

CLASSICS TO GO  
A GRINGO IN  
MAÑANA-LAND



HARRY L. FOSTER

# **A Gringo in Mañana-Land**

**Harry L. Foster**



A CHIEFTAIN DRESSED FOR THE EASTER CEREMONY OF  
THE YAQUI INDIANS

# CONTENTS

<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER I</u></a>	ON THE BORDER
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER II</u></a>	BANDITS!
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER III</u></a>	IN SLEEPY HERMOSILLO
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER IV</u></a>	AMONG THE YAQUI INDIANS
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER V</u></a>	DOWN THE WEST COAST
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER VI</u></a>	THOSE DARK-EYED SEÑORITAS!
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER VII</u></a>	IN THE DAYS OF CARRANZA
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER VIII</u></a>	THE MEXICAN CAPITAL
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER IX</u></a>	INTERMISSION
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER X</u></a>	THE LAND OF THE INDIAN VAMPS
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XI</u></a>	THOSE CHRONIC INSURRECTIONS!
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XII</u></a>	UP AND DOWN GUATEMALA
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XIII</u></a>	IN SUNNY SALVADOR
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XIV</u></a>	THE REVOLUTION IN HONDURAS
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XV</u></a>	WHERE MARINES MAKE PRESIDENTS
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XVI</u></a>	A LONG, LONG WAY TO COSTA RICA
<a href="#"><u>CHAPTER XVII</u></a>	ADIOS!

# ILLUSTRATIONS

[A Chieftain Dressed for the Easter Ceremony of the Yaqui Indians](#)

[In Those Days Trains Did Not Venture to Run at Night Across the Sonora Desert](#)

[An Escort of Soldiers Occupied a Freight Car Ahead as a Precaution Against Bandits](#)

[A Burro Train Laden with Bullion from the Mines](#)

[La Colorada, Once the Home of Gold Mines, Now Served Only as a Depot for Trucks That Crossed the Desert](#)

[Indian Women, Pounding Clothes upon the Rocks Beside a Shallow Brook, Ceased Their Work to Stare](#)

[The Christ Was Represented by a Cheap Rag Doll Cradled in a Wicker Basket](#)

[For Three Days the Indians Neither Ate Nor Slept, Refreshing Themselves Only with Mescal](#)

[The Mexican Señorita Has Always Been Portrayed in Our Fiction as a Wild Vampire](#)

[In the Days of Carranza One Frequently Saw a Bandit Hanging Around the Railway](#)

[Pedro Zamorra Had Removed a Few Ties Where the Train Came Around a Bend](#)



So Worthless Were the Federal Troops That Many Americans Professed a Preference for Bandits

The Orange Trees in Guadalajara's Plaza Were Golden Throughout the Year

Mexico City, One of the Most Ornate Capitals in the Western Hemisphere, Somewhat Resembled Paris

The Mexican Pyramids Probably Antedate Those of Egypt by a Thousand Years or More

In the Gardens of Xochimilco, Relics of an Aztec Paradise, Only the Cabbages Were in Bloom

Mexican Policemen in White Spats

No Latin-American Village Is So Tiny But That It Has a Square Devoted to Bartering

The Mexican Peon So Loves the Excitement of the Market That He Refuses to Sell His Goods Elsewhere

The Tehuana Maidens Regarded a Man as a Luxury Rather Than a Necessity

The Abundant Central-American Volcanoes Fertilize the Coffee Fincas with Lava Dust

Guatemala's Population Includes a Million Pure-blooded Aborigines

Occasionally the Resultant Earthquakes Knock Down a City or Destroy the Guatemalan Cathedral

When Orellana Started a Revolution, President Herrera Made No Strenuous Objection

The Only Casualties Were a Few Policemen Who Mistook the Revolution for a Disorderly Demonstration

