"While the declaration of the people of San Juan was being got ready, General Trujeque, who was in the Imperial service on the ranch of Tacache, a useful point of observation, sent me a message, offering to place himself and all his forces at the service of the Republic. As a guarantee of his good faith he proposed to send Don Enrique Travesi, who should remain with my men while I had a conference with him on the ranch.

"As the strength of the Imperialists was declining in the country, and I knew the treacherous character of Trujeque, I had good reasons to doubt whether his proposals were genuine. Nevertheless I set out for Tacache, taking only an adjutant with me.

"My men were very anxious when I started off without any escort, and they decided among themselves (as I subsequently learned) that a hundred horsemen should follow me at some distance, so as not to be seen, and hold themselves ready to come to my assistance should necessity arise.

"I passed Trujeque's outpost without incident; but this post was only a watch, composed of five dismounted men.

"On arriving at the ranch, and just as I was about to dismount at the door of the hut where Trujeque was lodged, his men fired unexpectedly upon my adjutant and myself from another hut on the other side of the little compound. My companion's horse was slightly wounded. We withdrew hurriedly by the road by which we had come, forcing our way past the outpost. Behind us we could hear the clatter of mounted men in hot pursuit.

"As my adjutant and I fled over the hills our position looked desperate. We saw a mounted force coming up which seemed bent on cutting off our retreat. Then we recognised to our joy that these were our own men. We joined them, and Trujeque's followers turned back.

"Trujeque wrote to me at once, explaining that what had occurred had been an accident due to the fact that one of his officers, who had not been informed of his plans, had recognised me. I remained doubtful as to the truth of this, although, had it been really a preconceived trap, they had only to wait until

I had dismounted to have captured both myself and my adjutant."

It was Diaz' complaint, not many months before this, that he had more men than arms. Now he had more arms than men, and was perplexed with the problem of how to manage such an army on nothing a day. His communications with the Juárist Government, often cut off for months together, were at all times uncertain. The army had to be maintained and fed by whatever means the ingenuity of the leaders could devise.

A modest passage from his diary, evidently written at this time, gives some indication of his troubles:

"The principal difficulty which I have to meet in getting together such forces as I should like to command is lack of funds. All the towns offer me men, but I prefer to have a small but effective following rather than a large one without means. With money, I could easily extend my line of operations to places where there are rich traitors who ought to be made to pay the expenses of the war. My means are so small, however, that a soldier receives only twelve centavos a day (equivalent to less than sixpence); as for the officers, they serve without receiving any pay at all. I could, of course, exist on loans from the towns; but this is not my plan. I do not wish to extort help from them, especially when the townsmen are faithful allies who hasten to serve us whenever a chance offers."

Diaz' chief anxiety is always for the welfare of his men, that they should be properly recompensed and cared for. That such thoughtfulness was well repaid in a country where every man, though not actually enrolled, could on occasion become a soldier, and a most effective one, is well illustrated by events which happened to an auxiliary force formed by General Don Luis Pérez Figueroa, and led and maintained independently by him.

Diaz notes in his diary—he is still writing of the year 1866:

"The most notable event of these days of July was the defeat

that General Figueroa inflicted on an Austrian column which was marching over the hills to the coast.

"In Soyaltepec, the scene of the action, ninety-three Austrian corpses were found; and on the road over which they were pursued as far as Tehuacán there were so many dead that they could not be counted. Those who did such effective work in the pursuit were not really General Figueroa's soldiers, but men from the towns who, supported by Figueroa's band, took up positions at various points along the roadside and harassed the enemy during their disorderly retreat. The less resolute left their houses and set fire to them so as to leave no means at the enemy's disposal for making a further stand. Such heroic conduct has been noticed in the towns of Soyaltepec, Istcatlán, and Ojitlán."

By the middle of August such progress had been made by the Republicans in the Southern and Eastern States that Diaz was prepared to carry on operations on an extensive scale, and communicated his intentions to the Minister of War in the Juárez Government in the following letter:

"Republican Army. Eastern Line.
"General-in-Chief.

