

LACK OF FEDERAL COMMANDERS CAUSED FALL OF TORREON

'Sun's' Staff Correspondent Who Entered Torreon With Villa's Advance Guard, Tells Vivid Story of Big Battle

GREAT BRITAIN TO PROTECT SPANISH RESIDENTS IN MEXICO

First Trainload of Torreon Residents Expelled by Villa Reaches Border--Rebels Begin New Attack on Tampico--Mexico City Has Not Heard of It

(From THE SUN'S Staff correspondent with Villa's Army.)

El Paso, April 7.—Torreon fell for what is surely the oldest reason in Latin American history—an inadequate supply of Generals. Certainly there were other contributory causes, such as the Constitutional attacks and the perille fortifications, but if the Federal stock of Generals had not given out the troops could have been forced to further fighting. And when his second attack failed at Gomez Palacio, and especially at Torreon, Pancho Villa was very nearly a badly beaten man, though his army was not demoralized.

This statement and those which follow are made from personal observation. I left Chihuahua on March 16 in a freight car on one of the trains in which Villa mobilized his army, was in all of the camps and saw the failure of the attacks on Gomez Palacio and Torreon. I was among the first to enter Torreon and with the first to leave after the evacuation. Owing to an absolute embargo on wire communication, only lifted for a moment after a battle, and censorship of a sort that made it impossible to send news or tell what would happen in the way of additions and subtractions to news which had apparently passed the censor, the facts could only be told after arrival in the United States, which I reached at the earliest possible moment after the Federals evacuated Torreon. That Villa was mistaken in this censorship is obvious, and I tried to explain to him that real news would help his cause and wild unfounded rumors hurt it. But he had made up his mind, and obstinacy has no better exponent than Gen. Villa.

Train Stops for Execution.

The campaign started and came to a close in a typical manner. As the luxurious "side door pullman" of the correspondents passed down from Chihuahua, Villa, in a brown sack suit, mused with yesterday's pushing refractory horses into stock cars, stood among a group of officers and hangers-on draining a bottle of pop. On the way to Torreon in a train of wounded and prisoners we stopped at Rabinza, where Huerta defeated Orozco and made his reputation. A captain hurried into the car, picked up his rifle-officers in the Constitutional army carry rifles--threw some cartridges into the magazine, and hurrying out said, "Colorados." I followed, thinking that some band might be trying to raid the train.

There was a little knot of men in front of one of the cars of prisoners, and in their midst four men, three young and one old. The young men were silent, or if they attempted to speak were silenced. The old man was trying to explain. No one else was excited, for everything seemed a foregone conclusion. After a few minutes the old chap was allowed to climb back into the car with the other prisoners. At first he cornered aid, but was finally helped in. Then the group with the three prisoners in the middle straggled informally across the peaceful, sunny desert to the bed of a dry watercourse. The prisoners walked with the crowd, seeming a part of it, and with neither apparent dread nor anticipation. They climbed down the banks and stood safely a moment. Several shots were fired, more or less at once, the guns within inches of the victims. There were other shots afterward, whoever wished firing at the bodies. Then the crowd drifted back to the train, the conductor crying, "Vamonos," and the engineer tooting the whistle to hurry the laggards.

It was all matter of fact, almost casual and utterly revolting. The men were said to be "Colorados," or volunteers depending as regulars. The blood-red is strong in the Mexican and he likes to shoot. A troop train passing through the country, or town for that matter, is like a perambulating Fourth of July celebration. The soldiers snipe at cattle or horses, jackrabbits or insulators on the telegraph poles. Once one of these was hit and the army was without communication with its base for some hours and raids by "Colorados" or "Orozcoistas" were rumored on both sides of the break.

Army in Camp at Yermo.

At Yermo the army detoured and seemed to disappear into the wide, flat valley between the mountain walls. Each command picked some unoccupied place and each man or little group did the same. There was neither order nor disorder. The individual simply was left to care for himself and was amply able to do so. A serape hung on a mesquite bush was the utmost in the way of a tent, except two or three small affairs for some general's headquarters. Horses were hobbled or picketed, little fires started and the indi-

dual members of the army were camping out.

