

An Original Revolution

By JOHNSTON McCULLEY

CALLIGAN threw his white helmet into a convenient chair and stretched out in another, waving his palm-leaf fan back and forth languidly. Before him was the little, palm-fringed plaza of Marcana, with a few natives sleeping in what shade they could find, with the drumming insects, and the heat waves that rose and fell between the hotel porch and the open sea.

It was the siesta hour.

Calligan closed his eyes, and ceased to work the fan. Once or twice he blew his breath upward, toward his nose, seeking to dislodge a bothersome fly. Then his hands dropped to his sides. He was not asleep, but he was near it.

Suddenly there came a sharp report, and a bullet crashed into the side of the hotel just above his head. Calligan came to himself with a start, sat up, and reached for his helmet. There came other reports. More bullets crashed into the side of the hotel.

Across the plaza, Calligan could see little brown men skipping from palm to palm, firing as they ran. To the right of the plaza, where stood the house of the presidente, which also served as the capitol, little men in dark green and red uniforms were running from the building and intrenching themselves behind the stone wall which surrounded it.

In the palms near the sea appeared a new flag—a flag that Calligan had never seen. The little brown men were cheering. The sleepers in the plaza had vacated hastily. Up and down the streets shop-

keepers were hastily boarding their windows and barricading their doors.

Calligan uttered an exclamation, then, as another bullet sailed past his head, he turned and ran down the porch to enter the hotel.

The door was locked; Calligan pounded upon it. Behind it, he heard the proprietor's voice.

"Let me in, you fool!" Calligan cried. "Do you suppose I want to be shot to pieces? Let me in, I say!"

"It is dangerous, *señor*," the proprietor cried. "It is a revolution! Were I to open the door, they might enter—those revolutionists—and make this a fort. Then would my business be ruined!"

"Open that door!" Calligan sputtered. "If you don't, I'll smash it in!"

Another bullet crashed near his head.

"If you try to smash it in, *señor*, I shall shoot," said the proprietor.

"I'll kill you for this!" Calligan screamed.

He ran back along the porch to a window; that, too, was locked and barricaded. More bullets crashed into the hotel near him. Calligan swore. Another bullet knocked his helmet from his head. Then Calligan ceased to swear, and his eyes narrowed, and his hands clenched.

"Seems to me," he muttered to himself, "that some dark-brown gent is mighty wild with his shooting. I'm in a direction at right angles with the zone of fire. Wants to kill me—a hated foreigner—eh? Oh, very well!"

When Calligan said, "Oh, very well!"

those who knew him knew that something was about to happen. Something happened now.

Calligan, past his first fright, collected his wits and his courage, and he had an abundance of both. He walked along the porch again, walked down the steps, walked straight across the dusty pavement and straight toward the plaza.

"Come back! Come back!" the proprietor was crying through a window in which there was a small, shuttered loop-hole.

But Calligan did not go back. He reached down at his belt and drew therefrom two revolvers of modern pattern. He held them in either hand, and with either thumb twirled either cylinder, meanwhile standing in the center of the street, bare-headed, and waiting.

The government troops in front of the executive mansion were firing volleys at the fringe of palms along the beach. The little brown men in the palms were replying with other volleys. Smoke drifted lazily out toward the sea. Calligan could see that at the house of the presidente they were closing the windows and putting up the heavy shutters. There was no doubting it—this was another revolution.

No more bullets had gone sailing and singing by the head of Calligan, and not being able to make a fight for personal revenge, Calligan was uncertain just what to do. He had never been in a revolution before, and he wasn't sure whether it was the part of a visiting citizen of the United States of America, on such an occasion, to take up arms for the government or the enemy.

If he took up arms for either, and the other side won, he would no doubt be shot against a wall. If he did not take up arms at all he would, no doubt, be shot just the same, as a man who refused aid when aid was needed. It was something of a

predicament.

"There ought to be something happen to decide me," Calligan muttered.

Then something happened—and it decided him.

The revolutionists were charging across the square. As Calligan watched, they gained the stone wall in the face of a heavy fire, leaving comparatively few dead and wounded behind, and began a hand-to-hand conflict with the soldiers of the government. In another moment, Calligan saw that the revolution was victorious, for the little brown men in no uniforms had gained the wide steps, had dashed to the door, smashed it in, and were swarming inside the executive mansion.

The noise of battle increased. From the executive mansion came cries and shrieks—among them a woman's shriek. Some of the revolutionists reappeared at the door, and with them there was a woman. She was struggling, fighting to get free. Two of the little men held her in their grasp, and others bound her hands behind her back.

"*Caramba!*" Calligan heard a native cry from the seclusion of a palm. "They have captured the daughter of the presidente; it is all over now!"

Calligan started. The daughter of the presidente, eh? And these brown vermin had captured her? They were handling her roughly, mistreating her as if she was a common woman of the hills! Calligan had met the daughter of the presidente! He had a kind feeling in his heart for her, for she was a pretty, vivacious girl of eighteen, fit to be a queen.

The revolutionists hurried her to the street.

