

SHAKING HANDS WITH HUERTA IN THE MEXICAN CAPITAL



PHOTO BY H. J. THOMAS CO.

President Huerta, Decorating the Colors of his Bodyguard Regiment, the 99th Gen. Blanquet, Minister of War Standing by his side



Gamboa and President Huerta on Independence Day in Mexico



Huerta and two Friends

Paul Davis Tells of His Meeting with the Dictator and Gives His Impression of the "Last of the Big Indians."

When General Huerta issued an invitation a few months ago to American newspaper men to visit Mexico, one of those who accepted it was Paul Davis, author of this article. After being received by the Mexican executive, he continued his journey into the interior in order to see some of the fighting going on in the turbulent republic. He got to the front, saw battles and skirmishes, and finally landed in jail, where he remained some time, in imminent danger of being taken out and shot by his captors. Finally he regained his freedom, reached Vera Cruz, and got back to the United States. This article by him tells of his personal experiences with General Huerta.

By Raul Davis.

A MAN short and stocky, with squared shoulders, shoulders that have been loaded down but refuse to sag; a hard square chin and a mouth that snaps tight; nostrils that dilate as an Indian's should; and then eyes that peer, that search you out and bore through you—this was the man Don Victoriano Huerta as I saw him enter the national palace in Mexico City on an afternoon in March.

A Practical Man.

With three other Americans and half a dozen correspondents from Europe I had gone to Mexico on the provisional president's invitation to report on conditions in his country after one year of his administration. We had been in the capital 10 days and had seen public buildings and bull fights, reviews of the troops and ruins of Aztec temples. We had met fiery generals and cabinet ministers, doughty soldiers and dainty senators. And it was all very good.

But the man we wanted to meet was Huerta. For months he had been featured on the front page of every newspaper. He had been damned as an assassin and lauded as a patriot. Which ever he might be, there was no denying he had the punch. He had shot out of total obscurity when the spotlight discovered him standing on Madero's dead body at the end of that 10 days' fighting through the streets of Mexico. And the reason why he had emerged on top, and not some other politician or general, had become apparent. He has brains—practical, put-it-through brains. For a solid year he had held his own with all the diplomats of Europe and kept our state department standing on its head. He had made himself the mainspring and the whole works of this country, Villa excepted. So we wanted to meet Huerta.

Huerta Elusive.

But "the old man" is not too easy to meet. You can see him any day of the week. In spite of daily threats of assassination, he moves about the streets of Mexico at will, dines in pub-

cafes, mingles with the audience in the theatres, and altogether lives the most democratic life of any despot on record. It seems that our presentation to him was to be a formal occasion, and such things take time in Mexico. Finally our hints became more insistent, and at last the hour was appointed and we were escorted to the national palace.

