the tenth had been a clerk of *rurales* and had been sold for paying a friendly visit to the previous two while they were in jail serving out their sentence for desertion.

When we smiled our incredulity at the tale of the tenth prisoner and asked the chief *rurale* point-blank if it was true, he astonished us with his reply. Nodding his grizzled head he said in a low voice :

“It is true. To-morrow may be my time. It is always the poor that suffer.”

We should have looked upon the stories of these men as "fairy tales," but all of them were confirmed by one or the other of the guards. The case of the musicians interested us most. The older carried the forehead of a university professor. He was a cornet player, and his name was Amado Godaniz. The younger was a boy of but 18, the boy who cried, a basso player named Felipe Gomez.

"They are sending us to our death—to our death," muttered Godaniz. "We shall never get out of that hole alive." And all along the route, wherever we met him, he said the same thing, repeating over and over again, "They are sending us to our death—to our death!" And always at the words the soft-faced, cringing boy of 18 at his side would cry silently.

At El Hule, the gateway to the Mexican Hell, we parted from our unfortunate friends for a time. As we left the railroad depot to board our launch in the river, we saw the ten, strung out in single file, one mounted *rurale* in front and one behind, disappear in the jungle toward Tuxtepec. Four hours later, as we approached the district metropolis in the thickening twilight, we saw them again. They had beaten the launch in the journey up the river, had crossed in a canoe, and now stood resting for a moment on a sandy bank, silhouetted against the sky.

Early the following morning found us on the jungle trail. During the forenoon we encountered several other travellers, and we lost no opportunity to question them.

"Run away? Yes, they try to—sometimes," said

one native, a Mexican cattleman. "But too many are against them. The only escape is down river. They must cross many times and they must pass Jacatepec, Chiltepec, Tuxtepec, and El Hule. And they must hide from everyone on the road, for a reward of 10 *pesos* is paid for every runaway captured. We don't love the system, but 10 *pesos* is a lot of money, and no one would let it go by. Besides, if one doesn't get it another will, and even though the runaway should get out of the valley, when he reaches Cordoba he finds the *enganchador* waiting there to send him back."

"One time," another native told us, "I saw a man leaning against a tree beside the trail. As I rode up I spoke to him, but he did not move. His arm was doubled against the tree-trunk and his eyes seemed to be studying the ground. I touched his shoulder and found that he was stiff—dead. He had been turned out to die and had walked so far. How do I know he was not a runaway? Ah, Señor, I knew. You would have known, too, had you seen his swollen feet and the bones of his face—almost bare. No man who looks like that could run away!"

Just at nightfall we rode into Jacatepec, and there we found the slave gang ahead of us. They had started first and had kept ahead, walking the twenty-four miles of muddy trail, though some of them were "soft" from jail confinement. They were sprawled out on a patch of green beside the detention house.

The white linen collar of Amado Godaniz was gone now. The pair of fine shoes, nearly new, which he wore on the train, was on the ground beside him,

heavy with mud and water. His bare feet were small, as white as a woman's and as tender, and both showed bruises and scratches. Since that evening at Jacatepec I have often thought of Amado Godaniz and have wondered—with a shiver—how those tender white feet fared among the tropical flies of Valle Nacional. "They are sending us to our death—to our death!" The news that Amado Godaniz was alive to-day would surprise me. That night he seemed to realise that he would never need those fine shoes again, and before I went to bed I heard him trying to sell them to a passer-by for twenty-five cents.

Wherever we stopped we induced people, by careless questions, to talk about the valley. I wanted to make no mistake. I wanted to hear the opinion of everybody. I did not know what might be denied us farther on. And always the story was the same—slavery, and men and women beaten to death.

We arose at five the next morning and missed our breakfast in order to follow the slave gang over the road to Valle Nacional. At first the chief of the two *rurales*, a clean, handsome young Mexican, looked askance at our presence, but before we were half-way there he was talking pleasantly. He was a Tuxtepec *rurale*, and was making his living out of the system, yet he was against it.

"It's the Spanish who beat our people to death," he said bitterly. "All the tobacco planters are Spanish, all but one or two." X

The *rurale* chief gave us the names of Spanish planters who had become rich on Valle Nacional

tobacco and had sold out and gone back to spend the rest of their days in Spain. After they were gone, said he, the new owner, in looking over the place, ran upon a swamp in which he found hundreds of human skeletons. The toilers whom his predecessors had starved and beaten to death they had been too miserly even to bury.

Nobody ever thought of having a planter arrested for murdering his slaves, the *rurale* told us. To this rule he mentioned two exceptions: one, the case of a foreman who had shot three slaves; the other, a case in which an American figured and in which the American Ambassador took action. In the first case the planter had disapproved the killing because he needed the slaves, so he himself had secured the arrest of the foreman. As to the other case:

"In past years they used to pick up a derelict American once in a while and ship him down here," said my informant, "but the trouble this particular one kicked up has resulted in Americans being barred altogether. This American was sent to a certain plantation where it was the custom to kill a steer every two weeks to provide meat for the family and the foremen; the only meat the slaves ever got was the head and entrails. On Sunday, while helping to butcher a steer, the hunger of the American slave got the better of him, and he seized some of the entrails and ate them raw. The next day he died, and a few weeks later an escaped slave called on the American Ambassador in Mexico City, gave him the name and home address of the American, and told him the man had been beaten to

death. The Ambassador secured the arrest of the planter, and it cost him a lot of money to get out of jail."

Our trip was a very beautiful one, if very rough. At one point we climbed along the precipitous side of a magnificent mountain, allowing our horses to pick their way over the rocks behind us. At another we waited while the slaves took off their clothes, piled them in bundles on their heads, and waded across a creek; then we followed on our horses. At many points I yearned mightily for a camera, yet I knew that if I had it it would get me into trouble.

Picture merely that procession as it wound in single file around the side of a hill, the tropical green above broken now and then by a ridge of gigantic grey rocks, below a level meadow, and a little farther on the curving, feminine lines of that lovely river, the Papaloapan. Picture those ten slaves, six with the regulation high straw hat of the plebeian Mexican, four with felts, all bare-footed now except the boy musician, who is sure to throw away his shoes before the end of the journey; half of them bare-handed, imagining that the masters will furnish them blankets or extra clothing, the other half with small bundles of bright-coloured blankets on their backs; finally, the mounted and uniformed *rurales*, one in front and one behind; and the American travellers at the extreme rear.

Soon we began to see gangs of men, from twenty to a hundred, at work in the fields preparing the ground for the tobacco planting. The men were the colour of the ground, and it struck me as strange that they moved

incessantly while the ground was still. Here and there among the moving shapes stood others—these seemed different; they really looked like men—with long, lithe canes in their hands and sometimes swords and pistols in their belts. We knew then that we had reached Valle Nacional.

At the first farm at which we stopped, crouching beside the porch of the main building was a sick slave. One foot was swollen to twice its natural size, and a dirty bandage was wrapped clumsily about it. "What's the matter with your foot?" I asked. "Blood poisoning from insect bites," replied the slave. "He'll have maggots in another day or two," a boss told us with a grin.

As we rode away we caught our first glimpse of a Valle Nacional slave-house, a mere jail with barred windows, a group of women bending over *metates*, and a guard at the door with a key.

I have said that our *rurale* corporal was opposed to the system, yet how perfectly he was a part of it he soon showed. Rounding a bluff suddenly, we caught sight of a man crouching half hidden behind a tree. Our *rurale* called him and he came, trembling, and trying to hide the green oranges that he had been eating. The ensuing conversation went something like this:

Rurale: Where are you going?

Man: To Oaxaca.

Rurale: Where are you from?

Man: From the port of Manzanillo.

Rurale: You've come a hundred miles out of your way. Nobody ever comes this way who doesn't have

business here. What farm did you run away from, anyhow?

Man: I didn't run away.

Rurale: Well, you fall in here.

So we took the man along. Later it was ascertained that he had run away from San Juan del Rio. The *rurale* got the 10 *pesos* reward.

At a certain plantation we left the slave gang behind, first having the temerity to shake the hands of the two musicians, whom we never saw again. Alone on the road, we found that the attitude of those we met was widely different from what it had been when we were travelling in the company of the *rurales*, the agents of the State. The Spanish horsemen whom we encountered did not deign to speak to us; they stared at us suspiciously through half-closed eyes, and one or two even spoke offensively of us in our hearing. Had it not been for the letter to the *Presidente* in my pocket it would doubtless have been a difficult matter to secure admission to the tobacco plantations of Valle Nacional.

Everywhere we saw the same thing—gangs of emaciated men and boys at work clearing the ground with *machetes* or ploughing the broad fields with oxen. And everywhere we saw guards, armed with long canes, and some of them with swords and pistols. Just before we crossed the river for the last time to ride into the town of Valle Nacional we spoke to an old man with a stump of a wrist who was working alone near the fence.

"How did you lose your hand?" I asked.

"A *cabo* [foreman] cut it off with a sword," was the reply.

One of our hosts in the Valle Nacional proved to be a very amiable fellow, and I almost liked him—until I saw his slaves. His secretary was even more amiable, and we four sat for two hours over our late dinner, thoroughly enjoying ourselves—and talking about the country. During the entire meal a little half-negro boy, of perhaps eight years, stood silent behind the door, emerging only when his master, needing to be waited upon, called "Negro!" He was bought cheaply, we were told—for 25 *pesos*.

Because of its great beauty Valle Nacional was originally called "Royal Valley" by the Spaniards, but after the Independence of Mexico it was rechristened Valle Nacional. Thirty-five years ago the land belonged to the Chinanteco Indians, a peaceful tribe, among whom it was divided by President Juarez. When President Diaz came into power he failed to make provision for the Chinantecos against scheming Spaniards, so in a few years the Indians had drunk a few bottles of *mescal* and the Spaniards had gobbled up every foot of their land. The Valle Nacional Indians now secure their food from rented patches high up on the mountain sides, which are unfit for tobacco cultivation.

Though the planters raise corn and beans, and sometimes bananas or other tropical fruits, tobacco is the only considerable product of the valley. The plantations are usually large, there being only about thirty in the entire district.

After dinner we went for a stroll about town, with a policeman for bodyguard. We proceeded to question him.

"All the slaves are kept until they die—all," said our guard. "And when they are dead the bosses do not always take the trouble to bury them. They throw them into the swamps, where the alligators eat them. On some plantations an expression has arisen among the slaves: 'Throw me to The Hungry!' There is a terrible fear among those slaves that when they fall ill they will be thrown to 'The Hungry' before they are dead and while they are yet conscious, as this has been done!"

Slaves who are worn out and good for nothing more, declared the policeman, and yet who are strong enough to cry out against being thrown to "The Hungry," are turned out on the road without a cent, and in their rags many of them crawl to the town to die. The Indians give them some food, and on the edge of the town there is an old house in which the miserable creatures are permitted to pass their last hours. This place is known as "The House of Pity." We visited it with the policeman, and found an old woman lying on her face on the bare floor. She did not move when we came in, nor when we spoke to each other and finally to her, and for some time we were not sure that she was alive. At last she groaned feebly. It can be imagined how we felt, but we could do nothing, so we tiptoed to the door and hurried away.

"You will find this a healthy country," an official told us a little later in the evening. "Don't you notice

how fat we all are? The labourers of the plantations? Ah, yes, they die—die of malaria and consumption—but it is only because they are underfed. *Tortillas* and beans—sour beans at that, usually—is all they get, and besides, they are beaten too much. Yes, they die, but nobody else here has any sickness.”

Notwithstanding the accounts of the policeman, the secretary of our host assured us that most of the dead slaves were buried. The burying is done in the town, and it costs the bosses a *peso* and a half for each burial. By charity the town puts a little bamboo cross over each grave. We strolled out in the moonlight and took a look at the graveyard. And we gasped at the acres and acres of crosses! Yes, the planters bury their dead. One would guess by those crosses that this was not a village of one thousand souls, but a city of one hundred thousand.

On our way to our beds in the house of our host we hesitated at the sound of a weak voice hailing us. A fit of heartbreaking coughing followed, and then we saw a human skeleton squatting beside the path. He wanted a penny. We gave him several, then questioned him and learned that he was one who had come to die in “The House of Pity.” It was cruel to make him talk, but we did it, and in his ghastly whispering voice he managed to piece out his story between paroxysms of coughing.

His name was Angelo Echavarria, he was 20 years old and a native of Tampico. Six months previously he had been offered wages on a farm at two *pesos* a day, and had accepted, but only to be sold as a slave to

the proprietor of a certain plantation. At the end of three months he began to break down under the inhuman treatment he received, and at four months a foreman broke a sword over his back. When he regained consciousness after the beating he had coughed up a part of a lung. After that he was beaten more frequently because he was unable to work as well, and several times he fell in a faint in the field. At last he was set free, but when he asked for the wages that he thought were his, he was told that he was in debt to the ranch! He came to the town and complained to the *Presidente*, but was given no satisfaction. Now, too weak to start to walk home, he was coughing his life away and begging for subsistence. In all my life I have never seen a living creature so emaciated as Angelo Echavarria, yet only three days previously he had been working all day in the hot sun!

We visited the plantation on which he had worked, as well as half a dozen others. We found the system of housing, feeding, working, and guarding the slaves alike on all.

The main dormitory consisted of one windowless, dirt-floor room, built of upright poles set in the ground an inch apart and held firmly together by strands of barbed wire fencing. It was as impregnable as an American jail. The beds consisted of a single grass mat each laid cross-wise on a wooden bench. There were four benches, two on each side, one above another, running lengthwise of the room. The beds were laid so close together that they touched. The dimensions of the room were 75 ft. by 18 ft., and in these cramped

quarters 150 men, women and children slept every night. The Valle Nacional tobacco planters have not the decency of slave-holders of fifty years ago, for on not one of the plantations did I find a separate dormitory for the women. And I was repeatedly told that the women who enter that foul hole all become common to the men, not because they wish to become so, but because the overseers do not protect them from unwelcome advances.

On the ranch which I am more particularly describing the *mandador*, or superintendent, sleeps in a room at one end of the slave dormitory, and the *cabos*, or overseers, in a room at the other end. The single door is padlocked, but a watchman paces all night up and down the passage-way between the rows of shelves. Every half-hour he strikes a clamorous gong. In answer to a question I was assured that the gong did not disturb the sleeping slaves, but even if it did, the rule was necessary to prevent the watchman from going to sleep and permitting a jail-break.

Observing the field gangs at close range, I was astonished to see so many children among the labourers. At least half were under 20, and at least one-fourth under 14.

"The boys are just as good in the planting as the men," remarked the proprietor, who escorted us about. "They last longer, too, and they cost only half as much. Yes, all the planters prefer boys to men."

During my ride through fields and along the roads that day I often wondered why some of those bloodless, toiling creatures did not cry out to us and say: "Help

us! For God's sake help us! We are being murdered!" Then I remembered that all men who pass this way are like their own bosses, and in answer to a cry they could expect nothing better than a mocking laugh, and perhaps a blow besides.

The next night we spent on another of these tobacco plantations. As we approached the place we lagged behind the proprietor to observe a gang of 150 men and boys planting tobacco on the adjoining farm. There were half a dozen overseers among them, and as we came near we saw them jumping here and there among the slaves, yelling, cursing, and striking this way and that with their long, lithe canes. Whack! Whack! went the sticks on backs, shoulders, legs and even heads. The slaves weren't being beaten. They were only being urged a little, possibly for our benefit.

We stopped, and the head foreman, a big black Spaniard, stepped over to the fence and greeted us.

"Do they ever fight back?" he repeated at my question. "Not if they're wise. They can get all the fight they want from me. The men that fight me don't come to work next day. Yes, they need the stick. Better to kill a lazy man than to feed him. Run away? Sometimes the new ones try it, but we soon tame it out of them. And when we get 'em tamed we keep 'em here. There never was one of these dogs who got out of here but went telling lies about us."

Should I live a thousand years I shall never forget the faces of dull despair I saw everywhere; and I shall never forget this particular night spent on a Valle Nacional farm. It is one of the smallest farms in the valley.

The dormitory is only 40 ft. by 15 ft., and it accommodates 70 men and women nightly. Inside there are no benches—nothing but the bare ground and a thin grass mat for each sleeper. In it we found an old woman lying sick and shivering alone. Later that night we saw it crammed full of the miserables shivering with the cold, for the wind was blowing a hurricane and the rain was coming down in torrents. In a few hours the temperature must have dropped 40 degrees.

One-third of the labourers here were women, one of them a girl of twelve. That night the buildings rocked so fearfully that the horses were taken out of the barn. But, though a building was blown down a few weeks previously, the slaves were not taken out of their jail. Their jail was built just off the dining-room of the dwelling, and that night my companion and I slept in the dining-room. I heard the jail door open and shut for a late worker to enter, and then I heard the voice of the twelve-year-old girl pleading in terror: "Please don't lock the door to-night—only to-night! Please leave it so we can be saved if the house falls!" The answer that I heard was only a brutal laugh.

When I went to bed that night at 9.30 a gang of slaves was still working about the barn. When I awoke at four the slaves were receiving their beans and *tortillas* in the slave kitchen. When I went to bed two of the kitchen drudges were hard at work. Through the chinks in the poles which divided the two rooms I watched them, for I could not sleep. At eleven o'clock by my watch one disappeared. It was 12.5 before the other was gone, but in less than four hours

more I saw her again, working, working, working, working!

Yet perhaps she fared better than did the grinders of corn and the drawers of water, for when, with the son of the proprietor, I visited the slave kitchen at five and remarked on the exhausted faces of the women there, he informed me that rising hour was two o'clock, and that they never had time to rest during the day!

Oh, it was awful! This boy of 16, manager of the farm in his father's absence, told me with much gusto how fiercely the women sometimes fought against the assaults of the men, and how he had at times enjoyed peering through a crack and watching those tragic encounters of the night! All night we were disturbed—mostly by the hacking, tearing coughs that came to us through the chinks, sometimes by heart-breaking sobs.

De Lara and I did not speak about these things until the morning, when I remarked upon his haggard face.

"I heard the sobs and the coughs and the groans," said De Lara. "I heard the women cry, and I cried too—three times I cried. I do not know how I can ever laugh and be happy again!"

While we waited for breakfast the proprietor told us many things about the slavery, and showed us a number of knives and files which had been taken from the slaves at various times. Like penitentiary convicts, the slaves had somehow got possession of the tools in the hope of cutting a way out of their prison at night and escaping the sentries.

The proprietor told us frankly that the authorities of Mexico City, of Vera Cruz, of Oaxaca, of Pachuca x

and of Jalapa regularly engage in the slave traffic, usually in combination with one or more "labour agents." He especially named a certain official who has been mentioned in the newspapers as a guest of President Roosevelt. This man, he said, regularly employed his city detective force as a drag-net for slaves. He arrested all sorts of people on all sorts of pretexts merely for the sake of the 45 *pesos* apiece that they would bring from the tobacco planters.

Our conversation that morning was interrupted by a Spanish foreman who rode up and had a talk with the proprietor. They spoke in low tones, but we caught most of what they said. The foreman had killed a woman the previous day and had come to make his peace about it. After a consultation of ten minutes the proprietor shook the hand of his visitor, and we heard him tell the murderer to go home and attend to his business and think no more about the matter.

On the Sunday we spent the entire day in the company of probably the most remarkable human monster in Valle Nacional. W— (I use fictitious initials in this book) oversees the business of a number of large plantations. He calls his slaves "*los tigres*" (the tigers), and he took the greatest of pleasure in showing us the "dens of the tigers," as well as in explaining his entire system of purchase, punishment and burial.

This man estimated that the annual immigration of slaves to Valle Nacional is 15,000, and he assured me that if the planters killed every last one of them the authorities would not interfere.

X “Why should they?” he asked. “Don’t we support them?”

Like many of the other planters, W—— raised tobacco in Cuba before he came to Valle Nacional, and he declared that on account of the slave system in the latter place the same quality of tobacco was raised in Valle Nacional for half the price that it cost to raise it in Cuba. It was not practicable, said he, to keep the slaves more than seven or eight months, as they become “all dried out.” He explained the various methods of whipping, the informal slugging in the field with a cane of *bejuco* wood, and the lining-up of the gangs in the administration of “a few stripes to the lazy ones as medicine for the day.”

“But after a while,” declared W——, “even the cane doesn’t do any good. There comes a time when they just can’t work any longer.”

An agent of the Government, he said, had three months before tried to sell him 500 Yaquis for 20,000 *pesos*, but he had rejected the offer, as, though the Yaquis last like iron, they *will* persist in taking long chances in a break for liberty.

“I bought a bunch of Yaquis several years ago,” he said, “but most of them got away after a few months. No, Yucatan is the only place for the Yaquis.”

We found two Yaquis, however, on one of the farms. They said they had been there for two years and were the only ones left of an original lot of 200. One had been out of commission for a few days, one of his feet being half gone—eaten off by insects.

“I expect I’ll have to kill that tiger,” said W——,

in the man's hearing. "He'll never be worth anything to me any more."

The second Yaqui we found in the field working with a gang. I stepped up to him and felt his arms. They were still muscular. He was really a magnificent specimen, and reminded me of the story of Ben Hur. As I inspected him he stood erect, staring straight ahead but trembling slightly in every limb. The mere attitude of that Yaqui was to me the most conclusive evidence of the shocking brutality of the system under which he was enslaved.

On this farm a foreman let us inspect his long, lithe cane, the beating cane, the cane of *bejuco* wood. It bent like a rawhide buggy whip, but it would not break.

"The *bejuco* tree grows on the mountain side," explained the foreman. "See! The wood is like leather. With this cane I can beat twenty men to death and yet it will be good for twenty more!"

In the slave kitchen of the same ranch we found two girls of 17, both with refined and really beautiful faces, grinding corn. Though their boss, W—, stood menacingly by, each dared to tell her story briefly. One, from Leon, State of Guanajuato, declared that the "labour agent" had promised her 50 *pesos* per month and a good home as cook in a small family, and when she discovered that all was not right it was too late; the *rurales* compelled her to come along. The other girl was from San Luis Potosi. She had been promised a good home and 40 *pesos* a month for taking care of two small children!

Wherever we went we found the houses full of fine furniture made by the slaves.

"Yes," explained W——, "some of the best artisans in the country come right here—in one way or another. We get carpenters and cabinet-makers and upholsterers and everything. Why, on my ranches I've had teachers and actresses and artists, and one time I even had an ex-priest. I had one of the most beautiful actresses in the country one time, right here. She was noted, too. How did she get here? Simple enough. A son of a millionaire in Mexico City wanted to marry her, and, to get her out of the way, the millionaire paid the authorities a good price to kidnap her and give her to a labour agent. Yes, sir, that woman was a beauty!"

"And what became of her?" I asked.

"Oh," was the evasive reply. "*That was two years ago!*"

Truly, two years is a long time in Valle Nacional, longer than a lifetime usually. The story of the actress reminded me of a story told me by a newly-married runaway Mexican couple in Los Angeles just before I started on my trip. The young husband was a member of the middle class of Mexico City, and his wife was the daughter of a millionaire. Because the boy was considered to be "below" the girl, the girl's father went to extremes in his efforts to prevent the marriage.

"George went through many dangers for me," is the way the young bride told the story. "One time my father tried to shoot him, and another time my father offered the authorities 5,000 *pesos* to kidnap him and

send him to Valle Nacional. But I warned George, and he was able to save himself."

W—— also told of eleven girls who had come to him in a single shipment from Oaxaca.

"They were at a public dance," said he. "Some men got into a fight and the police jailed everybody in the hall. Those girls didn't have anything to do with the trouble, but the *jefe politico* needed the money and so he sent them all here."

"Well," I asked, "what sort of women were they? Public women?"

He shot me a glance full of meaning.

"No, Señor!" he said, with contempt in his voice; "do you suppose that I need to have *that* kind of women sent in here to *me*?"

The close attendance of owners and superintendents, as well as the ubiquity of overseers, prevented us from obtaining many long interviews with the slaves. One day, returning from a long day's visit to numerous plantations, we hailed a ploughman working near the road. The nearest overseer happened to be half-way across the field, and the slave, at our inquiry, willingly pointed out the sloughs of the alligators and confirmed the story of dying men being thrown to "The Hungry."

"I have been here for six years, and I believe I hold the record for the valley," he told us. "Other strong men come and turn to skeletons in a single season, but it seems that I cannot die. They come and fall, and come and fall, yet I stay on and live. But you ought to have seen me when I came! I was a *man* then—a man!

I had shoulders and arms—I was a giant then. But now——”

Tears gathered in the fellow's eyes and rolled down his cheeks, but he went on :

“I was a carpenter, and a good one, six years ago. I lived with my brother and sister in Mexico City. My brother was a student—he was only in his teens—my sister tended the little house that I paid for out of my wages. We were not poor—no. We were happy. Then work in my trade fell slack, and one evening I met a friend who told me of employment to be had in the State of Vera Cruz at three *pesos* a day—a long job. I jumped at the chance and we came together, came here—here! I told my brother and sister that I would send them money regularly, and when I learned that I could send them nothing and wrote to let them know, they would not let me send the letter. For months I kept that letter, watching, waiting, trying to get an opportunity to speak to the carrier as he rode along the highway. At last I saw him, but when I handed him the letter, he only laughed in my face and handed it back. Nobody is allowed to send a letter out of here.

“Escape?” went on the ploughman. “Yes, I tried it many times. Once, only eight months ago, I got as far as Tuxtepec. I was writing a letter. I wanted to get word to my people, but they caught me before the letter was finished. They don't know where I am. They must think I am dead. My brother must have had to leave school. My——”

“Better stop,” I said. “A *cavo* is coming!”

“No, not yet,” he answered. “Quick! I will give

you their address. Tell them that I never read the contract. Tell them that I never saw it until I came here. My brother's name is Juan——”

“Look out!” I cried, but too late. “Whack!” The long cane struck the ploughman across the back. He winced, started to open his mouth again, but at a second whack he changed his mind and turned sullenly to his oxen.

The rains of our last two days in Valle Nacional made the trail to Tuxtepec impassable, so we left our horses and travelled down river in a *balsa*, a raft of logs on which was erected a tiny shelter house roofed with banana leaves. Two Indians, one at each end, poled and paddled the strange craft down the rushing stream, and from them we learned that the Indians themselves have had their day as slaves in Valle Nacional. The Spaniards tried to enslave them, but they fought to the death. They employed their tribal solidarity and fought in droves like wolves, and in that way they regained and kept their freedom. Such a common understanding and such mass movements cannot, of course, be developed by the heterogeneous elements that to-day are brought together on the slave plantations.

At Tuxtepec, on our way back, we met Señor V——, a well-known “labour agent,” with connections in high places. Señor V——, dressed like a prince, made himself agreeable and answered our questions freely because he hoped to secure the contract for furnishing slaves for my company.

“You can't help but make money in Valle Nacional,” said he. “They all do. Why, after every harvest

there's an exodus of planters to Mexico City, where some of them stay for months, spending their money in the most riotous living ! ”

Señor V—— offered to furnish me with any number of labourers up to 40,000 a year, men, women and children, and his price was 50 *pesos* each. Children workers, he explained, last better than adults, and I advise you to use them in preference to others. *I can supply you with a thousand children a month under 14 years of age, and I am prepared to secure their legal adoption as sons and daughters of the company, so that they can be legally kept until they reach the age of 22 ! ”*

“But,” I gasped, “how is my company going to adopt 12,000 children a year as sons and daughters? Do you mean to tell me that the Government would permit such a thing? ”

“Leave that to me,” replied Señor V—— significantly. “I'm doing it every day. You don't pay your 50 *pesos* until you get the children, and the adoption papers too ! ”

CHAPTER VI

The Country Peons and the City Poor

I TRUST that what I have written of Yucatan and Valle Nacional bears so clearly the stamp of truth that the ordinary reader will accept the story as it stands. But since denials of my statements have been widely circulated, I respectfully refer the reader to Chapter XI., entitled Critics and Corroboration, which I feel sure will dispel any doubts that may exist in the minds of unbiassed persons.

In some quarters this slavery has been admitted, but the guilt of the Government has been denied. But it is absurd to suppose that the Government could be kept in ignorance of a situation in which one-third of the population of a great State are held as peons and chattels. Moreover, it is well known that hundreds of State and national officials are constantly engaged in rounding up, transporting, selling, guarding and hunting slaves. As I previously pointed out, every gang of *enganchados* leaving Mexico City or any other city for Valle Nacional or any other slave district is guarded by Government *rurales*, or country guards, in uniform. These *rurales* do not act on their own initiative; they are as completely under orders as are the soldiers of the regular army.



Photo : C. B. Waite

ON A CHIAPAS RUBBER PLANTATION

Without the coercion of their guns and their authority the *enganchados* would refuse to travel a mile of the journey. A moment's thought is sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind that without the partnership of the Government the whole system of slavery would be an impossibility.

Slavery similar to that of Yucatan and Valle Nacional is to be found in nearly every State of Mexico, but especially in the coast States south of the great plateau. The labour on the henequen plantations of Campeche, in the lumber and fruit industries of Chiapas and Tabasco, on the rubber, coffee, sugar-cane, tobacco and fruit plantations of Vera Cruz, Oaxaca and Morelos, is all done by slaves. In at least ten of the thirty-two States and Territories of Mexico there is an overwhelming proportion of slave labour.

While the minor conditions vary somewhat in different places, the general system is everywhere the same—service against the will of the labourer, no pay, semi-starvation, and the whip. Into this arrangement of things are impressed not only the natives of the various slave States, but others—100,000 others every year, to speak in round numbers—who, either enticed by the false promises of labour agents, kidnapped by labour agents, or shipped by political authorities in partnership with labour agents, leave their homes in other parts of the country to journey to their death in the hot lands.

Debt and contract slavery are the prevailing system of production all over the south of Mexico. Probably three-quarters of a million souls may properly be classed

as human chattels. In all the rest of Mexico a system of peonage, differing from slavery principally in degree, and similar in many respects to the serfdom of Europe in the Middle Ages, prevails in the rural districts. Under this system the labourer is compelled to give service to the farmer, or *hacendado*, to accept what he wishes to pay, and even to receive such beatings as he cares to deliver. Debt, real or imaginary, is the nexus that binds the peon to his master. Debts are handed from father to son and on down through the generations. Though the Constitution does not recognise the right of the creditor to take and hold the body of the debtor, the rural authorities everywhere recognise such a right, and the result is that probably 5,000,000 people, or one-third the entire population, are to-day living in a state of helpless peonage.

Farm peons are often credited with receiving wages, which nominally range from 12½ cents to 25 cents a day American money—seldom higher. Often they never receive a cent of this, but are paid only in credit cheques at the *hacienda* store, at which they are compelled to trade in spite of the exorbitant prices. As a result, their food consists solely of corn and beans, they live in hovels often made of no more substantial material than corn-stalks, and they wear their pitiful clothing, not merely until the garments are all rags and patches and ready to drop off, but until they actually do attain the vanishing stage.

Probably not fewer than 80 per cent. of all the farm and plantation labourers in Mexico are either slaves or are bound to the land as peons. The other 20 per cent.