A Banana-Boat Loading on the East Coast

In These Pleasant Tropical Countries No Peon Girl Escapes Maternity

From His Palace the President Could Watch the Treasury to See That No One Stole the National Debt

Soldiers Stopped a Pedestrian at Every Corner to Search for Weapons

The Warship *Rochester* Had Anchored at Amapala on What Was Described as a Courtesy Visit

The American Intervention Had Brought Peace, but Managua's Dusty Streets Suggested no Prosperity

If the American Marines Were Withdrawn from Nicaragua a Revolution Would Transpire Over-Night

For Three Days the Boatmen Poled the Launch Through Shallows Framed in Rank Green Jungle

Greytown Was a Typical East Coast Port—Low, Swampy and Unattractive—With Black Complexions Prevailing

San José Contains the Most Delightful Plazas and the Most Beautiful Women in the World

A Machine-Gun Tower Built by the Tyrant Tinoco

In Its Interior Decoration the Costa Rican National Theater Equals Any Theater in the United States





# CHAPTER I

## ON THE BORDER

### I

It was my original plan to ride from Arizona to Panama by automobile.

In fact, I even went so far as to purchase the automobile. It had been newly painted, and the second-hand dealer assured me that no car in all the border country had a greater reputation.

This proved to be the truth. The first stranger I met grinned at my new prize with an air of pleased recognition.

“Well! Well!” he exclaimed. “Do *you* own it now?”

So did the second stranger, and the third. I had acquired not only an automobile, but a definite standing in the community. People who had hitherto passed me without a glance now smiled at me. There was even some discussion of organizing a club, of which I was to be the president, my term of office to continue until I could sell the car to some one else.

When I announced that I meant to drive to Panama—down through Mexico, Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and any other republics which I might discover along the way—every one who heard of the idea offered encouragement:

“You’ve got the right car for *that* trip, my boy. Since you’ll find no roads down there, you’ll need a companion to walk ahead and chop down the cactus or level off the mountains,

and if you step hard on the gas, you'll just about be able to keep up with him."

## II

I suspected that there was an element of insincerity in this encouragement.

I was rather young, however, at the time of that first venture at foreign travel. It was only a few months after the Armistice, and I felt disinclined to return to cub-reporting on a daily newspaper. I elected myself to the loftier-sounding profession of Free-Lance Newspaper Correspondent. I purchased a palm-beach suit and an automatic pistol. I was going south into the land of romance—of tropical moons glimpsed through whispering palm-trees—of tinkling guitars echoing through Moorish *patios*—of black-eyed *señoritas* and red-nosed soldiers of fortune—of all the many things beyond the ken of mere cub-reporters.

Despite the encouragement, I tacked my banner to the back of my car, and set out upon a round of farewells.

## III

My departure was very dramatic.

Men shook hands with an air of finality. Two or three girls kissed me good-by with conventional little pecks that seemed to say, "I'll never see the poor devil again, so I may as well waste some osculation on him."

I had made the entire circuit, until there remained only a couple of village school-marms, who happened—most unfortunately—to live on top of the highest hill in town. Half-way to the summit, I perceived that my car was never destined to climb that hill. It slackened speed. It stopped. It commenced to roll backward. I was forced to throw it into

reverse, just as the school-marms appeared in their doorway. The situation was humiliating. I became slightly flustered. I meant to step on the brake, but I stepped on the gas.

Wherefore, after some one had picked me out of the débris, I started southward by train.

## CHAPTER II BANDITS!

### I

I crossed the border at daybreak.

In the manner of a Gringo who first passes the Mexican frontier, I walked cautiously, glancing behind me from time to time, anticipating hostility, if not actual violence.

In the dusk of early morning the low, flat-roofed adobe city of Nogales assumed all the forbidding qualities of the fictional Mexico. But the leisurely immigration official was polite. The customs' inspector waved me through all formalities with one graceful gesture. No one knifed me in the back. And somewhere ahead, beyond the dim line of railway coaches, an engineer tolled his bell. The train, as though to shatter all foreign misconceptions of the country, was about to depart on scheduled time!

