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## Carranza : The Man and His Work

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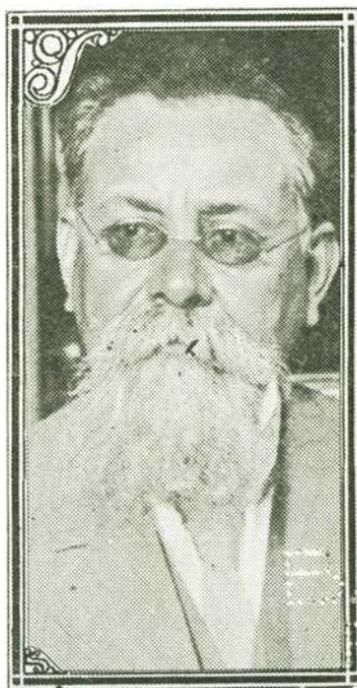
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# CARRANZA

## The Man and His Work



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There is no certainty about Villa:—whether he is dead or alive, who can say? He has been reported dead in so many places we might be pardoned for assuming that, personally, he is a myth.

Venustiano Carranza is not a myth, he is in Mexico, the *de facto* head of that nation.

In appearance, he is a tall, grey-haired man, carrying easily his fifty-nine years. When walking, he strides ahead as if he had business on his mind. Seated at his desk, he talks in quiet tones about the Revolution and the remaking of Mexico in a calm, matter-of-fact way.

There is nothing of the swashbuckler, or the melodramatic hero, about him. A farmer, a “ranchero” by taste and inclination, a lawyer by profession, naturally a student and an idealist, compulsion and patriotism have made him a man of action. He is moderately wealthy, and has spent nearly a lifetime in public service, so he is removed from the charge of being a political adventurer.

Political offices are acid tests of men’s characters. Carranza has been tried by his country in various offices. His apprenticeship was served in Municipal and State Government. Now he is the first chief of Mexico. Fire is the last test of a man.

Latin-Americans are temperamental volcanoes. Carranza suggests a glacier, in his advance. Slowly and irresistibly, he has moved upwards. Perhaps by reason of the ideas he represents and the strength of his convictions, for even his enemies have been impressed by his character. Opponents like Alvarado, González and Brigon have been won to his support by his moderate policy and constructive aims. Carranza wields the big idea in preference to the big stick.

In the days of the Diaz regime he was a senator and as recently as Madero's ill-starred reign, he was governor of Coahuila.

Politically, he has always been an independent permeated with socialistic ideas. American Republicans and Democrats may not agree with some of his political theories, and think they are chimerical and utopian, but you can always feel sure he is disinterested and has the unity and the prosperity of Mexico at heart. The present Mexican chaos does not obscure his vision of a distant ideal Mexico.

Carranza has the first requisite of a natural leader: faith. He believes in his country and its future.

The First Chief of Mexico is an idealist, and some of his speeches have a Cromwellian ring about them. They breathe the same passion for justice. We are not saying he is a Latin-American Cromwell, only that he has a resemblance to him in speech and task .

Cromwell had enemies and he slew some of them. Carranza has them in prison and he spares them.

His clemency angers his friends and encourages his enemies.

Kipling has some jungling lines in which he depicts St. Peter asking a trembling petitioner at the celestial gates:

“By the soul in your body,  
what have you done?”

What has Carranza done?

His last act was the abolition of bull-fighting, and his first, the restoration of land to the Indians.

His practical common sense told him liberty was a vain dream in Mexico if it rested on a substratum of ignorance, so he opened schools and met the opposition of the clerical party. Mexico abounds in monopolies. A few natives monopolize the land, foreigners the minerals and the oil, and the Church, education. He is trying to break the monopoly in schools. He is revaluating the land. It is only five years since Lloyd George, against fierce opposition, started to revalue the lands of England. General Carranza is finding it no easy task, to revalue the land in Mexico.

The free municipality or the township system he is seeking to establish. A bigger task than appears on the surface, for it will shift the political emphasis, in Mexico from personalities to parties and principles, and educate the people in co-operation.

In military affairs he is making the troops a federal force, when state troops are eliminated, the temptation of the State governors to use them for their own political ambitions will be removed.

Mexico is paying the price of despotism; bad government, devastation, high taxes and general impoverishment, has followed the years when the country was drained of its wealth, and its riches given to foreigners.

The lack of money and credit is a legacy Carranza received from the old regime, and it will take time to adjust the finances of Mexico.

As a country, it is as large as Great Britain, France, Germany and Austria-Hungary combined. Sparsely populated, but possessing great resources, and its financial salvation should come from within its own borders.

Carranza has banked the fires of revolution and he is trying to make Mexico support the Mexicans.