Photo : Cex

CUTTING SUGAR CANE

are denominated free labourers and live a precarious existence trying to dodge the net of those who would drag them down. I remember particularly a family of such whom I met in the State of Chihuahua. They were typical, though my memory of them is most vivid because I saw them on the first night I ever spent in Mexico. It was in a second-class car on the Mexican Central, travelling south.

They were six, that family, and of three generations. From the callow, raven-haired boy to the white-chinned grandfather, all six seemed to have had the last ray of mirth ground out of their systems. We were a lively crowd sitting there near them—four were happy Mexicans returning home for a vacation after a season at wage labour in the United States. We sang a little, and we made some music on a violin and a harmonica. But not one of that family of six behind us ever smiled or showed the slightest interest. They reminded me of a herd of cattle standing in a blizzard, their heads between their front legs, their backs to the storm.

The face of the old patriarch told a story of burdens and of a patient, ox-like bearing of them such as no words could possibly suggest. He had a ragged, grizzled beard and moustache, but his head was still covered with dark-brown hair. He was probably 70, but was evidently still an active worker. His clothing consisted of American jumper and overalls of ordinary denim, washed and patched and washed and patched—a one-dollar suit patched until it was nothing but patches.

Beside the patriarch sat the old lady, his wife, with

head bowed and a facial expression so like that of her husband that it might have been a copy by a great painter. Yes, the expression differed in one detail. The old woman's upper lip was compressed tight against her teeth, giving her an effect of perpetually biting her lip to keep back the tears. Perhaps her original stock of courage had not been equal to that of the man, and it had been necessary to fortify it by an everlasting compression of the mouth.

Then there was a young couple half the age of the two. The man sat with head nodding and granulated lids blinking slowly, now and then turning about to stare with far-distant interest upon the merry-makers around him. His wife, a flat-breasted, drooping woman, sat always in one position, with her head bent forward and her right hand fingering her face about the bridge of the nose.

Finally, there were two boys, one of 18, second son of the old man, and one of 16, son of the second couple. In all that night's journey the only smile I saw from any of the six was a smile of the youngest boy. A passing newsagent offered the boy a book for 75 *centavos*. With slightly widening eyes of momentary interest the boy looked upon the gaily decorated paper cover, then turned toward his uncle and smiled a half-startled smile. To think that anyone might imagine that *he* could afford to purchase one of those magical things, a book!

"We are from Chihuahua," the old man told us, when we had gained his confidence. "We work in the fields—all of us. All our lives we have been farm



Photo: C. B. Waite

labourers in the corn and the beans and the melons of Chihuahua. But now we are running away from it. If the bosses would pay us the money they agree to pay, we could get along, but they never pay all—never. This time the boss paid us only two-thirds the agreed price, yet I am very thankful for that much, for he might have given us only one-third, as others have done in the past. What can I do? Nothing. I cannot hire a lawyer, for the lawyer would steal the other two-thirds, and the boss would put me in jail besides. Many times I and my sons have gone to jail for asking the boss to pay us the full amount of our agreement. My sons become angry more and more, and sometimes I fear one may strike the boss or kill him. That would be the end of us.

“No, the best thing to do, I decided at last, was to get away. So we put our wages together and used our last dollar to pay for tickets to Torreon, where we hope to find work in the cotton fields. I hear we can get one *peso* a day in busy times. Is it so? Or will it be the same story over again there? Perhaps it will. But what else can I do but try? Work! work! work! That’s all there is for us—and nothing in return for the work! We do not drink; we are not lazy; every day we pray to God. Yet debt is always following us, begging to be taken in. Many times I have wanted to borrow just a little from my boss, but my wife has always pleaded with me. ‘No,’ she would say, ‘better die than to owe, for owing once means owing for ever—and slavery.’

“But sometimes,” continued the old man, “I think

it might be better to owe, better to fall in debt, better to give up our liberty than to go on like this to the end. True, I am getting old, and I would love to die free, but it is hard—too hard! ”

The three-quarters of a million of chattel slaves and the five million peons do not monopolise the economic misery of Mexico. It extends to every class of men that toil. There are 150,000 mine and smelter workers who receive less money for a week's labour than an American miner of the same class gets for a day's wages. There are 30,000 cotton-mill operatives whose wages average less than 30 cents a day in American money. The common policemen of Mexico City, 2,000 of them, are paid but 50 cents a day in American currency. Fifty cents a day is a high average for street-car conductors in the metropolis, where wages are higher than in any other section of the country except close to the American border. And this proportion is constant throughout the industries. An offer of 50 cents a day without "found" would, beyond the slightest doubt, bring into Mexico City an army of 50,000 able-bodied labourers inside of twenty-four hours.

From such miserable wages it must not be guessed that the necessaries of life cost little, as in the case of other low-wage countries, such as India and China. On the contrary, the cost of corn and beans, upon which the mass of the Mexican people eke out their existence, is actually higher, as a rule, than it is in the United States. At the time of writing it costs nearly twice as much to buy 100 lbs. of corn in Mexico City as it does in



A STUDY IN DESPAIR

Chicago, and that in the same money, American gold or Mexican silver. And this is the cheapest staple that the poverty-stricken Mexican is able to lay his hands upon.

As to clothing and shelter, the common Mexican has about as little of either as can be imagined. The tenements of New York City are palatial homes compared with the tenements of Mexico City. A quarter of a mile in almost any direction from Diaz's grand Paseo de la Reforma, the magnificent carriageway over which tourists are always taken and by which they usually judge Mexico, will carry the investigator into conditions that are not seen in any city worthy to be called civilised. If in all Mexico there exists a city with a really modern sewer system I am ignorant of its name..^x

Travellers who have stopped at the best hotels in the metropolis may raise their eyebrows at this last statement, but a little investigation will show that not more than one-fifth of the houses within the limits of that metropolis are regularly supplied with water with which to flush the sewers, while there are many densely populated blocks which have no public water whatsoever, either for sewer flushing or for drinking.

It will take a few minutes' reflection to realise what this really means. As a result of such insanitary conditions the death-rate in that city ranges always between 50 and 60 per thousand, usually nearer the latter figure, which places the percentage at more than double the death-rate of well-regulated cities of Europe, the United States, or even of South America. Which proves that half the people who die in this

metropolis die of causes which modern cities have abolished.

A life-long resident once estimated to me that 200,000 people of the country's metropolis, or two-fifths the entire population, spend every night on the stones. "On the stones" means not on the streets, for sleeping is not permitted on the streets or in the parks, but on the floors of cheap tenements or lodging-houses.

Possibly this is an exaggeration. From my own observations, however, I know that 100,000 would be a very moderate estimate. And at least 25,000 pass the nights in *mesones* of the poor—transient lodging-houses of the cheapest class.

A *meson* of the poor is a pit of such misery as is surpassed only by the *galeras*, the sleeping jails, of the contract slaves of the hot lands—and the dormitories of the Mexican prisons. The chief difference between the *mesones* and the *galeras* is that into the latter the slaves are driven, tottering from overwork, semi-starvation and fever—driven with whips and locked in when they are there; while in the *mesones* the ragged, ill-nourished wretches from the city's streets come to buy with three precious copper *centavos* a brief and scanty shelter—a bare spot to lie down in, a grass mat, company with the vermin which squalor breeds, rest in a sickening room with hundreds of others—snoring, tossing, groaning brothers and sisters in woe.

During my most recent visit to Mexico I visited many of these *mesones* and took a number of flashlight photos of the inmates. The conditions in all I found to be the same. The buildings are ancient ones—often



IN A COMMON LODGING-HOUSE IN MEXICO CITY

hundreds of years old—which have been abandoned as unfit for any other use than that of sleeping places for the country's poor. For 3 *centavos* the pilgrim gets a grass mat and the privilege of hunting for a bare spot large enough to lie down on. On cold nights the floor and yards are so thick with bodies that it is very difficult to find footing between the sleepers. In one room I have counted as many as two hundred.

Poor women and girls must sleep, as well as poor men and boys, and if they cannot afford more than 3 *centavos* for a bed they must go to the *mesones* with the men. In not one of the *mesones* that I visited was there a separate room for the women and girls, though there were many women and girls among the inmates. Like a man, a girl pays her 3 *centavos* and gets a grass mat. She may come early and find a comparatively secluded nook in which to rest her weary body. But there is nothing to prevent a man from coming along, lying down beside her and annoying her.

And this thing is done. More than once, in my visits to *mesones*, I saw a young and unprotected girl wakened from her sleep and solicited by a strange man whose roving eye had lighted upon her as he came into the place. The *mesones* breed immorality as appallingly as they breed vermin. Homeless girls do not go to *mesones* because they are bad, but because they are poor. These places are licensed by the authorities, and it would be a simple matter to require the proprietors to set apart a portion of the space exclusively for women. But this the authorities have not the decency to do.

Miserable as are the *mesones*, the 25,000 homeless

Mexicans who spend their nights there are fortunate compared to the thousands of others who, when the shadows fall upon them, find that they cannot produce the 3 *centavos* to pay for a grass mat and a spot on a bare floor. Every night there is a hegira of these thousands from the city's streets. Carrying what pitiful belongings they have, if they have any belongings; moving along hand in hand, if they are a family together, husband and wife, or merely friends drawn closer together by their poverty, they travel for miles, out of the city to the open roads and fields, the great stock farms belonging to men high up in the councils of the Government. Here they huddle about on the ground, shivering in the cold, for few nights in that altitude are not so cold that covering is not sorely needed. In the morning they travel back to the heart of the city, there to pit their feeble strength against the powers that are conspiring to prevent them from earning a living; there, after vain and discouraging struggles, at last to fall into the net of the "labour agent," who is on the look out for slaves for his wealthy clients, the planters of the lowland states.

Mexico contains 767,000 square miles. Acre for acre it is as rich as, if not richer than, the United States. It has fine harbours on both coasts. It is approximately as near the world's markets as is the United States. There is no natural or geographical reason why its people should not be as prosperous and happy as any in the world. In point of years it is an older country. It is not over-peopled. With a population of 15,000,000, it has eighteen souls to the square mile, which is slightly



ANOTHER COMMON LODGING-HOUSE SCENE

less than the average in the States. Yet, seeing the heart of Mexico, it is inconceivable that there could be more extreme poverty in all the world. India or China could not be worse off, for if they were, acute starvation would depopulate them. Mexico is a people starved—a nation prostrate. What is the reason? Who is to blame? ✓

CHAPTER VII

The Diaz System

THE slavery and peonage of Mexico, the poverty and illiteracy, the general prostration of the people, are due, in my humble judgment, to the Government that at present rules that country—in a word, to the autocracy of Porfirio Diaz.

That these conditions can be traced in a measure to the history of Mexico during past generations is true. I do not wish to be unfair to General Diaz in the least degree. The Spanish dons made slaves and peons of the Mexican people. Yet never did they grind the people as they are ground to-day. In Spanish times the peon at least had his own little patch of ground, his own humble shelter; to-day he has nothing. Moreover, the Declaration of Independence, proclaimed one hundred years ago, in 1810, proclaimed also the abolition of chattel slavery. Slavery was abolished, though not entirely. Succeeding Mexican Governments of class and of Church and of the individual held the people in bondage little less severe. But finally came a democratic movement which broke the back of the Church, which overthrew the rule of caste, which adopted a form of government as modern as that of

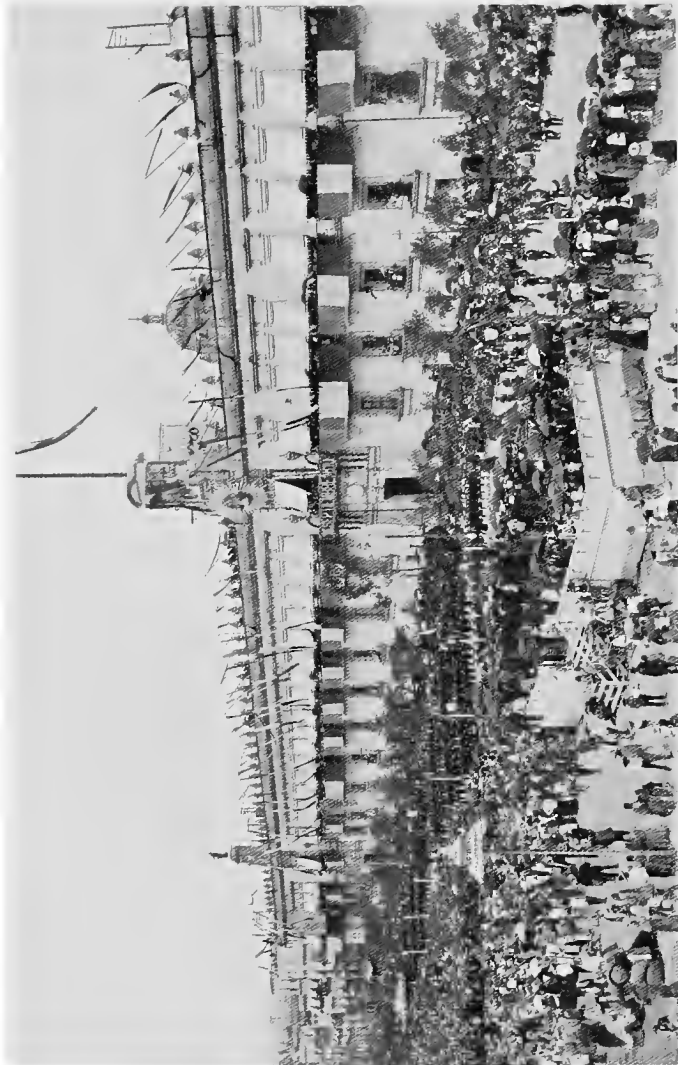


Photo: C. B. Waite

PRESIDENT DIAZ'S CITY PALACE ON MEXICO'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

the United States, which freed the slave in fact as well as in name, which gave the lands of the people back to the people, which wiped the slate clean of the blood of the past.

It was at this juncture that General Porfirio Diaz, without any valid excuse and apparently for no other reason than personal ambition, stirred up a series of revolutions which finally ended in his capture of the governmental powers of the land. While professing to respect the progressive institutions which Juarez and Lerdo had established before him, he built up a system all his own, a system in which he personally was the central and all-controlling figure, in which his individual caprice was the constitution and the law, in which all circumstances and all men, big and little, were bent or broken at his will. Like Louis XIV., Porfirio Diaz became the State !

It was under Porfirio Diaz that slavery and peonage were re-established in Mexico, and on a more merciless basis than they had rested upon even under the Spanish dons. Therefore, I can see no injustice in charging at any rate the largest share of the blame for these conditions upon the system of Diaz.

I say the "system of Diaz " rather than Diaz personally, because, though he is the keystone of the arch, though he is the Government of Mexico more completely than is any other individual the Government of any large country on the planet, yet no one man can stand alone in his iniquity. Diaz is the main prop of the slavery, but there are other props without which the system could not continue upright for a single day.

For example, there is the collection of commercial interests which profit by the Diaz system of slavery and autocracy, and which employs no insignificant part of its tremendous powers in holding the main prop upright in exchange for the special privileges that it receives. Not the least among these commercial interests are the American, and these, I blush to say, are quite as aggressive defenders of the Diaz citadel as any. Indeed, as I shall show in future chapters, these American interests undoubtedly form the determining force in the continuation of Mexican slavery. Thus does Mexican slavery come home to us of the States in the full sense of the term. For the horrors of Yucatan and Valle Nacional Diaz is to blame, but so are we; we are to blame in so far as governmental powers over which we are allowed to have some control are employed under our very eyes for the perpetuation of a regime of which slavery and peonage are an integral part.

In order that the reader may understand the Diaz system and its responsibility for the degradation of the Mexican people, it will be well to go back and trace briefly the beginnings of that system. Mexico is spoken of throughout the world as a republic. That is because it was once a republic and still pretends to be one. Mexico has a Constitution which has never been repealed, a Constitution said to be modelled upon that of the United States, and one which is, indeed, like that in the main. It provides for a National Congress, State legislatures and municipal aldermen to make the laws, Federal, State and local judges to interpret them, and a President, governors and local executives to ad-



BENITO JUAREZ
Mexico's First President

minister them; it provides for manhood suffrage, freedom of the Press and of speech, equality before the laws, and the other guarantees of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which we of the United States enjoy, in a degree, as a matter of course.

Such was Mexico forty years ago. Forty years ago Mexico was at peace with the world. She had just overthrown, after an heroic war, the foreign prince, Maximilian, who had been seated as emperor by the armies of Napoleon III. of France. Her president, Benito Juarez, is to-day recognised in Mexico and out of Mexico as one of the ablest as well as most unselfish patriots in Mexican history. Never since Cortez fired his ships there on the Gulf Coast had Mexico enjoyed such prospects of political freedom, industrial prosperity and general advancement.

But in spite of these facts and the additional fact that he was deeply indebted to Juarez, all his military promotions having been received at the hands of the latter, General Porfirio Diaz stirred up a series of rebellions for the purpose of securing for himself the supreme power in the land. Diaz led not merely one armed rebellion against a peaceable, constitutional and popularly approved Government, he led three of them. For nine years he plotted as a common rebel. The support that he received came chiefly from bandits, criminals, professional soldiers—who were disgruntled at the anti-militarist policy which Juarez had inaugurated, and which, if he could have carried it out a little further, would have been effective in preventing military revolutions in the future—and from the Catholic Church.

Repeatedly it was proved that the people did not want Diaz at the head of their Government. Three times during his first five years of plotting he was an unsuccessful candidate at the polls. In 1867 he received a little more than one-third the votes counted for Juarez; in 1871 he received about three-fifths as many votes as Juarez; in 1872, after the death of Juarez, he ran against Lerdo de Tejada, and received only one-fifteenth as many votes as his opponent; while in arms he was looked upon as a common rebel at home and abroad, and when he marched into the national capital at the head of a victorious army and proclaimed himself President, hardly a European nation would at first recognise his upstart Government, while the United States for a time threatened complications.

In defiance of the will of the majority of the people of Mexico, General Diaz, in the year 1876, came to the head of Government. In defiance of the will of the majority of the people he has remained there ever since—except for four years, from 1880 to 1884, when he turned the palace over to an intimate friend, Manuel Gonzalez, on the distinct understanding that at the end of the four years Gonzalez would turn it back to him.

Since no man can rule an unwilling people without taking away the liberties of that people, it can be very easily understood what sort of regime General Diaz found it necessary to establish in order to make his power secure. By the use of the army and the police powers generally he controlled elections, the Press, and public speech, and made of popular government a farce.

By distributing the public offices among his generals and granting them free rein to plunder at will, he assured himself of the continued support of the army. By political combinations with men high in the esteem of the Catholic Church, and permitting it to be whispered about that the Church was to regain some of its former powers, he gained the silent support of the priests and the Pope. By promising full payment of all foreign debts, and launching at once upon a policy of distributing favours among citizens of other countries, he made his peace with the world at large.

In other words, General Diaz, with a skill that none can deny, annexed to himself all the elements of power in the country except the nation at large. On the one hand, he had a military dictatorship. On the other, he had a financial camarilla. Himself was the centre of the arch, and he was compelled to pay the price. The price was the nation at large. He created a machine, and oiled it with the flesh and blood of a people. He rewarded all except the people; the people were the sacrifice. Inevitable as the blackness of night, in contrast to the sun-glory of the dictator, came the degradation of the people—the slavery, the peonage, and every misery that walks with poverty, the abolition of democracy and of the personal security that breeds providence, self-respect and worthy ambition; in a word, general demoralisation, depravity.

Take, for example, Diaz's method of rewarding his military chiefs, the men who helped him overthrow the Government of Lerdo. As quickly as possible after assuming power, he installed his generals as governors

of the various States, and organised them and other influential figures in the nation into a national plunderbund. Thus he assured himself of the continued loyalty of the generals on the one hand, and put them where he could most effectively use them for keeping down the people, on the other. One variety of rich plum which he handed out in those early days to his governors came in the form of charters giving them the right, as individuals, to organise companies and build railroads, each charter carrying with it a huge sum as a railroad subsidy.

The national Government paid for the railway, and the governor and his most influential friends owned it. Usually the railroads were ridiculous affairs, were of narrow gauge and of the very cheapest materials, but the subsidy was very large, sufficient to build the road and probably equip it besides. During his first term of four years in office Diaz passed sixty-one railroad subsidy Acts containing appropriations aggregating 40,000,000 dollars, and all but two or three of these Acts were in favour of governors of States. In a number of cases not a mile of railroad was actually built, but the subsidies are supposed to have been paid anyhow. In nearly every case the subsidy was the same, 12,880 dollars per mile in Mexican silver—and in those days Mexican silver was nearly on a par with gold.

This huge sum was taken out of the national treasury and was supposedly paid to the governors, although Mexican politicians of the old times have assured me that it was divided, a part going out as actual subsidies and a part being used for political purposes.

Certainly something more than mere loyalty, however invaluable it was, was required of the governors in exchange for such rich financial plums. It is a well authenticated fact that governors were required to pay a fixed sum annually for the privilege of exploiting to the limit the "graft" possibilities of their offices. For a long time Manuel Romero Rubio, father-in-law of Diaz, was the collector of these perquisites, the offices bringing in anywhere from 10,000 to 50,000 dollars per year.

The largest single perquisite was found for a long time in the confiscation of the lands of the common people—a confiscation, in fact, which is going on to this day. Note that this land robbery was the first direct step in the path of the Mexican people back to their bondage as slaves and as peons.

In a previous chapter I have shown how the lands of the Yaquis of Sonora were taken from them and given to political favourites of the ruler. The lands of the Mayas of Yucatan, now enslaved by the henequen planters, were taken from them in almost the same manner. The final act in this confiscation was accomplished in the year 1904, when the national Government set aside the last of their lands into a Territory called Quintana Roo. This Territory contains 43,000 square kilometres, or 27,000 square miles. It is larger than the present State of Yucatan by 8,000 square kilometres, and moreover is the most promising land in the entire peninsula. Separated from the island of Cuba by a narrow strait, its soil and climate are strikingly similar to those of Cuba, and experts have declared that there is

no reason why Quintana Roo should not one day become as great a tobacco-growing country as Cuba. Further than that, its hillsides are thickly covered with the most valuable cabinet and dye-woods in the world. It is this magnificent country which, as the last chapter in the life of the Mayas as a nation, the Diaz Government took and handed over to eight Mexican politicians.

In like manner have the Mayas of Sonora, the Papagos, the Tomochics—in fact, practically all the native peoples of Mexico—been reduced to peonage, if not to slavery. Small holders of every tribe and nation have gradually been expropriated until to-day their number as property holders is almost down to zero. Their lands are in the hands of members of the governmental machine, or persons to whom the members of the machine have sold for profit—or in the hands of foreigners.

This is why the typical Mexican farm is the million-acre farm, why it has been easy for such Americans as William Randolph Hearst, Harrison Gray Otis, E. H. Harriman, the Rockefellers, the Guggenheims, and numerous others, each to obtain possession of millions of Mexican acres. This is why the Secretary of Fomento, O. Molina, holds more than 15,000,000 acres of the soil of Mexico, why ex-Governor Terrazas of Chihuahua owns 15,000,000 acres of the soil of that State, why Finance Minister Limantour, Vice-president Corral, Governor Pimentel of Chiapas, Governor Landa y Escandon of the Federal District, Governor Pablo Escandon of Morelos, Governor Ahumada of Jalisco, Governor Cosio of Querétaro,

Governor Mercado of Michoacan, Governor Canedo of Sinaloa, Governor Cahuantzi of Tlaxcala, and many other members of the Diaz machine, are not only millionaires but are millionaires in Mexican real estate.

Chief among the methods used in getting the lands away from the people in general was a nefarious land registration law which Diaz fathered. This law permitted any person to go out and claim any lands to which the possessor could not prove a recorded title. Inasmuch as up to the time this law was enacted it had not been the custom to record titles, this meant all the lands of Mexico. When a man possessed a home which his father had possessed before him, and which his grandfather had possessed, which his great-grandfather had possessed, and which had been in the family as far back as history knew, he considered that he owned that home, all of his neighbours considered that he owned it, and all Governments up to that of Diaz recognised his right to that home.

Supposing that a strict registration law became necessary in the course of evolution, had this law been enacted for the purpose of protecting the landowners instead of plundering them, the Government would, naturally, have sent agents through the country to apprise the people of the new law and to help them to register their property and keep their homes. But this was not done, and the conclusion is inevitable that the law was passed for the purpose of plundering.

At all events, the result of the law was a plundering. No sooner had it been passed than members of the

governmental machine, headed by the father-in-law of Diaz, and Diaz himself, formed land companies and sent out agents, not to help the people to keep their lands, but to select the most desirable lands in the country, register them, and evict the owners. This they did on a most tremendous scale. Thus hundreds of thousands of small farmers lost their property. Thus small farmers are still losing their property. In order to cite an example, I print a despatch dated Mérida, Yucatan, April 11, 1909, and published on April 12 in the *Mexican Herald*, an American daily newspaper printed in Mexico City :

“ Mérida, April 11.—Minister Olegario Molina, of the Department of Fomento, Colonisation and Industry, has made a denouncement before the agency here of extensive territory lying adjacent to his lands in Tizimin *partido*. The denouncement was made through Esteban Rejon Garcia, his *administrador* at that place.

“ The section was taken on the ground that those now occupying them have no documents or titles of ownership.

“ They measure 2,700 hectares (about 6,000 acres, or over nine square miles), and *include perfectly organised towns*, some fine ranches, including those of Laureano Breseno and Rafael Aguilar, and other properties. The *jefe político* of Tizimin has notified the population of the town, the owners and labourers on the ranches, and others on the lands, that they will be obliged to vacate within two months, *or become subject to the new owner*.

“ The present occupants have lived for years upon the land, and have cultivated and improved much of it. Some have lived there from generation to generation, and have thought themselves the rightful owners, having inherited it from the original ‘ squatters.’

“ Mr. Rejon Garcia has also denounced other similar public lands in the Espita *partido*.”

Another favourite means of confiscating the homes of small owners is found in the juggling of State taxes. State taxes in Mexico are fearfully and wonderfully made. Especially in the less populous districts, owners are taxed inversely as they stand in favour with the personality who represents the Government in their particular district. No court, board or other responsible body sits to review unjust assessments. The *jefe politico* may charge one farmer five times as much per acre as he charges the farmer across the fence, and yet Farmer No. 1 has no redress, unless he is rich and powerful. He must pay, and if he cannot, the farm is a little later listed among the properties of the *jefe politico*, or one of the members of his family, or among the properties of the Governor of the State or one of the members of *his* family. But if he is rich and powerful he is often not taxed at all. American promoters in Mexico escape taxation so nearly invariably that the impression has got abroad in the States that land pays no taxes in Mexico. Even Frederick Palmer made a statement to this effect in his recent writings about that country.

Of course, such bandit methods as were employed and are still employed were certain to meet with resistance, and so we find numerous instances of regiments of soldiers being called out to enforce collection of taxes or the eviction of time-honoured landholders. Mexican history of the past generation is blotched with stories of massacres having their cause in this thing. Among the

most noted of these massacres are those of Papantla and Tomochic. Manuel Romero Rubio, the late father-in-law of General Diaz, denounced the lands of several thousand farmers in the vicinity of Papantla, Vera Cruz. Diaz backed him up with several regiments of regulars, and before the farmers were all evicted a considerable number of them were killed. In the year 1892 a tax was laid on the town of Tomochic, the centre of the Tomochic settlement, which it was impossible for the people to pay. Some leading men of the town were carried away as hostages, and when the people still refused to pay soldiers were sent for more hostages. The soldiers were driven away, after which the town was besieged. In the end it was burned, and a churchful of women and children were burned too. Accounts of the Tomochic massacre place the number of killed variously at from 800 to 2,000.

Cases of more recent blood-spillings in the same cause are numerous. Hardly a month passes without there being one or more reports in Mexican papers of disturbances, the result of confiscation of homes through the denunciation method or under the excuse of non-payment of taxes. Notable among these was the case of San Andreas, State of Chihuahua, which was reported in the Mexican Press in April, 1909. According to those Press reports, the State authorities confiscated lands of several scores of farmers, the excuse being that the owners were in arrears with their taxes. The farmers resisted eviction in a body, and two car-loads of troops hurried to the scene from the capital of the State, promptly cleaned them out, shooting some

and chasing half a hundred of them into the mountains. Here they stayed until starved out, when they straggled back, begging for mercy. As they came they were thrown into jail, men, women and children. The Government carefully concealed the truth as to the number killed in the skirmish with the troops, but reports place it at from five to twenty-five.

An incident of the same class was that of San Carlos, also in the State of Chihuahua, which occurred in August, 1909. At San Carlos, the centre of a farming district, the misuse of the taxing power became so unbearable that four hundred small farmers banded together, defied a force of fifty *rurales*, forcibly deposed the *jefe politico*, and elected another in his place, then went back to their ploughs. It was a little revolution, which the newspaper reports of the time declared was the first of its kind to which the present Government of Mexico ever yielded. Whether the popularly constituted local government was permitted to remain or whether it was later overthrown by a regiment of soldiers is not recorded, though the latter seems the more likely.

Graft is an established institution in the public offices of Mexico. It is a right vested in the office itself, is recognised as such, and is respectable. There are two main functions attached to each public office, one a privilege, the other a duty. The privilege is that of using the special powers of the office for the amassing of a personal fortune; the duty is that of preventing the people from entering into any activities that may endanger the stability of the existing régime. Theoretically, the fulfilment of the duty is judged as balancing

the harvest of the privilege; but with all offices and all places this is not so, and so we find offices of particularly rosy possibilities selling for a fixed price. Examples are those of the *jefes politicos* in districts where the slave trade is peculiarly remunerative; of the districts in which the drafting of soldiers for the army is especially let to the *jefes politicos*; of the towns in which the gambling privileges are let as a monopoly to the mayors thereof; of the States in which there exist opportunities extraordinary for governors to "graft" off the army supply contracts.

Monopolies called "concessions," which are nothing more nor less than trusts created by governmental decree, are dealt in openly by the Mexican Government. Some of these concessions are sold for cash, but the rule is to give them away gratis or for a nominal price, the real price being collected in political support. The public domain is sold in huge tracts for a nominal price or for nothing at all, the money price, when paid at all, averaging about 50 Mexican cents an acre. But never does the Government sell to any individual or company not of its own special choice; that is, the public domain is by no means open to all comers on equal terms. Public concessions worth billions of dollars—to use the water of a river for irrigation purposes or for power, to engage in this or that monopoly—have been given away, but not indiscriminately. These things are the coin with which political support is bought, and as such are grafts pure and simple.

Public action of any sort is never taken for the sake of improving the condition of the common people. It

is taken with a view to making the Government more secure in its position. Mexico is a land of special privileges extraordinary, though frequently special privileges are provided for in the name of the common people. An instance is that of the Agricultural Bank, which was created in 1908. To read the Press reports concerning the purpose of this bank one would imagine that the Government had launched a gigantic and benevolent scheme to re-establish its expropriated people in agriculture. The purpose, it was said, was to loan money to needy farmers. But nothing could be farther from the truth, for the purpose is to help out the rich farmer, and only the richest in the land. At the time of writing not a single case has been recorded in which aid was given to help a farm that comprised less than thousands of acres. Millions of dollars have been loaned on private irrigation projects, but never in amounts of less than several tens of thousands. In the United States the farmer class is a humble class indeed; in Mexico the typical farmer is the king of millionaires, a little potentate. In Mexico, because of the special privileges given by the Government, mediævalism still prevails outside the cities. The barons are richer and more powerful than were the landed aristocrats before the French Revolution, and the *canaille* poorer, more miserable.

