

# IN CAMP WITH MEXICAN REBELS



A REBEL OUTPOST

THE junta at El Paso agreed that a visit to the camp of Colonel Torribio Ortega and an interview with that Constitutional command would be a very good thing for the cause. When it came to delivering a passport and letter which would take the party past outposts, that was another matter. They were willing to do it, but always tomorrow.

"If we let them guys manana us we'll never get there," commented Scotty. "They know they are going to give us those papers, but they hate to get down to work. There is only one way to make them get busy and I'm going to use it." "The only way" meant cheerful, patient, persistent attendance on the junta morning, noon and night until finally, late one evening, after the last promise to have it ready the following morning at "tahn o'clock" had been brushed aside, the passport was prepared with great mystery, duly sealed, elaborately addressed and ceremoniously handed over. Before the following daybreak the automobile was straddling down some of the best country road in the United States bound for somewhere around Guadalupe, a little town something like forty miles distant on the Mexican side.

Locke, the owner of the car, and Jim, the chauffeur, were in front. Locke held the wheel on the country road, but later Jim would take the gasoline bridge. Jim would have been the working mate of Kit Carson, old man Bridger or some of the other giants of pioneer days if he had been a man fifty years ago. Now he is a border chauffeur, able to drive a car any place a goat can climb and willing to go anywhere into the seething interior of Mexico for his price.

"This ought to be a cinch today," Jim said. "We'll get through a humming if we don't run into a bunch of Salazar's men from Juarez out scouting, and they're bad hombres, or some of Castillo's bandits. Spill out your passes and don't shove the wrong ones; let me do the talking."

About twenty-five miles east of El Paso the Rio Grande swings into the side of the country road and at the first turn two khaki-clad young cavalrymen with six-shooters strapped to the right hip stepped forth with uplifted hands. Uncle Sam is making an earnest effort to keep down the smuggling of contraband across the border and for that purpose has thrown his soldiers along the international boundary. Inasmuch as the soldiers not only have both factions of Mexicans against them, but the American business sentiment as well, the thing is somewhat in the nature of a farce.

These young cavalrymen, however, were doing their duty as best they could and they wanted to know who, what, where, etc. They were told, duly scrutinized an official pass from the military authorities and took a look through the automobile. Cartridges, like blessings, come and go unawares and they were not taking a chance. Just a little later at what was once an international bridge six more soldiers headed by a sergeant tumbled out of the underbrush and from under the abutments and cried "Halt!"

"Sorry, you know," said the sergeant crisply as he went through the car with the deftness of a customs inspector, "but we've got to do it. Have you an extra-morning paper with you? Hey, Murphy, I win that bet! Washington did trim the Athletics."

The river ceased at this point to be the international line because whenever the irrigation will let her have a little water she gets even by finding new channels, cutting across lots and slicing up territory to give a boundary commission a nice summer job. In this particular instance she had sliced into the United States a mile or more, which threw the line a mile or two on the south side of the river, in a low lying flat land, which occasional floods have filled with willows, cottonwoods and dense undergrowth. It is a great point for smugglers.

Just at the end of that mile the fairly good road ended abruptly. Shifting sand, overgrown trails and desolation succeeded. It was as if the car had been dropped suddenly into a far distant country, unsettled and practically unexplored.

Just a mile to the north there has been a hard scientific road passing through farm land brought to the highest point of development. The fields were fragrant with growing, flowering alfalfa, kafir corn, milo maize, fruits and melons. The houses were pretty bungalows or modern concrete dwellings. There were men at work in the fields and their mules and horses were sleek and well cared for. Windmills were drawing water from wells where the gasoline pump was not used. It was all happy, all busy, all prosperous.

Over here the country was stricken. Land just as good as any in the world lay fallow, overgrown with brush.

"We ought to pick up an outpost about now," called back Jim finally. "Look out!" As he spoke there came from the mesquite covered side of a mesa a single sharp detonating report and something sang by in the air above like a large humming top.

"Sit still unless it's one of the Castillo bunch," came the command; if it is, jump for the mesquite."

Around the edge of the mesa came a horseman with his pony on a dead run, a Winchester swung in one hand, his Mexican sombrero fluttering.

"Rebel" was the decision. "It's all right; get out the junta letter."

The outpost had said that the way to Ortega was straight ahead and turn to the left at a big



BAND OF MEXICAN REBELS



IN THE HOT BED OF REBELLION IN MEXICO

washout. He raced back to the position he had been in, and off to the right presently another man was seen signaling with a zarape. It was a friendly service, for thereafter there were no shots, although horsemen rode near to the automobile.

