

THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER OF FREDERICK FUNSTON / FROM THE
CAPTURE OF AGUINALDO TO THE EVACUATION OF VERA CRUZ

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PREFACE

This study is an examination of the professional career of Frederick Funston from 1901, when he was commissioned a brigadier general in the regular army, to 1914, when the American occupation forces under his command withdrew from Vera Cruz, Mexico. Little attention is given to the subject's personal life with the exception of the introduction and certain anecdotes in the subsequent chapters which the author considers relevant to the central theme. The emphasis is on Funston's conduct as an army officer.

Funston was a popular figure, especially among westerners; perhaps his unorthodox and exciting feats were in the true frontier spirit. Yet, at this time, the United States was experiencing a transition from an isolationist, provincial nation to a world power with far-flung commitments and obligations. It might have been Funston's seeming irresponsibility rather than his alleged immorality which moved his critics to denounce his capture of Emilio Aguinaldo. Somehow, his behavior seemed inconsistent with the nation's new role in international affairs. The United States was emerging from its adolescence and Funston's antics might have seemed somewhat juvenile. However, the rationale of the young general's detractors is not the issue here. The concern of this study is Funston's stature as a military leader. The perception of the masses is not always precise; romantic episodes and colorful personalities appeal to the public, obscuring more fundamental factors. Hence, in 1917, the press speculated that Funston might have been sent to

France in command of the American Expeditionary Force. The subsequent chapters will attempt to determine what justification there was for the confidence placed by many Americans in their controversial hero.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Frederick Funston was born in Ohio on November 5, 1865, and while still in his infancy his family moved to Kansas and settled at the town of Iola. Frederick's father, Edward Hogue Funston, was a man of some education, and he held a prominent place in the public life of his adopted state for a quarter of a century.¹ He served in both houses of the state legislature and from 1884 to 1894 he sat in the United States Congress as representative at large from Kansas. "Foghorn" Funston, as the congressman was known, was a man of imposing stature in contrast to his diminutive son. He was also a strict, high-tariff Republican.²

Frederick completed his elementary education in a local school, and then entered the regional secondary school. Failing to obtain an appointment to West Point because he could not meet the requirements in height and scholarship, he enrolled in the state university at Lawrence. He was dependent upon his own resources during his college career; he worked as a guide for campus visitors to meet his expenses. Among the young men attending the university at this time was William Allen White, destined to win nation-wide recognition and acclaim as a

¹Charles F. Scott, "Frederick Funston," The Independent, LIII (April 11, 1901), 817.

²James H. Canfield, "Funston: A Kansas Product," American Review of Reviews, XXIII (May, 1901), 578.

journalist. White described Frederick as a "pudgy, apple-cheeked", youth who stood just under five feet and five inches in height.³ He attributed Funston's habitual clowning to an instinctive desire to overcome his small size by laughing at himself. Funston was not particularly dexterous and he did not participate in any form of athletics.⁴ He was rather clumsy and walked swiftly but not too steadily. However, nothing seemed to frighten him and in his youthful exploits he was something of a dare-devil. In his academic endeavors, he was a poor to passable student in White's opinion, but his classroom performance was not an adequate criterion with which to measure his intellectual capacities. According to a faculty member of the history department, he was an omnivorous reader and soon exhausted the resources of the university library.⁵ He read widely in the fields of history, political science, and sociology, but only as a diversion and not as a task. In the classroom his economics professor found him attentive, alert, and always ready to participate in discussion, but he never monopolized the conversation and was a good listener.⁶ Young Frederick appeared to master fundamental principles easily, but had a tendency to neglect details when applying these precepts. Although he would cling tenaciously to his generally well formed opinions, he was always amenable to rational argument.

In his personal habits he was methodical and meticulous. He loved

³William Allen White, Autobiography (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1946), 142.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Canfield, "Funston: A Kansas Product," 578.

⁶Ibid.

good clothes which he could not afford to buy.⁷ Although he retained a certain boyish quality, he was reasonably mature despite his restless and uneasy temperament. His affectionate nature endeared him to his fellow students and especially to his fraternity brothers, among whom Vernon Kellogg and White were his closest friends. Kellogg assumed a tolerant and protective attitude toward the other two members of the trio; all of them had adventurous spirits and could express themselves beautifully in the written word.⁸ Funston made his top grades in English composition and had a good sense of humor and a sharp wit, which he later displayed in his war memoirs.⁹ While at Lawrence, Funston formed life-long friendships with men who were destined to achieve fame and renown in their respective vocations, and he was given a nickname which proved to be just as lasting as his friendships. Funston was spelled "Timson" in the national journal of Phi Delta Theta, and he was promptly dubbed "Timmy".

Funston left college after his sophomore year, partly for financial reasons, partly because he chafed under the uninteresting burdens of academic life.¹⁰ He was convinced that his future was in journalism and he accepted a position with the Fort Smith (Arkansas) Tribune as police reporter. The Tribune was, at that time, a leading Democratic organ in Arkansas. One day the editor left Funston in charge with catastrophic results. In the following morning's edition, the young

⁷White, Autobiography, 142.