And the special financial privileges centring in the cities are no less remarkable than the special privileges given to the exploiters of the *hacienda* slave. There is a financial ring consisting of members of the Diaz machine and their close associates, who pluck all the financial plums of the "republic," who get the contracts,

the franchises and the concessions, and whom the large aggregations of foreign capital which secure a footing in the country find it necessary to take as coupon-clipping partners.

λ The President encourages foreign capital, for foreign capital means the support of foreign Governments. American capital has a smoother time with Diaz than it has even with its own Government, which is very fine from the point of view of American capital, but not so good from the point of view of the Mexican people. Diaz has even entered into direct partnership with certain aggregations of foreign capital, granting these aggregations special privileges in some lines which he has refused to his own millionaires. These foreign partnerships which Diaz has formed have made his Government international in so far as the props which support his system are concerned. The certainty of foreign intervention in his favour has been one of the powerful forces which have prevented the Mexican people from using arms to remove a ruler who imposed himself upon them by the use of arms.

I shall presently deal with the American partners of Diaz, but it will be well to bear in mind that England, especially, is nearly as heavily interested in Mexico as is the United States. While the States had 900,000,000 dollars (these are the figures given by Consul-General Shanklin) invested in Mexico in 1910, England (according to the *South American Journal*) had 750,000,000 dollars. However, these figures by no means represent the ratio between the degree of political influence exerted by the two countries. There

the United States exceeds all the other countries combined.

In this chapter I have attempted to give the reader an idea of the means which General Diaz employed to attract support to his Government. To sum up: by means of a careful placing of public offices, public contracts and special privileges of multitudinous sorts, Diaz absorbed all of the more powerful men and interests within his sphere and made them a part of his machine. Gradually the country passed into the hands of his office-holders, their friends, and foreigners. And for this the people paid, not only with their lands, but with their flesh and blood. They paid in peonage and slavery. For this they forfeited liberty, democracy and the blessings of progress. And because human beings do not forfeit these things without a struggle, there was necessarily another function of the Diaz machine than that of distributing gifts, another material that went into the structure of this Government. Privilege—repression; they go hand in hand. In the present chapter I have attempted to sketch a picture of the privilege attached to the Diaz system; in the next I shall attempt to define its elements of repression.

CHAPTER VIII

Repressive Elements of the Diaz System

AMERICANS launching upon business in Mexico are usually given about the same treatment at the hands of local authorities as they have been used to at home. Sometimes an American falls into disfavour and is cautiously persecuted, but it is seldom. And if he is there to get rich quickly, as is usual, he judges the Mexican Government by the aid it gives to his ambition. To him the system of President Diaz is the wisest, most modern and most beneficent on the face of the earth.

To be wholly fair to Diaz and his system, I must confess that I am not judging Mexico from the standpoint of the American investor. I am estimating it from its effects upon the mass of Mexicans generally, who, in the end, must surely determine the destiny of Mexico. From the standpoint of the common Mexican the Government is wholly the opposite of beneficent; it is a slave-driver, a thief, a murderer; it has neither justice nor mercy—nothing but exploitation.

In order to impose his rule upon an unwilling people, General Diaz found it necessary not only to reward the powerful of his country and to be free and easy with the foreigner, but also to strip the people of

their liberties to the point of nakedness. He took away from them all governmental powers, rights and securities, and all powers to demand the return of these things. Why do nations universally demand a popular form of government? Never until I saw Mexico did I appreciate to the full the reason why. The answer is that life under any other system is intolerable. The common interests can be conserved only by the common voice. Government by individuals not responsible to the mass invariably results in robbery of the mass and debasement of the nation. The upbuilding of any people requires certain social guarantees which are not possible except under a government in which considerable numbers take part.

When General Diaz led his army into the Mexican capital in 1876 he declared himself provisional President. Shortly afterwards he held a pretended election, and declared himself constitutional President. By a "pretended election" I mean that he put his soldiers in possession of the polls and, by intimidation, prevented anyone from appearing as a candidate against him. Thus was he "elected" unanimously. And, except for one term, when he voluntarily relinquished the office, he has continued to elect himself unanimously in much the same way.

I do not need to dwell on the election farces of Mexico, since the warmest flatterers of Diaz admit that Mexico has not had one real election during the past thirty-four years. But to those who desire some statement of the matter it will only be necessary to point out the results of the Mexican "elections." Can anyone

imagine a nation of some 15,000,000 with, say, 3,000,000 persons of voting age, all preferring the same man for their chief executive, not only once, but year after year and decade after decade? Just picture such a condition obtaining in the United States, for example. Could anybody imagine Mr. Taft being re-elected by a unanimous vote? Mr. Roosevelt was undoubtedly the most popular President the States ever had: could anybody imagine Mr. Roosevelt being re-elected by a unanimous vote? Moreover, could anyone imagine a country of 15,000,000 souls in which ambition never stirred the heart of more than one individual with the desire to stand before the people as a candidate for the highest office in the nation?

And yet this is exactly the condition we find in Mexico. Eight times Don Porfirio has been seated as President. Eight times he has been elected "unanimously." Never has an opponent stood against him at the polls.

And the story of the Presidential succession is repeated in the States. Re-election without contest is a rule which has seen exceedingly few exceptions. The Governor of the State holds office for life, unless for some reason he loses favour with Don Porfirio, which is seldom. A member of the Mexican upper class once put the situation to me quite aptly. Said he: "Death is the only anti-re-electionist in Mexico." The chief reason why the States are not governed by men who have been in office for thirty-four years is because those who were first put in have died, and it has become necessary to fill their places with others. As it is, Colonel

Prospero Cahuantzi has ruled the State of Tlaxcala for the whole Porfirian period. General Aristeo Mercado has ruled the State of Michoacan for over twenty-five years. Teodoro Dehesa has governed the State of Vera Cruz for twenty-five years. When deposed in 1909, General Bernado Reyes had governed the State of Nuevo Leon for nearly twenty-five years. General Francisco Canedo, General Abraham Bandala and Pedro Rodriguez ruled the States of Sinaloa, Tabasco and Hidalgo, respectively, for over twenty years. General Luis Terrazas was Governor of Chihuahua for over twenty years, while Governors Martinez, Cardenas and Obregon Gonzalez ruled the States of Puebla, Coahuila and Guanajuato, respectively, for about fifteen years.

Diaz's system of government is very simple, once it is explained. The President, the Governor, the *jefe politico*—these three names represent all the power in the country. In Mexico there is but one governmental power—the executive. The other two departments exist in name only. Not one elective office remains in the country. All are nominative. And through the power of nomination the three executives mentioned control the entire situation. The word of each of these three officials in his particular sphere—the President in the twenty-seven States and two Territories, the Governor in his State, the *jefe politico* in his district—is the law of the land. Not one of the three is required to answer to the people for his acts. The Governor must answer to the President, and the *jefe politico* to the Governor and the President. It is the most perfect one-man system on earth.

Of course, such conditions were not established without a struggle. Neither can they be maintained without continued struggle. Autocracy cannot be created by fiat. Slavery cannot exist merely by decree of a ruler. There must be an organisation and a policy to compel such things. There must be a military organisation armed to the teeth. There must be police and police spies. There must be expropriations and imprisonments for political purposes. And there must be murder—murder all the time. No autocracy can exist without murder. Autocracy feeds upon murder. It has never been otherwise, and, human nature being what it is, it never can be otherwise.

The succeeding two chapters are to be devoted to sketching the extirpation of political movements having for their purpose the re-establishment of republican institutions in Mexico. But first it seems well to define the public powers and institutions which are employed in this unholy work. These consist of :

The army.

The *rurale* forces.

The police.

The *acordada*.

The *ley fuga*.

Quintana Roo, the "Mexican Siberia."

The prisons.

The *jefes politicos*.

In a published interview issued during the Liberal rebellion in 1908 Vice-President Corral announced that the Government had more than 50,000 soldiers who were ready to take the field at an hour's notice. In these



Photo: C. B. Waite

MEXICAN CAVALRY

figures he must have included the *rurale* forces, for officials of the War Department have since assured me that the regular army numbered less—almost exactly 40,000, in fact. On paper the Mexican army is, then, smaller than that of the United States, but, according to estimates of the actual size of the States army published by American experts during the last few years, it is larger, and in proportion to the population it is at least five times larger. General Diaz's excuse for the maintenance of such a large army has always been a hint that the country might at any time find itself in danger of invasion by the United States. That his purpose was not so much to prepare against invasion as to guard against internal revolution is evidenced by the fact that, instead of fortifying the border, he fortified inland cities. Moreover, he keeps the bulk of the army concentrated near the large centres of population, and his best and most extensive equipment consists of mountain batteries, recognised as specially well adapted to internal warfare.

Mexico is actually policed by the army, and to this end the country is divided into ten military zones, three commanderies and fourteen *jefaturas*. One sees soldiers everywhere. There is not an important city in the country that has not its army barracks, and the barracks are situated in the heart of the city, where they are always ready. The discipline of war is maintained at all times, the presence of the soldiers and their constant drilling are a perpetual threat to the people. And the soldiers are used upon the people often enough to keep always fresh in memory the fact that the threat is not an empty

one. Such readiness for war as is maintained on the part of the Mexican troops is not known in the States. There is no red tape when it comes to fighting, and troops arrive at the scene of trouble in an incredibly short time. As one example, at the time of the Liberal rebellion in the autumn of 1906 the Liberals attacked the city of Acayucan, Vera Cruz. Despite the fact that the city is situated in a comparatively isolated part of the tropics, the Government concentrated 4,000 soldiers on the town within twenty-four hours after the first alarm.

As an instrument of repression, the Mexican army is employed effectively in two separate and distinct ways. It is an engine of massacre and it is an exile institution, a jail-house, a concentration camp for the politically undesirable.

This second function of the army abides in the fact that more than 95 per cent. of the enlisted men are drafted, and drafted for the particular reason that they are politically undesirable citizens, or that they are good subjects for "graft" on the part of the drafter. The drafter is usually the *jefe politico*. A judge, at the instance of the executive authority, sometimes sentences a culprit to the army instead of to jail, and a governor—as at Cananea—sometimes personally superintends the placing of considerable bodies of men in the army; but as a rule the *jefe politico* is the drafting officer, and upon him there is no check. He has no system other than to follow his own sweet will. He drafts labourers who dare to strike, editors who criticise the Government, farmers who resist exorbitant taxation, and any



Photo : C. B. Waite

RIO BLANCO FACTORY AND VILLAGE
The Scene of a Famous Strike

other ordinary citizens who may present opportunities for "graft."

As a dumping-ground for the politically undesirable, the conditions within the army are ideal from the point of view of the Government. The men are prisoners rather than soldiers, and they are treated as such. For this reason the Mexican army has gained the title of "The National Chain-gang." While in Diaz-land I visited a number of army barracks. The barracks at Rio Blanco are typical. Here, ever since the Rio Blanco strike, 600 soldiers and 200 *rurales* have been quartered within the shadow of the great mill, in barracks and upon ground furnished by the company, an hourly menace to the miserably exploited workers there.

At Rio Blanco a little captain showed us about—De Lara and myself—at the behest of an officer of the manufacturing company. El Señor Capitan informed us that the pay of the Mexican soldier, with rations, is 1 dollar 90 cents per month in American money, and that the soldier is always expected to spend the major portion of this for extra food, as the food furnished is too monotonous and too scarce in quantity to satisfy any human being. The captain confirmed the reports that I had often heard to the effect that the soldier, in all his five years' service, never has an hour to himself away from the eye of an officer, that he is as much a prisoner in his barracks as is the life-termer in a penitentiary.

The proportion of involuntary soldiers the captain estimated at 98 per cent. Often, said he, the soldiers,

crazy for freedom, break and run like escaping convicts. And they are hunted down like convicts.

But the thing that struck me most forcibly during my visit was that the little captain, in the hearing of half a company of men, told us that the soldiers were of the lowest class of Mexicans, were good for nothing, a bad lot, etc., apologising thus in order to make us understand that in time of war the quality of the army would be much improved. The soldiers heard and failed to look pleasant, and I could not help thinking that the loyalty of the Mexican army stands upon a very flimsy basis—merely fear of death—and that in case of any future rebellion against the dictatorship the army can be counted upon to revolt in a body as soon as the rebellion develops any appreciable strength—that is, enough strength to afford the deserters a fair chance for their lives.

The territory of Quintana Roo has been characterised as one of the "Siberias of Mexico," from the fact that to it, as convict-soldiers, are consigned thousands of political suspects and labour agitators. Sent there ostensibly to fight the Maya Indians, they are treated so harshly that probably not 1 per cent. of them ever see their homes again. I did not succeed in penetrating personally to Quintana Roo, but I have heard accounts of it from so many authentic sources that I have no doubt whatever that my estimate of it is correct. One of these sources of information, a distinguished Government physician, who has held a high place in the Army Sanitary Service in the Territory, I shall quote at some length.

“For thirty years,” said this man, “there has been an army of from 2,000 to 3,000 men constantly in the field against the Maya Indians. These soldiers are made up almost entirely of political suspects, and even many of the officers are men who have been detailed for duty in the Territory only because the Government has some reason for wanting to get rid of them. Quintana Roo is the most unhealthy part of Mexico, but the soldiers die from five to ten times as fast as necessary because of ‘graft.’ During the first two years I was there the death-rate was 100 per cent. a year, for in that period more than 4,000 soldiers died of starvation and sickness induced by starvation !

“For month after month,” said this physician, “I have known the deaths to average thirty a day. For every soldier killed by a Maya at least one hundred die of starvation or sickness. The commissary money is stolen, and the soldiers are starved with the connivance of the Federal Government. More than 2,000 have died of acute starvation alone during the past seven years. Even the cremation money is stolen. The soil of the peninsula, you must know, is rocky, the hardpan is close to the surface, and it is not practicable to bury the dead. The Government appropriates money to buy oil for cremation, but this money is stolen and the bodies are left to lie in the sun and rot away !”

From another source, also a man high in authority, I heard the story of the “Alley of Death” railroad, so called because it is said every tie cost five lives in the building. “When this road,” my informant told me,

“was built many prisoners were taken from the military prison of San Juan de Ulua to do the work. To encourage them to toil, all were promised that their sentences would be reduced by one-half, but after a few weeks of it the majority begged—but in vain—to be returned to Ulua, although that is the most dreaded of all houses of incarceration in Mexico. These unfortunate prisoners were starved, and when they staggered from weakness they were beaten, some to death. Some of them committed suicide at the first opportunity, as did many of the soldiers—fifty of them—while I was there.”

Fancy a soldier committing suicide! Fancy the cruel conditions that would lead fifty soldiers among 2,000 to commit suicide in the space of three years!

As to the graft features of the army drafting system, the *jefe politico*, as I have suggested, selects the names in his own way, in the privacy of his own office, and no one may question his methods. Wherefore he waxes rich. Since—allowing for a high death-rate—some 10,000 men are drafted every year, it will be seen that the possibilities of the system are enormous. The horror of the army is used by the *jefe* to squeeze money out of wage-workers and small property-holders. Unless the victim is drafted for political reasons, the system permits the drafted person to buy another to take his place—provided the drafting officer is willing. This option on the part of the *jefe* is used as a great money-getter, since the *jefe* is never willing unless the victim buys the *jefe* as well as the substitute. Usually it is not necessary to buy the substitute, but only the *jefe*



Photo : C. B. Waite

**A FEATURE OF PRESIDENT DIAZ'S INAUGURATION
PROCESSION IN 1900**

X The procession lasted six hours, and when it was over it was discovered that the Queen of the Parade, who is seen standing behind the President's bust, was dead from sunstroke. She was still erect, having been tied in her place

politico. In some districts it is said to be a regular practice, in the case of the higher-paid class of wage-labourers, to drag them to jail when they are paid after a long job, and tell them that they have been drafted, then, a day or two later, to send word that 100 dollars, more or less, has been fixed as the price of their liberty. I was told of an instance in which a carpenter was drafted in this way five times in the space of three years. Four times he parted with his money, sums ranging from fifty to a hundred dollars, but the fifth time he lost courage and permitted himself to be led away to the barracks.

The *rurales* are mounted police usually selected from the criminal classes, well equipped and comparatively well paid, whose energies have been turned to robbing and killing for the Government. There are Federal *rurales* and State *rurales*, the total of the two running somewhere between 7,000 and 9,000. They are divided among the various States approximately in proportion to the population, but are utilised most in the rural districts. The *rurales* are the special rough-riders of the *jefes politicos*, and they are given almost unlimited powers to kill at their own discretion. Investigation of wanton killings by *rurales* working singly or in squads is almost never made, and the victim must stand well indeed with the Government before punishment is meted out to the murderer.

In Mexico it is a small town that has no soldiers or *rurales*, and a smaller town that has no regular gendarmes. The City of Mexico has over 2,000, or twice as many police as New York in comparison with

its size, and the other municipalities are equipped in proportion. At night the gendarmes have little red lanterns, which they set in the middle of the streets and hover near. One sees these lanterns, one at each corner, twinkling down the entire length of the principal streets. A system of lantern signals is in use, and when one lamp begins to swing the signal is carried along, and in a trice every gendarme in the street knows what has happened.

While the "plain clothes" department of the Mexican police is a comparatively insignificant affair, there exists, outside of and beyond it, a system of secret police on a very extensive scale. An American newspaperman employed on an English daily in the capital once told me: "There are twice as many secret police as regular police. You see a uniformed policeman standing in the middle of the street. That is all you see, or, at least, all you notice. But leaning against the wall of that alley entrance is a man whom you take to be a loafer; over on the other side lounges a man who you think is a peon. Just start something and then try to get away. Both of those men will be after you. There is no getting away in Mexico; every alley is guarded as well as every street!

"Why," said he, "they know your business as well as you do yourself. They talk with you, and you never suspect. When you cross the border they take your name and business and address, and before you've reached the capital they know whether you've told the truth or not. They know what you're here for, and have decided what they're going to do about it."

Perhaps this man overstated the case—the exact truth of these matters is hard to get at—but I know that it is impossible to convince the average Mexican that the secret police system of his country is not a colossal institution.

The *acordada* is an organisation of secret assassins, a sort of secret police, attached to the Government of each of the Mexican States. It consists of a *jefe de acordada*, and anywhere from half a dozen to half a hundred subordinates. Personal enemies of the Governor or of the *jefes politicos*, political suspects, and highwaymen or others suspected of crime but against whom there is no evidence, are frequently put out of the way by the *acordada*. The names of the marked men are furnished by the officials, and the members of the society are sent about the State with orders to kill quietly and without noise. Two notable cases where the *acordada* are reported as having killed extensively are those of the days following the strikes at Cananea and Rio Blanco. Personally I am acquainted with a Mexican whose brother was killed by the *acordada* for doing no more than shouting "Viva Ricardo Flores Magon," while under the influence of *mescal*. I know also of a son of a general who became a *sub-jefe de acordada* in a certain State. He was a wild young fellow who had been put out of the army for acts of insubordination toward a superior officer. But his father was a friend of Diaz, and Diaz himself appointed the youth to the *acordada* job, which paid a salary of 300 *pesos* a month. This man was given two assistants, and was sent out with orders to

“kill quietly along the border” any and all persons whom he might suspect of connection with the Liberal party. No check whatever was placed upon him. He was to kill at his own discretion.

The *acordada* at times work extensively even in the Mexican capital, which more nearly approaches the modern in its police methods than probably any other city in the country. Before the Liberal rebellion of 1906 the Government, through spies, secured the detailed plans of the rebels, as well as the names of hundreds of the participants, and a large number of these were killed. What was done by the *acordada* in Mexico City at that time may be guessed by a statement made to me by a well-known newspaperman of the city. Said he: “I have it from the most reliable source that during the week preceding September 16 not less than 2,000 suspects were made away with quietly by the secret police and special deputies—the *acordada*—so quietly that not a line in regard to it has ever been published to this day!”

I hesitate to print this statement because it is too colossal for me to believe, and I do not expect the reader to believe it. But I have no doubt whatever that it was partially true; that, say, several score were killed at this time and in this way. Liberals whom I have met have often spoken to me of friends who had suddenly disappeared and never been heard of again, and many of these were supposed to have been done away with by the *acordada*.

The *ley fuga*, or law of flight, is a method of killing resorted to by all branches of the Mexican police force.



WOMEN BRINGING FOOD TO RELATIVES IN BELEM PRISON

It was originated by order of General Diaz, who decreed that his police might shoot any prisoners who should try to escape while under guard. While it may not have originated for that purpose, this rule came to be used as one of the means of putting to death persons against whom the Government had not the shadow of another excuse for killing. The marked man is simply arrested, taken to a lonely spot and there shot. The matter is kept quiet, if possible, but if a situation should arise that demands an explanation, the report is given out that the victim attempted to escape and so brought his fate upon himself. Thus it is freely asserted that thousands of lives have been taken during the past thirty-four years. To-day instances of the *ley fuga* are frequently reported in the Mexican Press.

Many political outlaws end their days in prison. Among the Mexican prisons there are two whose horrors stand out far above the others—San Juan de Ulua and Belem.

During both of my visits to Mexico I put forth desperate efforts to secure admission as a visitor to Belem. I saw the Governor of the Federal District; I saw the American Ambassador; I tried to enter with a prison physician. But I was never able to travel farther than the inner door.

Through that door I could see into the central court, where ranged hundreds of human beings made wild beasts by the treatment they received—ragged, filthy, starving, wolfish wrecks of men, a sight calculated to provoke a raucous laugh at the solemn declarations of certain individuals that Mexico has a civilised government.

But farther than that inner court I could not go. I was permitted to visit other prisons in Mexico, but not Belem. When I pressed his Excellency the Governor, he admitted that it was not safe. "On account of the *malas condiciones*, the vile conditions," he said, "it would not do. Why," he told me, "only a short time ago the Vice-President, Señor Corral, dared to make a hurried visit to Belem. He contracted typhus and nearly died. You cannot go."

I told him that I had heard of Americans being permitted to visit Belem. But he was unable to remember. Doubtless those other Americans were too well known—they were too much involved in Mexican affairs—to leave any danger of their coming out and telling the truth of what they saw. My credentials were not satisfactory enough to permit me to see Belem.

But I know Belem fairly well, I think, for I have talked with persons who have seen Belem as prisoners and come out of its horrors alive. Editors, many of them were; and I have talked with others—officials, prison physicians, and I have read the newspapers of Mexico.

Suffice it, however, to put down some bare and naked facts. Belem is the general prison for the Federal district, which comprises the Mexican capital and some surrounding suburbs, approximately, in all, a population of 600,000 people. It is alike city jail, county jail and penitentiary, except that there is also in the district another penitentiary, which is distinguished from Belem by confining within its walls only criminals who have been sentenced to more than eight



AT BELEM PRISON
Empty Basket being taken out of a Cell

years' confinement. The penitentiary—which is so designated—is a modern institution, decently built and sewered. The prisoners are few, and they are fairly well fed. Visitors are always welcome at the penitentiary, for it is principally for show. When you hear a traveller extolling the prison system of Mexico, put it down that he was conducted through the Federal district penitentiary only—that he does not know Belem.

Belem is a musty old convent which was turned into a prison by the simple act of herding some thousands of persons within its walls. It is not large enough decently to house five hundred inmates, but frequently it houses more than five thousand. These five thousand are given a ration of biscuit and beans insufficient in quantity to keep an ordinary person alive for many weeks. The insufficiency of this ration is so well realised by the prison officials that a regular system of feeding from the outside has grown up. Daily the friends and relatives of prisoners bring them baskets of food, in order that they may live through their term of confinement. Of course, it is a terrible drain on the poor, but the system serves its purpose—except for those hundreds of unfortunates who have no friends on the outside. These starve to death without a finger raised to help them.

“Within three days after entering Belem,” a Mexican prison physician informed me, “every inmate contracts a skin disease, a terrible itch which sets the integument on fire. This disease is entirely the result of the filthy conditions of the place. Every year,” he continued, “the prison goes through an epidemic of

typhus, which kills an average of at least 10 per cent. of the inmates. Within Belem there is no system of order among the prisoners. The weak are at the mercy of the strong. Immediately you enter as a prisoner you are set upon by a horde of half-crazed men who tear the clothes from your back, take away your valuables, if you have any, and usually behave with gross indecency, while officials of the prison stand grinning by. The only way to save yourself in Belem is to turn wild beast like the rest, and even then you must be strong—very strong.”

Should I give the name of this physician every official in the national capital would instantly recognise him as a man of high standing with the Government. I shall not name him, only because if I did he also would go to Belem as a prisoner. Such stories as his I heard from too many widely different sources to be able to doubt them. The stories of the Belem epidemics always get more or less into Mexican papers. I remember that during my first visit to Mexico, in the autumn of 1908, the papers reported an epidemic of typhus. For the first three days the number of new cases was daily recorded, but after that the news was suppressed. The condition threatened to become too great a scandal, for on the third day there were 176 new cases!

According to an old prison director whom I interviewed, at least 20 per cent. of the prisoners at Belem contract tuberculosis. This prison director spent many years in the prison at Puebla. There, he says, 75 per cent. of the men who go into the place come out, if they ever come out, with tuberculosis.



SAN JUAN DE ULUA
Where many Politicians are Incarcerated

Torture such as was employed in the Middle Ages is used in Belem to secure confessions. When a man is taken to the police station, if he is suspected of a felony he is strung up by the thumbs until he tells. Another method used is that of refusing the prisoner drink. He is given food, but no water, until he chokes. Often prisoners declare before the judge that they have been tortured into confession, but no investigation is made. There are—inevitably—records of innocent men who have confessed to murder in order to escape the torture of the thumbs or of the thirst. While I was in Mexico two Americans suspected of robbery were reported in the newspapers to have been arrested, their wrists strapped to the bars of their cells, and their fingernails jerked out with steel pincers. This incident was reported to the State Department of the United States, but no action was taken.

San Juan de Ulua is an old military fortress situated in the harbour of Vera Cruz—a fortress which has been turned into a prison. Officially San Juan de Ulua is known as a military prison, but in fact it is a political prison, a prison for political suspects, and popularly known as the “private prison of Diaz.”

San Juan de Ulua is built of cement, the prison cells are under the sea, and the salt water percolates through upon the prisoners, some of whom lie, half-naked and half-starved, in dark dungeons too small to permit of a full-grown man lying down in comfort. To San Juan de Ulua was sent Juan Sarabia, Vice-President of the Liberal party; Marguerita Martinez, a leader of the strike at Rio Blanco; Lazaro Puente, Carlos Humbert,

Abraham Salcido, Leonardo Villarreal, Bruno Trevino and Gabriel Rubio, a sextet of gentlemen handed over to Mexico by the United States Government at the request of the former as "undesirable immigrants"; Caesar Canales, Juan de la Torre, Serrano, Ugalde, Marquez, and scores of other leaders of the Liberal movement. Since entering those grey walls none of these men or women have ever been heard of again. It is not known whether they are dead or alive, whether they were shot beyond the walls, whether they died of disease and starvation, or whether they are still eking out a miserable existence there, hoping against hope that a freer Government will come and set them free. They have never been heard of because no political prisoner in San Juan de Ulua is ever permitted to communicate in any way with his friends or with the outside world. They cross the harbour in a little boat, they disappear within the grey walls, and that is all. Their friends never learn how they get on, nor when they die, nor how.

Of the official oppressors of Mexico, the *jefe politico* is the arch fiend. The *jefe politico* commands the local police and *rurales*, directs the *acordada*, and frequently gives orders to the regular troops. Although, because of Government control of the Press, comparatively few misdeeds of the *jefes politicos* become public, yet during my most recent visit to Mexico two wholesale killings which were prompted by *jefes politicos* were widely reported in the newspapers of that country. One was that of Tehuizingo, where sixteen citizens were executed without trial, and the other was that of Velardeña, where,

for holding a street parade in defiance of the *jefe politico*, several were shot down in the streets and a number, variously estimated at from twelve to thirty-two, were arrested, lined up and shot, and buried in trenches which they had been compelled to dig previously with their own hands.

A comment of *El Pais*, a Conservative Catholic daily of the capital on the Tehuitzingo affair, published in April, was as follows :

“ Terrible accounts have reached this capital as to what is taking place at Tehuitzingo, District of Acatlan, State of Puebla. It is insistently reported that sixteen citizens have been executed without trial, and that many others will be condemned to twenty years’ confinement in the fortress of San Juan de Ulua.

“ What are the causes that have given rise to this barbarous persecution which has dyed our soil anew with the people’s blood?

“ It is the fierce, infamous *caciquismo* which oppresses the people with a heavy yoke, and which has deprived them of all the benefits of peace.

“ We ask, in the name of law and of humanity, that this hecatomb cease; we ask that the guilty parties be tried fairly and calmly according to the law. But among those guilty parties should be included those who provoked the disturbance, those who drove the people to frenzy by trampling on their rights. If the *jefe politico* sought to defy the law by dictating an election, he is as guilty or more guilty than the rioters, and ought to be made to appear with them before the authorities to answer for his acts.”

This is about as violent an outburst as is ever permitted to appear in a Mexican publication, and there

are few papers that would dare go this far. Had *El Pais* wished to charge the guilt to General Diaz as the founder and perpetuator of the little czardom of the *jefes politicos*, it would not have dared to do so, for in Mexico the king can do no wrong; there is no publication in the country so strong that it would not be suppressed *at once* did it directly criticise the head of the Government. The comment of *El Tiempo*, another leading Conservative daily of the capital, on the Velardeña massacre, which appeared also in April, was:

“These irregular executions are a cause of profound dissatisfaction, and ought to be put a stop to at once for the sake of the prestige of the authorities; and in order to attain that end it is necessary that the authors of such outrages should be severely chastised, as we hope that those who are responsible for the sanguinary scenes that have been witnessed at Velardeña, and which have occasioned so much horror and indignation throughout the republic, will be.

“Let it not be said that Velardeña is an isolated case without precedents. Only to mention a few of the cases that are fresh in the public memory, there is the Papantla affair, the affair at Acayucam, the shootings at Orizaba at the time of the strike, the shootings at Colima, of which the Press has been talking just of late, and the frequent application of the *ley fuga*, of which the most recent instance occurred at Calimaya, State of Mexico.”

In closing this chapter perhaps I can do no better than refer to an item which appeared in the *Mexican Herald*, the leading daily published in English, on February 15, 1910. Though the facts were perfectly well authenticated, the *Herald* dared to print the story

only on the authority of another paper, and it presented the matter in such mild and cautious terms that it will require a careful reading to bring out the full horror of the deed. The scene of this judicial crime was a town in Michoacan, and the victims were Ignacio Chavez Guizar, one of the principal merchants of the place, and his son. The story, told by the *Pais*, and repeated by the *Herald*, is as follows :—

“ Some days ago a member of the rural police (a *rurale*) arrived at the house of the deceased in a state of intoxication, and began to insult and abuse the family. A quarrel succeeded in which the policeman was shot by José Chavez.

