

new régime the Department of War consists of nineteen sections and subsections, the duties of which are carefully detailed and defined, thus preventing any overlapping or neglect occurring in any one of them. In point of celerity, the work of the Mexican War Office may compare favourably with that of any similar European Government department; while there is a commendable absence of that red-tape which renders association with most Governments, our own not excepted, so trying and discouraging.

CHAPTER VI

Distribution of the Mexican Army—Military instruction—The Mexican officer—The private soldier—Rurales of the States—Their history—Their organisation—Daily pay—Influence of the Rurales with the public—Aguascalientes trouble suppressed—The equipment—Some valuable saddles—The Navy—National Fleet—Training ships—Naval schools.

THE Mexican Army is distributed throughout the Republic according to the different military zones into which the country is divided, and of which there are 10. At the time of writing the commands are in the hands of the following Generals:—

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|---------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zone 1. | General Luis E. Torres, | Hermosillo (Sonora). |
| „ 2. | „ José Maria de la Vega, | Chihuahua. |
| „ 3. | „ Ramon Teran, | Monterrey (Nuevo Leon). |
| „ 4. | „ Joaquin Z. Kerlegand, | Guadalajara
(Jalisco). |
| „ 5. | „ Juan A. Hernandez, | San Luis Potosi. |
| „ 6. | „ Emiliano Lojero, | Guanajuato. |
| „ 7. | „ Manuel M. Plata, | Puébla. |
| „ 8. | „ Lorenzo Garcia, | Oaxaca. |
| „ 9. | „ Julian Jaramillo, | Juchitan (Oaxaca). |
| „ 10. | „ Ignacio A. Bravo, | Quintana Roo. |

The various Regiments are stationed as follows:

The Federal District:—1st, 3rd, 5th, 14th, 21st and 24th Infantry; Gendarmes del Ejercito, 1st, 4th, 6th and 9th Cavalry; 2 Regiments Artillery and several smaller detachments of Rurales.

Michoacán:—2nd Infantry.

Sonora:—4th, 12th, 19th and 20th Infantry; 5th and 13th Cavalry.

- Puébla :—7th and 15th Infantry; 4th Regiment; 4th Squadron of Cavalry.
 Oaxaca :—8th and 25th Infantry; 10th Cavalry.
 Veracruz :—13th, 17th and 26th Infantry.
 Nuevo Leon :—9th and 23rd Infantry; 12th Cavalry.
 Jalisco :—16th Infantry; 9th Cavalry.
 Quintana Roo :—10th Infantry; 2 Regional Battalions.
 Sinaloa :—11th Infantry.
 San Luis Potosi :—22nd Infantry.
 Chihuahua :—18th Infantry.
 Guanajuato : 2nd and 3rd Cavalry.
 Tamaulipas :—3rd and 4th Squadrons Infantry; 3rd Squadron Cavalry.
 Tepic :—1st "cuadro" of battalion.
 Campeche :—2nd "cuadro" of battalion.
 Mexico :—11th and 14th Cavalry.
 Coahuila :—7th Cavalry, and 1st Squadron Cavalry.
 Zacatecas :—2nd "cuadro" of Regiment.

Each corps has its full complement of surgeons, and a full equipment of ambulances and appliances. There is also a good band to each corps, to say nothing of a number of "pets" in the shape of numerous dogs of a nondescript breed, which invariably accompany the respective regiments on the march.

The course of military instruction followed in the Mexican Army is a very thorough and efficient one. The Officers' "Sandhurst" is at the Castle of Chapultepec, the summer residence of the President of the Republic, which is more fully described elsewhere. Here practically all the officers are graduated, and a set of very fine young fellows they are, not over-tall, but well set up, smart and extremely careful of their behaviour in public. Loud talking, swagger or brawling are seldom or never heard among them, affording thus an admirable example and a striking contrast to some of the German and Russian officers whom one meets abroad, to say nothing of the young bloods in our own fair land. The literary instruction to which the Mexican officers must subscribe is a great deal fuller than that in force with Sandhurst cadets. Their examinations upon general subjects are also

more severe, especially in reference to foreign languages. There are very few commissioned officers in the Mexican Army who are unable to converse easily in several foreign languages, English, French, German and Italian being commonly acquired.