Why there are no epidemics in Mexican armies is to civilized man a marvel. There is no sanitation, cattle are slaughtered at the point most convenient, heads, entrails and nondescript fragments lie about, and even with the sun, the wonderful dry air of this high country and the wide scattering of the troops in camp, any sojourn in one place would, it seems, of necessity bring disease, for when I passed through the camp sites on my way north the odor of decay still hung about them. There was little else to mark the sites, for the Mexican camp leaves little litter and what there is is spread over an unbelievably wide area.

From Yermo the army marched to Conojos, the definite concentration camp. Here Villa joined the troops. Conojos possesses a burned station, a water tank and the name. Here was the same collection of little groups, each rolling its own tortillas on oil tins with beer bottles, hanging strips of meat on the thorny bushes to jerk it, and betraying interest only when a rabbit strayed into camp or some "pitching" horse proved too much for its rider.

Railroad Track Torn Up.

The railroad beyond Conojos was torn up, and I left the cars to go forward with the construction train. The Federals in retreating had torn up the track in a most amateurish fashion, merely loosening the ties, drawing spikes from the rails and burning the bridges. Most of the rails and ties could be used again and for the bridges piles of fresh ties were substituted. By the light of fires and lanterns the work progressed wonderfully fast. Calzado, new superintendent of railroads, was throughout the campaign most efficient. A soldadera family, women, children, dogs and poultry, all camped on a flat car or the beams under it, furnished supper of flour tortillas tough as leather and less appetizing, and a flat car on which a gun was mounted gave some space to sleep as well as the cold allowed.

In the morning a walk brought me to Bermello, where the first skirmish had been fought. There were no Federal wounded or prisoners, but some of the dead lay unburied. They wore the rurales uniform and some showed the effect of the expanding bullet fired at short range. On one side of the head a small hole, the other side gaping and the brains literally blown out from the skull.

Here, for a moment, the embargo on news was raised.

After a day's rest Villa, with his main force of some nine thousand men, columns having been detached to operate east and west, marched to San Carlos, five miles away, where the advance guard lay. This march, and in the afternoon when the whole army was flung out in a single line of horsemen sweeping across the country with flags flying and great columns of dust towering above them in the sunlight, furnished the most magnificent, almost the only magnificent spectacle of the campaign. The rest held none of the glamour of war, none of the romance and all its horrors. The entire fighting was like a bar room brawl, bloody with no gleam of science to relieve its sordidness.

Women, Children and Dogs in Car.

For a time the train kept even with the troops, then a bad break in the line followed by others stopped all progress, and when night came we could hear the fight at Gomez begin. That night I slept with another correspondent and photographers, babes in the woods, without canteens or blankets, who shared ours without thanks and with the result that all of us half froze in an armored car inhabited by several soldaderas, their children and innumerable dogs.

One of the little Chihuahua dogs had a family which, when it grew bitter cold, she abandoned for the warmth of some one's blankets, and the forsaken puppies, still blind, crawled about whimpering in search of comfort. With every whimper the mother would howl as if her heart were breaking, but made no effort to collect her offspring and warm them. The women and children slept peacefully, and only after great efforts could be roused to collect and quiet the dogs. The puppies, the size of mice, had crawled everywhere, the last being located in the sleeve of a sleeping child.

In the luminous dawn we started toward the front, where there was still sporadic firing. The wounded and stragglers were beginning to come in. As the battle must from the rear, it looked like defeat. Practically all Villa's forces are mounted, and the wounded rode back two on a horse, the stronger supporting his comrade, or if less badly wounded alone; some few on foot, half carried by comrades. But of all the wounded I saw only one who groaned or gave any voluntary sign of pain. Their fortitude was marvellous. One little chap, who could not have been more than 12, came in alone on his horse, his rifle across the horn of the saddle, his grip gripped to keep from falling. He was shot twice through the body, but sat bolt upright and made no sound.

Fighting Renewed at Sunart.

