

INTRODUCTION

Barbarous Mexico, the classic indictment of the tyrannical regime of Porfirio Díaz, has been called the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The comparison is a valid one if the molding of public opinion by a literary work is the basis for judgement, for both books caused untold numbers of complacent Americans to take a new look at their immediate neighbors and to revise their opinions of their leaders and their social and economic institutions. In both cases the fundamental issue was slavery, open in the one case and disguised in the other. Mrs. Stowe's book was a novel, a story of what could be happening south of the Potomac; Mr. Turner's book was an exposé of what was actually taking place south of the Rio Grande. And both books contributed greatly to the advancement of human freedom in the conflicts that followed their appearance. Not that either book was widely read in the area criticized; on the contrary, both were banned and it was not until years later that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was read in the South or that *Barbarous Mexico* was translated and allowed to circulate in Mexico.

By the early 1900's reform leadership in the United States had in many cases passed into the hands of militant socialists, many of them of the muckraking variety. John Kenneth Turner was one of these muckraking socialists, and although polite society then as today condemned socialism as foreign, Turner himself was eminently American. He was born in Portland, Oregon, on April 5, 1879, of old American stock. His maternal grandfather, a Methodist minister, had led a wagon train of pioneers across the con-

inent from Kentucky to Oregon in 1849. Turner's father was a printer on the *Portland Oregonian* and later had his own printing shop in Stockton, California. There Turner passed his youth and learned the printer's trade. At sixteen he became interested in socialism and at seventeen he was publishing his own newspaper, a muckraking weekly called the *Stockton Saturday Night*, which was devoted to exposing corrupt politicians and businessmen. He drifted into schoolteaching and eventually into his proper field, journalism. While a special student at the University of California, he met his future wife, Ethel E. Duffy, a senior at the university. They were married in 1905 and made their home in San Francisco until driven out by the earthquake of 1906. For a while they lived in Portland but soon moved to Los Angeles, California, where Turner obtained a position as a reporter on the *Los Angeles Express*.

Los Angeles was at this time the headquarters of the Organizing Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party, an anti-Díaz group formed by Camilo Arriaga in San Luis Potosí in 1900. By 1906 the movement had assumed a revolutionary character under the leadership of Ricardo Flores Magón, an anarchist and one of the charter members of the Mexican Liberal Party. He and three of his colleagues—Antonio I. Villarreal, Librado Rivera, and Manuel Sarabia—after years of evading United States and Mexican agents of various kinds, had finally been run to earth and jailed in Los Angeles following several abortive uprisings in Mexico which the Liberal Party had sponsored. They were formally charged with conspiracy to violate the neutrality laws of the United States, but the real reason for their arrest was the desire of the Taft administration to please Porfirio Díaz. They were being defended by Job Harriman, a young Socialist lawyer who had devoted his life to the cause of labor and who was many years later to become the co-founder of a noted worker's school, Commonwealth College, in Arkansas. The Socialist Party of Los Angeles, of which Harriman and the Turners were members, had taken an interest in the plight of the Liberal Party leaders since their arrest, and it was through Harriman that Turner arranged to interview the prison-

ers for the *Express*. Turner's interview convinced him that Díaz was a monster who should be driven from Mexico and he immediately determined to expose him in the press.

Porfirio Díaz was immensely popular in the United States up to the eve of the Mexican Revolution. Middle-class Americans thought of him as the man who had brought order out of chaos in Mexico after half a century of turmoil following the wars for independence from Spain. Under his presumably benevolent rule, Mexico had made astonishing economic progress: railroads had been built, mines opened, and factories established. The peso was solid as the dollar and Mexican credit had been soundly established in the financial centers of the world. The Mexican Army, small but believed to be more than adequate for any emergency, had been trained by Prussian officers, and the countryside was efficiently policed by the famed *rurales*.

