

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &
Professional Papers

Graduate School

1943

English translation of Tierra... with an introduction

Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes
The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Lopez y Fuentes, Gregorio, "English translation of Tierra... with an introduction" (1943). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 2230.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/2230>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

An English Translation of
TIENRA
by Gregorio López y Fuentes
with an Introduction
CRIOLLISMO

by

Walter M. Anderson
B. A., Montana State University, 1925.

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Montana State University

1943

Approved:

B. E. Thomas

Chairman of Board
of Examiners

Walter A. Anderson

Chairman of Committee
on Graduate Study

UMI Number EP35839

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

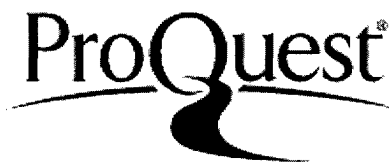


UMI EP35839

Published by ProQuest LLC (2012). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Introduction

ORIOLLISMO

Like a child that has to go through the phase of copying its mother and elders, quoting them more or less word for word, at first, as if expressing original ideas never thought of or uttered before, the child nations of the new world for generations adhered closely to the thought and mode of expression of Spain and France and even England, mother and older cousin countries.

As is very evident, a fund of literature soon began flowing from New Spain. The offsprings knew their cultural background well; and, as one generation passed and another reached the creative age, the new movements of Europe were watched and studied and imitated. The new world was proving that it could equal those across the sea in literary productivity that kept abreast of the times--that is, in new movements established by Europeans. It was true that great figures like Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695) during the colonial period, Juan Ruíz de Alarcón y Mendoza (1581-1639)--the great dramatist of the Golden Age, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888) of the Romantic Age, or anyone of many others dominated the Spanish American theatre of literature and even had their influence felt upon European

writers. Still, these same writers were seeking their inspiration away from home for forms, styles, and thought, and even, for the most part, the theme.

By the time of the Romantic Movement--roughly, the first half of the nineteenth century--there was already a flavor, at least, of the new world. However much Sarmiento, as well as others of his time, leaned on foreign models, he used local scenes and local coloring. The Hispano-Americans lived in a period of great unrest and revolution in political thought, a period which witnessed a struggle against tyranny and oppression; and in their struggle for all-embracing liberty, they were beginning to free themselves of the yoke of European standards of art. This unshackling, going on unconsciously at first, by the middle of the nineteenth century was a concerted effort.

Torres Ríosoco believes that "Basically, the romantic movement in the new nations meant a liberation from Peninsular models. It was the first step toward the discovery of the native artistic genius."¹

Besides, now throbbing in the veins of the Spaniards was new blood which carried the heritage of great civilizations--the Maya, the Aztec, the Inca, people who at their

¹ Arturo Torres-Ríosoco, The Epic of Latin American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942). p.84.

zenith had attained remarkable progress. These races had excelled not only in government, in astronomy, in architecture, and in engineering, but also in all the arts--weaving, sculpturing, poetry and music, designing in clay. The blending of the two--Spanish and Indian--made for an artistic people who were beginning to assert themselves.

The moderismo movement, which had its origin in France, flourished in Spanish America for a while, and did much to awaken Europe to the greatness of its progeny, was not, however, a mode of expression fit for the vigor and ruggedness of the new world. To Rubén Darío, the great Nicaraguan poet, we owe the degree of perfection it achieved for it was a movement that profoundly changed Latin-American literature. Darío, with his great gift of poetic expression, exerted a tremendous influence.² But, because he was throwing off the bonds of European tradition in this new school of art, other young artists also showed their independence by turning away from the cold artificiality of the very movement Darío had vivified and that they had followed blindly at first.³ They "struck out along a new path that

² Torres-Ríoaseco, op. cit., p. 86.

³ George W. Umphrey and Carlos García Prada, Selections from the Prose and Poetry of Ruben Darío (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928), p. 25.

led them back to nature, to actual life as they saw it, to social and national inspiration."⁴

Darío, who had withdrawn to his "tower of ivory," didn't find the happiness there that he sought.

"La torre de marfil tentó mi anhelo,
quise encerrarme dentro de mí mismo
y tuve hambre de espacio y sed de cielo,
desde las sombras de mi propio abismo."⁵

In his later works, inspired by thoughts of his race, he came out of his "ivory tower," occasionally, to express himself on subjects touching humanity--for instance, in his "Canto a la Argentina" in which he sings of the country he loved.⁶

Moderismo, with its purity and exactness of form but lacking contact with life, had spent itself. At last, the Latin American saw and appreciated the wealth of material at his own door; he realized his own powers. Now, there came from Mexico, Cuba, the Argentine, from Brazil, Central

⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵ Ibid., "Cantos de Vida y Esperanza," p. 148.
English translation (literal)
"The tower of ivory eagerly lured me,
I wanted to shut myself from the world,
and then I hungered for space and thirsted for
the sky
from the shadows of my own abyss."

⁶ Ibid., pp. 166-173.

America, in fact, from all Latin America, an urge to write about the problems that were theirs, in an American style--the style and language of the criollo, which was the term applied to the person of European parentage born on American soil. Likewise, here was the literature of European parentage but nurtured in American tradition and thought.

There were pitfalls, of course. No such great movement could escape them. The danger was that literature might become purely regional, which in many cases it did. In the countries of the Plata the term nativismo has been applied to that trend.⁷ There was also the danger that the characters--the Indians--or the local coloring might be used for decorative purposes to awaken curiosity, rather than springing from a genuine desire to present the real problem.⁸ The realities of life were not close enough to the author, although he might have had a genuine desire to picture social problems. Like Azuela, he had to struggle with the underdogs⁹ before his lines could ring true; or like

⁷ Medardo Vitier, "Caracteres de la Literatura Contemporánea." Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. IV, Nov. 1941.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

Also, Maurice Halperin, "The Social Background of Contemporary Mexican Literature." Modern Language Association Publications, 55 Pt. 2: 876, Sept. 1940.

⁹ Manuelo Azuela, Los de Abajo (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1930).

Güiraldes, he must ride the pampas and know intimately the gaucho's hard life. ¹⁰

In Argentina the only real native literature had come from the pampas in the form of ballads, in the Andalusian manner, which were improvised and sung by the payadores, the cowboy troubadours. They sang of the only life they knew on the plains of the South American continent, but in their song they embodied their trials, their joys, their sorrows, all the insignificant homely details of their daily lives. Though it had a romantic theme for its beginning--the legendary gaucho surrounded with mystery and myth--the payadores were not content with that. Life was too sad and fraught with too many disappointments and heartaches. The song to the melody of the guitar was his exhaust valve. Into it he poured the story of his life--the life of the pampas. This was the theme which was to evolve into the national novel of Argentina and, in part, of Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil. ¹¹

About 1880 began to appear novels written in the realistic style through the pages of which are graphic

¹⁰ Ricardo Güiraldes, Don Segundo Sombra (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1930).

¹¹ José E. Espinosa, "Notes on the Role of Gaucho Literature in the Evolution of Americanism in Argentina." Hispania, Feb., 1936. Pp. 85-87.

pictures of country life: the hours just before dawn when the farm is awakening to a new and busy day, the squibs of the cowboys as they warm themselves with a drink of mate in preparation for long hours in the saddle, the violent wind and rain storms that leave man and beast defenseless, the simple chronicles of birth, and the often tragic scenes of death.¹² If it happens to be a novel of the Revolutionary period, there are also pathetic pictures of desolation; villagers fleeing before the federales; stark figures in white shirt and trousers hanging from telephone poles; the harsh, sordid life of the peasant-soldier; scenes of the brutality of the overseer; and the murmurings of protest, faint at first but increasing in volume until they are an avalanche--a force of destruction sweeping everything before it.¹³

In these six great authors we find the spirit of criollismo perfected: José Eustasio Rivera (1889-1928) with his novel "La Vorágine" (1924), Ricardo Güiraldes (1886-1927) with "Don Segundo Sombra" (1926), Rómulo Gallegos (1884-),

¹² Ricardo Güiraldes, op. cit.
Also, Hugo Wast, Desierto de Piedra, edited by E.R. Sims (Chicago: D.C. Heath and Company, 1930).

¹³ The novels of Gregorio López y Fuentes, Mariano Azuela, Martín Luis Guzmán, and Rafael Muñoz.

Doña Barbara (1929), Gregorio López y Fuentes (1895-) in the revolutionary novels "El Indio" and "Tierra," and the other two Mexican novelists, Mariano Azuela (1873-) and Mauricio Magdaleno with their respective masterpieces, "Los de Abajo" and "El Resplandor."

First, their novels are written in the vernacular of the people, the colorful idiom of Latin America, the Spanish language enhanced by words and phrases that have grown out of the new life hewn on a new continent or been assimilated from the native tongues. Just as in the United States our language is the English language to be sure, but it is the language particularly of the United States, with added inflections, meanings, and words to meet this rapidly changing and complex life of ours. In fact, in order to understand these Spanish American novels, one must have recourse to a dictionary of americanismos¹⁴ for scores of words and expressions will not be found in the Castilian Spanish.

Secondly, there is an entire independence from foreign literary forms. The story, or more often the series of incidents loosely connected in many cases, as in "La Tierra" by López y Fuentes, is told in forceful, simple language without embellishments. This characteristic is a

¹⁴ Augusto Malaret, Diccionario de Americanismos (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1931).

natural result of the theme and of the characters. The Indians are men of few words with a philosophy direct and founded on the truths they have observed in nature--human and physical.

This brings us to the third condition, the subject matter. The story is laid in a world of realities--"cuadros de la vida rural platense, la pena humana en la salitreras chilenas, la condición del indio en la sierra peruana y ecuatoriana, escenas de selvas y ríos colombianos, problemas sociales de México, todo esto se ha vertido en la novela con fuerte acento americano."¹⁵ The peons, the gaucho, the Indian have become one with the author. They are struggling together for a common cause, for the betterment of man, for his right to live to express his soul in his art. (The very tragedy of his life makes for great art.)

True criollismo is national, hemispheric in scope. It is a literature that depicts the driving, relentless force of life made up of millions of individual beings on the Latin American continent. It is not merely concerned with describing nature in a single valley or plain, nor

¹⁵ Medardo Vitier, op. cit., p.30.

English translation: "pictures of rural life, human suffering in the Chilean saltpetre fields, the conditions of the Indian in the Peruvian and Ecuadorian sierra, scenes of jungles and Colombian rivers, social problems of Mexico, all this has been poured into the novel with strong American accent."

presenting a local problem here or there; but it is a conception of the universal greatness of America and its potentialities in its people--the traditions and skills of the past added to the achievements of the present and future--those who are next to the earth with their heads, figuratively, in the clouds of idealism and faith, not the ones who have lost all contact with the soul of man. So the Indian Rosendo Maqui¹⁶ ruminates "that happiness comes from the common good. This had been established by time, force of tradition, man's will, and the unfailing gifts of the earth."¹⁷

¹⁶ The leading character in the novel, Broad and Alien Is the World by Ciro Alegría.

¹⁷ Ciro Alegría, Broad and Alien Is the World. Translation by Harriet de Onís (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1941). p. 6.

THE AUTHOR

On the La Mamey hacienda not far from the town of Zontecomatlan in the Huasteca region of the State of Veracruz, Gregorio López y Fuentes was born November the seventeenth in the year 1895. He comes of a family who have lived for generations in this tropical region. Until he was eleven, he went to school in the nearby town and later at Chilcontepec, but he spent week-ends at home on the hacienda that he loved, working, hunting, and fishing. Gregorio was fifteen when the Revolution broke out and Porfirio Díaz was ousted by Madero

His father was eager for him to be a teacher in spite of the boy's longing to be a rancher. Too, Gregorio was already discovering his interest in writing and dreamed of that for a career. However, he was sent to Mexico City to complete his education in preparation for a teaching profession.

While in Mexico City, López y Fuentes published his first work, "La Siringa de Cristal" (1914)--a collection of poems. Other works of poetry, which were published in "El Universal Ilustrado," "Arte y Literatura," and other literary magazines, followed during the next eight years. A part of that time he spent on the hacienda while Mexico City was in the throes of the Revolution when Carranza took

the presidency. Then he returned to the City to teach in the Normal School.

The young man's ambition was realized when he gave up teaching to devote himself exclusively to writing. He had already made several attempts at prose writing and now with a position as a reporter on the staff of "El Gráfico," he began writing a daily column called "La Novela Diaria de la Vida Real"--under the pseudonym "Tulio F. Peseenz"--in which he fictionized sensational daily news, elaborating with imaginative details. The column was popular and continued for five years--a story a day.

The style developed here the writer later used in his longer novels. He discovered that he could recreate a composite picture of the common life of a community, of a region, of a nation, by a series of sketches of actual events.

The first of his major works, "Campamento," in 1931, portrays the life that López y Fuentes knows best--the rural life of the ranchería, the setting for his subsequent novels.

"Tierra" was published the next year. Through a series of pictures of incidents from 1910 to 1920, López y Fuentes gives the story of the revolt of the peasants in the State of Morelos and the part played by their leader, Emiliano Zapata. As its title indicates, it presents the real issue of the Revolution--the right of the people to

their lands, the communal lands, and the liberty to work them. As in all his novels, the characters that motivate the story are representative of the race and are not individualized.

Considered Gregorio López y Fuentes's masterpiece is "El Indio," which deals with the great social problem of the Indian to whom Mexico belongs and who will again possess the land and rule the country by absorption of the white population. The novel has beautiful descriptions of the life of the Indian, who is exploited by the landowners and politicians, bent by back-breaking labor, made to suffer unjustly, but who by his ability to work and endure will be the race of the future in Mexico.

The story of how the author wrote "El Indio" is interesting. In 1935 Sr. Botas, a well-known editor of Mexico City, made López y Fuentes a loan in exchange for which Botas was to get a novel which the author had already planned. The manuscript was in Bota's hands in twenty days. Sr. Botas liked the story so well that he entered it in a contest, without consulting the author. The novel won the first prize, offered by the National Committee on Literature as the best Mexican novel of the year.

The other novel that presents a social problem is "Huasteca," appearing in 1939. After publishing daily

articles in "El Gráfico" about the expropriation of foreign oil fields, López y Fuentes became so interested in the question that he went to investigate, personally, the region of Huasteca. The novel, which is the result of his trip, is about the Indians who--exploited by foreign companies--are compelled to sell out or suffer dire consequences. The author is interested in the effect of this new problem on the Indian. The two main characters, Micaela and her brother Guillermo, made fabulously rich, are corrupted by their new life and yearn for the wholesome happy life they once lived on the farm.

His other two novels, "Mi General" (1934) and "Arrieros" (1937), are full of folklore, humanness, and the breath of simple life in the country.

López y Fuentes is now Editor-in chief of "El Gráfico", enthusiastically combining his journalistic efforts with novel writing devoted to the cause of the Indian.

THE TRANSLATOR'S PROBLEM

A translator's task is not an easy one for he is constantly torn between creating a piece of literature of his own, rather than reproducing another's, or having a mere word translation. He must strike a median between those two if he is to keep the style and spirit of the author's work.

The first requirement, it seems to me, is to live vicariously with the author as he presents his story with the problem that confronts him and his characters, feeling the emotional and spiritual forces that under-lie the situation--that are woven into it. Then, one must understand fully the author's purpose in writing the particular work, as well as the motive that prompted his other writings of the same class. Since López y Fuentes is a writer of the time of the Mexican Revolution, the translator should be familiar with that period of history and also the preceding years in which the causes of this upheaval originated. As a third condition, the translator should strive to retain the flavor of the original, both in the idiom and the style.

The English translation of "Tierra" must be Mexican--the Mexican of the soil--in spirit, in flavor, in its entirety. Many expressions have a different color when translated into English, but they must convey the same

general effect. That is all one can hope to produce. Because the meaning is obvious and there are no English equivalents, many terms (for instance, the words for followers of leaders--such as, the word Zapatistas applied to the followers of Zapata) are best left in the original. Some Latin-American words are used that can readily be understood from the text or, having been borrowed from our Southern neighbors, are now found in the English language.

It is only to be hoped that I have kept all the rules laid down by myself, and that justice has been done to a fine vigorous novel of terse phrases and moving episodes.

Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes

LAND

The Agrarian Revolution in Mexico

1910

I

Walking along a narrow footpath were some one hundred laborers carrying machetes, those long cane-knives that serve all purposes from cutting a shrub to severing a head. Some carried on their shoulders axes or small bars. As they moved along, the men talked of the hardships of their daily lives: the scarcity of beans, the lack of rain, and the smallpox that was claiming so many victims. But of greatest interest at the moment was the matter of the master's latest acquisition-- the landlord had won the litigation over the lands watered by the brook. And what lands they were!

"But when has the master lost a dispute over lands?"

"Don't worry. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

From time to time those who were not burdened changed places with those who were carrying heavy rolls of barbed wire. These rolls were strung on pieces of timber and two peons carried a roll between them like hunters bringing in their deer after a successful hunt. If those who were less able to carry the heavy loads faltered or slipped they were helped and encouraged by their companions. These men were going in the direction of the newly-acquired land where the work of fencing would begin, or rather would be extended,

like an enormous arm of the master desirous of grasping the entire land.

For these workmen an engineer was not necessary. Among the laborers were handy men who could blaze a clearing through the mountains as straight as a die and as skillfully as they could cut a furrow with a yoke of oxen. It was old Procopio Perez who knew of these things and of many others. The overseer of the gang came along behind as if to push the laggards. But probably he walked in the rear not to get wet with the morning dew which the men on passing through the grass brushed off and freed of any incubation of marsh fever. He was the only one who carried arms. It was a pistol. Disturbed by the noise of the laborers, the birds became alarmed and flew noisily toward the mountains. Among the thickest bushes was heard the sniffing of a startled deer. Always interested in the hunt, the workmen stopped to listen with the enjoyment of hunting dogs. They seemed to scent the prize in the wind, promising themselves to go in chase of the game when the master gave them permission to turn the dogs loose in this direction.

They had reached the spot where the task must begin. It was a place full of rank reed-grass, clinging like flowering garlands to the leprous branches of the white cedars. From the most remote corner of the owner's lands, as they

were before he won the lawsuit, a line of wire forming an obtuse angle went in the direction of the mountain ridge. Another fence extended in the direction of the Arrojo Seco. The fence to be laid was to be a continuation of this one.

Near one of the oldest trees, a fig tree that had in its roots hollows and obstinate juttings--projections like the arms of a sofa and hollows in the form of a cradle or coffin--were placed the materials not necessary at the moment: the machine to stretch the wire, the gourds of water, the bags with the staples, and the noon lunch.

Before the work of clearing was begun, the overseer stood at the corner formed by the lines of fence. With arms extended, that he let fall uncertainly, he seemed by his gesture to divide the forest. He would have the workmen take that direction, but old Procopio corrected it. The course indicated by the overseer would infringe on a neighbor's land in the form of a dagger, the point of which was the spot on which the overseer stood, the blade, farther on, where the fence should touch the Naranjal lines.

Apparently the overseer was disgusted. Why haggle over and deny the master a mere ribbon of land. Only the opinion of the other workmen who supported the old man forced the overseer to agree. His arm deviated a little to the right. Here the men put their machetes to work.

Those ahead cut down the reeds and foliage. Next, another group cleared away the larger underbrush leaving the broken boughs scattered along the edge of the opening. Those farther behind set their axes to the trees that must be felled. The trees more or less in line in the middle of the opening were saved. They would be utilized as fence posts.

The hymn of knife and ax echoed through the mountain. In the places where the sunlight filtered through the leaves the steel blades of the rustic tools reflected a silvery light. Only the boss was not laboring. He confined himself to watching and demanding that the rest work. For entertainment he killed mosquitoes that lit on his neck and arms, cut with his knife tender reeds that he held up to the wind, or perhaps with a sharp twig demolished a hill of termites or ants.

A narrow gap was now visible down the hill. The laborers already had covered considerable distance. When one of the larger trees was brought down, the noise of the knives and axes was interrupted. Each time that "an old man of the mountains" fell there was an outcry. The workmen seemed to rejoice on seeing the destruction of those veterans that had such an advantage over them in years. Five-hundred year old trees they were, sheltering nests

filled with young birds and loaded with a hundred varieties of vines--great festoons of parasites. What a clamour they made in falling!

