

REAL ADVENTURES OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT

BY
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Narrative No. 4—The Battle of the Trains

UPON the triumph of the Madero revolution I retired from newspaper work for a few months, spending the time on a friend's hacienda in the State of Michoacan, near the placid island-dotted waters of Lake Patzcuaro. Hunting, fishing, riding and roving. I spent the walking hours idly yet strenuously, my night's repose interrupted by the thunder of cannon and the means of wounded men.

One February morning I received a wire from my paper telling me to return to the north country, where Pascual Orozco, Madero's former favored lieutenant, had risen in arms against his chief, now constitutional President of Mexico.

Orozco was at the time military commander of the State of Chihuahua, and at his request all federal troops had been retired from his district. Orozco, unable to bleed Madero for more than \$50,000 as payment for his services during the past revolution, engineered a "coup d'etat," proclaiming himself provisional President of Mexico and making use of the troops and munitions of war entrusted to him by Madero for the traitorous purpose of overthrowing him.

The entire State of Chihuahua seemed at the time to second the Orozco movement. It was claimed that he had strong financial backing from the Terrazas and Creel party, who apparently thought it good policy to provoke a schism in Madero's government, in order to weaken the new-born Mexican democracy and prepare the way for a return of the coffee-filling Diaz dictatorship.

Off With a Flying Column. The Mexican government was greatly troubled. Zapata, with several thousand bandits, threatened the south aided by his lieutenant, Salgado, in the south-east.

The proximity of these rebels to the national capital made it necessary to keep a large number of troops engaged in their persecution, as well as another considerable force in Mexico City. It was also indispensable that all the state capitals be strongly garrisoned to prevent their following Chihuahua's example.

The army was insufficient in numbers for the adequate protection of Mexico's immense area, but Madero rapidly organized a column of 3000 men and sent it northward under the command of General Gonzales Salas, Minister of War and of the Navy, and a close relative of the President.

The war administration of Gonzales Salas had been subjected to harsh attacks by the opposition press, and the General, a man of abnormal sensitiveness, had volunteered to personally attack Orozco so as to redeem his military reputation, dimmed, according to the papers, by his unavailing efforts to subdue the southern bandits.

We left Mexico by train, our immediate objective point Torreon, an important agricultural and manufacturing town in the State of Coahuila, held by a small Federal garrison and besieged by overwhelming revolutionist bands, who had cut the four railroad lines that connected it to Southern Mexico, and lacking artillery for an assault were trying to starve it into surrender.

Repairing the track, Gonzales Salas advanced on Torreon, protecting an immense convoy of provisions and munitions, occupying 10 trains of 30 cars each.

Ordered Out of Camp. I was aboard, hidden, of course, but the General learned of my presence, and had me thrown off while the train was moving. I luckily landed on the soft desert sand and was not hurt. Walking about 30 miles that day I caught up to the rear of the federal trains by nightfall, a burned bridge having enforced a halt, and friendly officers assisted me to find a secure hiding place.

We broke the siege of Torreon without difficulty, as the rebels did not wait us, but moved northward to join Orozco's main army at Jimenez. Hearing that I was in Torreon, General Salas sent for me and warned me that if I was caught in his camp again I would be executed as a spy. I will say for General Salas that he was consistent in his aversion to newspaper men, and treated other correspondents quite as harshly as he did me.

I got even with him, however, writing a long censure on the organization

of the federal column, finding it not at all difficult to point out important mistakes and omissions on the General's part.

Salas then issued a special order to his officers, prohibiting their assisting or even tolerating newspaper men on military trains.

There was a column 50 miles to the north of Torreon repairing the railroad track, and it was not thought necessary to communicate the order to them, as there was no way for a correspondent to get there. I stole a hand-car and pumped my way northward, being enthusiastically received by the colonel in command, who was an old acquaintance and had won me in a horse deal during the past revolution.

Rebel Officers Shot.

We pushed Chihuahua-ward, being followed ten miles to the rear by the rest of the army. Every half-mile or so we would come to the charred remains of a trestle, burned by the rebels to delay our advance and give them more time to prepare their defense. We then would halt and build a temporary structure, lay rails over it and proceed.

Attached to our train was the private car of the Engineer of Maintenance of Way of the National Railways of Mexico, an American named Colvin.