⁸Ibid., 143.

⁹Frederick Funston, Memories of Two Wars (New York, Charles Scribners Sons, 1911).

¹⁰Scott, "Frederick Funston," 818.

Kansan published a stinging denunciation of the Democratic party in general and the politicians of Fort Smith and Pulaski county in particular. For this he was immediately dismissed.¹¹

Unable to find another newspaper job, Funston worked as a ticket collector on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. In the summer of 1890, Frederick's father, at that time Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, secured for him a position with a party of botanists whose mission was the collection of wild grasses in Montana. He discharged his duties so well that he was given a similar assignment the following year with an expedition to the Death Valley region in California. Of the group of hardened men who made this trip, more than half were disabled in body or mind by the terrible hardships they were forced to endure.¹² Funston did not sustain any permanent physical or mental injury, despite the fact that he walked many miles without food or water in desert heat of 140 degrees to obtain aid for his companions.¹³

Funston's career with the Department of Agriculture culminated with his widely publicized journey into the unexplored wilds of Alaska. He had previously spent a summer with the Indians on the coast, but on this venture, he was alone, by choice, and he had to endure an Arctic winter. Funston was entrusted with this hazardous mission because his superiors considered him to be the one most likely to complete the expedition successfully. After 18 months of exile and thousands of miles

¹¹Ibid., 818.

¹²Ibid., 818.

¹³Ibid., 818.

of travel across largely uncharted country, Funston returned with his botanical samples and his report on the plant life of the region.

Funston resigned his position with the Department of Agriculture and occupied himself during the winter of 1894-1895 by giving lectures on his experiences. Lecturing was remunerative but it was also boring, and so the summer of 1895 found him in Central America where he became interested in the coffee growing business. Charles S. Gleed, an alumnus of Kansas University, had staked him for a share in a coffee plantation.¹⁴ The project failed and Funston and some of his friends in Lawrence saw their investments dissipated.¹⁵ Funston worked for a time as police reporter for the Kansas City Journal, enjoying a brief reunion with White who was also employed by that newspaper. Together they roamed the streets of what was to them a big city, reliving old times and conversing far into the night about their past adventures and speculating over future developments.

In the summer of 1896, Funston was in New York, dabbling in journalism, when he happened to visit the Cuban Fair in progress in Madison Square Garden. The fair was supported by resident Cubans and Americans who sympathized with the Cuban independence movement. Ostensibly, the purpose of the festival was to raise funds for medical supplies for the insurgents, but Funston later reflected that there was more traffic in guns resulting from the affair than there was in medicine.¹⁶ A speech by a retired Civil War general, Daniel E. Sickles,

¹⁴White, Autobiography, 210.

¹⁵Ibid., 306.

¹⁶Funston, Memories of Two Wars, 3.

aroused Funston and he promptly offered his services to the Cuban junta. He was politely informed by an official of the independence movement that no Americans were being sent to fight the Spanish. However, when he returned with a letter of introduction from Sickles he was welcomed into the insurgent fold. Since Spanish agents abounded in New York, the junta was forced to take security measures, and Funston's bold approach was naturally regarded with some suspicion.

His first duty was to learn something about the operation and maintenance of artillery. For this purpose he was sent to a local arms dealer where he received rudimentary training in the handling of a 12 pound Hotchkiss breech-loading rifle. He memorized the statistics on range and velocity and, after a few nights of idleness, he was called upon to instruct a group of Cuban youths in the mechanics of artillery pieces.¹⁷ These classes continued for a month before a long anticipated call came; Funston was directed to proceed to Cuba. After travelling by rail to Charleston, South Carolina, he boarded the Dauntless, a well known blockade runner which smuggled arms and volunteers into the island. In August, 1896, Funston joined the insurrectionists under General Gomez with the rank of Captain of artillery. In the beginning the Cubans had nothing worthy of the name, but after 18 months of service, Funston, now as a Lieutenant Colonel, the highest rank attained by any American in the insurgent army, commanded a respectable array of field pieces, including a "dynamite gun" which threw an explosive gelatin charge with terrific consequences. Funston used his guns against Spanish fortifications at incredibly close ranges; at times he was only a few hundred yards from the enemy and well within the reach of the Spanish Mausers.

¹⁷Ibid, 7.