“ The Prefect of police arrived on the scene of the trouble and arrested the father and another son, Benjamin, the slayer having made his escape, and took them to the police station. That was the last seen of them. Soon the people of the town began to inquire what had happened to them. The story was spread that they had escaped from prison. But a relative, a nephew of the deceased father, having a certain suspicion that this story was not true, opened what appeared to him a recently made grave near the police station, and there found the corpses of the two men who had been recently arrested.”

CHAPTER IX

The Crushing of Opposition Parties

MEN and women on the Western continent are daily suffering death, imprisonment or exile for contending for those political rights which have been enjoyed by the United States from the beginning: rights of free speech, of free Press, the right of assembly, the right to vote and decide who shall hold the political offices and govern the land, the right to be secure in person and property. For these things hundreds of men and women have died within the past twelve months, tens of thousands within the past thirty years, in a country only divided from the United States by a shallow river and an imaginary geographical line.

In Mexico to-day are being lived life-stories such as carry one's imagination back to the days of the French Revolution and the times when constitutional government, that giant which was destined to complete the change from the Middle Ages to modernity, was being born. In those days men yielded up their lives for republicanism. Men are doing the same to-day in Mexico. The repressive part of the Diaz governmental machine which I described in the preceding chapter—the army, the *rurales*, the ordinary police, the secret

police, the *acordada*—are perhaps one-fifth for protection against common criminals, and four-fifths for the suppression of democratic movements among the people. The deadly certainty of this repressive machine of Diaz is probably not equalled anywhere in the world, not even in Russia. I remember a trusted Mexican official once summing up to me the feeling of the Mexican people, taught them by experience, on this thing. Said he: "It is possible that a murderer may escape the police here, that a highwayman may get away, but a political offender never—it is not possible for one to escape!"

I myself have observed numerous instances of the deadly fear in which the secret police and the Government assassin are held, even by those who would seem to have no cause for fear. Notable among these is the panic which overtook the family of a friend with whom I was staying—his brother, sister, sister-in-law and nephew and niece—when the secret police surrounded their house in the capital and waited for my friend to come out. They were middle-class Mexicans of the most intelligent sort, this family, very well known and highly respected, and yet their fright was pitiful. Now they dashed this way and that, now to a window and now to a door, wringing their hands. Now they huddled together, verbally painting the dire calamities that were sure to descend not only upon the hunted one, but upon their own heads because he had been found with them. My friend had committed no crime. He had not been identified with the revolutionists, he had merely expressed sympathy with them, and yet his

family could see nothing but death for him. And after the fugitive had escaped by jumping through a window and climbing over house-tops, the head of the family, speaking of his own danger, said to me: "I myself may go to jail for a time while they try to compel me to tell where my brother is hiding. If I do not go it will be only because the Government has decided to respect me for my position and my influential friends, yet hourly I am expecting the tap on the arm that will tell me to go."

The case of most extreme fear which I observed was that of a wealthy and beautiful woman, with whose husband De Lara and I took dinner one day. Our host drank deeply of wine, and as the meal was near an end his tongue loosened, and he spoke of matters which, for the sake of his own safety, he should have guarded. The wife sat opposite him, and as he spoke of Government murders of which he knew, her face blanched, and with her eyes she tried to warn him to be more careful. Finally I turned my face away, and, glancing sidewise, saw her take the opportunity to bend forward over the table and shake a trembling, jewelled finger in his face. Again and again she tried skilfully to turn the conversation, but without success, until finally, unable to control herself longer, she sprang forward and, clapping a hand over her husband's lips, tried to dam back the fearsome words he was saying. The terror on that woman's face I can never forget.

Fear so widespread and so extreme as I met with cannot be the result of imagined dangers. There must be something behind it, and there is. Secret killing is

constantly going on in Mexico, but to what extent no one will ever know.

Mexico has never really enjoyed political freedom. The country has merely had the promise of it. However, the promise has undoubtedly helped to keep patriotic Mexicans fighting for a fulfilment, however great the odds against them. When Porfirio Diaz captured the Mexican Government in 1876, the Mexican battle for political freedom seemed won. The last foreign soldier had been driven out of the country, the throttling grip of the Church on the State had been broken, the country had inaugurated a system of universal suffrage; it had adopted a Constitution much like that of the United States, and, finally, its President, one of the authors of the Constitution, Lerdo de Tejada, was in the act of putting that Constitution in operation. The personal revolution of General Porfirio Diaz, made successful by force of arms only after it had failed twice, put a sudden stop to the Progressive movement, and ever since that time the country has gone back politically year by year. If it were humanly possible to put a stop to the movement for democracy in a country by killing the leaders and persecuting all connected with it, democracy would long ago have been killed in Mexico, for the leaders of every political movement in opposition to President Diaz, however peaceful their methods, however worthy their cause, have either been put to death, imprisoned, or hunted out of the country.

Briefly I will sketch some of the more important of these Opposition movements. The first occurred toward the close of President Diaz's first term in office, and was

a movement having for its purpose the re-election of Lerdo, who, upon Diaz's capture of the power, had fled to the United States. The movement had not time to gain any headway and come out in the open before it was crushed in the most summary manner. The leaders were considered as conspirators, and were treated as if they were guilty of treasonable acts—worse, in fact, for they were not even given the semblance of a trial. On a night in June, 1879, nine men, prominent citizens of Vera Cruz, were dragged from their beds, and on a telegraphed order, "*Matalos en caliente*"—"Kill them in haste"—Governor Mier y Teran had them lined up against a wall and shot to death.

While this incident happened over thirty years ago it is perfectly authenticated, and the widow of General Teran exhibits to this day the yellow paper upon which are inscribed the fatal words. The killing is now known as the Massacre of Vera Cruz, and is noted because of the prominence of the victims rather than for the number of those who lost their lives.

X During the ten years following the Massacre of Vera Cruz two Mexicans aspired at different times to oppose Diaz for the presidency. One of these was General Ramon Corona, Governor of Jalisco, and the other was General Garcia de la Cadena, ex-Governor of Zacatecas. Neither lived to see "election day." While on his way home from a theatre one night Corona was stabbed to death by an assassin, and the latter was in turn stabbed to death by a company of police who, by a strange coincidence, were waiting for him around a near corner. Cadena heard that assassins were on his

trail and took flight. He tried to reach the United States, but was caught at Zacatecas and shot dead, being pierced by many bullets from the pistols of thugs, all of whom escaped. No one can prove who ordered the killing of Corono and Cadena, but it is easy to draw conclusions.

In 1891 Mexico was thrown into a ferment by the announcement of Diaz that he had decided to continue in power for still another term, a fourth one. An attempt was made to organise a movement of opposition, but it was beaten down with clubs and guns. Ricardo Flores Magon, the political refugee, took a student's part in this movement, and was one of the many who suffered imprisonment for it. The choice of the Opposition for the presidency was Dr. Ignacio Martinez. Dr. Martinez was compelled to flee the country, and after a period spent in Europe he settled in Laredo, Texas, where he edited a newspaper in opposition to President Diaz. One evening Dr. Martinez was waylaid and shot down by a horseman, who immediately afterwards crossed into Mexico and was seen to enter army barracks on the other side. It is a pretty well-authenticated fact that on the night of the assassination a high official, who was recognised as Diaz's right-hand man in the border States, received a telegram, saying, "Your order obeyed."

✧ The only movement which Diaz ever permitted to gain much headway in the matter of organisation was the Liberal party. The Liberal party sprang into birth in the autumn of 1900 after all danger of effective opposition against the dictator's entering upon a sixth

term had been obviated. A speech delivered in Paris by the Bishop of San Luis Potosi, in which the priest declared that, in spite of the Constitution and the laws of Mexico, the Church in that country was in a most flourishing and satisfactory condition, was the immediate cause of the organisation. Mexicans of all classes saw greater danger to the national welfare in the re-nascence of a Church hierarchy than they did even in a dictatorship by a single individual, for death must some day end the rule of the man, while the life of the Church is endless. They therefore once more took their lives in their hands and attempted to launch still another movement for the restoration of the republic.

In less than five months after the Bishop's speech 125 Liberal clubs had arisen in all parts of the country, a half-hundred of newspapers were started, and a call was issued for a convention to be held in the city of San Luis Potosi on January 5, 1901.

The congress was held in the famous Teatro de la Paz. It was jammed with delegates and spectators, among the latter being many soldiers and gendarmes, while in the street below a battalion of soldiers was drawn up, ready to deal with the assembly should its voice be raised against the dictator.

Anything so radical as an armed rebellion was not spoken of, however, and the various speakers steered carefully away from any direct criticism of President Diaz. On the other hand, resolutions were adopted pledging the Liberals to pursue the campaign of reform only by peaceful means.

Nevertheless, as soon as it became evident that the



JUAN SARABIA

Vice-President of the Liberal Party, consigned to San Juan de Ulua Prison and believed to have died there

Liberals were planning to nominate a candidate for the presidency three years later, the Government began operations. By Russian police methods the clubs all over the country were broken up, and the leading members were arrested on fictitious charges, imprisoned or forced into the army. A typical case was that of the club Ponciano Arriaga, of San Luis Potosi, which formed the national centre of the federation. On January 24, 1902, although other clubs had been violently broken up for doing so, the Ponciano Arriaga made bold to hold a public meeting. Here and there among the people were distributed soldiers and gendarmes in citizens' clothing, under the command of a prominent lawyer and Congressman, an *agent provocateur*, who had been commissioned by the Government to destroy the organisation.

At a given moment, according to Librado Rivera, who was vice-secretary of the club, the *agent provocateur* jumped to his feet to protest against the work of the club, and at the signal the disguised soldiers and gendarmes feigned to join in the protest, smashing the chairs to pieces against the floor. Their leader fired some shots into the air, but the genuine audience and the members of the club made not the least move lest they should give pretext for an attack, for they knew that the *agent provocateur* and his assistants were but staging a comedy in order to invite violence to themselves from some members of the club. Nevertheless, hardly were the shots fired when a crowd of policemen invaded the hall, striking right and left with their clubs. Camilo Arriaga, president of the club; Juan Sarabia,

secretary; Professor Librado Rivera, vice-secretary, as well as twenty-five other members, were arrested and accused of fictitious crimes, such as resisting the police, sedition, and so on. The result was that they were all imprisoned for nearly a year and the club was dissolved.

In the same way were dissolved the majority of the other clubs in the Liberal federation. The Liberal newspapers, public spokesmen of the clubs, were put out of business by the imprisonment of their editors and the destruction or confiscation of the printing plant. How many men and women lost their lives in the hunt of the Liberals which extended over the succeeding years will never be known. The jails, penitentiaries and military prisons were filled with them, thousands were impressed into the army and sent away to death in far Quintana Roo, while the *ley fuga* was called into requisition to get rid of men whom the Government did not dare to execute openly and without excuse. In the prisons tortures were resorted to such as would almost shame the Spanish Inquisition.

Upon the organisation of the Liberal party some fifty newspapers sprang up to support it in different parts of the country. Every one of them was suppressed by the police. Ricardo Flores Magon once showed me a list of more than fifty newspapers that were suppressed, and a list of more than a hundred editors who were imprisoned during the time he was struggling to publish a paper in Mexico. In his book, Fornaro gives a list of thirty-nine newspapers that were persecuted or subjected to trial on trivial excuses in the year 1902 for the purpose of providing against any public



ANTONIO I. VILLARREAL

Secretary of the Liberal Junta, imprisoned
in the United States



Photo: C. F. Kohler

LIBRADO RIVERA

The First Speaker of the Liberal Junta, who has
spent several years in prison in the United
States

agitation against a seventh term for President Diaz. During 1908 there were at least six outright suppressions, the newspapers put out of business being *El Piloto*, a daily of Monterey; *La Humanidad* and *La Tierra*, two weeklies of Yucatan; *El Tecolote*, of Aguascalientes, and two of Guanajuato, *El Barretero* and *El Hijo del Pueblo*. While I was in Mexico at least two foreign newspapermen were deported for criticising the Government, two Spaniards, Ross y Planas and Antonio Duch, editors of *La Tierra*, in Mérida. Finally, in 1909 and 1910 the story of the suppression of the Liberal party and its Press was repeated in the suppression of the Democratic party and its Press—but I must reserve that for another chapter.

During the Liberal agitation many of the best known writers of Mexico fell by the assassin's hand. Among them were Jesus Valades, of Mazatlan, Sinaloa. Having written articles against the despotism, while walking home from the theatre one night with his newly wedded wife, he was set upon by several men, who killed him with daggers. In Tampico in 1902, Vincente Rivero Echeagarey, a newspaperman, dared to criticise the acts of the President. He was shot down at night while in the act of opening his own door. Jesus Olmos y Contreras, a newspaperman of the State of Puebla, about the same time published articles exposing an alleged licentious act of Governor Martinez. Two "friends" invited Contreras to supper. In the street the three walked arm in arm, the writer in the middle. Suddenly thugs fell upon him from behind. The false friends held Contreras tight until he had been struck down,

when a heavy rock was used to beat the head of the victim into pulp so that his identification might be impossible.

In Mérida, Yucatan, in December, 1905, a writer named Abalardo Ancona protested against the "re-election" of Governor Olegario Molina. Ancona was thrown into jail, where he was shot and stabbed to death.

In 1907 another writer, Augustin y Tovao, died of poison in Belem prison. Jesus Martinez Carrion, a noted newspaper artist, and Alberto Arans, a writer, left Belem to die in a hospital. Dr. Juan de la Pena, editor of a Liberal newspaper, died in the military prison of San Juan de Ulua. Juan Sarabia, another well-known editor, was also imprisoned there and is now supposed to be dead; at any rate, his friends can get no word of him. Daniel Cabrera, one of the oldest Liberal editors, was a cripple, and many times he was carried to jail on a stretcher.

Professor Luis Toro, an editor of San Luis Potosi, was imprisoned and beaten with such brutal severity that he died. In the same prison Primo Feliciano Velasquez, a lawyer, and publisher of *El Estandarte*, was beaten so severely that he became a life-long cripple. Another attorney and editor, Francisco de P. Morelos, was beaten in the city of Monterey for writing against the Government in his paper, *La Defensa*. In Guajuato, José R. Granados, editor of *El Barretero*, was beaten for writing against the Government. In Napimi a lawyer, Francisco A. Luna, was beaten and wounded with knives for writing against the Government.

And so a list could be given pages long. Ricardo Flores Magon, Jesus Magon, Enrique Magon, Antonio J. Villarreal, Librado Rivera, Manuel Sarabia, and many others spent months in prison for publishing Opposition papers. Others were assassinated. As I said before, autocracy feeds on murder, and the rule of Porfirio Diaz has been one long story of murder. When assassination, imprisonment and countless forms of persecution had destroyed their organisation in Mexico, the leaders who still retained their lives and liberty fled to the United States and established their headquarters there. They organised the Junta, or governing board of the party, established newspapers, and it was only after the agents of the home Government had followed them there and succeeded in harassing them with false charges which resulted in their imprisonment, that they abandoned all hope of doing anything peaceful for the regeneration of their country, and decided to organise an armed force for the purpose of overthrowing the Mexican dictator.

The story of the persecutions visited upon the Mexican refugees in the United States I will detail in another chapter. It is sufficient here to pass over them and point merely to the result of the attempts that have been made to bring about a change in the government by revolution.

Briefly, the Liberal party has launched two armed revolutions against Diaz. Both of these have come to grief at an early stage; first, because of the efficiency of the Government in putting spies in the midst of the revolutionists and thus being able to anticipate them;

second, because of the severe methods used in repression; and third, because of the effective co-operation of the United States Government, since the uprisings were necessarily directed from that side of the line.

The first Liberal attempt at revolution was to have been launched in September, 1906. The rebels claim to have had thirty-six military groups partially armed within Mexico and ready to rise at one signal. They expected that at the first show of strength on their part the army would desert to their standard and that the civilians would receive them with open arms.

Whether they judged the army and the people correctly will never be known, for they never succeeded in making any great show of strength. Government spies betrayed the various groups, and when the appointed hour struck the majority of the leaders were already dead or domiciled in San Juan de Ulua. The revolution was to begin on the National Independence Day, September 16, and the way the Government prepared for it generally may be imagined from the report which I previously quoted of the large number of secret killings in the capital.

Liberal groups in two cities succeeded in making a start. One group captured the town of Jimenez, Coahuila, and another laid siege to the army barracks at Acayucam, State of Vera Cruz. Civilians joined them in these two cities, and for a day they enjoyed partial success. Then train-loads of troops got into each town, and in a few days what was left of the rebel force was on its way to prison. The concentration of troops upon those towns was nothing short of wonderful. As before

stated, though Acayucam is comparatively isolated, 4,000 regular soldiers reached the scene within twenty-four hours after hostilities began.

The second rebellion was scheduled to come off in July, 1908. This time the Liberals claimed to have forty-six military groups ready to rise in Mexico. But, as it turned out, nearly all the fighting was done by Mexican refugees who re-crossed from the United States at Del Rio, Texas, and other border centres, armed with guns purchased in the States. The Liberal leaders here claim that every military group in Mexico was anticipated by the Government and the members arrested before the appointed hour. This certainly occurred at Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, and the affair, receiving much publicity, caused the groups from the United States to act prematurely. It is also claimed that some of the strongest groups were betrayed by a criminal who, because of his facial resemblance to Antonio I. Villarreal, secretary of the Liberal Junta, was freed from the Torreon jail and pardoned by the authorities on condition that he should go among the revolutionists, pass himself off as Villarreal, and betray them. I personally know of two cases in which emissaries who left the Liberal headquarters in the United States carrying orders for the rising of certain groups fell into the clutches of the Government soon after they crossed the line.

Nevertheless, the rebellion of June, 1908, profoundly shook Mexico for a time. The fighting in Coahuila furnished the American Press with a week's sensation, and it was a month before the last of the rebels had

been hunted down and shot by the superior forces of soldiers and *rurales*.

Such was the "Rebellion of Las Vacas," as it has come to be known both in the United States and in Mexico. As a result of this rebellion and the previous one, the Mexican agents in the United States at last succeeded in breaking up the Liberal organisation there almost as effectively as it was broken up in Mexico. At the time of writing, all the Liberal leaders in the United States are either in prison or in hiding, and no Mexican dares openly to espouse the cause of the Liberal party for fear that he, too, may be thrown behind the bars on a charge of having been in some way connected with one of those rebellions.

CHAPTER X

The Eighth "Unanimous Election" of President Diaz

IN order that the reader may entirely appreciate the fact that the political reign of terror established by Diaz in 1876 continues in full blast to the present day, I shall devote this chapter to a record of the Presidential campaign, so-called, which ended on June 26, 1910, with the eighth "unanimous election" of President Diaz.

To the end that the authenticity of this record may be beyond question, I have excluded from it all information that has come to me by means of rumour, gossip, letters, and personal reports—everything except what has already been printed in newspapers as common news. In hardly an instance, moreover, was one of these newspapers opposed to the regime of General Diaz; nearly all were favourable to him. Therefore, if there are any errors in these reports, the truth has no doubt been minimised rather than overstated.

The Mexican Presidential campaign of 1910, if I may so denominate it, properly dates from the month of March, 1908. At that time, through James Creelman and a magazine, President Diaz announced to the world, first, that under no circumstances

would he consent to enter upon an eighth term; and second, that he would be glad to assist in the transference of the governmental power from himself personally to a democratic organisation of citizens. According to Mr. Creelman his words were :

“ No matter what my friends and supporters say, I retire when my present term of office ends, and I shall not serve again. I shall be eighty years old then.

“ I have waited patiently for the day when the people of the Mexican Republic would be prepared to choose and change their Government at every election without danger of armed revolutions, and without injury to the national credit, or interference with national progress. I believe that day has come.

“ I welcome an Opposition party in the Mexican Republic. If it appears, I will regard it as a blessing, not an evil. And if it can develop power, not to exploit but to govern, I will stand by it, support it, advise it, and forget myself in the successful inauguration of complete democratic government in the country.”

The interview was reprinted by nearly every periodical in Mexico, and it produced a profound sensation. It is not exaggerating to say that the entire nation, outside of official circles, was overjoyed by the news. The nation took General Diaz at his word, and immediately there arose a lively but temperate discussion not only of the various possible candidates for the Presidency, but also of innumerable questions relating to popular government. Books and pamphlets were written urging Diaz to immortalise himself as a second Washington by giving over the government to his people when



BENITO JUAREZ, JUN.

Son of Mexico's first President, Member of Congress, and
President of the Democratic Party

he might easily retain the supreme power until his death.

But at the height of this discussion the word was passed quietly about that the President's promise to retire at the end of the term was not final. To show how thoroughly the Government had public speech and Press under control at this time, it is only necessary to say that at once, upon its being understood that there was no vacancy, the discussion of Presidential candidates for 1910 stopped.

Diaz was so thoroughly entrenched in power that there seemed little use in opposing him directly, but the people remembered the other statement that he had made and that he had not yet retracted—that he would welcome an Opposition movement in Mexico. The declaration that he would support an Opposition movement seemed paradoxical, and so the heads of the Progressive element were laid together to devise a movement that, while not being in direct opposition to Diaz, would at the same time be able to work an opening wedge into the log of democracy.

The plan hit upon was to urge President Diaz to retain his seat and in the same voice to ask that the country be permitted freely to choose a Vice-President, so that in case Diaz should die during his next term his successor might be more or less in line with the desires and ambitions of the people.

The silence with which President Diaz received the publication of this plan was taken for consent, whereupon there began a widespread agitation, an organisation of clubs, the holding of public discussions,

newspaper debates, all of which might be very well taken as proof that President Diaz was right when he declared the Mexican people fit at last to enjoy the blessings of a real republic.

According to Mr. Barron, in an interview published in the *New York World*, within a short time no fewer than five hundred clubs were organised in Mexico. In January, 1909, these clubs held a convention in the capital, formed a central organisation known as the Central Democratic Club, elected officers, and adopted a platform, the main points of which were as follows:—

Abolition of the *jefes politicos*, and the transference of their power to municipal boards of aldermen.

The extension of primary education.

Suffrage laws to be enacted and enforced, placing the franchise on a mixed educational and property basis.

Greater freedom for the Press.

Stricter enforcement of the laws of reform (against monastic orders, etc.).

Greater respect for human life and liberty, and a more effective administration of justice.

Legislation making it possible for working men to secure financial indemnity from their employers in case of accidents, and to enable the public to sue transportation companies and other like corporations on the same grounds.

Agrarian laws for the encouragement of agriculture.

The officers elected to head the new party were four bright young Congressmen: Benito Juarez, jun., president; Manuel Calero, vice-president; Diodoro Batalla, secretary; Jesus Urueta, treasurer.

On April 2 the Re-electionist Club, an organisation



JESUS URUETA
Congressman and Treasurer of the Democratic Party

consisting wholly of office-holders, appointees of Diaz, met and duly nominated General Diaz and his Vice-President, Ramon Corral, for re-election. Shortly afterwards, in accordance with its original plan, the Democratic party also named President Diaz for re-election. For Vice-President it named General Bernardo Reyes, Governor of Nuevo Leon.

Take a look at the general situation for a moment. Here was a party of men, principally from the middle-class, consisting of the best educated, most intelligent and most progressive elements in the country. Their platform shows their demands to have been excessively moderate. The party had sprung into existence through the published promise of General Diaz to permit it to function. In order to assure itself of safety at his hands, the party had placed General Diaz at the head of its tickets. Finally, the campaign which it launched was marvellously temperate and self-restrained. There was no call to arms. There was no hint of rebellion or revolution in any form. Such criticism as was offered of existing institutions was marked by studious calmness and care. General Diaz was even praised. The people were asked to vote for him, but—to vote for Reyes as Vice-President.

It required only a few days to develop the fact that in the event of an election Reyes would triumph over Corral by a large majority. Former enemies of Reyes were for him, not because they loved him, but because the movement behind him held out a promise of a little self-government for Mexico. As soon as the popularity of the Democratic party became evident, despite the

order that prevailed at its meetings, despite the temperateness of its Press, despite the fact that the laws were studiously observed, instead of supporting and advising it, as he had promised to do, General Diaz took action to destroy it.

His first open move was to nip the propaganda for Reyes that was beginning in the army. This he did by banishing to remote parts of the country a dozen army officers who had subscribed themselves as favourable to the candidature of Reyes.

This action of Diaz has been defended on the ground that he had a perfect right to prohibit members of the army from exercising political functions. But inasmuch as the president of the Re-electionist Club was an officer in the army, inasmuch as numerous army officers engaged openly and actively in the Corral campaign, it would seem that these men were proceeded against rather because they were for Reyes than because they were members of the army.

Captain Reuben Morales, one of the punished officers, had accepted the vice-presidency of a Reyist club. He was ordered to resign from the club or to resign from the army. He resigned from the army, or attempted to do so, but his resignation was not accepted, and he was sent away to the Territory of Quintana Roo. Eight of the offending officers were sent to Sonora to be placed in the field against the Yaqui Indians.

The banishment of the army officers took place at the end of May. Following close upon the incident came action against some Democratic leaders who occupied positions in the Government. Congressmen



Photo: Sandoral

GENERAL BERNARDO REYES

Run by the Democratic Party as Vice-President, on which account he was deprived of his Governorship

Urueta and Lerdo de Tejada, jun., and Senator José Lopez Portillo, were among the first to be deposed from their positions.

Some students of the national schools of jurisprudence, mines, medicine and the preparatory school of Mexico City, were encouraged in forming a club to further the candidature of Corral. But when the students of the Jalisco State schools of law and medicine formed a club to further the candidature of Reyes, the Government ordered them either to abandon their political activity or to leave school. They sent a committee to Diaz to appeal for fair play. But he gave them no satisfaction; the threat of expulsion was renewed, with the result that so many students were expelled from the Jalisco schools that the schools actually closed for lack of pupils.

In July a committee of Re-electionists from Mexico City held a public meeting in favour of Corral in the Delgado theatre, Guadalajara, capital of Jalisco. The audience, composed largely of Democratic students, hissed one of the speakers. Whereupon companies of police, which had been held in readiness, were ordered to clear the building and square.

This the police did after the manner of Mexico—with sabre, club and pistol. The figures of the killed, wounded and imprisoned were suppressed by the authorities, but all newspaper reports at the time agree that there were persons killed and wounded, as well as imprisoned. Following this occurrence, Guadalajara was filled with State and National troops. General Ignacio Bravo was hurried from Quintana Roo tem-

porarily to replace the existing head of the military zone; and, finally, all political expression of the Democrats was put down with an iron hand.

Among the prominent leaders of the Democratic movement in Guadalajara who were made to suffer at this time was Ambrosio Ulloa, an engineer and lawyer, founder of a school for engineers, and head of the Corona Flour Milling Company. Ulloa happened to be president of the Reyes Club of Guadalajara, and on the theory that the club was in some way responsible for the so-called student riot, Ulloa, a week after the occurrence, was taken to jail and imprisoned under a charge of "sedition."

During the putting down of the student movement in Guadalajara at least one case of the *ley fuga* was reported from that city. The victim was William de la Pena, a former student of the Christian Brothers' College, St. Louis, Mo., also of the Ohio State University. The case was reported fully in the St. Louis papers, from which place a dispatch was sent out through the Associated Press. Relating the occurrence, the Press dispatch said:

"He (Pena) was at his country home, when an officer of the *rurales* invited him to go with him. He mounted his horse and went. Next day servants found his body, riddled with bullets."

On September 7 Congressman Heriberto Barron, who had mildly criticised Diaz in an open letter, fled from the country and took up his residence in New York. One Mexican paper has it that agents of the

Diaz secret police forced Barron upon a Ward liner at Vera Cruz and compelled him to leave the country. In New York newspapers Barron declared that he had fled to escape imprisonment. A few months later he begged to be allowed to return home, but was told that he must remain an exile until the death of the President. The heinousness of Barron's crime may be gathered from the following paragraphs, the most uncomplimentary in his open letter to Diaz :

“ At the *velada* to which I have alluded, when your name was pronounced by the orators, it was received with unanimous hisses and marks of disapproval.

“ On the night of the performance given at the principal theatre in aid of the Guerrero victims, the entire audience maintained a sinister silence on your arrival. The same silence prevailed when you departed.

“ If you had occasion, as I have, to mingle with the gatherings and groups of people of different classes, not all Reyists, you would hear, Mr. President, expressions of indignation against you spoken openly on all sides.”

Within ten days after the banishment of Barron a foreign resident, Frederick Palmer by name, an Englishman, was lodged in Belem prison, denied bail, held *incomunicado* for some days, and finally was sentenced to one month's imprisonment—for doing nothing worse than remarking that he thought Diaz had been President of Mexico long enough.

On the 28th of July Celso Cortez, vice-president of the Central Club Reyista of Mexico City, was lodged in Belem prison for making a speech at the club rooms criticising members of the Diaz Cabinet.

Following came a long list of arrests of members of the Democratic party throughout the country. Usually the charge was "sedition," but never was any evidence produced to prove sedition as Americans understand that term. In this movement there was never any hint of armed rebellion or any concerted violation of existing laws. Of all these cases, I have yet to learn of one in which reasonable ground for the arrest existed. In many instances the victims were kept in jail for months, and in some they were sentenced to long terms in prison. The number persecuted in this way is problematical, as reports of only the more prominent cases got into the Mexican Press.

During the months following the attempt to place a candidate in the field against Vice-President Corral, the Democrats tried to strengthen their position by contesting some State and local "elections." As a result there were many arrests, and several massacres by troops or local authorities. While such incidents were going on, the Press situation was being vigorously handled. The Government bought or subsidised newspapers on the one hand, and suppressed hostile newspapers on the other. Some thirty or forty daily and weekly publications espoused the Democratic cause. I do not know of one of them which the Government did not compel to suspend operations. Despite the fact that they were careful of their utterances, they were put out of business, the majority of them by imprisonment of their editors or seizure of their printing plant, or both. I have a list of these imprisonments and confiscations, but I need only give particulars of two or three.



GENERAL GALLARDO
President of the Re-Electionist Club

In October, 1909, Alfonso B. Peniche, editor of *La Redención*, Mexico City, was arrested for "defamation" of a minor employee of the Government. Despite his imprisonment, Peniche succeeded in continuing his publication for a time, although in order to do so he was compelled to smuggle his "copy" through the bars of the prison. After remaining in Belem a short time he published an article asking for an investigation into the conditions of Belem, alleging that an instrument of torture called "the rattler" was used upon the prisoners. This undoubtedly had something to do with the extreme severity of the punishment that was meted out to Peniche, for after remaining five months in Belem he was sentenced to banishment to the penal colony on the Tres Marias Islands for four long years.

Undoubtedly the charge against Peniche was only a subterfuge to get him out of the way. The story of his "defamation," according to the *Mexico Nuevo*, the most conservative of the Democratic dailies, was this :

"In his paper *La Redención*, now suspended, he published a statement signed by various merchants making charges against a tax collector of the Federal district relating to acts committed in his official capacity. The Bureau of Taxation took action in the matter, ordering an investigation, and, as a result, the charges were sustained and the tax collector was removed by the Secretary of Hacienda, with the approval of the President of the Republic, for 'not deserving the confidence of the Government'; moreover, he was arraigned before the first judge of the district, for an inquiry into the supposed fraud of the treasury, and this inquiry is now pending.