Guadalupe was once a town of about 1,500 inhabitants, a bustling, thriving little community with many characteristics borrowed from over the line. The principal street had several ambitious stores. There was a bank and a telegraph office and the houses of the better class were commodious, of plastered adobe, with patios filled with flower beds. The rooms in some cases were decorated and the furniture imported.

Ortega, commander of the thousand or so men, occupied what was once the principal dwelling of the town, a pretentious Spanish home.

This happened to be the day before Ortega broke camp, hoping to join Pancho Villa in an attempt to capture federal trains carrying 2,000,000 pesos and \$80,000 worth of provisions to Chihuahua. Therefore the camp presented a busy scene. The only person who did not seem to be concerned was Ortega himself, who was propped up on a cot reading a novel.

Ortega does not talk much. His answers that day were very brief. He was fighting for the constitution, which had been set aside by the Huerta government after the assassination of President Madero. He would fight until constitutional government was restored or he was killed.

Intervention? He did not fear it because he believed in the good faith of the United States. Mediation or arbitration? He would never consent to either. Arbitration or mediation, any dealings whatever with the administration of Huerta, would amount to a recognition of its status. That would never be done.

Peace was not impossible in Mexico, but could come in only one way, and that was the withdrawal of Huerta and his friends. A provisional president must be chosen according to the constitution, some man who had not connected himself with Huerta and had not connived at the assassination. Seek out the man who would have been president according to law if Madero and Suarez had died naturally and install him in office. If that were impossible, let Venustiano Carranza be president until an election could be held. Personally Ortega thought General Trevino or Dr. Gomez might do, but not Huerta or De la Barra or Diaz or any man of that kind.

He was well satisfied with the progress of the revolution. The Constitutionalists occupied and dominated the greater part of the country and the embargo on munitions of war were repealed they would drive the federals out of the field in ninety days. He had about 1,300 men, well armed, plenty of ammunition and plenty of food. He was to march away very soon to join Villa. What the plans were he could not say, but a decisive blow would be struck. He would say nothing further, and in the meantime dinner was ready.

Ortega's staff occupied the large house exclusively. His real staff consisted of about six men, but as is usual there were as many more honorary members. The honorary revolutionist is prevalent in Mexico. He is always to be seen until just before a battle, when he finds a mission for himself elsewhere.

There was plenty to eat at the dinner, meat,

rice, of course beans, tortillas, coffee with sugar and a particular kind of goat's milk cheese much fancied by the people. After it was over Ortega turned to an inspection of his arms and ammunition, of which he appeared to have a large supply, and after the interpreter had been induced to forego another oration an idea was gained of the life of the rebel.

It seemed a fairly comfortable one. There was plenty of food in sight, comfortable quarters and little military work. Where men were not taking siestas in the shade they were playing cards or gossiping in groups. They were all satisfied-looking and fat.

On all sides raw beef suspended in the air was drying for jerking.

"We are going to move tomorrow," said one youngster of six to Jim. "We will go straight to Juarez," and he spoke as if he had been promised a visit to a circus. Women who heard him called out what they would do when they got into the little frontier town.

One rebel came along and Jim stopped him. "Say, what are you fighting for?" he was asked.

"Two dollars a day," was the answer, and the soldier passed along.

"What are you fighting for?" the little mechanic captain was asked.

"There is a grievous wrong in my country and there will be no true progress until that wrong has been removed," was the answer. "It is the land system."

"All the land in Mexico is owned by a few families and 90 per cent of it is uncultivated. All of it is untaxed. Until it is possible for the working class to acquire land and until the land is made to bear its share of public expenditures there can be no relief."

"A Diaz might subjugate, but that time has passed. There will be anarchy unless the conditions are improved. Perhaps Carranza, our chief, who is a good man, will change it all when he gets in."

A messenger, hot and dusty, arrived from Villa, at Ascension, sixty miles away, toward dusk and was received with embraces. He brought the final commands of that general, who had been a patriot since he had ceased being a bandit.

Three days later the thousand and more men seen that day were either fleeing over the desert sands of Rancheria, 70 miles away, or were dead, wounded or prisoners awaiting summary execution. The plan had been that Ortega should strike the railway at a point toward Juarez and cut the line behind the treasure trains, while Villa, further south toward Chihuahua, should wreck his end.

Ortega and his men arrived on time, but Villa never moved. Trainloads of federal soldiers, with artillery and cavalry, were expecting them and cut them to pieces. Villa's failure to move is ascribed by him to lack of ammunition. It is only pointed out that the insurance man who had been refusing to touch anything shipped over a Mexican railroad for some time insured the treasure train at 12 1/2 per cent premium and made a lot of money. They seemed to know that Villa would not attack.