The fearless Kansan did not survive the long ordeal unscathed. His left arm was broken by a Mauser bullet and another bullet penetrated both lungs, forcing him to spend three months in a primitive jungle hospital.¹⁸ While in the hospital he contracted Typhoid fever. Finally he suffered from an obstinate abscess which resulted when he fell from his horse. Facing a complete physical collapse, Funston obtained permission from General Maximo Gomez to leave the island.¹⁹ The precarious condition of his health was perhaps not the only reason for his departure. Funston had been incensed and outraged by the execution of Spanish prisoners by the insurgents and had protested to the Cuban commanders. Ironically, a few years later Funston himself would be the target of similar charges. He was also accused of desertion and it was alleged that the insurgents considered him a traitor who had defected to the Spanish.²⁰ Funston denied this, claiming that he enjoyed the respect of the military leaders of the insurrection as evidenced by his hearty reception at a sumptuous banquet given in his honor in 1906.²¹ The occasion referred to was Funston's visit to the island in his capacity as mediator in the civil war that had broken out between rival Cuban factions. He attributed any animosity on the part of the Cubans to the friction between the military and civil leaders of the insurrection. General Gomez had sanctioned his departure but the civil

¹⁸Scott, "Frederick Funston," 820.

¹⁹New York Times, October 19, 1906, p. 7.

²⁰Testimony of John F. Hall, presented as evidence before Senate investigating committee on Philippine affairs, 57th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Document 2, part 2, 1445.

²¹New York Times, October 19, 1906, p. 7.

authorities refused him passage on a ship which they surreptitiously operated during the Spanish blockade. Undaunted by this turn of fortune, Funston attempted to slip through the enemy lines, but he was captured and hastily devoured an incriminating document which would have placed him before a firing squad. He then represented himself as a deserter and the Spanish allowed him to return to the United States.²²

When he reached New York, Funston secured the medical attention necessary to prevent any further deterioration of his health and then proceeded to his home in Kansas for a period of rest and recuperation. He enjoyed the company of family and friends and did his best to forget the horror of the Cuban campaign.²³ The Maine had already been blown up and the country was filled with rumors of war. Funston doubted that the United States would become involved in a conflict with Spain, and he blamed the "Yellow Press" and the politicians for inflaming public sentiment.²⁴ When war did come, he entertained little hope of participating, for, as he expressed it: "I was without friends or acquaintances among those high in official life in Washington and took it for granted that in filling the quota of my own state the governor thereof would utilize as far as possible the existing organizations of the national guard, of which I was not a member."²⁵

Fatefully, however, Governor John W. Leedy held office by virtue of a Populist wave which had swept across Kansas, and he regarded the

²²Ibid., 7.

²³Funston, Memories of Two Wars, 149.

²⁴Ibid., 149.

²⁵Ibid., 149-150.

regular army and the national guard with distrust. When the president issued a call for volunteers, Kansas was asked to furnish three regiments of a thousand men each. The governor, upon receiving this request, immediately sought a meeting with Funston, whom he had met previously in an informal visit. When Funston arrived, Leedy informed him that he intended to ignore the national guard and form his own regiments. Members of the guard could enter one of these units, but only as individuals.²⁶ The governor offered Funston the command of one of the new regiments. Knowing little about the training of troops, Funston was reluctant to accept the commission. He protested that in the interests of the order and efficiency in the prosecution of the war the existing units of the national guard should remain intact. Leedy was adamant and informed him that he was in no need of free advice; if Funston did not want to command a regiment, he would offer the commission to another. Funston rationalized that he could do no worse than the governor's alternate candidate so he submitted and was appointed a Colonel of Volunteers.²⁷

Colonel Funston's regiment moved to San Francisco but he was detained for a time in Florida, where his knowledge of Cuban conditions placed him in an advisory capacity in the headquarters of General William R. Shafter. However, he was soon on his way to join his command, and, in November, 1898, the regiment was sent to the Philippine Islands. There the Twentieth Kansas served in the brigade of General Harrison Gray Otis under the division command of General Arthur MacArthur. The war with Spain was over, but Funston and his men covered themselves

²⁶Ibid., 150.

²⁷Ibid., 151.

with glory in the ensuing conflict between the Filipinos and the United States forces. The colonel seemed to possess a magnetic and dynamic quality which enabled him to lead volunteers into the fiercest fire and the most tangled jungles and swamps. On April 27, 1899, Funston and a party of about 50 men crossed the Rio Grande river in central Luzon in the face of a rain of insurgent bullets. Upon reaching the opposite shore, this handful of soldiers routed far superior numbers of Filipinos and enabled the American forces to carry the field, driving the enemy from their entrenchments before the town of Calumpit.²⁸ For this display of gallantry, Funston was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers.²⁹

After the expiration of his term of enlistment, Funston returned home and received many offers from business interests which would provide him a salary twice what he was earning as an army officer. For a series of 50 lectures he was promised compensation equal to five years' wages as a brigadier general.³⁰ There were other considerations which argued against his return to the Philippines. Funston had met Eda Blankart while in San Francisco, and she had become his bride. Funston no longer was responsible only for himself. Mrs. Funston's health would not allow her to live in the Philippines and, indeed, the general's physical condition was not sound enough to warrant another term in the tropics.³¹ Funston also recognized that the glamorous period of the insurrection, if such an euphemism could be applied to the early

²⁸Anon., "He Snared Aguinaldo," Literary Digest, LIV (March 10, 1917), 644.

