

LA TROPA ON THE MARCH

"But I haven't any other——" began Juan.

"I am your superior officer," returned the doctor. And that was the last we ever saw of doctor, horse and rifle.

I said farewell to the General, who was lying in torture in bed, sending bulletins to his mother by telephone every fifteen minutes. "May you journey happily," he said. "Write the truth. I commend you to Pablito."

CHAPTER IV

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AND so I got inside the coach, with Rafaelito, Pablo Seañes, and his mistress. She was a strange creature. Young, slender, and beautiful, she was poison and a stone to everybody but Pablo. I never saw her smile and never heard her say a gentle word. Sometimes she treated us with dull ferocity; sometimes with bestial indifference. But Pablo she cradled like a baby. When he lay across the seat with his head in her lap, she would hug it fiercely to her breast, making noises like a tigress with her young.

Patricio handed down his guitar from the box, where he kept it, and to Rafael's accompaniment the Lieutenant-Colonel sang love-ballads in a cracked voice. Every Mexican knows hundreds of these. They are not written down, but often composed extemporaneously, and handed along by word of mouth. Some of them are

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very beautiful, some grotesque, and others as satirical as any French popular song. He sang:

*"Exiled I wandered through the world—
Exiled by the government.
I came back at the end of the year,
Drawn by the fondness of love.
I went away with the purpose
Of staying away forever.
And the love of a woman was the only thing
That made me come back."*

And then "*Los Hijos de la Noche*":

*"I am of the children of the night
Who wander aimlessly in the darkness.
The beautiful moon with its golden rays
Is the companion of my sorrows.*

*"I am going to lose myself from thee,
Exhausted with weeping;
I am going sailing, sailing,
By the shores of the sea.*

*"You will see at the time of our parting
I will not allow you to love another.
For if so it should be, I would ruin your face,
And many blows we would give one another.*

*"So I am going to become an American.
Go with God, Antonia.*

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*Say farewell to my friends.
O may the Americans allow me to pass
And open a saloon
On the other side of the River!"*

The Hacienda of El Centro turned out to give us lunch. And there Fidencio offered me his horse to ride for the afternoon.

The Tropa had already ridden on ahead, and I could see them, strung out for half a mile in the black mesquite brush, the tiny red-white-and-green flag bobbing at their head. The mountains had withdrawn somewhere beyond the horizon, and we rode in the midst of a great bowl of desert, rolling up at the edges to meet the furnace-blue of the Mexican sky. Now that I was out of the coach, a great silence, and a peace beyond anything I ever felt, wrapped me around. It is almost impossible to get objective about the desert; you sink into it,—become a part of it. Galloping along, I soon caught up with the Tropa.

"Aye, meester!" they shouted. "Here comes meester on a horse! *Que tal*, meester? How goes it? Are you going to fight with us?"

But Captain Fernando at the head of the column turned and roared: "Come here, meester!" The big man was grinning with delight. "You shall ride with me," he shouted, clapping me on the back. "Drink, now," and he produced a bottle of *sotol* about half full. "Drink it all. Show you're a man." "It's too much," I laughed. "Drink it," yelled the chorus as the Tropa crowded up to see. I drank it. A howl of

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laughter and applause went up. Fernando leaned over and gripped my hand. "Good for you, *compañero!*" he bellowed, rolling with mirth. The men crowded around, amused and interested. Was I going to fight with them? Where did I come from? What was I doing? Most of them had never heard of reporters, and one hazarded the opinion darkly that I was a Gringo and a Porfirista, and ought to be shot.

The rest, however, were entirely opposed to this view. No Porfirista would possibly drink that much *sotol* at a gulp. Isidro Amayo declared that he had been in a brigade in the first Revolution which was accompanied by a reporter, and that he was called *Corresponsal de Guerra*. Did I like Mexico? I said: "I am very fond of Mexico. I like Mexicans too. And I like *sotol*, *aguardiente*, *mescal*, *tequila*, *pulque*, and other Mexican customs!" They shouted with laughter.

Captain Fernando leaned over and patted my arm. "Now you are with the men (*los hombres*.) When we win the Revolucion it will be a government by the men,—not by the rich. We are riding over the lands of the men. They used to belong to the rich, but now they belong to me and to the *compañeros*."

"And you will be the army?" I asked.