### II

Somewhat surprised, I made a rush for the ticket window.

A native gentleman was there before me. He also was buying passage, but since he was personally acquainted with the agent, it behooved him—according to the dictates of Spanish etiquette—to converse pleasantly for the next half hour.

“And your *señora*?”

“*Gracias! Gracias!* She enjoys the perfect health! And your own most estimable *señora*?”

“Also salubrious, thanks to God!”

“I am gratified! Profoundly gratified! And the little ones? When last I had the pleasure to see you, the *chiquitita* was suffering from—”

The engineer blew his whistle. A conductor called, “*Vamonos!*” I jumped up and down with Gringo impatience. The Mexican gentleman gave no indication of haste. The engineer might be so rude as to depart without him, but *he* would not be hurried into any omission of the proper courtesies. His dialogue was closing, it is true, but closing elaborately, still according to the dictates of Spanish etiquette, in a handshake through the ticket window, in an expression of mutual esteem and admiration, in eloquent wishes to be remembered to everybody in Hermosillo—enumerated by name until it sounded like a census—in another handshake, and finally in a long-repeated series of “*Adios!*” and “*Que le vaya bien!*”

What mattered it if all the passengers missed the train? Would there not be another one to-morrow? This, despite the railway schedule, was the land of “*Mañana.*”

### III

On his first day in Mexico, the American froths over each delay. In time he learns to accept it with fatalistic calm.

As it happened, the dialogue ceased at the right moment. Every one caught the train. Another polite Mexican gentleman cleared a seat for me, and I settled myself just as Nogales disappeared in a cloud of dust, wondering why any train should start at such an unearthly hour of the morning.

The reason soon became obvious. The time-table had been so arranged in order that the engineer could maintain a comfortable speed of six miles an hour, stop with

characteristic Mexican sociability at each group of mud huts along the way, linger there indefinitely as though fearful of giving offense by too abrupt a departure, and still be able to reach his destination—about a hundred miles distant—before dark.

In those days—the last days of the Carranza régime—trains did not venture to run at night, and certainly not across the Yaqui desert. It was a forbidding country—an endless expanse of brownish sand relieved only by scraggly mesquite. Torrents from a long-past rainy season had seamed it with innumerable gullies, but a semi-tropic sun had left them dry and parched, and the gnarled greasewood upon their banks drooped brown and leafless. Even the mountains along the horizon were gray and bleak and barren save for an occasional giant cactus that loomed in skeleton relief against a hot sky.



IN THOSE DAYS TRAINS DID NOT VENTURE TO RUN AT  
NIGHT ACROSS THE SONORA DESERT

This was the State of Sonora, one of the richest in Mexico, but its wealth—like the wealth of all Mexico—was not apparent to the eye of the tourist. The villages at which we



stopped were but groups of low adobe hovels. The dogs that slunk about each habitation, being of the Mexican hairless breed, were strangely in harmony with the desert itself. And the *peons*—dark-faced semi-Indians, mostly barefoot, and clad in tattered rags—seemed to have no occupation except that of frying a few beans and selling them to railway passengers.

At each infrequent station they were awaiting us. Aged beggars stumbled along the side of the coach, led by tiny children, to plead in whining voices for “*un centavito*”—“a little penny”—“for the love of God!” Women with bedraggled shawls over the head scurried from window to window, offering strange edibles for sale—baskets of cactus fruit resembling fresh figs—*frijoles* wrapped in pan-cake-like *tortillas* of cornmeal—legs of chicken floating in a yellow grease—while the passengers leaned from the car to bargain with them.

“What? Fifteen *centavos* for that stuff? *Carramba!*”

“Ten cents then?”

“No!”

“How much will you give?”