About a hundred meters had been opened. A rope was stretched out. Old Procopio went along setting a stake in the ground every twenty-four feet as a marker. Then holes by the workmen were made in which the posts would be set.

* * *

Suddenly far ahead, among the group clearing the way, a cry reverberated. A man had been bitten by a snake. From among the withered leaves, like the point of a spring suddenly released, there had darted out a triangular head, and as one of the workmen was about to lift a branch, he was bitten in the forefinger of the right hand.

The men had gathered about. Someone cut a straight twig and sharpened one end of it with his machete. The viper remained on guard with his curved head raised above the coiled body, a miniature mound of vivid colors. He watched from among the dried leaves and from time to time stretched out his neck, opening his fauces to show a red depth in which his very white teeth were visible like four cat claws.

To aid in the battle with the snake, old Procopio

chewed a piece of tobacco and spit it at the snake. The creature seemed to fall into a state of lethargy, and the man who had sharpened the stick took the position of a fisherman lying in wait to spear his fish. Aiming, he suddenly struck. The viper, nailed to the ground by the neck, uncoiled to its full length and then contracted, making beautiful curves and showing the ivory whiteness of its underside. Another man drew near and with the back of his knife gave the snake a couple of blows on the head.

That done, they all turned their attention to the man bitten by the snake for he was in grave danger. He himself, meanwhile, had put tobacco which he had been chewing on the wound. But the judgment of many was that the bite needed further attention. The characteristics of the viper were most alarming: the triangular shape of the head and the bright geometric coloring of the back. Old Procopio believed that the only remedy was to cut off the finger. The wounded man, willing to do anything necessary, held up his finger, though his face clearly revealed his fear of death. On his finger were four drops of blood that dripped off to make room for four others. While Procopio tested the edge of his knife and that of another offered him, he explained that the operation was simple: the finger is placed on the trunk of a tree, the victim looks away if he feels any

horror, and only one blow.....

At this moment the leader of the crew intervened, insisting that such a method was barbaric. He was opposed to what the old man Procopio proposed to do and sent one of the men to the farmhouse for a very effective medicine that the master had.

The messenger ran through the brambles and the reeds with the lightness of a deer. The wounded man kept his finger held high. He was pale as death and by signs indicated that he already felt his tongue sticking in his throat.

The men went back to their tasks. A short time passed. Someone remarked that the messenger was probably just reaching the farmhouse. Then the injured man fainted, and those who went to attend him observed that at the root of each downy hair and in the corners of his eyes was a small drop of blood. They all became alarmed and assembled around the boy. Procopio explained that no more time must be lost for the poisonous bite would cause immediate death.

The overseer, fearful of being charged with the responsibility because of having opposed the emergency operation, finally agreed; but in order not to witness anything too distasteful hid himself in the reeds under a luxuriant tree. Some men set up a solid chunk from a fallen tree. Another held the hand of the wounded finger on the top of

the improvised bench. Pressing his jaws tightly shut, the sick man looked away. Procopio let the blow fall at the base of the finger that sprang off like a piece of tender cane. With a rag torn off Procopio's own shirt, the wound was bandaged, not without first putting on it a piece of agaric found in a dry trunk.

A stretcher was improvised on which two workmen carried the sick man toward the farmhouse. Two others walked behind to replace the first two when they became tired.

Work was resumed. From the trees downed, the men had been cutting straight branches twelve feet long. They were the living posts, branches of those plants of great vitality that prosper in spite of every mutilation, capable of taking root even when they are planted base end up, with the tip end in the ground. In the same clearing others had found wood as resistant as iron: the heart of the chijol of Brazil, a magnificent wood for resisting dampness and time. Near each hole a post was dropped.

As in a factory, it was the complicated and at the same time simple subdivision of work carried on in the mountain regions. Some continued clearing the way. Others cut posts. Some made holes. Then came another group who put the posts in position and rammed them in the ground.

The wire stretcher fastened to a tree two hundred meters distant held the wire and stretched it taut. The staple was affixed and buried deeply in the wood of the post. Four times the same operation was executed. Following a direct line, the fence, the new boundary of the master's land, began to divide the forest. At the blow of the hammer, the wire rang with the vibration of a telegraph message. It was the message of the one in power sent in the direction of the village people despoiled of their lands -- the direction fixed by old Procopio trusting to his instinct of orientation.

"And where are we going to come out, Uncle Procopio?" To the young man's question, the old man answered with all surety: "Right, as straight as a furrow at the Arrajo Seco."

* * *

In the clearing the workmen stopped in the shade. It was noon and work was suspended. Sitting in groups they ate their lunches that the women had prepared in the morning: tortillas, chile, and some fragrant herb. The water gourds were passed from hand to hand.

In one of the groups was old Procopio. Again the conversation was about the lawsuit that the master had won

granting him the best lands of the marsh. When the overseer wasn't listening, the old man recalled the legend of a greedy landowner. As there were some Indians not native to the region among his listeners, Procopio translated for them what they didn't understand:

"You have heard them talk about the Enchanted Marsh? Well, it happened thus. Once there was a valley of such lands that the corn gave back one thousand kernels for each one planted; the beans, two thousand; and the sesame, one million. One day a man came asking for a small piece of land, just a corner, there, of the least desirable. The valley was so large and the land so wonderful that the owner let him have it. He was so unfortunate and poor and his children so thin. This man seeded only one measure of grain. Then he built a hut which was so small that one had to crawl in to enter. At harvest time he didn't have the place to store all the grain and with the profits he bought land. The following year he bought ten times more from his neighbor; the third year, fifty times more. It seemed that he was blessed from above since, while on the adjoining lands the sun burned up the grass, on his lands rain fell opportunely. No one had ever beheld such a sight! He was owner of a third of the valley and still he wanted more; in fact, he wanted all of it from ridge to ridge. In the afternoon

he used to look at what he might yet acquire. His wife reproached him:

"'And why do you want more land? You can't seed, now, all that you have.'

"'So that the others won't have it. Don't you see that this land is good? All, from one side to the other, is so fine that it yields one hundred times, one thousand times.'

"One afternoon when he was gazing over the great expanse that was all his and across to the other lands he coveted, there arrived fifty families dying of hunger. The children could scarcely stand, the old people gathered bitter weeds from the ground for food, and the stronger ones were ghosts of misery. They asked him for a corner where they might rest and food to lessen their hunger. Others came to beg a piece of land to plant if they might be permitted to stay.

"The greedy man refused them everything. He even forbade a little urchin taking a cup of water that he was already drawing up from the well. Spitting with disgust at the sight of such misery, the owner ordered his servants to set the dogs on the rabble to drive them away. Not running, but rather crawling, the half-starved people left. That night in a sound sleep the avaricious landowner had a dream.

God appeared to him and reproached him for what he had done, commanding him to get up immediately and go in search of the fugitives in order to bring them back and give them what they had requested.

"The order was so insistent and the face of the Lord so severe that the miser, taking a stick to use as a cane, went off in search of the poor people. But he traveled so unwillingly and so slowly, resting so frequently, that he didn't succeed in overtaking them. He returned home sure that he had fulfilled the mandate. Again God appeared to him in his dreams and condemned his wickedness.

"'Wake up and look at your lands.'

"And lo, they were a marsh that you now know by the name of 'Estero Encantado'."

When the overseer gave the order to go back to work, the peons hung up their bags, some returning to their tasks smoking the tobacco they had rolled on their knees.

* * *

At nightfall they returned home along the same path where they were met with the disagreeable news that the man bitten by the snake had died. Already in the peon's house all had been done that was needed for the wake. The neighbor women had raked and swept the patio. With one child in her arms and another clinging to her skirts, the wife cried inconsolably. She had been assured by the overseer of work

in the Patron's house. As for the children, as soon as they could work, they would be taken in as servants or given tasks they could do.

Silvestre, an overgrown boy who still carried his right arm in an enormous sling, was the most helpful. He had brought firewood, wheeled in the water cart filled with fresh water, and shelled some ears of corn, all duly in preparation for those who were holding a wake for the dead. Silvestre was able to help because, as a result of an accident, he couldn't yet do his regular work.

It had happened at the sugar mill where he was working for the master. Crushed to the elbow it was, and now the arm was so deformed that it resembled a dried-up root suspended from his shoulder.

For three months he had been working, badly paid and badly fed, until he had reached a state of exhaustion. At night, even, he had had to wrap piloncillo¹ though in the morning, at daybreak, he must get up to hitch the horses or the oxen, pile the wood, and cut sugar cane all day. Then the stock must be watered. When nightfall came, he wrapped sugar again. Thus his was an endless going from one thing to another without the power to bring an end to it.

It was that time of morning between darkness and daylight when the last shadows temptingly invite one to sleep a

¹ Compressed sugar

little longer. The boy was feeding sugarcane into the mill and dozed off for a second. The mill caught the point of his finger. He cried out, and his cries frightened the horses. Before the animals could be stopped, Silvestre's arm was a bloody mass. That day the sap had red veins through it.

In the middle of the room on a cross marked off on the floor with lime lay the corpse. The fingers were incompletely clasped for the right hand index finger was lacking to meet the left hand index finger--the usual position for laying out the dead.

In the corners of the room the neighbor women had discreetly placed the family clothing. From a jutting piece of timber hung the machete. Against the wall were his fishing rod and a net. The straw mat rolled tube-shaped, was in a corner.

Lost in the shadows of the night was the chorus of voices of the men and women singing "El Alabado" -- the moaning, perhaps, of those who were bidding farewell to the dead; perhaps, a hymn for the soul's joy at departing. As they prayed they told of his wondrous feats of hunting and fishing. Jugs of coffee sweetened with piloncillo were distributed to those present at the wake. The mournful scene was suddenly interrupted by cries that came from the adjoining

room partitioned off to form the living quarters for another workman.

They were the cries of a woman in childbirth. Either because she was too proud to make known her pain, or because she feared to awaken him who slept on his lime cross behind that wall, she seemed to stifle her cries. Clearly could be heard the husband promising, consolingly, to go on the run for the midwife. The good neighbor women as they blew on the embers were heard talking of beneficial herbs for a happy childbirth.

The poor woman continued moaning, almost crying. And suddenly -- the bleating of a little lamb. A long time passed before the midwife and the father of the little new arrival were heard entering.

And it was a boy!

The watchers could hear the news announced with all the joy that contrasted, in general, with the disconcerting news that heralded the birth of a girl. The father was so happy that he even entered the room of the dead to relate the good tidings. He drank to the health of his son from a container of brandy which he then shared with the dead man's companions. So the departing drank a toast to the newborn.

Now they heard the mother murmuring tenderly to her little son. Tomorrow she will devote herself to her house-

hold tasks. Then in eight days she will again return to the field. Thus was the custom.

At dawn the workers said goodbye. The administrator, an early riser, passed by peering into the house of death.

"Poor fellow!"

That was his comment. The father of the new infant came up to tell him:

"Now you have a new criado at your service."

"Good."

The body was prepared for burial. Wrapping it in the sleeping mat that had served him in life, they tied it at both ends and in the middle, as is done with the bodies of those who die at sea before throwing them in the water. This roll was then placed on a board and fastened to it. With four carrying the dead man, the funeral procession began. The deceased man's wife carrying a candle led the way. Those coming behind could see the pale soles of the feet that stuck out of the mat.

II

An unusual incident had caused quite a sensation in the sad life of don Bernardo Gonzalez's hacienda. A shower of gunfire from the mountain had wounded the administrator who was now confined to bed as a result. The doctor who had been urgently sent for from town had extracted a half-dozen bullets from the muscles and thighs, but it was feared that the administrator might die. One shot lodged in the kidneys could not be removed and was giving him great pain.

The assailant had not even been seen although accompanying the administrator were his son Francisco and an old cowhand. There were suspicions, of course. Antonio Hernandez and his father were being held. The former was a mere boy on whose upper lip was still only a bit of fuzz. His father was one of the oldest workmen on the farm. In the hallway of the main building was Antonio with marks of dried blood from his left ear to his foot. On arresting the suspect, Francisco had struck him with the barrel of his gun. The old man was kept away from his son in another building and no words were allowed between them. There was a reason, as not a few knew, for those two being under suspicion. What had happened some time before was being recalled and

commented on as being a probable explanation.

As was the custom among these country people, when Antonio was ten years old, the old Hernández picked out the girl to be his son's future wife. Love marriages are not known among these folk. The fathers of male children, when the latter are still too young to have even a vague idea of matrimony with its necessities and responsibilities, choose their future daughters-in-law. The father goes to the house of the favored little girl and asks the father for his daughter. A formal request formulated by some highly respected old man of the community is presented; and, if the two fathers come to an agreement, the bargain is sealed with a drink of aguardiente and, as a pledge, some gifts that are almost always food, clothing, or livestock.

From the moment that a girl is chosen and given in promise, no one may seek to gain her. It is a mutual contract of an anticipated marriage, to be sure many years in the future. From that time the boy has to work to earn the money needed to defray the expense of his wedding. The engaged pair have no intercourse with each other, never see each other. The parents are those who arrange and settle everything.

When, because of some circumstance -- a quarrel between the parents, for example -- the marriage cannot be

performed, the relatives of the girl return the gifts they received. And when one of the two pledged in marriage dies, the other is considered a widow or a widower. A girl is sometimes a widow at the age of seven. He who asks for her hand now must be a widower; and on obtaining consent, may dispense with the usual gifts, as if he did her a favor to look at her.

In the case of Antonio Hernández, when he was ten years old, his father asked for the daughter of Rosalío, another old workman on the hacienda, who, besides, practised veterinary medicine by means of his curative knowledge of herbs and not without the aid of pantheistic powers of witchcraft. María Petra, a girl with shiny dark hair and sparkling eyes was considered from then on Antonio's future companion since some pieces of money, two bottles of aguardiente, and three laying hens had been paid to obtain the consent of the girl's parents.

Wholly devoted to their work, neither the old people nor the young were impatient. Time was rolling around and after a few annual fiestas and four changes of the constable, they talked of the marriage of Antonio and María Petra when the priest made his next visit.

The administrator's son was the same age as Antonio. The administrator, like the city man that he was although

he had now been many years on the farm, was opposed to this custom of early engagements arranged by parents. Francisco was approaching manhood without having chosen his bride. According to his father, these marriages were only for Indians.

One fine day, Francisco, while riding with his father over the range where the young bulls were being branded, said to him, "Listen, father, I want to get married."

The old administrator burst out laughing. The frank request amused him greatly. When he had laughed to his heart's content, he began to sing:

"The dove, the dove wants to wed, wants to wed, but can't find the mate to marry."

"I want to marry María Petra, Rosalío's daughter."

The old man continued laughing loudly. That his son might want to get married was so funny. Perhaps, he was thinking of the grandchildren. Neither remembered that María Petra was promised in marriage.

That same night the administrator talked with Rosalío who informed him then of the obstacle--that María Petra was promised to Antonio. The administrator was not concerned with that. He offered to arrange everything, and he went away sure that his son's wishes would be granted.

He betook himself in the direction of old Hernández's

house. There he tried to convince Hernandez that Antonio should renounce his rights to marry Maria Petra. In exchange he would give the young man fine land adjoining the marsh to farm on shares. Besides, when Antonio wanted to marry some other girl, he would pay the expenses; and he offered to be the boy's godfather from then on. Old Hernandez tried to talk with the patrón about the matter, but don Bernardo had scarcely found out what the question was when he broke out saying:

"Do you think I have time to be bothered with that? Along with you."

Antonio's resistance went as far as threats. His father, old and sickly, was put to doing the hardest tasks. Antonio was forced to work, standing, in the sugar mill, without permission to leave even on Sundays. Finally the two were forced to receive the gifts offered them and give up María Petra. The engagement broken, the girl went to town to marry Francisco. Antonio, angry and grieved, did not show his face on the farm for several weeks.

The couple had been married now for six months. Naturally, when the attack on the administrator occurred, Antonio was believed the one who had shot the gun in revenge. The boy roundly denied it, but they were beginning to say he would be sent to the army.

At two o'clock father and son were taken while they were working in the mill. The other workmen were questioned, but none exposed anything that would compromise the two. Only the man in charge of the workmen said that Antonio had disappeared at nightfall the day before, returning a little later. When Francisco entered the mill, Antonio was stirring the kettles of bubbling syrup.

The old man was heaping sugar cane on the floor in front of the mill. The oxen rumbling round and round, lazily turned the mill and chewed their cuds. All the building was enveloped in the vapor from the boiling syrup, that odor that is so pleasing at first and soon becomes so offensive that even the sight of anything which suggests sugar is nauseating.

The first thing that Francisco did when he saw the two was to rebuke them soundly and strike Antonio with his pistol causing blood to flow.

The people talked of nothing else. The administrator's condition was grave indeed. Antonio was taken away to town, and the father was released not without cruel abusive language on the part of the patrón. Even Cidronio, Antonio's youngest brother, was the object of the most merciless treatment.

Like many other boys of Bernardo González's hacienda,

Antonio was going to be pressed into the service of the army. The owner congratulated himself on these consignments to the Chief of Police. Because he gave up some of his valuable workmen to defend his country, the patrón was considered a friend of the government. Of these "valuable" workmen some were those who had been unwilling to continue working on the farm; others, some spirited ones who differed with the master, for instance, in the dispute over property. But the master never told such things in handing over the recruit. He merely professed an unselfish desire to contribute to the maintenance of peace and order.

III

The grounds of the hacienda had all the animation of a market. It was Saturday toward evening, and the peons after their day's work were hurrying to transact their little business--some with the patrón--maybe in regard to a piece of land to seed on shares; others to collect their weekly wages; and many more to ask for something in the store. The patrón received his men like an Indian prince before whom the peons almost knelt.

Tomorrow would be the day of the fair, and this ranch--being equidistant from the others--was chosen for the market place. But whatever was obtainable in the patrón's store on credit had to be bought there under threat of punishment, instead of at the fair.

The cowboys arrived on their horses, tied them to a tree or wire fence and entered the office to settle their accounts, clanking their spurs as they went. They carried crude leather whips hanging from the hilts of their knives. On the threshold they removed their hats, revealing receding foreheads and hair plastered down by sweat.

"Hello, wild fellow."

"Señor, don't put me on the cuff. Don't you see that

up to now I have always been able to pay cash."

The one who was not able to pay cash was Romulo Reyes. He had owned a small ranch on the other side of the hill; he had his own cows; he had worked his own land; but in a suit with the patrón, he had lost everything. The lawyers decided everything in favor of the master, who in that way acquired possession of all the property. Therefore, Romulo was only a cowhand as before, working for the other fellow. But because of this he still had not learned to be submissive like the rest.

The field workers--the land infantry--were attended to and their accounts liquidated by a servant in the confidence of the patrón. He was a real dealer. Some of the peons still were carrying debts charged against them to be taken out of their next harvest. Why were they never to return home with their shoulders free? The burden served to get them in the rhythm of the march. They came in formation--backs hunched and heads lowered. They left their ears of corn in the granary and went on down the line which passed in front of a large counter and ended ten meters farther on.

With these laborers were those who had worked all week in the sugar mills. They could be distinguished by their clothing all incrustated with tobacco-colored dregs of

syrup. They smelled of the mill and carried some sweets in their hands--bananas golden with syrup and strung on twine like golden beads. It was a gift for the wife or little one.

"Marcial Ramírez."

He wasn't a fullblooded Indian, although it was apparent that he had a good proportion of Indian blood. His black faded beard revealed a strain of some workmen from a foreign land, who knows when and from where. The clerk added some figures and made notes in his book. Afterwards, he put some coins on the counter.

"Is that right?"

"Whatever you say. I don't know anything about figures or letters."

Ramírez asked for some huaraches for himself and a few meters of cloth for his wife. The clerk again wrote in his book.

"Juan Cuatzintla."

"Porfirio Díaz."

As they passed by, they gave their names--names of old families, common names, names signifying things that surrounded their homes, such as: Cuatzintla, he who lives near a tree; Tepeixpa, the one who lives facing a mountain. The Porfirio Díaz were so numerous that, in order to distinguish them, each was given some nickname, for instance: Por-

firio Díaz, minus-a-finger; Porfirio Díaz, the oak. The name of the President of the Republic was very common among the Indians. In their everyday speech they called him simply: Porfirio.