Juan Dosal, Villa's lieutenant, left his chief in disgust a day or so later. The incident only shows the uncertainty that exists even in the ranks of the revolutionists themselves.

## INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

### LESSON FOR OCTOBER 19.

#### REPORT OF THE SPIES.

LESSON TEXT—Numbers 13:1-3, 25-33. GOLDEN TEXT—"If God is for us, who is against us." Rom. 8:31.

Kadesh Barnea marks the place of the Israelites' first great defeat. Long and bitterly did they regret that day of unbelief and not till a new generation was reared did the nation as such enter into the land of promise. The act of that day was the culmination of a whole train of unbelief, and truly they chose death rather than life. (Josh. 24:15.)

I. The Spies. vv. 1-3. God had commanded Israel to possess the land, now as a precautionary measure they went about to "investigate." This act, which was not a part of God's program, but by divine permission, was a reflection upon God's word about the character of the land. (See v. 19.) The eternal questions of man are to know the why and the how. God told Moses to send these men as a concession to their lack of faith, but it cost Israel forty added years of exile. The inheritance prepared for the faithful are always conditioned upon obedience. (Heb. 11:8, etc.) This act, commanded by God at the request of the people, was a means, an opportunity, whereby they discovered themselves.

A True Type. II. The Majority Report, vv. 25-29. Though these spies spent forty days in conducting their investigation (a modern form of political graft), yet every step was a corroboration of God's word and the years of desolation which followed correspond to the number of days they were absent from the camp. The first or the affirmative part of their report was fine, but the negative was so exaggerated as to turn the twelve tribes to an act which amounted to a catastrophe. This land and this report is such a true type of our Christian experience. They brought back the evidence of the truth of God's description of the land (Ex. 13:5 and Deut. 8:7-10) which was to be for them a resting place after their wilderness journey (Heb. 3:8-11, 14 and 4:8, 9). But these spies had seen other things, things to discourage, viz., men, strong men, entrenched men (v. 28). They saw those tribes God had said they would find (Ex. 13:5). They not only saw all of this but, like all unbelievers, they magnified their enemies. Today we see evil entrenched behind special privilege, we see the forces of evil that appear to us as giants and unbelief cries out, "Who is sufficient?"

III. The Minority Report, vv. 30-33. Majorities may rule but minorities are more frequently right, witness history. A great cry of despair (Ch. 14:1) greeted this report. Caleb still the people (v. 30) that they might get the other side of the story. His report agreed with the majority as to the desirability of possessing the land; indeed, we surmise it was Caleb and Joshua who brought their evidence with them (v. 23). Their report differed, however, in its conclusion. To the picture of the strength of those scattered throughout the land Caleb bluntly replied, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Cf. Rom. 8:37; Phil. 4:19.) Ten men looked upon man, the two saw behind man, God, a God who was able. The ten lost their lives even as they feared, whereas Caleb and Joshua lived to enjoy the fruits of their vision of faith. (Ch. 14:6-9, Josh. 15:14.) Unbelief cries, "We be not able," of course not, for "vain is the help of man," but belief, seeing God, in the words of Caleb cries out for immediate action. "Unbelief shuts itself out of promised blessings (Heb. 3:19); it always has and is still so doing. Unbelief exaggerates and contradicts.

Must Consider Entire Story. IV. The Sequel, Ch. 14. No teacher can properly present this lesson without considering the entire story. The amazed people (14:1-4); the solemn protest of Joshua and Caleb (vv. 6-11) was met with threatened death and God interviewed to protect his faithful ones (Ps. 34:7). The unkindled anger of Jehovah (v. 11, 12) is met by that magnificent revelation of the beauty and strength of the character of Moses (vv. 13-19). He based his appeal upon the necessity of maintaining the honor of God's word and pleading for mercy and compassion. This appeal was answered by a gracious pardon for the people, but with it came a declaration that discipline was necessary.

We must remember that these Israelites had the benefit of the full revelation of the law, yet we see its insufficiency in producing a perfect character. Laws will not cure the ills of the body politic. Sinning men must enter into that fellowship with God that is the result of a life of obedience ere they can enter that delectable land of peace, plenty and power which lies before them. Failing in a knowledge of him and his resources, difficulties are magnified and our strength is minimized. To view people as giants and ourselves as grasshoppers is to court defeat.

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Doesn't Speak Well of Him. "Why did the last man who roomed here leave?" asked the would-be lodger.

"I told him to go," answered the landlady. "And I don't want any more roomers like him. He should be living in a pig pen."

"Rather careless, eh?"

"Careless is altogether too mild a word, sir. I'm not flincky, because I can't afford to be, but I give you my word that I never put but one thing in his room that stayed clean."

"What was that?"

"His towel."

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