Both parties seemed to enjoy this play of wits, and when, with a Gringo’s disinclination to haggle, I bought anything at the price first stated, the venders seemed a trifle disappointed. Everybody bought something at each stopping-place, and ate constantly between stations, as though eager to consume the purchases in time to repeat the bargaining at the next town. The journey became a picnic, and there was a child-like quality about the Mexicans that made it strangely resemble a Sunday-school outing at home.

Although an escort of *Carranzista* soldiers occupied a freight car ahead as a precaution against the bandits which

infested Mexico in those days, the passengers appeared blandly unconcerned.



AN ESCORT OF SOLDIERS OCCUPIED A FREIGHT CAR AHEAD AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST BANDITS

Each removed his coat, and lighted a cigarette. From the car wall a notice screamed the Spanish equivalent of “No Smoking,” but the conductor, stumbling into the coach over a family of *peons* who had crowded in from the second-class compartment, merely paused to glance at the smokers, and to borrow a light himself. Every one, with the friendliness for which the Latin-American is unsurpassed, engaged his neighbor in conversation. The portly gentleman who had cleared a seat for me inquired the object of my visit to Mexico, and listened politely while I slaughtered his language. The conductor bowed and thanked me for my ticket. When the *peon* children in the aisle pointed at me and whispered, “*Gringo*,” their mother ceased feeding a baby to “Shush!” them, their father kicked them surreptitiously with a loose-flapping sandal, and both parents smiled in response to my amused grin.

There was something pleasant and carefree about this Mexico that proved infectious. Atop the freight cars ahead, the escort of federal troops laid aside their Mausers, removed their criss-crossed cartridge-belts, and settled themselves for a *siesta*. As the desert sun rose higher, inducing a spirit of coma, the passengers also settled themselves for a nap. The babble of the morning gave place to silence—to silence broken only by the fretting cry of an infant and the steady click of the wheels as we crawled southward, hour after hour, through the empty wastes of mesquite.

And then, as always in Mexico, the unexpected happened.

The silence was punctured by the staccato roar of a machine-gun!

#### IV

In an instant all was confusion.

Whether or not the shooting came from the Carranzista escort or from some gang of bandits hidden in the brush, no one waited to ascertain. Not a person screamed. Yet, as though trained by previous experience, every one ducked beneath the level of the windows, the women sheltering their children, the men whipping out their long, pearl-handled revolvers. The only man who showed any sign of agitation was my portly friend. His immense purple sombrero had tumbled over the back-rest onto another seat, and he was frantic until he recovered it.

After the first roar of the machine-gun, all was quiet. The fatalistic calm of the Mexicans served only to heighten the suspense. The train had stopped. When, a few months earlier, Yaqui Indians had raided another express on this same line, the guard had cut loose with the engine, leaving the passengers to their Fate—a Fate somewhat gruesomely

advertised by a few scraps of rotted clothing half-embedded in the desert sand. The thought that history had repeated itself was uppermost in my mind, and the *peon* on the floor beside me voiced it also, in a fatalistic muttering of:

“*Dios!* They have left us! We are so good as dead!”

We waited grimly—waited interminably. With a crash, the door opened. A dozen revolvers covered the man who entered. A dozen fingers tightened upon a trigger. But it was only the conductor.

“*No hay cuidado, señores,*” he said pleasantly. “The escort was shooting at a jack-rabbit.”

## V

The passengers sat up again, laughing at one another, talking with excited gestures as they described their sensations, enjoying one another’s chagrin, all of them as noisy and happy as children upon a picnic. They bought more *frijoles*, and the feast recommenced, lasting until mid-afternoon, when we pulled into Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora.

A swarm of porters rushed upon us, holding up tin license-tags as they screamed for our patronage. Hotel runners leaped aboard the car and scrambled along the aisle, presenting us with cards and reciting rapidly the superior merits of their respective hostelries, meanwhile arguing with rival agents and assuring us that the other fellow’s beds were alive with vermin, that the other fellow’s food was rank poison, and that the other fellow’s servants would at least rob us, if they did not commit actual homicide.