²⁹Ibid., 644.

³⁰Scott, "Frederick Funston," 820.

³¹Ibid., 820.

months of the war, was past, and that the distasteful, unappealing task of suppressing the guerrilla forces of Aguinaldo would be his duty if he re-enlisted. Yet, Funston elected to rejoin his command in Luzon and this fateful decision opened the way to a career in the regular army and to achievements which would capture the public imagination as had none of his previous exploits.

CHAPTER II

THE CAPTURE OF AGUINALDO

Early in 1901, Funston electrified the nation by capturing the Filipino president, Emilio Aguinaldo. This feat was of great significance in several respects. First of all, most of the army command considered that the seizure of the little chieftain broke the back of insurgent resistance in Luzon. Many Filipinos had considered Aguinaldo invincible and as long as he eluded the Americans who pursued him, their will to fight was sustained. In the second place, his capture of the insurgent leader prompted his promotion to brigadier general in the regular army and launched him in a profession in which his ambition and energy were directed toward more valuable ends than his former quest for excitement and action. Also, this particular accomplishment was undoubtedly the highlight of his career in terms of public recognition. Some observers pointed to the popular acclamation of Funston for his strategem as indicative of the morality of the American masses. Funston was seen by anti-imperialists as typifying the amoral attitude of Americans toward less developed societies. Lastly, the capture of Aguinaldo was an achievement which can be credited almost entirely to Funston. He conceived the plan of action, convinced his superiors of its feasibility, and carried it out personally.

Scattered throughout the Philippines were 70,000 American troops, including native auxiliaries. The detachments ranged in size from a regiment to a company and these units garrisoned every town of importance

in the islands.¹ The war between the Philippine nationalists and the United States which had broken out in February, 1899, had now degenerated into a vicious guerrilla conflict. The Americans had crushed the insurgent armies in the field but found it more difficult to break the indomitable will of the Filipinos. Short of arms and ammunition, the native forces could not approach the fire-power of the American army. The average insurgent was fortunate to possess a rifle, and even then he was likely to be using defective cartridges which had been reloaded innumerable times. Filipino casualties ran very high and their ratio of five deaths to every man wounded hinted at the nature of the strife.² Indeed, many American officers felt that the insurgents had forfeited the rights and privileges of "civilized warfare" by their use of irregular bands and hit and run tactics.

These partisan forces, however, represented the Philippine insurrectionist government and owed allegiance to General Emilio Aguinaldo, President of the Republic that was hopefully established after the defeat of the Spanish. Covertly, this government still existed in the form of underground organizations in most of the towns which were nominally under American jurisdiction. Often the same official acted as agent for both governments. The guerrilla forces received both material support, in the form of food, clothing and equipment, and moral sanction from the Filipinos. The bulk of the native population, both educated and ignorant, considered the Americans usurpers and regarded

¹Frederick Funston, "The Capture of Aguinaldo," Scribners, L (November, 1911), 523.

²Emilio Aguinaldo, with Vicente Albano Pacis, A Second Look At America (New York, Robert Speller and Sons, Publishers Inc., 1957), 17.

any of their countrymen who collaborated with the foreign invaders as traitors.³ Any leader who surrendered to the United States Army was thereafter suspect, no matter how much subsequent double-dealing he engaged in to regain his stature. Many perceptive Americans realized that the "insurrection" was actually a popular movement for independence in which the enemy was not a group of insurgents but a united people.

It was only with great reluctance that Aguinaldo and his chieftains pursued the war against the United States. The Philippine leader entertained little hope of defeating the Americans but rather sought by firm resistance to demonstrate Filipino determination to gain independence. Perhaps the Americans would recognize the fact that his people did not wish to be civilized at the expense of their national sovereignty. Militarily, the prospects were bleak; the Americans fought with a resourcefulness and daring never exhibited by the Spanish who were described by Aguinaldo as "leisurely and slow" fighters.⁴ The United States poured in reinforcements and equipment in amazing quantities. Against such formidable opposition the Filipino had only vague hopes of outside intervention to save them from complete subjugation. Aguinaldo placed great faith in the Democratic party and the Anti-Imperialist League to generate enough pressure in the United States to force the government to withdraw from the Philippines. All else failing, the insurgents looked to Europe for aid. For a price, they reasoned, one of the European powers, perhaps Germany, could be enticed into the conflict with

³James H. Blount, The American Occupation of the Philippines (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), 334.

⁴Aguinaldo, A Second Look At America, 115.

the Americans.⁵

The United States Army had its own remedy for the Philippine situation. It consisted of bringing the war to a speedy conclusion by employing as much in the way of additional men and materials as necessary. Of course the practical Americans would not demur if a panacea was devised which would end the conflict in one blow. To many officers the capture of the insurgent chief, Aguinaldo, seemed the solution to the problem of how to break the Filipino resistance. Since November, 1899, when the Filipino military leaders decided that further organized resistance was impossible and disbanded their field army,⁶ the one great desire of the army was Aguinaldo's demise, violent or otherwise. It was generally felt that the little president was the driving force behind the resistance movement and that he personally represented the cohesive element which bound the insurgents and coordinated their efforts.