Colvin, accompanied by two other construction engineers, also Americans, was always at the front, overseeing

the repair of the trestles, and searching the track ahead for bombs. One of his pet theories was that the rebels would at some time send a wild engine down the track at us, and as a matter of precaution he always kept a hand-car gang several miles ahead of our train, with instructions to cut the track if they saw anything on the rails coming at us.

One morning Colvin was on the hand-car five miles ahead of the train, when from behind a nearby hill several horsemen galloped in his direction, evidently trying to cut him off from the military train. Hurrying back, he managed to leave the rebels behind and regain the

train, warning the colonel of the rebels' approach. We steamed ahead slowly for three miles, and then stopping and disembarking our men advanced on foot into the foothills, where the rebels had been seen. We were received by a volley, but the Federals, undismayed, charged heroically on the unseen enemy, taking their positions and forcing them back, killing a few score, and capturing several prisoners.

Among the prisoners were two rebel officers who were immediately shot and their bodies hung on telegraph poles as an example to the country-side.

Hearing the firing, General Telles, who commanded the second trainload of Federals, came up and offered assistance, but the fight was over, and he returned to his train after accepting Colvin's invitation to supper. Colvin, I should explain, had the only sleeping car and cook in the column.

With Telles there arrived on the scene another newspaper man, Humbert Strauss, representing El Imparcial of Mexico City. Strauss was disguised as a Red Cross surgeon. That evening a couple of soldiers were crushed between the cars, and were turned over to Strauss for treatment.

"How are your injured men getting along, doctor?" asked General Telles a few hours later.

Strauss clicked his heels together and brought his hand up in a military salute. "They have died, my general," he answered.

Of course they had. Strauss, who afterward admitted to me that the sight of blood turned his stomach, had left his patients severely alone. He placated his conscience by telling me "They would have died anyhow, they were so thoroughly smashed."

We questioned the prisoners as to Orozco's plans and numbers, and were told that he had nearly 10,000 men and was awaiting us 30 miles farther on at a place called Relano, where the track left the plain and entered a winding canyon in the sierra.

We were also informed that the rebels had loaded an engine with dynamite, and would send it against us at the first opportunity.

On the following day General Gonzales Salas overtook our train and assumed command of the entire army, now that battle was near. I kept out of his way that day, but early the next morning was arrested by his order and returned to Torreon under guard.

Salas Ends His Life.

This saved my life, as a few hours later the vanguard train, in which I had been traveling, was wrecked by a wild locomotive laden with dynamite, and, following the panic produced by explosion, the rebels defeated Salas' army, killing or capturing nearly half of its total force and so discouraging its commander that he committed suicide during the night, fearing to face the adverse criticism in the Mexican newspapers.

The train which was taking me back to Torreon was obliged to halt at a water tank a few miles from Relano, as the engine was about to die for lack of water. We found that the revolutionists had emptied the tank and stopped the train, taking care to also empty the boiler.

It was necessary to bring water from a dam four miles away to fill the pump's boiler, and, having chopped up some ties, which we took from the track, as there was no other combustible to be had, got up steam and

pumped enough water into the tank to fill our needs.

As a prisoner I was made to do the chopping, four sentinels guarding me. I should have been allowed to use the ax as a weapon and attempt to escape. All the while that we were engaged in watering our engine we could hear the artillery fire at Relano.

That night I was only able to write in the story that a big battle, perhaps the decisive one of the war, had begun. The authorities in Torreon claimed not to know anything about the result of the fighting.

On the following noon three trainloads of infantry arrived in Torreon with the story of their defeat. There

counted for five of the six that were harnessed to it.

Telles, whose act is considered by expert tacticians as one of the most masterly retreats of modern warfare, received no praise nor public recognition, and to this day the battle of Relano is generally conceded to have been an insurgent victory, few people realizing that the second and most important phase of the battle was decidedly won by Telles.

Had the rebels attacked Telles with the same decision with which they had fought and defeated Gonzales Salas that morning, the Federal General would have doubtless been overwhelmed, so great was the disparity

setting his arms and ammunition through the customhouse at Juarez, was notified that no more food nor war supplies would be permitted to pass the border destined to the revolutionists.

As Chihuahua does not produce nearly sufficient foodstuffs for the sustenance of its population, being essentially a mining country, the rebels soon felt a scarcity of food which threatened to become a famine. The Chihuahuans, fearing an enforced fast, no longer supported Orozco with the old enthusiasm, and in the mountain districts far from Orozco's armies, many rose in arms, in what the Mexicans call a "contrarevolucion," or counter revolution.