"When the Revolucion is won," was the astonishing reply, "there will be no more army. The men are sick of armies. It is by armies that Don Porfirio robbed us."

"But if the United States should invade Mexico?"

A perfect storm broke everywhere. "We are more *valiente* than the Americanos—The cursed Gringos

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would get no further south than Juarez—Let's see them try it—We'd drive them back over the Border on the run, and burn their capital the next day . . .!"

"No," said Fernando, "you have more money and more soldiers. But the men would protect us. We need no army. The men would be fighting for their houses and their women."

"What are you fighting for?" I asked. Juan Sanchez, the color-bearer, looked at me curiously. "Why, it is good, fighting. You don't have to work in the mines . . .!"

Manuel Paredes said: "We are fighting to restore Francisco I. Madero to the Presidency." This extraordinary statement is printed in the program of the Revolution. And everywhere the Constitutionalist soldiers are known as "Maderistas." "I knew him," continued Manuel, slowly. "He was always laughing, always."

"Yes," said another, "whenever there was any trouble with a man, and all the rest wanted to fight him or put him in prison, Pancho Madero said: 'Just let me talk to him a few minutes. I can bring him around.'"

"He loved *bailes*," an Indian said. "Many a time I've seen him dance all night, and all the next day, and the next night. He used to come to the great Haciendas and make speeches. When he began the peons hated him; when he ended they were crying. . . ."

Here a man broke out into a droning, irregular tune, such as always accompanies the popular ballads that spring up in thousands on every occasion:

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*"In Nineteen hundred and ten
Madero was imprisoned
In the National Palace
The eighteenth of February*

*"Four days he was imprisoned
In the Hall of the Intendancy
Because he did not wish
To renounce the Presidency*

*"Then Blanquet and Felix Diaz
Martyred him there
They were the hangmen
Feeding on his hate.*

*"They crushed. . . .
Until he fainted
With play of cruelty
To make him resign.*

*"Then with hot irons
They burned him without mercy
And only unconsciousness
Calmed the awful flames.*

*"But it was all in vain
Because his mighty courage
Preferred rather to die
His was a great heart!*

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*"This was the end of the life
Of him who was the redeemer
Of the Indian Republic
And of all the poor.*

*"They took him out of the Palace
And tell us he was killed in an assault
What a cynicism!
What a shameless lie!*

*"O Street of Lecumberri
Your cheerfulness has ended forever
For through you passed Madero
To the Penitentiary.*

*"That twenty-second of February
Will always be remembered in the Indian Republic.
God has pardoned him
And the Virgin of Guadalupe.*

*"Good-bye Beautiful Mexico
Where our leader died
Good-bye to the palace
Whence he issued a living corpse*

*"Señores, there is nothing eternal
Nor anything sincere in life
See what happened to Don Francisco I. Madero!"*

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By the time he was half-way through, the entire Tropa was humming the tune, and when he finished there was a moment of jingling silence.

"We are fighting," said Isidro Amayo, "for Libertad."

"What do you mean by Libertad?"

"Libertad is when I can *do what I want!*"

"But suppose it hurts somebody else?"

He shot back at me Benito Juarez' great sentence:

"Peace is the respect for the rights of others!"

I wasn't prepared for that. It startled me, this barefooted *mestizo's* conception of Liberty. I submit that it is the only correct definition of Liberty—to *do what I want to!* Americans quote it to me triumphantly as an instance of Mexican irresponsibility. But I think it is a better definition than ours—Liberty is the right to do what the Courts want. Every Mexican schoolboy knows the definition of peace and seems to understand pretty well what it means, too. But, they say, Mexicans don't want peace. That is a lie, and a foolish one. Let Americans take the trouble to go through the Maderista army, asking whether they want peace or not! The people are sick of war.

But, just to be square, I'll have to report Juan Sanchez' remark:

"Is there war in the United States now?" he asked.

"No," I said untruthfully.

"No war at all?" He meditated for a moment.

"How do you pass the time, then . . . ?"

Just about then somebody saw a coyote sneaking through the brush, and the entire Tropa gave chase

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with a whoop. They scattered rollicking over the desert, the late sun flashing from cartridge-belts and spurs, the ends of their bright serapes flying out behind. Beyond them, the scorched world sloped gently up, and a range of far lilac mountains jumped in the heat waves like a bucking horse. By here, if tradition is right, passed the steel-armored Spaniards in their search for gold, a blaze of crimson and silver that has left the desert cold and dull ever since. And, topping a rise, we came upon the first sight of the Hacienda of La Mimbrera, a walled enclosure of houses strong enough to stand a siege, stretching steeply down a hill, with the magnificent Casa Grande at the top.