"This being the case, there were many reasons to

suppose that Peniche, in publishing the accusation, was working in the public interest, and was not committing any crime. Instead of this, he is convicted of defamation, an even more serious offence than libel."

El Diario del Hogar, an old and Conservative daily paper of the capital which had espoused the cause of the Democrats, printed an account of Peniche's banishment also, the article appearing under the caption "Newspapermen Watch Out." The authorities at once forced the suspension of the paper. The owner, Filomena Mata, an aged man, who had retired from active life; Filomena Mata, jun., managing editor, and the mechanical foreman, were taken to prison. A month afterwards it was reported that father and son were still in jail, and that the elder Mata was dying of ill-treatment.

Some time later, in March, 1910, the Government forced the suspension of the *Mexico Nuevo*. It was revived later, however, and is the only Democratic paper which survived the Reyes campaign.

Paulino Martinez was one of the oldest and best-known newspapermen in Mexico. His papers were the only ones in opposition to the policy of the Administration which succeeded in weathering the storm of Press persecutions in past years. For several years they were the only Opposition papers in Mexico. Martinez kept them alive, so he told me himself, by refraining always from making direct criticisms of high officials or acts of General Diaz.

But in the campaign against the Democratic movement Martinez's papers went with the rest. When the Government began action against him his papers num-



PAULINO MARTINEZ

A Mexican Journalist who escaped to the United States

bered four, *La Voz de Juarez* ("The Voice of Juarez"), *El Insurgente*, *El Chinaco*, all weeklies, and *El Anti-Re-Electionista*, a daily. All were published in the capital.

The first blow fell upon *La Voz de Juarez*, on the 3rd of August, 1909; it was suppressed and the plant confiscated. "Slandering the army" was the charge. The police looked for Martinez, but failed to find him. All minor employees found about the shop were arrested, and it was announced that the plant would be sold.

On the 3rd of September the secret police descended upon *El Insurgente* and *El Chinaco*, also upon *El Paladin*, a weekly paper published by Ramon Alvarez Soto. The type-forms of all three publications were seized and taken to the offices of the secret police as *pièces de conviction*. Two editors, five printers, two other employees and Mrs. Martinez, were put in jail. After five days the reporters and printers were released. But Mrs. Martinez and Enrique Patino, a member of *El Paladin* staff, who had been apprehended later, were held on charges of sedition.

El Anti-Re-Electionista, the last of the Martinez papers, succumbed on the 28th of September. The office was closed, the plant seized and sealed with the seal of the court, and the twenty-two employees found about the office were all taken prisoners and charged with sedition. The list consisted of three members of the office executive force, one reporter, fifteen type-setters, and three bindery girls.

How long these twenty-two remained in prison is not recorded. Six months later I saw a report that at least one of the Martinez editors, D. Feliz Palavicini,

was still in jail. Mrs. Martinez remained there for several months. Her husband succeeded in escaping to the United States, and when Mrs. Martinez joined him neither of them had a dollar. Mrs. Martinez, by the way, is a native of the United States.

Most remarkable of all was the treatment meted out to the nominee of the Democratic party, General Bernardo Reyes, Governor of the State of Nuevo Leon. Doubly, trebly remarkable was that treatment in view of the fact that General Reyes not only did not accept the nomination of the Democratic party, but actually repudiated it. Four times he repudiated it. Not only so, but during the months in which calamities were being heaped upon him and his friends he never gave utterance to one word or raised his little finger in the most insignificant act that might be construed as an offence to President Diaz, to Vice-President Corral, or to any of the members of the Diaz Government. By its military bluster the Government tried to create the impression that Reyes was on the verge of an armed revolt, but of that there is not the slightest evidence.

As a candidate General Reyes did not perfectly fit the ideal of the leaders of the Democratic movement, for he had never before appeared in any way as a champion of Democratic principles. Doubtless the Democrats chose him, as a Government organ alleged, because of their belief in his "ability to face the music." Reyes was a strong figure, and it requires a strong figure to rally the people when their fears are strong. It was for this reason that the Democratic leaders pinned their faith to him, and they launched their campaign on the

assumption that when he discovered that the people were almost unanimous for him, he would accept the nomination.

In this the Democrats were mistaken. Reyes chose not to face the music. Four times he repudiated the nomination publicly. He retired to his mountain resort and there waited for the storm to blow over. He put himself out of touch with his partisans and with the world. He made no move that might give offence to the Government.

And yet—what happened to Reyes?

Diaz deposed the head of the military zone which includes the State of Nuevo Leon, and placed in command General Trevino, a personal enemy of Reyes. Trevino marched upon Reyes' State at the head of an army. He stopped on his way at Saltillo, and, by a display of arms, compelled the resignation of Governor Cardenas of Coahuila merely because the latter was a friend of Reyes. He threw his army into Monterey and overturned the local government, as well as all the municipal governments in the entire State. Diaz ordered a fine of a third of a million dollars to be imposed upon Reyes' financial associates, in order that he, as well as they, might be dealt a crushing blow financially. Trevino surrounded Reyes in his mountain resort and compelled him to return, a virtual prisoner, and to hand in his resignation. Finally, Reyes was sent out of the country, on a "military mission" to Europe.

So perished Reyism, as the Government papers derisively called the Opposition. The Democratic

movement was demoralised for the time being, and the Government doubtless imagined that the end of Reyes meant the end of the Democratic movement.

But not so. The democratic ambitions of the people had been aroused to a high pitch, and they would not be denied. Instead of intimidating them, the banishment of Reyes and the high-handed acts that went before it only served to make the people bolder in their demands. From daring to nominate a candidate merely for Vice-President they passed on to nominating a candidate for President. The pseudo-Opposition party became an Opposition party indeed.

In Francisco I. Madero the party found its new leader. Madero was a distinguished citizen of Coahuila, a member of one of the oldest and most respected families in Mexico. The Maderos had never involved themselves in Diaz politics; they were rich farmers, well educated, cultured and Progressive. Madero's first notable interest in democracy was shown in his book, "La Sucesion Presidencial," which he published in 1908. It was a thoughtful but mild criticism of the Diaz régime, and in the end it urged the people to insist upon the right to engage in the elections of 1910.

Madero's book is said to have been suppressed in Mexico, but only after it had gained wide circulation, and its influence was no doubt considerable in prompting the launching of the Democratic party. After the nomination of Reyes, Madero went about the country in his own private car, addressing public meetings, not campaigning for Reyes, but confining himself chiefly to



FRANCISCO I. MADERO

Candidate for the Vice-Presidency, who was arrested
a fortnight before the Election

the dissemination of the beggarly elements of popular government.

The banishment of Reyes did not stop Madero's speech-making, and before the end of 1909 it was announced that the Democratic and Reyist clubs would reorganise as "Anti-Re-Electionist" clubs, and that a National Convention would be held at which the Anti-Re-Electionist party would be organised and nominations made for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the Republic.

The Convention was held in the middle of April, 1910; Madero was nominated President and Dr. Francisco Vasquez Gomez, Vice-President. The scattered elements of the interrupted campaign were got together, and Madero and such others of the Democratic leaders as were out of jail went on with their speech-making—careful, as ever, to criticise but sparingly and to encourage no breaches of the peace.

The result was instantaneous. The nation was again in a fervour of enthusiasm over the idea of actually exercising its constitutional right of franchise. Had the movement been small, it would have been allowed to go on its way and spend itself. But the movement was tremendous. It organised a parade in the national capital such as Diaz, with all his powers of coercion and of hire, had never been able to equal in his own behalf. Every marcher in the parade knew that in walking with that throng he was laying himself open to prosecution, to ruin, perhaps to death, but yet so great was the throng that the Government organs themselves were forced to admit that the parade was a

triumph for the "Maderists," as the Democrats were now called.

Before the Convention and during the Convention the Diaz Press pooh-poohed Madero, his programme and his party, as too insignificant to be noticed. But before the delegates had returned to their homes the movement had assumed such grave proportions that the Government proceeded against it as it had proceeded against the Reyists before the banishment of Reyes. Everywhere members of Anti-Re-Electionist clubs were thrown into jail; such Progressive newspapers as remained and dared to espouse the Democratic cause were suppressed, and the police power was used to break up the clubs, stop public meetings, and prevent receptions being accorded to the party's candidates as they travelled through the country.

In June, the month of election, matters became very much worse. Estrada and Madero themselves were arrested. On the night of the 6th of June they were secretly taken and secretly held in the penitentiary at Monterey until the truth became noised about, when charges were formally preferred against them. Estrada was charged with "sedition." Madero was first accused of protecting Estrada from arrest, but soon afterwards this charge was dropped, and he was accused of "insulting the nation," then of "insulting the President." He was removed from the penitentiary of Nuevo Leon to the penitentiary of San Luis Potosi, and here he remained *incomunicado* until after the election.

The Presidential campaign ended amid many reports of Government persecutions. A reputable dispatch,



PORFIRIO OSORIO

A Mexican Editor imprisoned during the last Presidential Campaign

dated June 9, said that in breaking up a gathering at Saltillo, following the news of the arrest of Madero, the police rode down the crowds, injuring more than two hundred people. Another, dated June 14, reported that in the cities of Torreon, Saltillo and Monterey more than one hundred persons were arrested on the charge of "insulting" the Government; that at Ciudad Porfirio Diaz forty-seven prominent citizens were arrested in one day, and that a big exodus of citizens of the border towns, fearing arrest, was taking place to the United States. Still another dispatch, dated June 21, said that more than four hundred arrests had been made in northern Mexico the previous day and that a thousand political prisoners were being held *incomunicado*, and would so remain until after the election.

"Election day" found soldiers or *rurales* in every town and hamlet. Booths were actually put up here and there, and a farce of an election was gone through with. Soldiers held the polls, and every man who cast a ballot for any but the Administration ticket knew that, in doing so, he was risking imprisonment, confiscation of property, even death.

Even with all this intimidation the Anti-Re-Electionists believe that they actually received a majority of the votes. The Government, after going through a form of counting the vote, in due time announced to the world that the Mexican people had proved "practically unanimous" in their choice of Diaz and Corral. This did not satisfy the people, and protests were heard from every centre of population. The Government went ahead with its persecution of the Anti-Re-Electionists,

and among the quota of political prisoners taken in the drag-net of the police of the capital on the 5th of July were two young girls, Esperanza and Eulalia Jiminez, daughters of Maria Mendez de Jiminez, secretary of the women's Anti-Re-Electionist club, Hijas de Cuahuatemoc. Every Anti-Re-Electionist newspaper had been suppressed, but others rose in their places; new editors bobbed up even more fearless than those who had gone to prison. The storm of protest rose higher and higher, and for the first time there were actually law-breaking riots on the part of the people.

CHAPTER XI

Critics and Corroboration

THE first five chapters of this book, which, in a rather less extended form, were published serially in an American magazine in the autumn of 1909, called forth a considerable measure of comment both in the United States and in Mexico. Both the magazine and myself were deluged with letters, many of which asserted that the writers themselves had witnessed conditions similar to those which I described. On the other hand, there were many who flatly averred that I was a fabricator and a slanderer, declaring, variously, that nothing akin to slavery or even to peonage existed in Mexico; that, if it did, it was the only practical way to civilise Mexico; anyhow, that the Mexican working people were the happiest and most fortunate on the face of the earth; that President Diaz was the most benign ruler of the age; that a long enough hunt would discover cases of barbarity even in the United States, and we had better clean our own house first; that there were 900,000,000 dollars of American capital invested in Mexico, and so on and so on.

The remarkable thing, indeed, about the discussion was the headlong manner in which certain magazines,

newspapers, book publishers and private individuals in the United States rushed to the defence of President Diaz. These individuals denounced me in the most vigorous terms, on the one hand, and let loose a flood of adulatory literature concerning President Diaz on the other. I imagine that it would require a very long freight-train to carry all the flattering literature that was circulated in the States by the friends of Diaz in the six months following the first appearance of my articles upon the news-stands.

The perusal of my articles and this other literature also would drive anyone inevitably to the conclusion that somebody was deliberately distorting the truth. Who was distorting the truth? Who—and why? Since the “who” and the “why” are peculiarly a part of this story, I may be pardoned for pausing at this point to reply. First, to the question, Who?

It would give me pleasure to present here some hundreds of letters which, among them, corroborate many times over all the essential features of my account of Mexican slavery. But did I do so, there would be little room left in the book for anything else. I can merely say that, in most cases, the writers claimed to have spent various numbers of years in Mexico. The letters were unsolicited, the writers were paid by no one; in many cases, they were endangering their own interests in writing. If I am the liar, all of these persons must be liars also—a proposition which I doubt if anyone could believe were he to read the letters.

But I am not printing these letters, and I do not ask the reader to consider them in my favour. Samples



Photo: C. B. Waite

A TEHUANTEPEC BEAUTY

of them, and a large enough number to be convincing, have appeared, however, in the magazine referred to above.

I shall pass over, also, the published testimony of other writers—well-known investigators, who have corroborated my story in more or less detail. For example, the account of the slavery of the American rubber plantations, by Herman Whitaker; the accounts of the slavery of Yucatan by the English writers, Arnold and Frost. The corroboration which I shall present here is taken almost entirely from my critics themselves, persons who started out to deny the slavery or to palliate it, and who ended by admitting the existence of the essential features of that institution.

To begin with the least important class of witnesses, I take up the statements of several American planters who rushed into print to defend the system of President Diaz. There is Mr. George S. Gould, manager of the San Gabriel rubber plantation on the isthmus of Tehuantepec. In various newspapers Mr. Gould was quoted extensively, especially in the *San Francisco Bulletin*, where he speaks of the "absolute inaccuracy" of my writings. Here are some of his explanations taken from that paper :

"As general manager of the San Gabriel, I send \$2,500 at a certain season to my agent in the city of Oaxaca. He opens an employment office, and calls for a quota of seventy-five men. . . .

"The labourer is given an average of 50 cents (Mex.) a week until the debt he owes the Company is liquidated. The Company is not obliged to pay him this amount, but

does so to keep him contented. He is usually contracted for for periods ranging from six months to three years. In three years, if he is reasonably industrious and saving, he will not only have paid off his debt money, but he will draw his liquidation with money in his pocket. . . .

“The sum total is this: The peon slavery in Mexico might be called slavery in the strictest sense of the word, but as long as the labourer is under contract to the plantation owner, he is being done an inestimable good. It is the plantation owners who prevent the peon—ordinarily worthless humans with no profession—from becoming public charges. Unwittingly perhaps they block a lawless and irresponsible element by teaching the peon to use his hands and brain.”

And in such words Mr. Gould imagined he argued the whole crime away. The burden of some of my critics' writings is that the cases of slavery that I found were the rare exception. Here we have a man who seems to have become so used to the sight of the system that he can admit that the thing amounts to slavery and yet can defend it!

Mr. Edward H. Thompson was for many years the American consul in Yucatan, and is the owner of a henequen plantation. Immediately following the publication of my first article, Mr. Thompson issued a long statement that was published in a number of papers. Mr. Thompson began by denouncing my article as “outrageous in its statements and absolutely false in many details.” But read what Mr. Thompson himself says are the facts:

“Reduced to its lowest terms, and looking at the matter without the desire to produce a sensational magazine

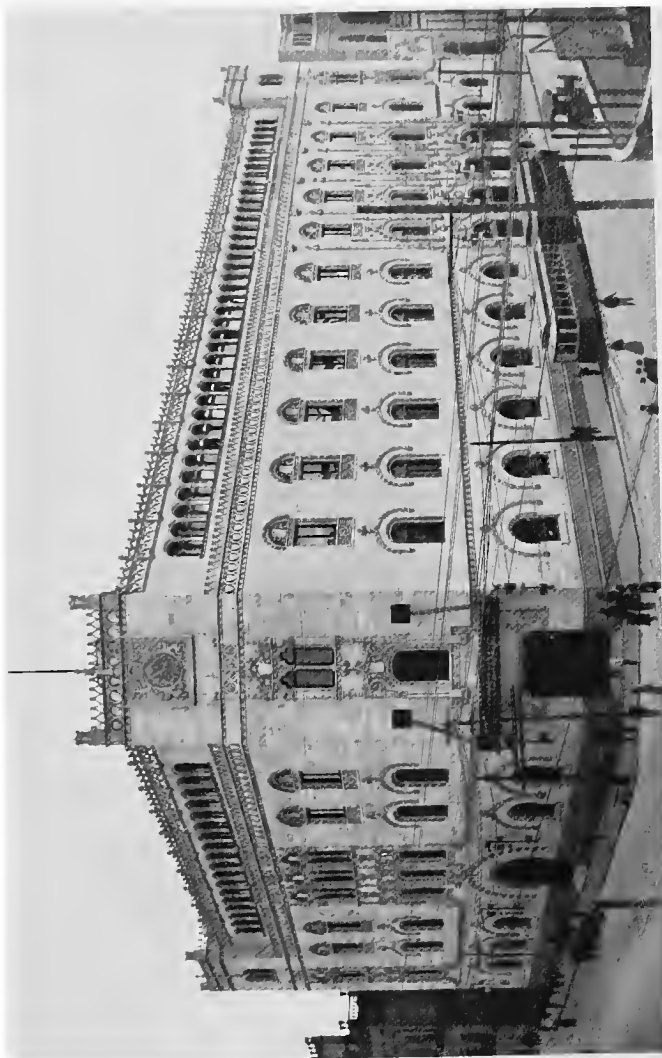


Photo: C. B. Waite

ONE OF MEXICO CITY'S GREAT PUBLIC BUILDINGS
The Post Office

article, the so-called slavery becomes one of simple contract convenience to both parties. The native needs the money, or thinks he does, while the planter needs the labour of the native servant.

“The indebted servant is held more or less strictly to the terms of the verbal and implied contract according to the personal equation of the planter or his representative. This general fact is equally true in all of the great industries of our country as well as in Yucatan.

“I do not seek to defend the system of indebted labour. It is bad in theory and worse in practice. It is bad for the planter, because it locks up capital that could otherwise be employed in developing the resources of the plantation. It is worse for the servant, because by reason of it he learns to lean too much on the powerful protection of his creditor-employer.”

Reading those lines with discrimination, you will observe that Mr. Thompson admits that debt slavery is prevalent in Yucatan, admits that a similar system exists all over Mexico, and admits that it is a system that cannot be defended. Then why does he defend it?

Mr. C. V. Cooper, an American land promoter, writing in the *Portland Oregonian*, says that he read my articles with “amusement mixed with indignation,” and decided that they were “grossly exaggerated.” But he made some admissions. Said he :

“The Mexican peon law provides that if a servant for any reason is indebted to his employer, he must remain and work out the debt at a wage agreed upon between the employer and the employee.”

But, Mr. Cooper, if the employee *must* remain, how

can he have any say as to how much the wage which you declare is "agreed upon" shall be?

Very naïvely Mr. Cooper explains the freedom of the peon. Thus :

"There is nothing compulsory in his service at all. If he does not like his surroundings or his treatment, he is at perfect liberty to obtain the amount of his debt from anyone else and leave the property."

From whom else, Mr. Cooper? Oh, the sweet, sweet liberty of Mexico!

It is too bad that Mr. Cooper should have marred such a rosy picture as he paints by admitting the man-hunting part of the system. But he does :

"Should a man run away, we can have him brought back if the amount of the debt involved is worth while. The expense of his capture is paid by the plantation and added to his account."

Yet Mr. Cooper finally avers :

"The peons are perfectly free to come and go as they choose, with the only legal proviso that they do not swindle anyone out of money that has been advanced them in good faith."

Mr. Cooper thought so well of his defence of the Diaz system that he—or someone else—went to the expense of having it printed in pamphlet form and circulated about the country. There were other pamphleteers besides Mr. Cooper, too, who rushed to the defence of Mexico. One was Mr. E. S. Smith, the man who

wired to President Taft begging him to deny the magazine containing my articles the mails, and that before the first one went to press. Mr. Smith wrote "The Truth about Mexico," which the *Bankers' Magazine* printed; and the same matter was afterwards put into a pamphlet. Mr. Smith was so extravagant in his denials of imperfections in Mexican institutions, and so glowing in his descriptions of Mexico's "ideal" government, that one of that Government's warmest defenders, the *Mexican Herald*, was revolted by the production, and printed a long editorial in which it prayed that Mexico might be delivered from such friends as Mr. Smith.

Mr. Guillermo Hall, another American, who is interested in Mexican properties, considers my articles a "great injustice," inasmuch as, since the poor Mexican knows nothing of freedom, he must be perfectly well off as a slave. The *Tucson Citizen*, Arizona, quoted Mr. Hall as follows:

"The cold facts stated in black type might seem preposterous to the Americans of this country, whose training and environment are so different. . . . In the lower country along the border, for instance, the so-called peon has no conception of the liberty we enjoy in America. He absolutely doesn't know what it means. The property owners there are compelled by force of circumstances to maintain, at present, a sort of feudalism over him."

Mr. Dwight E. Woodbridge, a planter and writer, wrote at length in defence of Mexican peonage in the *Mining World*, the organ of the American Mine-owners' organisation. Here are some excerpts:

BARBAROUS MEXICO

“Unquestionably there are brutalities and savageness in Mexico. Outrages are committed there, both on the prisoners taken from confinement to *haciendas* and on the Yaquis. . . . I am interested in a large plantation in southern Mexico, where we have some 300 Yaqui labourers.

“Throughout the Yaqui country I have seen such things as are pictured in the magazine, passed the bodies of men hanging to trees, sometimes mutilated; have seen hundreds of tame Yaquis herded in jails to be sent to the plantations of Yucatan, or Tabasco, or Vera Cruz; have heard of worse things.

“There is a certain sort of peonage in Mexico. One may call it slavery if he will, and not be far from the truth. It is, in fact, illegal, and no contracts under it can be enforced in the courts. The slave is a slave so long as he is working out his debt.”

Of course, none of the defenders of Mexico admit all of my assertions, and all of them naturally seek to minimise the horrors of the slave system, otherwise they could not be defending it. But you will see that one admits one thing and another another, until the whole story is confessed as true.

Among the American publishers who rushed to the defence of Diaz was Mr. William Randolph Hearst. Among other things he did, Mr. Hearst sent Mr. Otheman Stevens to Mexico to gather material for a series of articles. But in dealing with the contract slavery system Mr. Stevens succeeded in admitting most of the essential points, and was able to defend only on the plea of capitalistic “necessity.” Some of his admissions, as they appeared in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* of March, 1910, are :

“To offset these prospects of early industrial advances is the contract labour system, and the contract labour system in Mexico is a bad institution.

“Its repulsive feature to our eyes is the fact that, while the labourer enters voluntarily into the contract, the law gives the employer a right over the workman’s person in the enforcement of the contract.

“Theoretically there is no argument to be made for contract labour.

“If an *enganchado* rebels, or is insolent or lazy, the lithe rod in the hands of the ‘boss’ of the gang winds around him, and he soon understands that he must fulfil his part of the contract. If he runs away, a reward of ten dollars is paid to whoever brings him back. His clothes are taken away from him, and he is clad in a gunny sack, with holes cut for arms and legs.”

Mr. Stevens’s defence of this system, as published in the same number of the same magazine, is :

“Outside of the restrictions of dogmatic controversy there is only one phase that makes a wrong right, and that is necessity. A legal enforcement of a contract by using physical force over the person is in itself wrong. On the other hand, legislation now prohibiting contract labour would work a greater wrong, for it would destroy millions of investment, would retard a most beneficent and rapid development of the richest region on this continent, if not in the world, and would, by reflexes, work more harm to the very people it would intend to aid than an indefinite continuance of the present conditions.”

This is exactly the logic the slave-driving cotton planters of our Southern States used before the Civil War. It will hardly “go” with anyone who has not

money invested in Mexican plantations which use *enganchados*.

I do not wish to tire the reader, but, aside from the fact that I have been most violently attacked, I have a reason for wishing to go a little deeper into this matter of critics and corroboration. In Mexico City there are two daily newspapers printed in English, the *Mexican Herald* and the *Daily Record*. Both are prosperous and well edited, and both are defenders of the Mexican Government. The *Herald*, especially, repeatedly denounced my articles. I could show as many as fifty clippings from this paper alone which, in one way or another, attempted to cast doubt upon my statements. Nevertheless, in the course of the daily publication of the news, or in the very campaign of defence, both of these papers have, since the first appearance of my articles, printed matter which convincingly confirmed my charges.

On October 23, 1909, the *Daily Record* dared to print an article from the pen of Dr. Luis Lara y Pardo, one of the best known of Mexican writers, in which he admitted that my indictment was true. A few lines from the article will suffice. Said Dr. Pardo :

“ The régime of slavery continues under the cloak of the loan laws. Peons are sold by one *hacendado* to another under the pretext that the money that has been advanced must be paid. In the capital of the Republic itself traffic in human flesh has been engaged in.

“ On the *haciendas* the peons live in the most horrible manner. They are crowded into lodgings dirtier than a stable, and are maltreated. The *hacendado* metes out justice to the peon, who is even denied the right to protest.”

A widespread fear among the common people of being snared as *enganchados* would argue not only that the system is extensive, but that it is fraught with great hardship. On January 6, 1910, the *Daily Record* published a news item which indicated that this is true, and also suggested one way in which the Government plays into the hands of the labour snarers. Shorn of its headlines, the item is:

“Five hundred contract labourers, intended to work at construction camps on the Vera Cruz and Pacific railroad, are encamped near Buenavista station as a result of their unwillingness to sign a formal contract, and the law prohibiting their being taken into another State without such contract.

“Governor Landa y Escandon yesterday afternoon refused to grant the request of R. P. Davis and F. Villademoros, signers of a petition to him, to allow the labourers to be shipped out. With their wives, children, and all their worldly possessions, they form a motley camp near the station.

“In their petition Davis and Villademoros claim that the railroad company is suffering large losses by the detention of the labourers, and that many of the latter *fear that if they sign contracts they will be shipped to sugar and coffee plantations, and held until the expiration of the specified terms.*

“Governor Landa refused the request on the ground that the law requires such a formality to protect the labourers, while the reason for waiving it did not appear logical.”

The *Mexican Herald* furnishes more corroboration than the *Daily Record*. Commenting editorially upon the announcements of my articles, it said (August 27, 1909):

“ In this journal during recent years, and in many Mexican papers as well, the abuses of the peonage system, and the ill-treatment of *los enganchados*, or contract labourers, in some regions have been most frankly dealt with. The enlightened Governor of Chiapas has denounced the evils of peonage in his State and has received the thanks of the patriotic Press of the country. That there are dark spots in agricultural labour conditions no fair-minded person of wide information seeks to deny.”

About the same time Mr. Paul Hudson, general manager of the paper, was quoted in a New York interview as saying that my exposures “do not admit of categorical denial.” And in the *Mexican Herald* of May 9, 1910, Mr. J. Torrey Conner, writing in praise of Diaz, says: “Slavery, doubtless, is known to exist in Mexico; that is generally understood.” In February, 1909, in an editorial item upon the political situation in the State of Morelos, the *Mexican Herald* went so far as to admit the killing of debt labourers by their masters. To quote it exactly :

“ It is undeniable that their (the planters’) management is at times severe. When angry they heap abuse on the peons and even maltreat them physically. In some instances they have, in times not so distant, even taken the lives of native labourers who have incensed them, and have gone scot free.”

In an article on “The *Enganchado*” on August 27, 1909, the *Herald* said :

“ The *enganchados* are guarded most carefully, for there is the ever-present danger of their running away on the

slightest opportunity. Often the *cabos* are cruel in their treatment, a fact which is to be condemned. . . . It is not in keeping here to mention the abuses which are alleged to have been practised against the *enganchados*, the treatment of men so shamelessly that they die, the raping of the women, the deprivation of the labourers of any means of bathing, and the unsanitary condition of their houses, leading on to noxious diseases. . . . No planter who knows the real history of the system, or the inside facts of the neighbouring plantations, will deny that for a moment the worst stories of the *enganchado* are true.

“ Plantation men do not take the *enganchado* labour because they like it. Nor do they prefer it to any other, even the lowest. But there is a certain advantage in it, as one planter said to the writer, with a queer thrill in his voice: ‘When you’ve got ‘em they’re yours, and have to do what you want them to do. If they don’t, you can kill them.’ ”

Such corroboration from a supporter of the system itself would seem rather embarrassing to those individuals who were so zealous as publicly to announce that my portrayal of Mexican slavery was a fabrication. It will be seen that my exposures of Mexican slavery were not the first to be circulated in print; they were merely the first to be circulated widely, and they went into considerably more detail than anything that had gone before. The little item that I have just quoted admits practically all the worst features which I dealt with in my articles.

Here is an ordinary news item clipped from the *Mexican Herald* of May 30, 1909:

“ An *enganchado* belonging to a good family is reported to have been brutally killed by being beaten to death with

staves at . . . sugar mills in the El Naranjal municipality. Local newspapers state that other similar crimes have been committed at that place."

This is the first information I have had that men are beaten to death in the sugar mills of Mexico.

If I had space I would present a news item from the *Mexican Herald*, which describes better than I did in my fourth chapter one of the methods pursued by labour snarers to get their fish into the net. The newspaper prints this story of boy-stealing as if the occurrence were unusual; in reality, it is typical. The only difference is that in this particular case the victim was rescued, and the labour agent was imprisoned for a day or two, only because it chanced that the victim had been an employee of the National Department of Foreign Relations. If the authorities wished to stop this sort of man-stealing, as the *Herald* would have us believe, why did they not arrest the keepers of the other "*casas de los enganchadores*" which they found and liberate the prisoners?

I doubt if I could do better than end this chapter with quotations from official reports of the United States Government itself. Cold-bloodedly as the succeeding paragraphs are written, the statements that they contain are yet exceedingly corroborative. They are from Bulletin No. 38 of the United States Department of Labour, published in January, 1902. I should like to quote more extensively, but I take only a few paragraphs from pages 42, 43 and 44.

"In a great many (Mexican) States where tropical pro-



Photo: C. B. Waite

NATIVES SORTING BEANS

ducts are raised, the native residents are employed under a contract which is compulsory on their part, owing to their being in debt to the planter. . . .

“The system of enforced labour is carried out to its logical sequence in the Sisal-grass plantations of Yucatan. There on each large plantation is to be found a body of peons, called *criados* or *servientes* (servants), who, with their families, live on the plantations, and in many cases have been born there. These *criados* are bound to the soil by indebtedness, for although a mere contract to perform certain services does not impose specific performance, it is held in Yucatan that where an advance payment has been made, either the repayment of the money or, in default thereof, the specific performance may be exacted.

“The system of labour enforced by indebtedness seems to work in Yucatan to the satisfaction of the planter. The peon is compelled to work unless he is able to pay off his constantly increasing debt, and any attempt at flight or evasion is followed by penal retribution. The peon rarely, if ever, achieves independence, and a transference of a workman from one employer to another is only effected by means of the new employer paying to the former one the amount of the debt contracted. The system thus resembles slavery, not only in the compulsion under which the peon works, but in the large initial expense required of the planter when making his first investment in labour.