Torreon was chosen as the center of this mobilization, and there Huerta got together 7000 men, 30 cannons, 40 machine guns and an immense amount of ammunition and supplies, before beginning to move northward against Orozco.

The time employed by Huerta in organizing his army was not wasted by the rebels. Revolutions broke out all over the country, seconding the Orozquista movement. The Chihuahua and Laguna divisions of the rebel forces swelled to about 12,000 men, and it seemed as if every day that elapsed made the rebels stronger.

However, the United States at last showed its hand. Orozco, who had been

TEN MINUTES WITH THE FUNNY MEN
SOME of the QUIPS and JESTS FROM PENS of the NEWSPAPER HUMORISTS.

Terse Tales From Humorous Pens

MONTE CARLO PRICES. Judge William H. Moore, at a supper in Gotham's newest hotel, discussed hotel prices.

"They are worse at Monte Carlo, perhaps," he said, "than anywhere else in the world. The German tourist is sneered at in Monte Carlo because, when he enters a bar, he is asked, 'Have you always asked the charge to be to before he sits down in the chair?'"

"What is a man to do in barbershops where it is no uncommon thing to be charged two or three dollars for the simplest operation?"

"And it's the same thing in hotels. I know a man who took a suite at Monte Carlo hotel without asking the price of anything—and in the restaurants of such hotels it's a common thing to find no prices even on the menus."

"Well, when this man came to pay his bill, it was enormous. But he paid it. Then he said: 'Have you any twenty-five centime stamps?'"

"Yes, monsieur," said the clerk. "How many do you wish?"

"Tell me first, please," he said, "what you charge for them here?"—*Minneapolis Journal.*

EASILY REMEDIED. "People love to perplex themselves and then depend on someone to get them out of the middle," says Henry Miller, and, as an example, he gives the following:

A famous Chicago lawyer once had a singular case to settle. A physician came to him in great distress. Two sisters, living in the same house, had babies of equal age, who so resembled each other that their own mothers were unable to distinguish them when they were together. Now, it happened that the carelessness of the nurses had caused the children to become mixed, and now the mothers to make sure that they received back their own infants?

"But, perhaps," said the lawyer, "the children weren't changed at all."

"Oh, but there's no doubt that they were changed," said the physician. "Are you sure of it?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, if that's the case, why don't you change them back again? I don't see any difficulty in the case."

Young's Magazine.

TEN LIES. Here are ten lies which are often heard, according to the amiable Mr. Arthur Auld of Lamar:

Yes, we're out, but we've just ordered a lot of it.

I didn't care anything for the money. It was the principle of the thing.

I'd just like to have been in his place. I'd have showed them.

If I had that woman for a little while I'd teach her a few things.

If I'd catch a kid of mine at anything like that I'd blinder him.

If I had just a little money I know where I could go out and make a pile.

I never would care to be rich, just comfortably fixed.

My wife and I have never exchanged a cross word.

If you don't think it's a good thing for you I don't want you to do it.

I've never seen such weather before.

—Kansas City Star.

WASTED HUMOR. The unconsidered witicism, however well meant, strikes snags in Boston. Professor Zueblin in a recent lecture playfully remarked that many people marry presumably for love.

A woman in the audience took offense at this and interrupted him.

"What are your views, madam?" he asked.

"I do not wish to contaminate myself with talking to you," the woman added. "I shall send my husband to speak to you."

The professor proceeded with his lecture, possibly in fear and trembling. As far as known, however, the hus-

band hasn't appeared.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

WHAT SHE WANTED TO KNOW. "So your daughter is engaged?"

"Yes."

"Is he a nice young man?"

"Yes."

"And you approve of the match?"

"Yes. They seem to be just suited for one another."

"That's so nice. Are his people all right?"

"They're delightful."

"How old is he?"

"About 32."

"Just a fine age. Is he handsome?"

"Well, he's not what you'd call bad looking."

"I'm just crazy to see him. I suppose Agnes is very happy. But I must be going now. I'll drop in again sometime."

"Haven't you forgotten to ask me something?"

"I don't think so. What is it?"

"Oh, I thought you wanted to know how much money he is making?"—*Detroit Free Press.*

THE CRITICAL POET. T. A. Daly, whose beautiful poem, "The Turbush," won the \$250 prize in the Mitchell Kennedy competition, is like all good versifiers, a severe critic of bad verse.

At a dinner at the Bellevue-Stratford, in Philadelphia, a young lady of a humorous turn asked Daly a conundrum.