There were some who wanted to examine their accounts. Distrustful, they scrutinized the network of lines and figures, but it was impossible to make sense of the "hen scratchings". They had worked so much and had not charged as much as the clerk said was in the books against them. The clerk declared:

"A peso that I give you is one that you owe me; and here's another that I have charged to you; doesn't that make three in all?"

The peon's eyes opened as wide as saucers and then closed as if the poor fellow could better figure it out when he shut out the figures on the book. Finally he gave up, scratching his head which he decided was too hard to get anything through. He glued his eyes to the figures which registered nothing intelligible on his brain.

"Urbano Tlahuica."

The line of workmen settling their Saturday accounts was held up a long time. Urbano's case was well-known and had many ramifications. Urbano, whose father and grandfather also had been laborers on don Bernardo's farm, had

left months before to work elsewhere, weary of seeing himself in the greatest poverty without hope of ever getting out of the mesh.

One night without a word to anyone, he took his scant belongings--his machete and clothes--and set off behind his wife, who carried their son on her back, for another farm where he could work without the chain of inherited debts around his neck. His pay was always discounted and still the debt increased instead of decreasing. This action was one of rebellion. The following morning his neighbors discovered that he had disappeared. As he did not hurry to work, the superintendent inquired of the others. No one knew anything of Urbano's departure.

Some days passed, and it became known that he was working at El Naranjal, where the patrón was informed of Urbano's conduct. A messenger was sent to call the sheriff, who, because he owed his position to the patrón had to travel miles to attend to complaints. With the most submissive humility written on his face, the sheriff appeared before the master who seemed to represent authority as well as power.

The sheriff received instructions to seize Urbano and bring him back to the farm. The runaway owed him a great deal, and besides, by no means was the patrón going to lose

a workman.

The unfortunate man was apprehended and, with his arms tied behind his back, was returned to the farm. When the superintendent saw him, he was so furious that he was on the point of beating him with a halter. But, controlling his passions, he put his hand on the man's shoulders, called him "son", and personally untied the knots of the cord that bound the prisoner.

That was Urbano's story. Since he had been absent several months and was now again checking in at the pay window, he was again being reminded of his encumbrances to refresh his memory. All the debt had been inherited from the old man, and how the father had so mired himself no one knew.

The son, now twenty-five years old, had one of those faces that by the forcefulness of its lines recalled a clear-cut sculpture in stone. He was resolved to sacrifice everything to win his independence, and he refused to accept all his wages for the days he had worked. He wanted only a third, the rest to be applied on the debt.

"Don't be stubborn, Urbano."

And the clerk insisted that, if Urbano wouldn't take full credit, he at least take something from the store--a shawl, for instance, of that year's fashion which he put on

the man's shoulder.

"For the old woman, hombre."

And upon the man's hat, he put a new one, one of those with a turned-up brim.

"Yours is very old. Take this one and everything you want."

Urbano resisted, refusing to take the shawl and hat. But it did him no good. The clerk knew well the methods to employ to snare his victims. He paid no attention to Urbano's protests, wrote the charges in the book, and turned to the next peon in line.

So the week's record of credits and deficits was completed. Some men carried off with them along with the niggardly remuneration, various articles acquired on credit at the store: machetes, a blanket, hats, knickknacks. Others came from the granary with a few measures of corn or beans charged to their accounts.

The liquor stand attracted many where they had drinks before starting down diverse paths home. First, they said goodbye to the administrator who, as his subjects respectfully passed with their hats in their hands, sent them off in a fatherly fashion without shaking hands.

The inebriates, in whom joy had overcome fatigue, sang out of tune as they stumbled along in pairs. If someone

lost his footing and fell, those less intoxicated took him by the arms, and he was suspended between the shoulders of his two companions. With his feet dragging, the drunkard thus continued homeward. If he were abandoned on the road, the coyotes would make short work of him.

Night was falling. Under the thickets whistled the cooing quails. The crickets chirped monotonously. In the distant ranch houses the first lights were beginning to shine. Some latent thrushes flew by returning to their nests. How melancholy was all this silence and beauty! And in the middle of the field, the workmen, homeward bound, resembled a moving line of clothing more or less dirty put out to dry.

IV

The farm village with its gray shacks and moss-colored turret seemed intent on climbing the edge of the nearby mountain ridge. Viewed from afar it looked attractive. Close up, it was a sad outlay of houses. In the neighboring fields not a workman was to be seen. In the shade of the fig trees a couple of sleepy oxen were chewing their cuds, and in the sun rested a few old nags burdened with wood. The farm was holding its annual fiesta, the "Fiesta of the Virgin", the Mother of Sorrow, who was famed for performing miracles and whose statue on a piece of linen fluted for the occasion occupied the center of the only altar in the little church.

Two incidents had promised to make this fiesta more significant than in other years: the presence of both the priest and the patrón, the master of their souls and the master of their lands. For that reason elaborate preparations had been made. The church was decorated with palms gathered in the heart of the mountains. In the doorway they hung festoons of paper and over the modest archway wild flowers were entwined to form a canopy. The Virgin was adorned with wax offerings, flowers, and candles. In spite of all this, the picture was not one of gayety. The

tears that the unknown painter had put on her cheeks were too evident. Garlands even adorned the bells.

There were the two bells that were rung simultaneously only on the occasion of great events, for example, the night before when the young priest arrived, or when there was a fire. When the people had to assemble by order of the patrón, then only the small bell was rung.

When the priest had arrived the night before, he hadn't even had time to remove his riding boots. With a red handkerchief around his neck and his revolver in his belt, the priest had slipped on his vestments and begun his work, which was considerable for it had been some time since he had visited the place.

Informed of his arrival about ten couples were inside the church ready to get married, as well as some fifty women with their children in their arms, the first group waiting at the altar for the marriage ceremony, and the second, for the baptismal waters.

The bells pealed out as the priest dismounted from his gray mule, at the side of the little church. When he crossed the threshold, he genuflected. His general appearance, plus the firearms at his belt and a kerchief at his neck, made him look more like a tax-collector. Scarcely had his assistant helped him with his vestments when the Indians

hastened to kiss his hand. Like an army officer he ordered the women, with their babies in their arms, to form two lines leaving a narrow lane between. The assistant gave him the water, a book, and a flask. There was no time to lose. Sprinkling water from one end of the wailing lines, he baptized all the children at once. The sacristan went down the two lines and on a rusty tray received twenty reales for each child. When this was over, there were fifty children more, crying and waiting for the same service.

"He is baptizing wholesale," some said.

Perhaps the poor priest repeated Jesus's words: "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few." So few were there that didn't arrive at least in twos that the sacristan could indeed scarcely collect the money fast enough. With each collection, the tray must be emptied in a safe place and a constant eye kept on it.

Afterwards there were those couples desiring to be married--about forty, accompanied by their parents, godparents, sisters, and brothers. By pluralizing the admonishments, lengthening the epistle, and giving a general blessing, the marriages were celebrated in the shortest time possible.

"This is like killing a whole flock with one stone."

"Be quiet, heretics. To say such things of the padre. He knows what he is doing. That's the thanks of a brute!....

Love your neighbor as yourself. Amen."

Some peasants arrived to go to confession. It was impossible to hear them. The priest--the only laborer--had before him much grain to harvest.

"Confession? I surely see in your faces that you are God's sainted people. What sins can you have committed? Go in peace. If you have sinned, I give you absolution."

* * *

This done, and the master having arrived, the fiesta began. There was shooting of firecrackers in the church courtyard. A band of musicians playing wind instruments were going up and down the dusty little streets. As soon as the church opened, a group of dancers entered. There were probably twenty and they entered in two's accompanied by a monotonous rhythmic music that might be suitable for the accompaniment of gymnastic exercises. By their dress they seemed to want to recall their pre-colonial ancestors. They had tufts of bright feathers on their heads, their chests were bare, they wore breech-clouts and sandals, and they carried in their right hands a cane like a macana² entirely covered with bells. A leader who wore trousers, shoes and a

² Wooden weapon in use among the ancient Indians of Mexico, generally edged with sharp flint.

hat directed them with a long machete. To the rhythm of the music and uttering strident cries, he went through contortions and movements similar to those associated with fencing. It was a dance of symmetry. The bells sounded with perfect uniformity. The performers danced with more detachment and more monotony as greater became their desire to be more acceptable to the divinity.

There was a smell of resin. Suddenly the captain cried out more shrilly than before and raised his machete high in a manner equivalent to a command. The violin struck a more vigorous air--one might say a martial air. The dancers gave greater rigidity to their movements; they walked gracefully; turned sharply, one wing to the left and one to the right; they advanced laterally two steps toward the center; and, inter-crossing with the greatest precision, advanced to the first position and continued dancing.

A stir was caused by the arrival of the master accompanied by the administrator. Neither don Bernardo nor his companion made the sign of the cross. The priest came out of the sacristy and hastened to greet don Bernardo, who kissed the priest's hand. The altar and the saints didn't matter to him, but he was very watchful of his politics: to show reverence for the priest since it suited him that the peons, taking that as an example, should respect and fear

the priest. The latter led the owner off toward the sacristy. The door closed and there alone they dropped all formalities and slapped each other on the back.

"Ha, little priest, glutton for chicken, you have come again to exploit my poor Indians."

"And because of whom are they that way? Slave driver."

They laughed heartily. The priest took out a bottle.

"A drink, so early?"

"It is the consecration wine, the good wine that pricks the throat, Cognac written in capital letters."

"Oh, what a rascal is our little priest!"

They again slapped each other and laughed loudly. When they went out the priest had his hands humbly clasped on his stomach--as the hands of the dead are customarily placed. Don Bernardo went at the priest's side, submissive, respectful, and with lowered eyes.

Then don Bernardo knelt and heard mass at the conclusion of which the two went out together to take a stroll over the farm bedecked for the fiesta. Quite soon they were joined by the judge, some old men, the constables, and some others that formed a retinue. Among the crowd where the light color of the peons' hats and clothes predominated, the priest and don Bernardo with their cassimere clothing

were detected from a distance.

They went toward a small open plain, a break in the ascent of the nearby range, where there were about two hundred meters of wide, level road. On both sides were thick reddish walls. Many people were assembled where the horse-race was to start. The Indians, however, were not admitted within, and they had to climb up with the boys into the trees at the side of the road.

Already four horses had raced whose riders were walking by all sweaty and panting. The horses were rough looking and skinny but possessed some fleetness. The patrón was only interested in his mare that was running against a horse famous in the vicinity, owned by his neighbor, another farmer.

Meanwhile preparations were being made for a race between a black horse with a white tail and a spotted gray. They were of equal height and well matched. Bets were put up. The patrón seated himself in the best place, high and in line with the starting point.

The riders were two boys, cowhands of don Bernardo, dressed in the typical white homespun clothing, with the shirt always worn over the trousers. Mounted now they rode up and down warming their horses. Finally, the horses were brought in line back of the starting rope stretched across

the road, to give no horse the advantage. They tossed their white straw hats far off. The starter drew his pistol from his belt and counted: one ... two ... bang! The horses were off headlong down the course. At fifty meters the gray was ahead and his rider struck the whitetail on the ears. Cries of protest were heard. One hundred meters and they were neck to neck, the whitetail's rider encroaching on the other's terrain.

The two riders ended by seizing each other's horses at full gallop. Before reaching the finishing line, they both rolled to the ground striking each other. The mounts, riderless, kept on going. Consequently, the race was discounted. Now the mare was to run. Her rival was a dark horse with a white spot on his forehead and a turbulent mane. Don Bernardo went himself to see that nothing was lacking. He checked the reins, the cinch, the animal's feet. The rider was a lively young fellow. Bets were laid. Don Bernardo put down two hundred pesos in bank notes and received as much as they wanted to bet against him.

The horses were ridden up to the starting line and stood side by side. Off went the gun. The mare stretched out its neck trying to get ahead, but the dark horse led her by half his length. The rider applied the whip to the mare's legs and chest. When they crossed the finishing line, the

black won by a fraction--his front legs were over the line first.

Don Bernardo paid and left disgruntled. Some tipsy old men and others who honestly wanted to offer their regrets approached him, their hats in their hands. The administrator roughly brushed them aside and told them that in the afternoon the master would receive all those who wanted to talk with him.

The priest was also detained by the people. He let them approach and extended his hand to be kissed, or he merely threw his blessing to right and left, which some women and also some men knelt to receive.

Then for the "greased pole." In honor of the patrón they were all eager to win--that is, to reach the top of the pole where the prizes were. They formed a human pyramid, those at the bottom holding the feet of those higher up. Down they all fell amid great shouts of laughter.

The priest, who considered he had fulfilled his duty as far as his attention to the activities on the farm, returned to the church to continue marriages and baptisms not without first insisting that he expected don Bernardo for dinner.

Don Bernardo visited the settlement of workmen's huts, which had a festive air on this occasion, on his way to the

square where the cock-fights were taking place. His cocks were fighting those of a neighboring hamlet in six prearranged fights and two extras as if all of them had not been arranged. Since the master was the owner of the cocks, he took the bets for the fight, which promised to highlight the fiesta.

Gamblers from all the surrounding country were gathered in the square. The landowner had scarcely joined the group when the amarradores proceeded to fit the guards to the spurs of the birds. Bets were laid. One of the betters shouted:

"I'll put up five to one on the young cock."

Near the pit was the best part of the settlement, women as well as men. The official presiding gave don Bernardo his place near a table on which were objects to raffle off and a red cedar box containing spur guards.

"Si...lence, let'er go!"

The shout cut the discussions short. Those within the ring left by stepping over the canvas covering which guarded the entrance. There remained within only the men to release the birds. The young cock looked like a raven. The other was almost black with silver tail-feathers. The men holding the cocks squatted down on one knee either side of a line drawn across the center of the ring. The two cocks,

on seeing each other in such close proximity, flashed their beaks in rapid thrusts and arched their neck feathers. To arouse them further, the men pulled the birds' feathers. Simultaneously, the two men backed to another line and released the birds. The combatants rushed at each other. They met in mid-air. Both fell bewildered. Wounded, they were both dying. But the silver tail raised his head and crowed. He had the advantage--seconds only.

"Don Bernardo won."

And to that shout the band stationed outside the ring responded with a march. The music was the only thing to which the crowd was treated because it cost money to see the fight.

It was too bad the patrón couldn't stay for the dance. Night had scarcely fallen. The musicians were now seated on a sort of raised platform in the dance hall. On the benches along the whole length of the hall were, already, many women. The men, the early comers, formed a group near the bar and the liquor stands set up in the gutters.

The faint light of the small lanterns paled as the moon, yellow and enormous, rose behind the distant orchards. The musicians decided upon the corrillo, "La Leva". Many must have remembered Antonio Hernandez, but there was no time for conversation. Some already--about ten or

hat in hand, were going in search of their partners. The girls danced with their eyes cast down, hardly showing the toes of their shoes beneath their skirts. Some of the men even made neat turns, jauntily beating time with the soles of their shoes. Those who danced barefooted made a disagreeable noise caused by the friction of their toes against the dust-covered floor.

The animation of the dance increased with each passing hour. From the surrounding ranches, cowboys arrived who tied their mounts near the hall. Only taking time to remove their spurs, they entered in search of partners. Two of those roving troubadours who improvised verses with greatest ease for every occasion, whether it be a declaration of love or a combat, approached the musicians' platform and began to sing. It was again "La Leva". They sang alternately, relating the pitfalls of all those who were conscripted--the memories of recruiting of men made many years ago to fight the Americans and the French, happenings revived because of the recent recruits sent as punishment to the army by the patron. The troubadours told that the government forces were coming, summoning all the unmarried young men and even those just reaching manhood. At the end of each verse there was something resembling a sob, perhaps because the author could not transcribe in a better way the weeping of the

mothers deprived of their sons.

A request for a dance number was initiated. When the musicians began to play a "two step", the dancers were only half what they had been before. Not all of them knew that number since it was considered a dance for the better class. They clasped arms; and, like trained dogs, they went through the motions of this unnatural dance not of their ancestors.

Dawn was breaking. Those who had come from the nearby ranches mounted their horses and rode off at a gallop. Those intoxicated shouted and drove around cutting capers on horses as frisky as they were. When not even a woman remained in the hall, the musicians left their platform and went to have coffee at one of the improvised stands.

The fiesta had ended. Opposite the curate, the sacristan made ready for the departure of the priest, who always said he preferred to leave early to take advantage of the coolness. Mounted on a mule, he blessed everything and everybody, raising his hand with which he made the sign of the cross. He spoke in the name of Christ and recommended humility, love for one's neighbor, etc. Seeing him, they fancied what Jesus would be like with a thirty caliber pistol at his belt and leading a mule, carrying on its ulcerous back two thousand pesos.

1911

Don Bernardo had visitors to whom he had shown off his best sugar-cane plantations and his best herds of horses, cows, and swine; and he wanted as well, to display to his visitors his many peons. Let them see how many hundreds of workers he had on his land and let them see how they held him in respect and reverence. A patriarch of old might have done the same thing in trying to do honors to distinguished guests.

The peons had been called together under pretext of celebrating the abundant harvest--that is, the master's bins were full, though empty were those of the workers who even lacked bare necessities.

For the workmen, the patrón had ordered installed free dispensaries of aguardiente and tepache.³ Let them even get drunk now, who, because of having attended to the demands of the master, had failed to seed in season; to give their crops the needed care at the right time; and, in short, failed to harvest anything; and when the rains had come upon them, the little they had earned was lost at cards.

The whiskey made them happy, and they forgot that

³ A Mexican drink made of pulque, water, sugar, pineapple and cloves.

hunger was knocking at their doors to devour them. It didn't matter. The master's granaries were full. The farm now would sell them corn and beans that they themselves had cultivated. If they didn't have any money, they could work it out. If their charge accounts increased, what of it? How many didn't already have insolvable bills passed on from father to son.

The crowd sounded like a nest of angry wasps. Suddenly the hum of the hive was hushed, the reason being that the owner had come out of the farmhouse surrounded by his visitors. Don Bernardo gave his "children" a fatherly smile. The peons removed their hats and said to each other: "the master".

"Senor Gonzalez, with all these men armed and you in command, it would be a problem, at least for the local authorities ... "

"Who is talking of that? I am a friend of the government, and by no means would I commit the crime of arming my boys. They are happy subject to me. With weapons in their hands, quien sabe?"

A fat senora with very white arms and waddling like a duck asked another of those questions that seemed to annoy the master:

"And why haven't you put them in school? In town

there are boys who would gladly come to serve you--board and room and a wage no more than that paid a peon."

"Don't think of it, my dear Agustina. They would be lost to me then. Who could put up with them if they knew how to read and write? The first thing, they would ask for land and an increase in wages."

Suffering from the evening's sultry heat, don Bernardo and his visitors fanned themselves. They didn't realize that the laborers congregated there brought on their backs all the heat of the sun that had beaten down the long day on the open fields, on the plowed lands, on the rows of sugarcane, on the earth freshly prepared for the seeding of corn.

Someone had arrived. A group of men gathered around the individual who had all the appearance of a traveler. Around his neck was a bundle of clothes; he leaned on a staff; and, while he gesticulated, he fanned himself with his straw hat. It was the voice of Antonio Hernández, sent to the army six months before. They were all surprised that he had returned so soon while others had remained in the service of the army for even three years. No one thought for a moment that his discharge might have been paid since the old man, his father, was not the kind to spend money. Exasperated, the patrón ordered Antonio to approach. He wanted to find out how and why he had returned so soon. Antonio, passing

among his old friends to right and left, greeted them. He seemed arrogant as if proud of having gone to see other places, perhaps of having been a soldier. Then he came face to face with his father. The old man was drunk. When he realized that his son stood in front of him, he embraced him, crying and insisting that the boy drink out of the same glass with him.

When the youth approached Bernardo, the master looked him over from head to foot. The appearance of this frightful-looking person--hair closely clipped, shirt half open, trousers faded and like much-dented sheetmetal tubes, shoes covered with mud--disgusted him. After four days on the road searching for this miserable home, he was indeed filthy. The patrón was angered even more when the boy saluted him.

