

Mexico's Picturesque Rural Police

Troop of Mexican Cavalry, in the Field

WHATEVER the virtues and defects pertaining to the several branches of Mexico's police service, the republic may justly boast of the most efficient, as well as attractive system of rural protection to be found anywhere in our hemisphere. Apropos of the particular jurisdiction to which its authority extends, this picturesque organization is known as the federal corps of rurales. The antecedents of this powerful arm of the law are as full of romantic interest as its subsequent record is replete with brilliant accomplishments.

When General Porfirio Diaz launched forth on his splendid career as Chief Executive of the then infantile Mexican Republic, all that vast territory extending from the Gulf to the Pacific, and from the Rio Grande to the very gates of the capital, was infested and controlled by a prodigious fraternity of brigandas. Operating in perfect harmony and under the direction of shrewd and crafty leaders, this nefarious organization was a grave menace to the future prosperity of the new government. Besides the wholesale plundering of mines and haciendas everywhere within their reach, one of the principal sources of revenue of these marauders was the frequent concentration of their forces about a town or village, and the laying of an immense tribute on the community. The impoverished condition of the republic at that period precluded the possibility of suppressing this appalling scourge by force of arms. And even had the necessary finances been available, so formidable were these outlaw forces and so inaccessible their mountain strongholds, that it would have required years in which to overcome them.

Diaz's Clever Move.

But the marvelous fact of General Diaz proved equal to the emergency. Inviting the bandit chieftains to a council, he desired of them a statement as to the income pro rata of the members of the outlaw band, as a result of their depredations. Being furnished with this, the President astonished them with a proposition to pay them salaries amounting to more than the figures they had named, providing they would forsake their illegitimate practices and become a special mounted guard over the same territory they were then terrorizing. With the then leaders to remain in command. The overtures were at once communicated to the various outlaw bands constituting the baleful federation, with the result that the great majority immediately joined their leaders in a compact to serve the Government. The outcome of the establishment of this corps has been nothing short of phenomenal. Naturally, among so many, there were some who preferred to continue in their former lawless vocation rather than be-

come useful servants of society, but with their former comrades to contend with, this obdurate minority was speedily exterminated.

Thus, for years past, thanks to the untiring vigilance of this regenerated faction, the vast rural districts of Mexico have been almost entirely free from the encroachments of organized bands of robbers. Their advent was the signal for a new era of prosperity throughout Northern Mexico, and the erstwhile persecuted hacendados and mine-owners speedily came to entertain a feeling of security under the protection of their old-time foes. Not only is the "rurale" a source of dread to the malefactor, but to the hostile Indian likewise, and to his incessant warfare is due the fact that the Mexican border no longer suffers from the raids of renegade bands of Apaches.

Men of Pluck.

The fame of the Mexican "rurale" is not alone confined to his native country. His bravery has often been employed in the interest of American settlers just beyond the border. Even the foaming barriers of the great Pacific could not check his indomitable advance, when once his duty called him beyond them.

On January 18, 1888, the whaleboat of the United States steamer Ranger, engaged in surveying off the coast of Lower California, was captured during a heavy gale, just beyond the line of breakers, near Ensenada. The sea was running so high at the time that the entire crew would undoubtedly have been lost had not a party of rurales suddenly appeared on the beach, and, spurring their horses through the swirling surf, swam to their rescue. As it was, one unfortunate sailor was swept out to sea, and, although the rurales made superhuman endeavors to save him, their efforts were in vain. The remainder of the crew, however, to the number of 11 men, were rescued and borne to the shore in safety.

In appreciation of this valorous act, the President of the United States caused to be presented to the brave rurales appropriate memorials, consisting of a gold watch and chain for their chief, with the inscription, "Presented by the President of the United States to Pedro Miramontes, chief of the Rural Guards, Ensenada, Mexico, for humane and praiseworthy services in behalf of a boat's crew of the United States steamer Ranger, January 18, 1888," and silver medals for the other members of the party, bearing inscriptions similar to the above.

Arms and Costume.