"When is a poet not a poet?" she said.

"About 35 times out of 100," was the grim reply.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

A NEW SIDE SHOW. Tommy had been to the circus with his father, and was telling his mother all about it.

"But," he said, "there was one side show we didn't see."

"How do you know you didn't?" asked his mother.

"Well," explained Tommy, "just as we were leaving I heard Mr. Jones talk papa that he'd better stick around so as to see some of the pretty chicks."

—Popular Magazine.

Quips and Flings

"There is some great force lacking in this country today," observed the Sage.

"Yes," commented the Wise Guy. "What this country needs is a fool-killer who will stay on the job."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

"How did Skimmels make his money?"

"He was one of those old-fashioned dairymen who left you in doubt whether water had been put in the milk or milk had been spread in the water."—Washington Star.

"I understand you went over to Crimston Gulch and lynched the wrong man?"

"No," replied Three-finger Sam. "You can't lynch the wrong man in Crimston Gulch. We just got Plute Pete a little bit ahead of his turn."—Washington Star.

Wife—"Why did you tell the Batsons that you married me because I was such a good cook, when you know I can't even boil a potato?"

Hubby—"I had to make some excuse, my dear, and I didn't know what else to say!"—London Opinion.

One day an inspector of a New York tenement-house found four families living in one room, chalk lines being drawn across in such a manner as to mark out a quarter for each family.

"How do you get along here?" inquired the inspector.

"Very well, was the reply. "Only the man in the farthest corner keeps boarders."—Everybody's.

One swallow doesn't make a Summer, but it breaks a New Year's resolution.—Life.

Bertie—"What makes you think I've got no sense of humor?"

Gertie—"Your self-appreciation."—Harvard Lampoon.

Knicker—"It is terrible the way par-

ents make their babies work at night."

Youngpup—"And it is terrible the way babies make their parents work at night."—New York Sun.

"What's daughter doing?"

"Making shrimp salad."

"I didn't know we had any shrimp in the house."

"We haven't, but there is one going to call on her this evening."—Houston Post.

"What are you thinking about?"

"Just nothing."

"You always were an egotist."—Town Topics.

Doctor—"You'll have to cut out some of this wine, woman and song business; it's killing you."

Patience—"All right, doc; I'll never sing again."—Wisconsin Sphinx.

"That's a lovely gift book for children—why, it's illustrations are exquisite!"

"Yes, I bought it for our little ones, but, of course, it's much too nice for them to look at."—Exchange.

A gentleman who was asked to illustrate the difference between "alt" and "set" recently answered, "The United States is a country on which the sun never sets, and the rest of the world never sets."—Christian Register.

Knicker—"Our forefathers didn't know beans."

Bocker—"They didn't have to; they had beef."—New York Sun.

"Yes; I think the next lecture I shall give will be on Keats."

"Oh, professor, what are Keats?"—Sketch.

Servant—"Please, sir, there's a man at the door with a bill."

Mr. Owens—"Tell him we are well supplied."—Boston Transcript.

Among the Poets of the Daily Press

VOICE CULTURE. When Phyllis sings the very air is moved—and this I know!

The breeze bends and its pace and bear Her message as they go.

The front door slams, the back door, too.

Each curtain outward swings.

A shrill wind whistles up the flue

When Phyllis sings.

When Phyllis sings the neighbors mark

I know what I can hear!

They run to rest them in the park.

And, resting there, rejoice.

No neighbor of them all to sleep

Floats on her music's wings.

But rents grow most surprising cheap

When Phyllis sings.

When Phyllis sings—O, we is me!

I know what I can hear!

And when she strives to reach high C,

I wish I drifted there.

I leave a sort of absent sigh

And in my fancy sighs

Longing that I far, far might fly

When Phyllis sings!

—Chicago News.

ODDS AND ENDS. O for boyhood's painless play!

I know what I can hear!

The childhood shows the man

As morning shows the day.

The schoolboy, with his satchel in his hand,

Whistling aloud to keep his courage up.

—Blair.

Life went a Maying

With Nature, Hope and Poesy.

When I was young!

—Coleridge.

PROMOTION. The Indian o'er the country used to range.

Until the white man came, to make his change—

The snake's change, indeed, as was but proper.

—Kansas City Times.

THE SUBLINE PORTE. The Sublime Forte

Seems to be changing

Rapidly to

The ridiculous.

—Kansas City Times.