I fought my way through them to the platform, where another battle-scene was being enacted.

Mexican friends were meeting Mexican friends. To force a passage was a sheer impossibility. Two of them, recognizing each other, promptly went into a clinch, embracing one another, slapping one another upon the back, and venting their joy in loud gurgles of ecstasy, meanwhile blocking up the entire platform.

Restraining *Gringo* impatience once more, I stood and laughed at them. In so many cases the extravagant greetings savored of insincerity. One noticed a flabbiness in the handclasps, a formality in the hugs, an affectation in the shouts of “Ay! My friend! How happy I am to see you!” Yet in many cases, the demonstrations were real—so real that they brought a peculiar little gulp into one’s throat, even while one laughed.

Be they sincere or insincere, I already liked these crazy Mexicans.

## CHAPTER III IN SLEEPY HERMOSILLO

### I

A little brown *cochero* pounced upon me and took me aboard a dilapidated hack drawn by two mournful-looking quadrupeds.

*"Hotel Americano?"* he inquired.

*"No. Hotel distinctly Mejicano."*

He whipped up his horses, and we jogged away through narrow streets lined with the massive, fortress-like walls of Moorish dwellings, past a tiny palm-grown *plaza* fronted by an old white cathedral, to stop finally before a one-story structure whose stucco was cracked and scarred, and dented with the bullet holes of innumerable revolutions.

The proprietor himself, a dignified gentleman in black, advanced to meet me. Were there rooms? Why not, *señor*? Whereupon he seated himself before an immense ledger, to pore over it with knitted brows, stopping now and then to stare vacantly skyward in the manner of one who solves a puzzle or composes an epic poem.

"Number sixteen," he finally announced.

"Occupied," said a servant.

Another period of intellectual absorption.

"Number four."

There being no expostulation, a search ensued for the key. It developed that Room Number Four was opened by Key Number Seven, which—in conformity to some system



altogether baffling to a Gringo—was usually kept on Peg Number Thirteen, but had been misplaced by some careless servant. The little proprietor waved both hands in the air.

“What *mozos!*” he exclaimed. “No sense of orderliness whatsoever!”

A prolonged search resulted, however, in its discovery, and the proprietor himself led the way back through a succession of *patios*, or interior gardens, the front ones embellished with orange trees, and the rear ones with rubbish barrels, to Room Number Four, from which the lock had long ago been broken.

It was a large apartment, with brick floor. It contained a canvas cot, a wobbly chair, and an aged bureau distinguished for its sticky drawers, an air of lost grandeur, and a burnt-wood effect achieved by the cigarette butts of many generations of guests. The bare walls were ornamented only by a placard, containing a set of rules—printed in wholesale quantities for whatever hotels craved the enhanced dignity of elaborate regulations—proclaiming, among other things, that occupants must comport themselves with strict morality.

“One of our very choicest rooms, *señor,*” smiled the proprietor, as he withdrew. “It has a window.”

A window did improve it.

From the narrow street outside came the soft voices of *peons*, the sing-song call of a lottery-ticket vender, the tread of sandaled feet, the clatter of hoofs from a passing burro train laden with bullion from distant mines, the guttural protesting cry of the drivers, all in the exotic symphony of a foreign land.



### A BURRO TRAIN LADEN WITH BULLION FROM THE MINES

Yet there was a calm, subdued note about the chorus. In Mexico, a newly arrived Gringo expected melodrama. It was disconcerting to find only peace.

An Indian maiden, straight as an arrow, swung past with the flat-footed stride of the shoeless classes, balancing an earthenware jar upon her dark head. A fat old lady cantered by upon a tiny donkey, perched precariously upon the extreme stern. A little brown runt of a man staggered past under a gigantic wooden table. Another staggered past under the influence of alcohol. Women on their way to market stopped to offer me their wares. Did I wish to buy a chicken or a watermelon? Would I care for a bouquet of

yucca lilies? Or an umbrella? If not an umbrella, a second-hand guitar?

