

'There is an easy way to test his loyalty to you,' said the young officer deprecatingly. 'I, for one, should be glad to see his fidelity proved and his calumniators silenced. Send him to arrest the priest.'

For answer the First Chief struck a bell. To the orderly who appeared he commanded: 'Send Lieutenant Obregon here.'

The lieutenant soon entered and saluted. The general looked at him. Anger still possessed him and he spoke sharply. 'You are accused of being a clerical. No man can be a clerical and loyal to me and the cause I represent. I give you a chance to prove to the world that you are loyal. Proceed at once with a few men to Chuaha and arrest the traitor priest there. He will be tried and shot at daybreak. See all this evidence concerning him,' and he pointed to the report. 'Go at once, do you hear?'

The lieutenant had paled slightly, and stood hesitating while his enemy leered at him from behind the general's back. Obregon saw that he was trapped and that the time had come when he must declare himself.

He saluted again and left the presence of the First Chief without a word.

God only knows what was in Obregon's mind as he rode to arrest the priest for the crime of fearlessly doing God's work. It was a long ride, and though he received the command of the First Chief early in the day, he did not arrive at the village until late in the afternoon. He rode up to the priest's house, and bidding his escort to await outside, he entered. When the priest presented himself in his cassock, Obregon staggered back as if someone had struck him.

'My God!' he exclaimed. 'It is Fate.'

It was none other than Don Luis Moreno, his old-time friend and intimate at the South American College. Don Luis recognised Obregon at once and went forward to embrace him, thinking that he had come on a friendly call, but Obregon sternly held up his hand.

'Padre,' he said, 'I am sorry to announce to you that you are under arrest.'

The Padre paled. He knew what little mercy he could expect at the hand of Carranza or any of his emissaries.

'Obregon,' he answered, 'my old friend, I am sorry to see that you have exchanged the service of God for that of the devil. I am ready to go with you.'

Obregon stood silent. His face was deadly pale. Finally he spoke. 'Padre, I am to tell you that if you are not across the border by midnight you will be shot. Your life is already forfeit, and I give you the opportunity to exile yourself. You must leave at once. Certain death awaits you if you hesitate.'

The Padre breathed a deep sigh of relief. Life was given to him. He had not expected any mercy at the hand of the First Chief. Obregon must have interceded for him to gain so unusual a privilege as exile. Never for a moment did he dream of what was going on in the mind of Obregon. Never for a moment did he dream that Obregon, at the risk of his own life, was deliberately disobeying the instructions that were given him.

'Lieutenant, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. But before we separate promise me that you will retire from the service of the First Chief, where your faith is constantly imperilled.'

'I promise,' said the lieutenant sombrely. 'And now, Padre, will you hear my confession?'

'Willingly,' cried the Padre eagerly. 'Thank God for His mercies. Obregon, I knew you would remain a faithful Catholic.' Obregon knelt at his feet, and the priestly hand of his friend was soon raised in absolution. After confession they took leave of each other.

'Promise me, Padre, that you will leave immediately and remain in exile until better days.'

'I promise, lieutenant. And you, in turn, promise to quit the service in which you are now engaged at your first opportunity?'

'I promise, Padre,' answered the lieutenant, solemnly.

When he rejoined his troops, the sergeant stepped forward.

'Pardon, lieutenant, but the priest? Are we not to arrest him?'

'Who is commanding here?' demanded the lieutenant.

The sergeant answered, 'I beg your pardon, senior lieutenant, but you are.'

'Then attend to your own business,' answered the lieutenant sharply.

The sergeant saluted and fell back with the men, while the lieutenant rode on alone in the gathering dusk, his little troop closely behind him. Once or twice the thought came to him to escape, but a glance behind showed that the sergeant was watching him closely, carbine ready for action.

Obregon understood then that his subordinate had received instructions to observe him closely, and would shoot the moment he attempted to escape. Then they would return and capture the priest. No, he must gain as much time as he could, and this was the only way to return to the First Chief and stand the consequences of his act. He did not conjecture much as to what that would be. Human life was cheap in Mexico, and he knew his open disregard of the orders of the chief would cost him his life.

Next day was January the eighteenth, the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, and Lieutenant Obregon, already regarded by his friends as a renegade to the faith because of his services on the staff of Carranza, was proclaimed a traitor to Carranza by the court martial, publicly degraded and shot.

Thus as a double traitor died Lieutenant Peter Obregon, one of God's noblemen. Faithful as far as he could see his way to God and country and friends, faithful unto death. Like the great St. Peter, if at any time through human frailty he denied his Lord, he wiped out the stain of his denial by his blood.—*The Pilot.*

CATHOLICITY IN FRANCE

The following letter was read recently at Birkenhead from Admiral Sir David Beatty at a gathering of the Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge—'May I say that your society is doing as much to bring the war to a successful conclusion as any society or union. Surely the Almighty God does not intend this war to be just a hideous fracas—a bloody, drunken orgy. There must be purpose in it all; improvement must be born out of it. In what direction, France has already shown us the way. She has risen out of her ruined cities, with her revived religion, which is most wonderful. Russia has been welded into a whole, and religion plays a greater part. England still remains to be taken out of the stupor of self-satisfaction and complacency in which her great and flourishing condition has steeped her, and until she can be stirred out of this condition and until religious revival takes place at home, just so long will the war continue. When she can look out on the future with humbler eyes and prayer on her lips, we can begin to count the days towards the end. Your body is helping to this end, and helping to bring the war to an end, a successful end, and without success it cannot end.'

'There is a time for all things.'—Proverb.

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