In February, 1901, Colonel Frederick Funston, United States Volunteers, commanding the Fourth District of the Department of Northern Luzon, was presented with an opportunity to achieve military fame and popular renown. At his headquarters in San Isidro he received word that the officer commanding the station at Pantabangan, about sixty miles to the northeast, was holding a native messenger named Cecilio Sigismundo. Sigismundo had been persuaded to surrender to the Americans by the local mayor who, to the messenger's surprise, was cooperating with the Americans in fact as well as name. According to Funston's

⁵Ibid., 115.

⁶Annual report of Major General Arthur MacArthur to the Secretary of War, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 2, part 2, 88.

report,⁷ the courier then turned over to the commanding officer a packet of letters from Aguinaldo to various chieftains throughout central Luzon. Urbano Lacuna, insurgent leader in Neuva Ecija province where the courier was apprehended, was to receive the letters and forward them to their respective destinations.⁸

Funston immediately replied to the officer at Pantagangan, requesting that the courier and the letters be brought at once to San Isidro. When they arrived, Funston found that the letters bore no addresses and were signed in various noms de guerres. Also, many of the dispatches were in code and were deciphered only with great difficulty by Lazaro Segovia, a Spaniard of dubious integrity who was currently in American employ. It was learned that Emilio Aguinaldo had ordered his cousin, Baldomero Aguinaldo, to assume command of central Luzon, replacing Jose Alejandrino with whom the president was presumably displeased because of his inept prosecution of the war. Then Baldomero was to select four-hundred armed men from the various bands and dispatch them to Emilio. The location of the president's retreat was volunteered by the courier, Sigismundo, whom Aguinaldo had ordered to guide the first detachment of the anticipated reinforcements. For more than a year the exact whereabouts of Aguinaldo had been a mystery. Probably few, if any, of the provincial chieftains knew his location.⁹ Since only a few trusted men were aware of his hideout, Sigismundo must have been regarded as a man

⁷Report of Funston to Major General Loyd Wheaton, commanding Department of Northern Luzon, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 2, part 3, 122. Hereafter referred to as Funston's Report.

⁸Funston, "The Capture of Aguinaldo," 523.

⁹Ibid., 524.

of exceptional integrity. Yet he apparently deserted to the Americans and freely revealed all that he knew concerning his master.

The contradiction here is obvious and Funston's account loses its credibility when one examines a recent description of the same episode by Emilio Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo compared notes with other insurgent leaders after the war and pieced together an entirely different story of Sigismundo's "betrayal".

The Americans had practiced various tortures on captured insurgents to obtain just such information as Sigismundo revealed. Periodical literature and newspapers of the day carried to the American readers accounts of United States army brutality. Especially publicized was the "water cure", (a cure for reticence),¹⁰ in which a bamboo reed was forced into the victim's mouth and gallon after gallon of water was poured in, crowding the internal organs and producing a very painful distention of the stomach. The pressure would be then released by natural processes or, if the tormentors were impatient, one would jump on the prostrate man's abdomen. Rarely could one subjected to this form of torture withstand over one or two treatments without disclosing the desired information to avoid another dose.

In Aguinaldo's version, Funston personally was responsible for the torture of Sigismundo and his companions in an attempt to force them to divulge information about their mission. The messages entrusted to Sigismundo had been concealed in the woods and the Americans obtained them only after he had been subjected to two applications of the "water cure". Then, according to Aguinaldo, he led his captors to the packet of letters. If this last statement is to be taken literally,

¹⁰Blount, The American Occupation of the Philippines, 202n.

it appears unlikely that Funston himself presided over the interrogation of the courier, for his headquarters was sixty miles from the scene of Sigismundo's "surrender". Certainly he was responsible, however, for impressing Sigismundo into service against his president, for when the decoded letters revealed that the messenger knew the site of Aguinaldo's headquarters, Funston concocted a plan to capture the insurgent chief by using the unfortunate Sigismundo as a decoy.¹¹

Funston's scheme hinged on the fact that Sigismundo was supposed to lead the first group of reinforcements to Palanan, where Aguinaldo was hiding. He proposed to disguise a company of native mercenaries called Macabebes as insurgents, and enlist the aid of a few ex-insurgents to "command" the party. Funston and four or five American officers would accompany them as "prisoners of war", although they would actually be in command of the expedition. Under the circumstances this bit of subterfuge seemed the only way to reach Aguinaldo, for the natives would warn the Filipino president before a punitive force could get near the town.