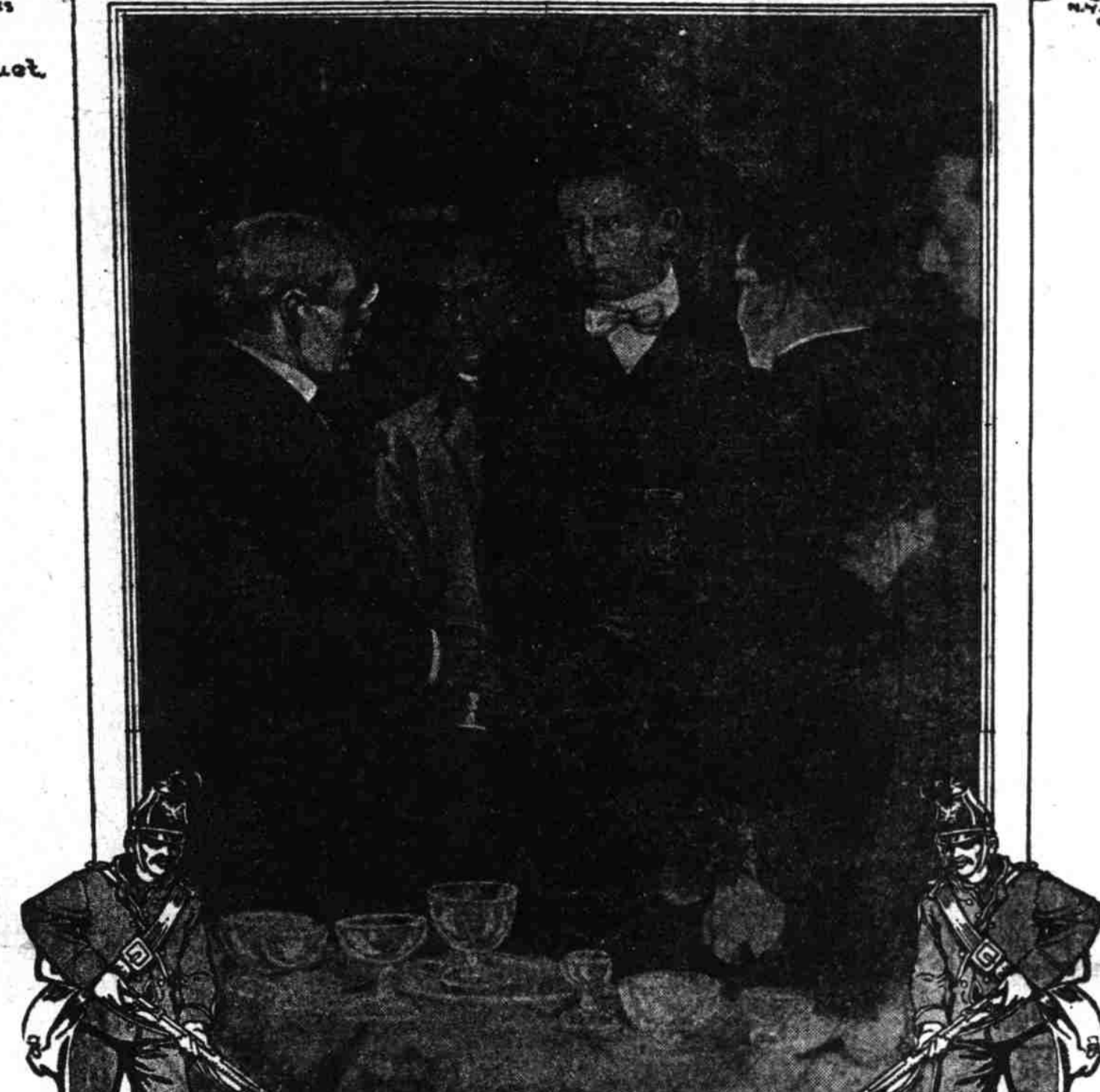
This palace is a relic of bygone days when Spanish emperors ruled over the land of the Aztecs. Most of its furnishings I found were relics, too musty with the atmosphere of a dead monarchy. Brown soldiers in the blue uniforms with red edgings of the Twenty-ninth regiment, the backbone of the army, guard the doors. Military aids, secretaries, state officials, and diplomats tread softly through its rooms and corridors holding whispered conferences behind their hands. Even the canopies and draperies seem to shroud secrets. It is all very impressive and mysterious. You feel you are getting tangled up in intrigues with Huerta squatting like an old spider in the center of things spinning the web.

An hour rolled by. At intervals we advanced from corridor to antechamber, to a reception room, and finally we were summoned to a state apartment. Here we endured another wait. Twenty correspondents chewed their pencils, heaving sighs of impatience with swords and fixings of their heavy dress uniforms, and then the double doors are thrown open, several secretaries and cabinet officers come in looking guilty as pallbearers and—enter Huerta.

Before he has taken three steps into the room everything has wakened up. He wears a little brown hat pulled down over his eyes. He has a touch of the rolling gait of a man who has spent most of his life in the saddle and plants his heels quick and hard. His manner shows we are there for business. The introductions are run through with in short order and he sizes each man up at a glance. He seat ourselves by his direction—he even hustles a few chairs—and, signing to his interpreter, he begins to talk.