“No?” They seemed surprised and disappointed. But they smiled politely. “*Gracias* just the same, *señor! Adios!*”

An ice cream vender made his rounds with a slap of leather sandals, balancing atop his *sombrero* a dripping freezer. He stopped before a patron to dish the slushy mixture into a cracked glass, pushing it off the spoon with a dirty finger, and licking the spoon clean before he dropped it back into the can. From one pocket he produced bottles and poured coloring matter over the concoction—scarlet, green, and purple. Then he swung his burden aloft, and continued on his way, chanting, “I carry snow! I carry snow!”

Even the cries of a peddler were soft and gentle here. I was about to turn from the window, when around the corner came a strange procession of mournful men and wailing women, led by three coffins balanced, like every other species of baggage in this country, upon the heads of *peons*. Mexico was Mexico after all! Here was evidence of melodrama! Excitedly I hailed the proprietor.

“A bandit attack, *señor*? No, indeed. José Santos Dominguez had a christening at his house last night. Purely a family affair, *señor!* Nothing more.”

## II

After the dusty railway journey I craved a bath.

From a doorway across the *patio* a legend beckoned with the inscription of “*Baños.*” I called an Indian servant-maid, pointed at the legend, struggled with Spanish, and finally secured a towel. The bath-room door, like that of my room, had long ago lost its lock. Searching among the several tin cans which littered one corner, I found a stick which

evidently was used for propping against the door by such bathers as desired privacy. Having undressed, I leaped jubilantly into the huge, old-fashioned tub, and turned on the water. There *was* no water. Poking modest head and shoulders around the edge of the door, I looked for the maid. She eventually made her appearance, as servants will, even in Mexico, and regarded me suspiciously from a safe distance.

“No, *señor*, there is no water. You asked for a towel. You did not mention that you wished also a bath.”

“Well, for the love of Mike, when—”

“*Mañana, señor*. Always in the morning there is water.”

And so, after supper and a stroll in the *plaza*, I retired, still coated with Sonora desert, to my room. There was some difficulty in locating the electric button, since another careless *mozo* had backed the bureau against it. There was also some difficulty in arranging the mosquito net over my bed. It hung from the ceiling by a slender cord which immediately broke in the pulley. I piled a chair on top of a cot, climbed up and mended the string, climbed down and lowered the net to the proper height, unfolded it, and discovered that it was full of gaping holes through which not only a mosquito but possibly a small ostrich could have flown with comfort and security. Finally, beginning to feel that the charm of Mexico had been vastly overrated by previous writers, I retired, prepared to fight mosquitos, and discovered that there *were* no mosquitos in Hermosillo.

In the morning, rejuvenated and reenergized, I again waylaid the Indian servant-maid.

“Ah!” she exclaimed, as though it were a new idea. “The *señor* wishes a bath? Why not? *Momentito! Momentito!*”

“*Momentito*” is Spanish for “Keep your shirt on!” or “Don’t raise hell about it!” or more literally “In the tiny fraction of a

moment!" It suggests to the native mind a lightning-like speed, even more than does "*Mañana*."

And eventually I did get the bath. There was some delay while the water was heated, and more delay while the maid carried it, a kettleful at a time, from the kitchen to the bath-room, but the last kettle was ready by the time the rest had cooled, and I finally emerged refreshed, to discover again that in Mexico the unexpected always happens.

When I pulled out the old sock used as a stopper, the water ran out upon the bath-room floor, and disappeared down a gutter, carrying with it the shoes I had left beside the tub.

### III

But Hermosillo possessed a charm which even a Mexican bath could not destroy.