Palanan was a little village of bamboo huts in the province of Isabela in northeastern Luzon. It was completely isolated from the outside world except for rough trails through the tangled jungle. The inhabitants knew little of the war when Aguinaldo arrived in September of 1900. Yet they enthusiastically welcomed him and gave him unqualified support.¹² Here Aguinaldo and his small party of officers and

¹¹Funston's Report, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 2, part 3, 123.

¹²Emilio Aguinaldo, "The Story of My Capture," Everybody's Magazine, V (August, 1901), 131.

soldiers were unmolested until Funston's raid in late March, 1901. Once a detachment of Americans wandered into Palanan but Aguinaldo and his men, forewarned, hid until they departed.¹³ Had it not been for the impatience of Colonel Simon Villa, Aguinaldo's chief of staff, the Funston episode might have been avoided. Villa chafed at the placid, uneventful existence in Palanan and requested a command in the field. The president conferred with the treasurer of the Philippine Republic, Dr. Santiago Barcelona, and decided to requisition the commanding officer in central Luzon for four-hundred men who would be placed under Villa's command.¹⁴

The insurgent chief in central Luzon would then direct each of his four zone commanders to contribute a band of select men. Urbano Lacuna was one of the zone commanders and it was his detachment which was impersonated by Funston and his Macabebes.

The Macabebes were indistinguishable from the native stocks but they spoke their own peculiar dialect. They were presumably descendants of Indians brought by the Spanish from North America who were allowed to settle near Manila Bay in the province of Pampanga upon completion of their military service.¹⁵ Though these warriors intermarried through succeeding generations, they continued to look to the colonial Spanish government for assistance and protection. They in turn served as mercenaries for their white masters and automatically transferred their loyalty to the Americans to protect themselves from

¹³Ibid., 132.

¹⁴Ibid., 134.

¹⁵W. Cameron Forbes, The Philippines Islands (2 vols., Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), I, 103n.

the wrath of the Filipinos.

Funston selected eighty-one Macabebes who spoke the Tagalo dialect of the central Luzon insurgents and who were strong enough for the grueling expedition and intelligent enough to carry out the subterfuge. In addition he recruited four turncoat insurgents to complete the ruse by portraying the officers in command. Hilario Tal Placido, "chief" of the band, was personally acquainted with Aguinaldo. Lazaro Segovia was of pure Spanish blood and a sergeant in the colonial army before he deserted to the insurgents, where he held the rank of lieutenant. Dionisio Bato and Gregario Cadhit were also ex-Filipino lieutenants. The three Tagalos were described by Aguinaldo as "plain renegades" who had been repeatedly disciplined by their superiors for various military offenses while in the Filipino army.¹⁶ Apparently they sought revenge as well as American gold. As it turned out, Funston picked his men well, which, of course, proved nothing except that he had an excellent taste for renegades.

All who participated in the venture were offered sizable rewards, contingent on the success of the undertaking. They were also promised quick and effective punishment, presumably death, for failure to fulfill their duties. With the exception of Segovia and the hapless Sigismundo, none was informed of the nature of the expedition until after departure. Funston obviously feared treachery on the part of the Tagalos. The only security risk involved with the Macabebes was the danger of one of them revealing the plot while in his cups.¹⁷

¹⁶Aguinaldo, A Second Look at America, 124.

¹⁷Blount, The American Occupation of the Philippines, 335.

To play the role of prisoners of war and to provide the actual leadership of the party, Funston selected Captain Harry F. Newton, Thirty-fourth Infantry, United States Volunteers, and First Lieutenant B. J. Mitchell, Fortieth Infantry, United States Volunteers, in addition to the officers attached to the Macabebe company. The latter were brothers; Captain R. T. Hazzard and O. P. M. Hazzard, Eleventh Cavalry, United States Volunteers.

Division Commander Major General Arthur MacArthur had approved Funston's plan and had arranged with the navy to transport the detachment by sea to Casiguran Bay, about ninety miles south of Palanan on the east coast of Luzon.

On March 6, 1901, the command boarded the gunboat Vicksburg in Manila and began the voyage around the southern end of Luzon through the San Bernardino Straits. Once aboard the men discarded their American uniforms and donned a non-descript collection of native clothing, including some tattered insurgent uniforms. The American officers put on private's uniforms that were equally shabby. The natives in the party were armed with Spanish Mausers and Remingtons, with ten Krag Jorgensen rifles representing the arms captured from the American patrol from which the five prisoners supposedly were taken.

Funston undoubtedly possessed courage and perseverance for there was little to justify his optimism concerning the expedition. MacArthur cautioned him that it was a hazardous operation and expressed the fear that he would never again see Funston alive.¹⁸ There were others who considered the mission a dangerous one and for good reason. The

¹⁸Funston, "The Capture of Aguinaldo," 528.

chances were great that the party would meet an insurgent force that far outnumbered them. In the region in which they were to penetrate there would be no support from American units or outposts; they would be left entirely to their own resources. Probably most depressing to Funston, however, was the news that he was being mustered out of the service, since he was a volunteer officer, and that he had received only a temporary extension to allow him to complete his "special duty".

