

CORN FAMINE CONFRONTS ALL OF HUNGRY MEXICO

Crop Only Two-fifths Normal, Importations Difficult and People Have No Money to Buy—Graft, Seizures and Destruction Denude the Land.

The sixth article on conditions in Mexico since Carranza assumed control. By Mark S. Watson, special investigator of THE SUN and Chicago Tribune.

By MARK S. WATSON.
With enormous quantities of admirable agricultural land and an ample quantity available for cultivation without expensive irrigation work, Mexico has never approached an adequate development.

No evidence of its backwardness is needed further than to mention that it always has been an importer even of corn, which constitutes the principal food base of the population and which is easily grown if serious effort is made to grow it.

To the shortage of normal times is now added the shortage due to the extraordinary conditions of recent years. To the want which is ordinarily experienced by the consumer who has to buy from outside is added a want the direr by reason of many factors—the unusual domestic shortage, the difficulty of getting such grain as there is into the cities, transportation being so execrable, and the high price of imported grain in a year when the United States is called to divert its excess to other channels.

Mexico has never had an adequate crop report system, and accurate figures are impossible. Estimates, however, have been made up from the first hand reports of reliable men in various sections of the republic, and these figures bring one to the dismaying realization that in only five States of the republic was the 1915 crop anywhere near normal, or anywhere near sufficient to support the communities through the non-producing period.

These are the States of Oaxaca, Morelos, Campeche, Tabasco and Chiapas, the last four being only small producers anyway. Oaxaca is a producer of only the second magnitude, its normal crop running about 4,000,000 bushels of corn. The big producers are Jalisco, which normally grows 20,000,000 bushels, and Guanajuato and Michoacan, which normally grow 15,000,000 bushels each, and from these three States there was obtained in 1915 a total of 18,000,000 bushels, or a little more than a third of normal.

Total Crop Two-fifths Normal.
The Federal district—which politically corresponds with the District of Columbia—containing 700,000 consumers within its small confines, grew not more than a fourth of its normal crop of 1,600,000 bushels, and to make matters worse was for weeks unable to obtain as much as a carload (150 kilow) from outside. Altogether not much more than 65,000,000 bushels was grown, against a normal crop of 130,000,000.

The crop reports contain mention of the causes of shortage and in many States the drought was fully 50 per cent. responsible. Insects played a minor role. The revolution did the rest and by many ways.

For a long time the farmer who has ploughed and harrowed and sown and cultivated and brought his crop up to harvest time has then been visited by an army. Whether it was a Government army or a rebel army made no difference. With the firm impartiality which marks the Mexican patriot everything in sight was taken. If the farmer had his grain already in sacks the looting was so much the easier.

If it was still standing the horses were turned loose to eat and trample, and to make the job complete a torch occasionally was applied. Let it be said for the patriots, however, that so far as known they never appropriated a standing crop and did the harvesting themselves. That would have required work, and work and patriotism in Mexico are entirely incompatible. The farmer was allowed to do the work if any was to be done and then the appropriation began.

The farmer who has gone through this experience once or twice is not disposed to do the harvesting. He is not even disposed to do as planting as seed costs money. From the very outset the possibilities for large crops have been faint.

If any one thinks the seizures of grain have been due entirely to the immediate consumption needs of the army it is time to abandon that idea. A close second has been the greed of the commanders, who have held the corn as their personal property, to be sold at high prices, or to be held for higher prices. The pay of the Mexican soldier is not high, and if one is going to be a patriot he might as well make sure of some reward other than abstract virtues. Hence the seizures, and hence the high prices.

Carranza Hits Price Killing.
Gen. Carranza has laid great stress on the way in which the prices of foodstuffs are controlled, and it is every reason to believe he is sincere. In his own State of Coahuila the prices cannot be called exorbitant, all considered. But in the Federal district, controlled by his immediate subordinates, the prices have been, are and will continue to be exorbitant.

well, but casual inquiry has not uncovered any great number of philanthropists disposed to donate a few million bushels.

How Can They Buy Corn?
How Mexico is to buy corn is hard to say when money is so scarce—real money. The mills with which every General is equipped for the grinding out of a few bushels of paper can continue to work, but 8 or 7 cents at all these prices are worth, and a discount of 25 per cent. is rather heavy, even for a starving man, to pay.

Just one percent would tend to check, without use of force, the continued ruin of agriculture. That would be the bringing home to the military chiefs of the situation and the interest in determining that cannot be done. With exceptions which can be numbered on one's fingers the chiefs are irresponsible, without mental capacity or moral qualities. The only argument which will appeal to force, and the uniform opinion in Mexico, among the enlightened, is that force must be eventually applied either from Mexico—or from without.

Corn has been mentioned at length because corn is the great commodity, taking the place of wheat in the United States or Europe. In some measure exactly the same could be said of other crops except in the sections which have not been so hard hit by revolution as the corn country.