Just after sunset the battle commenced anew with vigor. I reached the artillery position. The country before Gomez Palacio is absolutely flat, either open fields or covered with sparse scrub. One of the American gunners told me that the night had been spent wandering from position to position, and after dark took were only less surprising than their abandonment of them. In the second attack little progress was made on the right, but both centre and left fought their way to the middle early and the advance of Villa's forces was



ON THE WAY TO TORREON--THE SUN'S CORRESPONDENT WAS ON THIS TRAIN, AHEAD OF VILLA'S ARMY.

checked only some hundred and fifty yards from the Federal headquarters. For the first time the Constitutional artillery shelled the city and was used at night. As examination showed subsequently little damage was done. The Constitutionalists reached the light plant early and the city was in darkness except for the flash of hand bombs.

Americans Volunteer for Attack.

This attack was driven back and morning found Villa's men but little advanced beyond their previous positions. Villa himself was anxious, and no attack was ordered for the day or evening. The Americans, of whom there were eight in the artillery, volunteered for the attack on Calbasas. They say that when they reached the summit both sides fraternized, exchanging guns and cigarettes.

Entire Army in Second Attack.

The second attack on Gomez was made, as the first had been, at night. Villa, for this attack had assembled all his troops, the detachments sent east and west having effected a junction and a body under Gen. Contreras and some of Urbino's men having come in. The heaviest attack was made on the left, and the outskirts of the city fell to the rebel forces. The firing was heavy, the Federal volleys being distinguishable from the Constitutional individual firing.

Federals Eager to Desert.

After the second attack there was not a Federal General unwounded. The troops were unwilling to fight longer and many wished to join the Constitutionalists. A nine-year-old girl, daughter of a soldadera attached to the Forty-fourth Federal Regiment, came under heavy fire into the Constitutionalist lines to ask help for her mother, who had been hit. One of the correspondents crossed to the house where the mother lay and found her dead. The daughter stated that the night before a party of the Forty-fourth Regiment wanted to join the Constitutionalists, but the rest refused, and this led to the loyalist winning.

No Rejoicing Over Victory.

After Gomez Palacio fell there was no visible enthusiasm among the troops. Villa's worried look passed away, however, and he became boyishly genial again. The only enthusiasm saw in all the campaign was in the headquarters car when the news of the fight from the Federal side was brought in. A list of two Generals killed and one said to be mortally wounded created quite a bit of interest, and when the death of Col. Huerta, said to be son of the provisional President, was announced the officers congratulated me on my saying "Gringo; comportsal" and sometimes holding a cocked and loaded rifle unbecomingly near by stomach while I explained that I was in a hurry.

with mattresses of bedding on the floor. Torreon was little damaged by the bombardment and fighting, but this does not mean that the fighting was not severe. Villa told me that the Federals had lost 2,000 men at least in the campaign, more than half killed or prisoners. My own estimate based on the best data I could get would be considerably smaller. Villa's losses were in the neighborhood of some 1,200 wounded and 600 killed, most of them in the fights at Torreon and Gomez Palacio. The Federals had about 7,000, Villa about 15,000 men.

READY FOR TORREON ATTACK.

Velasco's Army Reported on Way Back With Reinforcements. El Paso, April 7.—Messages from three separate sources in Mexico city, each independent of the other and each confirmed by the other, were received in El Paso today by prominent Federal sympathizers and officials stating that the Federal forces comprising the recent garrison at Torreon had concentrated near Torreon, reinforced by Gen. Javar de Moore and Masses, and were returning to make a combined assault upon the city.

That, it was explained, was the reason for the contention in Mexico city that Torreon had never been taken. It was said that when the reinforcements failed to reach Gen. Velasco he retired from the city to await their arrival, but meanwhile prepared to repel with a much larger force, and for this reason the Mexican War Department does not consider the city as taken until another battle is fought.

REBELS CONCENTRATE FOR NEW ATTACK ON PORT.

Special Cable Dispatch to THE SUN. TORREON, April 7.—Donacostilla and Arbol Grande, two suburbs of Tampico, were captured by rebels after all day fighting yesterday. The gunboat Vera Cruz in Tamulipas River has left the rebels under hot fire and prevented them from making a general attack or concentrating their forces.

TAMPICO QUIET, SAYS HUERTA.

Mexican Government Still Denies Fall of Torreon. Special Cable Dispatch to THE SUN. MEXICO CITY, April 7.—Rebels attacked Tampico yesterday and again today, but were repulsed and the city is now quiet, according to reports received here today. The Government has had a translation made of Col. George Harvey's article in the North American Review appealing to President Wilson to admit that he made a mistake in his attitude toward Mexico and urging him to recognize the Huerta Government as the strongest one possible under the circumstances. Ten thousand copies of the article will be distributed.