“In the State of Tabasco the conditions of forced labour are somewhat different, and the difficulty of the labour problem, especially from the point of view of the planter, is exceedingly aggravated. In Tabasco the law does not permit the same remedy as in Yucatan—namely, the enforcement of the specific performance of a contract upon which an advance payment has been made; but this drawback is more apparent than real, since the governmental authority is vested in the hands of the landowning, planting classes,

and the obligation of contracted peons to work for the planters is virtually enforced.''

Is it necessary to ask again, who has been distorting the truth—myself or the other fellow? Is there slavery in Mexico, and is it widespread? Are men bought and sold like mules, locked up at night, hunted down when they try to run away, starved, beaten, killed? Surely these questions have been answered to the satisfaction of every open-minded reader. But I have not yet answered that other question: Why? Why are so many Americans so anxious to keep back the truth about Mexico?

CHAPTER XII

The American Partners of President Diaz

THE United States is a partner in the slavery of Mexico. After freeing his black slaves, Uncle Sam, at the end of half a century, has become a slaver again. Uncle Sam has gone to slave-driving in a foreign country.

No, I shall not charge this to Uncle Sam, the genial, liberty-loving fellow-citizen of our childhood. I would rather say that Uncle Sam is dead, and that another is masquerading in his place—a counterfeit Uncle Sam, who has so far deceived the people into believing that he is the real one. It is that person whom I charge with being a slaver.

This is a strong statement, and it gives me little enough pleasure to make it, but I believe that the facts justify it. In the first place, the United States is responsible in part for the extension of slavery in Mexico; in the second place, it is responsible as the determining force in the continuation of that slavery.

When I say the United States, I do not mean a few minor and irresponsible American officials. Nor do I mean the American nation—which, in my humble judgment, is unjustly charged with the crimes of some persons over whom, under conditions as they exist, it

has no control. I mean the organised power which officially represents this country at home and abroad. I mean the Federal Government, and the interests that control the Federal Government.

Adherents of a certain political cult in the States are wont to declare that chattel slavery was abolished in the country because it ceased to be profitable. Without commenting on the truth or fallacy of this assertion, I aver that there are plenty of Americans who are prepared to prove that slavery is profitable in Mexico. Because it is considered profitable, these Americans have, in various ways, had a hand in the extension of the institution. Desiring to perpetuate Mexican slavery, and considering General Diaz a necessary factor in that perpetuation, they have given him their undivided support. By their control of the Press they have glorified his name, when otherwise his name should be by right an offence to the nostrils of the world. But they have gone much farther than this. By their control of the political machinery of their Government, the United States Government, they have held him in his place when otherwise he would have fallen. *Most effectively has the police power of the States been used to destroy a movement of Mexicans for the abolition of Mexican slavery, and to keep upon his throne the man who is chiefly responsible for the system.*

Still another step can we go in these generalisations. By making itself an indispensable factor in his continuation in the governmental power, through its business partnership, its Press conspiracy and its police and military alliance, the United States has virtually

reduced President Diaz to the status of a political dependent, and by so doing has virtually *transformed Mexico into a slave colony of the United States.*

As I have already suggested, these are generalisations, but I truly believe that the facts set forth in this and the succeeding chapter fully justify each and every one of them.

Pardon me for again referring to the remarkable defence of Mexican slavery and Mexican despotism which we find in the United States, inasmuch as it is itself a strong presumption of guilty partnership in that slavery and despotism. What publication or individual in the United States, pray you, was ever known to defend the system of political oppression in Russia? What publication or individual in the United States was ever known to excuse the slave atrocities of the Congo Free State? How many Americans have been in the habit of singing pæans of praise to the Czars of Russia or the late King Leopold?

Americans, of whatever class, not only do not dare to do these things, but they do not care to do them. But what a difference when it comes to Mexico! Here slavery is sacred. Here autocracy is deified.

What, then, is the reason for this strange difference of attitude? Why do so many prostrate themselves before the Czar of Mexico, and none prostrate themselves before the Czar of Russia? Why is America flooded with books hailing the Mexican autocrat as the greatest man of the age, while it is impossible to buy a single book, regularly published and circulated, that seriously criticises him?

The inference is inevitable, that it is because he is the Golden Calf in but another form : that Americans are profiting by Mexican slavery, and are exerting themselves to maintain it.

But there are easily provable facts that carry us far beyond any mere inference, however logical it may be.

What is the most universal reply that has been made to my criticisms of Mexico and Mexico's ruler? That there are nine hundred million dollars of American capital invested in Mexico!

To the powers that be in the United States the nine hundred million dollars of American capital form a conclusive argument against any criticism of President Diaz. They are an overwhelming defence of Mexican slavery.

"Hush! hush!" the word goes about. "Why, we have nine hundred million dollars grinding out profits down there!" And the argument is irresistible—the behest is obeyed.

In that nine hundred million dollars of American capital in Mexico is to be found the full explanation not only of the American defence of the Mexican Government, but also of the political dependency of Mexico upon the American Government. Wherever capital flows, capital controls the Government. This doctrine is recognised everywhere and by all men who have so much as half an eye for the lessons that the world is writing. The last decade or two has proved it in every country where large aggregations of capital have gathered.

No wonder there is a growing anti-American senti-

ment in Mexico. The Mexican people are naturally patriotic. They have gone through tremendous trials to throw off the foreign yoke in past generations, and they are unwilling to bend beneath the foreign yoke to-day. They want the opportunity of working out their own national destiny as a separate people. They look upon the United States as a great colossus which is about to seize them and bend them to its will.

And they are right. American capital in Mexico will not be denied. The partnership of Diaz and American capital has wrecked Mexico as a national entity. The United States Government, as long as it represents American capital—and the most rampant hypocrite will hardly deny that it does to-day—will have a deciding voice in Mexican affairs. From the standpoint of patriotic Mexicans the outlook is melancholy indeed.

Let us cast our eyes over Mexico and see what some of that nine hundred millions of American capital is doing there.

The Morgan-Guggenheim Copper Merger is in control of the copper output of Mexico.

M. Guggenheim Sons own all the large smelters in Mexico, as well as vast mining properties. They occupy the same powerful position in the mining industry generally in Mexico that they occupy in the United States.

The Standard Oil Company, under the name of the Waters-Pierce, with many subsidiary corporations, controls the vastly greater portion of the crude oil-flow of Mexico. It controls a still greater proportion of the

wholesale and retail trade in oil—90 per cent. of it, so its managers claim.

Agents of the American Sugar Trust have secured from the Federal and State Governments concessions for the production of sugar beets and beet sugar so favourable as to ensure to it a complete monopoly of the Mexican sugar business during the next ten years.

The Continental Rubber Company, which controls 15 per cent. of the world's production of raw rubber, is in possession of millions of acres of rubber lands, the best in Mexico.

The Wells-Fargo Express Company, the property of the Southern Pacific Railroad, through its partnership with the Government, holds a monopoly of the express carrying business of Mexico.

Mr. E. N. Brown, president of the National Railways of Mexico, and a satellite of Mr. H. Clay Pierce and the late E. H. Harriman, is a member of the board of directors of the Banco Nacional, which is by far the largest financial institution in Mexico, a concern that has over fifty branches, in which all the chief members of the Diaz financial camarilla are interested, and through which all financial deals of the Mexican Government are transacted.

Finally, the Southern Pacific Railroad and allied Harriman heirs, despite the much vaunted Government railway merger, own outright or control by virtue of near-ownership three-fourths of the main-line railway mileage of Mexico, which enables it to-day to impose as absolute a monopoly in restraint of trade as exists in

the case of any railway combination in the United States.

These are merely some of the largest aggregations of American capital in Mexico. For example, the Harriman heirs own two and a half million acres of oil lands in the Tampico country, and a number of other Americans own properties running into millions of acres. Americans are involved in the combinations which control the flour and meat trades of Mexico. The purely trade interests are themselves considerable. Eighty per cent. of Mexican exports come to the United States, and 66 per cent. of Mexican imports are sent to her by the States, the American trade with Mexico totalling some 75,000,000 dollars a year.

So you see how it is in Mexico. The Americanisation of Mexico, of which Wall Street boasts, is being accomplished, and accomplished with a vengeance.

It were hardly worth while to pause at this juncture and discuss the question why Mexicans did not get in on the ground floor and control these industries. It is not, as numerous writers would have us believe, because Americans are the only intelligent people in the world, and because God made Mexicans a stupid people and intended that they should be governed by their superiors. One good reason why the President delivered his country into the hands of Americans was that Americans had more money to pay for special privileges. And Americans had more money because, while all Mexicans were becoming impoverished by the war for the overthrow of the foreigner Maximilian, thousands of Americans were making fortunes by

means of grafting army contracts involved in the Civil War.

Let me present an instance or two of the way in which Americans are contributing to the extension of slavery.

Take the Yaqui atrocities, for example. The Yaqui war was stirred up because there was an opportunity of getting the Yaqui lands, so rich in both mining and agricultural possibilities, and selling them at a good price to American capitalists.

American capital followed the Yaqui women and children away from their homes. It saw families dismembered, women forced into wifehood with Chinamen, men beaten to death. It saw these things, encouraged them and covered them up from the eyes of the world, because of its interest in the price of Sisal hemp, because it feared that with the passing of slave labour the price of Sisal hemp would rise.

Also, Americans work the slaves—buy them, drive them, lock them up at night, beat them, kill them, exactly as do other employers of labour in Mexico. And they admit that they do these things. In my possession are scores of admissions by American planters that they employ labour which is essentially slave labour. All over the tropical section of Mexico, on the plantations of rubber, sugar-cane, tropical fruits—everywhere—you will find Americans buying, beating, imprisoning, killing slaves.

Let me quote you just one interview I had with a well-known and popular American of Mexico City, a man who for five years ran a large plantation.

“When we needed a lot of *enganchados*,” he told me, “all we had to do was to wire to one of the numerous *enganchadores* in Mexico, saying: ‘We want so many men and so many women on such and such a day.’ Sometimes we’d call for three or four hundred, but the *enganchadores* would never fail to deliver the full number on the dot. We paid 50 *pesos* apiece for them, rejecting those that didn’t look good to us, and that was all there was to it. We always kept them as long as they lasted.

“It’s healthier down there than it is right here in the city of Mexico,” he told me. “If you have the means to take care of yourself you can keep as well there as you can anywhere on earth.”

Less than five minutes after making this statement he told me:

“Yes, I remember a lot of three hundred *enganchados* we received one spring. *In less than three months we buried more than half of them.*”

The hand of the American slave-driver of Mexico has been known to reach out for its victims even as far as his own home—the United States. During my travels in Mexico, in order to become better acquainted with the common people I spent most of my travelling days in second- or third-class cars. Riding in a third-class car one night I spied an American negro sitting in a corner.

“I wonder if they ever caught *him* down here?” I said to myself. “I’ll find out.”

Jim Smith, a free-born Kentucky negro of five-and-twenty, hesitated for some time to admit that he had

ever been a slave. But he confessed gradually, and at last I got at the truth.

"Ah was workin' in a brick yahd in Kaintucky at two dollahs a day," was the way Jim put it, "when anothon cullahd man come along an' tole me he knowed where Ah cud get three seventy-five a day. Ah said 'Ah'm with ye.' So he hands me one o' them book prospectuses, an' the next day he tuk me to the office o' the company an' they said the same thing—three seventy-five American money, or seven an' a half Mex. So Ah come with eighty othah cullahd folks down here to a coffee and rubbah plantation in Oaxaca.

"Seven and a half a day! Huh! Seven an' a half! That's just what they paid me when they let me go—aftah two yeahs! Ah run away twict, but they ketched me and brung me back. Did they beat me? Naw, they beat lots o' othahs, but they nevah beat me. Ah, yeh, they batted me a few times with a stock, but Ah wouldn't 'a' let 'em beat me; no suh, not me!"

The plantation that caught Jim Smith, Kentuckian, was an American plantation. Some months after talking with Jim I happened to hold a conversation with a man who identified himself as Jim's master after I had told him Jim's story.

"Those niggers," this American told me, "were an experiment that didn't turn out very well. They must have been ours, for I don't know of anybody else down that way that had them at the time of which you speak. The seven and a half a day? Oh, the agents told 'em anything to get them. That was none of our business.

We simply bought them and paid for them and then made them work out their purchase price before we gave them any money. Yes, we kept them under lock and key at night and had to guard them with guns in the daytime. When they tried to make a break we'd tie 'em up and give 'em a good dressing-down with a club. The authorities? We chummed with the authorities. They were our friends."

The partnership of American capital with President Diaz not only puts at its disposal a system of slave labour, but also permits it to utilise the system of peonage and to beat the class of wage-labourers down to the lowest point of subsistence. Where slavery does not exist in Mexico you find peonage, a mild form of slavery, or you find cheap wage-labour. The *rurales* shot Colonel Greene's copper miners into submission, and threats of imprisonment put an end to the great strike on an American-Mexican railroad. American capitalists boast of the fact that their Diaz "does not permit any foolishness on the part of these labour unions." In such facts as these is found the reason for their hysterical defence of him.

When Mexico attempts to kick over the traces of undue American "influence" there will be trouble. The United States will intervene with an army, if necessary, to maintain President Diaz, or a successor who will continue the partnership with American capital. In case of a serious revolution the United States will intervene on the plea of protecting American capital. American intervention will destroy the last hope of Mexico for an independent national existence. Mexican

patriots cannot forget this, for it is daily paraded before them by the President's Press. Thus the threat of an American army in Mexico is another of the American influences which keep Mexico from revolution against his autocracy.

American capital is not at present in favour of political annexation of Mexico. This is because the slavery by which it profits can be maintained with greater safety under the Mexican flag than under the American flag. As long as Mexico can be controlled—in other words, as long as she can be held as a slave colony—she will not be annexed, for once she is annexed the protest of the American people will become so great that the slavery must of necessity be abolished or veiled under less brutal and downright forms. The annexation of Mexico will come only when she cannot be controlled by other means. Nevertheless, the threat of annexation is to-day held as a club over the Mexican people to prevent them from forcibly removing President Diaz.

Do I guess when I prophesy that the United States will intervene in case of a revolution against Diaz? Hardly, *for the United States has already intervened in that very cause.* The United States has not waited for the revolution to assume a serious aspect, but has lent its powers most strenuously to stamping out its first evidences. President Taft and Attorney-General Wickersham, at the behest of American capital, have already placed the United States Government in the service of Diaz to aid in stamping out an incipient revolution with which, on justifiable grounds, the revo-

lution of 1776 cannot for an instant be thought of by comparison.

Four times during the past three years the United States Government has rushed an army to the Mexican border in order to crush a movement of Liberals against the autocrat of Mexico. Constantly during the past few years the American Government, through its Secret Service, its Department of Justice, its immigration officials, its border rangers, has maintained in the border States a reign of terror for Mexicans, in which it has lent itself unreservedly to the extermination of political refugees of Mexico who have sought safety from the long arm of Diaz upon the soil of the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

CHAPTER XIII

American Persecution of the Enemies of Diaz

AMERICA, Cradle of Liberty, has joined hands with Porfirio Diaz in stamping out that part of the world-movement for democracy which is to-day attempting to secure the common rights of human beings for the Mexican people.

In previous chapters I have shown how the United States is a voluntary partner in the slavery and political oppression of Diaz-land. I have shown how, by its commercial alliance, its Press conspiracy and its threat of intervention and annexation, it has supported the dictatorship of the President. This chapter I shall devote to the story of how the United States has delivered its military and civil resources into the hands of the Tyrant, and with that power has held him in his place when otherwise he would have fallen; and thus has been the final determining force in the continuation of the system of slavery which I have described in the early chapters of this book.

When I say the United States here I mean the United States Government chiefly, though State and local Governments along the Mexican border are also involved. Numerous instances go to show that, in

order to exterminate the enemies of Diaz who have come as political refugees to the States, public officials, from the President down, have set aside American principles cherished for generations, have violated some laws and stretched and twisted others out of all semblance to their former selves, and have permitted, encouraged and protected law-breaking on the part of Mexican officials and their hirelings in my country.

For the past few years the law of the border States, as far as Mexican citizens are concerned, has been very much the law of Diaz. The border has been Mexicanised. In numerous instances the Government has delegated its own special powers to agents of Mexico in the form of consuls, hired attorneys and private detectives. Mexican citizens have been denied the right of asylum and the ordinary protection of the laws. By the reign of terror thus established the United States has held in check a movement which otherwise would surely have developed sufficient strength to overthrow Diaz, abolish Mexican slavery, and restore constitutional government.

Four times during the past three years, twice as Secretary of War and twice as President, William Howard Taft has ordered troops to the Texas border to aid Diaz in wreaking vengeance upon his enemies. He also—at these same times as well as at other times—ordered posses of United States marshals and squads of Secret Service operatives there for the same purpose.

The first time he ordered troops to the border was in June, 1908, the second time in September, 1908, the third time in July, 1909, the fourth time in March, 1911.

The troops have had to drive back into the hands of pursuing Mexican soldiers or to capture and detain any fugitives who attempted to cross the Rio Grande and save their lives upon Texas soil.

That this action on the part of President Taft was an undue stretching of the laws would appear from dispatches sent out from Washington, June 30, 1908. From one of these dispatches published throughout the country on July 1, 1908, I quote the following :

“The employment of American troops for this purpose, by the way, is almost without precedent in recent years, and the law officers of the War Department, as well as the Attorney-General himself, have been obliged to give close study to the question of the extent to which they may exercise the power of preventing persons from entering the United States across the Mexican border.

“Under the law no passports are required except in the case of Chinese and Japanese, and about the only other reasonable ground for detention of fugitives seeking to cross the line would be some presumable violation of the immigration or health-inspection laws.

“So it will be a delicate task for the army officers, who are charged with the duty of policing this international boundary line, to avert clashes with the civil courts if they undertake to make promiscuous arrests of persons fleeing from Mexico into the United States.”

The troops obeyed orders. Fleeing Liberals were turned back to be pierced by the bullets of Diaz's soldiers. Was the Government justified in causing the death of those unfortunate men in such a manner? If not, would it be improper to characterise the action as executive murder?



Photo: F. J. Feldman

LAURO AGUIRRE

A Mexican Liberal Editor who has suffered imprisonment
in the United States

During the past few years hundreds of Mexican refugees have been imprisoned in the border States, and there have been numerous attempts to carry refugees across the line, in order that the Diaz Government might deal with them after its own summary methods, and many of these attempts have been successful. Some of the schemes employed in its campaign of deportation are, first, to institute extradition proceedings under charges of "murder and robbery"; second, to deport through the Immigration Department under charges of being "undesirable immigrants"; third, to kidnap outright and feloniously carry across the line.

Some members of the Liberal party whose extradition was sought on charges of "murder and robbery" during the space of a few months are Librado Rivera, Pedro Gonzales, Crescencio Villarreal, Trinidad Garcia, Demetrio Castro, Patricio Guerra, Antonio I. Villarreal, Lauro Aguirre, Ricardo Flores Magon and Manuel Sarabia. There are others, but I have not definite knowledge of their cases. Some of the prosecutions occurred at St. Louis, others at El Paso, Texas, others at Del Rio, Texas, and others at Los Angeles, California.

An uprising of a Liberal club at Jimenez, Coahuila, formed the basis of the charges in all but one or two of the cases. During this uprising somebody was killed and the Government post-office lost some money. Wherefore every Mexican who could be convicted of membership of the Liberal party, although he might never have been in Coahuila nor have even heard of the rebellion, stood in danger of extradition for "murder

and robbery." The United States Government spent a good many thousands of dollars in prosecuting these manifestly groundless charges, but it is to the credit of certain Federal judges that the prosecutions were generally unsuccessful. Judge Gray of St. Louis and Judge Maxey of Texas both characterised the offences as being of a political nature. The text of the former's decision in the Rivera case follows :

"The United States vs. Librado Rivera.

" City of St. Louis ss., State of Missouri.

" I hereby certify that upon a public hearing had before me at my office in said city on this 30th day of November, 1906, the defendant being present, it appearing from the proofs that the offence complained of was entirely of a political nature, the said defendant, Librado Rivera, was discharged.

"Witness my hand and seal.

"JAMES R. GRAY,

"United States Commissioner at St. Louis, Mo."

The scheme to deport political refugees through the Immigration Department was more successful. The immigration laws provide that, if it be discovered that an immigrant is a criminal or an Anarchist, or if he has entered the country in an illegal manner, provided that such discovery is made within three years of his arrival here, the immigration officials may deport him. The question of the "undesirability" of the immigrant is not a subject for review by the courts, the immigrant may not appeal, and within two or three restrictions the immigration agent's word is law. It will be readily seen, therefore, that if the said official be not an honest man, if he be willing to accept a bribe or

even yield to influence or blandishments, he may, with impunity, send many innocent and upright men to an untimely death.

And exactly this thing has been done. Antonio I. Villarreal, secretary of the Liberal party, was among those placed in danger of deportation "under the immigration laws." After various means had been used unsuccessfully to secure his extradition, he was turned over to the immigration officials at El Paso and was actually on his way to the line when he made a break for liberty and escaped.

Of a large number of Mexican Liberals arrested in Arizona in the autumn of 1906, L. Puente, Abraham Salcido, Gabriel Rubio, Bruno Trevino, Carlos Humbert, Leonardo Villarreal and several others were deported in one party by the immigration officials at Douglas. There is no legal excuse for deporting an immigrant because he is a political refugee. On the other hand, according to "American principles," so-called, he is entitled to especially solicitous care for this reason. And yet all of these men were deported because they were political refugees. All of them were peaceable, respectable persons. The law in no circumstances permits of deportation after the immigrant has been a resident of the country for more than three years. But several of this number had lived here for longer than that time, and Puente, who was editing a paper in Douglas, claimed to have resided in the United States continuously for thirteen years.

Still another official misdeed may be cited in this particular case. When occasion arises for deportation,

the immigrant in ordinary cases is merely returned to the country whence he came. But in this case the group of Mexican Liberals was delivered over to the Mexican police in handcuffs, and the American handcuffs were not removed until the prisoners arrived at the penitentiary of Hermosillo, State of Sonora!

The Mexican Government, by the way, found nothing against these men after it had got them, except that they were members of the Liberal party. Nevertheless, it sent each and every one of them to long terms in prison.

Many Americans will remember the case of L. Gutierrez de Lara, whom the Immigration Department seized for deportation in October, 1909, accusing him of being "an alien Anarchist." De Lara had resided more than three years in the States, yet undoubtedly he would have been sent to his death had not the country sent up such a protest that the conspirators were frightened. It is supposed that De Lara's life was sought at this particular time because he accompanied me to Mexico and aided in securing material for my exposé of Mexican conditions.

When Diaz fails to gain possession of his enemies in the United States by other means he does not hesitate to resort to kidnapping, and when he resorts to kidnapping he finds no trouble in securing the criminal assistance of American officials.

The most notable case of refugee kidnapping on record is that of Manuel Sarabia. The case is notable not because it is the only one of its kind, but because it is the one which was most successfully exposed.

Manuel Sarabia was second Speaker of the Liberal Junta. He was hounded about from place to place by Mexican detectives, finally bringing up in Douglas, Arizona, where he went to work quietly at his trade of printer.

On June 30, 1907, Antonio Maza, the Mexican consul at Douglas, saw Sarabia in the street and recognised him. That evening a U.S. ranger held up Sarabia at the point of a pistol and, without a warrant, put him in the city jail. At eleven o'clock that night Sarabia's door swung open, he was led outside, forced into an automobile, carried across the international boundary line and there turned over to Colonel Kosterlitzsky, an officer of Mexican *rurales*. The *rurales* tied Sarabia on the back of a mule, and, telling him that he was to be shot on the road, made a hurried trip with him through the mountains, finally bringing up, after five days, at the penitentiary at Hermosillo, Sonora.

What saved Sarabia? Just one thing. As he was forced into the automobile he cried out his name and shouted that he was being kidnapped. The ruffians guarding him choked him into silence and then gagged him, but some one heard and the story spread.

Even then efforts were made to hush up the matter. But Franklin B. Dorr, who was running the *Douglas Daily Examiner*, raised a protest that stirred the blood of the people of Douglas. Street meetings were held which aroused the people to some purpose. A crowd looked for the Mexican consul with a rope. Telegraphic appeals were sent to the State and National

Governments. And finally—Sarabia was shamefacedly returned.

What would have happened to Sarabia if his voice had not been heard on that night in June, 1907? Exactly what has happened to others whose frightened voices have not been heard. He would have dropped out of sight, and no one would ever have been able to say for certain where he had gone.

And what, pray, happened to the kidnappers? Absolutely nothing.

The consul, the ranger, a city jailer, a constable and the chauffeur were arrested, and the first four were duly held to answer to the upper court sitting at Douglas. The chauffeur made a clean breast of the affair, but as soon as the excitement had blown over, every one of the cases was quietly dropped. It was not Sarabia's fault, for an effort was made to bribe him to leave the town, and he refused the bribe.

Nearly every small town along the Mexican border harbours a personage who enjoys the title of Mexican consul. Consuls are found in villages hundreds of miles from the Mexican border. Consuls are supposed to be for the purpose of looking after the interests of trade between countries, but towns in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas which do not do a hundred dollars' worth of trade a year with Mexico have consuls who are maintained at the expense of tens of thousands of dollars a year.

Many of these consuls are not consuls at all. They are spies, persecutors, bribers. They are furnished with plenty of money, and they spend it freely in hiring thugs

and detectives and bribing American office-holders. By the power thus gained they have repeatedly suppressed newspapers and put their editors in jail, as well as broken up political clubs of Mexicans.

During the trial of José Maria Ramires and four other Liberals in El Paso in October, 1908, a city policeman naïvely swore that his chief had told him to obey the orders of the Mexican consul and the chief of police of Juarez, a Mexican town.

When, after threats by the Mexican consul of Tucson, Arizona, thugs destroyed the printing plant of Manuel Sarabia in that city in December, 1908, Sarabia was unable to persuade the authorities to make an investigation of the affair or to attempt to bring the perpetrators to account.

City detectives of Los Angeles, California, have repeatedly taken orders from the Mexican consul there, and have unlawfully placed in his hands property of persons whom they have arrested.

During the past three years persecution has directly caused the suspension of at least ten newspapers printed in Spanish along the border for Mexican readers.

To each of these persecutions and Press suppressions there is an interesting story attached, but to attempt to detail all of them would require too great a proportion of this work. I shall detail but one case, that of Ricardo Flores Magon, president of the Liberal party, and his immediate associates. This case, as well as being the most important of all, is typical. Its difference from the rest has been chiefly that Magon, having been able to gather about him greater resources, has been able to

make a longer and more desperate fight for his life and liberty than others of his countrymen who have been singled out for persecution. For some seven years Magon has been in the States, and during nearly the whole of that time he has been engaged in trying to escape being sent back to death beyond the Rio Grande. More than one-half of that time he has passed in American prisons, and for no other reason than that he is opposed to President Diaz and his system of slavery and despotism.

The worst that can be said of Magon—as of any of his followers whom I know—is that he desires to bring about an armed rebellion against the established Government of Mexico. In cases where reformers are given the opportunity of urging their reforms by democratic methods, armed rebellion in this day and age is indefensible. But when, through the suppression of free speech, free Press and such liberties, peaceable means of propaganda are impossible, then force is the only alternative. It was upon this principle that America's revolutionary forefathers proceeded, and upon which the Mexican Liberals are proceeding to-day.

Magon and his followers would never have come to the States to plot against Diaz had not their peaceable movement been broken up by gun-and-club methods and their lives seriously endangered at home. The propriety of citizens of despotic countries seeking refuge in another country, there to plan better things for their own, was for many decades recognised by the constituted powers of the United States, which protected political refugees.

A dozen years ago Palma established the Cuban revolutionary Junta in the city of New York, and instead of being arrested he was lionised. For more than a century political refugees from European countries, South America, and even China have found safety there. Young Turks prepared for their revolution there. Irish societies raised money there for a movement to free Ireland. Jewish defence societies have been financed all over the country, and none of the promoters have been turned over to the vengeance of the Czar. And these things have been done openly, not secretly. Until the other day there were Portuguese revolutionist headquarters in the United States. Porfirio Diaz himself—what historic irony!—when he turned revolutionist, found safety on American soil, and, though his cause was an extremely questionable one, no one arrested him. What is more, he committed the identical crime which, through the legal machinery of the United States, he is now urging against many of the refugees, that of setting on foot a military expedition against a foreign power. On March 22, 1876, Diaz crossed the Rio Grande at Brownsville, Texas, with forty armed followers for the purpose of waging war upon President Lerdo de Tejada. He was driven back and, though all America knew of his exploit, no effort was made to imprison him.

But now the policy has been changed to accommodate President Diaz. Action has been taken against political refugees of just one other country, Russia, and it is safe to assume that those cases were undertaken merely that the authorities might defend themselves

against the charge of using the machinery of government with partiality against Mexicans.

Magon and a small group of followers, including his brother Enrique and the Sarabias, crossed the Rio Grande in January, 1904, and soon afterwards established their paper, the *Regeneración*, in San Antonio. The paper had been going but a few weeks when a Mexican called at the office and tried to stab the Liberal leader with a dirk-knife. Enrique Magon grappled with the fellow, and in another moment four detectives rushed in and placed Enrique under arrest. The next day he was fined 30 dollars in the police court, while his assailant was not even arrested.

The exiles looked upon this incident as a part of a conspiracy to get them into trouble. They moved to St. Louis, where they re-established their paper. They had hardly got into their new quarters when they began to be annoyed by a detective agency. Then two different parties were brought from Mexico to institute charges of criminal and civil libel against the editors. The editors were thrown into jail, the publication was stopped. Furlong detectives seized letters and turned them over to the Mexican consul, and from these letters, the refugees claim, was gleaned a list of names which resulted in the arrest of some three hundred Liberals in Mexico.

The editors got out of prison on bail, whereupon new charges were prepared to get them back again. But, having important work to do, they chose to pay their bail and flee from these charges. Magon and Juan Sarabia went to Canada, and it was here that they

carried on their final correspondence preparatory to launching an armed rebellion against Diaz. The first gun was to be fired on the 20th of October, 1906, and on the night of the 19th the Liberal leaders gathered at El Paso preparatory to crossing the line the following morning.

As set forth in a previous chapter, this rebellion was betrayed and was more or less of a fizzle. Of the refugee leaders, Juan Sarabia was betrayed into the hands of Diaz, and with scores of others was soon afterwards sent to the military prison of San Juan de Ulua. Villarreal, as previously stated, was among those arrested by the American police. For a long time he fought extradition on the "murder and robbery" charge, and was finally turned over to the immigration authorities. Immigration officers were in the act of leading him to the boundary line when he bolted and succeeded in escaping by running through the streets of El Paso. Librado Rivera, first Speaker of the Liberal Junta, with Aaron Mansano, was kidnapped at St. Louis by detectives, was hurried as far as Ironton, Missouri, but was there rescued and brought back through an exposé which was made by one of the St. Louis papers.

As for Magon, for months he was hunted by detectives from city to city. He went to California, but was still kept dodging, and once masqueraded as a woman in order to escape the Diaz hounds. Finally, he revived his paper in Los Angeles under the name of the *Revolución*, and here he was joined by Villarreal and Rivera. The three worked quietly together, going out for their airing only at night and in disguise.