Yucatan, for example, has not suffered seriously, mainly because of the geographical position of the peninsula country. The Yucates is in many ways superior to the central or northern Mexican. He is famous for his cleanliness, which is something.

How Our Man Was Robbed.
One of the earliest reforms instituted was the re-opening of many settled legal cases, involving large estates, so that the estates could be seized or appropriated at small money. The papers recently mentioned the forced sale by a proved title holder of twelve years standing of property worth half a million to 500,000 pesos of 20 cents each. The Constitutional court allowed him "no loss, senior, whatever," directing sale at 1,500,000 of the present pesos, worth 4 or 7 cents. This man, whose only offense was that he was wealthy, was deliberately and officially robbed of 85 per cent. of his holdings.

Another reform was the expulsion of priests, culminating in the encouragement of a mob to the extent of raiding the beautiful cathedral, smashing of pictures, marionettes and firing of the batteries. To-day just three Merida churches are allowed to remain open, and for one hour a day and without priests. Even in distant places, where rebellion was not even considered, the Constitutional patriots have wallowed in destruction, theft, murder and tyranny.

With the spring planting comes the need for seed. The effect of the coming starvation period will be checked. If the raids of the armies continue there is no great reason for expecting the Mexican farmer to plant heavily. And if he does not plant heavily he will not reap heavily, and still another year of starvation will follow. The cost of seed itself, with present inflated values, is something which must be considered. The farmer must use seed worth 60 cents a bushel to produce a crop, say 25 fold, which may not be worth anywhere near 60 cents a bushel.

If the oldest of the revolution is to reduce the Mexican problem by reducing the population through the starvation process the revolution is a glorious success already.

RUTH ST. DENIS TO GIVE DANCE OF EAST SIDE
Many Other Features at Benefit for Boys Club Fund To-night.

"The Dance of the East Side," created by Ruth St. Denis last week, will be seen for the first time this evening at the benefit performance Miss St. Denis and her company will give at the Candler Theatre for the Boys Club Association in its campaign for \$500,000. Her dancing partner will be Sammy Aides, 14 years old, discovered by Miss St. Denis when she was the guest of the Boys Club of Avenue A last week.

Included in Miss St. Denis's programme will be the Peacock Indian legend dance, a ballet Egyptian, a Japanese dance and the "Hatha," a mystic dance of the five senses. Ted Snaawa, her dancing partner, and the others of the company will appear in the nature series. Mr. Snaawa and Miss St. Denis will give an ancient dance and he will interpret a rhythmic study of the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Thirty-fourth Street

Women's Tailored Suits

in an unusual assemblage of smart models for Travel, Sports and Skating wear, are shown in the Department on the Third Floor at very moderate prices.

FUR-TRIMMED SKATING SUITS will be on sale to-morrow at special prices.
Also a selected number of **TRAVEL AND SKATING SUITS** at the interesting price of \$18.50

An Important Offering of Reversible Velour Portieres

(custom-made in workrooms in the establishment)

will take place on the Fourth Floor Monday and Tuesday. These Portieres are 8 feet in length, finished with French open edge, and made of excellent-quality velour in the wanted colors (among which are blue, brown, fawn, etc.) and color combinations. They will be marked at the extraordinarily low price of \$15.00 per pair

The scarcity of dyes for the coming season invests this Sale with unprecedented interest.

A Remarkable Sale of Summer Dress Cottons

will be held to-morrow and Tuesday, when a large quantity of Embroidered and other Fancy Cotton Fabrics (many in exclusive styles and all eminently desirable) will be offered, arranged in Dress Lengths, at prices ranging from \$2.45 to \$8.50 per Length

being considerably less than the figures usually quoted for Cotton Fabrics of these superior qualities.

Advance Assortments of Woolen Dress Fabrics

just received from the leading foreign and home manufacturers, are now being specially featured. Among the new textiles shown, many of which have received the cachet of approval from the style arbiters of Paris, are Jerseyette, Gabardine, Silk-faced Duvetyn in the fashionable vivid colors; Checked Velours, and a large variety of Black-and-white effects in checks and stripes.

Homespuns, Cheviots and Wool Jerseys for Sports Suits and Coats

A Special Offering for to-morrow will consist of Several Thousand Yards of

Fine Tailor Serge

54 inches wide, in navy blues and black, quite exceptionally priced at \$1.15 per yard

FIFTH AVENUE - MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE 7000 MURRAY HILL
Thirty-fifth Street

An Extraordinary Sale of Girls' & Children's Washable Garments

for to-morrow and Tuesday, will be an occasion of more than ordinary interest in the respective Departments on the Second Floor, affording an unusual opportunity for replenishing the juvenile wardrobe at a decided saving in expenditure.

GIRLS' WASHABLE DRESSES (sizes 6 to 16 years)
Of gingham or chambray, \$1.60
Of lingerie fabrics or colored cottons . . . \$2.25, 3.10
Of white or colored linen at . . . \$5.00, 7.25

Also White Net Dresses (suitable for graduation) . . . \$12.75
Washable Middy Blouses (6 to 20 years) . . . 95c.
Hand-smocked Guimpes, 95c.