But Mexican peace and prosperity were superficial. The upper classes and foreign interests in Mexico had prospered at the expense of the lower classes, and while the gross national product was rising, the standard of living of the great majority of people was falling. And the peace that reigned was the peace of fear, not of contentment. As the Liberal Party organ *Regeneración* put it:

The quietness of death reigns in Mexico because of the fear of punishment so prodigally administered by Porfirio Díaz. Before even whispering an opinion it is necessary to look around carefully to make sure that no one is listening. The press is silent, newsmen have been imprisoned or murdered in the shadows of the jail; those persons who have shown opposition to the government are dragged from their beds at night to be killed in some secluded spot; the courts are in the hands of government lackeys; the peace that reigns is the peace of death.¹

The first problem in the exposure of Díaz by Turner and his colleagues was to obtain unimpeachable evidence of the truthfulness and accuracy of the charges made by the Liberal Party leaders

¹ Rafael Romero Palacios, "Inédito," *Regeneración*, No. 100 (July 27, 1912), 1; translation by the editor.

against the Díaz dictatorship. This task was assigned to John Murray, a prominent Socialist who was to become the leading spirit in the formation of the Pan-American Federation of Labor in 1918, its first Spanish-language secretary, and a trusted lieutenant of Samuel Gompers until his death several years later. Born in New York of the old Quaker family for which Murray Hill in New York City had been named, Murray had been influenced in his youth by the writings of Tolstoy and had renounced his patrimony to become a crusader for human betterment. He had played a leading role in Los Angeles labor and radical movements since his arrival in California and had been especially active in aiding Mexican refugees and immigrants, the "wetbacks" of his day. On May 8, 1908, he left Los Angeles for Mexico and eventually traveled as far south as the Valle Nacional in Oaxaca, where debt slavery was rampant, although he did not for a number of reasons enter the notorious valley itself. Before he returned to Los Angeles he had collected a substantial body of information on conditions in Mexico but not enough to make an effective exposé of Porfirio Díaz.

John Murray's trip to Mexico had been financed by an affluent member of the Los Angeles Socialist Party, Elizabeth Darling Trowbridge, a native of Boston. A former Radcliffe student, Miss Trowbridge had rebelled against conventional upper-middle-class life and the unattractive possibility of a middle-class marriage and had thrown in her lot with the Socialists. Unlike John Murray, however, she had not renounced her patrimony and in the years to come was to spend her entire fortune in promoting humanitarian causes. In 1909 she married Manuel Sarabia, one of the Liberal Party Junta defendants, and shortly thereafter she and her husband fled to London to avoid further persecution of Sarabia by Díaz. There Sarabia became the spokesman for the fight against Díaz both in the press and on the lecture platform.

Soon after the return of John Murray, Turner himself decided on a fact-finding trip into Mexico. But since he did not at this time speak Spanish well it was necessary for him to take along an interpreter. The person chosen for this task was Lázaro Gutiérrez

de Lara, one of the most trusted members of the Liberal Party. De Lara had come to Los Angeles in 1906 from Sonora, where he had been jailed for making speeches in support of the striking miners at Cananea. He was of an outstanding Mexico City family and had been trained for the law. Before becoming active in the labor movement he had been a practicing attorney, an official in the Mexican State Department, and the judge of a minor court. He was a radical of many years' standing who had been associated with Ricardo Flores Magón while living in Mexico City. He had been released from jail in Sonora through the efforts of his brother, a prominent physician in Mexico City who had Díaz connections. Soon after arriving in Los Angeles he became editor of *Revolución*, a short-lived Liberal Party newspaper. In August 1908 he and Turner left Los Angeles for Mexico, the money for the trip having been contributed by Elizabeth Trowbridge. Their chief object was to gather information on the fate of the thousands of Yaqui Indians who were being deported from Sonora to Yucatan and the Valle Nacional as forced laborers. This was an extremely hazardous undertaking for Turner and De Lara and they were forced to keep their identity a secret. Turner posed as a wealthy American businessman who wanted to invest heavily in Mexican henequen and tobacco, while De Lara acted the part of his intimate friend, interpreter, and advisor. Luckily enough, they were apparently never suspected, although they penetrated deep into the slave labor areas of both Yucatan and the Valle Nacional. The big planters were more than happy to talk business with a well-heeled gringo, for the depression of 1907 had left many of them in straitened circumstances. In many cases the planters made no effort to hide the brutality of their operations from Turner and De Lara, who had ample opportunity to see for themselves what it was like to be a forced laborer on a large hacienda. And what they saw was not pretty: it was a confirmation of what Turner had been told by the Liberal Party leaders when he had interviewed them in jail in Los Angeles. The experiences of Turner and De Lara and the horrors that they witnessed are told in the first chapters of *Barbarous Mexico*.