Early in August, 1907, the hiding-place of the Liberal leaders in Los Angeles was located. The evidence seems to point to a plot to kidnap them much as Sarabia was kidnapped. First, the officers had plenty of time in which to procure a warrant, but they did not procure a warrant, nor even attempt to do so. Second, they secreted an automobile in the vicinity and did not use it after the arrest. Third, when the three men, fearing a kidnapping plot, cried out at the top of their voices, the officers beat them with pistols, Magon being beaten until he lay bleeding and insensible on the ground. This circumstantial evidence of a kidnapping plot is borne out by the direct testimony of one of those who engaged in it.

Everything seems to have been arranged. The descent of the detectives was made on August 23, and the Mexican Ambassador from Washington was at hand. On the night of August 22 he was given a banquet by Mexican concessionaires having headquarters in Los Angeles.

But the outcries of Magon and his friends collected a crowd and it became impossible to kidnap them. So unprepared were the officers for a mere arrest case that when they got their prisoners to jail they were at a loss to know what charge to make against them, so they put them down on the police books as "resisting an officer"!

The Ambassador then proceeded to retain some of the highest-priced lawyers in Southern California to devise ways and means for getting the prisoners down into Mexico. These lawyers were ex-Governor Henry

T. Gage, Gray, Barker and Bowen, partners of U.S. Senator Flint; and Horace H. Appel. When the cases came into court their names were announced by the public prosecutor as special counsel, and always during the hearing one or more of them was personally in attendance.

The "officers" who beat the refugees and then charged them with resisting an officer—although they had, not even procured a warrant—were Thomas H. Furlong, head of the Furlong Detective Agency of St. Louis, an assistant Furlong detective, and two Los Angeles city detectives.

If there is any doubt as to who hired Furlong and his henchman to hunt down Magon, the doubt will be dispelled by the reading of an excerpt from Furlong's sworn testimony taken in the Los Angeles courts. The following is from Mr. Harriman's cross-examination :

Q.—What is your business?

A.—I am the president and manager of the Furlong Secret Service Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

Q.—You helped to arrest these men?

A.—I did.

Q.—What right did you have?

Mr. Lawler—That is objected to as a conclusion of the witness.

Q.—By Mr. Harriman: Did you have a warrant?

A.—No, sir.

The Commissioner—The other question is withdrawn, and now you ask him if he had a warrant?

Mr. Harriman—Yes, sir.

Q.—Arrested them without a warrant?

A.—Yes, sir.

BARBAROUS MEXICO

Q.—You took this property away from them without a warrant?

A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—Went through the house and searched it without a warrant?

A.—How is that?

Q.—Went through the house and searched it without a warrant?

A.—Yes.

Q.—And took the papers from them?

A.—I didn't take any papers from them. I took them and locked them up and then went back and got the papers.

Q.—Took them from their house and kept them, did you?

A.—No, sir. I turned them over——

Q.—Well, you kept them, so far as they are concerned?

A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—Who paid you for doing this work?

A.—The Mexican Government.

Attorney-General Bonaparte seems to have had the same purpose as Furlong and the Mexican authorities, even at a time when the case in hand did not involve extradition to Mexico, or even to Arizona. During a hearing before Judge Ross in San Francisco, Mr. Bonaparte had the temerity to wire his district attorney in that city: "Resist habeas corpus proceedings in case of Magon et al. on all grounds, *as they are wanted in Mexico.*" This telegram was read in court.

Five separate and distinct charges were brought against Magon and his associates, one after another. First, it was "resisting an officer." Then it was the old charge of "murder and robbery." Later it was criminal libel. Still later it was murdering "John Doe" in

Mexico. Finally it was conspiracy to violate the neutrality laws.

Undoubtedly the conspirators would have early succeeded in their purpose to "railroad" the men back to Mexico had not a number of Los Angeles organisations formed a defence committee, held mass meetings to arouse public sentiment, collected funds, and hired two able attorneys, Job Harriman and A. R. Holston. These lawyers after a long fight succeeded in driving the prosecution into a corner where they were compelled to proceed under action only involving imprisonment in the States.

During the early stages of the legal fight the Mexican agents were suppressing the *Revolución* in characteristic style. After the arrest of its three editors, the editorial emergency was met by L. Gutierrez de Lara, who had not previously been in any way identified with the Liberal party. Two weeks later De Lara was keeping company with Magon, Villarreal and Rivera. His extradition was sought on the ground that he had committed robbery "on the — day of the — month of 1906 in the — State of the Republic of Mexico"!

Despite the passing of De Lara, the *Revolución* continued to appear regularly. As soon as the agents of the prosecution could locate the new editor they promptly arrested him. He proved to be Manuel Sarabia, and he was charged with the same offence as happened to stand against Magon, Villarreal and Rivera at the time.

Who was left to publish little *Revolución*? There were the printers. They—Modesto Diaz, Federico

Arizmendez and a boy named Ulibarri—rose to the occasion. But in less than a month they, too, were led to jail, all three of them charged with criminal libel. Thus the Mexican Opposition newspaper passed into history. Incidentally, Modesto Diaz died as a result of the confinement following that arrest.

The *Revolución* was not an Anarchist paper. It was not a Socialist paper. It did not advocate the assassination of Presidents or the abolition of government. It merely stood for the principles which Americans in general, since the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States came into being, have considered as necessary to the well-being of any nation. If an American newspaper of its ideals had been suppressed by methods one-tenth as brazen, a righteous protest would have echoed and re-echoed across the continent. But it was only a Mexican newspaper, an opponent of President Diaz, and—it was suppressed.

The story of Lazaro Gutierrez de Lara well exemplifies the system of robbing the enemies of Diaz of their personal liberty in the United States, as practised by the Department of Justice working in conjunction with Mexican agents in various parts of the West during the past five years.

De Lara was taken to jail on the 27th of September, 1907, on telegraphic instructions from Attorney-General Bonaparte. As before stated, he was charged with larceny committed on the — day of the — month of 1906 in the — State of the Republic of Mexico, and on this awful indictment his extradition to Mexico was sought.

The extradition treaty between the United States and Mexico provides that the country asking extradition must furnish evidence of guilt within forty days of the arrest of the accused. In De Lara's case this little technicality was waived, and at the end of forty days a new complaint was filed containing the illuminating information that the alleged crime had been committed in the State of Sonora. This was considered sufficient ground upon which to hold the prisoner another forty days.

Nothing happened at the end of the second forty days, and on December 22 Attorney Harriman applied for a writ of habeas corpus. The writ was denied, and the prosecution was given more time in which to file a third complaint. De Lara was then accused of stealing uncut stove-wood in the State of Sonora, August 13, 1903!

Several peculiar facts transpired at the hearing. One was that De Lara had been tried and acquitted of the identical offence in Mexico more than four years previously. Another was that while at the trial in Mexico the value of the wood was fixed by the prosecution at four dollars, at the Los Angeles hearing its value was placed at twenty-eight dollars. Because a thief cannot be extradited for stealing less than twenty-five dollars the wood market had taken a spectacular jump. But by an oversight of the prosecution the market even then did not jump quite high enough, for by discovering that the price of silver was a little lower than usual that year, Attorney Harriman showed that the alleged value, fifty-six Mexican *pesos*, did not come to twenty-eight dollars

in American money, but a little less than twenty-five dollars, and so on that technicality the life of De Lara was saved.

The facts of the case were that De Lara had never stolen any wood, but that, while acting as attorney for a widow whose land was in dispute, he had given the widow permission to cut some wood on the land for her own use. The audacity of the prosecutors in this case would be unbelievable were it not a matter of record. De Lara was released, but only after one hundred and four precious days of his life had been wasted in an American jail. He had been luckier than many of his compatriots; he had won his fight against extradition, but that three and a half months were gone and could never be brought back. Moreover, the *Revolución* had been suppressed, and a Mexican gentleman had been taught that he who opposes the Tyrant may be properly disciplined in the United States as well as in Mexico.

Magon, Villarreal and Rivera remained in prison continuously for nearly three years. From early in July, 1908, to January, 1909, they were held *incomunicado* in the Los Angeles county jail, which means that no visitors, not even newspapermen, were permitted to see them. For a time not even Mrs. Rivera and her children were permitted to see the husband and father. Only their local attorney saw them. Two attorneys who were representing them in another State were excluded on the flimsy ground that they were not attorneys of record in California.

The only excuse a high official had to offer for

this severe isolation when, in July, 1908, I called upon him at his office and protested was :

“We are doing this at the request of the Mexican Government. They have accommodated us, and it’s no more than right that we accommodate them.”

Requests were also made by the Mexican Government that the men might not be admitted to bail, and the requests were obeyed. The privilege of liberty on bail pending trial is guaranteed by the law to all accused persons below the murderer in cold blood, and yet Judge Welborn, sitting both as district and as circuit judge, denied the men this privilege. Bail had previously been fixed at 5,000 dollars, ten times the amount required in similar cases that had previously come up. In the latter part of July, 1908, this amount was raised and presented in the most gilt-edged form, but it was not accepted. Judge Welborn’s reason was that a rule of the Supreme Court says that during habeas corpus proceedings the custody of a prisoner shall not be changed. This rule he strangely interpreted to mean that these particular prisoners should not be admitted to bail.

During their six months of *incomunicado*, when the prisoners were unable to make any public statement, one of the prosecutors took advantage of their enforced silence publicly to declare them guilty not only of the offences charged, but of others, among them a plot to assassinate President Diaz, when, as a matter of fact, there was no evidence whatsoever of such a plot.

After nearly two years in county jails, Magon, Villarreal and Rivera were adjudged guilty of conspiring to

violate the neutrality laws by planning to set on foot a military expedition against Mexico. They were sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment and were confined in the penitentiary at Florence, Arizona. Sarabia was not tried. Having waived extradition proceedings, he had been taken to Arizona before the others. Here he was released on bail and soon afterwards was married to a Boston lady of old and wealthy family. His health broken by long confinement, believing that a trial would result in his imprisonment in spite of the lack of evidence against him, Sarabia was persuaded to pay his bail and with his wife flee to Europe. There he has since interested himself in writing for various English, French, Spanish and Belgian papers articles upon the democratic movements in Mexico.

The campaign to extradite the refugees on charges of "murder and robbery" failed generally. It succeeded in so far as it kept a good many Liberals in jail for many months, drained their resources, weakened their organisation, and intimidated their friends, but it did not succeed in extraditing them. Most of the Liberals deported were deported by immigration officials or by kidnapping.

The "murder and robbery" campaign failed because it was so plainly in contradiction with American laws and American principles. The United States prosecutors might have known this from the start, but, in order to accommodate Diaz, they went ahead with the prosecutions. That this campaign was not a mere blundering on the part of individual United States attorneys, but that it was a policy of the highest officials of the Govern-

ment, was shown when, in 1908, numerous published reports from various departments at Washington and from Oyster Bay expressed the desire of the administration to deport Mexican political refugees "*as common criminals.*"

Failing in its efforts to deport Mexican refugees wholesale "*as common criminals,*" the Department of Justice concentrated its energies on securing their imprisonment for violation of the neutrality laws or conspiracy to violate the neutrality laws. It is a high misdemeanour to set on foot a military expedition against a "*friendly Power,*" or to conspire to set on foot a military expedition against a "*friendly Power.*" In addition to Magon, Villarreal, Rivera and Sarabia, some of the Liberal refugees who have been prosecuted under this law are Tomas de Espinosa, Jose M. Rangel, Gasimiro H. Regalado, Lauro Aguirre, Raymundo Cano, Antonio Aruajo, Amado Hernandez, Tomas Morales, Encardacion Diaz Guerra, Juan Castro, Priciliano Silva, Jose Maria Martinez, Benjamin Silva, Leocadio Trevino, Jose Ruiz, Benito Solis, Tomas Sarabia, Praxedis Guerrero, Sirvando T. Agis, John Murray, Calixto Guerra, Guillermo Adan, E. Davilla, Ramon Torres Delgrado, Amendo Morantes, Francisco Sainz, Marcelleno Ibarra and Inez Ruiz.

Most of the arrests occurred at San Antonio, Del Rio, El Paso, Douglas, or Los Angeles. This is by no means a complete list, but is a list of the most notable cases.

In nearly all of these cases the accused were kept in jail for month after month without an opportunity of

proving their innocence. When the cases came to trial, they were usually acquitted. Convictions were secured in the cases of Espinosa, Aruajo, one of the Guerras, Priciliano Silva, Trevino, Rangel, and Magon, Villarreal and Rivera. Prison sentences ranging from one and a half to two and a half years were passed on the convicted ones, and they were imprisoned either at Leavenworth, Kansas, or Florence, Arizona.

Were these men guilty? If not, how is it that they were convicted?

It is my opinion that not one was guilty within the proper interpretation of the statute, that the laws were stretched to convict them, that in some instances, at least, they were deliberately "jobbed."

This is a bold statement, but I think the facts bear me out. That there exists on the part of the American Government an incontinent desire to serve Diaz is shown by the circumstance that cases where the evidence of violation of the neutrality laws is ten times as clear—as American expeditions to aid revolutions in Central America or South American countries—have been and are habitually overlooked by the authorities. But this fact I do not need to urge in favour of the Mexican Liberals. The truth is that there has never been any adequate evidence to show a violation of the neutrality laws on their part.

Did they set on foot a military expedition against a friendly power? Did they plan to do so? No. What did they do? They went to the States and there planned to aid a revolutionary movement in Mexico. They fled to the States to save their lives, there they stayed,

planning to return and take part in a rebellion upon Mexican soil; nothing more.

Did this constitute a violation of the neutrality laws?

Not in the opinion of U.S. Judge Maxey, of Texas, who reviewed some of the cases. On the 7th of January, 1908, the *San Antonio Daily Light and Gazette* quotes Judge Maxey as follows:

“If Jose M. Rangel, the defendant, merely went across the river and joined in the fight, he had every right to do so, and I will so tell the jury in my charge. This indictment is not for fighting in a foreign country, but for beginning and setting on foot an expedition in Val Verde county.”

Magon, Villarreal and Rivera, the leaders, not only did not set on foot an expedition against Mexico, but they did not even cross the river and fight themselves. Their conviction was secured through the palpably perjured testimony of a Mexican detective, who presented the only direct evidence against them. This witness claimed to be a spy who had penetrated a meeting of a Liberal club. There, he declared, letters were read from Magon ordering the club to constitute itself a military body and invade Mexico. At this meeting, said he, military appointments, forwarded by Magon, were made, and the names were written by a member named Salcido. The paper was produced, but handwriting experts brought by the defence proved the document to be a forgery. The man then changed his testimony and swore that he wrote the names himself. This was a vital point in the testimony, and its breakdown should have been followed by the immediate

discharge of the defendants, instead of the heavy sentences which were passed upon them.

The general prosecution of Mexican political refugees continued unabated up to June, 1910, when the scandal became so great that the matter was presented to Congress, and the facts which I have set down here, but in more complete form, were testified to before the House Rules Committee. Resolutions providing for a general investigation of the persecutions are, at the time of writing, pending in both Houses.

Up to the initiation of Congressional proceedings the Government planned to continue the persecutions. Repeatedly it was announced that, when the terms of Magon, Villarreal and Rivera, at the Florence penitentiary, ended, they would be prosecuted on further charges. But on the 3rd of August they were released and were not re-arrested. Since that date there have been no prosecutions to my knowledge. It is to be hoped that the laws of the country, and the great American principle of protection for political refugees, will not again be abused, but I fear that the conspirators are only waiting for the public to forget their past crimes.

There may be further persecutions and there may not. Even if there are not, Justice will not be satisfied; the friends of decency and of liberty cannot be content. For some of the victims are still enduring unjust punishment which it is in the power of the American people to end. There is Lazaro Puente, for example, the peaceful editor, thirteen years a resident of the United States, who was unjustly and unlawfully deported as an "un-

desirable immigrant" by the immigration officials. Lazaro Puente is a prisoner in San Juan de Ulua, the military fortress in Vera Cruz Harbour. He has been a prisoner there for more than four years. Unjustly he was yielded up to the Mexican police; in justice the American people should demand that he be returned free.

CHAPTER XIV

President Diaz Himself

“BUT Diaz himself—isn't he a pretty good sort of fellow?”

It is a question that almost invariably rises to the lips of the average American when he learns for the first time of the slavery, peonage and political oppression of Mexico. Though the question is only another evidence that the President's Press agents have done their work well, yet it is one that may very well be examined separately.

The current American estimate of Porfirio Diaz, at least up to the past year or two, has indeed been that he is a very good fellow. Theodore Roosevelt, in writing to James Creelman after the publication of the latter's famous laudatory article, declared that among contemporary statesmen there was none greater than Porfirio Diaz. In the same year, during a trip to Mexico, William Jennings Bryan spoke in the most eulogistic terms of Diaz's “great work.” David Starr Jordan, of Stanford University, in recent speeches, has echoed Creelman's assertion that Diaz is the greatest man in the western hemisphere. And hundreds of our most distinguished citizens have expressed themselves

in a similar vein. On the part of prominent Americans travelling in Mexico it has become a custom, a sort of formality of the trip, to banquet at Chapultepec Castle—the lesser lights at Chapultepec café—and to raise the after-dinner voice in most extravagant praise, loudly attributing to General Diaz the virtues of a superman, even of a demi-god.

Were not the facts overwhelmingly to the contrary, did not the easily provable acts of President Diaz tell an entirely different story, I would not presume to question the estimates of such men, especially when those estimates agree and are accepted generally as correct. But when the facts speak for themselves, it matters not how obscure may be the individual who brings them to light. It matters not, even, how distinguished the men who disregard those facts, for facts are greater than men. Current literature, in calling attention to the new conception of Porfirio Diaz that has of late been gaining ground in America, refers to him as a man of mystery. But, given the facts, the mystery dispels itself.

In judging the life of a man, especially of a man who has decided the fate of thousands, who has "saved a nation," or wrecked it, small virtues and small vices count for little; insignificant acts of good or ill are important only in the aggregate. A man may have committed grave crimes, yet if he has brought more joy to the world than sorrow, he should be judged kindly. On the other hand, he may be credited with laudable deeds, yet if he has locked the wheels of progress for a time to feed his own ambition, history will not acquit him of the crime. It is the balance that counts; it is the scales

that decide. Will not President Diaz, when weighed in the balance of his good and evil deeds, be found wanting—terribly wanting? His friends may sing his praises, but when they, his best friends, begin to specify, to point out their reasons for selecting him for a high niche in the hall of good fame, is it not found that they themselves become, instead of his advocates, his prosecutors?

It is curious, this almost universal feeling—in the States—that Porfirio Diaz is a very good fellow. But it can be explained. Indeed, it has already been quite fully explained in preceding chapters of this book. To repeat: for one thing, individuals who have not had the opportunity to judge a particular man or thing for themselves, though they be College Presidents and Congressmen, are apt to accept the word of others as to that man or thing. President Diaz, knowing this and valuing the good opinions of men who do not know, has spent lavishly for printer's ink in the States. For another thing, most men are susceptible to flattery, and the President is a good flatterer. As Catholics journeying to Rome seek an audience with the Pope, so Americans travelling to Mexico seek an audience of General Diaz; they usually get it and are flattered. Still again, to paraphrase an old proverb, men not only do not look a gift horse in the mouth, but they do not look the giver in the mouth. Despite the ancient warning, men do not usually beware of the Greeks when they bring gifts; and Diaz is free with gifts to men whose good opinion is influential with others. Finally, there is nothing that succeeds like success, and Diaz has succeeded. Power



Photo: C. B. Waite

PRESIDENT DIAZ'S PALACE AT CHAPULTEPEC

dazzles the strong as well as the weak, and Diaz's power has dazzled men and cowed them until they have not the courage to look steadily at the glare long enough to see the bones and carrion behind it. I do not for a minute imagine that any decent American approves of the acts of Porfirio Diaz. I merely guess that they—the decent ones—are ignorant of those deeds and are moved to strong praise by having accepted the word of others—and by the dazzle of success.

As for me, I do not come with a new ideal of statesmanship with which to change my readers' opinions, but I come with facts. With those facts before you, if you hold Washington a great statesman, or Jefferson, or Lincoln, or any other enduring light of American political history, I am sure you cannot at the same time hold Porfirio Diaz a great statesman. What Porfirio Diaz has done, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, would have abhorred to do, and you yourself would abhor to do or see done, are you really an admirer of any or all of these men.

Porfirio Diaz is truly a striking figure. He must be a genius of a sort, and there must actually be some traits of character about him to be admired. Let us examine some of his acts with a view to discovering whether or not he may justly be called the greatest living statesman, or "the grandest man in the Americas."

First let us examine those broadly general allegations upon which is based his good fame abroad. Chief among these are three: that he has "made modern Mexico," that he brought peace to Mexico, and that he is a model of virtue in his private life.

Did Porfirio Diaz "make" modern Mexico? Is Mexico modern? Hardly. Neither industrially, nor in the matter of public education, nor in the form of government, is Mexico modern. Industrially it is at least a quarter of a century behind the times; in the matter of public education it is at least half a century behind the times; in its system of government it is worthy of the Egypt of three thousand years ago.

True, Mexico has seen some advancement in certain directions—especially industrially—during the past thirty-five years. But that mere fact does not argue any propelling force on the part of President Diaz. In order to show that he was the special propelling force, will it not be necessary to show that Mexico has advanced in that period faster than other countries? And should it be shown that Mexico has advanced more slowly than almost any other large nation in the world in the past thirty-five years, would it not be logical to attribute to Diaz at least some of that retarding force?

Consider the United States thirty-five years ago and then to-day, and next consider Mexico. Consider that the world has been built over, industrially, in the past thirty-five years. To make the comparison perfectly unassailable, disregard the United States and European countries and compare the progress of Mexico with that of other Latin-American countries. Among persons who have travelled extensively in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and even Cuba, and Mexico, there is a fair measure of agreement that Mexico is the most backward of the five—in the matter of government, in the matter of public education, even industrially. Who made Argen-

tina? Who made Chile? Who made Brazil? Why don't we find a "maker" of these countries? The fact is that whatever modernisation Mexico has had during the past thirty-five years is to be attributed to evolution—that is, to the general progress of the world—rather than to Porfirio Diaz. In general, he has been a reactionary force. His claims for being progressive are all based upon one fact—upon his having "encouraged" foreign capital.

"Diaz, the peace-maker, the greatest peace-maker alive, greater than Roosevelt!" chanted an American politician at a banquet in the Mexican capital. And the chant was only an echo of louder voices.

I remember seeing, not long ago, a news item stating that the American Peace Society had made Porfirio Diaz an honorary vice-president, in consideration of his having brought peace to Mexico. The theory seems to be that since the history of Mexico before Diaz was full of wars and violent changes in the government, and the history of Mexico under Diaz has been without violent upheavals of far-reaching effect, Diaz must necessarily be a humane, benevolent creature who shrinks at the mention of bloodshed, and whose example of loving-kindness is so compelling that none of his subjects have the heart to do anything but emulate him.

In answer to which it will only be necessary to refer the reader to my account of how Diaz began his career as a statesman by deliberately breaking the peace of Mexico himself, and how he has been breaking the peace ever since—by making ruthless war upon the self-respecting, democratic elements among his people. He has

kept the peace—if it can be called keeping the peace—by disposing of his opponents as fast as their heads have appeared above the horizon. This sort of peace is what the Mexican writer De Zayas calls “mechanical peace.” It has no virtue, because the fruits of legitimate peace fail to ripen under it. It neither brings happiness to the nation, nor prepares the nation for happiness. It prepares it only for violent revolution.

For more than twenty years before arriving at the supreme power in Mexico, Diaz had been a professional soldier, and almost continually in the field. The wars of those times were by no means unnecessary affairs. Mexico did not fight simply because it is the Mexican character to be looking always for trouble, for it isn't. Diaz fought in the Three Years' War, in which the throttling grip of the Catholic Church on the throat of the nation was broken and the nation secured a real republican Constitution. Afterwards he fought in the War of Maximilian, which ended in the execution of the Austrian prince whom the armies of Napoleon III. had made emperor.

During these twenty odd years Diaz fought on the side of Mexico and patriotism. He probably fought no more wisely or energetically than thousands of other Mexicans, but he had the good luck to have become acquainted in his youth with Benito Juarez, who, years later, as father of the Constitution and constitutional President, guided the destinies of the country safely through many troublous years. Juarez remembered Diaz, watched his work, and promoted him gradually from one rank to another until, at the downfall of

Maximilian, Don Porfirio held a rank which in the States would carry the title of major-general. Note how Diaz repaid the favours of Juarez.

Following the overthrow of Maximilian, peace reigned in Mexico. Juarez was President. The Constitution was put into operation. The people were sick unto death of war. There threatened neither foreign foe nor internal revolt. Yet the ambitious Diaz wantonly and without any plausible excuse stirred up rebellion after rebellion for the purpose of securing for himself the supreme power in the land.

There is evidence that Diaz began plotting to seize the Presidency even before the fall of the Empire. During those last days, when Maximilian was penned up in Querétaro, friends of Diaz approached several military leaders and proposed that they form a military party to secure the Presidency by force of arms, which prize would be raffled off among Generals Diaz, Corona and Escobedo. General Escobedo refused to enter into the conspiracy, and the plan consequently fell through. Diaz, who was at that time besieging Mexico City, then effected a secret combination with the Church to overthrow the Liberal Government. According to one writer, he intentionally delayed taking the metropolis, and asked General Escobedo for two of his strongest divisions, which he planned to turn against Juarez. But Juarez received word of the plot in time, and instructed General Escobedo to send two of his strongest divisions, under command of General Corona and General Regules respectively, with orders to destroy the treachery of Diaz should it arise. When the reinforce-

ments arrived, Diaz tried to get them entirely into his power by appointing new officers, but Corona and Regules stood firm; and Diaz, realising that he had been anticipated, abandoned his plot.

Immediately after the coming of peace, Juarez appointed Diaz commander of that part of the army which was stationed in Oaxaca, and Diaz used his power to control the State elections and impose himself as Governor. After his defeat for the Presidency Diaz started a revolt, known as "La Ciudadela," The Citadel, but the uprising was crushed in one decisive meeting with the Government troops. Six weeks later Diaz started a second rebellion, calling his friends to arms under what is known as the "Plan de Noria"—a platform, in reality—in which the leading demand was for an amendment to the Constitution absolutely forbidding the re-election of either President or Governors. This rebellion also met with ignominious defeat on the battlefield at the hands of the Government forces, and when Juarez died, in July, 1872, Diaz was a fugitive from justice.

After the death of Juarez, Diaz prosecuted a successful rebellion, but only after four years more of plotting and rebelling. The people of the country were overwhelmingly against him, but he found one very definite interest upon which to play. That, far from being a peaceful and legitimate interest, was a military interest, the interest of the chiefs of the army and of those who had made their living by killing and plundering. The Government of Juarez and the Government of Lerdo both carried out, after peace came, a sweepingly anti-

militarist policy. They announced their intention of reducing the army, and proceeded to reduce the army. Thereupon the chiefs thereof, seeing their glory departing from them, became fertile ground for the seeds of rebellion which Diaz was strewing broadcast. Diaz gave these army chiefs to understand that under him they would not be shorn of their military splendour, but, on the other hand, would be raised to positions of higher power.

Lerdo issued an amnesty to all revolutionists, and Diaz was safe from prosecution as a rebel. But instead of employing in useful and honourable pursuits the freedom thus given, he used it to facilitate his plotting until, in January, 1876, he started his third rebellion, issuing his "Plan de Tuxtepec," in which he again demanded a change prohibiting the re-election of the President.

For nearly a year Diaz prosecuted this third revolt, during that time issuing another manifesto, the "Plan de Palo Blanco," which gave his operations the aspect of still another and a fourth rebellion. It was under this plan that the rebel leader finally gained a decisive victory over Government troops, and soon afterwards led his army into the capital and declared himself provisional President. A few days later he held a farcical election, in which he placed soldiers in possession of the polls, and permitted neither rival candidates to appear nor opposition votes to be cast.

Thus in 1876, more than a generation ago, Porfirio Diaz came to the head of the Mexican State a rebel in arms. He broke the peace of Mexico to begin with,

and he has continued to break the peace by periodical and wholesale butcheries of his people. General Porfirio Diaz the "greatest living peace-maker"! What sacrilege!

That the Mexican dictator has not fallen a victim to the physical debaucheries that sometimes over-tempt men suddenly risen to great power is undoubtedly true. But what of it? Certainly no one will argue that, since a man keeps clean physically, he has a right to mis-govern a country and assassinate a people. Physical temperance and marital virtue do not in the least determine the standing a man deserves as a statesman.

Thus it will be seen that the allegations upon which the good fame of General Diaz is based have no foundation in fact. Moreover, none of his flatterers have so far discovered in him claims of greatness any better substantiated than those mentioned.

Diaz has some personal abilities, such as a genius for organisation and keen judgment of human nature, as well as industry, but these do not determine that a man's public acts shall be beneficent. Like the virtues the devout Methodist lady attributed to the devil, industry and persistence, they merely render him more efficient in what he does. If he chooses to do good, they become virtues; if he chooses to do ill, they are but the minister of his vices.

The flatterers of Porfirio Diaz are wont to speak in generalities, for otherwise they would come to grief. On the other hand, a large book could be written recounting his evil deeds and contemptible traits.

Ingratitude is one of the least important of the charges

that are brought against him. Benito Juarez made the career of Porfirio Diaz. Every promotion which Diaz received was given him by the hands of Juarez. Nevertheless, Diaz turned against his country and his friend, started rebellion after rebellion, and made the last days of the great patriot turbulent and unhappy.

Yet, to portray the other side, Diaz has shown gratitude to some of his friends, and in doing so he has at the same time exhibited his utter disregard for the public welfare. An Indian named Cahuantzi, illiterate but rich, was Diaz's friend when the latter was in rebellion against Juarez and Lerdo. Cahuantzi furnished the rebel with horses and money, and when Diaz captured the supreme power he did not forget. He made Cahuantzi Governor of Tlaxcala, sent him a teacher, and has retained him in that position.

A similar case was that of Manuel Gonzalez, a *compadre* who aided the Diaz rebellions and whom Diaz substituted for himself in the Presidential chair from 1880 to 1884. After Gonzalez had served his purpose in the Federal Government, Don Porfirio presented him with the State Government of Guanajuato, where he reigned until his death. Gonzalez was wont to boast that the Government had killed all the bandits in Guanajuato but himself, that he was the only bandit tolerated in that State.

The flatterers of Diaz tell of his intellectual ability, but of his culture they dare say nothing. The question as to whether or not he is a cultivated man would seem important, inasmuch as it would determine somewhat the distribution of culture among the people whom he

controls so absolutely. In devising ways and means to strengthen his personal power, Diaz's intelligence has risen even to genius, but of refinement and culture he possesses little or none. Despite the necessity of his meeting foreigners almost daily, he has never learned English, or any other foreign language. He never reads anything but press clippings and books about himself, and he never studies anything but the art of keeping himself in power. He is interested neither in music, nor in art, nor in literature, nor in the drama; and the encouragement he gives to these things is negligible. Mexico's drama is imported from Spain, Italy and France. Her literature is imported from France and Spain. Her art and music are likewise imported. Less than a century ago art flourished in Mexico, but now her art is decadent, choked, like her budding literature, by the thorns of political tyranny.