"Why have you returned?"

"Because they told me to."

"Who?"

"My lieutenant, by order of the general."

"And where is that order?"

"He didn't give it to me in writing."

"That seems strange to me. I think you deserted."

"No, señor amo. They said to me: 'Get out!' I turned right about face and here I am at your service."

Antonio saluted again and withdrew. The master did

not take his eyes from him even for a moment as if he was trying to read the truth in the soldier's face. Don Bernardo's visitors asked for the story, and he told them all that had happened: the attack on the administrator, the proof of Antonio's guilt, his being sent to the army and his sudden return.

Meanwhile, Antonio was mingling with his acquaintances, friends, and relatives. They all invited him to have a drink and he drank from the contents of every glass and every bottle. He told of how he had fared in the soldiers' quarters. With affection, he recalled his lieutenant, a certain Nacho Moreno. What a fine fellow was that Nacho Moreno.

His tone was irritating to some. They thought that he was lost for no other reason, perhaps, than that he had gone to who-knew-where. The liquor was going to his head, and his excuse was that he hadn't eaten all day. Suddenly, a bugle began to play. He began giving military orders and executing them.

"Right about face. March.

"Left flank. Halt."

He was completely drunk now. As darkness descended, there were many peons too intoxicated to walk. Others were dragged away by their friends. Antonio remained in the patio marching first one way and then another, still giving

commands in the most foolish manner. Perhaps he had the illusion that he was whistling, but all he succeeded in doing was to keep his mouth pursed like the inflated thick underlip of a horse. Other drunkards marched behind him. It was a pastime for those still in their right senses who were looking on.

Even less overjoyed on seeing Antonio back at the farm was the administrator, who then arrived on the scene. He also questioned the fellow as to why and how he had returned so soon. Antonio's answer was the same as before. There were more inquiries.

"That's it! I forgot, senior administrator. I haven't told you the most important thing: the ball has started rolling; don Pancho Madero has taken up arms in the north."

And he shouted with all his might, "Long live Madero!"

Don Bernardo rushed out of the house. Much to his annoyance, he had received word of this some days before and now in the most unexpected way to hear someone shout the cry in his ears ... He asked what was happening. The administrator told him what had happened and the master commented:

"What's this nonsense about Madero? This fellow is drunk and doesn't know what he is saying. How would he know?"

"As sure as there is a God, patrón. Do you know who told me? My lieutenant, Nacho Moreno. Now if my lieutenant doesn't know, who does?"

Don Bernardo didn't pay any attention to him. He seemed worried as he reentered the house to discuss the news with his visitors. Antonio had another drink which was offered to him and said to his friends:

"I am going to see my dear mother."

Along the path that he had not forgotten, Antonio, the recruit, disappeared into the night shouting,

"Long live Madero! Long live Pascual Orozco!"

VI

Among the peons who lived within the shadows of the farmhouse there was an air of unrest. Cecilio, Antonio's young brother, had been beaten with the barrel of a gun for refusing to tell the names of those involved, who had arms, and what was the hiding place of the fugitives. Besides, the master threatened to send him to the army if he continued being obstinate and remaining silent.

Those who had left were being treated as fugitives from justice. The patrón had searched the ranchería--a rare thing indeed--asking questions here, examining there. He treated them all as his "children," but in none of the peons was there that feeling of confidence that justified the treatment.

Cecilio was locked up under the crafty eye of the manager. Among the other peons there was a belief that something bad was going to happen to the boy. No one dared to approach him, except his mother, a little old bent woman who went at noon to give him food, which her son refused in silence. The old woman wept and in silence returned home.

Everyone knew that Antonio had been in the ranchería during the night, that he had left some arms and led off some

horses, that some men joined him--two cowhands (recent arrivals and apparently not well liked by the master), three peons who worked in the sugar mill, and others. It was said that he had now fifty men in all.

Most of the peons still did not know how to define the situation. Brought up to a life of subordination, accustomed to accepting decisions always made by the master, they were bewildered now that some of their own were the principals in the present drama. From the conversations of the workers, it was apparent that they couldn't present clearly to themselves the part being played by those who had left on a note so hostile. They confused them with the gangsters, the cattle thieves, and the highwaymen that in times past had been the enemies of all. The old people, especially, thought that the young fellows were crazy. What were they going to do, so many, so poorly armed and inexperienced in warfare against don Porfirio's men? They were in that state of emotion of people accustomed to a well-defined order of things, suddenly deprived of support. They thought don Porfirio was permanent, that only death could remove him from office. It never occurred to them to rise up and go against authority and thus remove the unpopular leader. Sadly they thought of their former fellow workers. They imagined them as they had seen the highway

robbers taken prisoner by the peasants, suspended from a branch, hanged in the middle of the road as a warning to others, shot in front of a church door or against the trunk of a tree.

Few were the ones who had gone to work. Neither the master nor the administrator nor anyone had taken charge of the labor on the farm. Along the road began to appear small detachments. They were the government troops on their way to camps or to small towns. Very spectacular they were with their good horses, their wide hats, and their trousers with rows of buttons up the sides. Their leader rode ahead on a handsome horse of great stature who foamed at the bit and tossed his mane proudly.

Don Bernardo, in person, received them in the patio of the hacienda. At once the administrator rushed forward to stand beside his master, as if he were the one to defend him from attack. The commander dismounted, the rowels of his spurs resounding on the pavement. Gesturing, the owner began to explain the happenings of the last seventy-two hours. They passed to the interior of the house while about forty rurales remained outside.

When the commander and don Bernardo came out, the administrator had already brought Cecilio to the patio. The commander said to him with a tact which seemed to expect the

immediate and desired reply:

"Well, boy! And your brother?"

"Only God knows, señor."

"You know too, and you are going to tell us or we'll hang you from a tree if that is more to your liking."

The officer turned his head as if to expectorate and took advantage of the movement to wink at don Bernardo as if to say: we must bring him to his knees to make him tell us where his brother is hiding. He turned to the boy being questioned:

"Do you think he has joined Madero's forces?"

"God knows, señor."

"Didn't he tell you where he was going?"

He shrugged his shoulders. The questions and threats had left on the young Indian's face not a single trace of fear.

"Can he be far?"

"God knows, señor."

"You too know it and you are going to tell me."

They tied the boy with a rope, elbow to elbow so that he couldn't move his arms. One end of the rope was brought up to the nape of the neck and a loop thrown around his neck. The other end was fastened to the horn of the saddle of one of the soldiers.

The commander bade don Bernardo goodbye, and the troop mounted their horses. As if they expected to encounter the Maderistas a few steps away, the soldiers drew their guns from the holsters and held them in their hands in readiness. They disappeared down the road, Cecilio in advance in the capacity of guide.

All those who watched the departure of the soldiers gave Antonio and his companions up for lost. In fact, one need only look at these peasant soldiers to concede that the Maderistas had enjoyed their last day of earthly life.

Of course, don Bernardo was of the same opinion, and the administrator had no other thought because he believed the information given the soldiers so opportunely would prevent the rebels from organizing and increasing in number. Summing up his opinion, he expressed it in the following words:

"A shout in time drives the beast from the mountain."
The rebellion had been nipped in the bud.

* * *

Finally, it became known that Antonio was one only of many who had taken up arms. The story was told that in Morelos there was a very important general, General Zapata, who was threatening Cuernavaca. Also, that in the north the

ball was gaining momentum. They learned that the soldiers, circling around where they thought Antonio and his men were hidden, were ambushed and so sudden was it that they had no time even to fire a shot. The first discharge, made at close range, cost the life of the commander and ten soldiers. Five more were hunted like tigers through the rocks and brambles. The others succeeded in escaping, running "as if the devil were on their tails", as someone at the farm expressed it. Cecilio, still bound, presented himself to his brother and was taken in to increase the ranks of the Maderistas.

At the farm the revolutionists were expected at any moment and there was great alarm. Don Bernardo didn't show his face anywhere, and it was well known that he was hiding on one of his sugar plantations. Those who had nothing to fear from Antonio's arrival constantly watched the roads and the mountain paths. All they saw were the buzzards who converged from all directions toward the place where the shooting had occurred. They must have been having a feast on the corpses.

A muleteer who passed the farm spread the good news:

"Madero has triumphed. Don Porfirio has renounced the Presidency of the Republic and he has fled from the country."

The old ones refused to believe it. They saw the revolution through the personality of Antonio Hernández-- or rather they saw him in terms of the revolution.

VII

With what interest did they listen to the stories of those who were in the party with Francisco I. Madero when he entered the capital of the Republic. Antonio Hernandez, who had returned home with a "Texas" hat and new boots, was one of those in authority. He related how Madero, when Antonio was presented to him, embraced him and told him he had heard how much he had done for the cause. But that wasn't enough for Antonio's listeners. Those who hadn't had the good fortune to go to the big city and march in triumphantly needed more facts, and Antonio didn't seem disposed to enter into details. They asked him the manner of their entering and the identity of those participating. When señor Madero's name was mentioned, the peasants tipped their hats or at least touched the brim of their chilapeños as they did in passing the door of a church or when they pronounced the name of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

As Antonio passed their questions by, reading or pretending to read the communications received or waiting on the prominent men of the town who came looking for him, his soldiers described, without omitting the least detail, the entrance into the city and the principal men of the new regime.

"Madero," they said, "is very short. He seems to laugh with his eyes. At first glance one wouldn't give three peanuts for him. But, what a man! He has almost too big a heart for his breast. To have ousted don Porfirio: there was sufficient reason for giving him such a reception. They say that no one in Mexico has ever been welcomed by so many people. From the station to the palace, like from here to Palo Gacho, were crowds of people--about three hundred thousand--waiting to see him, to know him, to cheer him. And when I tell you that on the "Caballito" there were about a hundred like criminals hanging on the gallows."

Not a few were curious about Pascual Orozco. His deeds of valor, especially at Juárez City, an action considered decisive in the triumph of the revolution, made everyone admire him. The conqueror general attracted those individuals more than the apostle of Democracy.

"Pascual Orozco? ... a tall man, extremely serious, as if he didn't know what laughter was. But what a valiant man! Those generals of Porfirio didn't know what to make of him. Navarro, who was one of the best, had to take off his hat to him in Juárez City."

"And Zapata?"

"That one is our chief. I mean we were among his troops. We with Antonio as our commander joined with the

southern forces. These were all country people dressed in calzón y camisa⁴ and with hats like ours. Zapata is dark, tall, dressed like a charro⁵ with a large black mustache. He resembles his brother Enfemio except he is not so tall. Oh, that evil-faced chief Enfemio!"

Their version that among the troops that filed into the city were some women interested the peasants greatly.

"How can old women make themselves equal to men instead of staying at home tending the children!"

Someone mentioned something about the colonel's wife, Pepita Neri.

"Now that one! So that's her specialty! What chance are those poor officers going to have?"

Cecilio, who also was among the Madero troops, ventured an idea that all the rest seconded:

"What I don't like is that señor Madero surrounded himself with dandies as soon as he entered Mexico City. They are all sly fellows. Since señor Madero is so good, he trusts them, listens to them, accepts them into the party. For the greater part they are followers of Porfirio come to share the spoils."

⁴ The white cotton shirt, tail out, and trousers worn by many Mexicans of the poorer class.

⁵ The charro wears a large embroidered felt hat, soft shirt and bright tie, and tight-fitting trousers decorated along the sides with silver ornaments.

"That is the least. The worst is that those disgusting leaders of Porfirio have not been sent chasing chickens instead of being kept in command of troops.

* * *

Not even when the priest visited the settlement had there been such great enthusiasm. Antonio had received a letter from the general telling him to give his attention to the matter of giving guarantees and facilities to the candidate for district deputy. The candidate was a former municipal secretary of the town, considered very intelligent.

In his letter the general talked of the complete triumph of democracy: that the peasants now had the liberty to vote for whomever they wanted, that is to say, to elect their representatives to the Assembly.

"Look here. Some chase the hare and others without running overtake him. What has the secretary under Porfirio done to deserve to be deputy?"

"What's the use of fighting! The 'higher-ups' say that he it is and he it must be. Say what? Do you want to run for deputy when you can't even write your own name?"

Antonio had arranged everything necessary to give the candidate a reception worthy of the occasion. He had asked for musicians. He had commanded that some arches of flowers

and colored paper streamers be erected at the entrance of the village. He had notified all the neighbors to assemble at the proper time. And he had ordered prepared a good mate and a whole kettle of tamales.

Don Bernardo had made no objections. Moreover, he had paid almost all the expenses and had requested that the candidate stay in his house.

The sound of music heralded the arrival of the distinguished guest. He rode in very poorly mounted on a dark-colored lame mare. Antonio, with three of his boys who had met him down the road, was close beside the candidate. They looked more like four policemen with a criminal. But the "criminal" when he talked to them did it with the air and mien of a protector.

Don Bernardo came out to the patio, honey dripping from his mouth, and received the candidate with an embrace and with much bowing and scraping. He told him he would feel greatly honored to receive him in his house, and he made him enter.

The neighbors began arriving, wearing their best Sunday clothing. Antonio's men presented arms and formed a guard of honor. The band continued playing. There was an air of a fiesta in the ranchería. Before supper, that was to be served in the patio, they proceeded to organize a

political meeting at which time the candidate was introduced. The patrón proposed the installation of a club, the Francisco I. Madero Club. Applause of satisfaction followed the happy suggestion. The candidate congratulated don Bernardo and, following the customary rule, offered him the presidency of the club. Charmed, don Bernardo accepted it. They pulled out a table and some chairs. The peasants were gathered in the patio. Those who could not get in, were perched up on the thick stone walls of the corral and patio. Near the table they had taken seats--the candidate in the center; don Bernardo, at the right, at the left, Antonio. The candidate tried to direct some remarks at the constituents nearby but since he couldn't make himself heard, he climbed up on the table.

He declared that he had always been a revolutionist. Not a few must have wondered how, if he was a revolutionist, he served such a long time in the Porfirio regime. He made mention of his services lent the Madero cause. (It was known to everyone that he had passed the last few months playing billiards in the pueblo.) He explained that the age of democracy had arrived when the people would freely name their representatives. Madero and General Zapata had been elected. He referred to don Bernardo and praised the liberality with which he treated the revolution, which he, the speaker, rep-

resented. Of Antonio, not one word. To wind up his oration he gave cheers of "long live" for Madero, Zapata, Orozco, and democracy.

"I have spoken."

There was great applause. The band broke out with the reveille. The candidate, satisfied, coughed and passed his silk handkerchief over his lips which were very dry from speaking. Don Bernardo shook hands with him and congratulated him.

Then followed a supper of tamales sprinkled down with aguardiente and cold water from the well. In their hands and on their knees the peasants held their plates as they did in the fields and at work. To conclude the evening's program, a dance was improvised. At midnight the candidate, now ready to go to bed, made another speech. He mentioned his confidence in his election since he had been received everywhere so enthusiastically--which didn't surprise him because he had accomplished excellent results with the weapons in his hands, the weapons of ideas, he added, prophet-like. He affirmed that he had defended the revolution and had attacked the worm-eaten Porfirio regime.

"When I am in the Assembly, I shall direct all my efforts to the betterment of this unfortunate section of the country whose representatives never realized its neces-

sities. Who of us were acquainted with our endless Porfirio deputies? No one! I shall cry out all the truth that has previously been silenced. I shall work diligently to obtain all that you have lacked for a better life and ... Long live the Revolution. I have spoken!"

Again there was great applause. To the tune of "Sobre las Olas" they all felt the gentle vibration of a better life.

VIII

The workers returned to their fields, the patron's fields. On the way going to their labors in the morning and returning home at night, as they walked along one behind the other, they commented on the part they had recently played in the struggle and recalled the triumphant entrance into the Capital of the Republic. What palaces they had seen! From that, they went on to talk of the new authorities in the pueblo. And they concluded by evaluating the results of the revolution.

"All right, and what have we gained?"

This question almost all of them had asked themselves. In the furrows, in the neighborhood gatherings, everywhere the question had presented itself. Many of the workers had not expressed it so clearly, but they were made to understand it when the master ordered them to leave their own work to attend to his.

They had dreamed that the triumph of the Madero revolution would set them free--free to devote themselves to their own occupations: to seed at the proper time, to weed when it was needed, and to gather the fruits of their harvest before the crops were choked by weeds or eaten up by wild animals.

There was always some one to justify and enumerate the benefits received.

"Hombre, we have rid ourselves of paying taxes. Before we had to pay even to live. You know what a burden that was? The boys were scarcely making a day's wage and already the tax collector had their names on the list. Besides, now we are not always threatened with being sent to the army, and we are treated with some consideration. You well know that if they abused one of us they would have to deal with Antonio or one of the other leaders, whom they fear like wild animals. And if you don't think so, remember what happened to the manager of the sugar-cane mill at "El Laurel". He struck a boy, and the boy in self-defense let him have it in the stomach. When they took him to town to the police, he was able to prove in the courts that he had been treated like a dog, and they set him free. It was Antonio who said that if they did not give the boy his freedom he would hang them as soon as trouble started."

"It is true. Now, too, they don't carry off our women to serve by the week in the master's hacienda or anywhere that the master needs someone to grind corn for the peons."

"Nor do they make the women work, as before, as laborers whenever there is more than we men have time to do."

"It is true."

But the conviction of an improvement in their lives was completely transitory. They talked of the same miseries, of never getting out of their contracted debts, of the bad situation of the share-holders.

"We shouldn't have allowed the patrón to return to the hacienda, or at least we should have made him give us lands and the time to work them."

"That couldn't be. Property is sacred. He who has a nurse, suckles; and he who hasn't shifts for himself."

"Look, comrade, I have heard something of that matter of the lands that were ours and that the lawyers have taken away from us. I have the idea, but I don't know how to put it into words. What a misfortune not to know how to read or write!"

IX

"Again the federales?"

"They are coming to put us in order! All because of what happened at Jojutla, and at Cuautla."

"Well, let's fire on them!"

"It must be God's will. As for me, that would suit me fine."

And they didn't wait to find out what the general feeling was, but were off after the soldiers whom they attacked in the hills of Santa Maria. The incident wasn't given any importance. It was attributed to bandits, who lived evil lives, who recognized no leader, and whom it was necessary to fight energetically. The revolutionists, on the other hand, were surprised that those who made the attack in the hills of Santa Maria were considered outlaws when a short time before they were merely rebels.

In the portales were groups of individuals, armed, who were not really soldiers, nor irregulars, nor anything one could define. They belonged to the type of armed citizen, with the hands of a workman of the farm, born of the revolution. It was among these groups in which there was the most agitation and unrest.

The column of federal troops passed through, grimy and covered with dust. General Huerta was their leader. The sound of a drum marked their passing. A shot was heard. Someone had fired on the federales. No more was needed. It was a pretext for shooting at random and some people were killed. By dint of shouts and prudence a revolutionary leader succeeded in establishing order.

"Death to Madero for having straddled the political fence!"

"Madero? Why he's the one who supports you, Zapatistas!"

X

Antonio Hernández had been urgently called to a council meeting. The communication was signed by General Zapata himself, and in it he referred to Antonio by the title of "Colonel." Antonio prepared to leave at once. In the silence of the night a blast of the bull's horn sounded. The churchyard was filled with enormous hats whose wearers gathered around, desirous of hearing what Antonio had to command. It was necessary to bring together all the useful horses, all arms, all saddles and trappings. Those who didn't want to give them up would be considered enemies of the revolution. All must be ready at dawn. Some went away saying,

"Well, and now what are we fighting? Don Porfirio is already gone . . ."

"There, the chief will tell us. It doesn't worry me. It suits me fine to be on the go."

"You're right. Let's go, then."

The farm village was a lively scene. In doorways appeared those who now could use their guns, hidden for days past in the grass of the thatched roofs. Others went in search of their horses in the fields. Even the women seemed enthusiastic. There was excitement in the kitchens for

they were preparing what their men would take with them to eat for at least the first few days. Antonio, after remarking that something serious might happen when his general sent for him so urgently, went off to get some sleep. Making a great noise, messengers left to take the orders to the neighboring rancherías. The news was the occasion for a fiesta. A military band marched from hut to hut, and there was singing before those where there were marriageable girls. Merrymakers joined the musicians, pulling out bottles and distributing drinks.