While Turner and De Lara were in Mexico, Elizabeth Trowbridge bought out a printing shop in Tucson, Arizona, and there the *Border*, a magazine devoted to the defense of Mexican refugees and the exposure of Porfirio Díaz, was established under the joint management of John Murray, Ethel Turner, and Elizabeth Trowbridge. The shop also printed a Liberal Party periodical in Spanish called *El Defensor del Pueblo*, which was edited by Manuel Sarabia, now out on bail after having developed tuberculosis while in prison. The establishment immediately came under the surveillance of local police and Díaz agents. Turner joined the staff of the *Border* soon after returning from Mexico but in a few weeks left for New York to find a publisher for several articles on slave labor in Mexico that he had completed. Shortly after his departure the printing shop was entered at night, presumably by Díaz agents, and the printing press wrecked. The project was abandoned soon thereafter.

Turner's articles were accepted by the *American Magazine*, formerly *Leslie's*, which had been established by a group of prominent muckrakers including Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, and Finley Peter Dunne, who had "seceded" from *McClure's* in 1906 because of its growing conservatism. The circulation of the *American Magazine* by 1909 was approximately 300,000 but it was laboring under a debt of \$400,000 and its owners were hard put to meet the interest payments. The "Barbarous Mexico" series would undoubtedly increase circulation, for the exposure of Díaz would be a revelation that would attract wide attention. But before proceeding with the series it was necessary that Turner do further research into the matter, that he make a thorough investigation into the political nature of the Díaz regime.

Turner, accompanied by his wife, returned to Mexico late in January 1909. Because of his skill as a tennis player he was able to obtain a position as sports editor on an English-language newspaper, the *Mexican Herald*, in Mexico City, and soon gained acceptance into sports circles by umpiring the Mexican-United States tennis tournament held at the Country Club in Churubusco. In his spare time he collected information on the Díaz machine. By late

April he had completed his investigation and was soon back in New York, where he turned over his latest articles to the *American Magazine*.

The September 1909 issue of the *American Magazine* carried a full-page announcement that the "Barbarous Mexico" series would begin in October. The magazine praised Turner as the one American who had seen Mexico as it really was and compared him to George Kennan, who "saw Russia and Siberia twenty years ago, and in some ways that which he [Turner] saw and reports is even more terrible than that which Mr. Kennan told us about." The author of the announcement commented on the great American ignorance of Mexico and blamed it on doctored "news" from that country and on the success of Díaz in suppressing publications critical of his government.

The October issue, which inaugurated the series, carried in 14-point type a two-page editorial introduction to "Barbarous Mexico" which concluded as follows:

A great Díaz-Mexico myth has been built up through skilfully applied influence upon journalism. It is the most astounding case of the suppression of truth and the dissemination of untruth and half-truth that recent history affords. But Mr. Turner has by long and often hazardous journeys and investigations got at the truth. As you read the articles one after another, follow the author in his adventures, and see with his eyes how things really are, you will be forced to admit that Mexico the "Republic" is a pretence and a sham. Díaz is an able autocrat who has policed the country well, used his power for the benefit of the few and neglected the welfare of the great body of the people. In Mexico they say "after him the deluge, if indeed he is not swept away by it."

With this introduction, "Barbarous Mexico" got off to a good start. The first installment, entitled "Slaves of Yucatan" and appropriately illustrated with carefully chosen photographs and excellent drawings by George Varian, set the tone for what promised to be a shocking series of revelations of conditions in Díaz' Mexico. The November issue carried "The Tragic Story of the Yaqui In-

dians,” and the December number dealt with “The Contract Slaves of the Valle Nacional.” The articles were written with skill and passion and they carried conviction; they were calculated not only to inform but to create a highly emotional response in the reader.