The quarters assigned to the officers at the Chapultepec and other military schools as well as in barracks are of a high class as a rule, and those among the latter which are old are being gradually remodelled or entirely rebuilt. At Tlalpam, for instance, the greater portion of the lower story of the main building of the new barracks which are being constructed will be entirely devoted to the quarters for the officers of the troops stationed there. The apartments are airy, spacious and comfortably furnished. They are close to the guard-room, the court-house, the armoury, general store-rooms and the reception-room for guests and visitors. On an upper floor is a good library, containing a number of books in the English language, the general assembly-room, the flag-rooms of the different officers as well as the wardrobe or uniform room.

The barracks at Tlalpam will cost between £55,000 and £60,000. The façade of the building will be 830 feet, and it will be of two stories in height. The flanking buildings will each have a length of 60 feet, and the central portion will be 130 feet, or a total length of 250 feet. The main portions of the building will be of basaltic stone and brick. Each man will have a bed instead of a stretcher, and will have a minimum of 25 cubic feet of air-space.

All the barracks in Mexico contain schools where the elements of instruction are implanted among the rank and file. They go through the usual course of learning to read and write, and are grounded in geography, arithmetic and history.

Although he is far from prepossessing in outward appearance, the Mexican private is a brave and stubborn fighter. He is, as a rule, recruited from the lowest and roughest classes of the community, and can hardly be expected to evince any great interest in his personal appearance, in his carriage or in his dress. He slouches along with but little evidence of the martial warrior spirit supposed to be burning within him, but

he is an indefatigable campaigner, and can endure more physical fatigue than many a hardened European veteran. He can live upon less and march farther under a tropical sun in one day than many a Northern or Western man could do in two. When away from barracks, the Mexican private is as merry as a sandboy, and is, on the whole, admirably conducted. He smokes furiously all day, even when on the march, and his discipline does not preclude him from dragging along out of line of formation and even whistling snatches of gay song. Singing in the ranks likewise is not only encouraged but compulsory in some German regiments, whose hoarse, monotonous, and tuneless voices have frequently inspired one with profound melancholy when sojourning in a German military town. The Mexican private is merely an Indian, and is much like a naughty child on occasions, and it is as such that he is disciplined and corrected by his officers. A Mexican officer informed me that upon a fair average 40 per cent. of the troopers and privates in the Mexican Army are first-rate shots, while some are excellent marksmen.

Scarcely a visitor comes to Mexico but fails to be impressed by the splendid body of men known as the States Rurales—half police and half soldiers. Both in regard to personal appearance and uniform they present an exceptionally picturesque aspect, although their attire is simplicity itself, consisting of a plain gray cloth jacket and tight-fitting trousers, a gray sombrero with cord, and a bright-red neck-tie. Nothing gaudy in this—and yet, thus costumed, the Rurales are more conspicuous than many a gay popinjay of a soldier such as one sees strutting about in Italy or Spain.

The Rurales were formed at a time when the whole country more or less was overrun by bandits and robbers, and it was to exterminate these pests, root and branch, with orders to shoot "on sight" and never to give quarter, that they were trained and maintained. State after State has been cleared of the Mexican banditti by these useful but unscrupulous police, who naturally are feared by the more ruffianly element, and never fail to overawe them at any sight of trouble. Thanks to these troops, or rather "gendarmes," since their *status* is entirely different to that of the ordinary army-soldier, the whole Republic is now (if I except some parts of Sonora, near the

American border, and Quintana Roo) as free from danger of highway robbers as Great Britain itself.