The Mexican "rurale" wears the national "charro" costume, consisting of terra cotta jacket and trousers, the latter embroidered down the sides with rows of silver buttons, a bright red handkerchief knotted about the neck, wide sombrero embroidered with silver, and cowboy saddle, behind which is rolled a red "serape," or blanket. His arms consist

of a short carbine of modern pattern, Colt's revolver, cavalry saber, and the inevitable lasso, which latter he handles with a quickness and dexterity that constitute it, at short range, one of the most formidable weapons he carries. Owing to their martial air and eminently national aspect, a contingent of rurales at full gallop is one of the great attractions of the various public holidays held in Mexico. One of the features

of the Centenary Cotton Exposition at New Orleans was a company of these rurales, sent out and maintained by the Mexican government. As a further evidence of Mexico's great pride in this particular arm of her military police establishment, a picked company, representing the flower of the rurales, superbly equipped and mounted throughout on coal black chargers, are now in attendance at the Buffalo Exposition.

Their truly marvelous horsemanship and picturesque costumes invariably create the most enthusiastic admiration on occasions of such a character, and it is to be hoped the Mexican government will continue to make this unique organization a feature of its exhibit at all international exhibitions held in this country. The entire corp in Mexico represents 2000 men, under command of General Francisco Ramirez, an ideal cavalry

leader, who notwithstanding his long service with the rurales, is yet in the prime of life. At the present day but little of the original outlaw element remains in the ranks of the rurales, and the remote past of that small remnant has long since been fully condoned by a people whom, for nearly a quarter of a century, they have served so continuously and so well.

Characteristic Uniformity.

The various branches of the police service throughout Mexico are characterized by their external uniformity. The uniform of the municipal police, as prescribed by the government, is very similar to that worn by the private soldier, in addition to which, side arms, consisting of a short sword or club and Colt's revolver, are worn in plain sight.

The only badge displayed consists of the officer's number, worn just above the visor of his cap. From a standpoint of efficiency, the average Mexican policeman cannot be said to rank high. As previously intimated, he is incorruptible, and

for instance, as a street fight, he never sets himself up as a court of justice to decide which is in the wrong; but promptly arrests both persons and takes them before a police magistrate, who relieves him of all further responsibility in the premises.

In place of being assigned regular beats, the men are stationed in the middle of the streets, where they cross at right angles, and, regardless of all inclemencies of the weather, each continues at his post for eight hours at a time. Every 15 minutes he blows a shrill blast on a whistle, which he carries attached to a cord worn about his neck, the signal being answered by the co-guardian of the peace stationed near at hand. At night the same method is observed, with the addition that each policeman is provided with a lantern, which serves the somewhat doubtful purpose of keeping the nocturnal marauder minutely posted as to the officer's whereabouts.

A noticeable characteristic of the Mexican police is their diminutiveness of



Gen. Francisco Ramirez, Commander-in-Chief of Mexican Rural Police



Latest Equestrian Photo of President Diaz, of Mexico

stature, the average height being not more than 5 feet 4 inches. An incident is related. The municipal police system in Mexico is conducted on much the same lines as the Army, the private gendarmes seldom, if ever, being advanced to the grade of commissioned officers. The latter are on the same social footing as military officers, the Chief of Police at the Mexican capital being a General appointed from the Army. JOSE DE OLIVARIS.

IN MEMORY OF THE NATION'S DEAD



Veterans Who Will Parade on Memorial Day.

1. Colonel James Jackson, U. S. A. (retired); Inspector-General, O. N. G., and prominent member G. A. R.
2. Captain James P. Shaw, G. A. R.; grand marshal of the parade.
3. Rev. Henry A. Barden, Lincoln-Garfield Post, G. A. R.; chaplain of the day.
4. H. S. Allen, past post commander, G. A. R.
5. Hamer Sutcliffe, A. Q. M. G., Department of Oregon, G. A. R.
6. A. C. Sloan, vice-commander and past commander, George Wright Post, G. A. R.
7. Mrs. P. S. Shepard, prominent worker, Woman's Relief Corps.
8. F. S. Shepard, commander, Lincoln-Garfield Post, G. A. R.
9. Adjutant-General C. U. Gastenbein, O. N. G.; served as Major, Second Oregon Volunteers, Spanish war.

That the dead may know they're not forgotten. That our loved ones see that we love them still. Though lost to our sight in the fields of heaven. With a love that death nor time can chill. We cover their graves with flowers and fragrance. We heap the blossoms above their dust. And they—do they lean toward earth and listen. And hear our prayers? Ah, they must, they must!