“Barbarous Mexico” created a sensation in Mexico, in the United States, and in England, where the series was reprinted in a London newspaper. Protests from Mexico were prompt; in fact, soon after the *American Magazine* had announced its intention to publish the series, there were sharp denials in the Mexican press of the truth of the forthcoming articles. Some persons linked the series with the Madero movement, while others saw the attack on Díaz as simply a manifestation of continuing Yankee aggression. To many conservative Mexicans, “Barbarous Mexico” was unquestionably part of an insidious campaign against Mexico that had begun only recently with the publication in the United States of Herman Whitaker’s *The Planter* and Carlo de Fornaro’s *Díaz, Czar of Mexico*, the former a novel telling of some of the horrors related by Turner and the latter a muckraking exposé of such violence as to result in a prison sentence for the author.² And not only Mexicans but also United States citizens living in Mexico were bitterly opposed to “Barbarous Mexico.” One E. S. Smith, speaking unofficially for the American colony in Mexico City—so he alleged—stated his intention in the *Mexico City Record* of asking for a writ of mandamus compelling the *American Magazine* to substantiate its charges against Díaz. Smith was the most vociferous of the Díaz supporters and attempted to prevent delivery of the magazine to subscribers by sending the following wire to President Taft:

Please prohibit use of the United States mails to the American Magazine proposing publication of “Barbarous Mexico” in October number. The

² According to Turner in the *Appeal to Reason* (June 4, 1910), Fornaro was an Italian newspaperman who had been the Sunday editor of Mexico City’s *El Diario*. He wrote his book on Díaz while in the United States and was convicted of criminal libel and sent to prison in the United States. He was still in prison in 1910, serving a one-year term.

foreword threatens libel against the whole Mexican people, and its circulation here or elsewhere is a disgrace and injury to American citizens in Mexico.³

Smith's appeal to Taft was ineffective, but he continued his efforts in behalf of Díaz by publishing an article entitled "The Truth About Mexico" in the November issue of *Bankers Magazine*, an eminently conservative publication which devoted this entire issue to "selling" Díaz to its readers. Díaz himself took action in Mexico against the circulation of the "Barbarous Mexico" articles and the publishers were forced to protest to the United States State Department and the Postoffice Department that copies of the November issue of the *American Magazine* destined for Mexico were being detained or confiscated by Díaz authorities.

The "Barbarous Mexico" series was enthusiastically received in the United States. The articles were given scores of favorable reviews and comments in the American press beginning with the first article in October. The New York *Sun* spoke approvingly of the "heart-rending installment" in the November issue. The Rochester *Times* said, "The Abolitionists in our own ante bellum days did not formulate an indictment as repulsive as that brought against Mexico by this impassioned writer." The Milwaukee *Journal* in an article headed "More Power to the American" commented that "the horror of the thing grows, and the guilt, not of the American people but of their dollars, begins to come into view." The San Diego *Sun*, as Christmas approached, called the series "a fit thing for you to think about in that season of the year when 'peace on earth and good will to men' is on every lip." The Socialist and labor reviews were especially favorable; in England the *Labour Leader* in an article headed "The Henequen Hells of Mexico" called Turner "an American humanitarian who deserves the thanks of civilisation." More staid publications were noncommittal in their observations but their reviews were of respectable length and included many long and telling quotations. The *Literary Digest* headed its review "The Slave Trade of Mexico" and the *Review of*

³ San Francisco *Bulletin*, September 4, 1909.

Reviews discussed the series in its column "Leading Articles of the Month." The first three installments of "Barbarous Mexico" had been a magnificent success.