In front of this house, which had been sacked and burned by Orozco's General, Che Che Campa, two years before, the coach was drawn up. A huge fire had been kindled, and ten *compañeros* were slaughtering sheep. Into the red glare of the firelight they staggered, with the struggling, squealing sheep in their arms, its blood fountaining upon the ground, shining in the fierce light like something phosphorescent.

The officers and I dined in the house of the *administrador* Don Jesus, the most beautiful specimen of manhood I have ever seen. He was much over six feet tall, slender, white-skinned—a pure Spanish type of the highest breed. At one end of his dining-room, I remember, hung a placard embroidered in red, white and green: "Viva Mexico!" and at the other, a second, which read: "Viva Jesus!"

It was after dinner, as I stood at the fire, wonder-

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ing where I was to sleep, that Captain Fernando touched me on the arm.

"Will you sleep with the *compañeros*?"

We walked across the great open square, in the furious light of the desert stars, to a stone store-house set apart. Inside, a few candles stuck against the wall illumined the rifles stacked in the corners, the saddles on the floor, and the blanket-rolled *compañeros* with their heads on them. One or two were awake, talking and smoking. In a corner, three sat muffled in their serapes, playing cards. Five or six had voices and a guitar. They were singing "Pascual Orozco," beginning:

*"They say that Pascual Orozco has turned his coat
Because Don Terrazas seduced him;
They gave him many millions and they bought him
And sent him to overthrow the government.*

*"Orozco believed it
And to the war he went;
But the Maderista cannon
Was his calamity.*

*"If to thy window shall come Porfirio Diaz,
Give him for charity some cold tortillas;
If to thy window shall come General Huerta,
Spit in his face and slam the door.*

*"If to thy window shall come Inez Salazar,
Lock your trunk so that he can't steal;
If to thy window shall come Maclovio Herrera,
Give him dinner and put the cloth on the table."*

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They didn't distinguish me at first, but soon one of the card-players said: "Here comes Meester!" At that the others roused, and woke the rest. "That's right—it's good to sleep with the *hombres*—take this place, *amigo*—here's my saddle—here there is no crookedness—here a man goes straight. . . ."

"May you pass a happy night, *compañero*," they said. "Till morning, then."

Pretty soon somebody shut the door. The room became full of smoke and fetid with human breath. What little silence was left from the chorus of snoring was entirely obliterated by the singing, which kept up, I guess, until dawn. The *compañeros* had fleas. . . .

But I rolled up in my blankets and lay down upon the concrete floor very happily. And I slept better than I had before in Mexico.

At dawn we were in the saddle, larking up a steep roll of barren desert to get warm. It was bitter cold. The Tropa were wrapped in serapes up to their eyes, so that they looked like colored toadstools under their great sombreros. The level rays of the sun, burning as they fell upon my face, caught them unaware, glorifying the serapes to more brilliant colors than they possessed. Isidro Amayo's was of deep blue and yellow spirals; Juan Sanchez had one brick red, Captain Fernando's was green and cerise; against them flashed a purple and black zigzag pattern. . . .

We looked back to see the coach pulled to a stop, and Patricio waving to us. Two of the mules had given out, raw from the traces, and tottering with the

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fatigue of the last two days. The Tropa scattered to look for mules. Soon they came back, driving two great beautiful animals that had never seen harness. No sooner had they smelled the coach than they made a desperate break for freedom. And now the Tropa instantly went back to their native profession—they became *vaqueros*. It was a pretty sight, the rope-coils swinging in the air, the sudden snake-like shoot of the loops, the little horses bracing themselves against the shock of the running mule. Those mules were demons. Time after time they broke the *riatas*; twice they overturned horse and rider. Pablo came to the rescue. He got on Sabas's horse, drove in the spurs, and went after one mule. In three minutes he had roped him by the leg, thrown him, and tied him. Then he took the second with equal dispatch. It was not for nothing that Pablo was Lieutenant-Colonel at twenty-six. Not only could he fight better than his men, but he could ride better, rope better, shoot better, chop wood better, and dance better.