It was a sleepy little city, typically Mexican, basking beneath a warm blue sky. It stood in a fertile oasis of the desert, and all about it were groves of orange trees. Its massive-walled buildings had once been painted a violent red or green or yellow, but time and weather had softened the barbaric colors until now they suggested the tints of some old Italian masterpiece. And although ancient bullet holes scarred its dwellings, there hung over the Moorish streets to-day a restful atmosphere of tranquillity.

At noon the merchants closed their shops, and every one indulged in the national *siesta*. The only exception was an American—a quiet, determined-looking man—who kept walking up and down the hotel *patio* with quick, nervous tread.

"Somebody just down from the States?" I asked the proprietor.

“No, *señor*. He is the manager of mines in the Yaqui country. One of his trucks is missing, and he fears lest Indians have attacked it.”

Such a contingency, in sleepy Hermosillo, sounded quite absurd. It was the most peaceful-appearing town in all the world. As the *siesta* hour drew to a close, the *señoritas* commenced to show themselves, dressed and powdered for their evening stroll in the *plaza*. They were dainty, feminine creatures, not always pretty, yet invariably with a gentle womanliness that gave them charm. Upon the streets they passed a man with modestly downcast head. Behind the bars of a window and emboldened by a sense of security, they favored him with a roguish smile from the depths of languorous dark eyes, and sometimes with a softly murmured, “*Adios!*”

I drifted toward the *plaza*, wondering how a Free-Lance Newspaper Correspondent were to earn a living in any country so outwardly unexciting as Mexico, and dropped disgustedly into a bench beside another young American.

He was a rosy-cheeked, cherubic-appearing lad. He wore horn-rimmed spectacles, and his neatly-plastered hair was parted in the middle. Like myself, he was dressed in a newly purchased palm-beach suit. His name was Eustace. He, too, was just out of the army. He had enlisted, he explained, in the hope that he might live down a reputation as a model youth. And the War Department had given him a tame job on the Mexican border, cleaning out the cages of the signal-corps pigeons. Wherefore he was now journeying into foreign fields in the hope of satisfying himself with some mild form of adventure.

Very solemnly we shook hands.

“I couldn’t quite go back to cub-reporting,” he explained. “So I decided to become a free-lance newspaper



correspondent.”

Even more solemnly we shook hands again. Since neither of us actually expected that any editor would publish what we sent him, we formed a partnership upon the spot. The Expedition had a new recruit. And together we mourned the disappointing peacefulness of Hermosillo.

Evening descended upon the *plaza*. A circle of lights appeared around the rickety little bandstand. An orchestra played. The *señoritas* strolled past us, arm in arm, while stately *Dons* and solemn *Doñas* maintained a watchful chaperonage from the benches. The night deepened. The cathedral clock struck ten. *Dons*, *Doñas*, and *señoritas* disappeared in the direction of home. The *gendarmes* alone remained. Each muffled his throat as a precaution against night air, and each set a lantern in the center of a street crossing. From all sides came the sound of iron bars sliding into place behind heavy doors. Hermosillo was going to bed.

As we, also, turned homeward, our footsteps rang loudly through the silent streets. A policeman unmuffled his throat and bade us “Good night.” Then he produced a tin whistle and blew a melancholy little toot, to inform the policeman on the next corner that he was still awake. From *gendarme* to *gendarme* the signal passed, the plaintive wail seeming to say, “All’s well.”

A beggar huddled in a doorway hid his cigarette beneath his ragged blanket at our approach, and held out his hand. A lone wayfarer, lingering upon the sidewalk before a window, turned to glance at us, and to bid us “*Adios*.” Through the bars a girl’s radiant face shone out of the darkness. Then the man’s voice trailed after us, singing very softly to the throbbing of a guitar. A moon peeped over the edge of the low flat roofs—a very aged and battered-looking moon, with a greenish tinge like that of the old silver bells in Hermosillo’s ancient cathedral—a moon which, like the city

below it, suggested that it once had known troublous days, yet was now at perfect peace.

