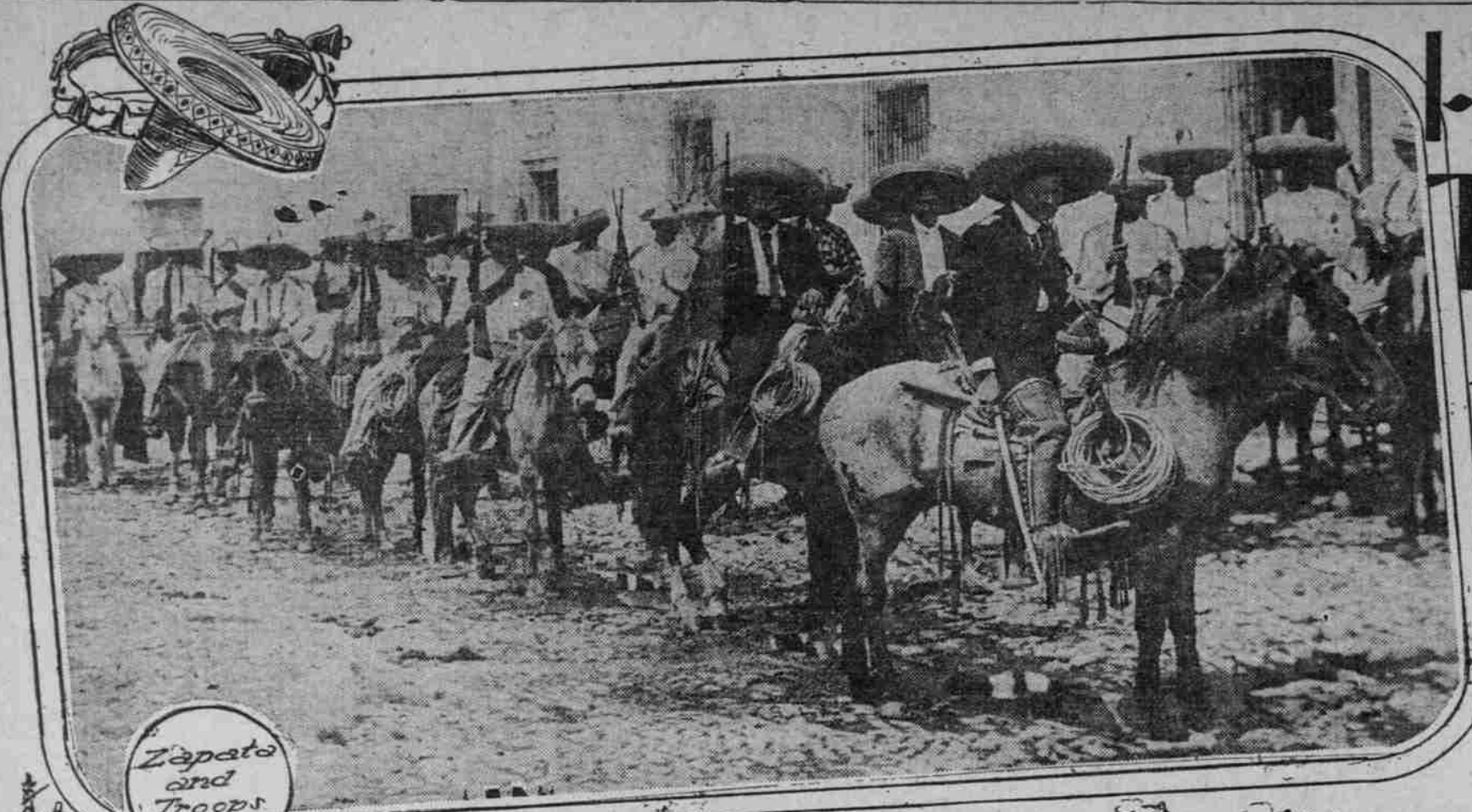


# How Mexican Soldiers Fight Told by a War Correspondent

## Little Tactics Less Strategy and Each Command Looks After Itself, Soldiers Take Wives Into Field to Do Cooking.



Zapata and Troops



G.A. Dawling

BY H. HAMILTON FYFE.

H. Hamilton Fyfe, who is in Mexico as a special correspondent of the London Daily Mail, found great difficulty in getting into the country from the United States owing to the distraction of traffic and the prevailing confusion. He succeeded eventually, however, in overcoming the difficulties, and the following article describes his arrival at Monterey with a party of acquaintances and his first experiences of Mexican fighting.

IS THERE any pleasure equal to the joy of feeling clean and fresh after a long, fatiguing, dirty ride? If there is, I do not know it. In our five days' journey across the wilderness from Matamoros to Monterey we only had our clothes off once. You can imagine the delight with which we bathed and shaved and put on our "other clothes." You can picture the effect of a dainty luncheon table upon men who had been eating canned beans and crackers off the lids of tins and eating them three times a day! There was a wondrous contentment in our faces as we sat smoking after lunch in a sunny patio full of roses, with a glorious pink creeper smothering the walls.