It was early morning before the village recovered something of its habitual calm. At dawn the bugle sounded, and there gathered in front of the curate, mounted now, the men of Colonel Antonio Hernandez. The tardy ones were urged to make haste. It was an ant-hill of horsemen--wide straw hats and wide cotton trousers. In the disorder suitable for the road on which it was impossible to go even two by two, they filed out, happy, among shouts of enthusiasm, without knowing against whom they were going to fight--those men of Antonio Hernandez.

"Get up, little horse!"

"Open up, our guns are loaded."

It was in Yautepco where Antonio found out what was happening. He received orders not to continue ahead. They

told him that General Zapata had had a conference with don Francisco I. Madero and that the General had agreed to disarm his troops when and as soon as the federales left the State of Morelos. At daybreak came the news that the troops under the command of General Victoriano Huerta were approaching the plaza. In truth, in view of Yautepec some federal forces had halted. The Zapatistas wondered why the troops had entered a zone protected by agreement.

Messengers arrived in the revolutionary camp to say that the federales had set up three rapid-fire guns, their one-eyed stares fixed on the town. The government had not kept its word, and the names of General Victoriano Huerta and of Colonel Aureliano Blanquet had inspired suspicious fear in Morelos.

"What if we should give them a scorching?"

"We're at it now."

In the mountains, under cover of the huizachales the Zapatistas were creeping in search of the most advantageous places as approaches to the encampment of the federales. Shots were heard. They were from the Zapatistas who were manifesting in that way their nonconformity. Immediately the cannons returned the fire. It was the first time a death-dealing shot had touched Yautepec. The Zapatistas retreated, unable to withstand the fire which was becoming

more insistent. In a short time the cannons had shattered the rocks back of which Antonio was discharging his 30-30.

* * *

It was night and in the open country, in the neighborhood of Yautepec, when Antonio presented himself to his General. The chief recognized him immediately because Zapata also had that gift of remembering names and faces.

"We are going to fight again, Antonio. They want us to disarm because they say now we do not need guns, as if they had fulfilled the promises made to us concerning the lands. I joined the revolution only for what it says in Article 4 of the Plan of San Luis signed by Madero. Look. I always carry it with me, for the document rather than the changes of president is what interests us."

The General held the paper up to the light of his cigar and read slowly:

"'Because of the abuse of the law regarding communal lands, numerous small land owners, the Indians in greatest part, have been despoiled of their lands either by the decision of the Secretary of Public Works or by the judgment of the courts of the Republic. Its being of utmost justice to give back to their former owners the lands that were taken from them in such an arbitrary manner, such dispositions and judgments are declared subject to revision, and it is

demanded of those who acquired them in such an immoral way, or of their heirs, that they make restitution to their first owners, to whom they will also pay an indemnification for the injuries suffered. Except in the case that these lands have passed to a third person before the promulgation of this Plan, the former owner will receive indemnification of those in whose favor the despoliation was verified."

Antonio listened enraptured. Never had he heard of such a Plan.

"That's it. How wonderful!"

"But señor Madero comes to us with the words that it will be some years before they will be able to fulfill those promises made to the peasants. He tells us we must hand over our arms, that don Porfirio has gone, that the federales are about to give guarantees. As if we had fought only to get rid of don Porfirio. And the lands? Are they going to continue to be in the hands of the rich? And are we going to continue to be slaves to the landowners? We've got to fight again until we recover the lands that have been taken away from us."

"At your command, my general!"

The General was silent. In the darkness only the light of the cigar was visible. He was reclining on a sa-

rape and had a rock for a pillow. Some meters away on all sides could be felt the presence of the guard--quite a few in number. Now more calmly Zapata talked of the motives that he had for not disarming his troops as long as the federales did not leave Morelos.

"I have thought a great deal of the question of the lands, Antonio. I was ten years old in Anenecuilco, mi tierra, when I had an unforgettable lesson. One night I saw my father return home utterly dejected. My mother asked him:

"'What's the matter?'

"'The hacendado is going to take our lands away from us.'

"'But if they are ours, our communal lands!'

"'It doesn't matter. He is going to take the lands and with them what we have planted!'"

There was a long pause.

"I seem to see him now, so sad ... From that time my one thought has been of the lands. For that reason, when I was scarcely a man, I started a dispute about the adjoining lands. They brought false charges against me, and the government sent me to the army."

"The same here. I also was a soldier."

"I reached the rank of sergeant in the Ninth Artil-

lery. After some time, my countrymen of Anencuilco and of Villa Ayala collected the money necessary for a substitute for me."

"I deserted."

"And after that I lived waiting for an opportunity, with my horse saddled for flight, all because I never gave up my idea that we might recover our lands of Anencuilco when Escandon used to brag that his land would reach as far as the church door."

"It was the same with our patron, only more so--his even included the church."

Zapata related that he had even been accused of doing things that would make anyone blush. Because he had knowledge of horses and was fond of them, the rich landowner, don Ignacio de la Torre, son-in-law of don Porfirio, consulted him on various occasions about some fine horses he had; and only because of that the story was circulated that he was the groom in charge of the landlord's horses.

"It wasn't true; if it had been, I would not try to deny it. It was repeated in order to make me appear ungrateful. I had always been a farmer. My greatest joy I received when I brought in a good harvest of watermelons from some communal lands that I had rented."

"You're right, ni general. I was a day laborer on

the farms of don Bernardo González, and I'm not ashamed of it. Robbery is a shame."

"Thus it was. The boys in other parts set the pace. See what they said in a manifesto." And Zapata began to reconstruct from memory:

"It says: 'In Zehuitzingo, the head of the municipality of that name, at such-and-such an hour, on such-and-such a day, under the direction of General Emiliano Zapata (that is to say, me) the revolutionary Colonel Madgaleno Herrera and Jesús Morales met, each one, who with so-and-so, agreed to seize all arms again ...' Now, many other leaders have joined: my brother Infemio, Genovevo, Saavedra. All of them on equal terms are pulling together."

"Fine, general." Could you give me some arms?"

"Arms? Now you will find out how to get arms."

* * *

Antonio returned with his men. He had received orders to organize his forces to carry on guerilla warfare in his territory against any federals that penetrated there. From what the General had told him, it was clear that to recover the lands taken from the poor they must fight. This he explained to his men. They scattered in all directions the first news about the goal of the new revolution. The

peons in the country expounded the new idea: an agrarian revolution, the fight for the lands. Work became less hard. Land was a promise of well being. Zapata must be a good general to bring them all under one banner.

Land! They all wanted to fight for the recovery of their lands. That great ambition, to possess a piece of land, stirred them--even the children--with enthusiasm. The coveted land, the target of so many disputes, was going to give birth to sons by the thousands.

XI

With each Zapatista party of armed men there went a multitude of individuals, unarmed. They were the zopilotes, those who wanted to form part of the revolutionary forces but didn't have weapons. When there was a skirmish, a battle, shooting of any kind, these multitudes hovered around in the brakes and thickets behind the line of fire like vultures from which their name came, waiting for the moment when they could throw themselves on the dead and dying. If the encounter proved favorable for the Zapatistas, the zopilotes rushed, ravenously, on the field of battle and, before trying to take anything else of value, snatched the guns and cartridges from the fallen federales. By that single act they became regular soldiers. On occasions, the enthusiasm was so great that, though the encounter had not been decided to the advantage of one or the other side, the zopilotes were already in the field. Some succeeded in taking possession of a gun, others fell dead still with empty hands.

With the same object in view, the system of providing themselves with arms, here, was very different from the method being used in the North. There the border was near,

over which were carried great contrabands of guns, ammunition, and artillery. However, in Morelos a large encampment, hemmed in by immense territory controlled by the federation, the rebels couldn't count on any arms other than those carried by the enemy.

The zopilotes formed an enormous reserve of the Zapatista army. All the Morelos men began as zopilotes, the first step in the ranks of the Zapatistas, subordinate to the common soldier. Therefore, through the mountains wandered those unarmed masses smelling out the scenes of combat to leap upon the dead and despoil them of their arms.

III

General Zapata with three hundred men abandoned Villa de Ayala. The forces took to the roads with which only those of the region were acquainted. Few knew their destination. By the direction they took, some supposed that it was a question of abandoning the State of Morelos because of the tenacious campaign being waged against the Zapatistas. Perhaps, they supposed, the General had decided to carry on operations in the State of Puebla. They reached the mountains separating the two states, climbed the foothills, and stopped to encamp in the little town of Ayoxustla. At daybreak, as if they were ushering in a day of fiesta, there was much music by a military band and there were fireworks. All the neighbors and all the soldiers were taking part. Then, from a small porch, Otilio Montaña spoke to them.

With all the fieriness always demonstrated by Montaña, he began by saying that General Zapata--pointing to him--had worked out a Plan so that now they would not be treated like desperadoes but as the revolutionists that wanted nothing except the fulfillment of the promises made by don Francisco I. Madero: the restitution of the lands. He continued by saying that the Plan of San Luis had been mocked, since the

leader of the revolution considered that many years were needed before they would be able to put into practice this chapter referring to the lands. Otilio held some papers in his hand. They contained the Ayala Plan on which an oath was going to be taken and that should carry the name of Ayoxustla affixed to it. Montano read the document.

.

In short, it was a complete justification of the revolution. The inhabitants of Ayoxustla surrounded the speaker and listened to him with eyes open in amazement. Never had they heard talk of such a thing. The land! So disputed by the rich, and that was theirs--the people's! So it said on the paper!

Montano was a soldier, but he had the manner of a preacher and a teacher. As for the military review, the soldiers were in formation--the line running some meters on either side of the speaker. It was fitting that there was no further uniformity other than their huge hats and cotton apparel. Those who were farther away rose upon their stirrups as if to reach out for the words. Those who were closer leaned on the necks of their horses not to cut off the view from the women and children.

Montano had finished reading. The beating of drums, music from the band, shouts of general applause at once

filled the air. It was as if a volcano, which could be heard from the vertebrae of the mountain range itself, had suddenly erupted. Beneath the silence that followed that great phenomenon, the small army headed by General Zapata began to file away. They all extended their hands over the paper and swore to die for the cause of the agrarian revolution.

"Now we have a Plan. Now we will not be treated like bandits."

Facing the west, the column began to descend from the Puebla Mountains, going in the direction of the heart of Morelos. One could hardly see the miserable village now. Over the volcanos crowned with snow, a storm was brewing.

1912

XIII

"Art thou also one of those who want lands? Well, we are going to give them to thee. This very moment, thou art going to take possession of them. Wilt thou have it two meters long and one meter wide? Perhaps the subsoil would suit thee better because on the surface when it isn't very cold, it is very hot . . . How can we refuse thee thy little piece of land?"

And the Zapatista and hundreds of Zapatista prisoners, even those surprised in the fields, where they were toiling, were placed with their backs to a tree trunk or against a wall. The bull's eye of the target--the white of their clothing. Peasants' calzón y camisa were not hard to hit. One discharge. The Zapatista fell on the land that they had so brutally promised him.

There was no grave, after having offered him his ten meters of land. As a warning example, he was hanged from a branch, from a post or from the telegraph wires. In all directions from Morelos those pendular examples could be seen. They had that narrow-hipped slenderness peculiar to hanged men--the feet following the direction of the shin-bone like toe dancers; the arms clinging to the ribs; the neck

stretched; the face, looking up as if gazing at the heavens if the knot was in front, and down at the feet if the knot was at the back of the neck.

Then the vultures arrived. They perched on the shoulders of the hanged men. They thrust their expert beaks into the eye-sockets as if in search of other eyes.

* * *

Reprisals.

"Come on, boys; the federals are already fleeing."

But those who hadn't fled yet were killing those who dared to cross the street. Some had attempted to slide by, clinging to the walls. In each doorway they stopped and fired violently. They eluded the figure shooting at them and aimed again. The cannon kept up a continuous fire at the same spot. The gunner finally fell with a bullet in one eye, the eye that he had exposed to take aim.

Walls were demolished. If the Zapatistas couldn't advance by the street to fight the enemy in their positions, they forced a way to the interior of the houses, making breaches in the walls from one house to another by using large crowbars. When there was no time for that, dynamite was used in the form of bombs made of knobs taken from bedsteads and well filled with powder, dynamite, nails, nuts, and rivets--make-shift bombs, but sufficiently effective.

Each dynamiter with a bagful of these lit the match-cord by the live coal of his tobacco. Then it was hurled without anyone's worrying that behind the wall there might be innocent people.

Women who believed themselves safe within the four walls of a room were exposed, praying in front of a statue.

"Señores, we are peaceful people."

"And who asked you?"

"The old woman is not worthless . . . eh, señora! And your daughters?"

In the next room, a cry:

"Mamá!"

The houses were burning. Explosions continued. The defenders of the plaza had raised a white flag. There was a conference. The conquering side asked for a day for plundering.

"Four hours only for pillaging! Not a minute more! But without robbing anyone, do you hear? It must be orderly."

* * *

In a section of the sierra, where no rebel had penetrated before, a party of Zapatista soldiers came upon a railroad that swung its tracks across a deep ravine. Who would have thought of such audacity? Choosing a spot at one

end of the five-span bridge, the rebels in broad daylight, pulled up all the nails, leaving the rails in place as if in perfect order. The rebels did not have long to wait. A train was on the way and the engineer, not suspecting danger at this point but rather much farther on, was trapped. When the engine reached the spot, the rails sprang apart. The locomotive was thrown over and nosed down into the bed of the gorge. Some cars dragged along in the upset overturned. The car following the engine clung to the rails careening on its giddy way only to leave the tracks and plunge into the ravine on a curve.

In the crags rang out the first shots. Two soldiers and a convoy lieutenant, unhurt in one of the less damaged cars, opened fire on those who now, like birds of prey, came out of the thickets. In a moment the three men were silenced. One of them was hanging by his clothing over the edge of the car, with his eyes wide open. The victors went in and out of cars. They plundered the living and the dead. They set fires. Wood, corpses, wounded--whatever the wrecked convoy contained--were burning. Then off they went into the mountains, shouting and blowing a horn as they fled to summon the tardy ones.

1913

XIV

The city, accustomed to looking at the happenings of the war from a distance, was surprised one day by the noise of intense firing. With that curiosity characteristic of city crowds, the people rushed out into the streets to find out what was happening. Columns of soldiers were passing in quick time. Others dragged cannons and mortar guns. The crowd let out cries of "long live!" for the government. Not a few looked on at the preparations with the prudent calm of those who didn't sympathize with the state of things. Curiosity turned toward the environs of the fortress where the rebels had entrenched themselves. It was the work of the artillery. Across whole blocks, the huge missiles opened up streets in search of their objective. In the center of the city astonishment was reaching its height. In the suburbs, after the first surprise, the people commented on the happenings. Would the government forces be able to occupy the fortress, or would they be destroyed facing the enemy positions?

"But indeed these people fight decently. They interrupt the firing a little before one in order to sit down to eat in peace; they renew the fighting in the afternoon, can-

nonade until nightfall, and charge again just before dawn."

A survivor of Querétaro said:

"In my time, with two hundred gunners I would have driven those rebels out, completely beaten."

What at first was general confusion became a pestime. The constant beating of the mortar guns was becoming the lullaby of the life of the capital. There were the constant charges of the attacked repelled always by the rebels. Shooting continued in the cross-streets. Also there was some exchange of shots overhead between some cannons installed in the towers and those of the fortress. After ten days, when the ambulances already had carried hundreds of dead and wounded to the hospital and to first-aid centers, the situation solved itself. Madero was betrayed by the chief of the government forces and treacherously assassinated.

Now another name ran through the revolutionary camps: Venustiano Carranza.

XV

The night was cold. A sharp wind made the branches of the trees in the orchard tremble. The few inhabitants that had remained in the ranchería shivered as they went off to spend the disagreeable night in the mountains--else run the risk of being surprised. Yesterday some rancherías, more or less distant across the sierra, had been burned because the Huerta troops said that was the only way to clean up the rebels.

The stragglers from the rebel army had seen numerous families leave with their miserly belongings, their children, and their dogs. On that fairly clear night, the farm village appeared deserted. For the first time, even the cocks did not crow, and the farm gave the impression of midnight--so silent was it. There scarcely shone a light in any house. Of the many, no more than ten families remained. In the mountains echoed the blast of a horn. Perhaps the ring-leader of the rebels was giving orders to his people. Perhaps some unity was achieved since the horn was recognized as a call for the troops.

Someone went knocking desperately at one door and then another: "The federales are coming! They are burning

'El Laurel'!"

Suddenly no one felt the cold as if the heat of the distant fires warmed him. The women and children trembled from fear now. Some groups watched and discussed the fire, resembling a luminous fan. No one doubted that "El Laurel" was being devoured by flames nor that the Huertistas had set the fire.

After the first emotion of simple surprise they felt the urge to flee. Now nothing, not even the cold of the night, could hold them back a minute longer. Hastily everyone gathered up from his hut what he most valued: the men, their tools of labor, their guns, and some clothes; the women, their cooking ware and their children. By diverse routes they abandoned the farm--these miserable looking groups that journeyed into the night, facing freezing winds that seemed to come from the high regions of the sierra. The men carried one child on their backs and by the hand led another, while around their necks hung a small bundle of tattered clothing. The women walked behind also with a child in their arms. From time to time they turned their eyes toward the fan-shaped light. The flames reminded them of fires they had set in their own fields as a prelude to seeding. Each time they looked at the glow, they hastened their steps, sure that very soon the village they were

leaving with their little houses and forsaken possessions would be on fire.

They were going in search of a refuge on the open mountain side, thinking of huts that might be made of corn husks and easily concealed where they would secretly gather in silence, quieting the dogs and the children. The homes already were far behind and farther still the stream and the orchards. The whitewashed walls of the Ranchoería, illuminated by the diagonal rays of the moon made a phantom of the place, now completely evacuated of its inhabitants.

Suddenly some shots were heard in the direction of the fire. It must be the same thing as had happened in other farm villages set aflame. Some inhabitants, obstinate about leaving because they considered they had given no cause, now with their homes afire, were obliged to run through the streets like rats, the Huertistas shooting at them amidst shouts of laughter and blasphemy. The shots were answered by others discharged at closer range. The trained ear could measure the distance between the combatants. The revolutionists must be in the low hills near the Ranchoería. Without any doubt they were Antonio Hernández's men, who had hurried to the defense--useless, however, since the fire appeared to have consumed everything.

Hours passed and the shooting languished on cease

sions. A shot sounded, rebounding echo on echo. Then midnight silence. Suddenly in the immense solitude of the country a light came on as if in the outskirts of a ranchería some muleteers might have stopped to pass the night and, before going to sleep, were warming their supper. Now there were two spots of light. The fire was spreading. It was another ranchería on fire, also the work of the Hueristas determined to leave all the peons homeless as a rigorous measure to force them to submit.

In the dense obscurity of early morning the last fire was vividly outlined. A great expanse was illuminated. The howling of the dogs was heard as well as the cries of those spreading the fires. The fact that there was no shooting seemed to indicate that everyone had succeeded in leaving. But in the last shadows of the night resounded a shot. The light of the discharge was visible outside the circle of light. The aim was evidently at shadows within that were outlined against the fire. It was a new force of Zapatistas trying to dislodge the federales and prevent their burning more buildings. It seemed hopeless. They had failed at "El Laurel", a more favorable place for attack Morning appeared enveloped in a vapor either caused by the smoke of the burning houses or a light fog which often follows a cold night. Little by little the black ruins

could be distinguished. From the rubbish, columns of smoke were rising.

Far away in the ravine that led to the farmhouse of don Bernardo Gonzalez was distinguished a line of moving points. They were the federales. Those who looked on from their hiding place must have wondered if the hacienda would share the same fate. By what could be seen of the distance between those who marched ahead and those who brought up the rear, there must have been about two hundred men.

In broad daylight an hour and a half later the feder-ales reached the hacienda. Again hours passed; and, from the consideration with which they treated the property of the landowner, it was deduced that the latter was well thought of by the Federation.