"To the wall with her!" they were crying. "Her father has slain many of our women!"

"They will kill her—shoot her!"

screamed the native behind the palm.

Calligan took a hitch at his belt, whirled the cylinders of his revolvers again, took a deep breath, and with a bellow like that of an angry bull he charged full-tilt across the sun-baked plaza, straight at the group of revolutionists and their prisoner.

“Help me! Help!” the daughter of the presidente was crying in anguished tones.

Some score of little brown revolutionists beheld a gigantic, angry Americano bearing down at them, kicking great clouds of dust and sand behind him as he ran.

Four or five hurried the girl on toward the deadly wall beside the cuartel, to the right of the executive mansion. The others ran back a few steps, and began firing at Calligan.

Calligan gave another angry roar as a bullet fanned his cheek. His two revolvers came up, and he, too, began firing. He had the satisfaction of seeing one little brown man turn a somersault and bite the dust.

On he charged! The daughter of the presidente was still shrieking for help. In the yard of the capitol, government troops were in hand-to-hand conflict with revolutionists, and it seemed they had all they could do there, without going to the aid of the presidente’s daughter.

Calligan tore through the middle of those who would have opposed him, firing as he ran. Two more little brown men bit the dust. One more bullet sang by Calligan’s head, but only one, though there was a volley fired at him.

“Excellent marksmen,” he sniffed to himself.

The daughter of the presidente had been carried around the edge of the wall.

Now, as Calligan started to turn the corner, he found himself in the grasp of half a dozen revolutionists. They fell upon him suddenly, tearing his weapons from

his grasp. With his bare hands he fought them, striking out wildly, knowing that in such a melee they would not dare fire at him for fear of hitting some of their own band. The revolutionists were adept at dodging; and Calligan pursued them in turn. Once they tripped him, but he was quickly up and at them. He secured one of his revolvers again, and blazed away at a man near him. The man did not fall, and Calligan cursed.

He looked past them, at the cuartel wall. They had tied the daughter of the presidente to a post in front of it. Three men had backed away, and were lined up like a firing squad. Evidently they meant to murder her at once to prevent a recapture.

The sight maddened Calligan. A red mist swam before his eyes. He dashed aside another of the revolutionists, discharged his revolvers some more, and was through them finally, and running toward the wall.

“Ready!” he heard one of the men cry.

Those of the firing squad took their eyes from him, and gave attention to the grim business before them.

“Aim!”

Their rifles arose in a line, and pointed at the shrieking girl.

Calligan’s revolvers spoke again; one of the firing squad dropped to the ground. Someone fired, and another bullet sang past Calligan.

“One of them’ll get me yet!” Calligan muttered.

In another instant he was beside the girl, firing wildly at the two remaining members of the squad. They turned and fled. With quick fingers Calligan undid the girl’s bonds.

“You have saved me!” she said.

But Calligan deemed this no time for heroics.

“I haven’t saved you yet—by a long

shot!" he said. "We've got to get out of this!"

He put an arm around her, and when she would have protested he drew it more tightly still, half-lifted her from her feet, and swept her along, running around the cuartel, toward the executive mansion.

"Is there a rear door?" he demanded.

"Yes—yes, *señor!*"

"Show me!" he commanded.

She pointed it out. Calligan hurried her through it, barred it, and went on into a corridor, his arm still about her.

"Let me—go—*señor,*" she gasped. "It is all right—now!"

"Not by a long shot, it isn't!" Calligan exclaimed.

Troops and revolutionists were still firing in front of the capitol. Calligan reached the rear-stairs, and ran up them, dragging her with him.

"I've got to have cartridges—guns!" he cried.

"I don't know, *señor*—"

"Don't know where there any?"

"No, *señor.*"

Calligan's lips set tightly. He left her standing in the hall, and dashed into a room that fronted on the plaza. The daughter of the presidente, Señorita Inez Torello, smiled softly, and with great tenderness, as she reeled against the wall, weak from his hot embrace.

Calligan found no cartridges in the room, and no guns. He ran to a front window and looked out at the sun-baked plaza, to see what new move the revolutionists were making. He looked, then he stepped back and rubbed his eyes, and then looked again. Where were the dead and wounded men that had dotted the tiny, palm-fringed square as he raced through it to the rescue of the Señorita Inez Torello? Where were the men his revolver bullets had dropped in the dust? They were gone! Did revolutionists, then,

stop in the midst of a combat to pick up their wounded and bury their dead?

For the combat was not ended. From the front steps of the executive mansion came a chorus of battle-cries, the sound of rattling fire-arms being worked overtime. Calligan crept nearer the edge of the window, and peered down through the shutters. What he saw staggered him. Revolutionists and government troops were side by side, yelling with all the power of their lungs, and firing—into the air!

What did it mean? Had the revolution won over the army? Calligan decided that it had. Yet it was funny what had become of the dead and wounded men that had dotted the sun-baked plaza.

