

FELIX DIAZ and HIS FIRST REVOLT

It Ended In A Farce At Vera Cruz.

Gerald Brandon, War Correspondent, Tells of the Uprising Which Blew Up and Landed Diaz in Prison—An Intimate Study of the Mexican Type of Intrigue.

BY GERALD BRANDON.
REYES, Orozco and Zapata having been defeated by the Maderist arms, there arose on the Mexican political horizon a new revolutionary tendency, this time a man whose antecedents and connections were such as to assist rather than retard him in his struggle for the Presidency.
Felix Diaz, nephew of the veteran Porfirio, and only unshaken member of his dictatorial dynasty, had never associated himself with the group of grafters whose stealings hastened the decline of the Diaz administration. This ring, whose scientific system of graft had won for it the appellation of Cientificos, was busily dividing among its members the immense resources of the Mexican nation. In this it was unwittingly assisted by the failing President, who 12 years past the three-score and ten, was no longer able personally to attend his duties, and was forced to delegate them to his trusted but untrustworthy ministers.
Felix Diaz, closer to the President than any other, never took advantage of his official position to enrich himself at the public expense, but dedicated his energies to his duties as police commissioner of the federal district, making Mexico City perhaps the best policed capital in the world.
Not yet in his 40th year, Felix Diaz had attained the rank of Brigadier-General of the army. He came of a family famous in Mexican annals for its fighters, his father, known as El Chato or the pug-nosed, having contributed largely to the success of the liberal arms in the Wars of Reform, at the close of which, captured by the conservative party, he met a tragic death, having been one of the last victims of the Holy Inquisition.

Diaz Plans a Revolt.
When Porfirio resigned or abdicated, Felix asked his discharge from the army and retired to private life, not caring to enter the political arena. Twice he was offered the Governorship of the State of Coahuila, one of the most important of the Mexican union, but he ever reiterated his resolve to live apart from politics.
Some months ago rumors arose to the effect that Felix, at the head of an army, had risen against the government in Northern Mexico. The afternoon papers in Mexico City printed the story, only to be contradicted on the following day by their morning colleagues, whose front pages held interviews with the retired soldier, who, found peacefully residing on his country estate, again assured the public of his complete and permanent divorce from public life.

During the next month there were daily reports from different points of the republic where Diaz was alleged to have started a revolution, and when he left the capital for Vera Cruz on an ostensible visit to a relative, the government sent 15 secret service men to dog Diaz's steps, hoping thus to find out "who were his friends and what were their schemes."
One day Diaz disappeared from the ken of his 18 shadowers, who reported to the government that he had set out seaward in a motorboat, presumably to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where the Indians are all staunch supporters of the Diaz family.

Trip Made on Horseback.
Two days later the Vera Cruz train failed to arrive in Mexico City, and the telegraph wires, after yielding a short and startling message to the operators, were cut.
According to the laconic message from Vera Cruz, the city was in the hands of Diaz, who had assaulted it in the early morning with 200 men and had been joined by the federal garrison and four gunboats in the harbor.

It was impossible to get further details. The government, railroad and commercial wires were down. Attempts to reach Vera Cruz by cable via Galveston resulted unfruitfully, and the Mexico City public demanded news, almost mobbing the newspaper buildings.
"Go to Vera Cruz as quickly as possible, regardless of fatigue and expense, and keep us informed as to developments," ordered the Associated Press. "Cover the revolutionary end of the story and come into Mexico City with the revolutionary army if, as is generally supposed, Diaz succeeds in overthrowing the government."
That evening I left Mexico City by train, arriving next morning at Cordoba, 130 miles north of my destination and the edge of the territory protected by federal influence.
In the Mexico City depot an American, to me unknown, approached me, telling me that he was a passenger on the Ward Line steamer due to leave Vera Cruz the following day, and did not want to miss his boat, "and now they tell me that the train only goes as far as Cordoba," he complained. "If you are going to Vera Cruz on horseback," he added, glancing at my riding breeches and leggings, "I will accompany you."

In Cordoba I found more than a hundred persons of all callings and nationalities who were desirous of reaching Vera Cruz without delay, and all efforts to secure a special train being unavailing, a group of us hired horses and struck southward.
There was only one livery stable in Cordoba, and its proprietor, making the most of his opportunity, would only let us have his horses as far as Paso del Macho, 33 miles away. For this service he charged up the equivalent of the value of the horse, making us also pay for the mounts of the two muzzos who accompanied us for the purpose of returning the ponies.
Our party was composed of nine persons, as follows: Fernando Ramirez de Aguilar, staff correspondent of El Imparcial of Mexico City; Guillermo Castillejo Tapia, who claimed to be a civil engineer bound for a construction job on the Isthmus, and who was accompanied by a silent, business-like patriot whom he said was his draughtsman; Francisco Belmar, the 20-year-old son of a Mexican Supreme Court Justice, who said that he had reached the deathbed of a rich relative from whom he hoped to inherit; Ed Walsh, the American who had graciously accompanied me from Mexico City, and another American whose name I do not remember—a tall, lanky Yankee with a sense of humor and a constitution sapped by tropical fevers. Besides there were myself and the two muzzos; one a stouter, cotton-clad, sandal-soled Indian, the other more than three-quarters Spaniard, arrayed in buckskin chaps and a towering sombrero.