To be perfectly frank, the Rurales of Mexico do not possess the highest reputation for strict probity and morality. As a matter of fact, many of them have "had a past," but upon the principle of "set a thief to catch a thief," they are found eminently useful and reliable. They love their exciting work of man-hunting, and never fail to secure their victims—as often as not in a condition which will effectually preclude them giving any more trouble to anybody in this world. General Santa Ana, one of the greatest brutes who ever lived, and who waged war with all the savagery of a Cumberland, inaugurated this famous force which bore the nickname of "Cuerados," partly on account of their costume, which was that of the *ranchero*, or cattle-herders. When their Chief died, finding their occupation gone, they took to the road on their own account, and many a thrilling story of "hold-ups" could be related concerning their daring escapades and prowess when hard-pressed by regular troops. They made their headquarters in the Malinche Mountains, near Puebla, whence they frequently swooped down upon all and sundry, killing without mercy all who opposed them, and bearing back with them into captivity (with the view to heavy ransom) any prosperous citizen or stranger who was unlucky enough to fall in their way.

Robin Hood and his Little John were angels of kindness and consideration compared to these Cuerados—or, as they came to be known later on, "Plateados," on account of the heavily-plated silver and gold ornamentation of their costumes and horse apparel—it being considered hopeless to expect anything like mercy from them. Their relations with the mountain peasantry were extremely friendly, as are those of the mountain robbers of Italy and Spain to-day. Their hiding-places were kept inviolate, and a peon would rather lose his life than betray one of the Cuerados. If he did, he would have been killed, anyhow. It is sad to relate that in those "bad old days of Mexico," now for ever departed, the Government Officials of certain States were not unsympathetic to these highwaymen, and even shared with them their plunder, although in what precise proportion I am not prepared to say.

Finding it impossible to suppress them and to obtain convictions against the few who did fall into their hands, the authorities at length adopted the sensible and shrewd suggestion of Comonfort, the Mexican President, to turn them into regular troops, but upon a special footing. The idea proved to be more successful than was ever anticipated, and the Plateados, given the option of being shot down to a man (when they could be caught!) or becoming paid servants of the State, unanimously accepted the Government's offer, and have remained their picked rural troops ever since.

They number in all some 4,000, are engaged for a term of 5 years (subject to renewal), and are quartered anywhere that the Government of the Republic may elect; they are moved about the country very much like chessmen, without any previous warning and wherever trouble, either political, agrarian or labour, is likely to occur. Thus, in July of last year, when some peon rising was threatened at Aguascalientes, a body of 250 of the Rurales made their sudden appearance one afternoon, camped quietly near the Railway Station, and thereafter not another word of any trouble was even whispered. The mere knowledge that the Rurales were on-hand was sufficient, and the American and European residents, against whom open threats had been uttered, to be executed on July 4th, slept quietly and peacefully in their beds—if ever they had known any disquietude, which one may doubt, since their confidence in the Government of Mexico to deal with any threatened trouble could never have seriously wavered.

It was while I was at Aguascalientes (in July 1906) that I met a young Lieutenant of the Rurales, in charge of the troop arrived there, and to whom I am indebted for the information concerning the history of his regiment. According to my informant, the Government provides the men with uniform, arms, and a horse, as well as a daily wage amounting to 10 reals (a real is 12½c.), but 25 centavos (say 6d.) a day is withheld by the Government as "caution money" for the value of the horse and equipment. When the men leave the regiment, or are dismissed, the money thus withheld is returned to them in full. The men must provide their own food, and forage for their horses; but since living—as the Mexican lower classes live—costs practically nothing, and free



GENERAL JUAN QUINTAS Y ARROYA, GENERAL BRIGADIER OF THE MEXICAN ARMY.

pasturage for the animals can be obtained for the asking, the *Rurale* can save nearly all his pay if he is provident. His daily rations would consist of *tortillas*, or flat flour-cakes made of cooked maize, with hot peppers and chilies; *frigoles*, a mess of dark brown beans, very nourishing and rather tasty; an occasional—very occasional—piece of meat, and the inevitable *pulque*. Perhaps the greatest expenditure is upon cigarettes, of which the Mexicans smoke an enormous number in a day; but inasmuch as these same cigarettes can be purchased at 3 centavos for 40 (say about one halfpenny), even this outlay cannot be termed ruinous.