This was a delightful land, but to a pair of Free-Lance Newspaper Correspondents—

As we entered the wide-arched portals of the hotel, the telephone struck a jarring note. The American mining man, still pacing nervously up and down the *patio*, leaped to the receiver.

“Laughlin speaking! What news? Did they—? Shot them both? White and Garcia both? Get the troops out! I’ll be there in just—”

#### IV

In an instant Eustace and I were at his elbow.

Ours was the newspaperman’s unsentimental eagerness, which might have hailed the burning of an orphan asylum with its four hundred helpless inmates as splendid front-page copy. Here was murder! This was Mexico! *Viva Mexico!* Here was our first story!

“No time to talk!” snapped Laughlin. “I’ll send John Luy for you in the morning. He’ll take you to La Colorada, in the Yaqui country itself. You’ll get the dope there!”

And he vanished down the street. We stood at the hotel gate, a little startled, gazing out into the night. The moon smiled down over low, flat roofs, and a man’s voice drifted to us, singing very softly to the throbbing of a guitar, and the plaintive note of a *gendarme’s* whistle seemed to say, “All’s well.”

## **CHAPTER IV AMONG THE YAQUI INDIANS**

### **I**

John Luy met us in an elderly Buick early the next morning.

He was a stocky man in khaki and corduroy, a man of fifty or sixty, with slightly gray hair, and the keen, friendly eyes of the Westerner. He was a trifle deaf from listening to so many revolutions, and questions had to be repeated.

“Heh? Oh, the holes in the wind-shield? They’re only bullet holes.”

He motioned us into the back seat, grasped the wheel, and drove us out through the suburbs of Hermosillo into the open desert. The road was nothing more than the track of cars which had crossed the plains before us. Sometimes it led through wide expanses of dull reddish sand; sometimes the cactus and mesquite grew in thorny forests up to the very edge of the narrow trail.

It was a country alive with all the creeping, crawling things that supply local color for magazine fiction. Swift brown lizards shot from our path, starting apparently at full speed, and zigzagging through the yucca like tiny streaks of lightning. Chipmunks and ground squirrels dived into their burrows at our approach. A rattler lifted its head, hissed a warning, and retired with leisurely dignity. Jack-rabbits popped up from nowhere in particular and scampered into the brush, laying their ears flat against the head, running a dozen steps and finally bouncing away in a series of long, frantic leaps. Chaparral cocks, locally known as road-

runners, sped along the trail before us, keeping about fifty feet ahead of the car, wiggling their tails in mocking challenge, slackening their pace whenever we slackened ours, speeding whenever we speeded, and shooting away into the mesquite in a low, jumping flight as John stepped on the gas.

Now and then we passed a mound of rocks surmounted by a crude wooden cross, and once we saw the wreck of what had been another automobile.

“Heh?” asked John. “Oh! Graves. People shot by Yaqui Indians. Oh, yes, quite a few of them. Quite a few.”

He gave the wheel a twist, and we plunged down a steep slope into a deep, sandy river-bed. The car lumbered through it, sinking to the hubs. In the very center it came to an abrupt stop. John picked up a rifle.

“One of you lads take the gun and lay out in the brush. This is the kind of place where White got *his*.”

Eustace seized the weapon, and crawled into the cactus, while I worked savagely to dig the wheels from their two-foot layer of soft, beach-like sand. John, puffing complacently at his corn-cob pipe, tried the self-starter again and again without success, meanwhile giving me the details of White’s murder:

“It was an arroyo exactly like this one. Exactly like this one. He come around a bend in his truck, and hit the waterhole, and was plowing through it when a dozen Mausers blazed out’n the cactus. Three bullets hit him square in the head. Maybe Garcia, his mechanic, got it on the first volley, too. You couldn’t be sure—so the fellows said over the telephone. The Yaquis had cut him up and shoved sticks through him ’til his own mother couldn’t’ve recognized him. Dig the sand away from that other wheel, will you?”