

MEXICAN ARMY A PICTURESQUE BUT UNFIT LOT

English Correspondent Writes of Observations Among Queer Soldiers Beyond the Rio Grande.



Federal Soldiers Entrenched



Here Children are to be Found Occasionally in the Ranks.



Women and Children Move With the Troops. Being Served.

HAMILTON FYFE, a special correspondent for the London Times, who has been in Mexico for his paper, has written a book of his experiences and observations in the southern republic, "The Real Mexico." Just issued by McBride, Nast & Co. Here is what he thinks of the army of General Huerta:

In Vera Cruz as well as in the capital the press gang had been busy seizing men off the streets to be soldiers, so that the army might be brought up to something like its normal strength. It is because he is obliged to resort to such a method of recruiting that General Huerta has failed to make his position good. He showed his unwillingness to govern by not realizing that he could do nothing without a real army. It would have paid him to let the revolutionists alone for six months while he trained a certain number of troops with the help of American or European instructors and sergeants. Then he could have wiped out the rebel forces in one or two engagements, and the rest would have

melted away. Let me give an example of what happens now.

On a Sunday at the beginning of November—to be accurate, the second of the month—I was watching General Velasco's brigade entrain at Saltillo for Torreon. I asked the General if he meant to start that day. No, not that day. Very shortly, perhaps tomorrow. It made no difference that the troops were in their cars and in vans. They are accustomed to live in trains. Their wives are taken along, too, to act as army service corps. They would never be in a hurry to start. They enjoy the lazy side of soldiering, but they dislike fighting as much as they dislike work.

Torreon, the prosperous center of the cotton-growing district, was taken by the revolutionists in September. After denying for a week that it had fallen the War Office admitted the truth, but said that it would be retaken in a few days. For a month or so nothing happened. Then it was announced that "a blow would be struck."

General Velasco would start at once

and the rebels would be driven out of Torreon. The government had been urged to act vigorously, because in the cotton district a record crop was in need of being picked. They responded by putting a new tax on cotton "to meet the cost of warlike operations," and by doing—nothing.

For six weeks after I saw General Velasco's brigade in its five trains, Torreon remained in the hands of the rebels. The forces which were to retake it advanced and retreated, marched this way and matched that. General Velasco was frequently reported to be, not with his command, but in Saltillo. Not until December 10 was Torreon retaken, and then only because the rebels had drawn off and left the garrison very weak.

I have mentioned before the absence of any fire discipline. Large numbers of men do not even raise their rifles to the shoulder. They fire from the hip—into the air. They scarcely ever charge. They are never put through tactical exercises. Some of the regiments which are kept in the capital,

such as the Twenty-ninth, upon which the government confidently leans, have a few non-commissioned officers who understand their duties. Among the company officers there are some who know that everything is wrong. They do their best with their own men, but what are they among so many who neither know nor care?

The Mexican idea of making a soldier is to cram him into a uniform, give him a rifle and let him fight as best he can. Even if the men were willing to serve, this plan would be disastrous, seeing that most of them are Indians from the fields, very low in the intellectual scale. But when we consider that soldiering is looked down upon as disgraceful, that the federal ranks are recruited by the press gang, and that many criminals are turned out of prison into the army, we see at once what a tragic farce the civil war in Mexico is.

After the evacuation of Torreon by the federalists General Mungua was tried by a court of inquiry. The intention was to shoot him. This was his defense: "How could I meet the rebels

in the open?" he asked. "They fight in loose formation. I was obliged to keep my troops together. If I did not, they would melt away. Desertion is the idea uppermost in almost every soldier's mind. Again, how could I order my officers to lead their men to the attack? I knew their men would shoot them down as soon as they got the chance."

The best generals would find it hard to do anything with such an army as this until they had disciplined it and discovered a certain number of men whom they could trust. Mexican generals have unfortunately very little talent for war, and they make, as a rule, no attempt to "lick their men into shape." Officers in command are to our minds incredibly slack. At a small battle in the State of Morelos the federalists, by use of machine guns, forced the rebels to retire. The nature of the country made it easy for their retreat to be cut off. But the federal colonel looked at his watch.

"It is time for dinner," he said, and told his bugler to sound "Cease fire."