"To the Minister of War,

"Profiting by the present distracted state of the invading army, owing to the operations of the Republican forces in the interior of the country, I have arranged for a general movement with the small forces that I possess in the States of Mexico, Puebla, Oaxaca, Tlaxcala, and Chiapas, and my plans begin to be realised with, up to now, good results.

"On August 10th, Colonel Jesús Visoso, with two hundred infantry of the Chiautla garrison, defeated the rest of the troops commanded by the traitor Gavito. He then joined me with his force, a mountain-gun, and eighty-six extra rifles. On the 13th we were again in front of Chiautla, which place had been reoccupied by the enemy, reinforced with the Austrian garrison from Matamoros. On that occasion I had expected that the enemy would accept the battle which my presence there

invited; but he only came out a few paces to take observation of my troops, without leaving the shelter of the fortifications, and then returned to his trenches.

"Here I received news that Colonel Ignacio Gamboa, at the head of the people of Itscaquixtla, had defeated the traitor Granados Maldonado, Prefect of Tepeji, killing seven of his men and taking twenty-six prisoners and thirty rifles, and at the same time dispersing most of his force. Of these, during the fight, twenty-eight cavalry came over to our side. Gamboa, hampered by his captures and closely pursued by Imperialist troops from Tepeaca and Puebla, called on me for help. I accordingly sent General Francisco Leyva, Governor of the third district of Mexico, with seventy horse, to unite the Republican partisans in that district, to organise and arm those in the neighbourhood who were disposed to defend the Independence, and to establish, wherever possible, Republican authority. Meanwhile, with the rest of the force under my direct command, I marched out and joined Gamboa.

"While this was passing here General Luis Pérez Figueroa was to threaten Tehuacán on the north, while Battalion-Commander Felipe Cruz, at the head of one hundred and fifty Mixtecas mountaineers, was to occupy the mines of Peras on the 12th. On the same day Colonel Manuel López y Orozco accomplished an aggressive march from Jamiltepec to Zola. The Juchitán garrison must have gone to Tequisistlán, to cut the road between Tehuantepec and Oaxaca. I await the result of all these operations, which should have been executed simultaneously. I will take advantage of the enemy's engagements to extend the radius of my actions on that side, and get some supplies for my troops. At the same time I intend to incite the Imperialists in Puebla to action by marching near to that town. If, as I fervently hope, the enemy comes out after me I will lead him as far from his base as possible and fight him alone if I be sure of the result. My chief object, however, for the present, is to rouse all those on whom I can count in the northern part of the State of Puebla, where the spirit of insurrection is beginning to show itself. Very soon I shall have the pleasure of advising

you of the result of all these operations, in which the forces from Chiapas, Tabasco and Vera Cruz are not taking part, for the first must be near Oaxaca, observing Tehuantepec, those of General García watching Tlacotalpam, and the others kept in reserve to guard against the Yucatan forces.

"OUR LAND AND LIBERTY!

"Tlapa, August 20th, 1866.

(Signed) "PORFIRIO DIAZ."

"To the Minister of War, Chihuahua."

Events now began to move quickly. From September until the close of the year General Diaz participated in no fewer than six engagements. Out of them all he came unscathed. The Imperialists endeavoured to shut him in at Tepeji, and for a time the prospects of the future President of Mexico looked desperate, but he managed to get away safely to Huajuapam. Here he escaped another treacherous attack by the renegade Mexican General Trujeque, whose former attempt on his life at Tacache was recounted a few pages back. In the guise of friendship and with the object of discussing new proposals, Trujeque rode out of the town to an appointed meeting place, but had secretly posted riflemen to fire upon Diaz as soon as he came within range. Fortunately, the bullets once again went wide of their mark.

The hardships of the long campaign seemed to have no effect upon Diaz' iron constitution. There is another side to guerilla warfare than that which appeals most forcibly to the popular imagination. Frequently the troops were sodden through to the skin by tropical rains. Provisions would give out, and when next they might be replenished none could foretell. Powder, when wanted to resist a sudden attack, was found to be wet and useless. Pay was most uncertain. Discontent and demoralisation spread rapidly among men under such conditions, and all the tact, courage, and personal prestige of their resourceful commander were needed to keep the force together.