The mules' legs were tied, and they were dragged with ropes to the coach, where the harness was slipped on them in spite of their frantic struggles. When all was ready, Patricio got on the box, seized the whip, and told us to cut away. The wild animals scrambled to their feet, bucking and squealing. Above the uproar came the crack of the heavy whip, and Patricio's bel-low: "*Andale! hijos de la Gran' Ch——!*" and they jerked forward, running, the big coach taking the arroyos like an express train. Soon it vanished behind

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its own pall of dust, and appeared hours afterward, crawling up the side of a great hill, miles away. . . .

Panchito was eleven years old, already a trooper with a rifle, too heavy for him, and a horse that they had to lift him on. His *compadre* was Victoriano, a veteran of fourteen. Seven others of the Tropa were under seventeen. And there was a sullen, Indian-faced woman, riding side-saddle, who wore two cartridge-belts. She rode with the *hombres*—slept with them in the cuartels.

"Why are you fighting?" I asked her.

She jerked her head toward the fierce figure of Julian Reyes.

"Because he is," she answered. "He who stands under a good tree is sheltered by a good shade."

"A good rooster will crow in any chicken-coop," capped Isidro.

"A parrot is green all over," chimed in someone else.

"Faces we see, but hearts we do not comprehend," said José, sentimentally.

At noon we roped a steer, and cut his throat. And because there was no time to build a fire, we ripped the meat from the carcass and ate it raw.

"*Oiga, meester,*" shouted José. "Do the United States soldiers eat raw meat?"

I said I didn't think they did.

"It is good for the *hombres*. In the campaign we have no time for anything but *carne crudo*. It makes us brave."

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CHAPTER III

A PEON IN POLITICS

VILLA proclaimed himself military governor of the State of Chihuahua, and began the extraordinary experiment—extraordinary because he knew nothing about it—of creating a government for 300,000 people out of his head.

It has often been said that Villa succeeded because he had educated advisers. As a matter of fact, he was almost alone. What advisers he had spent most of their time answering his eager questions and doing what he told them. I used sometimes to go to the Governor's palace early in the morning and wait for him in the Governor's chamber. About eight o'clock Sylvestre Terrazzas, the Secretary of State, Sebastian Vargas, the State Treasurer, and Manuel Chao, then Interventor, would arrive, very bustling and busy, with huge piles of reports, suggestions and decrees which they had drawn up. Villa himself came in about eight-thirty, threw himself into a chair, and made them read out loud to him. Every minute he would interject a remark, correction or suggestion. Occasionally he waved his finger back and forward and said: "*No sirve.*" When they were all through he began rapidly and without a halt to outline the policy of the State of Chihuahua, legislative, financial, judicial, and even educational. When he came to a place that bothered him, he said: "How do they do that?" And then, after

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it was carefully explained to him: "Why?" Most of the acts and usages of government seemed to him extraordinarily unnecessary and snarled up. For example, his advisers proposed to finance the Revolution by issuing State bonds bearing 30 or 40 per cent. interest. He said, "I can understand why the State should pay something to people for the rent of their money, but how is it just to pay the whole sum back to them three or four times over?" He couldn't see why rich men should be granted huge tracts of land and poor men should not. The whole complex structure of civilization was new to him. You had to be a philosopher to explain anything to Villa; and his advisers were only practical men.

There was the financial question. It came to Villa in this way. He noticed, all of a sudden, that there was no money in circulation. The farmers who produced meat and vegetables refused to come into the city markets any more because no one had any money to buy from them. The truth was that those possessing silver or Mexican bank-notes buried them in the ground. Chihuahua not being a manufacturing center, and the few factories there having closed down, there was nothing which could be exchanged for food. So, like a blight, the paralysis of the production of food began all at once and actual starvation stared at the town populations. I remember hearing vaguely of several highly elaborate plans for the relief of this condition put forward by Villa's advisers. He himself said: "Why, if all they need is money, let's print some." So

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they inked up the printing press in the basement of the Governor's palace and ran off two million pesos on strong paper, stamped with the signatures of government officials, and with Villa's name printed across the middle in large letters. The counterfeit money, which afterward flooded El Paso, was distinguished from the original by the fact that the names of the officials were signed instead of stamped.