The rebels leisurely went away.

That kind of incident, which happens daily, helps to keep current the

belief that federal officers do not wish to bring the war to an end. They do not take soldiering seriously. At some sun trials near the capital the general's daughter came forward to fire a charge; then his wife was urged to show her courage; then his son must do likewise. It was more like an afternoon tea party than a serious piece of military business. Naturally when guns go into action they are handled very often without any effect. At Tuxpan, in the oil district, a bargeload of women and children left suddenly one afternoon for a safer spot. As the barges went down the river the Federal artillery opened fire across it. Shells could be seen exploding over federal positions. If the gunners did any harm at all, it was to their own side.

The Mexican army has no army service corps, no medical department to speak of. It carries no camp equipment, no supplies. Watch a field force break camp at dawn. First there go pattering off a horde of women laden with pots and pans, blankets, sometimes babies. These are the soldaderas, the camp followers, the commissariat of the force. That they move as quickly as they do is a miracle. Whatever the day's march may be they are al-

ways on the camping ground before the men arrive. They rig up shelters, they cook tortillas and frijoles, they make coffee. You see them mending their husbands' coats, washing their shirts, roughly tending flesh wounds. Without these soldaderas the army could not move. While President Huerta was seizing hundreds of men by night in the City of Mexico and other cities in order to swell his forces to 100,000, he also had women "pressed" to go with the new soldiers to take care of them. Crindas (maldivas) were positively afraid to go out after dark.

The stratagems of an active General like Villa, who is the best soldier the rebels have, are resented. He is not considered to be "playing the game." In a club one day a Mexican complained to me of the trick by which Juarez was taken as "shameful." Villa seized the railway, shamed his men into trains, forced the telegraph operators to announce these as freight trains and turned his troops out in the city before the authorities had any suspicion that they were on the way. "Shameful," my Mexican acquaintance declared. Another day I asked a Mexican war correspondent who had been present at a small fight whether the federal loss was heavy.

"Very," he said, and then, in horrified tone, added: "They killed a Colonel."

Breezy Suzanne - By Ellis Parker Butler.

Suzanne Discusses The Point Of View.

SAY, honest! ain't folks the limit? Believe me, girls, of all the human inhabitants of the earth I think people are the craziest group I ever saw! The wise guys started in to get rid of the horse in time, for an automobile can't laugh; but in about another year the horses would have got wise to what jokes you and me are, and every old truck animal would have sat down on his haunches and laughed its head off. I guess a lot of these wisehairs are behind a steel gas engine than behind a horse that is apt to turn around and give them the merry ha-ha just when they are torse-shell-glancing out some of that psycho-know-it-all stuff. A gas engine can't laugh, and if it does you can give it a jolt on the data wheel for wrench without getting the Society for the Prevention of Something after you.

What touched the match to my fuse? Well, our little old Society for the Prevention of Pinning Feathers on Snails is going to be a big hit. Mrs. De Guster and the Sunday Supplement Society dames are boosting it for all they are worth, and Perky is so busy taking subscription checks out of letters that he has to come to the office Sundays to make out his deposit slips. Algy wheels the money to the bank in a wheelbarrow every Monday morning. We're piling up a swell defense fund to hire two eminent helixologists to go to Africa and investigate the cruellest practices on the African snails. Are you wise? Perkins and Algy are the two eminences that will go, and if little rosy-tipped me can chloroform Perky and drag him into a marriage shop, I'm going alone. Ain't it a peach of a graft? And it was all little Suzanne's idea.

By this time next year we ought to have a hundred thousand plunks in the fund, and if I can cast the net over Perky I'll be upstairs in a swell hotel in Cairo (Egypt, not Illinois), dressing for dinner while Perky and Algy sit on the veranda with their toes on the railing, smoking real Egyptian cigarettes with a smell like a burning mummy, while some dark brown Arab rakes around in the desert and tries to find a real snail to write into the annual report. Once in a while we'll take a little sail up the Nile to see if any mean guy is pinning feathers on snails in the neighborhood of where we want to go. And all at the society's expense. But back up! I'm getting as wordy as J. Rockefeller before an investigating committee.