Late in the year General Diaz' small army was augmented by a company which his brother, Colonel Félix Diaz, had raised,

and they advanced further into the interior, occupying posts from which the foreign troops were being gradually withdrawn. Two engagements in which he led his soldiers to victory immensely strengthened the Republican cause in the south, and further narrowed the area within which Maximilian's authority remained absolute.

Diaz told me that he considers the encounter at Miahuatlán, on October 3rd, 1866, when his strategy was pitted against that of General Carlos Oronoz and a French officer, Enrique Testard, to be his most interesting fight.

He was occupying Miahuatlán with a force of six hundred infantry and two hundred and eighty mounted men, having retired from the town of Ejutla when General Oronoz moved upon that place. His adversary had remained three days inactive when his advance was disclosed in the early afternoon by clouds of dust thrown up by the troops. Miahuatlán lies behind a group of low hills at the foot of the Cuixtla range, which afforded good positions for concealment and defence, and if a retreat became necessary an open way to the mountains. Northwards runs the road to Oaxaca, the ultimate re-capture of which by the Republicans was a task upon which General Diaz had set his heart, and brought all his tactical skill to bear; for Oaxaca meant more than a town to him, it was swathed in the romance of his childhood.

The fight opened with a ruse. It was all-important to Diaz that he should gain time for dispersing his men. Accordingly, having ordered the infantry to form up and march to positions assigned to them, and the cavalry to proceed out of the town by another route, he himself went ahead to meet the enemy, and ascended a hill that commanded the road about a kilometre's distance from the town. Here he disposed of his somewhat numerous staff and escort of thirty men, so as to make as brave a show as possible, and opened fire on the Austrians and French as soon as they approached.

Oronoz' command consisted of eleven hundred infantry and three hundred horse, with two mountain guns, borne on the backs of mules. Not knowing what was going on behind the

hills from which the first shots came, the Imperialists judged that a general engagement was about to open, and arranged their ranks accordingly. A bend in the road after a time disclosed a glimpse of the cavalry moving in front, and the bulk of the infantry advancing by another route. Their general, who had brought in the cavalry from his flanks, now sent them in a charge after the Republican horse, but Diaz had already withdrawn the latter, and the Imperialists, sweeping on, found themselves assailed on both flanks by rifle fire from close quarters, and were compelled to beat a disastrous retreat.

Meanwhile a section of the infantry led by Colonel Don Manuel González had moved round to a commanding position, and the Republican cavalry, screened by rising ground, was able to deliver a sudden and unexpected attack on the enemy's rear-guard. General Diaz put himself at the head of the remaining infantry, and a simultaneous attack on front and flank was delivered. Bayonets finished the work.

Diaz thus sums up the results of his victory:

"General Carlos Oronoz fled with many of his chief officers, leaving the French leader, M. Enrique Testard, dead on the field. Testard had commanded a battalion of Mexican soldiery whose officers were all French, as was the case with many troops at that time in Mexico.

"Many of the dead were Mexicans, although they had been led by foreigners. Their officers, having lost their horses, which had been left with the baggage in the rear-guard, could not get away when our final charge was made.

"Among the prisoners taken were many French officers. These were sent to the hills for safe keeping, so that they should not hinder our future operations. Arms were taken from twenty-two Mexican officers, who had at one time belonged to our army, but had joined the enemy.

"Our prizes consisted of some thousand rifles, two mountain howitzers, and over fifty mules laden with ammunition for small guns and cannon."

A victory for the Republicans in Mexico meant much more

than is implied merely by the defeat of the Imperialists, for after every success, numbers of men found in the ranks of the enemy were willing and anxious to take service in the Republican cause, and the wastage of battle was more than replenished by these recruits. When Diaz moved against La Carbonera only a fortnight later he had sixteen hundred men acknowledging his command—rather a different affair to the little body of thirteen he had commanded a short time before.

The battle of La Carbonera (October 18th, 1866), began so unexpectedly that it looked as if Diaz would suffer defeat. The Republicans, in loose formation, were ascending rising ground when their scouts brought in intelligence that a considerable force of the enemy was marching on the other side of the heights. They must very shortly gain the summit. General Diaz arranged his force in haste as circumstances demanded, first sending ahead three hundred infantry under Colonel Segura to gain a ravine on his left, where they were to lie concealed in readiness to deliver a surprise attack on the enemy's flank, and if possible, cut off his retreat. The bulk of the forces were rapidly advanced, and the front extended in the form of a crescent.