Two of our party were at home now. The other two of us had no idea of leaving Monterey to our Capitan, charming city though it is. Mountains on three sides of it cut jagged patterns on the hot, blue sky. Its climate, except for the heat of summer, is as near perfect as can be. The enterprise of a Canadian company has given it good water, electric light and power, gas, drainage and excellent streets. It has a large foreign colony, chiefly Americans and Germans, the most friendly, kindly folk imaginable. Yet, tempting as this rich, light-hearted city was, the mining engineer was anxious to get to Saltillo and I equally determined to press on to no trains, but the Tampico service was running, so I booked for the next morning but one, and went to bed that night with the happy feeling that my way seemed now to lie more plain.

**Awakened by Battle.**

But Mexico is a country where "you never can tell." Early next morning I dreamed that I was beating carpets. I awoke and sat up. The noise of the beating went on. I hit my head against the wall to see if I were not dreaming still. Then I jumped out and ran to the window. What I heard was the

sound of heavy rifle fire, coming from the direction of the suburbs which lie out on the plain, the suburbs we had passed through. Very soon the whole city knew that the constitutionalists were attacking it, and we knew that if we had been one day later we should have butted into the very heart of the battle.

You must not think of a Mexican battle, though, as being like an engagement between other armies. Troops are not handled in masses at all. There is little strategy and no tactics. Let me illustrate this by what I managed to see of the two days' attack upon Monterey. It was delivered by a force of between 4000 and 5000 insurgents, against whom the commandant of the garrison could only muster some 300 or 350 regulars, with a few hundred volunteers. In the result these volunteers did pretty well, but at the start the citizens were more afraid of them than of the rebels, since most of them were holding a rifle for the first time. When I got up on a hill that first morning and saw how the situation lay I had no doubt whatever that within 24 hours the Constitutionalists would capture the city. I met a German later in the day, a shrewd student of war; he was entirely of my opinion, and expected the Federal troops to march out during the night, leaving the place to be occupied without a struggle.

**Women Real Heroes.**

My German friend ought to have known better, for he has lived in Mexico all his life. My error was pardonable. I had so far seen only skirmishes. Now I discovered that Mexican battles are simply a series of small fights fought on skirmishing lines. A general advance could not have been kept back, not even by the machine guns which tap-tapped methodically from the federal positions. But there was no general advance. Small bodies of 15 or 20 operated singly, so far as could be seen, without any co-operative plan. The organization of the rebels is by "commandos."

One Captain has a woman flagbearer—a handsome, graceful girl who wore a military hussar's dress, sat a big horse perfectly, carried a revolver in her belt, and a rifle on her saddle. A day or two after the battle she and the rest of her commando were at a farm a few miles

out. There was a sudden alarm. Federal cavalry was sighted. In the confusion she could not find her horse. The others galloped off without her. She ran into the barn, threw her cap and pistol under some straw and strolled out as the federals rode up, "Just a woman." They only stayed a few moments, and took no notice of her. Ten minutes afterward the Captain, with four men, came back and galloped her off.

I have heard of other "soldaderas"; I saw one lying dead in a street of Monterey. But my admiration for them does not surpass that which I feel for the herds of non-fighting wives who go everywhere with the soldiers. Mexican armies have no commissariat. These Indian women carry the cooking pots, light the fires and get the food ready. A Mexican campsite is really an astonishing sight. It is like a large picnic. Children swarm everywhere. Coffee and "tortillas" appear as if by magic. Somehow the women are always there in good time. They even keep up with marching cavalry, often carrying babies at the breast. Their endurance and devotion are wonderful. They are the real "heroes" of the war.

The same absence of organization which accounts for this system runs through Mexican methods of fighting. The men are not handled in masses at all. Street fighting is preferred because shelter can be taken. Yet, although in this kind of warfare marksmanship is so essential, the troops are not even taught to take aim. On the roof of the hospital—a strange place to fire from—a dozen men were letting off their rifles. I could not see one of them aiming. They shot into the air. The same thing was noticed on all sides.

Even the machine guns were used wastefully. One was turned for several minutes upon four men across the river who were out of range! On both sides, but especially among the Federals, many officers are men of capacity and dash. One young Lieutenant made

great play with a machine gun in a big motor car, charging about from point to point, and at all events rightening the little hands of rebels if he did not kill many of them. But either the officers do not trouble or they are not allowed to give any systematic training to their men.