Trip Is Difficult.
The time-worn adage, "A man is known by the company he keeps," obtains to an exaggerated degree in wartime; and as I recognized in the engineer an old-time revolutionist but lately released on bond from the penitentiary, and as there was a probability of our being overhauled by federal troop trains, I did not care to be caught in his company. Neither did I believe that Belmar had a sick relative in Vera Cruz, nor that the two Americans were aught but soldiers of fortune. Besides it was my intention to beat the Imparcial man.

For these reasons I decided to get ahead of the party, and gradually hastened my horse's pace. However, Walsh, the engineer and his companion and Belmar seemed to suspect my plan, they kept at my side, and we reached Paso del Macho two hours ahead of the rest of the party.
To our dismay there were no horses for hire in the little village, but we were told that Camaron, a hamlet situated on the railroad 30 miles further, would surely be able to offer us a means of continuing our journey.
I did not propose to remain on foot at Paso del Macho, and decided to continue on the same horse, knowing that the Associated Press could easily extract me from any consequent trouble. I therefore pressed on, being followed by the four others until nightfall, when a hut beside the road suggested a needed rest and food for ourselves and mounts.
Muzzos Are Overcome.
We had hardly settled to the "frivolous" and "torillas" hospitably set before us by the rancher, when the "muzzos" galloped up in a cloud of dust and profanity.
I endeavored to placate them with fair words and money; but to no effect. They would return instantly with the horses, leaving us where we were, and would lay a complaint against us in the nearest town.
Suddenly changing tactics, I applied a Japanese jiu-jitsu strangle hold to one of the natives, who fell senseless at my feet, and possessing myself of his "machete" I easily frightened his companion into acquiescence to my plans.
Warning both muzzos and making them ride in the midst of our party, we got to Camaron a little before midnight.
With the exception of the engineer and his draughtsman, all my companions decided to go on farther with me. You have already committed horse theft, assault and abduction, and we

are only half way to Vera Cruz," they asserted. "Quiet sake, what you will do next. We do not want to be accomplices of any more fractures of the law."
This suited me to the ground, and accompanied by the two now admitted revolutionists, I roused the section gang, who for a consideration pumped us 30 miles to Salcedo Doblado.
A handcar, with a willing crew and on a down grade, will travel as fast as an express train, and we covered those 30 miles in half an hour, continuing on foot 10 miles farther, until fatigues forced us to rest.
Spreading my blanket on the grass a few yards away from the track, I lighted a cigarette to keep away the mosquitoes, and started to lie down, when by the flash of the lighted match

I perceived that a myriad of entomological specimens, including the well-known spider, scorpion and centipede families, had instantly possessed themselves of my couch.
Abandoning the blanket to these unwelcome bedfellows, I returned to the right of way, and, with crushed rock ballast for a mattress and a rail for a pillow, slept soundly until sunrise.
Next morning, "waking with the day's first beam," we footed it farther until a friendly rancher was found, who provided us with horses that placed us in Vera Cruz by noon.
As we started on this last stage of our journey the engineer turned to me and said: "I hope the Federal troop train did not pass us while we slept."
And we had slept with our heads on the rails.

History as taught in Mexican schools tells of three successive sieges sustained by Vera Cruz against the invading armies and navies of the United States, England and France. This is the reason of Vera Cruz' rather bombastic official title, "The Thrice Heroic City of the True Cross." But if Felix Diaz selected this city as the scene of his revolution on account of its bellicose traditions he soon realized his mistake.

Diaz and His Army.
"We are a city of workmen, not of fighters," answered the Vera Cruz-ans when called to assist him in overthrowing the government. "Not that we love Madero more, but that we love war less." And Diaz, who had several thousand stands of arms and an unlimited supply of ammunition, was only



HE "ACQUIRED"—AFTER THE STRANGLE HOLD.