This first issue of currency was guaranteed by absolutely nothing but the name of Francisco Villa. It was issued chiefly to revive the petty internal commerce of the State so that the poor people could get food. And yet almost immediately it was bought by the banks of El Paso at 18 to 19 cents on the dollar because Villa guaranteed it.

Of course he knew nothing of the accepted ways of getting his money into circulation. He began to pay the army with it. On Christmas Day he called the poor people of Chihuahua together and gave them \$15 apiece outright. Then he issued a short decree, ordering the acceptance of his money at par throughout the State. The succeeding Saturday the market-places of Chihuahua and the other nearby towns swarmed with farmers and with buyers. Villa issued another proclamation, fixing the price of beef at seven cents a pound, milk at five cents a quart, and bread at four cents a loaf. There was no famine in Chihuahua. But the big merchants, who had timidly reopened their stores for the first time since his entry into Chihuahua, placarded their goods with two sets of price marks—one for Mexican silver money and bank-bills, and the

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other for 'Villa money.' He stopped that by another decree, ordering sixty days' imprisonment for anybody who discriminated against his currency.

But still the silver and bank-bills refused to come out of the ground, and these Villa needed to buy arms and supplies for his army. So he simply proclaimed to the people that after the tenth of February Mexican silver and bank-bills would be regarded as counterfeit, and that before that time they could be exchanged for his own money at par in the State Treasury. But the large sums of the rich still eluded him. Most of the financiers declared that it was all a bluff, and held on. But lo! on the morning of February tenth, a decree was pasted up on the walls all over Chihuahua City, announcing that from that time on all Mexican silver and bank-notes were counterfeit and could not be exchanged for Villa money in the Treasury, and anyone attempting to pass them was liable to sixty days in the penitentiary. A great howl went up, not only from the capitalists, but from the shrewd misers of distant villages.

About two weeks after the issue of this decree, I was taking lunch with Villa in the house which he had confiscated from Manuel Gomerros and used as his official residence. A delegation of three peons in sandals arrived from a village in the Tarahumare to protest against the Counterfeit Decree.

"But, *mi General*," said the spokesman, "we did not hear of the decree until to-day. We have been using bank-bills and silver in our village. We had not seen your money, and we did not know. . . ."

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"You have a good deal of money?" interrupted Villa suddenly.

"Yes, *mi General*."

"Three or four or five thousand, perhaps?"

"More than that, *mi General*."

"Señores," Villa squinted at them ferociously, "samples of my money reached your village within twenty-four hours after it was issued. You decided that my government would not last. You dug holes under your fireplaces and put the silver and bank-notes there. You knew of my first proclamation a day after it was posted up in the streets of Chihuahua, and you ignored it. The Counterfeit Decree you also knew as soon as it was issued. You thought there was always time to change if it became necessary. And then you got frightened, and you three, who have more money than anyone else in the village, got on your mules and rode down here. Señores, your money is counterfeit. You are poor men!"

"*Valgame dios!*" cried the oldest of the three, sweating profusely.

"But we are ruined, *mi General!*—I swear to you—We did not know—We would have accepted—There is no food in the village——"

The General in Chief meditated for a moment.

"I will give you one more chance," he said, "not for you, but for the poor people of your village who can buy nothing. Next Wednesday at noon bring all your money, every cent of it, to the Treasury, and I will see what can be done."

To the perspiring financiers who waited hat in hand

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out in the hall, the news spread by word of mouth; and Wednesday at high noon one could not pass the Treasury door for the eager mob gathered there.)

Villa's great passion was schools. He believed that land for the people and schools would settle every question of civilization. Schools were an obsession with him. Often I have heard him say: "When I passed such and such a street this morning I saw a lot of kids. Let's put a school there." Chihuahua has a population of under 40,000 people. At different times Villa established over fifty schools there. The great dream of his life has been to send his son to school in the United States, but at the opening of the term in February he had to abandon it because he didn't have money enough to pay for a half year's tuition.

No sooner had he taken over the government of Chihuahua than he put his army to work running the electric light plant, the street railways, the telephone, the water works and the Terrazzas flour mill. He delegated soldiers to administer the great haciendas which he had confiscated. He manned the slaughterhouse with soldiers, and sold Terrazzas's beef to the people for the government. A thousand of them he put in the streets of the city as civil police, prohibiting on pain of death stealing, or the sale of liquor to the army. A soldier who got drunk was shot. He even tried to run the brewery with soldiers, but failed because he couldn't find an expert maltster. "The only thing to do with soldiers in time of peace," said Villa,

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"is to put them to work. An idle soldier is always thinking of war."