What I was going to give away to let the horses laugh at it was just this little old world the way it is. Say, do you know how the world is? It's a little bit of all right, ain't it? That's what you think, but you're dead wrong. You ought to have copped what a couple of real wise ones said about it yesterday.

I was sitting here at my desk, see? Perky and Algy had gone out to mail a bunch of sucker letters to a new lot of college professors they had just got wind of, and they wanted to get ten apiece for the society from them before the easy marks bought Nothing Doing copper stock or a suit length—minus one pants leg—of worsted goods. The man had amugged in and must let go at a bargain, and I was trying to decide whether I wanted lime, white or

tango red for my new suit, when in blew Jane Copps. Know her? She's a millitette or suffragant, or one of those things.

"Is this the headquarters of the Society for Prevention of Pinning Feathers on Snails?" she says. "Pay right here. Ten dollars, please."

"In a minute," she says. "But first I must tell you why I am with this movement heart and soul."

"I should worry!" I says. "The main thing is that you're with it and can cough ten dollars without pain."

"Not at all," she says. "My name is Jane Copps."

"Well, it's short and crisp, anyway," I says. "Sounds to me like a perfectly good name. Mine is Suzanne, but you can call me Bricktop if you want."

"You don't understand," she says. "I'm the Jane Copps, with the accent on the 'the.' I'm the celebrated Jane Copps."

"Gosh!" I says. "You don't mean it? And at that it won't cost you but ten to join the Society. To any one who is celebrated as you are the price ought to be fifteen, and it would be if I had ever heard of you; but it's ten."

"You are exceedingly rude, young lady," she says.

"Just breezy," I says. "I let the fresh air blow through my conversation. Did anybody give you the wrong tip about me? Who told you I was one of the moidy ones? Did you expect me to say 'Oh, dear! So you are the celebrated Jane Copps'?"

"Copps, not Coops," she says.

"Well, anyway, I don't see it that way," I says. "I don't know who you are, and so I don't say so. Get me? I'm a busy little lady and the only part of the paper I have time to read is the baseball page. You can't expect a girl with a head of crinkly hair like mine to have time to coif her head and keep track of all the mushroom celebrities that are newspapered into the limelight, can you?"

Geo. she gave me an ugly look! Know her? Of course I know her. She's the eugenic feminist, et cetera, lady. She's the one that's so strong on making better babies by measuring them under the arms with a tape measure every six days, or some dope like that. She's the one that wouldn't let anybody marry unless he and she could pass a jury composed of C. D. Gibson, Christy, Hamilton, Fisher, John L. Sullivan and Doc Murron. She wants to abolish department stores because Gladys O'Leary goes to dances after 8 o'clock P. M. with Dennis Flaherty. I don't get the connection, but it's something fierce, I bet. But she was getting mad, so I let her down easy. Ten dollars is ten dollars.

"Say, lady," I says, "excuse my little joke. I know who you are, but I'm jealous of any female that stands so far above her poor sister as you do."

"That's better!" she says. "That's more rational, but I can't see why an organization with dear Mrs. De Guster at its head employs any one so rude."

"Search me!" I said. "Sometimes I long for them to flit with the gentlemen members. Most of them think that five of their ten dollars is to pay for the right to chuck me under the chin. But you were saying—"

"I was saying that the reason I wish

to join this society is because I feel it a duty," she says. "I have given the world deep thought."

"Fine for the world!" I says. "If a few of the greater souls and larger minds did not give the world their attention I tremble to think of what would soon come to pass. Do you know whether the world goes?"

"I knowest not whether," I says. "Whither?"

"The world—meaning humanity and the human race—is going to ruin at a

breakneck pace," she says. "The world is worse today than at any time since the late but successful flood. Greed, commercialism, vice, rum, folly and carelessness are rampant as never before. Centuries of male government have brought the world to the verge of ruin and destruction. The outlook is pitch-black. Can you not see the Niagara-like current bearing us to ruin? Noneugenic marriages, rum power triumphant, monopoly chortling in its caves, the black night of misery ahead of us?"

"Maybe I can," I says. "But ain't it awful, Mabel?"

"My name is Jane," she says, not cracking a smile. "The outlook is pitch-black, and it is for that reason I am joining this society."

"Who?" I says.