But something went wrong and the December installment was the last of Turner's articles to appear in the *American Magazine*. The January 1910 issue continued the series but made no mention of John Kenneth Turner. Instead, there was an editorial on Mexico which began: "We wish to affirm what we said at the beginning of these articles—that Mexico as a civilized government is a farce and a failure; as a republic it is a mockery. It is still barbarous in that it permits and indulges in barbarities." The editorial continued in this vein and ended by stating: "There is slavery at this moment. . . . There is barbarous political persecution at this moment. . . . There is imprisonment for free speaking at this moment. . . . There is suppression of personal and political liberty at this moment." The editorial was followed by an unsigned article dealing with debt slavery entitled "Moving Pictures of Mexico in Ferment." In February the series was continued with an article by Herman Whitaker of *The Planter* on debt slavery in the rubber-producing areas of Mexico, the March number had a short anonymous piece by a former debt slave whom the magazine called "a responsible German now living in California," and the April issue carried the personal observations of two Englishmen on forced labor in Yucatan, in the form of an open letter to Díaz. But the May, June, and July numbers made no mention of "Barbarous Mexico." In the meantime, there was much speculation in liberal and radical circles regarding the suppression of the Turner articles. In the June 4, 1910, issue of the *Appeal to Reason*, Turner himself charged that the editors of *American Magazine* had been intimidated by Díaz: "The editors of The American Magazine imagined that they were strong, but they found themselves pitifully weak. They thought themselves brave men, but they discovered that they were only cowards. Weak and cowardly were they, but only in the face of a power whose might they had misjudged and which threatened to crush them." This charge was answered by *American Magazine* in its August 1910 issue:

It will come as a complete surprise to at least nineteen out of twenty of our readers that an attack has been made in certain socialistic newspapers on the honesty and integrity of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

We have been charged with having stopped publication of our "Barbarous Mexico" articles because "Wall Street has got us," and so on.

We should not take notice of this absurd piece of folly were it not for the fact that we are humble enough to realize that a few of our friends, far away, may hear these ridiculous stories and put some measure of faith in them if we wholly ignore them, as we are inclined to do. It seems to us that it is simpler, more direct, and more human, to stand up quietly and say, once for all, that this periodical is as free as the air, that it is devoted to the truth, that the Mexican government or anybody else outside this office does not and cannot control it. . . .

The September issue carried nothing on Mexico, but in the October number there was an article on Díaz by E. Alexander Powell, an English traveler, which Turner in the October 8, 1910, issue of the *Appeal to Reason* effectively exposed as a paraphrase of an article which he, Turner, had written for *American Magazine* some months before. The November issue carried nothing and in that of December there was only a very short anonymous article, said to be the translation of an unpublished document, which was called in English "I Also Accuse." This was the end of the "Barbarous Mexico" series that had started out so bravely fourteen months before.

What had happened? No one knows for sure. Upton Sinclair in the *Brass Check* wrote close to a decade later:

The magazine had begun the publication of a sensational series of articles, "Barbarous Mexico," by John Kenneth Turner. These articles, since published in book form, and a second time suppressed,⁴ gave an intimate, firsthand account of the ferocities of the Díaz regime, under which American "dollar diplomats" were coining enormous fortunes. The "American" began the publication with a grand hurrah; it published two or three of the articles, and then suddenly it quit, with a

⁴ Mr. Sinclair is incorrect in stating that the book was suppressed.

feeble and obviously dishonest excuse—and poor Turner had to take his articles to that refuge of the suppressed muckraker, the “Appeal to Reason.”

There must have been a crisis in the office of the magazine. Somebody had evidently had a “show-down”, the editors had been “taught their place.” Ever since they have been a theme for tears. . . .

Be that as it may, one thing is certain: *American Magazine* was no longer interested in Mexico and when the Revolution began in the fall of 1910 it had no comment to make.

After his series had been dropped by the *American Magazine*, Turner began publishing the remainder of the articles in other periodicals. By the end of 1910 seven chapters of the book had been published in the *Appeal to Reason*, one chapter had appeared in the *International Socialist Review*, and the *Pacific Monthly* had carried another.

It is not clear exactly when Turner decided to publish his articles in book form, but it must have been during the summer of 1910. Unable to find a standard publisher in the United States, he turned to Charles H. Kerr and Company, an old Socialist firm of Chicago, which announced in the December 3, 1910, issue of the *Appeal* that *Barbarous Mexico* would be off the press in the very near future. Publication in England was by the standard firm of Cassell and Company.