An Excellent Talker

Two men have been pointed out to me as "the chap who writes Huerta's speeches for him." But nobody needs to write speeches for Huerta. He can speak for himself. He talks with careful emphasis and, to aid our weak Spanish, (most of mine is in my vest pocket dictionary), he enunciates with painstaking care. He hunts for just the right word, and when he catches it, if it tries to elude him he gives a little grunt of approbation that is tra-



President Huerta and Paul Davis, at a Toast at a Reception



President Huerta Receives Newspaper Men, Mr. Davis back at Huerta's left

ditionally Indian. As I sit almost at his knee he shoots a glance at me after each sentence and occasionally hangs them. "Understand?" I nod. "And how long will it take to rid the country of them?" I persisted. He had been bluffing a bit about the strength of his army. Now there was the glint of a laugh in his eye as he explained his answer must not be taken too seriously and he said: "How old is God?" We were at liberty to go anywhere through the country that we chose, he told us, promising that all our questions would be answered frankly, that military escorts would be provided if we wished to go to the front, and that he and the whole machinery of government were at our disposal. After this expansive invitation he led us to the banquet table and there corrected my pronunciation of "Salut!" the Spanish equivalent of "Here's luck!" to be pronounced over your cognac—cognac, not cocktails, begins every spread in Mexico.

Capacity for Brandy

Huerta drinks enough cognac to make any American's hair curl, but the stories of his drunken rampages are wild. It may be that he can't drink enough to bowl him over. His capacity for cognac is the admiration and despair of his followers. But no one ever sees him unsteady on his legs, or hears him talk with a thick tongue.

That his head has seldom been fairly fuddled during the past year and a half is proved by the fact that it is still on his shoulders. When Huerta took office on Madero's downfall, he could scarcely count on the support of any one in the republic. The people

were dazed by the volcanic eruption that had splintered the mountain of their government. Huerta kept men began to warm up to him and others were squeezed into an appearance of support. But the middle and lower classes hate and in whispers revile him. Two hundred thousand men have been impressed into his armies to be butchered in this desolating war. And the Mexicans see that it is his political fight, not theirs. They have nothing to gain, everything to lose. Even in the army among the officers trained in Chapultepec Academy, Mexico's West Point, hatred of Huerta has been growing, though fighting is the business of their lives. Sitting on gun-carriages at San Pedro waiting for the next assault of the rebels, three of these young officers told me at different times that their country was being driven to destruction.

And Huerta is the driver. He grabbed the reins of government and has held on like grim death. He seems to hypnotize his cabinet officers and all who come in contact with him, such is the force of his dominant personality. The fear of him has gone throughout the state. He has become more than a man to the imaginative Mexican. He is an evil jin whose eye sees in the dark and spies out treachery. This is why no assassin's bullet has yet found him. Several bold attempts have

His Rule of Fear Fast Ending—Drinks Heavily, But Is Rarely Intoxicated—Transacts Business in His Automobile.

been made on his life. Once in the Cafe Colona Roma a congressman walked up to his table and fired point-blank at him, having concealed his revolver in his napkin. Huerta was not scratched. Other plots have been laid to shoot him in the dark. But his very fearlessness protects him. Even today, when half Mexico City is waiting only for some one to lead the mob and drag him to his doom, no one has the courage to take the first step.

The first entry in the autobiography of Don Victoriano Huerta will read that he was born an Indian. And the last entry in that book should be: "He died an Indian." First, last and all the time, Huerta is an Indian. There are 15,000,000 people in Mexico. Twelve millions are Indians, nearly half of them full-blooded. Huerta is the last "big chief" the world will ever see.

In the Army Forty Years

He himself was trained in Chapultepec Academy. He was born of poor parents in a little village near Guadalupe, but he attracted the attention of some military men by his alertness and at 18 was sent to the military school where he was graduated from the engineer course with honors after seven years. For 40 years he progressed in the army step by step. Then suddenly he saw his chance to become the boss of the country and he jumped for it.