In the matter of the political enemies of the Revolution he was just as simple, just as effective. Two hours after he entered the Governor's palace the foreign consuls came in a body to ask his protection for 200 Federal soldiers who had been left as a police force at the request of the foreigners. Before answering them, Villa said suddenly: "Which is the Spanish consul?" Scobell, the British vice-consul, said: "I represent the Spaniards." "All right!" snapped Villa. "Tell them to begin to pack. Any Spaniard caught within the boundaries of this State after five days will be escorted to the nearest wall by a firing squad."

The consuls gave a gasp of horror. Scobell began a violent protest, but Villa cut him short.

"This is not a sudden determination on my part," he said; "I have been thinking about this since 1910. The Spaniards must go."

Letcher, the American consul, said: "General, I don't question your motives, but I think you are making a grave political mistake in expelling the Spaniards. The government at Washington will hesitate a long time before becoming friendly to a party which makes use of such barbarous measures."

"Señor Consul," answered Villa, "we Mexicans have had three hundred years of the Spaniards. They have not changed in character since the *Conquistadores*. They disrupted the Indian empire and enslaved the people. We did not ask them to mingle their blood with ours. Twice we drove them out of Mexico and

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allowed them to return with the same rights as Mexicans, and they used these rights to steal away our land, to make the people slaves, and to take up arms against the cause of liberty. They supported Porfirio Diaz. They were perniciously active in politics. It was the Spaniards who framed the plot that put Huerta in the palace. When Madero was murdered the Spaniards in every State in the Republic held banquets of rejoicing. They thrust on us the greatest superstition the world has ever known—the Catholic Church. They ought to be killed for that alone. I consider we are being very generous with them."

Scobell insisted vehemently that five days was too short a time, that he couldn't possibly reach all the Spaniards in the State by that time; so Villa extended the time to ten days.

The rich Mexicans who had oppressed the people and opposed the Revolution, he expelled promptly from the State and confiscated their vast holdings. By a simple stroke of the pen the 17,000,000 acres and innumerable business enterprises of the Terrazzas family became the property of the Constitutionalist government, as well as the great lands of the Creel family and the magnificent palaces which were their town houses. Remembering, however, how the Terrazzas exiles had once financed the Orozco Revolution, he imprisoned Don Luis Terrazzas, Jr., as a hostage in his own house in Chihuahua. Some particularly obnoxious political enemies were promptly executed in the penitentiary. The Revolution possesses a black book in which are set down the names, offenses, and property of

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those who have oppressed and robbed the people. The Germans, who had been particularly active politically, the Englishmen and Americans, he does not yet dare to molest. Their pages in the black book will be opened when the Constitutionalist government is established in Mexico City; and there, too, he will settle the account of the Mexican people with the Catholic Church.

Villa knew that the reserve of the Banco Minero, amounting to about \$500,000 gold, was hidden somewhere in Chihuahua. Don Luis Terrazzas, Jr., was a director of that bank. When he refused to divulge the hiding-place of the money, Villa and a squad of soldiers took him out of his house one night, rode him on a mule out into the desert, and strung him up to a tree by the neck. He was cut down just in time to save his life, and led Villa to an old forge in the Terrazzas iron works, under which was discovered the reserve of the Banco Minero. Terrazzas went back to prison badly shaken, and Villa sent word to his father in El Paso that he would release the son upon payment of \$500,000 ransom.

CHAPTER IV

THE HUMAN SIDE

VILLA has two wives, one a patient, simple woman who was with him during all his years of outlawry, who lives in El Paso, and the other a cat-like, slender young girl, who is the mistress of his

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house in Chihuahua. He is perfectly open about it, though lately the educated, conventional Mexicans who have been gathering about him in ever-increasing numbers have tried to hush up the fact. Among the peons it is not only not unusual but customary to have more than one mate.

One hears a great many stories of Villa's violating women. I asked him if that were true. He pulled his mustache and stared at me for a minute with an inscrutable expression. "I never take the trouble to deny such stories," he said. "They say I am a bandit, too. Well, you know my history. But tell me; have you ever met a husband, father or brother of any woman that I have violated?" He paused: "Or even a witness?"