During the months immediately preceding the publication of *Barbarous Mexico*, Turner created a sensation in the press by charging that local, state, and national officials as well as private detective agencies in the United States were cooperating with Díaz agents in persecuting Mexican political refugees. These charges were made before a joint committee of the House of Representatives in Washington during June 1910. The witnesses were John Kenneth Turner, John Murray, Lázaro Gutiérrez de Lara, and Mother (Mrs. Mary) Jones, probably the most noted female Socialist agitator of this time. The published proceedings of these hearings run to ninety-five printed pages and contain a wealth of information on the persecution of anti-Díaz Americans and Mexicans in the

United States on the eve of the Mexican Revolution. News of the hearings, including portions of the testimony, was carried by the United Press and by major American dailies such as the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *San Francisco Daily News*. The publicity given these hearings—despite efforts of the pro-Díaz faction on the committee to keep the testimony secret—enhanced the fame of Turner as a fighter for justice and created sympathy for the Mexican rebels in the approaching conflict.

Early in August 1910, Ricardo Flores Magón, Antonio I. Villarreal, and Librado Rivera were released from prison. They immediately established the headquarters of the Junta of the Mexican Liberal Party in Los Angeles and began the republication of its official organ, *Regeneración*. Turner acted as a confidential purchasing agent for the Liberal Party Junta and bought all the rifles, revolvers, and ammunition available in the local stores. These munitions were packed in cases marked “farm machinery” and shipped to Jim Wilson, a friendly farmer living near Holtville, California. Wilson then hauled them in his wagon to the border, where they were slipped into Mexico at night and hidden in the brush. After the Revolution began in November, Liberal Party members participated in various engagements, sometimes in alliance with the *maderistas*, but the Junta had an objective of its own: the capture of Baja California. Plans were made by the Junta for the conquest of Mexicali and Tijuana; Mexicali was taken without difficulty on January 29, 1911.

While the Revolution was getting under way, *Barbarous Mexico* came off the press, first in the United States and shortly thereafter in England. The first reviews appeared in February 1911. Like the magazine articles, the book was well received. The *Portland Telegram* headed its review “The Book That Caused a Civil War” and called it “an epoch in Mexican history.” The *London Daily Mail* reviewed it in its Book of the Day column and declared: “If Mexico is half as bad as she is painted by Mr. Turner, she is covered with the leprosy of a slavery worse than that of San Thome or Peru, and should be regarded as unclean by all the free peoples of the world.” The *Chicago Daily Tribune* discussed it at great

length and with numerous long quotations, along with the recent laudatory Díaz biography by James Creelman, *Díaz, Master of Mexico*. The New York *Times* reviewer remarked of Turner: "For many of his charges there is only too much ground." Some publications were less favorable, a minority ranging from mildly to bitterly hostile. The *Spectator* said that "the facts may be exaggerated." The *Saturday Review* saw the book as "full of prejudice and altogether unfair to Díaz." *Outlook* said that it lost its effectiveness "because of the sensational, rhetorical, and feverish methods employed." Years later the book was still being commented on. Henry Baerling in *Mexico: The Land of Unrest* wrote in 1914: "The worst one can say of Mr. Turner is that he is pretty full of truth." Edith O'Shaughnessy, an American diplomat's wife in Mexico City during Victoriano Huerta's term in power, spoke of it as "that depressing book, *Barbarous Mexico*." Herbert Ingram Priestley, writing in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* in 1919, says that it "was hotly discussed" in both the United States and Mexico. Timothy Turner, an American newspaperman who reported the Mexican Revolution, wrote in *Bullets, Bottles, and Gardenias* in 1935: "Turner's book, *Barbarous Mexico*, was the 'Mother India' of the time and caused a great sensation; some said it had much to do with bringing on the revolution."

