



Gen. Huerta is also a thoughtful man, whose intellect runs very largely to Mexican cunning. He has handed President Wilson one of the puzzle problems of the twentieth century to solve. Up to the present it looks as though the American President has the best chance of making a good next move.



Loading shells on the battleship New York for the 14 and 16 inch guns at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.



President Wilson was always a thoughtful man. Since this photograph was taken he has been the most thoughtful man in America. At present he has the most perplexing American problem on his hands since the days of Abraham Lincoln. The offer of mediation by Argentina and Chili is not likely to help him much.

# The War "Short of War"

*Which May be a Serious Business, But Has Considerable Comic Opera in its Plot*

By JAMES JOHNSTON

HOW to be in a state of war without declaring war is the problem President Wilson and Secretary Bryan have propounded to the world and propose to solve if possible before the experiment costs the United States more than it can afford. The American fleet, under Rear-Admiral Badger, has blockaded the port of Vera Cruz, seized the customs houses and docks and intercepted a big Hamburg-American liner supposed to contain 8,000,000 rounds of ammunition and 300 machine guns for Huerta. It was the phantom cargo of the Ypiranga that led to the sending of Admiral Badger's fleet to blockade Vera Cruz before Congress had endorsed the policy of the President. The cargo was supposed to be intended by Huerta to slaughter a few thousand more of Villa's men after the horrible whacking the Federal forces got at Torreon. Various theories were advanced as to what Admiral Badger would do with the cargo which was not contraband of war. He was advised by newspaper experts to send it back to Germany. But when the marines searched the Ypiranga she was found to have a dummy load of empty shrapnel shells, and empty ammunition chests. Whereupon Huerta laughed with sardonic mirth.

So far, serious comic opera seems to have taken the stage; as it normally does whenever the Latin countries near the Gulf of Mexico get into states of war. The United States has been cast for the plot. The cue is at least a bit of burlesque. The affair over the U. S. marines at Tampico was pretty well settled up by the arrest of the officer who had arrested the marines and an apology from Huerta for their arrest. President Wilson demanded that Old Glory be saluted as an epilogue to the piece. The crafty Huerta, smiling down the streets of Mexico City from his administration headquarters, conceded the salute of 21 guns—if the ships flying Old Glory would return gun for gun. The President objected to the number of guns. Huerta stuck to his guns. Immediately the United States, which up to the present had spent a year in refusing to recognize the government of Huerta against Villa and Carranza, recognized Huerta the individual by sending a fleet to blockade and sufficiently bombard Vera Cruz and Tampico, and to effect a blockade of the entire Mexican coast.

That is, so far as military amateurs can see into this affair, though the United States refused to support any one of the three chiefs in the Mexican Civil War, even when that war had cost American citizens in Mexico millions of dollars, the moment Huerta refused to back down from his "gun for gun" acknowledgment of the salute, the United States Government proceeds against him as though the United States itself were one of the factions in Mexico. A state of war is precipitated to the booming of artillery and the shelling of positions in Vera Cruz. Mexican sharpshooters and American marines engage in actual gun conflict. They come as near the gun for gun ratio as possible. A number are killed and wounded on both sides. Yet no war is declared. The moment Vera Cruz and Tampico and a few other Mexican ports are sufficiently blockaded to keep the rest of the world from helping any of the factions in Mexico, especially Huerta, the U. S. Government intends to sit tight and let the Mexicans finish the job to the best of their ability.

This is probably the most cunningly complicated



Senator Root wanted war, not with Huerta over the gun for gun episode, but with Mexico on behalf of American property and citizens.

imbroglio that ever happened outside of Turkey. It is infinitely more involved than the causes of the Spanish-American War. The results are much more difficult to forecast. Yellow newspapers forced the United States into a war with Spain at Cuba and the Philippines. The result is that Cuba is now under American protectorate, and the Filipinos, given self-government by the United States, are now beginning to oust Americans from the civil service.

W. H. TAFT, once Governor of the Philippines, does not see enough in the result to warrant the United States going to war with Spain. It is quite probable that President Wilson sees too little in the ultimate result to warrant a declaration of war with Mexico. The United States does not want to annex Mexico any more than it did Cuba or the Philippines; any more than it would desire to annex Canada. The price of annexation in modern times is always too great for any nation to be willing to pay. War in the twentieth century costs five times what it did in the early part of the nineteenth. A country like Mexico is difficult to conquer; just as South Africa was difficult. Any war of conquest must be a long one. It must practically ruin the country before conquering it. The country's credit drops to the lowest level. Its commerce is crippled. Its investments are depreciated. Fire, dynamite, idleness of workers, ruin of railways and of shipping, wholesale decimation of the people, depletion of the exchequer, the spoliation of property—all combine to make a conquered country ultimately not worth the price of conquest, at least in the same generation.

All these forces have been going on at a fairly good pace in Mexico already. Four years ago civil war began with the Diazes and Madero. It has continued ever since. The country is now split up into three factions. It is a matter of fine discrimination

to determine which is the worst. All believe in fighting fire with fire. Desperadoes are in the rank and file of each camp because desperate measures by an excitable Latin race are the order of the day in a condition of ruinous civil war. Before the war American and Canadian and foreign capital flowed into Mexico as freely as British capital sluiced into Canada for the building of great railways. There was unlimited natural wealth. Capital was eager to exploit it. Hundreds of millions were invested by half a dozen countries. Mexico ceased to be a purely Latin country, living a half aboriginal, half decadent-civilized life. It became a land of commercial adventure and of great industries, of great ports and railways and mines.

When the Latin republic appetite for revolution got the better of commercial conquest and started Mexico on a career of gunning and dynamite and fire, the millions of foreign capital invested in Mexico were jeopardized. Investors would have been glad to withdraw. They could not. Foreign citizens would have been glad to come out. Their property



Major Smedley Butler, commanding the American marines at Vera Cruz.