And what care they for earth-blown blossoms Who stray in meadows of arched, And cool their thirst at the Living Well? This: Because they remember and love us. Because we are kin, in death's despite. They find the flowers of heaven, unending. Less dear than these that will fade e'er sight.

Next Thursday morning, in the silent cities of the dead, loving hands will decorate, with flowers and flags, the graves of those who served their country, in her hour of need. Memorial day is now in most of the states, a legal holiday. Perhaps the time is not far distant when it will become a National one. Originally the date of its observance differed in different localities, but usage has settled definitely upon May 30. It is said that the reason for choosing this day in preference to any other is to be found in the fact that, on this day, the last soldier of the Union Army of the War of the Rebellion received his discharge.

At first the day was set apart as sacred

to the memory of those who fell in the Civil War, and only the graves of those who lost their lives in defense of the flag were decorated in Northern cemeteries. Later, as the war veterans began to lay down the burdens of life in increasing numbers, the sod that covered a dead soldier, whether he had died in service or out, was made beautiful with flowers and flags. As time healed the scars of battle and softened the hearts and sweetened the memories of the men, not only the fallen defenders of the Stars and Stripes, but those who had worn the gray and fought beneath the Stars and Bars came to be included in the floral distribution. At present it is the custom—almost National in the extent to which it prevails—to go to cemeteries, either during the forenoon of the 30th of May, or upon the preceding evening, and decorate the graves of those we love. And to walk through these still cities, in the afternoon of Memorial day, is like strolling in a garden of bloom and beauty.

The exercises, religious and otherwise, of Memorial day, are always conducted by the Grand Army of the Republic, and the officers of the day are chosen from the different posts, according to convenience and inclination. Here, in Portland, arrangements are already about completed, and the grand marshal, Captain James P. Shaw, publishes in this morning's issue of The Oregonian the order of the day. These arrangements are made by a joint committee whose members were appointed

from all the Grand Army different posts and Relief Corps of the city. The Ben Butler Post, of Sunnyside, will hold memorial exercises in the morning, at Lone Fir, but will unite with the others in the procession, and in the ritualistic services to be held at the Army in the afternoon.

On Wednesday the children from the city schools will gather flowers, which will be collected at the different school buildings. There committees from the various Woman's Relief Corps, assisted by any others who may wish to volunteer their services, will rearrange the flowers, making them into bouquets and garlands. Early in the morning Thursday, men detailed from each of the four posts will carry these to the cemeteries, where they will be placed upon the graves of the sleeping soldiers. This year the Spanish War Veterans take part in the exercises, and the fallen heroes of the Oregon Volunteers will not be neglected in the distribution of flowers. It is a custom, long established, for the National Guard to act as escort to the Grand Army on Decoration Day. Next Thursday, in addition to the state's soldiers, the Naval Reserve will be in readiness in the parade, and the various Boys' Brigades have been invited to march in the procession, which will form on First street, in front of G. A. R. Hall, where the George Wright Post has its headquarters. Captain Shaw, who is to serve as grand marshal of the day, has a somewhat re-

markable history. He enlisted as a volunteer, in response to President Lincoln's first call for troops, in April, 1861, at the age of 16, and he was mustered out at the close of the war, with a record of having participated in 31 pitched battles; he fought in the first engagement after Fort Sumter was fired upon, and in the last that was of consequence. He was with Grant at Shiloh; was wounded at Chickamauga, and marched, under Sherman, "from Atlanta to the sea." At present he is identified with the Lincoln-Garfield Post, of which he is a past commander.

Major Thomas C. Bell is another Grand Army man whose record is something to be proud of. He, too, is a past commander of the Lincoln-Garfield Post, of which the present commander is Mr. F. S. Shepard, who went into service at the age of 16, and who, during three years of active military life, was but once wounded, and was not in the hospital a single day. He was in the battles of Gettysburg and Fredericksburg, and was discharged on June 21, 1865, at Hall's Hill, Va.

E. C. Sloan, senior vice-commander of George Wright Post, and H. Sutcliffe, assistant quartermaster-general, department of Oregon, are also men whose experiences in the Civil War are of creditable record. Colonel James Jackson is so well-known in Portland and elsewhere in Oregon that any further word would be superfluous. He, too, is identified with the G. A. R.,

as indeed many, if not most, United States Army men are who have lived long enough. Major Calvin U. Gastenbein, who earned his promotion in Luzon, and General Owen Summers, who went to the Philippines at the head of the Second Oregon, are now eligible for membership in the organization.