Turner, acting as the confidential agent of the Liberal Party Junta and as chief advisor to the rebels in Baja California, was in and out of Mexico during the early months of the Revolution, but he took no part in the actual fighting. He had two major tasks: to reconcile differences between rival factions in the Liberal fighting forces and to handle Liberal publicity in such a manner as to forestall United States intervention in the conflict. He was suspected by United States authorities of violating the neutrality laws and was threatened with arrest by the United States District Attorney, but the federal government was wary of attempting to indict Turner because of his international reputation as a fighter for justice. Other Liberal Party leaders were arrested but Turner remained free. By late May 1911 Tijuana had fallen to the Liberals, Ciudad Juárez had been taken by the *maderistas*, and Porfirio Díaz had

fled to Europe. The first phase of the Mexican Revolution had come to an end and Turner retired unmolested to Carmel, California, to relax and write.

The writers' and artists' colony in Carmel was in its infancy in 1911 and still retained its primitive attractiveness. Reminiscing half a century later, Ethel Turner wrote:

We gathered wild blackberries. We hunted pine cones for our fireplaces. We lay on the white sand dunes among the fragrant sand verbenas. We found agaves on the beach. We saved abalone blisters . . . to make into jewelry. Sometimes we bathed in the ocean, but the surf was rough and dangerous. The river mouth was better. Every year on Bech's birthday he gave a roast pig party. He tended the pig all afternoon, and when it was ready we ate on plank tables out of doors. There was plenty of wine and gaiety.⁵

While the Turners' house was being built, they lived in the home of the poet George Sterling, their closest associate in Carmel. They were active in the Forest Theater—Turner made a big hit as Shylock—and they became friends of many noted literary figures who lived in or wandered in and out of Carmel: Robinson Jeffers, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Sinclair Lewis.

Turner was by no means satisfied with the course that events had taken in Mexico following the fall of Díaz. The Liberal Party had split and several members of the Junta had joined the *maderistas*, the Liberal revolt in Baja California had been crushed by Madero, and in the south Zapata was forced to continue his fight for agrarian reform. Turner did not believe that Madero intended to make a serious effort to solve the agrarian problem by giving land to the landless peasants and he decided to talk to Madero in an effort to determine his intentions. He left for Mexico in late December 1912 and upon his arrival in Mexico City he arranged to write for the newspaper *El País* to defray expenses. On January 27, 1913, he had an interview with Madero and wrote his wife the following day:

⁵ Ethel Duffy Turner, "Notes on Early Literary Carmel," an unpublished manuscript in Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Big news! Last night El Señor Presidente received me, sending various personages away in order to talk to me. He greeted me with: "You are a very famous man." We talked for 45 minutes, walking up and down the same balcony where Creelman had his highfalutin interview with Díaz. I haven't time to tell you what he said at all, though I might say he said that "Barbarous Mexico" had helped him very much in the revolution of 1910, as it gave the American people the knowledge that he was fighting for liberty. But he told me many things, showed me a map of Lower California with the various concessions, told me a good deal about the land question, outlined most of his policies, and in the end gave me the thing I wanted—a sweeping letter ordering all the authorities, military and civil, in the republic, to give me all the data I asked for. Of course the flattering reception did not warp my judgement at all. I finally left at my own suggestion, as I didn't want to overdo the thing. In parting he told me to come back later if I wanted anything, and if any official failed to give me the information I wanted, to complain direct to him.⁶

Turner took full advantage of the *carte blanche* given him by Madero and was on the streets of Mexico City during the Tragic Ten Days, February 9 to 19, which resulted in the downfall of Madero and his murder by Victoriano Huerta. His news items on the revolt were cabled to the New York press. On February 16 he was arrested by a member of the anti-Madero forces, allegedly as a suspected spy. His story was carried in the March 8 issue of the *New York World*:

I was taken to the Ciudadela. After General Mondragon had seen me, I was thrown into a hole, with drunken soldiers for fellow prisoners, and kept there for seven hours.

I sent for Ambassador [Henry Lane] Wilson, who came and promised to get me out that night. Then he said he had lost a great deal of time and would let me stay there over night, but I would be perfectly safe, he said.