As he turned to hurry from the room, he heard voices in an adjoining apartment. He recognized the voices—one was that of President Torello, the other that of one of his foremost politicians. Calligan heard what they said, and his lips set in a thin, firm line. The next moment his lips relaxed, and a smile trembled at the edge of his mouth. He swept out into the hall again, like the warrior that had rescued the *señorita* from the cuartel wall.

"I found no cartridges—no guns!" he screamed at her. "Come!"

He grasped her again, and this time, because she did not move quickly enough, he picked her up bodily, and carried her as he ran along the hall. He refused to listen when she begged to be released.

He took her to the president's private office, at the head of the great stairway that led down to the plaza.

"The revolutionists are gaining the day," he whispered. "I stand ready to help the government, *señorita*. You will remain here?"

"I am afraid," she said.

"I will be on the stairs; they will not harm you unless they cross my dead

body!”

“Still, I am afraid.”

“There is no danger for you!”

“But there is for you,” she answered, softly.

“Do not fear for me,” he replied “Adios!”

Before she could answer, he was gone—rushing down those broad stairs. He flung open the great front door, which had been closed after the first assault, and appeared suddenly at the top of the flight of steps.

Government men and revolutionists before him ceased their wild firing into the air, and glanced up in his direction.

“Having a little celebration, eh?” he cried. “You curs in uniforms, you are against your government, too, eh? Is that it? Oh, very well!”

Like an avalanche he was at them. They broke and fled as the powder from his revolvers singed their faces. Not a man fell!

Weapons were too cumbersome in such an event, Calligan decided. Fists were better, and more natural, having being invented before revolvers. Moreover, Calligan knew how to use his fists.

And he used them now to good advantage, made noses turn claret, made dark brown eyes turn black. In an instant he was the center of a maelstrom. Shrieks and cries smote upon his ear. There were those who struck back at him, and got floored for their pains.

Out in the plaza he fought with them, until the score that surrounded him broke and fled. Government troops in their comedy uniforms dropped their rifles and ran. Revolutionists ran, too.

Calligan turned and stalked triumphantly back toward the executive mansion.

Señorita Inez Torello met him at the top of the stairs. He grasped her by the arm again, and led her into a room.

“They have gone—the little revolutionists,” he told her.

“My brave Americano!”

“There is no danger now,” he said.

“My father shall thank you, *señor*.”

“I’d rather you thanked me, *señorita!*”

“I do thank you,” she replied, letting her long black lashes veil her eyes.

Suddenly he grasped her in his arms, and rained kisses upon her forehead and her lips. She struggled to be free, and still he held her tightly.

In time her resistance was at an end, and she nestled snugly in his arms. Presently she turned up her face.

“You love me, *señor?*” she asked.

“I loved you since the first night—when I met you here. But I didn’t dare aspire to win you,” he said. “You are the daughter of the presidente—and you looked so blamed dignified that you frightened me!”

“Oh, *señor!*”

“Now I’m going to marry you!” he told her.

She did not answer for a moment; then she held up her head again.

“Whenever you wish, *señor*,” she said.

Calligan kissed her again, kissed her many times.

Presently she drew away from him.

“*Señor*,” she said, archly.

“Well?”

“I have a confession to make to you—”

“I’m not a priest,” Calligan said.

“Listen, *señor*. I, too, loved from that first night. But you would never look at me, *señor*. In our country when a woman loves it is her whole life, and if she loses her love it is always sad for her after that. I heard you were going away, *señor*. And I wanted you to love me—and stay here! So

I—I—well, *señor*, this revolution, it was all what you call a fake.”

“A fake?” said Calligan.

“I arranged it all, *señor*. Those revolutionists were troopers dressed in rags. I arranged to have them begin the revolution when you were sitting on the piazza at the hotel. They were to seize me, and take me out to be shot. I hoped, *señor*, that you would be a brave man and come to my rescue, and that—perhaps—you would love me then. Danger often begets love, *señor*. You do not despise me, do you? Those real bullets that went by your head, *señor*, were fired by an excellent marksman, and all the other firing was without bullets. I even had blank cartridges put into your revolvers, *señor*, so you could not hurt any of our men!”

Calligan opened the cylinders of his revolvers. One shot remained unfired—and the cartridge was a blank.

He looked at her.

“You will not be angry, *señor*, and you will love me? All is fair, they say, in love!”

“All’s fair in love,” echoed Calligan. “That’s why I was so brave going down the stairs and tackling the whole crowd, single-handed, just now. I noticed, when in the front room, that all the dead men in the plaza had come to life—also I heard your father laughing and talking in an adjoining room. That’s why I went after the crowd, *señorita*; because, you see, you forgot to put blanks in my fists—and I wanted to even up matters. Some of the government troops have sore noses and faces!”

“But you have me, *señor*,” she said.

“Oh, very well!” said Calligan.

When Calligan said, “Oh, very well!” like that, those who knew him knew that something was going to happen. It happened now.

Señorita Inez Torello found herself held breathless, found her lips pressed tightly against *Señor* Calligan’s, and sighed happily.

“Now,” said Calligan, “we’d better go in and see the presidente. If I’m going to be your husband and stay in Marcana, I’ll have to have a government job!”