General education in Mexico is almost non-existent. The flatterers of Diaz tell of the schools that he has established, but the investigator fails to find these schools. They are mostly on paper. There are practically no such things as country schools in Mexico, while towns of many hundreds of inhabitants often have no school whatsoever. Nominally there are schools in such towns, but actually there are none, because the Governors of the various States prefer not to spend the money on education. While travelling in the rural districts of the State of Mexico, for example, I learned that scores of schools in small towns had been closed for three years because the Governor, General Fernando Gonzalez, had withheld the money, explain-

ing to the local authorities that he needed it for other purposes. The fact that there is no adequate elementary school system in Mexico is attested by the most recent official census (1900), which goes to show that but 16 per cent. of the population are able to read and write. Compare this with Japan, an over-populated country, where the people are very poor and where the opportunities for education, seemingly, ought not to be so good. Ninety-eight per cent. of Japanese men and ninety-three per cent. of Japanese women are able to read and write. The sort of educational ideal held by President Diaz is shown in the schools that are running, where a most important item in the curriculum is military study and training.

Is Diaz humane? The question is almost superfluous, inasmuch as few of his admirers credit him with this trait. All admit that he has been severe and harsh, even brutal, in his treatment of his enemies; while some of them even relate deeds of exceptional cruelty—relate them with gusto, condemning not at all, but treating the incidents as if they were merely some excusable eccentricities of genius. The wholesale killings carried out by the orders of Diaz, the torture perpetrated in his prisons, the slavery of hundreds of thousands of his people, the heart-breaking poverty which he could greatly ameliorate if he wished, are of themselves sufficient proof of his inhumanity.

As a military commander Diaz was noted for his cruelty both to his own soldiers and to any of the enemy who happened to fall into his hands. Several

Mexican writers mention unwarrantable acts of severity and executions of subordinates ordered in the heat of passion. All authorities agree that the massacre at Juchitan, Oaxaca, was done in cold blood, indiscriminately and out of revenge. On becoming President, Diaz installed his brother "Chato" as Governor of Oaxaca. "Chato" was a drunkard and a libertine, and he was killed while overriding the personal liberties of the people of the town of Juchitan. Many weeks later, long after the uprising of a day had passed, President Diaz sent troops to Juchitan, who, according to one writer, suddenly appeared one evening in the public square where the people had gathered to listen to the music of a band, and poured volley after volley into the crowd, continuing their deadly work until all the people left in the square were dead or dying on the ground.

Such killings have been a recognised policy of the Diaz rule. The Rio Blanco massacre took place after the town was entirely quiet. The executions in Cananea were carried out with little discrimination and after the alleged disturbance of the strikers was over. The summary executions at Velardeña in the spring of 1909 all took place after the so-called riot was over. And other instances could be given. It may be suggested that in some of these cases not Diaz, but an underling, was responsible. But that he approves of a policy of distributing indiscriminate death is shown by his remarkable toast to General Bernardo Reyes, after the Monterey massacre in 1903, when he said: "Señor General, that is the way to govern."

The inhuman methods used to exterminate the Yaqui Indians have been set out in a previous chapter. One of the President's famous Yaqui orders, which, however, I did not mention, not only exhibits his rude and uncultured ideas of justice, but paints his cruelty in lurid colours. Several years ago, after various employers of labour of the State of Sonora had protested against the wholesale deportation of the Yaquis because they needed the Yaquis as farm and mine labourers, Diaz, in order to pacify the aforesaid employers, modified his deportation decree to read substantially as follows: "No more Yaquis are to be deported except in case of offences being committed by Yaquis. For every offence hereafter committed by any Yaqui, five hundred Yaquis are to be rounded up and deported to Yucatan."

This decree is attested by no less a personage than Francisco Madero in his book, "La Sucesion Presidencial," which was suppressed by the Diaz Government. The decree was carried out, or at least the stream of Yaqui exiles kept on. Cruel and revengeful is the Mexican President, and bitterly has his nation suffered as a result of it.

Is Diaz a brave man? In some quarters it has been taken for granted that he is a man of courage, inasmuch as he made a success as a soldier. But there are many distinguished Mexicans who, having watched his career, assert that he is not even a brave man. The fact that when he seized the power he carefully excluded from any part in the government each and every one of the ablest and most popular Mexicans

of the day is attributed to fear. The fact that he maintains a large army, which he distributes in every quarter of the country, and a huge secret police system armed with extraordinary power to kill on suspicion, the way in which he gets rid of his enemies, his bloody massacres themselves, even his muzzling of the Press, are all attributed to fear. In his book, "Diaz, Czar of Mexico," Carlo de Fornaro voices this belief, and reasons quite effectively upon it. He says :

" Like all people quick to anger, he (Diaz) is not really fearless, for as the jungle song says, ' Anger is the egg of fear.' Fearful, and therefore ever vigilant, he was saved from destruction by this alertness, as the hare is preserved from capture by his long ears. He mistook cruelty for strength of character, and consequently was ever ready to terrorise for fear of being thought weak. . . .

" Last year, on the 16th of September, as the Mexican students desired to parade on the streets of the capital, they sent their representative, a Mr. Olea, to beg the President's permission. Porfirio Diaz answered: ' Yes; but beware! for the Mexicans have revolutionary tendencies lurking in their blood.' Think of three score of youngsters parading unarmed being a menace to the republic, with 5,000 soldiers, *rurales* and policemen in the capital!

" It is only by admitting this shameful, well-hidden stigma on the apparently brave front of this man that we can logically explain such despicable and infamous acts as the massacres of Vera Cruz and Orizaba. He was then panic-stricken, like a wanderer who shoots wildly at the fleeing phantoms of the night; he was so terrorised that the only means of relieving his blue funk was to terrorise in return."

Nor can the President be acquitted of hypocrisy.



Photo: C. B. Waite

A SPECIMEN OF THE STATUARY IN THE ALAMEDA PARK, MEXICO CITY

Constantly is he foisting new shams and deceptions and farces upon the public. His election farces and his periodical pretence of wishing to retire from the Presidency, and then reluctantly yielding to a universal demand on the part of the people, have already been referred to. Diaz's rule began in hypocrisy, for he went into office on a platform which he never attempted to carry out. He pretended to consider the doctrine of non-re-election of President and Governors of enough importance to warrant turning the nation over in a revolution; yet as soon as he had entrenched himself in power, he proceeded to re-elect himself as well as his Governors on to the end of time.

When Elihu Root went into Mexico to see Diaz and arrange some matters in regard to Magdalena Bay, Diaz was desirous of showing Mr. Root that the Mexican people were not as poverty-stricken as they had been painted. He therefore, through his Department of the Interior, distributed, the day before Mr. Root's arrival in the capital, five thousand pairs of new pantaloons among that class of workmen who were habitually most prominent in the streets. In spite of orders that the pants were to be worn, the majority of them were promptly exchanged for food, and so Mr. Root was probably not very badly fooled. The incident merely goes to show to what extent the petty hypocrisy of the Mexican ruler sometimes goes.

Diaz is the head of the Masons in Mexico, yet he nominates every new bishop and archbishop the country gets. Church marriages are not recognised as legal, yet Diaz has favoured the Church so far as to refuse

to enact a divorce law, so that to-day there is no such thing as divorce and re-marriage during the life of both parties in Mexico. Constantly is Diaz trying to fool the people as to his own motives. He brought about the merger under national control of the two leading railway systems of the country, ostensibly to put the railways where the Government can use them best in time of war, but actually in order to give his friends an opportunity to make money in the juggling of securities. Deceits of this class could be enumerated indefinitely.

One of the most notable hypocritical antics of Diaz is his pretended concurrence in the overwhelmingly popular idolatry of the patriot Juarez. It will be remembered that when Juarez died, Diaz was in revolt against him, and therefore, if it is conceded that Juarez was a great statesman, it must be admitted that Diaz was wrong in rebelling. Diaz undoubtedly recognised this fact, and some ten years ago he is said to have aided secretly the publication and circulation of a book which attempted, by new and cleverly written interpretations of the acts of Juarez, to make out that the father of the Constitution was a great blunderer instead of a great statesman. This failed to turn the tide against Juarez, however, and Diaz fell in with the tide, until nowadays we see him every year, on the occasion of the birthday of Juarez, delivering a eulogistic speech over the tomb of the man against whom he rebelled. More than this, during each speech Diaz sheds tears—rains tears—and is wont to refer to Juarez as “my great teacher”!

The ability to shed tears freely and on the slightest provocation has, indeed, been declared by the President's enemies to be his greatest asset as a statesman. When a distinguished visitor praises Diaz or his work, Diaz cries—and the visitor is touched and drawn toward him. When the "Circula de Amigos de General Diaz" pays its formal call to tell its creator that the country once more demands his re-election, he weeps—and the foreign Press remarks upon how that man loves his country! Once a year, on his birthday, the President of Mexico goes down into the street and shakes hands with his people. The reception takes place in front of the national palace, and all the while the tears are raining down his cheeks—and the people say to themselves, "Poor old man, he's had his troubles. Let him end his life in peace."

Diaz has always been able to cry. While striving against the Lerdist Government in 1876, just before his day of success came, he was beaten in the battle of Icamole. He thought it meant an end of his hopes, and he cried like a baby, while his subordinate officers looked on in shame. This gained him the nickname of "The Weeper of Icamole," which still sticks to him. In his memoirs Lerdo calls Diaz "the man who weeps."

An oft-related incident, which shows the shallowness of the feeling that accompanies the Diaz tears, is told by Fornaro as follows:

"When Captain Clodomoro Cota was sentenced by the military tribunal to be shot, his father sought the President, and on his knees, weeping, begged him to pardon his son.

Porfirio Diaz also was weeping, but, lifting the despairing man, uttered this ambiguous phrase: 'Have courage, and faith in justice.' The father left, consoled, believing that his petition had been answered. But on the following morning his son was shot. The tears of Porfirio Diaz are crocodile tears."

The President is not noted for avarice, which is not surprising, since the power that he wields, by reason of the army and the rest of his machine, is far greater than any power that money could buy in Mexico. To Porfirio Diaz money and other cashable goods are but a pawn in the game, and he uses them to buy the support of the greedy. Yet his enemies declare that he is the richest man in Mexico. He keeps his financial affairs so well hidden that few can guess how large a fortune he has. It is known that he has large holdings under aliases and in the names of dummies, and that the various members of his family are all wealthy. But why should Porfirio Diaz care for mere money when all Mexico is his?

Is the President patriotic? Has he the welfare of Mexico at heart? His flatterers swear by his patriotism, but the facts demand a negative answer. Diaz helped to depose the foreign prince, but immediately afterwards he plunged a peaceful country into war to feed his own ambition. Perhaps it will be said that he imagined that he could order the destinies of Mexico more for the benefit of Mexico than could anyone else. Doubtless; but why has he not given his country progress? Is it possible that he believes autocracy is better for a people than democracy? Is it pos-

sible that he considers illiteracy a condition of the greatest possible happiness for a people? Can he believe that a state of chronic starvation contributes to the welfare of a nation? He is an old man—eighty years old. Why does he not make some provision against political chaos after his death?

In my judgment the key to the character and the public acts of Porfirio Diaz is that he wants to stay where he is. "How will this move affect the security of my position?" I believe this question has been the one test for the acts of Porfirio Diaz in all these thirty-five years. This question has always been before him. With it he has eaten, drunk, slept. With it before him he built a machine, enriched his friends, and disposed of his enemies, buying some and killing others. With it before him he has flattered and gifted the foreigner, favoured the Church, kept temperance in his body, and learned a martial carriage; has set one friend against another, fostered prejudice between his people and other peoples, paid the printer, cried in the sight of the multitude when there was no sorrow in his soul, and—wrecked his country.

CHAPTER XV

The Mexican People

SINCE in the last analysis all apologies for the Diaz system of economic slavery and political autocracy have their roots in assertions of ethnological inferiority on the part of the Mexican people, it would seem wise to end this book with an examination of the character of Mexicans and a discussion of the arguments upon which Americans are wont to defend a system in Mexico such as they would not for a moment excuse in any other country.

Every defence of Diaz is an attack upon the Mexican people. It must be so, since there is no conceivable defence of despotism except that the people are so weak or so wicked that they cannot be trusted to take care of themselves.

The gist of the defence is that the Mexican must be ruled from above because he "is not fit for democracy"; that he must be enslaved for the sake of "progress," since he would do nothing for himself or the world were he not compelled to do it through fear of the whip or acute starvation; that he must be enslaved because he knows nothing better than slavery, and that he is happy in slavery anyhow—all of which



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BASKET-CARRIERS

in the end resolves itself into the simple proposition that because he is down he ought to be kept down. Incurable laziness, childish superstition, wanton improvidence, constitutional stupidity, immovable conservatism, impenetrable ignorance, an uncontrollable propensity for theft, drunkenness and cowardice are some of the vices attributed to the Mexican people by those same persons who declare their ruler to be the wisest and most beatific man on the face of the earth.

Laziness, according to the American friends of President Diaz, is the cardinal vice of the Mexican. Laziness has always been a cardinal vice in the eyes of the grinders of the poor. American planters actually expect the Mexican to work himself to death for the love of it! Or is it for the love of his master that they expect him to work? Or for the dignity of labour?

But the Mexican does not appreciate such things. And, failing to receive anything more tangible for his work, he "soldiers" on the job. Wherefore he is not only lazy but stupid. Wherefore it is right and proper that he should be driven to the field with clubs, that he should be hunted down, forced into *enganchado* gangs, locked up at night, and starved.

It may be information to some persons to tell them that Mexicans have been known to work willingly and effectively when they saw anything to work for. Tens of thousands of Mexicans have displaced Americans and Japanese on the railroads and in the fields of the American South-West. So high an authority as E. H. Harriman said, in an interview published in

the Los Angeles *Times* in March, 1909: "We have had a good deal of experience with the Mexican, and we have found that after he is fed up and gets his strength he makes a very good worker."

Note that. "*After he is fed up and gets his strength*"—which is saying, in effect, that many of the employers of Mexican labour, some of them estimable Americans, friends of Diaz, *starve them so chronically that they have not the actual strength to work effectively.* Thus we have a second reason why Mexicans sometimes "soldier" on the job. Worthless, worthless Mexicans! Virtuous, virtuous Americans!

The American promoter feels a personal grievance at the religious bigotry of the poor Mexican. It is because of the Church *fiestas*, which give the Mexican a few extra holidays a month when he is free to take them. Profits are lost on those *fiesta* days; hence the anguish of the American promoter; hence the welcome which the American gives to a system of labour such as we find in Valle Nacional, where the cane of *bejuco* wood is mightier than the priest, where there is no day when the club does not drive the slave to the back-breaking toil of the field.

"They told us labour was cheap down here," an American once said to me in a grieved tone. "Cheap! Of course; dirt cheap. But it has its drawbacks." He expected every "hand" to do as much work as an able-bodied American and to live on thin air besides!

Far be it from me to express approval of the influence of the Catholic Church upon the Mexican.

Yet it must be admitted that the Church alleviates his misery somewhat by providing him with some extra holidays. And it feeds his hunger for sights of beauty and sounds of sweetness, which for the poor Mexican are usually impossible of attainment outside of a church. If the rulers of the land had been enlightened and had given the Mexican the barest glimpse of brightness apart from the Church, the sway of the priest might have been less pronounced than it is to-day.

Those *fiestas*, which are such a thorn in the side of the American promoter, are useful to him at least in that they furnish him with an excuse for paying the wage-earner so little that it is an extravagance indeed for the latter to take a day off. "They're so improvident that I have to keep them at the starvation point or they won't work at all." You may hear Americans saying that almost any day in Mexico. In illustration of which numerous stories are virtuously recounted.

Improvident! Yes; the starving Mexican is improvident. He spends his money to keep from starving! Yes; there are cases where he is paid such munificent wages that he is able to save a *centavo* now and then if he tries. And, trying, he finds that providence boots him nothing. He finds that the moment he gets a few dollars ahead he at once becomes a mark for every grafting petty official within whose ken he falls. If the masters of Mexico wish their slaves to be provident they should give them an opportunity to get something ahead, and guarantee not to steal it back again.

The poor Mexican is accused of being an inveterate thief. The way a Mexican labourer will accept money and then try to run away, instead of working for the rest of his life to pay off the debt, is indeed enough to bring tears to the eyes of the American grinder of *enganchados*. The American promoter steals the very lifeblood of the labourer, and then expects the latter to be so steeped in virtue as to refrain from stealing any part of it back again. When a Mexican peon sees a trinket or a pretty thing that takes his fancy, he is quite likely to steal it, for it is the only way he can get it. He risks jail for an article worth a few *centavos*. How often would he do it if the payment of those few *centavos* would not mean a hungry day for him? American planters steal labourers, carry their families away from them, lock them up at night, beat them, starve them while they work, neglect them when they are sick, pay them nothing, kill them at the last, and then raise their hands in righteous horror when the poor fellow steals an extra *tortilla* or an ear of corn.

In Mexico ploughing is often done with a crooked stick or with the hoe. The backs of men take the place of freight wagons and express vehicles. In short, Mexico is woefully behind in the use of modern machinery; for which the Mexican is accused of being unprogressive.

But the common people do not choose how much machinery shall be used in the country. The master does that. American promoters in Mexico are little more progressive in the use of machinery than are



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OXEN PLOUGHING

Mexican promoters, and when they are they frequently lose money by it. Why? Because flesh and blood is cheaper in Mexico than machinery. A peon is cheaper to own than a horse. A peon is cheaper than a plough. A hundred women can be bought for the price of a grist mill. It is because the master has made it so. If by some means the price of flesh and blood were suddenly to rise above that of dead steel, machinery would flow into Mexico as fast as it would flow into a new industrial field in the United States or any other country.

Do not think that the Mexican is too stupid to work machinery when he is put to it. There are some industries in which machine labour is cheaper than hand labour, and we have only to look to these industries to learn that the Mexican can handle machinery quite as easily as any other people. Native labour works the great cotton mills of Mexico almost exclusively, for example. For that matter, mechanical cunning of a high order is shown in the many hand arts and crafts practised by the natives: the blanket weaving, the pottery making, the making of laces, the manufacture of curios.

Ignorance is charged against the Mexican people as if it were a crime. On the other hand, we are told, in glowing terms, of the public elementary school system which Diaz has established. One writer, in his book on Mexico, remarks that it is doubtful if there is a single hamlet of one hundred Mexicans in all the country that has not its free public school. The truth is, as I showed in the preceding chapter, that

there are few schools. The sort of authority this author is may be gauged by the Government statistics themselves, which in the year he issued his book placed the number of Mexicans who could read and write at 16 per cent. of the population. In Mexico, I repeat, there are some public schools in the cities, and almost none in the country districts. But even if they were there, can a hungry baby learn to read and write? What promise does study hold out for a youth born to shoulder a debt of his father and carry it on to the end of his days?

And they say that the Mexican is happy! "As happy as a peon" has come to be a common expression. Can a starving man be happy? Is there a people on earth—any beast of the field even—so peculiar in nature that it loves cold better than warmth, an empty stomach better than a full one? Where is the scientist that has discovered a people who would prefer an ever-narrowing horizon to an ever-widening one? Depraved indeed are the Mexican people if they are happy. But I do not believe they are happy. Some who have said it lied knowingly; others mistook the dull glaze of settled despair for the sign of contentment.

Most persistent of all derogations of Mexicans is the one that the Spanish-American character is somehow incapable of democracy, and therefore needs the strong hand of a dictator. Since the Spanish-Americans of Mexico have never had a fair trial of democracy, and since those who are asserting that they are incapable of democracy are just the ones who are trying



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AN INDIAN WATER-CARRIER

hardest to prevent them from having a trial, the suspicion naturally arises that those persons have an ulterior motive in spreading such an impression. That motive has been pretty well elucidated in previous chapters of this book, especially in the one on the American partners of President Diaz.

The meaning of the vilification of Mexicans is very plain. It is a defence against indefensible conditions whereby the defenders are profiting. It is an excuse—an excuse for hideous cruelty, a salve to the conscience, and an apology to the world.

The truth is that the Mexican is a human being, and that he is subject to the same evolutionary laws of growth as govern the development of any other people. The truth is that, if the Mexican does not fully attain the standard of the highest type of European, it is because of his history, a most important part of which is the grinding exploitation to which he has been subjected under the present regime. Let us go back to the beginning and glance briefly at the Mexican as an ethnological being, and compare his abilities and possibilities with those of the "free" American.

While nearly all persons of more than primary education nominally accept the theory of evolution as the correct interpretation of life upon this planet, not so many of us take advantage of its truths in estimating the people about us. We cling, instead, to the old doctrine of special creation, which supports us when we wish to believe that some men are created of superior clay, that some are inherently

better than others and always must be better, that some are designed and intended to occupy a station of special rank and privilege among their fellow men. Forgotten is the scientific truth that all men are shoots from the same stalk, that intrinsically one man is no better than another, that in the fullness of time the possibilities of one race or people are no greater than those of any other. Whatever differences there are between men and races of men are due, not to inherent causes, but to the action of outside influences—to soil and climate, to temperature and rainfall, and to what may be denominated the accidents of history, following naturally, however, in the train of these influences. "A man's a man for a' that."

But there are differences. There are differences in general between Americans and Mexicans. Let us see if there are any differences which justify the condemnation of Mexicans to slavery and to government by a despot.

What is a Mexican? Usually the term is applied to the members of a mixed race, part native and part Spanish, who predominate in the so-called sister republic. Pure natives, who long ago left the aboriginal state, are also often included in the category, and they seem to have a right to the name. In the Government census of 1900 the proportion of races is given as 43 per cent. mixed, 38 per cent. pure native, and 19 per cent. of European or distinct foreign extraction. The Mexican Year-Book thinks that the proportion of mixed peoples has greatly increased in the past ten years until it is far more than half the



RECUPERATING FOR TO-MORROW'S TOIL

total to-day. The Mexican of to-day, then, is either all Spanish, all native, or a mixture of the two, most often the last; so the peculiar character of Mexicans can be said to be made up of a combination of the two elements.

Take the Spanish element first. What are the peculiar attributes of the Spanish nature? In Spain we find much art and literature, but, on the other hand, much religious bigotry and little democracy. We find a versatile people, but a people with swift passions and fickle energies. In its achievements along modern lines Spain stands at the foot of the countries of western Europe.

But—why?

The answer is to the credit of Spain. Spain sacrificed herself to save Europe. Standing upon the southern frontier, she bore the brunt of the Moslem invasion. Retarding the barbarian hordes, she saved the budding civilisation of Europe and its religion, Christianity. Long after the issue was settled as far as the other nations were concerned, Spain was still engaged in the fight. And in that life and death struggle it may well have been inevitable that the power of the State should become more centralised and despotic, that the Church should come into closer union with the State, that the Church should become more unscrupulous in the methods she employed to annex power to herself, more avid of gain, more dogmatic in her teachings, and more ruthless in the treatment of her enemies.

Thus is revealed the prime cause of Spain's posi-

tion as a laggard in the path of democracy and religious enlightenment. For the rest, it may be said that, while the magnificent scenery of the country has helped to make the Spaniard superstitious, it has also helped to make him an artist; that while the exuberance of the soil, by enabling him to secure his living with comparatively little labour, has not forced him to habits of such regular industry as are found farther north, it has contributed to his cultivating the arts of music, painting and social intercourse; that the heat of the summer, by rendering hard labour at that season inadvisable, has also militated toward the same ends.

Of course I am not attempting to go into details on these matters. I am merely pointing out a few principles which underlie racial diversities. On the whole, a close examination of the Spanish people would show that there is nothing whatsoever to indicate that they are specially unfit or unworthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy.

As to the native element, which is more important, inasmuch as it undoubtedly predominates in the make-up of the average Mexican, especially the Mexican of the poorer class, an examination of its peculiar character will prove quite as favourable. Biologically, the original Mexican is not to be classed with any of the so-called lower races, such as the negro, the South Sea Islander, the pure Filipino, or the American Indian. The Aztec has been a long time out of the forest. His facial angle is as good as that of an American. In many ways he is on the same level. In some ways, perhaps, he rises to a higher level, while the



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WOOD-CARRIERS

ways in which he falls below the American standard can all be traced either to peculiar external influences or to the luck of history, or both.

It must be admitted that Mexico is not quite as well adapted for the production of physical and mental energy as is the greater portion of the United States. The bulk of the population of Diaz-land lives upon a plateau ranging from 5,000 to 8,000 feet high. Here the air is thinner, and for every foot-pound of energy expended there is a greater tax upon the heart and the human machine generally. Americans who take up their residence on that plateau find that they must live a little more slowly than in their own country; that it is better to take the midday siesta, like the Mexicans. If they persist in keeping up the old gait they find that they grow old very fast—that it does not pay. If, on the other hand, they choose to live in the tropical belt they find that here, too, because of the greater heat and moisture, it is not wise for them to work as fast as they were wont to do at home.

If the average Mexican has less working capacity than the average American, it is largely for that reason, and for the other reason that the Mexican labourer is invariably half starved. When the American labourer meets the Mexican on the latter's own ground he is quite often outdone. Few Americans engage in physical labour either on the plateau or in the tropics. The labourer of no nation can outdo the Mexican in carrying heavy loads or in feats of endurance, while in the tropics the Mexican, if he is not starved, is

supreme. The American negro, the Asiatic coolie, the athletic Yaqui from the north, have all been pitted against the native of the tropical States, and all have been found wanting, while there is no question as to the inferior working capacity of men of European descent under tropical conditions.

So much for the working capacity of Mexicans, which in this extremely utilitarian age is placed high among the virtues of a people. As to intelligence, in spite of the fact that it was always the policy of the Spanish conquerors to hold the native Aztecs in subordinate positions, enough of the latter have succeeded in forcing their way to the top to prove that they were quite as capable in the higher functions of civilisation as the Spaniards themselves. The most brilliant poets, artists, writers, musicians, men of science, military heroes and constructive statesmen in the history of Mexico were natives pure or natives but faintly crossed with the blood of Spain.

On the whole, the Mexicans seem to exhibit stronger artistic and literary tendencies than do their northern neighbours, and less inclination towards commerce and heavy mechanics. The mass of the people are illiterate, but that does not mean that they are stupid. There are undoubtedly several million Americans who are able to read but who do not read regularly, not even a newspaper, and they are no better informed, perhaps, and certainly no clearer thinkers, than the peons who pass the news of the day from mouth to mouth on their Sundays and their feast days. That these people are illiterate by choice, that they are poor because they



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FURNITURE PORTERS

want to be, that they prefer dirt to cleanliness, is absurd.

“They choose that sort of life, so why should we bother ourselves about their troubles?” “They could improve their condition if they cared to make an effort.” “They are perfectly happy, anyhow.” Such expressions are sure to greet the traveller who remarks upon the misery of the common Mexican. The fact is, the ordinary Mexican chooses the life he lives about as truly as a horse chooses to be born a horse. As I suggested before, he cannot be happy, for no starving being can be happy. While as to improving his condition alone and unaided, he has as much chance of doing it as a horse has of inventing a flying machine.

Pick up a poor young Mexican in Mexico City, for example, where the opportunities are the best in the land. Take, say, a typical Mexican labourer. He cannot read or write, because he was probably born in a country district ten miles from the nearest school, or if he was born in the shadow of a school he literally had to scratch the earth from the time he could crawl in order to get something to eat. He has no education and no special training of any kind, because he has had no opportunity to secure either. Having had no special training, all he is able to do is to carry heavy loads.

Probably at five-and-twenty he is a physical wreck from under-feeding, exposure and overwork. But suppose he is one of the few who have kept their strength. What can he do? Carry heavier loads,

that is all. He can get perhaps 50 *centavos* a day carrying heavy loads, and all the effort of a Hercules cannot better the price, for all he has is brawn, and brawn is cheap as dirt in Mexico. I have seen men "making an effort." I have seen them work until I could see the glazing of their eyes. I have seen them put forth such efforts that their chests rose and fell with explosive gasps. I have seen them carry such heavy weights that they tottered and fell in the street, in which way they are crushed to death sometimes by the things above them. They were putting forth their best efforts in the only thing they knew, because they had never had an opportunity to learn anything else, and they were dying just as fast as those others who did as little as possible to live.

And how about the capacity of Mexicans for democracy? The assertion that democracy is not compatible with the "Spanish-American character" seems to be based wholly upon the fact that a considerable percentage of the Spanish-American countries—though not all of them—are still ruled by dictators, and that changes in the government come only through revolutions by which one dictator is succeeded by another. This state of affairs was brought about more by the peculiar history of these countries than by the "Spanish-American character." Ruled as slave colonies by foreigners, these countries displayed enough valour and patriotism to overthrow the foreigner and expel him. Their struggle for freedom was long and bitter; moreover, being small countries, their national existence was in danger for considerable periods after their



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HOW PACKAGES ARE DELIVERED IN MEXICO

independence. Therefore, of necessity the military calling became a dominant profession, and militarism and dictatorships followed naturally. To-day such Spanish-American countries as are still ruled by dictators are so ruled largely because of the support accorded the latter by foreign Governments, which oppose democratic movements, sometimes even with arms. Diaz is not the only Spanish-American dictator who is supported by the United States at the behest of Wall Street. During the past five years several of the most notorious of the Central American dictators have been held in their places only by a military demonstration on the part of the United States.

But is Mexico ready for democracy? Does she not need to be ruled by a despot for a while longer, until such time as she shall have developed capacity for democracy? I repeat this absurd question merely because it is so common. The only reasonable reply is that of Macaulay, that capacity for democracy can only increase with experience of the problems of democracy. Mexico is as ready for democracy as a country can be which has no democracy whatsoever.

Assuredly Mexico is behind the States in the march of progress, behind them in the conquests of democracy. They have been lucky enough not to have had the rule of Spain imposed upon them for three hundred years; lucky enough to escape the clutch of the Catholic Church at their throats in their infancy; lucky enough not to be caught in their weakness at the end of a foreign war, caught by one of their own generals, who, in the guise of President of the Republic,

quietly and cunningly and remorselessly built up a repressive machine such as no modern nation but Mexico has ever been called upon to break. They were lucky enough, in a word, to escape the reign of a Porfirio Diaz.

Thus, whichever way we turn, we come finally back to the fact that the cause of all the ills, the shortcomings, the vices of Mexico is the system of President Diaz. Mexico is a wonderful country. The capacity of its people is beyond question. Once its republican Constitution is restored, it will be capable of solving all its problems. Perhaps it will be said that in opposing the system of Diaz I am opposing the interests of the United States. If the interests of Wall Street are the interests of the United States, then I plead guilty. And if it is to the interests of the United States that a nation should be crucified as Mexico is being crucified, then I am opposed to the interests of the United States.

But I do not believe that this is so. For the sake of the ultimate interests of my country, for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the millions of Mexicans who are actually starving at this moment, I believe that the Diaz system should be abolished, and abolished quickly. I ask the mass of decent Americans at least not to stand in the way of Mexican democracy. At least they can withdraw their active support from this terrible system. *They can demand that their Government cease to put the machinery of State at the disposal of the despot to help him in crushing the movement for the abolition of slavery in Mexico.*

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