

Story of Their Long Struggle to Free Themselves from  
Oppression—Willing to Sacrifice the Life of the Last  
Man to Avenge the Wrongs That They Have Suffered.

Twenty years ago Gen. W. T. Sherman wrote that the Yaquis of northern Mexico were the Spartans of America. The Yaqui tribe further borne out by the United States army officers stationed in the frontier garrisons, who say that the Yaqui tribe comprises some of the most remarkable natural strategists in the world, and that in some respects the guerrilla warfare that has been known to us for more than a generation has one or two respects of 20 months ago. The time between the Yaquis and the Mexicans is without comparison on this continent. The tribe and the Mexican army now engaged in the Yaqui war is a novel of any in its kind, and, unless some agency intervenes, the old Yaqui tribe will be exterminated. For grim and unrelenting, an everlasting and perfect recklessness of personal safety, the Yaquis are an exception suffering. They have made a mistake since the Diaz government until he have laid down his life in the effort to avenge old tribal wrongs. The Yaquis have had some success in their efforts to occupy the Yaqui territory and shed their best blood nearly 90 years. The Spanish government has been in a state of intermittent warfare with the Yaquis, and when Mexico gained her independence (in 1821) the Yaquis remained, and from that time to this have been a constant headache to the government. They have been a half dozen times a century the cause of a serious cessation of hostilities has been declared, and the tribe has quit fighting for a year or two. But the bellum spirit soon broke out again, when the Yaqui tribe came in May, 1881, when the Yaquis signed an armistice. The Yaquis believed that the Mexican government had at last seen of peace with her warring neighbors, only to have the tribal spirit of revenge break out again. From that time to this some Mexican soldiers have been engaged in the Yaqui war against the Indians. The war has been progressively fought, and the

has to struggle at their old persecutors' and tyrants. The Yaqui women even camped on the battlefields with their husbands and sons. When Mexico was free the Yaqui returned to their homes among the mountains and valleys of the Sierrita. For 25 years the tribe was at peace. It developed its agriculture and its mines, and, for the first time since Cortez, increased rather than diminished in population. The Yaquia are workers. In 1822 and in 1845 they were famous for their great grain fields and silver mines. The Yaqui copper mines were at the most profitable in Mexico, but they have been seized by the Mexican government during the long years of war and are now largely owned by Americans.

**GRIEVANCES OF THE TRIBE.**

The chief grievance of the Yaquis against the United States concerns the way in which the United States at Mexico in 1848 has been that tribal rights are to lands and streams of the Yaquis were given to the Americans in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. But the treaty makes dozens of other claims of the rights of the Mexican Indians. The Yaquis has spent its earnings of 5 years ago sacrificed many thousand lives in war. Mexico has lost 25,600 soldiers in the Yaqui wars. Until a few years ago, before the tribe had become so decimated, the Yaquis were the fiercest of the Yaquis was as often as the Mexicans. Almost every square mile of the mountains and valleys in eastern Sonora and northern Chihuahua has been the scene of an enmity between the crudely armed Indians and the drilled and equipped Mexican soldiers.

While the Yaqui braves have suffered and fought out among the mountain fastnesses and foothills, the women and children in the miserable stone and adobe huts in the valleys have suffered. The Yaqui women have saved every possible way for the purchase of ammunition for their fighting men.

The Yaqui women have defended mountain passes, and Gen. Torres says he has many times found Yaqui women dressed in male attire and armed with rifles in the field when an engagement was over. Only a few months ago a company of Mexican soldiers found a gunpowder mill that was operated secretly by a Yaqui woman and her half-breed boys among the Sierrita mountains.

The Yaqui boys are taught to be sharpshooters by the time they are 16 years old. They have bought thousands of improved Winchester rifles from the Americans, and have gone without food to buy the rifles. The Yaqui men, women, and children could earn as laborers in the silver mines, as fishermen on the Gulf of California, as ranchers and day laborers, has been contributed to the tribal fund for carrying on the war.

Nowhere in Yaqui land the name of Gen. Cajeme is held in reverence. He was a Yaqui Indian, who was born

In 1840, and was reared in a Roman Catholic school in Los Angeles. Cal. He was a natural leader of men—a lieutenant in the Mexican army at 22, and a governor in the Yaqui country at 26. In 1878, the Yaquis held a general convention at Turin, and formally seceded from the authority of Mexico. Cajemil threw up his governorship and joined himself to the Yaqui cause. He was elected general of the rebel army.

That was in 1880. The Mexicans sent 5,000 to fight the rebels, but the warfare between Cajemil and the Mexican forces under Gen. Pesqueira lasted six years and ten months. There were skirmish battles every few weeks, and Cajemil achieved some wonderful strategic moves, and many notable victories. The Yaquis held the mountain strongholds, and the Mexicans were driven back. Finally, Cajemil, the Yaqui idol, was ambushed, captured, and shot. For two years the Yaquis simply held their strongholds in the upper mountains and refused to be drawn into the fight. Meanwhile the women and old men of the tribe labored and economized more to provide a fund for further blows against Mexico.