Colonel Félix Diaz, with three hundred men, was posted on the right wing, which was a little advanced; and Colonel Espinosa y Gorostiza, with three hundred men and the two mountain guns captured at Miahuatlán, defended the left, the open road passing between them. The cavalry, numbering some three hundred and fifty horsemen, were held in reserve, and formed a second line.

"I had not finished arranging the troops (says Diaz in his notes), when the enemy, under cover of their artillery fire, sent forward a large body of French fusiliers, who advanced boldly, and arrived close to my lines before the fire from my rifles and cannon could hinder them.

"It was necessary at once to execute a counter-attack with half a column from each of the two wings. This forced the enemy to make a decisive charge with the bulk of their infantry.

"Notwithstanding that I thereupon reinforced the two half-columns with every available man, they were obliged to fall back on both sides to the foot of the mountain and its fissures, on account of pressure from our foes, who were now supported by the sudden advance of their cavalry, which consisted chiefly of Hungarian soldiers.

"I then brought up all my reserves (who had been forming the centre) into the front line, together with my cavalry which had been in the second line. The enemy, repulsed by this force thrown upon them *en masse*, fell back in disorder upon the hill forming the base of their operations. Here they still had a small reserve of artillery. I notified Colonel Segura, by a signal formerly agreed upon with him, and he appeared suddenly from the ravine on the high ground to cut off their retreat.

"This movement, which was made in full sight of all engaged, together with our vigorous frontal attack, caused the retirement of the treacherous Mexican cavalry and part of the Hungarian troops, whose precipitate retreat created confusion among the infantry. Some six hundred prisoners and four guns were quickly captured. In their flight the fugitives left behind another small gun intact, and the mountings of a second, but they carried away the gun itself on a mule. Before the pursuit ceased a hundred more men were captured."

Thus what had threatened at the outset to be a defeat was turned to a decisive victory. It proved costly in men, owing to the stubbornness with which the first attacks were delivered and met, but was most valuable to Diaz, who already enjoyed a great reputation among his countrymen as a military leader, which this engagement immensely enhanced. The troops he met and conquered at La Carbonera, numbering some thirteen hundred, were commanded by the Austrian Colonel Hötse, and comprised a battalion of Austrian infantry, two companies of French volunteers, three squadrons of Hungarian cavalry, and two of Mexican Imperialists—in short, some of the best of Maximilian's army. Fortune had favoured Diaz. He was

master of the situation and was able to march directly on his native town which, as we know, it had been his dream to re-capture.

General Diaz thus tells the story of the siege of Oaxaca which followed immediately after the battle of La Carbonera:

"On October 20th, 1866, I turned my steps towards Oaxaça, to commence the siege.

"The first news received by the Imperialist General Oronoz, who was defending the city, that a battle had lately been fought and that a column was coming towards him, was by means of one of the circulars I had myself sent to all the towns, asking for men and transports to carry away the wounded.

"He was still in ignorance of the result of the engagement, and so had ordered the officer commanding the fort of La Soledad (an advanced post on an eminence) to give him a signal as soon as he saw troops approaching—three consecutive shots if they were friendly, one single shot if hostile.

"Foremost in my ranks, and flanked by Republican soldiers, we had placed the Austrian prisoners. Deceived by this arrangement, the commander at La Soledad announced the presence of a friendly column, a mistake which he quickly tried to rectify when we came closer and he was able to recognise us as an enemy.

"It was then too late. I occupied all the line of outposts that I had myself held when defending the city against Marshal Bazaine. Firing between the opposing forces continued at intervals until midnight.

"On the following day I drew the besieging lines closer, and went on strengthening them until the 30th. While I was preparing to attack the strong position of La Soledad, as a preliminary operation to assaulting the buildings of the town, an envoy was sent out under a flag of truce, with proposals to allow my troops to enter and take possession of the city on certain conditions.

"I replied that I could only accept an unconditional surrender.

"This was before long tendered, and I appointed as a