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WHO WANTS VILLA?

By Frank Pickering

"GO GET VILLA" was a battle-cry which brought thousands of young men to the colors, each one of whom no doubt expected to eventually lay his hands on "Pancho" and "bring him to camp." Our nation understands the value of publicity and without it the people would not always do their duty as citizens.

I do not think that Gen. Pershing or any of his aids ever expected to "get Villa." Germany was whipped but nobody "got the Kaiser" during the war.

As a matter of fact, I do not think that Villa raided Columbus. All talk of his connection with the affair was "hearsay," and let me assure you that although many have seen his alleged picture in hideous poses and have imagined him to be the arch-enemy of



General Francisco Villa
(Photograph by J. Frank Pickering.)

the United States, people are sometimes mistaken. Villa fought Carranza's way to Mexico City; Carranza then broke his bargain, and instead of showing some courtesy by appointing Villa to a position of trust, he appointed him commander of the army he had himself created. Carranza then forgot about his promises to divide the big estates in the north, some held by the elite Spaniards, some held illegally by alleged Americans, and Villa saw that his work had all been in vain.

No wonder he tried to make other revolts successful! No wonder he was "sore" when our country allowed Carranza's soldiers to pass over our soil to "get him," notwithstanding the U. S. was technically right.

I met Villa just after he took Juarez. If it had been in Arizona, I would have hailed him as the foreman of some big ranch. The mayor of the city introduced me and interpreted. Villa was dressed in an ordinary home-spun suit of clothes,



Villa in Action

carried no weapons that I saw, and was inspecting the town. Saloons had been closed, I never visited a town of 20,000 so quiet and orderly. Villa wore a cheap blue shirt such as all his soldiers had been given that morning.

He said the foreigners who did right would be protected. I was interested in the "Mormon" colonies, where were many of my friends. He said he could not say much, as there were roving bands of bandits at large, but "after two more battles" (landing him in Mexico City) he could promise that they would be safe, as his men would then "get the bandits."

He had no aspirations for the Presidency, said he was only a "soldier," seemed abashed at the photo taking but good-naturedly posed, shook hands and rode away.

He may be dead or alive, but if living I doubt that Mexico contains a better friend of the United States, but if we intervene we will find him the most bitter enemy, because he loves his mountain home and the poor peons who followed him to Mexico City.

The people who are trying to make more work for themselves by doing just as little as they can, will be the first ones to holler about their inability to find any job.

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