By March 12, 1901, the Vicksburg had rounded the southern tip of Luzon and proceeded up the east coast as far as the Polillo Islands. Here Funston finally succeeded in securing native ships, two-masted craft called bancas, which he planned to use for disembarking the troops. If possible, Funston wished to avoid bringing the gunboat within sight of the shore and he knew the bancas would arouse no suspicion. However, the Vicksburg soon encountered a storm and the native ships, which were being towed, were swamped and the party was forced to continue without them. Funston now resigned himself to the fact that the Vicksburg's boats would have to be used in landing his command.

On some stationery captured previously from Urbano Lacuna's headquarters, Segovia, on Funston's instructions, now wrote two letters to Aguinaldo. The first, dated February 24, was Lacuna's acknowledgment to Aguinaldo's message to him, and the second stated that Lacuna had received orders from the commander of central Luzon to dispatch one of his best companies to Aguinaldo. This force was commanded by Hilario Tal Placido, according to the letter, and Tal Placido was once again working with the Filipinos after a brief period of inactivity following his pledge of allegiance to the United States.¹⁹ This statement was

¹⁹Funston's Report, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 2, part 3, 125.

inserted because it was feared that Aguinaldo had heard of Tal Placido's defection. The rest of the officers were also mentioned including Segovia, "who had shown himself so much addicted to our cause".²⁰

With the completion of the fake letters, the command was prepared for the landing. On March 13, at 9 P.M. the Vicksburg, under a low head of steam and with all lights screened, entered Casiguran Bay and at 1 A.M. anchored near the west shore. The boats were lowered and within an hour all had disembarked. The night was ideal for cover but little else as it was extremely dark, with occasional rain squalls. Before the Vicksburg's departure, arrangements were made for the gunboat to visit Casiguran four days hence on the pretext of searching for some American prisoners. This would not only add credence to their story, but would also provide an exit in case the ruse failed. The final rendezvous with the Vicksburg was set for the Twenty-fifth in Palanan Bay.²¹ This, of course, was dependent upon the success of the mission.

The company remained on the beach until daylight, when they located fresh water and prepared breakfast. Then the command started for the village of Casiguran, which was only a few miles distant across country but the difficult terrain made the trip a torturous twenty mile march. At noon a native boat was discovered and it was used to send word of their arrival to the townspeople. Food and quarters were requested and they were readily provided by the local vice-presidente. By evening all the command was established in Casiguran. The American prisoners were treated well, although they were the subjects of much curiosity. They were fed the local staples--cracked corn, sweet potatoes, and a

²¹Funston's Report, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 2, part 3, 125.

few chickens. Three nights were spent in Casiguran during which Funston directed the proceedings through Segovia, with whom he had periodic surreptitious conferences. The fate of the whole command was thus entrusted to a proven double-dealer, but one must wonder most at the audacity of Funston than at Segovia's loyalty, for the latter was probably strongly motivated by the prospect of much American gold with the successful conclusion of the mission. Still Funston admired and respected him and considering the results of the venture, his judgment of men could scarcely be impugned. Certainly Segovia's combination of intelligence and resourcefulness with a fine command of the Tagalo dialect and knowledge of the Filipino temperament made him indispensable.

While at Casiguran, the Macabebes were informed by the villagers that Aguinaldo had just been reinforced by a band of four-hundred armed men. They immediately panicked but Funston succeeded in calming them through individual contacts made during the night. The element of surprise, Funston told them, would offset the terrific odds.²²

A third letter was now prepared for Aguinaldo, this one presumably from Tal Placido, the Tagalo in "command" of Funston's party. In the letter, which of course was composed by Funston, Tal Placido informed the Filipino president that he was enroute to Palanan with a force which Lacuna had directed him to take to Aguinaldo's hideout. This letter, together with the two previously written deceptions, was carried to Palanan by native messengers who arrived at their destination two days ahead of the column. These cleverly devised frauds, as it turned out, completely disarmed Aguinaldo, and proved to be the crucial

²²Ibid., 126.

factor in his capture.

Much to their disappointment, the Americans discovered that the village staples were useless for provisioning a five day journey, for the natives subsisted primarily on fresh fish and sweet potatoes. The local official offered to scour the area for corn in sufficient quantities but the Vicksburg would be in Palanan Bay, ninety miles to the north, in eight days. Therefore, the party left Casiguran on the morning of March 17 with rations adequate for only half the journey. Despite efforts to conserve the food, the men went hungry during most of the march to Palanan. What bits of edible material they could gather on the way only sharpened their hunger. Besides the food problem, the party had to contend with the elements and the almost impassable terrain. The heavens opened in a deluge which soaked them to the skin and impeded their progress. At 6 P.M. on March 22, the column reached the point where the trail to Palanan left the coast and proceeded inland. Here they found some natives building sheds to house the American prisoners as Aguinaldo did not wish to have them brought to his headquarters for security reasons.²³ The insurgent chief planned to conduct the captives to Ilagan under the cover of darkness and release them.²⁴

The column was now within eight miles of their destination but twenty of the Macabebes were so weakened by hunger that they could not continue without nourishment. Practical as always, Funston dictated to Segovia a note to Aguinaldo which affirmed compliance with the instructions concerning the prisoners, and requested provisions for the

²³Ibid., 127.