It is fascinating to watch him discover new ideas. Remember that he is absolutely ignorant of the troubles and confusions and readjustments of modern civilization. "Socialism," he said once, when I wanted to know what he thought of it: "Socialism—is it a thing? I only see it in books, and I do not read much." Once I asked him if women would vote in the new Republic. He was sprawled out on his bed, with his coat unbuttoned. "Why, I don't think so," he said, startled, suddenly sitting up. "What do you mean—vote? Do you mean elect a government and make laws?" I said I did and that women already were doing it in the United States. "Well," he said, scratching his head: "if they do it up there I don't see that they shouldn't do it

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down here." The idea seemed to amuse him enormously. He rolled it over and over in his mind, looking at me and away again. "It may be as you say," he said; "but I have never thought about it. Women seem to me to be things to protect, to love. They have no sternness of mind. They can't consider anything for its right or wrong. They are full of pity and softness. Why," he said, "a woman would not give an order to execute a traitor."

"I am not so sure of that, *mi General*," I said. "Women can be crueller and harder than men."

He stared at me, pulling his mustache. And then he began to grin. He looked slowly to where his wife was setting the table for lunch. "*Oiga*," he said, "come here. Listen. Last night I caught three traitors crossing the river to blow up the railroad. What shall I do with them? Shall I shoot them or not?"

Embarrassed, she seized his hand and kissed it. "Oh, I don't know anything about that," she said. "You know best."

"No," said Villa. "I leave it entirely to you. Those men were going to try to cut our communications between Juarez and Chihuahua. They were traitors—Federals. What shall I do? Shall I shoot them or not?"

"Oh, well, shoot them," said Mrs. Villa.

Villa chuckled delightedly. "There is something in what you say," he remarked, and for days afterward went around asking the cook and the chambermaids whom they would like to have for President of Mexico.

THE HUMAN SIDE

He never missed a bull-fight, and every afternoon at four o'clock he was to be found at the cock-pit, where he fought his own birds with the happy enthusiasm of a small boy. In the evening he played faro in some gambling hall. Sometimes in the late morning he would send a fast courier after Luis Leon, the bull-fighter, and telephone personally to the slaughter-house, asking if they had any fierce bulls in the pen. They almost always did have, and we would all get on horseback and gallop through the streets about a mile to the big adobe corrals. Twenty cowboys cut the bull out of the herd, threw and tied him and cut off his sharp horns, and then Villa and Luis Leon and anybody else who wanted to would take the professional red capes and go down into the ring; Luis Leon with professional caution, Villa as stubborn and clumsy as the bull, slow on his feet, but swift as an animal with his body and arms. Villa would walk right up to the pawing, infuriated animal, and, with his double cape, slap him insolently across the face, and, for half an hour, would follow the greatest sport I ever saw. Sometimes the sawed-off horns of the bull would catch Villa in the seat of the trousers and propel him violently across the ring; then he would turn and grab the bull by the head and wrestle with him with the sweat streaming down his face until five or six *compañeros* seized the bull's tail and hauled him plowing and bellowing back.

Villa never drinks nor smokes, but he will outdance the most ardent *novio* in Mexico. When the order was given for the army to advance upon Torreon, Villa

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stopped off at Camargo to be best man at the wedding of one of his old *compadres*. He danced steadily without stopping, they said, all Monday night, all Tuesday, and all Tuesday night, arriving at the front on Wednesday morning with blood-shot eyes and an air of extreme lassitude.

CHAPTER V

THE FUNERAL OF ABRAM GONZALES

THE fact that Villa hates useless pomp and ceremony makes it more impressive when he does appear on a public occasion. He has the knack of absolutely expressing the strong feeling of the great mass of the people. In February, exactly one year after Abram Gonzales was murdered by the Federals at Bachimba Cañon, Villa ordered a great funeral ceremony to be held in the City of Chihuahua. Two trains, carrying the officers of the army, the consuls and representatives of the foreign colony, left Chihuahua early in the morning to take up the body of the dead Governor from its resting-place under a rude wooden cross in the desert. Villa ordered Major Fierro, his Superintendent of Railroads, to get the trains ready—but Fierro got drunk and forgot; and when Villa and his brilliant staff arrived at the railway station the next morning the regular passenger train to Juarez was just leaving and there was no other equipment on hand. Villa himself leaped on to the already moving