⁶ John Kenneth Turner to Ethel Duffy Turner, January 28, 1913, the original in the possession of Ethel Duffy Turner, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

Up to that time I had given a false name, but when Ambassador Wilson said he would have to look up some of my friends, I told him my right name. He took umbrage at this and brusquely asked me why I had given a false name. I told him I had done so because my life would not be worth the purchase price if the Díaz people knew I was the man who wrote *Barbarous Mexico*, describing the atrocities of Porfirio Díaz.

Ambassador Wilson practically compelled me to give my right name to the lieutenants of Felix Díaz.

In so many words, Mr. Wilson told me that the only thing that in any way made me deserving of the punishment they intended for me was the fact that I had criticized the policy of the American administration.

Felix Díaz afterwards accused me of plotting to assassinate him. Fortunately, after my arrest and before reaching the arsenal, I had destroyed a letter from President Madero which I had been carrying. It commended me to all his officers, assuring them that they could give me with safety any information at their disposal, and informing them that I was criticizing the administration of President Taft. If this letter had been found upon me, I should have been summarily put to death.

Three times I was sentenced to be shot, but each time something happened to prevent the execution. Notwithstanding the Ambassador's promise, I was three days in the arsenal.

News of Turner's predicament was carried by the Hearst newspapers in the United States and a campaign was immediately begun by his friends and colleagues, including Richard Harding Davis, to obtain his release. But before the campaign could get well under way, he was suddenly and mysteriously set free. He stayed in Mexico for a few days, but upon learning that he was to be arrested again he fled to Veracruz, where he took ship for New York. Back in the United States he exposed Henry Lane Wilson in the press and in letters to President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan.

After this adventure Turner did not visit Mexico for close to two years. During this period he wrote for the press on the Revolution

and on strikes in the United States. He had a contract with the Scripps-McRae chain of newspapers and in addition wrote much for the Socialist New York *Call*, the *Appeal to Reason*, and various other periodicals. In the spring of 1915 he returned to Mexico to report on the United States occupation of Veracruz, a move which he bitterly condemned. On this trip he had an exclusive interview with Venustiano Carranza. Shortly thereafter he published two books on Mexico: *Quién es Pancho Villa?* and *La intervención en México y sus nefandos factores*. The following year he made two more trips to Mexico and wrote articles opposing the Pershing Punitive Expedition.

In April 1917, as a guest of Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Turner heard President Wilson deliver his war message to Congress. From this time on he opposed United States participation in the war. His views on Wilson were expressed in his highly critical book *Shall It Be Again?*

Following the war, when there was still danger of United States intervention in Mexico, the Rand School of Social Science published Turner's *Hands Off Mexico*. He was greatly interested in agrarian reform and in 1921 went to Cuernavaca where he interviewed Genovevo de la O, a noted *zapatista* general.

This was Turner's last visit to Mexico. He continued to make his home in Carmel but the reaction of the 1920's discouraged him profoundly and he did little writing. His last book came after a lapse of many years in 1941, when he published his *Challenge to Karl Marx*. He died in 1948.

There has been a renewal of interest in Turner and *Barbarous Mexico* in recent years. This is no doubt due in part to the reappraisal of Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Liberal Party that is presently taking place. In 1955 the first Spanish translation of *Barbarous Mexico* was published in Mexico, with numerous illustrations, in *Problemas agrícolas e industriales de México*. The second Spanish edition appeared in 1964 under the auspices of the Instituto Nacional de la Juventud Mexicana, and the third Spanish edition was issued by "Cordemex" in 1965. David Alfaro Siqueiros included Turner in his Chapultepec Castle mural along with the

great Mexican heroes of the Revolution. The central figure in this famous mural is Fernando Palomárez, a Liberal Party member who was one of Turner's advisors while he was writing *Barbarous Mexico*. (Palomárez had the distinction of having emptied his revolver at Porfirio Díaz while the latter was making a speech, and living to tell the tale.) More recently, in 1967, the book was used as the basis of a two-hour experimental motion picture entitled *El Periodista Turner*, which was directed by Oscar Menéndez. The movie was certainly a worthwhile project, but the well-fed amateur actors who play the parts of debt slaves in Yucatan bear little resemblance to the original debt slaves of *Barbarous Mexico*.

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