able to recruit 40 volunteers in Vera Cruz.
I found that the Diaz force comprised about 1000 infantrymen in Vera Cruz. The four gunboats that were still at anchor in the harbor had not openly espoused the revolutionary cause nor declared against it, but seemed to be awaiting developments before taking a decisive step.
Diaz assured me that he had already reached an understanding with Comodoro Auguste, in command; and as I saw that water, provisions and money were being sent aboard daily from Vera Cruz I believed the General.
I also saw and believed several documents in which some of Mexico's most prominent military men pledged themselves to the Diaz cause.
In the meanwhile various Federal

forces approached Vera Cruz from all sides, but somehow they did not seem desirous of attacking the city. General Joaquin Beltran, senior officer in command of these forces, held several parleys with Diaz.
The revolutionary leader seemed satisfied with the result of these conferences, and it was generally understood that while Beltran would not openly join the revolution he would allow himself to be captured with all his men.
The battle was announced one day, and at the appointed hour, instead of attacking, Beltran sent another envoy, who was closeted several hours with Diaz. That afternoon the revolutionary army paraded the city streets, bands blaring forth and flags flying.
Diaz Is Tricked.
The assault was to commence at day-break. All foreigners hid to the neutral zone and Mexican noncombatants hid themselves in their houses, while the revolutionary army manned the church towers and high buildings on the outskirts of the city.
Diaz instructed his men not to shoot to kill the federals who would advance against them, but just to fire above their heads, that the world might hear a noise and later credit the federals with having fought bravely before surrendering.
But Diaz did not know that during the night another and larger federal army had arrived at Beltran's quarters. This new body of men was commanded by General Blanquet, whose loyalty to Madero was a matter of record.
The situation had changed, and what was to have been a sham assault became a real one under Blanquet's vigilance.
Under a noisy but harmless fire a group of 50 Federals charged for the city gates, entering and proceeding to the main plaza, where General Diaz awaited them on the roof of the municipal palace.
Meeting no resistance from the 200 revolutionists who manned the building, the Federals entered and, mistaking me for a rebel officer, ordered me to lead them to General Diaz.
Chief Is Captured.
"I would rather not interfere in this," I protested. "Arrest this man. Search him and kill him if he attempts to escape or give the alarm," came from Colonel Ocaranza, in command of the Federals, and I was stripped of my belongings, despite my explanations and protestations. The Federals hurried up the stairs and were met by General Diaz and his staff, who, thinking Ocaranza was about to offer his allegiance, started to deliver a flowery speech of welcome.
"You are my prisoner," snapped the Colonel, presenting his pistol at Diaz' head while his men with fixed bayonets and ready rifles surrounded the little group.
And so ended the Diaz revolution, the shortest lived though best augured revolt of modern Mexican history.
Diaz' army seeing its chief a prisoner, did not attempt to resist, but allowed itself to be disarmed by the Federals, who continued to enter the city in bodies of 50 at a time.
Diaz and his principal officers were court-martialed and condemned to death.
After a few hours' detention I was identified by General Valdez, who personally commanded the attacking detachment of Beltran's army, and was set at liberty.
Reporter Makes Escape.
That afternoon I was detained by an officer who had a personal grudge against me and whom alcohol had made somewhat rash. Bidding his men train their guns on me he called me names, and when I returned in kind I was beaten over the head with the butts of heavy Mauser rifles and jabbed in several places with their bayonets.
I was saved by Consul William Canada, one of the most prominent members of the American Consular Corps, who, hearing of my predicament, hurried to the General and procured my release.
On the following day I was again arrested charged with having received arms and ammunition from Diaz during his occupancy of the city.
This was true. Diaz had given me a dozen rifles and 2000 rounds of ammunition in Chihuahua, a request that myself and other Americans be not without some means of defense.
I explained and was again released. That night one of the city officials to whom I had returned a service story around to my quarters and advised me to get away before morning.
"An accusation which will necessitate your going to prison for several months until you are tried has been cooked up against you," he cautioned.
I slipped aboard the Seguranza that night and on the following day sailed for New York.
Probably I would have been able to disprove any charge concocted against me by my enemies but I was tired of Mexican prisons and thought that three years' confinement in revolutionary jails would have been a good thing for me to a vacation in God's country.
And here I am safe in body, but with my reputation as a revolutionary prophet burst higher than a rocket.
But I maintain "Quiet sake" what would have happened had General Blanquet not loomed with his army in Beltran's rear at the psychological moment.
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THE TYPES AS THEY SLIP

"ENGLISH teacher desires to teach Japanese pupils four or five to form a class."—North China News.
"She was attended by three bridesmaids, who had wreaths of oranges in their hair."—Barnet Press.
"Frenchman or German—A permanent vacancy occurs with good export firm for young foreigner to act as Valentia; 20s after a few weeks."—Daily Telegraph.
"French model christening robes, trimmed hand embroidery and real lace. Redwood regardless of cost from 50s to 95 guineas."—From catalogue.
"3590.—Parcel lady's clothes; coat, skirt, blouse, hats, boots, shoes, trousers fit youth 16-17."—The Lady.
"Blanche dropped her lips over her smooth dark gray eyes."—Daily Record.
"The bridge was attended by six bridegrooms."—Yorkshire Evening Post.
"Bell-ringers of the adjoining parishes came to blows over the respective

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