BRITAIN TO ACT FOR SPAIN.

Will Protect Tampico Residents in Case of Disturbances. WASHINGTON, April 7.—Rear Admiral Mayo, commanding the American naval vessels at Tampico, Mexico, reported to the Navy Department today that he had been informed by the commanding officer of the British cruiser Hermione that the British commander has instructions to care for Spanish subjects in the event of any disturbance at Tampico. This report was regarded here as significant of the attitude of the Spanish Government toward the United States in regard to the Mexican situation. It has been known for a long time that Spain feels very deeply the fact that hundreds of her citizens have been killed or deported and their properties confiscated in northern Mexico and the Spanish Govern-

CARRANZA WONT INTERFERE.

Carother's Appeal in Behalf of Spaniards of No Avail. El Paso, April 7.—George C. Carother, special representative of the United States State Department, who returned from Torreon last night, made representations to Carranza today on behalf of the United States relative to the expulsion of the Spaniards. He is said to have been called to the border by Secretary Bryan for the special purpose of taking up this matter with Carranza. It is understood that Carranza told him frankly that the expulsions would not stop.

THE BRAIDED CUTAWAY COAT AND VEST

Saks braided cutaways this Spring are superb examples of fine workmanship, immaculately cut and beautifully tailored.

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"The Envoy" \$7

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It is a Saks-Banister shoe, in tan, mahogany and black Russia calf, with broad shank and flat heels, and is one of the smartest Banister models.

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Broadway at 34th Street.

soon arrive for the rebels and that they will bring artillery.

The Spanish cruiser Carlos V. is preparing to sail tonight for Tampico and other warships will probably depart tomorrow if the attacks on that port continue.

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The Government continues to deny that Torreon has fallen. Its claim seems to be that Gen. Refugio Velasco moved out of Torreon to more strategic positions and that with the arrival of reinforcements the Federals now have the rebels cut off from their communications to the north.

Major Arce, who arrived here tonight from Torreon, declares that when he left that city last Friday the fighting was furious. Up to that time Gen. Velasco had made a firm stand and repulsed all the rebel attacks. Major Arce says Gen. Urbina led the rebel attack from the west. The Federals sallied out and captured him and he was afterward executed.

Dr. E. P. Ryan, an American Red Cross surgeon, and Major von Popper, a German officer, left for Torreon tonight.

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ment and its representatives have been inclined to blame the United States for the conditions in Mexico which has resulted in the persecution of Spaniards.

Heretofore Spain has looked to the United States for assistance and protection in its subjects wherever it was not in a position to care for them itself. This is still the case in northern Mexico, where Villa and Carranza are in control, and is more so less inevitable, as the United States is the only nation having many representatives in rebel territory.

At Tampico, however, the United States is not the only nation having warships on the scene ready to look out for the interests of foreigners. Great Britain and Germany also have naval vessels for the emergency expected in the event of another attack on the city, by the rebels or by the Spaniards.

That Spain should have turned from the United States to Great Britain on the first occasion it has had the opportunity to exercise a choice is regarded as a clear indication of only its preference in the matter but also that it does not recognize the United States as the only Power capable of acting in Mexico.

As a matter of fact all that the United States has done for Spaniards in Mexico has been to intercede with the rebel authorities on their behalf. In the case of the Spaniards expelled from Chihuahua by Villa the efforts of the United States resulted only in the statement from Villa that he knew these Spaniards to have been aiding the enemy.

There was no attempt to go behind the statement and the situation of the Spaniards was not at all relieved. Similarly a promise from Villa that at Torreon he would expel only those Spaniards who had been helping the Huerta Government was accepted by the State Department, though elsewhere it is recognized that in interpreting this promise Villa is both judge and jury.

At present it is reported that all Spaniards have been ordered from Torreon by Villa and their properties confiscated, but as the State Department has no confirmation of these reports no action has been taken.

It now seems likely if Villa actually issued such an order, that the deportation will be made effective before the United States acts.

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