There are stories of the millions he has shipped abroad and placed in his private account in Paris. They would be hard to prove. Millions have been scarce in Mexico during the past two years. Most people believe that the old man wouldn't overlook a chance to get the coin, but he has been a frugal spender. He has a rainy-day fund in bills and gold to the extent of several hundred thousand dollars—no, the old man himself doesn't know how much—stored away in his safe.

He has little time to spend in riotous living. If he were playing the game for money alone he would have dropped out before this. Now at the first sign he makes of fading away the wolves will be hard after him. Huerta is greedy of power. He brooks no interference before him. He has a rival in Gen. Mondragon, a really capable military man, was minister of war during the first months of his administration. The war portfolio is the most ticklish in the cabinet. Huerta grew tired about Mondragon. He gave a banquet for him. When the time for the toasts arrived Huerta arose and announced that he was feeling very tired and would not make it plain. Mondragon was leaving for Paris tomorrow.

"Why—you mistake, your excellency," Mondragon protested. "I am not leaving for Paris."

"Yes, my dear general; yes, you are. An important mission," Huerta insisted.

"But I am not prepared," persisted the general, floundering for excuses. "I have no trunks, no—"

"Don't worry, I'll send your trunks," said Huerta. "I'll have them sent around 30 fat trunks to the Mondragon residence early next morning. Mondragon packed the trunks and Huerta went to the station and bade him an

all but tearful farewell. He likes Mondragon, but he likes to be sure of him.

"The old man" has had enough troubles abroad during his reign, but they have been nothing compared to his troubles at home. He not only has to use one eye, and occasionally a foot, for his cabinet, but he has to be on the job in every department all the time. And the worst of his troubles is money. How he has managed to squeeze through a year and a half with more credit out-of and the revolution growing bigger every day is a mystery even to the financiers closest to the throne. His creditors have been barking around him every day.

Once he called them all up to the palace, those with large accounts. They were shuffled from room to room and the gloom deepened. Finally "the old man" burst in on them. For 20 minutes he abused them for their greed. "Money!" he yelled. "You want money? Well, the government has money. There's And there's and from every pocket he pulled out handfuls of gold coin and threw it around the room. "Now, go home! And come back tomorrow. Kiss your families good-bye and come back to collect your bills."

The American automobile man who told me of this scene went back the next day. And he got his money, \$80,000. But "the old man" stuffed a lot of them out. There is no trick he is not ready to turn to to win.

One of the best things he does is to keep out of reach when he doesn't want some one to find him. And his official business is transacted in his limousine, and the limousine keeps moving. Almost every morning he drives out to Chapultepec park and, in the shadow of the old castle and the giant trees, he calls his chiefs into conference and lays down the law.

Face to face with him I could scarcely believe that he was over 60. His vitality is enormous. He is a two-handed talker, short, gripping hands they are, and he makes jabs with his fist to drive his point home. The thing that grows on you is the capacity of "the old man" for the street under the rifles of soldiers who have been broken to the wheel.

The days of despots in Mexico are probably numbered. What sort of despots Huerta would have proved had he got control is now beside the mark. He has played the game. He has not overlooked a trick. He is losing because the world is too strong for him. But he has made a great one-man fight, and stands out as one of the most fascinating figures that has ever stepped out on the world's stage to play a leading part.

WORLD'S CAPITAL CITY

From the Lincoln Star.
WHAT would you think of a world-wide battle for the location of a city, such as counties have been known to wage for the location of the county seat? Wouldn't such a battle be a corker?
There has recently been organized what is known by its membership and those who are privy to its purposes as the "World Conscience society," and its chief plan is the establishment of a city to be recognized as the capital of the world.
This project arises from the dreams of an artist, Hendrick Christian Anderson, an American-Scandinavian sculptor, who took up his residence in Rome. He has been assisted in his idealistic creation by some 40 sculptors, artists, engineers, architects and scientists. The aim is to create a city wherein all international activities are to have their home and inspiration.
The promoters of this dreamy project have published an elaborate volume giving the design in detail, and in reviewing it the monthly bulletin of the Pan-American union recently said:
"This proposed international city is to be a city of light, health, wide avenues, parks, playgrounds, fountains, lagoons and noble buildings. It is to be a city without slums, a city of efficiency, convenience and beauty. Not only in structure, plan and equipment will it be the ideal city, but it is intended to become the intellectual,

artistic and practical international capital of the world, a clearing house for the various social, cultural, scientific and political aspirations of humanity."