The Grand Army of the Republic, which came into being in February, 1864, as the conception of two officers of the Fourteenth Illinois Infantry, is mainly responsible for the setting apart of one day in the year as sacred to the memory of departed comrades. The two officers mentioned—Major B. F. Stephenson and Chaplain W. J. Rutledge—conceived the idea of an association of war veterans while they were tent mates and companions in Sherman's expedition to Meriden, Miss.

Just who it was that first proposed Memorial day no one living can tell with certainty. Early in May, 1868, says the records, Adjutant-General Chipman, of the National encampment of the G. A. R., "received a letter from some comrade," referring to the subject, but, with the lapse of time, the name of the writer "passed from memory, and the letter was lost or destroyed." This comrade referred to the fact that he had served as a private soldier in the Union Army; that in his native country (Germany) it was the custom of the people to assemble in the Spring time and scatter flowers on the graves of the dead, and he suggested that

the Grand Army of the Republic "insaugurate such an observance, in memory of the Union dead."

The suggestion was accepted as opportune, and was regarded with favor by Adjutant-General Chipman, who at once made a "rough draft of a general order covering the subject, and laid it, with the letter referred to, before General John A. Logan," who was then National Commander of the Grand Army. General Logan set the seal of his approval upon the suggestion, added a few paragraphs to the order and named the 30th of May as a suitable day for "strewing with flowers the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late Rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land."

There are several other accounts of the origin of the beautiful custom, which will be observed throughout the Union next Thursday, but this incident of the letter is authentic and directly resulted in the issue of the general order instituting a Memorial day.

Oregon's Soldier Dead.

In our own dear Oregon is one who has written many touching verses commemorating the dead "who sleep in River-view," in the soldier's narrow bed. And in all future Memorial days no celebration will be complete that does not include recognition of the men who died in the

We shall bring our yearly greeting, when the morrow has begun. To our silent friends and comrades, lying yonder in the sun. Dumb alike to sound of music, march of feet, or beat of drum. We shall stand beside the portals of their closed and guarded rooms. Where the thrill of battle-music may not pierce the sacred glooms; We shall bring them stores of flowers—all the wealth of Summer blooms. Not today the grim war music, that enticed them to the fray. When their brave and boyish spirits sprang to manhood in a day. And for love of man and brother went to God the martyr's way. But no scent of rarest blossoms can enchant them from their sleep; Woe-bred by the noise of battle, wrapped in silence, strange and deep. Where the princely pines above them watch and ward forever keep. Roll of drum, and call of bugle, nevermore shall break their rest. For the grave conveys no message to its dreaming soldier guest; And of all the sleep allowed us, they have found the last and best. We have won the dreadful struggle, though they perished in the fight; And beneath a flag of freedom we shall slumber soft tonight. While the hands that wrought our safety moulder darkly out of sight. Ended is their day and story; told the tale of good and ill; But a hero-loving Nation holds them unforgotten still; And as thus we do them honor, so we ever must and will. Leave them where the late Spring blossoms and the silver lilies press. And the soft wind, sighing southward, drops its odorous caress— Even love can win no answer from their marble stateliness. Let us turn our banners homeward, through the long and dusty way; And our weary soldier-brothers, let them slumber as they may. Death resumes his solemn vigil, Life has nothing more to say.



BY EVA B. PILLSBURY.

MEMORIAM

We, with uncovered head, Salute the sacred dead. Who went, and who return not.

Professor Pratt has conceived the very admirable idea of having those teachers who are sufficiently patriotic go with the school children to the cemeteries and carry flowers to place upon the graves of the soldiers. These graves are now easily distinguished by the iron star which surmounts a short rod sunk in the sod of each grave that holds the body of a Grand Army man. Many of the teachers will endeavor to act upon Professor Pratt's suggestion on Thursday next.

The laurel wreath of glory That decks the soldier's grave, Is but the finished story— The record of the brave;

Sang George M. Vickers more than one decade ago, and the recent conflict with Spain has proved him right, in his conclusion that— He who dared the danger, Who battled well and true, To honor was no stranger, Though garbed in gray or blue. LUTHER M. MILLER.