* * *

At nightfall, the peasants descended to the burned settlement. Only the charred ruins remained in which yet burned some wooden beams. The only thing saved was the little church with its small steeple of decalcomania. The chickens, pigs, and a cow that bellowed for her calf wandered through the ruins where the streets had once been. Among the few neighbors gathered, there was that state of emotion more disposed to fleeing than to remaining. While

they searched the places where their homes had been for something that might be saved, they turned their eyes repeatedly toward the road, fearful that the federales were going to return. All they found of worth were two ploughs.

Those who did arrive were five revolutionists from the hill. Crossed on the white of their shirts were their chinstraps which they had loosened. They gathered together near the church, a group of twenty individuals, and their greeting was a series of interjections all directed at the Huertistas.

".....!"

"Forty against two hundred, so figured those here at home. Our boys are away."

"On the path in the canyon is a dead federal."

"We shall burn him so that the vultures don't become Huertistas. They say that around here even the mice are revolutionists and set fires."

"And what good to burn him if they killed Antonio."

"Shut your trap! Hadn't we agreed to keep secret the death of our chief."

"Hombre! All these brothers are to be trusted. Why hide it from them?"

"All right! But the one that tells it among strangers pays with his hide. When will you learn to keep your

tongue from wagging?"

The neighbors wanted to know how their leader had died. The one who headed the small party who objected to his men spreading the news refused to give any information. The task was left to the one he had called the "tongue wagger."

This man began by saying that when the first group of houses was burning, Antonio went off with a number of men to attack the Huertistas, leaving Cecilio with the rest of the men. They surprised and killed some of the enemy, who fell back; and, on seeing that the attackers were few in number, the Huertistas made a return thrust, obliging Antonio and his party to retreat since there was no possibility of saving the settlement. The rebels limited themselves to firing from the nearby hills, trying to hunt out those that stood out clearly in the light of the fire. Many of the revolutionists saw their own houses burn and wrung their hands in grief at their own inability to save them. When the federals left to go in the direction of the other ranchería, Antonio slipped down the north side of the hills to ambush the enemy where he downed a few and then, by taking a short cut, took shelter behind the best of the houses. Those were the shots heard a little after the fire started.

Antonio was willing to take any chance, but he lacked

ammunition. As they were leaving the houses, under fire of attack, suddenly Antonio elung to the wall with his fist pressed tightly against his breast. To those nearest him, he said,

"Go. I am wounded!"

Two seized him by his arms, which they placed around their shoulders, and carried his almost dead weight while his feet dragged on the ground. When they reached the edge of the ranchería, blood was streaming from his mouth; and he died.

The narrator said that he himself carried Antonio on his back, and traveled with him some distance until they reached the top of the hill. They improvised a stretcher and carried him farther. With the barrels of their guns and their machetes they made a hole at the foot of a live-oak tree on the bank of a stream, and there they buried him. They knew where. When times changed, they would take him out to bury him in hallowed ground.

The story had filled the listeners with discouragement that was revealed in their faces. They remained mute for some seconds. Suddenly, as if they were moved by the same spiritual spring, they turned toward the place where the dead federal lay. They carried him, now rigid, by his hands and feet and threw him on a mound of embers that still

smoked. On top of him they put grass and boards taken from the nearby houses not entirely consumed by fire.

Revengfully, they watched as the corpse flexed, contracted, and even seemed to attempt to sit up. The fire made the fat and meat hiss and crackle.

In a small ravine, near which was a cart road or rather a path, five men were bent over the furrows, working. So engrossed they were in their labors that they didn't notice the presence of twenty federales.

"Hey, what do you know about Zapata? Where is he?"

"God only knows."

"But what have you found out?"

"That he isn't leaving 'El Jilguero'."

"And how many men does he have?"

"They say many, señor."

"What are you?"

"Farmers, señor."

"How does it come that you are not Zapatistas?"

"God deliver us from fighting. We do not want to kill people. We only plant the good corn."

The officer knew full well that the Zapatistas, in the years that the struggle had been going on, had served both in the armed service and on the farm. In that lay the strength of the Morelos movement. Some days the men fought, other days they worked on the farm. The officer examined them from head to foot and examined, too, the sur-

roundings in search of guns that might be hanging from some tree.

These men had all the appearance of Zapatistas -- enormous hats, white shirts, and wide trousers. But in the faces of the peasants there wasn't the least indication. Leave them in peace? Shoot them? Quién sabe ?

"Chief, I am sure they are Zapatistas."

The officer searched them again. He could read nothing in those eyes but weighty indifference. The five seemed to be of volcanic stone. In his capacity of an officer he disliked shooting them thus when he had come upon them working. If he could only find in the vicinity even one accusing gun.

The small troop continued on its way. The five laborers continued working. When the federalists were lost from view around the first turn in the road, the five slipped into the thickets and into the next bramble field to get their guns.

In the hill a horn sounded. Some moments passed, and in the foothills about one hundred meters from the road, the first shot was discharged.

"Viva Zapata!"

Or they shouted with the same significance: "Land!
Land!"

"'Pa las macetas!' At them, boys, if you don't want those fools to finish us in the ravine with a couple of shots."

⁶ A cry of the revolutionist, literally: "Land for flower pots", or just a handful of land.

1914

XVII

In San Pablo Ocotupeec almost all the leaders of the agrarian revolution had met. They were to decide what was the best thing to do in view of the latest developments. General Victoriano Huerta, like don Porfirio, had left the country and another Francisco had taken over the duties of president: the scholar Francisco Carvajal.

The leaders discussed whether to accept the change as for the best or continue fighting. No great effort was needed to come to an agreement. In the rebels' quarters they considered don Francisco Carvajal only the prolongation of the Huerta regime. He wouldn't satisfy the agrarian movement nor the revolution in general. It would be a mistake to accept as decisive the change of president. The revolution, besides, felt itself too strong now not to reach its ultimate goal. The zapatismo already dominated Morelos. Villa had shown triumphs as important as Torreón and Zacatecas. The troops of Sonora had not had a single set-back during a huge campaign. In each state there was a Zapatista army.

The delegates drew up two fundamental resolutions:
(1) to recognize as their supreme commander of the whole

revolution General Emiliano Zapata, (2) to continue to fight until they saw the agrarian ideals realized. These were made evident in the document known as the "Act of Ratification of the Ayala Plan."

XVIII

The sound of the drum that was heard in the hills and fields during the revolution wasn't that of the drum that is commonly known in military circles. It was a dry sound, the "call of the hollow log". It was the drum that served as guide to the Yaqui communities from which came the troops of the Northwest that occupied the city after the fall of the Federal army.

In the faces of these Yaqui Indians there was no surprise, no joy, no sadness, nothing. One would think they hadn't been victorious. They gave the impression of being accustomed to the city that attracted the attention of others by its buildings and monuments. They filed along with the indifference of carved stone, all serene, all immutable, with that austere brow that so distinguished them.

The drum went on ahead. The army followed. When the column stopped for some moments, the men remained in their places, remote from all that surrounded them as if they carried, familiarly, the vision of all the fortunes of the race: those who had been sent to the chicle jungles of Quintana Roo, those that went on the Maya campaign, and the great number that had always taken part in the country's

battles. They stood erect. When their turn came, they marched on. Their looks showed dislike or maybe indifference. They embraced their guns like something greatly cherished, grasping them firmly in their hands or against their sides. The city looked at them with the admiration that it always had for the conquerors. The legends that had preceded them made them braver, more stoic, greater fighters. In the rebel quarters they celebrated in their own way their successes or perhaps some memorable date. To the sound of the drum they executed the "danza del venado". It was a dance of nervous movements, associated with the hunt. One of the dancers simulated the deer being pursued in the hills of Bacatete, while the other dancer represented the hunter. For three, five, ten, twenty hours. Time was of the least importance.

When it was necessary to evacuate the city, they filed out to the sound of the drum, leaving as indifferently as they had entered. They knew they weren't fleeing, but simply leaving to return quién sabe cuándo. If they didn't return, they knew that some day they would all meet in the place designated by their religion to those who die in battle.

It was a dry sound without repercussions.

* * *

There had assembled in the city from all sections of the country the Zapatistas from the mountains of Ajusco, troops from Indian villages along the highways, the forces of the Northern Division--a specimen of the followers of Villa, interminable cordons with the enormous Chilapeño hats, blouses and wide trousers predominating. They brought with them a reputation of horror. These waves from the North and from the South joined forces. The province had concentrated itself in the city and now the city timidly handed itself over to the garrison.

There must have been twenty regions represented, each with its own color, costumes, language, and all. The northern troops were more like soldiers; the southern, more like guerilla fighters. All of them had strong reserves of strength, and they eased their pain and fatigue in the cantinas and brothels.

"Who is the one in charge here?"

"Who but me, handsome, of course."

"Fine! Shut the door and let us have the place to ourselves."

"Girls, here are the señores."

"Come in, boys."

The man handed over a roll of bills.

The cantina also was a center of interest where dis-

cussions went on over deeds of battle.

"What have you done? You steal and run!"

"You will be mired down. The men of the South. . ."

And before his words were finished, a gun went off for they were quick on the draw. A number of Zapatistas and as many Villistas were dead. The cantina became a field of battle. Some fell where they stood at the counter, others on the sidewalk, and there was one lying in the middle of the street.

1915

XIX

Because of the lack of special laws, the Governor of the Convention was proceeding in a practical way with the villages that needed lands. The task was difficult--as the agrarian commissioner sent to Yautepco found out--because many files with the necessary data had been destroyed, and because numerous hacendados were in the power of the strongest leaders, who were reserving the harvests for the maintenance of the revolution. The commissioner began by fixing boundaries.

Even this task wasn't easy. Since it was the land-lords who for so many years had ruled the land of the people, the latter had forgotten the traditions concerning the boundaries. Common sense advised referring it to the old men of the place in order that they might designate where the lands of one community terminated and those of a neighboring community began.

But this presented another difficulty, especially in Yautepco. Many years before, also because of a quarrel over land, all the old men were massacred in the village square. There were eleven of them then. Nevertheless, someone said that one of the old fellows was saved, old José Valero, now

eighty years old.

The commissioner went in search of him and found an old man confined to a chair--one of those low armchairs with a seat of crude leather, so suitable for warm climates. The man seemed to be a complete invalid. Both his hair and his beard were white, his hands were gnarled, and his cheeks were like dried figs. His eyes were the only part of him that seemed to have life; there, shone that light one sees in the eyes of children.

"Don Pepe, I have come to talk with you about the lands. They are going to be returned, legally, the communal lands of the villages."

"Vaya! So we are going to have what's ours. General Zapata had his way. I said he would. He who keeps at it gets what he wants. The toughest leather will soften if you use plenty of tallow."

"But no one knows how to find the boundaries between Yautepco and Anencuilco... "

"These boys of today don't know anything. And the people of Anencuilco. What do they say?"

"They don't know either--nor anyone in Villa Ayala. And, although they are sure to have their maps in colors from the time of the aztecs showing all the lands-- the village's, the king's, and the church's-- we need to take

someone who will tell us: this belongs, here, that belongs there."

"That's easy, señor. We will climb Mount Tetillas, and from there I will tell you which are the boundaries. We old fellows are of some good yet."

"But what are you going to do, don Pepe, to climb Mount Tetillas? In a sedan chair? I must look for some men to carry you. You are so frail, don Pepe."

"A sedan chair? You'll see how we'll climb. Where there's a will, there's a way."

It was arranged that at dawn the trip would be undertaken. The commissioner was convinced that eighty years needed a gentle, sure-footed horse. He secured for Valero an old nag incapable of running away whatever the cause. Now, ready to ride and leading the nag, he rode up in front of don Pepe's house just in time to see the old man come out of the corral gate, mounted on a black horse that reared on its hind legs every time it turned. The commissioner couldn't believe that it was really old Valero on such a wild brute.

"Don Pepe, you on such a horse! I thought that your timber wasn't fit for toothpicks."

"Come, come. I am breaking this jackass for my General Amador Salazar."

They began to climb. The "jackass" followed the narrow path between precipices and rocks like a deer, and the old man seemed to be glued to the saddle. When they had reached a great height, don Pepe pointed out the boundary line between Yautepac and Anenecuilco, Emiliano's natal land, -- a straight line east from the peak of Mount Tetillas to the peak of the opposite mountain. "Palo Amarillo" was the intermediate point.

The group descended. That intermediate point, so necessary, must be found. Neither the Anenecuilcos nor the Yautepacs knew how to reach it. Every mark had disappeared. Even the old man didn't know how it could be found. Inhabitants of the two towns held heated discussions. Finally, they agreed to postpone further action until someone could find out where "Palo Amarillo" was. Valero was sure that the only person who knew such data was General Zapata. Not for nothing had they sent him to the army when he tried to reclaim the lands for his people.

The revolution continued on its course. The commissioner had gone to General Zapata, asking him to identify the place called "Palo Amarillo". He had answered that he would seize the first opportunity to attend to the affair and to sign the necessary papers. The business was accomplished much sooner than anyone thought possible since

everyone imagined that the General, as their commander-in-chief, would make excuses to postpone such a trivial matter. How could he leave the directing of the campaign in order to point out a boundary that could be one hundred meters this way or that.

One day, unexpectedly, the General appeared in Anenecuilco. From there he advised the people of Yautepec to meet him on the following day in the neighborhood of Mount Tetillas. Without wavering, with all surety, he pointed out the place where "Palo Amarillo" had been. The General was conscious of immense happiness and his eyes sparkled with enthusiasm. His assistance in the act had lent much in the way of sentiment. It was Zapata's dream of other years when he was sent as a recruit in the Ninth Artillery Division.

With his own hands he gathered stones with which he himself made a mound. It was the landmark that showed the edge of the communal lands of Anenecuilco and of Yautepec. At this same spot they all signed the document, beginning with General Zapata. The Yautepecs took possession of one side; and the Anenecuilcos, with Zapata and his escort, of the other. This simple act was the realization of an idea that had already cost so many thousands of lives.

A fruit vender from the country carried to General Zapata's camp a paper that promised an understanding. It wasn't a communication proposing that he surrender. Rather, it was a document by means of which it was apparent that the two parties, the Constitutionalists and the Zapatistas, coincided in one point of the program--the distribution of the lands. The document was nothing less than the Law of the Sixth of January:

"Venustiano Carranza, First Commander of the Constitutional Army, charged with the executive power of the United States of Mexico and Commander of the Revolution in virtue of the faculties with which I am invested and considering that one of the most general causes of ill-being and discontent among the agricultural classes of this country has been the despoliation of communal lands or of the apportionment that had been granted them by the colonial government as a means of assuring the existence of the Indian class, and that on pretext of complying with the Law of the Twenty-fifth of June of 1856 and other dispositions that ordered the division and reduction to private ownership of those lands among the neighbors of the village to which they

belonged, they remained in the power of a number of speculators . . . "

.

In the camp they agreed that the finalities were the same. There wasn't, then, any reason for continuing the fight. They had won.

1916 - 1917

Nevertheless:

"Friend, you must come and give us a hand. It is here, right close, behind the small hill. The federales insist on taking our position and we are determined not to let them."

"You must be cowards. Come, right now. Let's climb up the canon, cut to the right and talk to them in a language that doesn't need words."

The village was lively like in the good old days of fiestas, or rather like the nights when Antonio Hernandez blew the bull's horn to call all his people together. Then there was something to eat. They could all seize their guns if meat was lacking and send a bullet through one of the master's bulls. What if there was no corn. Then they could work the master's fields.

Now there was nothing. Because the men were all in the army, no one had tended to the crops. It was more exciting to chase from one place to another than to stay at home in the furrow, digging and working with the goads or with the huingaro.⁷ For this reason the chief had made

⁷ A machete with a curved point used for weeding

rules some time before. During the planting season, all military operations were suspended as long as possible. Only to hold off the enemy, a part of the boys remained at the front with their guns. The rest seeded, weeded, and harvested.

When some had finished their work, they changed places with the rest who had not yet cultivated their lands. Hunger was also to be fought. When those in the army saw themselves in danger, they asked aid of those working in the fields. The workers only had to get their rifles from the thickets along the bank, and they were ready to start off. Some did not return to the furrow after a skirmish. Others returned and, while they made holes for the seeds in the fallowed ground, they would say:

"These boys still don't know how to fight. We arrive, and the federales flee as if the devil were after their souls."

"Indeed, comrade. It isn't firing the gun, but knowing where the coward nests."

1918

XXII

Soldiers had just arrived from Tlatenango after an assault at daybreak against the Carrancistas. The city of Cuautla had somewhat recovered the animation of better times. The little park was full of people and even the thrushes seemed to have caught the spirit of general content. It was in the heat of the day, and the soldiers who were most exhausted were sleeping stretched out under the parotas and the fig trees. Others were walking with their women under the flowering branches of the cazahuates. Many were in the river bathing and also washing and cooling off their horses.

Unexpectedly from the central part of the city there came to their ears a series of shots which made them fear a surprise raid. Had the Carrancistas forced their way in by some valley favorable for an attack, and having caught their adversaries off guard, were they already fighting in the streets? From everywhere hastened armed men, already loading their guns, with the stupefied expression of the man who gradually becomes enraged and inhuman until only the fighter remains. They fired some shots into the air to vent their impatience at not being able to see the enemy. The men who had so abruptly disturbed the peace of the city were

other Zapatistas.

They related the exact account of what had happened. General Eufemio Zapata had been shot. With his huge hat a few meters away and with the undeniable stamp of recent death on his face, he lay on the sidewalk where he had fallen under the fire of the best one of his lieutenants.

Those who had witnessed the scene blamed the wine, the drinks. But they soon began directing menacing remarks and blasphemies at Loco Lidronio. After a silence during which they scratched their unkempt heads, they ended by saying that it was a misfortune.

"How can Lidronio face his general! With that Eufemio affair! Only one glance and he'll be done with!"

"Hombre! I have never swallowed a fish bone. And as I've said one thing, I'll say another. Eufemio was to blame. Even if he was a general, wouldn't he pick a quarrel with his own parents?"

Meanwhile through the fields and in the road could be heard the shooting of Eufemio's men against Camacho's. Others, made stupid by the heat or by the wine, leaned against the walls of the cantina and issued the news of how things were progressing.

Eufemio who was terrible when he was in his right

senses was more so in his cups. In a drinking brawl, he took exception to the remarks of Florencio Camacho. Pulling out his sword, Eufemio gave him such a drubbing that the poor old man could scarcely touch his thighs and back.

At this moment his son, General Camacho--called "Loco Lidronio" appeared on the scene. With few words arms flashed. Eufemio pulled out his pistol. Camacho reached for his rifle on his saddle, which was near. It was a real fight. Eufemio began to stagger like a drunkard--which he was--and fell heavily.

From that moment there was shooting everywhere. Men fought taking the side of their respective leader. Camacho's followers fell back making a hasty retreat. They gained the road on the gallop.

"I'll hang myself if Camacho doesn't surrender to the Carrancistas."

"And if he doesn't, Emiliano will break his neck as sure as there's a God."

XIII

It was the same through all Morelos. Near the orchards of mangos and mannee trees were huge, gaunt shells of houses the walls of which were long tongues of smoke. They were the buildings of the hacienda--abandoned now. Only those remained--the walls and the trees in the orchards. Chimneys of the sugar mills, fallen like rotten tree trunks. Roofs that were nothing but rubbish now. At the side of what was once the dwelling of the hacienda, a bridge under which the river still flowed. These were the haciendas burned by the rebels.

Farther away, near the hills, were also rubbish heaps, in clusters as had been the homes of the workmen, the share croppers, the peons. Those were the houses burned by the federals. Depending on the side to which the damage had been done, one could determine the hand of the doer. In some places both the house of the patrón and the homes of the workers were alike in shambles.

In the fields formerly cultivated grew grass instead of ears of corn. Next to the ploughed fields stood the plows, black as if burned by the sun. Everything was in ruin.