The bushacking warfare continued intermittently until the fall of 1897, when the American miners, who had been active in Sonora and Chihuahua, prevailed upon the Mexican authorities and the Yaqui chiefs to come to an understanding. So it came about that the soldiers and the braves laid down their arms. They were to come to a treaty of peace at Ortiz and a celebration lasting two days. However, a few months later, the Yaquis began complaining that the Mexican government was forcibly removing their boys and girls from their reservations and forcing them into government schools.

In November, 1898, it became known that the Yaquis had secretly repaired their old strongholds in the mountains, and were again ready to fight the Mexican army. Since then guerrilla fighting has gone on without interruption.

An example of the desperate ends to which these Indians have carried their resistance to Mexican authority is afforded by the last battle between the Yaqui forces and the army under General Torres, which took place five months spent in careful scouting, located a band of the enemy deemed large enough to warrant a concerted attack at the hands of the several columns into which the Mexican army had been divided, in the foothills of the San Mateo mountains. The Indians had been informed of this force. General Torres made haste to get his forces into position before the Indians should scatter and make their escape in twos and threes to the plains. A column of 300 men wassent up the main trail into the mountains, while the body of the Mexican forces remained about the valley for such was to cut off all escape by the paths and run down the hills. Another detachment of troops was then directed to ascend the mountain from the rear, so as to bring the Indians between them and their comrades on the other side. The Indians were thus completely cut off. Taking into custody a body of the tribesmen variously estimated at from 350 to 500 men. On the day appointed for the general advance, the Mexican forces moved forward slowly, according to orders, taking care to round up all the wild or half-breed that came in their way to prevent, if possible, news of their advance from reaching the enemy.

FIGHTING IN THE MOUNTAINS.

The trails, few in number leading up the mountains, were almost impassable owing to the growth of the forest and the prickly shrubs. Native guides had to be relied upon also, and their loyalty was many times brought in question. The columns ascending the hills from different sides counted on meeting after the first day, and on the morning of the first day, the soldiers of one column lay upon their arms at the crest of the hill at the beginning of the range. Sentries had been posted to guard the camp in every direction. About midnight the officers came forward, a soldier to the front, Indian kneeling on his chest, while another was preparing to bind him with a loosely twisted rope of fibre. With the exception of the officers, and a few men who escaped in the confusion, the soldiers were taken as slaves, as they slept for the most part, and so many had the bloody work been accomplished that the officer in charge had heard nothing of it until he was himself attacked. The Indians, it seems, had been waiting for the campaign planned by General Torres almost a year, and he had been decided upon, through sources of information which they have always enjoyed, and which the Mexicans have never been able to circumvent. Under the leadership of the Indians, who had for many years now been the acknowledged chief of the fighting body, the Indians slowly drew towards the advancing column, taking care not to come up with it until darkness had set in. The sentries were the first to be killed, men, while the Indians, it was learned later, were only half as many. Six of their number were told off to murder the sentries by strangling them so that they could not give the alarm. This they did by creeping close to the sentries' stomachs over the ground until they had in the darkness approached near enough to the soldiers to throw nooses around their necks. In this the Indians were aided by the fact, as the Jerkens suddenly from the rear, as the Indians were, of course, incapable of outcry or resistance. As soon as the sentries were disposed of the main body of the Indians stole quietly into the camp, and worked frightful slaughter among the sleeping soldiers. The officers whose lives had been spared the Indians took with them in their flight down the mountain, which covered practically the same line, took with them the survivors coming up. They had judged rightly that the soldiers left to guard the valley would be so disposed as to cover the axis from the mountains between the Indian where the two forces had begun the attack, and the valley, so that the Indians would get back of either column, so that when they came out on to the plains there was no one to molest them. Once in the valley, the Indians were armed, led by the sentries to the river, and to the mountains beyond to cross.

President Diaz's administration has recently adopted new measures in dealing with the Yaqui problem. To cut off the succor that the braves in the Yaqui stronghold have had from the women and children who remain in the pueblos and on the ranches to work, and to prevent Yaqui boys from taking their fathers' and brothers' places in the ranks of the fighters, all Yaquis are now deemed prisoners of war. The men are sent to the military reservation, and the women and children are sent down into southern Mexico to a reservation, where they are wholly separated from the Yaqui fighters. The Yaqui boys are put in a military school at Vera Cruz, where they are not enabled to come into contact with their parents, where they are weaned from their innate hatred for Mexican authority, and where they are trained for service in the Mexican army—a calling for which their unusual military sense well adapts them.—New York Evening Post.

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