It matters not to the dreamers that the proposed city will cost in its building a hundred million. Nobody thinks of hundreds of millions since the Panama canal was built. As designed the city will cover some 10 square miles of ground, and its plans are so drawn that it can be built at almost any spot that is accessible to the sea.
The international committee of organization is to determine the site and location of the world's capital city. Among the places that have been mentioned are the Dutch coast near The Hague, the Riviera near Cannes, Tuurvuoren near Brussels, the Mar mora coast near Constantinople, the New Jersey coast near Lakewood, the isthmus of Panama and the island of Cuba. Many leaders in art, science, education and world politics in the various countries of the civilized world are taking an active interest in the project and the meeting of the international committee next year will create world-wide interest.

NEXT SUNDAY.

The fifth article by Kurt Aram in the series on Russia and Russia, entitled "Documents Which Uncover Official Crimes in Russia," will be published in THE SUNDAY JOURNAL next Sunday.

WORDS WE MISPRONOUNCE

From the Kansas City Star.
ARE either and neither pronounced "eether" and "neether" or "eyether" and "neyther"? This question, much disputed, is answered in favor of "eether" and "neether" by Julian W. Abernathy in a useful little book entitled "Correct Pronunciation." Not a single modern dictionary gives "eyether" the preference, says the little book, and goes on to quote Richard Grant White, who says "eyether" is an affection and a second-rate British affectation at that. Which should hold the "eyether" advocates for a while.
And now about the word vase. It's pronounced "vace," whether it comes from the 10-cent store or Tiffany's. "Vase" is wrong, says the book, and "vaws" is vulgar. Another tally for our old-fashioned folks.
Perhaps you've been confused by hearing people talk about "rice" and "finding out afterward that they meant the noun "rise." Well, they were wrong, too. A straw vote of the best modern dictionaries hands the preference to "rise" as the proper pronunciation.
Another word that is frequently mispronounced is depot. It should be "deppo," not "deppo" or "dsappa." Our old friend Jean Valjean, of course, is properly "Zahn Valzahn," and the great state of Kansas is pronounced as though the first s were a z. The folks who insist on making it soft are all to the bad.
J. Pierpont Morgan is a "Finnanser," not a "Fynanser."
The Renaissance is pronounced "ren-

esans," accent on the last syllable, not Renayans, and Salome gets her last syllable pronounced.
Poets are filled with the divine "aff-flayus," not the divine "affliatus."
The ruler of Japan is the mikado, with the accent on the second syllable, as all serious minded students of Gilbert and Sullivan know, and never the Mickadoo.
Gibberish is pronounced with a hard g, and not jiberlish, and the word flaccid is "flaksid," not "flacid." Amateur is "amatour," not "amatoor" or "amachoor."
The Antipodes—Australia, you know—are pronounced "antipodees."
When the winds howl through the branches it "sows," never "suffs."
A faucet is a "fawset," not a "faset."
These are only a few examples. The book contains 3000 words which are commonly mispronounced, and 800 proper names which are frequently improperly spoken. A little study of it will enable you to bowl out almost any one of your friends frequently, besides tending to improve your own vocabulary.
"Careless and slipshod enunciation among presumably cultured people," the author says, "is probably more common in the United States than in any other country in the world. A Frenchman is proud of his speech and treats it as a fine art, while an American regards his speech with indifference or contempt."
Probably he is right, as he is a Ph. D. and the author of a book on American literature.