1919

XXIV

Cecilio Hernández had returned to the village after a two weeks' campaign. The men who had gone out as zopilotes had returned armed to the teeth, and those who had left on old worn-out horses had come back riding good ones. His instructions had been to attack the federals who had insisted on repairing three burned bridges, and the mission had been accomplished very successfully. The leader was at this business when a fugitive brought him the news. Homeward bound, the party did not bring with it the excitement and gaiety that usually accompanied the arrival or departure of troops. Rather, Cecilio's party seemed like a procession following a hearse. Everyone was sad. One might even have said that there were tears in eyes that didn't weep.

They had dismounted at one side of the little church. The old men came to greet them, curious boys crowded around, and even the women drew near.

"How good that you have returned, Cecilio! The federals have been seen around the hacienda. What if they should attack us? It would be the dickens now, when we have almost rebuilt the houses, if they should come to burn us down again as the Huertistas did."

"Do you know who passed here and told me to say 'hello' to you? But what's the matter with you? Are you wounded?"

The last question had a good reason for being asked. Cecilio seemed so far removed from what they were saying. After having dismounted, he remained near his horse, one elbow on the saddle, sadness written in every line of his face.

"Can you be sick, Cecilio?"

For the homefolks, Colonel Hernandez was only Cecilio and they talked to him as a mother to her son.

"They murdered our General!"

"Don Emiliano?"

"Yes, our Chief ..."

He crossed his arms on the saddle as one would on a table and in them hid his face. By the movement of his shoulders it was apparent he was sobbing. Those who had gathered dispersed, one by one, in silence. In almost all the faces of the noncombatants there were tears.

Cecilio's men were arriving mute, singly, not in lively groups as of other days.

Urbano Tlahuica, the workman always in debt, who had fled from don Bernardo Gonzalez's hacienda and had been persecuted like a thief, at the sight of all those grief strick-

en faces had forgotten to dismount; and on his horse went through contortions like one possessed of the devil. He cried out. He wept. He beat himself and pulled his hair. He rode wildly up and down the road.

"They have murdered mi padrecito! What is going to become of us poor people. The rich will come again and we'll be the same as before: 'here's one I give you, and one I charge against you'. Alas!"

For a few moments, Urbano's horse reared, and Urbano undertook to subdue him with blows. He struck him on the ears, on the neck, pulled brutally on the reins and dug his spurs into the horse's sides.

"Why couldn't we have been there?"

"What if we had? It was treason. It was a trap!"

"I would give my neck, I would give my sons only to have my hands on that murderer for one moment."

No one would dare accuse Urbano of being intoxicated though his gestures and his behavior certainly resembled those of a drunkard. Suddenly thrown headlong from his horse, he rolled in the dust, with his hands buried into the earth, which he pulled up in great handfuls that poured out between his fingers when he raised his clenched fists. He didn't cry--he howled, he bellowed, he screeched. It was the sorrow symbolical of that suffered by all the peas-

ants of Morelos at the news of the General's death. For a good reason they had considered themselves attached to the tail of the Zapatista horse.

* * *

The details became known little by little. The commander-in chief of operations in Morelos charged with putting an end to zapatismo had done nothing, or rather had done the same as the rest of the generals from the time of Madero until Carranza, sent on the same mission.

One of the chief obstacles in completely putting to rout the Zapatistas was a perfect knowledge of the terrain on the part of the rebels. That obstacle had been removed in part by means of the formation of irregular bodies of soldiers recruited from the vicinity, and the attachment of others of Zapatista origin by means of more or less tempting bribes.

Another obstacle, even to holding conferences, had been General Zapata's proverbial countryman's distrust. It was impossible to put one's finger on him. Messages were taken and brought back through rough and trackless places. Even the famous place of "El Jilguero" proved to be a labyrinth. Zapatista prisoners asserted they hadn't an idea where the General might be found. His was an almost cat-

like distrust.

The downfall of the General had been complete in every detail from combat to skirmish. It was a long time now since General Obregon had put an end to villismo, at least the form of villismo which was a real danger, for Villa had become the genial guerrilla fighter. But that was all he was, a guerilla fighter. Meanwhile, General González continued his campaign against zapatismo without success, for the enemy seemed to spring up from the earth itself.

And it was then when incompetency turned its face to treachery and treason. The attack went straight to the head of the agrarian movement, to the Commander-in chief, realizing that the death of zapatismo would be assured with the death of Zapata. The trap could not have been more nearly perfect. The execution of the plan could not have been less above reproach.

* * *

In the General Headquarters of Military Operations against the zapatismo, they had some prisoners among whom figured a man in the complete confidence of General Zapata, Colonel Eusebio Jáuregui, captured by the Carrancistas some days before. Perhaps the knowledge that they had regarding the prisoner suggested the plan of assassination. They

must have understood at Headquarters that Jáuregui wasn't only a prisoner but a Zapatista spy.

In any case, tact might have advised overlooking the fact of his being a spy. Instead, Colonel Jáuregui was the object of a number of considerations that the other prisoners did not enjoy. They permitted him the liberty of walking within the confines of the camp, of talking with anyone, and even of approaching the offices of the Commander-in-chief. Thanks to these privileges, he was even able to get into the hands of Zapata more than one message concerning military movements.

By one of those rare privileges which the prisoner enjoyed in the last days of March of 1919, one afternoon Jáuregui found himself a few steps from the main office. Suddenly his attention was attracted by the angry closing of a door. Such behavior in the very office of the Commander!

With face flushed, bristling mustache trembling, there appeared Colonel Jesús M. Guajardo, perhaps the best of the chiefs on which the Commander of Military Operations depended. Guajardo was the one who fought the hardest against zapatismo. He was a valiant, daring, skillful man. Clearly Guajardo was excessively angry. Without heeding Jáuregui, as if he hadn't seen him, he began to vociferate, from which one gathered that he had had an unsatisfactory

interview with the General. It must have been a real quarrel.

"That is the way you're paid for your services! As if sitting in an office signing papers were the same as going out risking your hide!"

Guajardo realized that Jauregui was near and had heard everything.

"Oh, you here, Jauregui?"

"What's the matter, Chief?"

"Forget that you heard anything. It was a mad act on my part to say out loud what I should have kept to myself. But, now that you know, I am going to tell you. The usual thing: The better one does, the greater sacrifices are expected of him. They want to take away my men and give me worthless fellows that aren't good for anything. You understand how I feel? You see how they don't know our worth. At the first opportunity ... Believe me ... (almost in Jauregui's ear) I'll get him on the end of the rope. And then this high-handed General will see who Jesús M. Guajardo is. For today, remember I haven't told you anything ... I'll see you later."

At Headquarters things went as before. Officials, off duty, strolling around the camp or bathing in the river. Troops leaving, troops returning. Prisoners brought in.

Wounded men. All the affairs of a general headquarters. General González with his dark glasses taking a walk in the afternoons and receiving the troops of his subalterns with reports and communications.

Perhaps because of the color of his glasses, General González couldn't perceive that the prisoner Jáuregui was enjoying greater liberties. He was privileged to talk with the farmers who came from far-off places to sell the fruit of their lands.

One of those indifferent looking men carried off, concealed in his load--inserted in a watermelon--a message written by Jáuregui to General Zapata. It was nothing less than the information, a "tip" Jáuregui called it, that Guajardo was disposed to "go over" to the Zapatistas.

General Zapata should value, fully, the importance of that acquisition. Guajardo was the one who had most ferociously combatted zapatismo, the one who best had arranged war maneuvers as proven by the results attained; in a word, he was perhaps one of the best leaders of the government forces.

The answer was not long in coming. Another peasant, leading three loaded burros, brought, in a roll of dried meat, a letter for Guajardo and another paper with instructions for Jáuregui. The same peasant carried back the

answer. Something must have yet been lacking. The time was not ripe for the carrying out of the plan because Guajardo replied that he accepted the invitation, that he sympathized with the agrarian movement, but that he must defer his leaving in order to get the best materials--especially ammunition. When prepared, he would put himself at the service of Zapata.

The day arrived. Won over to the agrarian cause, Guajardo left camp with four hundred men, well armed and still better mounted, among whom were sixty ex-Zapatistas and their leader, Victorino Bárcenas, men well acquainted with the country. On many other occasions they had left thus, but to fight the forces they now were going to join.

There was an exchange of communications. General Guajardo gave notice of his resolution which he was finally carrying out. He wanted, at any risk, to be put in contact with General Zapata in readiness for a general movement. But General Zapata answered postponing the first interview; and, as a proof sought by the distrustful chief, Guajardo received orders to attack Jonacatepec defended by some Carrancista forces. Guajardo must have understood that that order was a test of his adherence, and he didn't wait for the order to be repeated--willing to sign with blood the document of his loyalty and of his affiliation with the

rebel army.

With what fearlessness did attackers and defenders of Jonacatepec battle. Guajardo had the advantage in numbers; while the Carrancistas had the courage of those who are resisting betrayers, proving the adage that your worst enemy is he who was your best friend. But the small number of Carrancistas was defeated as soon as all Guajardo's four hundred men rushed into the attack. Those who were able to escape left crying "traitors" at Guajardo's men.

The proof had been given and how well! With sincerity, tested in blood, like the virgins! From Jonacatepec Guajardo communicated his triumph. General Zapata read the letter, satisfied with having won for his cause such a valiant leader; and thus he commented on it, talking with the men closest to him of his guard.

The chief's answer concerned their coming interview. Zapata's native distrust had been vanquished by evident proof. Two hours' journey from Jonacatepec, in Tepalcinzo, they met at last. General Zapata brought only the same number of troops as Guajardo, since the Chief of the Morelos movement had his numerous guerrilla forces scattered and almost always brought with him only his guard.

They embraced.

"I congratulate you for coming to defend an ideal,

the agrarian ideal, to defend the land of the poor."

"I have always desired it, General."

Pulling at his long black mustache, Zapata examined his new leader while he talked. With a look of indefinable intention the chief seemed to look to the depth of the soul of his new recruit. Guajardo talked without pause, heightening his valorous achievements while he ratified his loyalty at each word.

Seated on the ground near their horses, the two men talked alone. At their sides were their troops--nearby, the most intimate and trusted; and removed from them, the body of the troops. They smoked and planned an offensive--an outline for a general movement with a concentration of all the troops: thirty thousand men, at least.

When they were about to leave, Zapata ordered Guajardo's men to march by first. The Commander-in-chief from his horse looked at the face of each one as he filed past--faces half-concealed under enormous hats. Suddenly General Zapata sat erect in his saddle, bearing upon the stirrups. He had seen something. To better assure himself, he made his horse walk down the line. He had discovered among Guajardo's men, Victorino Bárcenas. The General's eyes shone disquietingly.

That discovery incubated in exceeding distrust, made him resolve to ask at once for a second proof of loyalty.

On reaching Peña Pelona it was evident that the enemy, the Carrancistas, were hiding in the hills, apparently in considerable numbers. The General commanded Guajardo to prepare for an encounter and go ahead with his troop. It was only a skirmish against a small flying column that fled. Although the enemy proved to be not great in number, Guajardo and his troop had initiated the attack with the will to win, however numerous the federales might be. Thus, Guajardo had again demonstrated his allegiance. Twice he had fought against those who at one time were his companions.

Once having put the Carrancistas to flight, the column raised the dust, leaving Peña Pelona behind. They camped almost side by side near Jonacatepec. General Zapata stationed his troops as if he expected an attack. After supper he meditated a long time, as he was accustomed to do, pulling his long mustache. He puffed his pipe and lost himself in thought. When someone came up to consult him about something, he solved it with the logic of a man brought up in the country--that reasoning, subject to moderate rules, governing old familiar subjects--the ox, the mule, the weather, the rain, the poor, the rich, etc.--each case with its peculiar solution to meet the never-ending needs of his people.

The cause of his meditation was concerning things

that were to determine the destiny of a man. Guajardo was going to be submitted to the hardest test. When, obeying a call, Guajardo stood before Zapata, the latter took him by the arm; and, after a long walk, with the incurvated stride of those who have spent their lives in the saddle, he led him to a nearby fig tree.

In the darkness, without any doubt spied upon by hundreds of watchful eyes, the General's words rang solemnly:

"I can tolerate a thief. I can tolerate a killer. But I can't tolerate a traitor."

Guajardo brusquely drew away. He fell back a couple of steps in a manner almost hostile and asked irritatingly:

"Is that remark directed at me, General?"

"No, hombre, let me finish. I put up with the thief because he is hungry. I pardon the killer because maybe he must kill to defend himself. But the traitor I never pardon! Some time ago I searched for some traitors to punish them as they deserved. You, Guajardo, have those men in your troop; and while they are with you, I shall not be at peace. He who betrays once will betray a hundred times. I refer to Victorino Bárcenas and his men. You punish them as they should be punished, or they must be turned over to me so that I can punish them as is befitting traitors."

Zapata's manner was determined. Guajardo, plotting,

began to twist his mustache.

"All of them, General?"

"All."

"General, I won over Barcenas and his men because they know the country, and I consider they will be of great service to me. It would be a misfortune."

"Yes, though they are not from Morelos, they know the country. And it is precisely for that reason that they were useful to the carrancismo. Because of them, on more than one occasion the enemy struck at us. But they cannot know the land better than I and my boys. This is our homeland."

"General, you put me in a serious position. What are my men, and whoever may hear of it, going to say? Oh--if I just weren't required to hand them over!"

"Don't hand them over. Punish them yourself!"

"I shall dismiss them, stripped of their arms."

"No, traitors are not dismissed. Traitors merit the most severe punishment and in the army that's death."

Guajarde seemed intensely moved and preoccupied. After a great deal of vacillation, in which it was evident he was searching for a satisfactory solution, he said:

"General, will you grant me tonight to think about it? Tomorrow I will tell you if I shall punish them, or if I shall turn them over to you to do what you see fit."

"Perfectly, but I'm going to tell you a story--"

And the General related one of those stories that settled the most transcendental questions, full of the wisdom of the country.

"A worker in the neighborhood of Anenecuilco had on his ranch a dog who watched his home. He was a large yellow dog with long pointed ears. As soon as the animal would hear the coyotes howl, he would run at full speed to chase them. And the good man, when the dog returned, would tell the cook to throw him some tortillas since he had so well earned them--watching over the chickens. Once the coyotes approached so near that, when the yellow dog went out to chase them, the man followed behind to see if he had caught one. And under a huizache tree he found the dog and the coyotes amicably devouring a hen. The coyotes fled while the dog kept on eating. The farmer, convinced that his dog was a traitor, quietly pulled out his machete and split open the dog's head with one blow."

* * *

It was a veritable bridge of blood--a bridge made with red coagula. Passing over that bridge to the other side--the desired goal--or renouncing all, withdrawing with his men and perhaps attacking Zapata and his followers, who

certainly had taken precautions, was Colonel Guajardo's problem. He was presented with the stark grimace of insomnia. Doubtless he had struggled a great deal with himself, elaborating on the answer he must give. One can imagine the mental torture. Though in the midst of his men, he was alone and unable to communicate with anyone.

"General, I am ready to respect your orders. I think that a war council should pass sentence upon Barcenas and his men, and it should be the council that should take the responsibility."

"I approve your decision. Let it be a summary council to act without delay or formality."

In Guajardo's eyes shone a remote hope for the sixty men: that the members of the council chosen from his troop would vote them absolved of guilt. Perhaps they would guess his thoughts. He could, perhaps, give them a hint; although he couldn't and didn't want to talk to them directly . . .

Now when the day was well along, Barcenas's sixty men were lined up, on foot, in the road. Barcenas was not in camp. He had fled during the night, alone.

"He must have suspected something," Guajardo commented.

Zapata looked at him intently and seemed satisfied with his examination. Guajardo returned the look with the

tranquillity of one who fears nothing because he is responsible for nothing. Behind the sixty individuals to be judged, were placed one hundred Zapatistas, almost two to one. Guajardo himself ordered the first group to drop their guns and their cartridge belts on the ground.

"Right flank ... March!

"Left face ... Halt! "

The two small columns carried out the orders. On leaving that spot, automatically Barcenas's men were prisoners.

"Surely, they don't intend to shoot us. We're many."

"They will give us a kick in the rear and send us packing."

Of the disarmed men, some looked at each other uneasily, their eyes inquiring. Others, the braggarts, tried to appear unworried and sure of themselves. Behind them were their guards with their guns ready. These were the men of the General's bodyguard most closely attached to General Zapata.

The members of the war council were chosen. Zapata proposed that neither he nor Guajardo take part. Minutes afterwards, having to consider only the charges brought by Zapata himself against the Southern Army, the members of the council assembled in a farmer's hut nearby. It might have

been a long and weighty task, that of hearing one and all. However, the only matter that deserved any examination was the selection of Barcenas's men who had rejoined by his orders subsequent to their revolt from the Zapatista lines. The points of discussion and accusation in accordance with the General's reasoning were as follows:

If Bárcenas's men had served in the Southern Army, and in a dangerous situation had gone over to the Carrancistas, those men had betrayed the Agrarian Revolution. And if those men had been traitors, in order to set an example and avoid further defections, an exemplary punishment was necessary.

When a war council, during a revolution as bloody as the Zapatista against the Carrancistas spoke of an exemplary punishment, the meaning was quite clear. The members understood all this, and the verdict was not long forthcoming: sentence of death for the sixty men including Victorino Bárcenas.

The verdict did not surprise Guajardo. The formality of having a council had strengthened him spiritually. He carefully avoided his men. Perhaps he thought he lacked the necessary fortitude to see them face to face.

Those who were being sentenced were taking it calmly. Seated on the ground they looked as if they were resting

from a long march. They even seemed indifferent. When someone spoke of what they might expect as a result of the meeting of the war council, there wasn't lacking someone to say:

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm not worried. Victorino said: 'Go this way', and we went with him. Afterwards he said to us: 'We're going there', and we obeyed. It's his responsibility, not ours."

"I'll bet they won't do anything to us. We are too many for them to kill like flies."

"As I said: a kick in the rear and . . ."

They were mistaken. A colonel, on horseback, began to make preparations. He ordered a score of his men to stand facing a steep slope of black earth washed by the recent rains. Five of the condemned were placed against that large natural wall. The orders were precise: Fire! One of the victims tried to escape and from every direction bullets flew to finish him. Five others were led up to the wall. For the firing, only a gesture was needed from the one directing the execution. There were no orders for the rest. As soon as the five arrived, the firing squad raised their guns to their shoulders and fired. Some of those sentenced gained the nearby Craig, and there were shouts of:

"Don't follow him! Don't fire on him. He has earned

his life. He didn't escape death for nothing!"

Among the last group, a boy started to run but so stupidly that he rushed terrified into a group of spectators. They drove him back with bullets. He went in another direction and found the same wall. The guns seemed to be discharging blank cartridges. An officer had to cry out:

"Look out or you'll kill a bystander."

He pointed his pistol at the boy, stretched out his hand, and pulled the trigger. The boy raised his arms and remained for a fraction of a second in midair, poised on tiptoe, and then lunged backward. Some members of the firing squad took charge of finishing those who still moved.

Zapata found Guajardo with his head between his hands as if to stop up his ears not to hear the detonations.

"Don't worry, compañero; it is necessary to be rid of traitors."

"General, I believe I have given you the most convincing proof of my loyalty."

"I haven't the least doubt. One couldn't expect any more of you. For a good reason, I called you to the ranks of the Revolution, the real Revolution of ideals."

Guajardo extended his hand. It was a handshake equivalent to a solemn pact in words.

"Right now, my general, I want us to celebrate this

union. But I want to celebrate it in a friendly way. I invite you to eat with me. I have someone in Chinameca who makes me an excellent mole. There will be beer. And what do you say if after the banquet there is something in the way of music and girls to dance a little?"

"And so in Chinameca -- mole with turkey -- beer -- music and girls? I'm for it tomorrow."

"Agreed?"

"Zapata gives his word."

Gaujardo ordered the signal given for the cavalry to saddle, and he took his men in the direction of Chinameca. Zapata and his men left for Jonacatepec. On the road, behind them, those who had been shot looked like rags scattered on the ground.

* * *

The hacienda in Chinameca was like many farmhouses in the State of Morelos--veritable traps, or better, veritable fortresses. Immense houses with good walls. A large portal. Rooms for the patrón, for the administrator, for the employees, and for the visitors. A great square for coaches and horses. And in front of the house, a quadrangular space so large that markets were held there. That rectangle was bordered by a wall, something like a tecorral, a stone wall,

but better constructed than the general run of tecorrales. To the right and to the left the wall had wide gates.