The *Rurale's* equipment consists of a carbine, two revolvers in his holsters and one in his hip pocket, and a *machete*, or "Bowie" knife, the terrible weapon which plays such a prominent part in all heated discussions among the low-class Mexicans. The horses, which are invariably fine-looking and serviceable animals, capable of much endurance and long travel, have first-class housings and trappings, the saddles, bridles and stirrups being of the finest leather, and often handsomely embroidered in gold thread. Steel stirrups are seldom seen in Mexico except among foreign riders, who prefer them to the heavy leather or wooden native stirrups.

The young officer to whom I have referred, informed me that his Colonel possessed a saddle which cost no less than \$12,000 (say £1,200), while another of his military friends owned one which was valued at \$10,000 (say £1,000). Upon both of these sumptuous saddles the arms of the Republic and the Regiment were stamped in solid gold, and, in fact, it was, he assured me, difficult to see any of the leather at all owing to the richness of the gold ornamentation. These saddles were not show-articles only, but were in frequent use by their owners.

Bearing in mind that every dollar of unproductive expenditure handicaps a nation, and convinced of the uselessness of maintaining a large navy, the Mexican Government, unlike the South American Republics of Argentina, Brazil and Chile, has expended little or nothing upon a sea-force, reserving its strength and enterprise for the Army. The past few years have successfully demonstrated the ridiculous waste of money upon naval armaments incurred by the Southern States I

have mentioned, which build expensive battleships one day to sell them at a heavy loss the next, only to repeat the absurdity shortly afterwards.

Mexico is so unlike any of the South American Republics in regard to its government that it is not in the least surprising to find it declining to emulate the mad policy pursued by Argentina, Brazil and Chile in their passion for building navies. Mexico has no desire to be regarded as a maritime power, being perfectly satisfied to have her vast foreign trade handled by steamship lines flying foreign colours. However the Mexican may excel as a soldier, he does not shine as a sailor, any more than do the members of other Latin-American races; and the Mexican Government has the sense to know it. We witness to-day the absurd spectacle of the Argentine and Brazil straining every financial nerve to build huge war-vessels, when neither of them has the men to supply their necessary crews. The Argentinos and the Brazilians absolutely refuse to join the naval service, except under seductive bribes in the way of high wages. They object not alone to the ordinary low rate of pay, but to the discipline, and especially to the loss of liberty which service under the flag at sea entails. Such ships as are in commission are not half-manned; nevertheless Brazil proposes to expend another \$50,000,000 in acquiring new warships. How much better would it be were these Republics to follow the example of Mexico and turn their attention to the development of their great territories, instead of devoting their attention to costly naval armament.

The Mexican Navy is a very modest affair, sufficient to maintain the dignity of a nation and to protect its coast-line of some 5,518 miles upon emergencies. There are the gunboat *Democrat*, first-class, 450 tons, 600 h.p., 4 guns; the gunboat *Libertad*, first-class, 430 tons, 400 h.p., 5 guns; the training-ship *Zaragoza*, 1,200 tons, 1,300 h.p., 8 guns; the transport *Oaxaca*; the sailing-ship *Yucatan*; 2 schooners; 2 combined gunboats and transports, *Tampico* and *Veracruz*; and 2 gunboats now being built in Italy. The personnel of the Navy consists of 130 officers and 293 men.

The *Zaragoza* has a length of 65 metres; beam, 10 metres; depth, 5.55 metres; maximum draft, 4.30 metres; displace-

ment, 1,226 tons; engine power, 1,250 h.p.; speed, 13 knots. The ship is of steel, with sailing rig, her armament consisting of 2 Canet cannon of 12 centimetres and 36 calibres, 4 Canet cannon of 12 centimetres and 43 calibres, 2 quick-firing Nordenfeldt cannon of 57 millimetres, and 2 Hotchkiss guns of 37 millimetres.

Yucatan, sailing training-ship, has a length of 48 metres 53 centimetres; beam, 8 metres, 75 centimetres; depth, 3 metres, 76 centimetres; displacement 650 tons. This vessel has an iron hull and shipping vessel tackle. Her armament is the same as the *Zaragoza*, as well as the same speed and power.