"For centuries the world has been growing steadily worse. All thinking men and women can see it," she says, "and the only salvation is for all right-thinking people to put their shoulders to the wheel. Unless we do, I tremble to think of the future. That

is why I am joining this society. We must further every movement that tends to uplift the race or the worst will come."

"And the price of admission is only \$10. Thanks!" I says and put her money in the drawer. She paused on the way out.

"Jane Copps is the name," she says, "and if you need one of my photographs to publish it will be supplied free of cost."

Well, say! When she was gone I almost wept into the ink bottle. I was trying to ooze a tear when the door opened and in came a man with a face like a sunny egg. You know?

One of the kind that thinks it is his duty to smile at you, no matter how much you hate him. He came in with a glow of joy on his face like a coat of paint. He sprang for me and grabs my loose flipper in both hands.

"Ah, my dear, dear young person!" he gurgles. "How noble to see such a noble young person doing such noble work. It is a great work, it is a joyous work; it is an ennobling work! I come joyously to give my mite to the noble work!"

"Price ten dollars to one and all," I says.

"And would I could give millions!" he gurgles. "Yes, millions! The blessings of countless snails will rest upon your head, dear young person, if they do."

"They'll rest on a warm spot, if they do," I says.

"Ah, yes," he says, not stopping smiling long enough to smile. "And who can say the world is not growing better and better when young persons give their days to such noble causes?"

"Whoa up!" I says. "Ain't the world skidding into a future of pitchy black-ness?"

"What!" he gurgles. "Do you ask Callisthenes Baggs that question? My dear, dear young person, drive such thoughts from your mind. Have you not read the edition of the Gotham Whoop for last Sunday? Have you not read my article on 'Whither Tendest We?' My dear young person, the millennium is close at hand. It has passed but a moment around the corner to dust off its shoes with its pocket handkerchief before coming upon me—Look around you and then answer me—is not the world growing better day by day?"

I looked around.

"Same old world," I says.

"But better!" he exclaims. "Think of the dark ages! Think of the religious persecutions! Witches burned! The bath an annual event! Slavery! War! Rapine! Tyrants! Famine! Saragines! Ignorance! No cereal foods! How can you say 'The same old world'! Love and kindness and charity prevail today. The millennium it at hand."

"All right, grandpa, have it your way," I says.

"And therefore I join your worthy—most worthy—society," he says, beaming a 32-candlepower gleam at me. "It is our duty to join anything that will hasten the millennium—a millennium for men and women and children and snails!"

"Ten dollars, please," I says.

So he dug up the ten and beamed himself out. I should worry! A 400 listed,

of muddy water. Miller's big arms and body shielded the woman's face; smoke poured in, down, all about them—gray, greasy, strangling smoke.

"That blanket! That blanket!" cried Miller in a choking gasp. "There! Now, raise the shoulder! That's right! Now under—now over—so . . ."

Smash! smash. The door from the etherizing-room trembles, breaks, gives—sharp spurs of firemen's axes splinter it, shatter the lock—the door breaks down—two, three firemen stumble in, heads muffled, axes in gloved hands.

"Out! Out!" they roar dully. "Only chance is through de wino! Out here in de nex' room! Clear out!"

One seizes Miss Willett and carries her off bodily through the curling smoke. Benedict, shielding his head with his hands, rushes out wildly. Then comes a sudden dash of water all over Miller and the woman, as some other fireman got a line of hose up the ladder into the next room.

"Wait! Hold on!" yells Miller. "Turn that the other way!"

And gathering up in his strong arms, as if she had been a child, the unconscious woman who so haughtily him a coward, he bears her out of the now fiercely flaming place, through the window of the etherizing-room, down the awing, smoking ladder.

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Terror to Battleships.

(Rochester Democrat.)

John Hays Hammond, Jr., son of the famous mining engineer, appears to have inherited to a degree the talent of his distinguished father. The young man, although only 25 years of age, is credited with having perfected a boat which can be propelled, maneuvered and managed through the use of Hertzian waves, utilized in wireless telegraphy. At present the craft has a range of eight miles from the wireless station at Gloucester, Mass., and it would take the place of the most modern torpedo, and would greatly simplify the problem of coast defense. For in connection with range finders it would become a weapon with which the largest dreadnought could be annihilated.

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