LITTLE CHILDREN'S WASHABLE DRESSES (sizes 2 to 5 years)
Of chambray or gingham
White Batiste Dresses . . . \$1.60
Middy Dresses of white drill, 1.50

LITTLE CHILDREN'S LINGERIE DRESSES (sizes 1 to 3 years)
White, with colored hand-stitching . . . 95c., \$1.15

ALSO LITTLE BOYS' WASHABLE SUITS in very smart styles (sizes 2 to 5 years). . . \$1.50, 1.65, 2.10

A Final Clearing Sale of Misses' Suits and Coats

presents a selection of modish garments, excellently made and in attractive materials suitable for the Midwinter season, at prices that have been subjected to revision irrespective of cost.

MISSES' SUITS at \$10.50, 15.50, 18.50 & 22.00
MISSES' COATS at \$9.50, 14.50 & 18.50 (sizes not complete)

The remainder of the High-cost Garments are being offered at proportionately low prices.

January Rug Sale

There is now in progress a most interesting Sale of CHOICE ORIENTAL RUGS

During this period rare floor coverings may be obtained at less than the present cost of importing similar merchandise. Every rug offered in this Sale has been subjected to severe tests, thereby enabling B. Altman & Co. unreservedly to guarantee wearing qualities. The assortments are enormous and include many large and odd sizes not usually to be found in this country.

Some of the recent additions are
CHINESE RUGS in room sizes \$85.00, 130.00, 165.00 & 250.00
PERSIAN RUGS in room sizes \$125.00, 175.00, 225.00 & 275.00
HALL RUNNERS AND SMALL RUGS at correspondingly low prices.

The January Sales of Linens, Blankets, Bedspreads, etc.

now in progress (and to be continued throughout the month) will offer a great number of additional inducements during the current week.

Included will be
IN THE LINEN DEPARTMENT
Linen Damask Table Cloths each \$2.40, 2.75, 3.35, 4.00 to 6.50
Linen Damask Napkins dozen, \$2.75, 3.25, 3.75, 4.25 to 6.75
Turkish Bath Towels, hemmed, per dozen . . . \$3.00, 3.60 & 4.80
Madeira Luncheon Sets, hand-scalloped and hand-embroidered; consisting of 13 pieces (24-inch centerpiece, six 6-inch and six 10-inch doilies) per set \$4.25 & 4.75
Muslin Sheets and Pillow Cases at Special Prices

IN THE BLANKET DEPARTMENT
White Blankets per pair . . . \$4.50, 5.50 & 6.50
Satin-finish Bedspreads, with scalloped edges:
Single size . . . each \$3.00
Double size . . . each 3.75
Crochet Bedspreads each . . . \$1.10 & 1.25
Comfortables
Cotton-filled . . . each \$1.65
Cotton-filled, with figured mull top and plain border . . . each \$2.50
Wool-filled, with figured mull top and dotted mull border; reverse matching border . . . each \$5.50

Another Important Sale of Women's American-made Underwear

has been arranged for to-morrow and Tuesday. It will comprise a large number of daintily-fashioned Undergarments made of excellent-quality lingerie fabrics, crepe de Chine and washable satin, offering very decided values at these attractive prices:

Nightrobes
Lingerie, \$1.00, 1.50, 1.90, 3.90
Crepe de Chine or Washable Satin at . . . \$3.85, 5.00, 7.50

Chemises
Lingerie, \$1.00, 1.50, 2.00, 2.90
Crepe de Chine or Washable Satin at . . . \$2.85, 3.90

Combination Garments
Lingerie, \$1.00, 1.50, 3.00, 3.90
Washable Satin, . . . \$3.90, 5.00

Knickers
Crepe de Chine . . . \$1.90
Washable Satin . . . 3.00

Lingerie Drawers
at . . . 65c., \$1.00, 1.50

Lingerie Petticoats
at . . . \$1.00, 1.50, 1.90, 3.90

Lingerie Corset Covers
at 55c., 85c., \$1.00, 1.25, 1.90

Underbodices
Crepe de Chine, \$1.00, 1.50, 1.90
Washable Satin, . . . \$1.75, 3.85

Also Outing Flannel Nightrobes at . . . 85c., \$1.00, 1.25

15,000 Pairs of Women's Black Silk Hosiery

will present very exceptional values to-morrow at the prices quoted.

WOMEN'S BLACK SILK HOSE
With cotton tops and soles per pair . . . 75c.
With double tops (silk throughout) per pair . . . \$1.00
With extra spliced double top per pair . . . \$1.40
With black or white hand-embroidered clocks, per pair \$1.60

Also
Women's Extra-size Black Hose . . . per pair \$1.00

Sweeping Price Reductions in Fur Muffs & Neckpieces

including
Natural Blue Fox
Natural Silver Fox
Natural Russian Sable
(Fur Department, Third Floor)