The Transport *Oaxaca* has a length of 58 metres; beam 3 metres, 50 centimetres; depth 3 metres 70 centimetres; speed 7 knots; tonnage 1,000 tons. This vessel has a sloop rigging, its hull is all steel, and it has accommodation for 300 tons of cargo, 200 head of cattle and 500 men.

The five gunboats belonging to the Mexican Navy are all new, with the exception of one, the former comprising the *Bravo*, the *Morélos*, the *Tampico* and the *Veracruz*. The fifth, the *Democrata*, was the first gunboat purchased. She has a length of 42 metres; beam, 7 metres; depth, 2.40 metres; displacement, 450 tons; engine power, 600 h.p.; speed, 10 miles.

The *Veracruz* and *Tampico* are sister ships, and were constructed at Elizabeth Port, N.J. (U.S.A.). They have a length of 200 ft.; beam, 32 ft. 16 in.; depth, 15 ft. 8 in.; displacement, 1,000 tons; engine power, 2,200 h.p.; speed, 16 miles. They both have steel hulls, and each carries two 4-in. quick-firing Bethlehem guns, and six 57 mm. automatic quick-firing guns.

The *Morélos* and *Bravo*, also sister ships, were built and equipped in Italy. They have a length of 17 m. 20 c.; beam, 10 m. 32 c.; depth, 5 m.; engine power, 2,500 h.p.; speed, 16 miles; displacement, 1,210 tons. They have steel hulls, and carry two 4-in. quick-firing Bethlehem guns; six 57 mm. and 50 calibres Schneider-Canet quick-firing guns. They have accommodation for 250 marines.

The National Arsenal is at Veracruz, on the Island of San Juan de Ulua, and the National Docks are at Guaymas,

Sonora. At Veracruz there is also a small floating dock which can accommodate a vessel of 1,500 tons. The Arsenal at Veracruz was constructed in 1892, and has some of the most modern machinery worked by compressed air. The docks at Guaymas were inaugurated in 1897.

An excellently-equipped naval school is situated at Veracruz, which was also inaugurated in 1897, its progress having been as remarkable as it is commendable. A target-shooting practice department is now attached to this school, and cadets receive a thoroughly sound and efficient training, including a severe scientific course of instruction, after which they are sent for a term of practice on the two training-ships *Yucatan* and *Zaragoza*.

CHAPTER VII

Porfirio Diaz—Monarchy *v.* Republic—Birth and early education—Trained for priesthood—Meeting with Benito Jaurez—Military career—First presidency—Revolt against Santa Ana and Tejada—Differences with Benito Jaurez—Election for first term—His successful government—Subsequent re-elections as President—Foreign distinctions—Diaz as orator—His character and disposition—Popularity in Mexico—Daily occupations—Madame Carmen Rubio Diaz.

PERHAPS no more deserving commentary could be bestowed upon Porfirio Diaz than the recalling of Ovid's beautiful words to be found in that Poet's "Metamorphoses"—"Os homini sublime dedit cœlumque tueri Jussit; et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus" ("God gave man an upright countenance to survey the heavens, and look upward to the stars"). Upright and erect have been his life, his deeds and his aspirations; and no praise too high could be awarded to a man who has lived as he has lived, and who has fulfilled as he has fulfilled, the sacred and onerous trust imposed upon him.

Even the most rabid of anti-Republicans would admit that no more admirable representative of the Presidential chair has yet come forward to occupy it than the present Chief Magistrate of the United States of Mexico. It may be urged that Republics are and must be subject to corruption on the part of their officials from the highest to the lowest; that under such régimes there is actually less liberty, since no hereditary monarch dares to act as arbitrarily as do some Presidents of Republics; that in Republics snobbery of birth becomes snobbery of wealth—an even more repellent form, especially when masquerading under the cloak of liberty. All this may be true—and indeed *is* true of some Republics, especially of the Republics of South America, but it is certainly untrue as applied to Mexico, and will continue to