Judging by the incessant noise of firing for the best part of 48 hours you might have supposed that the streets after the battle would be heaped with dead. I went about very early in the morning after the insurgents had been repulsed and saw wonderfully few. Altogether there can hardly have been more than a couple of hundred killed, counting all parts of the field. Yet in all, nearly 10,000 men were engaged, for early in the afternoon of the second day the garrison was heavily reinforced. It was magnificent to see the relief march into the city. The frightened inhabitants came out into the

streets, which till then had been as empty as in dead of night, to cheer and give the soldiers all the food and cigarettes they had. I shall never forget the emotion of that hour. But I could not help wondering why the enemy had not made any movement to intercept this force, and why, instead of marching it into the city, it had not been sent to catch the rebels in the rear. That would not have been Mexican, however, and changes of method are displeasing to the Mexican mind.

**Adventure of the Dying Detective**

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3.)

However, he was as eager now to consult the person named as he had been obstinate in refusing.

"I never heard the name," said I.

"Possibly not, my good Watson. It may surprise you to know that the man upon earth who is best versed in this disease is not a medical man, but a planter. Mr. Culverton Smith is a well-known resident of Sumatra, now visiting London. An outbreak of the disease upon his plantation, which was

distant from medical aid, caused him to study it himself, with some rather far-reaching consequences. He is a very methodical person, and I did not desire you to start before I because I was well aware that you would not find him in his study. If you could persuade him to come here and give us the benefit of his unique experience of this disease, the investigation of which has been his dearest hobby, I cannot doubt that he could help me."

I give Holmes' remarks as a consecutive whole and will not attempt to indicate how they were interrupted by gasping for breath and those clutchings of his hands which indicated the pain from which he was suffering. His appearance had changed for the worse during the few hours that I had been with him. Those hectic spots were more pronounced, the eyes shone more brightly out of darker hollows and a cold sweat glistened upon his brow. He still retained, however, the jaunty gallantry of his speech. To the last gasp of his life he would always be the master.

"You will tell him exactly how you have left me," said he. "You will convey the very impression which is in your own mind—a dying man—a dying and delicious man. Indeed, I cannot think why the whole bed of the ocean is not one solid mass of oysters, so prolific the creatures seem. Ah, I am wandering! Strange how the brain controls the brain! What was I saying, Watson?"

"My directions for Mr. Culverton Smith."

"Ah, yes, I remember. My life depends upon it. Plead with him, Watson. There is no good feeling between us. His nephew, Watson—I had suspicions of foul play and I allowed him to see it. The boy died horribly. He has a grudge against me. You will soften him, Watson. Beg him, pray him, get him here by any means. He can save me—only he!"

"I will bring him in a cab if I have to carry him down to it."

"You will do nothing of the sort. You will persuade him to come. And then you will return in front of him. Make any excuse so as not to come with him. Don't forget, Watson. You won't fail me. You never did fail me. No doubt there are natural enemies which limit the increase of the creatures. You and I, Watson, we have done our part. Shall the world, then, be overrun by oysters? No, no; horrible! You'll convey all that is in your mind."

I left him full of the image of this magnificent intellect babbling like a foolish child. He had handed me the key, and with a happy thought I took it with me lest he should lock himself in. Mrs. Hudson was waiting, trembling and weeping, in the passage. Behind me as I passed from the flat I heard Holmes' high, thin voice in some delicious chant. Below, as I stood whistling for a cab, a man came on me through the fog.

(To be concluded next Sunday.)

**Imperialism vs. Democracy.**

Theodore Dreiser's "A Traveler at Forty."

Queer how imperialism apparently teaches people to be civil while democracy does the reverse. We ought to get a little "imperialism" into our government, I should say. We ought to make American law and American government supreme, but over it there ought to be a "supreme" people, who really know what their rights are, who respect liberties, decency and courtesies for themselves and others, and who demand and see that their government and their law and their servants, public and private, are responsive and responsible to them rather than to the "Christian gentlemen" who want to "pack 'em in." If you don't believe it, go to Berlin and then see if you come home again cheerfully believing that this is still the land of the free and the home of the brave. Rather I think you will begin to feel that we are getting to be the land of the "dub" and the home of the doormat. Nothing more and nothing less.

**The Fly in the Ointment.**

Atlantic.

Today the movie pictures present the most triumphant form of cheap entertainment. They are good of their kind and there is a visible effort to make them better; but the "special features" by which they are accompanied in the 10 and 15-cent shows—the shrill songs, the dull jokes, the clumsy clog dances—are all of an incredible badness. Compared to them the worst of plays seems good and the ill-paid actors who storm and sob through "A Scene in a Great City" or "No Wedding Bells for Her" assume heroic proportions, as ministering to the emotions of the heart.

**Glittering Possibilities**

(Washington Star.)

"What I want to see," said the reformer, "is a city that knows absolutely nothing of graft."

"That's what I'd like to see," replied the war politician. "Wouldn't it be a gold mine for the right parties?"



Federal Soldiers Lay Down Arms Until Paid and Fed. (Underwood & Underwood Photos)