In Chinameca Guajardo awaited General Zapata. Inside the large house was the troop, posted in the best and most cunning places. At each one of the gates, in view of whoever arrived, were only six armed men--just two modest guards of honor. Near the corridor was stationed a bugler.

The dinner hour was approaching. There was a certain impatience in Chinameca. General Zapata was already late. Suddenly a messenger arrived who was stopped at the gate. The corporal received the news that the General was already approaching. The corporal transmitted the news.

In truth, a few minutes later, the General's escort began to arrive. These, too, were not permitted to enter the patio. The guards of honor had orders not to let these pass since it was necessary to do honor to the Chief first. Judging by the direction in which the emissary and some of the body-guard arrived, the General would enter by the right gate. The six men of that guard were in impeccable formation, in resolute attitude, and at rest.

The general was riding with the rear guard. Those who had arrived first had dismounted outside the wall near the gate where they were only awaiting the arrival of the General. Of his personal guard some were seated confidently

on their horses, others had dismounted, some--lazier or exhausted from the heat of the sun--were now stretched out on the grass under the chirimoyos.

The Chief came into view. He was recognized at a distance by the great height of his horse, by his large mustache, and by something that a commander's party always offers. Although he was still twenty meters away, the bugle began to play the "march of honor". The Chief was being received as he deserved, with all honors. The corporal had ordered his men to present arms. As soon as the bugle sounded, he gave the command in a vigorous voice:

"Present ... arms!"

Zapata's horse advanced, moving gracefully. His small ears were pointed forward. He was tense, electrified by the note of the bugle. The guard still presented arms, their left hands pressed hard against the middle of the barrel, their right, a little below the guard, their heads erect, their rifles in perfect line--the ends of the barrel in direct line with the eyebrows. The General had advanced ten meters nearer and was now within the patio. Then the six men of the guard that were presenting arms, executed a slight movement, letting their guns drop to an acute angle and the sound of the gun reports was carried back.

General Zapata violently attempted to whirl his horse

around, perhaps with the idea of escaping from such a trap. But the act was not completed. In the first movement he fell headlong to the ground. The horse fled.

The corporal approached the General. With his rifle he fired the finishing shot.

* * *

The body was lashed to the back of a mule, feet hanging on one side, arms on the other. With a strong escort capable of protecting such a valuable prize, the journey in the direction of Cuautla was begun. To the trotting of the mule, the legs of the dead man imitated the movements of one walking, as if Zapata were still running through the State of Morelos. The arms seemed to stretch out, perhaps wanting to reach for the earth for his boys, reaching for what he had so fought--so near and yet so distant.

In Cuautla the body was exhibited, and in undertones, the legend began:

"He isn't the General."

"He must be. He is mutilated thus from having come as he did. The blood has gone to his head."

"No, friend, the General had a very peculiar mark on one cheek-bone -- and that one doesn't have."

"Of course! The finishing shot entered that spot."

"Quién sabe?"

And the "quién sabe?", full of hopes, proved to be sobs instead. Meanwhile others rejoiced.

"Indeed, this bandit has fallen!"

XXV

Disaster. Everywhere Zapatista leaders surrendered. The nucleus that accompanied General Zapata had dispersed. There remained, among others, the group that in Tochimilco, in the region of the volcanos, constituted a more or less permanent quarter, something like the seat of the Zapatista movement.

That group had received orders to start out in the direction of Jonacatepec. They were on the way when in Tepanapa, in the late morning, they learned from some soldiers not in the regular army the news that had been traveling by word of mouth that General Zapata had been assassinated in Chinameca. Their first thought was to name a new chief. During the day, after having confirmed the news, there were sent numerous emissaries to locate the principal leader of each band. A meeting was arranged. It was in the mountains in the neighborhood of the village of Ixtlilco. While discussions were going on, the detonations of a bloody encounter sounded two kilometers away.

One of the generals proposed then that all the contingents abandon Morelos to withdraw to Veracruz to carry on operations. In support of his proposal were the incon-

veniences it would occasion the government forces since a change of front would oblige the loss of time and materials as always happens in all movement of troops, while the revolutionary forces had the marvelous bridge of the volcanic region. Others took an opposite view. They said that a change of place for operations was equivalent to flight, that would seed distrust among the people. They heatedly held to the conviction that they must remain in Morelos where the agrarian idea was already somewhat well-rooted into the consciousness of the peasants.

* * *

Words. The hope of a reorganization did not last longer than the meeting at Ixtlilco. The campaign against them grew stronger and surrendering became a common occurrence. The people themselves, always so loyal, on seeing their armies so weak and demoralized abandoned them to their fate. When one of their armies arrived, the peasants fled into the mountains. Every day, those from Tochimilco, who believed in maintaining morale in the center of Morelos, received news of surrenders. They were being deserted. Former fellow rebels were becoming their persecutors. They realized that they must again seek the safety of the volcanos, and they undertook the journey across the mountains.

Fighters became fugitives. On foot they reached Hueyapan, tired and very hungry. The peasants themselves began persecuting them. They sought shelter in some caves where a cataract like a wide curtain hid the entrance. Then, they continued their pilgrimage, traveling only at night through places where before they had been received with acclaim. It was the season when the countryside was white with the flowering casahuates.

They arrived at Quebrantadero. A rebel leader received them like comrades. But the following day, without any warning, he surrendered to the Carrancistas. They fled again, eating for several days only the bitter fruit of the parota and ears of corn cut off in passing along the edge of the corn fields. They reached Ahuehuetzingo. Another rebel leader welcomed them as friends, also to surrender. And the small party concealed themselves in the sierras of Atencingo and Tlancualpican. Other rebel leaders surrendered immediately after the fugitives arrived.

Then began the most sorrowful part of the pilgrimage. The rumor spread that they were the ones who were convincing the loyal rebels to give up their arms and surrender. Some Zapatistas, still armed, made it known that, if they could get hands on the traitors, they would shoot them. Other surrenders gave more strength to the rumor.

1920

It was an occasion for celebrating with music and fireworks, an event that recalled the ceremony in the village of Ayoxustla. Since morning the band had not ceased playing. The musicians, enveloped in their cloaks and with their hats pulled down to half-conceal their faces, seemed like gray tree-trunks endowed with sound-giving powers. "La Valentina" proclaimed its amorous adventure, that had become a revolutionary adventure.

While waiting for the authorities of the town to arrive, the agrarian committee devoted itself to the preparation for the fiesta. Arches of flowers had been put up over the road at the entrance to the farm village, just as when the candidate for deputy had come years before. They were decorating with flowers the place where the banquet would be spread.

The village, rebuilt after the last fire, looked like another, as if it might have had its face washed. Everything was lively and gay, like one of those days when the landlord had ordered a general mobilization of the peons. In the doorways were Indians, crouching, with a stone between their feet sharpening their machetes. The children

roamed and played. The women were wearing their cleanest clothes.

Procopio was with the other old men. One of them was saying:

"They said that don Bernardo wanted to sell his lands, but there was no one to buy them because the restitution and the division of lands were pending."

"But he doesn't lack anything for all that. He travels around Europe spending some of the great deal that he has."

"He was lucky. Other hacendados would like to be able to count his money. Because they were so ambitious, they bet on the wrong horse and lost."

Procopio had in his possession some of the last plundering. He had had the courage, since he no longer feared the patrón.

"Who knows what curse that boy who was bitten by the snake cast upon him! Do you remember?"

In another group were soldiers active in the revolutionary ranks. One of them was telling something that doubtless referred to the place. He pointed fifty meters to the left, and turned his index finger against his chest and marked a spot five centimeters above the chest. He must have been describing how they had killed Antonio Hernández.

Another, who talked very loudly, said:

"What a brave fellow was Antonio Hernandez. The kind that women don't give birth to every day."

"Don't tell me. Valor is a question of circumstances. You know I'm not a saint. Well, when we entered Mexico City, I grabbed a dandy in the street, and with one haul took his watch away from him. You won't believe me, but I returned it to him. He stuck his nose in my face and said, 'Eh, country fellow!' (I think that was the word.) 'Why take my watch if you can't even tell time? See that they wash you and buy you some pants and shoes.' And I allowed myself to take the watch. While I looked at myself, huaraches and trousers all black with dirt, he walked off--he walked off and I after him. I overtook him, too!"

"Yes, friend. It is sad that they despise the poor. In Mexico City I met an elegant woman as pretty as a virgin. What eyes! What arms! And what breasts! I was going to put my arms around her to carry her off somewhere bodily; but she, without fear or anything, pulled away from me saying: 'Brute, you're soiling my dress!' She was so pretty and I was so dirty. Then she took a coach and left me like that ----."

He scratched his nose with the point of his finger.

"She should have fallen to my lot. In Cuautla when

we took it the first time, three were mine. Three pretty little things!"

A horseman galloped up.

"The officials are coming now."

Rockets were set off. Shots were fired into the air. Everyone crowded around. Without losing time they all went toward the lands that had been the master's and that the people had taken possession of some time ago. The officials were coming merely to ratify the possession.

The old peons did not go as in past years, submissive to the voice of the overseer. Now, boasting wildly, they shouted with enthusiasm. The engineer, who for several days had been busy measuring lands, shadowed old Procopio, the living archive of the village. When they came upon a stone fence, half in ruins, the boundary of the master's former lands--the people tore it down completely amid cheers of joy. Through that spot passed the limits of the communal lands of the village.

Some distance further on, the engineer stopped, pointing out a place with his arm. The mayor alighted from his horse and reached for a stone that he placed as a marker. The peasants took charge of the rest. With a heap of stones they built a landmark. When they had completed the business of the boundaries, it was made known that the joint

owners would enjoy in common the waters of the creek and the forests of the canyon.

While the mayor made his speech, the peasants were thinking of how they would pasture in the master's former fields the horses that had served in the revolution. Others amused themselves looking at the buzzards that circled and dipped in the lucid heights of the sun.

* * *

On the way back, the band zigzagged crazily between the pastures and the bramble fields. The old Zapatistas uttered wild cries of happiness. Birds, frightened by the confusion, flew away. More than one mountain beast drew near electrified by the noise. The riders pranced their horses in caracoles.

At a point where a path entered the road stood a strange figure. It was María Petra, now a woman and already a widow, who was walking with her sorrow among the brambles. Everyone knew her and her story. In spite of her demented condition, the inhabitants looked upon her with respect, as well as pity. The fact was they saw in her, Antonio Hernández, Colonel Hernández.

Cecilio, who with the officials of the town headed the committee, told her story to the visitors:

"That girl was going to be my brother's wife. My father had asked for her for Antonio. But Francisco, the administrator's son, liked María Petra. Antonio was forced to give up his claim to her. In those days who could oppose them? How the old man, my father, suffered seeing himself humiliated and Antonio in grief! Francisco married María Petra, and they went away to live in town not long before the patron fled from here. As time passed, Francisco became more courageous, believing that all had been forgotten; and following the master's orders, he persisted in coming to spy on what was happening here. One day, he was hanging from a tree with three bullets in his head. Naturally, there were plenty of tongues blaming my brother. Eight days later Antonio was killed in a fray when the federales burned the village. I was far away at the time. Some of his men, four or five, carried him into the mountains and buried him under an oak tree near a stream. Since my return we have agreed that we should remove the body. When the time was ripe, we were going to bring his remains to the cemetery. We were so busy, however, that time went on and on without our even going to see the place where he was buried. The ones who knew died one by one, and now no one knows where the place is. And as we have searched for it so much, people say we aren't looking for him but for the

treasure that he left buried. María Petra has also looked a great deal, but in vain. She goes out in the morning, covers the mountain, and returns at nightfall. She cuts flowers and leaves them under any oak tree near any stream .

. . . For entire hours she stays here, looking at the flowers and talking as if she were talking to Antonio. For her, he is in every place where she leaves her offering. People say that she is crazy. Pobrecita! You can see that she loved him."

The certainty existed that Antonio Hernandez was indeed dead, but no one knew where he was buried. On the other hand, everyone knew where General Zapata was buried; but no one, around there, believed he was dead.

XXVII

The news went like a hungry dog from door to door, swiftly. They whispered it, they told it as they gathered in groups. The men told it in the furrows, the women at the well. Now there was someone who had seen him. Then, it was true that he hadn't died

"Do you know who saw him? The old woman Albina. And she tells it in detail to all who wish to hear. Surely you realize that the old woman doesn't tell a lie. It is all the truth to her. She told me:

"I saw him with these eyes that are soon going to be eaten by worms. There was such a beautiful moon when he rode up on horseback to the corridor. It seemed like mid-day. I tell you that when I rubbed my eyes, I could see clearly who it was. I recognized him in a second. He had his hat hanging back as he liked to wear it; the same trousers with rows of buttons; and his mustache, so plain--to be recognized leagues away. When I was going to open the door to tell him to enter and have a cup of coffee at least, he reined in his horse, turned, and went off at full gallop in that direction; look, as if he were going to Anenecuilco."

* * *

Time and again the old Zapatas pulled out their rifles so furtively concealed in the straw that made up the roofs of their homes. Without making a noise, they released the catch, allowing the bolt to slide back. The hammer was cocked like a lower jaw-bone horribly out of joint. Noiselessly they pulled the lever again; one cartridge and then another dropped out, until the chamber was empty. They cleaned the interior perfectly and oiled it. They blew through the barrel and peered through it. And finally, they put the cartridges back in place until the gun was again in perfect working order.

"And what are you doing with the rifle, man?" This from the woman who feared for the bystanders. A false move, and who knows what might happen.

"I am cleaning it. It has to be ready. He is coming one of these days when he is least expected to tell me to follow him."

* * *

Near the fire in the shelter of the reconstructed huts, the farmers were eating breakfast. It was a little before dawn, shortly before the time to leave for work. The man's bench was empty. He had died in the revolution. The

oldest son filled his place as head of the family. The little ones, almost naked, brown, as if carved of old piloncillo, continued sleeping on their petates. The women turned the tortillas on the fire and ground corn on the floor.

Outside, the silent darkness of the early morning. First very faintly, then very distinctly the galloping of a horse was heard. They all turned their ears. They stopped eating and even breathing. The dog with mangy ears stretched out his neck and sniffed the air sadly.

A man said in a low voice: "It must be he."

Their glances turned toward the door, a hole leading into the immense black tunnel of the night. They were sure that he was going to appear on the threshold, and that his tall, dark, unmistakable figure would fill the doorway.

The beating of the hoofs could still be heard, but they were receding. Into the shadows they passed on. Again silence.

* * *

Along the old road in the opaque light of nightfall, a yoke of oxen slowly plodded homeward. The animals walked and chewed in rhythm. They were statuesque, though they were lean, carved of pumice-stone. Behind the oxen,

carrying their goads like pilgrims' staffs, walked two men as grimy as the beasts they were driving. In low voices they gossiped of what was a part of their conversation whether before the hearth, in groups gathered at doorways, or in the confidences of the furrow.

"That's what they say. The old woman Albina saw him."

The two oxen raised and lowered their heads monotonously. The two men withdrew to their thoughts. Fireflies darted in the tall grass bordering the road. In the mountain there was a light. Probably a star had just fallen.

The two men turned their heads at the same moment. They felt sure they had heard the movement of a horse. They saw, perhaps, outlined against the depths of the clear horizon a figure on horseback. They screened their eyes with their hands as those do who come out from the darkness into the light. There was nothing, only the complete silence of the fields.

THE END

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Alegría, Ciro, Broad and Alien is the World. Harriet de Onís, translator. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1941. 433 pp.
- Alzamirano, Ignacio Manuel, El Zarco. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1933. 136 pp.
- Arnold, Matthew, "On Translating Homer," Essays in Criticism. Boston: Fields, Osgood, and Company, 1869. Pp. 284-424.
- Azuela, Mariano, La Luciérnaga. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1932. 206 pp.
- _____, Los Fracasados. Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1939. 249 pp.
- _____, Pedro Moreno, El Insurgente. Santiago, Chile: Editorial Breilla, 1935. 122 pp.
- _____, Los de Abajo. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1930. 229 pp.
- Bates, Ralph, Fields of Paradise. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1923. 280 pp.
- Blanco-Fombona, Rufino, Grandes Escritores de América. Madrid: Renacimiento, 1917. 302 pp.
- Chase, Stewart, Mexico, the Study of Two Americas. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933. 327 pp.
- Coester, Alfred, Literary History of South America. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919. 475 pp.
- Gallegos, Rómulo, Doña Barbara. Barcelona: Casa Editorial Araluce, 1929. 389 pp.
- Goldberg, Isaac, Studies in Spanish-American Literature. New York: Brentano's, 1920. Pp. 1-46, 101-183.
- Güiraldes, Ricardo, Don Segundo Sombra. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1930. 319 pp.

- Gunther, John, Inside Latin America. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1941. Pp. 1-117.
- Guzmán, Martín Luis, El Aguila y la Serpiente. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1928. Vol. I, 260 pp., Vol. II, 304 pp.
- Hackett, C.W., The Mexican Revolution and the United States. Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1926. 104 pp.
- Hespelt, Herman K., An Outline History of Spanish-American Literature. New York: F.S. Crofts and Company, 1941. Pp. 78-160.
- Holmes, Henry Alfred, Contemporary Spanish Americans. New York: F.S. Crofts and Company, 1942. Pp. 130-136.
- Kazin, Alfred, Mexico, from Conquistadores to Cardenas. New York: New York Herald Tribune Books, Feb. 21, 1937. P.3.
- King, Rosa B., Tempest Over Mexico. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938. 319 pp.
- López y Fuentes, Gregorio, Arrieros. Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1937. 220 pp.
- _____, Huasteca. Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1939. 324 pp.
- _____, El Indio. Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1937. 269 pp.
- _____, Tierra, la Revolución Agraria en México. Mexico: Editorial Botas, 1933. 186 pp.
- _____, Mi General. Mexico: Editorial Botas, 1934. 253 pp.
- Lynch, Benito, El Inglés de los Oñesos. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1930. 311 pp.
- Magdaleno, Mauricio, El Resplandor. Mexico: Editorial Botas, 1937. 427 pp.
- Muñoz, Rafael, Vámonos con Pancho Villa. Ruth Donnelly Harris, translator. (Unpublished Master's thesis, Montana State University, 1942). 213 pp.
- Reed, John T., Insurgent Mexico. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1914. 326 pp.

- Rivera, José Eustasio, La Vorágine. Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1932. 384 pp.
- Sánchez, Florencio, La Gringa. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927. 67 pp.
- Torres-Rioseco, Arturo, Antología de la Literatura Hispano-americana. New York: F.S. Crofts and Company, 1939. Pp. 31-33, 50-52, 58-66, 73-81.
- _____, Epic of Latin American Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1942. 255 pp.
- Umphrey, George W., and Prada, Carlos García, Selections from the Prose and Poetry of Ruben Dario. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928. 175 pp.
- Walsh, Gertrude M. Cuentos Criollos. Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1941. 142 pp.
- West, Hugo, Desierto de Piedra. Chicago: D.C. Heath and Company, 1930. 202 pp.
- _____, Pata de Zorra. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1937. 136 pp.

Periodicals

- Englekirk, J.E., "The Discovery of 'Los de Abajo'," Hispania, Jan., 1935. Pp. 53-62.
- Espinosa, José E., "Notes on the Role of the Gaucho Literature in the Evolution of Americanism in Argentina," Hispania, Feb., 1936. Pp. 85-92.
- Frank, Waldo, "The Hispano-American's World," The Nation, 152:615-18.
- Halperin, Maurice, "The Social Background of Contemporary Mexican Literature," Modern Language Association Publications (PMLA), 55pt. 2:875-80, Sept., 1940.

Moore, Ernest R., "Novelists of the Mexican Revolution,"
Mexican Life, Nov., 1940. Pp. 23-25, 52-56.

Stanton, Ruth, "The Realism of Mauricio Magdaleno,"
Hispania, XXII, Pp. 345-353.

Vitier, Medardo, "Caracteres de la Literatura Contemporánea,"
Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. IV, Nov. 1, 1941. Pp. 19-35.