

and left for Mexico at the end of the term.

I met his friend and classmate, Don Luis Moreno, shortly afterward, and told him I was sorry that Peter had left.

'Oh, he answered, 'it was the sensible thing to do—though sometimes I think he had a vocation. It is the bad influence of his father, a liberal, which has upset him. I fear he will suffer for unsettling Peter by his constant appeals. But, you know, we Latins take a very sensible view about a man leaving the seminary. We believe it is a trying-out place. Many come in not sure of their vocation, and very sensibly drop out when they find the life does not appeal to them. We do not consider it a waste of time for the boys to get a good education, and a good training, and no one can blame them if they leave.'

'It is different with us,' I responded. 'Often-times a man is blamed if he leaves as a man who has put his hand to the plough and has turned back.'

'Yes,' answered Don Luis, 'I have heard that. It is a cruel and unreasonable view to take, and I'm sure it is because people do not understand. After all, it is impossible to be sure of a vocation until one has tried. That's what the seminary is for.'

'I don't think Peter made a mistake,' I said. 'He was a splendid character, but he had no regard for rules and regulations, went his own undisciplined way, and God knows we must have disciplined men in the priesthood more than anywhere else. Then he was of an unsettled disposition, light, restless, and adventuresome. Perhaps it was for the best, Luis,' I concluded, after a pause.

'Perhaps,' he agreed. 'But we miss him awfully. He was the life of the place. He was so cheerful, so frank, so lively—'

'Let me know from time to time how he is getting on,' I begged.

'Certainly,' answered Luis, warmly. He was pleased with my interest in his friend, and wrote from time to time after I got back to Boston.

The first news that he sent surprised and grieved me, for he told me that Peter, on his return to Mexico, had joined the army of Carranza. This unfortunate step was due to the influence of his father, who was a liberal of anti-clerical tendencies and sided with the rebels. Perhaps also his own restless and adventuresome spirit would not allow him to remain inactive in such stirring times.

It was distressing news, and so I prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail. I knew that if the light-hearted, impulsive lad had only stopped long enough to weigh matters seriously, to consider the characters and principles of the men with whom he was associating himself, he would never have joined the irreligious and blood-thirsty Carranzistas. Once with them, however, he was lost. Little by little he would fall, oh, my God, into the horrible and sacrilegious crimes which in recent days, at our very doors, have stained the name of civilisation. Oh, Liberty, what crimes men commit in thy name! And so, Peter, I prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.

As the revolution progressed in intensity I lost all track of Obregon save for occasional mentions in despatches. I look in vain for news that he had left the anti-clerical bandits with whom he had allied himself, but instead, I read that he had been made a lieutenant on the staff of the First Chief himself. Then, indeed, I abandoned hope. I concluded that he had finally denied his Lord like the great St. Peter, and then I prayed for his conversion, hoping that he, too, would go out and weep bitterly.

And now he was shot as a traitor; yes, a traitor, I thought sadly, to his God and to his master, the First Chief—a double traitor. God grant that he had the grace of repentance before he died the shameful death. My heart was filled with bitterness and sadness. I tried to pray for the wretched old man, his father, but could not. He was to blame, he who had lured the boy from God and the seminary and allowed him to serve the devil and Carranza. The wretched father was richly punished now, as are all those who turn their

backs on God and the Church to serve the devil and the world, for though the mills of God grind slowly, they grind exceedingly fine.

A double traitor—Obregon whom I called friend, who was so frank and careless and free, who had not a bit of smallness or treachery in his soul. What diabolical influence had changed him in the short space of one year?

Little by little I learned the sad story, a fragment here and a fragment there, but chiefly from the letters of Don Luis Moreno, a refugee in Mexico City, and from a poor Mexican laborer who found his way even to far-away Boston from the land where he had witnessed such horrors.

Obregon had been successful as a soldier from the very beginning. His superior education, for he spoke a little English and was master of French and Italian, his frank and joyous disposition, made him a favorite with all, even with the dour First Chief himself. His dashing bravery in action also commended him, and so he was made a staff officer. In fact he became such a general favorite that the jealousy of another young staff officer was excited. Whether Obregon continued openly to practise his religion or not, I have not been able to learn, but he showed his horror at the sacrileges committed by the army on several occasions.

Once when the troops were pillaging a town he stood at the door of a convent with drawn sword and protected the trembling women within. Another time, seeing soldiers carrying precious vessels from a church, he struck them with the flat of his sword, and taking the chalices reverently, restored them to the terrified priest.

This latter incident was reported to the First Chief, who reprimanded the young lieutenant sharply for his zeal in defence of clericalism and his lack of consideration for the soldiers. The young staff officer did not take the reprimand well, and answered boldly that the soldiers were thieves, and that he proposed to stop unnecessary pillaging wherever he observed it. The First Chief was intensely angry at this insubordination, and with difficulty controlling himself, placed the lieutenant under arrest for a few days.

Unfortunately, there was present at this interview the young staff officer, the rival and enemy of Obregon. He saw the beginning of the differences between Obregon and the First Chief, and strove daily by whisperings and stories to widen the breach. He waited a good opportunity to make the break permanent, and it soon came.

A report from the civil authorities of the town of Chuaha, near the American line, and only half a day's journey from the Carranza headquarters, was delivered to the First Chief. It denounced particularly the priest there as a man who, despite regulations and without authorisation, continued to celebrate Mass, to preach to the people, and to administer Sacraments. Moreover, it was reported that he had been a Huertista. That was sufficient. The anger of the First Chief flamed into fire as he read. Those priests must be taught that their day was over. They alone defied his authority and regulations. In spite of his express orders they continued to exercise their superstitious functions, alienating the people from the great God of Liberty.

'Why do the Gentiles rave?' quoted the young staff officer, the deadly enemy of Obregon, who happened to be present when the first chief spluttered his words of wrath and reviling. 'Why do you object to the priest when you have a well-known clerical on your own staff? I refer to Lieutenant Obregon.'

The First Chief was silent for a moment as he glared at the officer. 'It is a lie,' he exclaimed. 'No man on my staff is a clerical.'

'Well,' was the rejoinder of the officer, shrugging his shoulders, 'that's what people say—the other officers and even the soldiers. I heard you reprimand him yourself for his zeal in that direction.'

The chief brought his fist down on the table with a crash and chewed his moustache savagely. After a moment he reiterated: 'It is a lie!'

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