²⁴Aguinaldo, "The Story of My Capture," 134.

starving men. The following morning the insurgents delivered enough cracked corn to enable the men to resume the march.

Aguinaldo's stipulation that the Americans should not be brought to Palanan threatened to sabotage the mission as far as Funston was concerned. Whether the presence of the American officers was necessary for the execution of the coup is problematic. Perhaps the insurgent leaders would have been dealt with more severely if left to the tender mercies of the Macabebes, but Funston was probably also moved by the desire to be on stage when the curtain opened. Accordingly, the colonel's fertile brain concocted a scheme to avoid this new obstacle. The main column continued on for Palanan, leaving the Americans and ten Macabebe "guards" at the make-shift prison. However, within an hour a Macabebe corporal returned with new instructions which ordered the guards to bring their wards to Aguinaldo. This satisfied the natives who had built the sheds for the prisoners and the Americans departed without incident.

About half way to Palanan, Funston and his companions met two Macabebes who had returned to inform them that Aguinaldo had dispatched his own guard to watch the prisoners in order that the entire command could proceed to his headquarters. In order to warn Funston Segovia had detained the insurgents when he learned that they were to relieve the Macabebes. The colonel and his men hid along the trail in dense thickets, allowed the relief squad to pass, and then resumed their march.²⁵ Funston allowed time for the rest of the column to cross the Palanan River before putting in his appearance, fearing that

²⁵Funston's Report, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 2, part 3, 128.

if the Americans were sighted before the Macabebes were in position, the Filipino leaders would escape. The presence of the American prisoners after Aguinaldo had specified that they should not be brought to Palanan might have exposed the plot.

At a few minutes before 3 P.M., March 23, the officers reached the Palanan River, and across a hundred yard expanse of water they saw Aguinaldo's retreat. The last load of Macabebes had crossed and, in accordance with previous arrangements, the boat was sent back for the Americans. Segovia and Tal Placido had entered Aguinaldo's quarters and were distracting the insurgent leaders with conversation which bordered on the inane. One after another, four of Aguinaldo's staff left the room for various reasons, leaving Dr. Santiago Barcelona, Treasurer of the Republic, Colonel Simon Villa, chief of staff and a third insurgent leader who managed to escape when the shooting began.

After about twenty minutes, Segovia excused himself and left the house. When he reached the Macabebes, who had by now drawn up into formation, he shouted an order which was unintelligible to the insurgents.²⁶ Instantly the Macabebes began firing on Aguinaldo's body-guard which had formed into position across the way. The insurgents, who did not have their rifles loaded, fled leaving behind them two dead comrades, eighteen rifles and about one thousand rounds of ammunition. Segovia, after giving the order to fire, re-entered the house and confronted the insurgents with a revolver.²⁷ Tal Placido, at this instant, lunged for Aguinaldo, but the three insurgent officers drew their guns and formed a shield around their president. Barcelona told

²⁶Aguinaldo, "The Story of My Capture," 138.

²⁷Aguinaldo, A Second Look At America, 128.

Segovia not to shoot as they would surrender, and at the same time he enfolded Aguinaldo in a bear hug to prevent the president from using his gun. "Don't sacrifice yourself," cried Barcelona, "the country needs your life."²⁸ Then according to Aguinaldo's version of the affair, Segovia fired point blank on the huddled group of insurgents, hitting Villa three times, but not seriously wounding him, thus giving substance to Aguinaldo's scornful remarks concerning the Spaniard's marksmanship.²⁹ Aguinaldo, Barcelona and Villa then surrendered while the fourth Filipino vaulted out the window and into the river below, which he swam to make his escape.

At this point the American officers arrived and restored order among the Macabebes, who were completely disorganized and firing at random. The Filipino prisoners were made comfortable and Dr. Barcelona dressed Villa's wounds. Funston's command sustained one casualty, a Macabebe who was grazed on the forehead when one of Aguinaldo's retreating body-guards managed, in the confusion, to load his rifle and return fire. Fortunately, the rumor that Palanan had been reinforced by a band of four-hundred guerrillas proved to be spurious and the company, which was in poor fighting trim after the grueling march, had only to contend with the president's personal force of fifty men.

No attempt was made to pursue the fleeing insurgents, as such an endeavor would have been futile in the dense jungle. The inhabitants of the town had also vanished, leaving a plentiful supply of cracked corn, rice, and sweet potatoes for the near-famished soldiers. The village

²⁸Aguinaldo, "The Story of My Capture," 139.

²⁹Aguinaldo, A Second Look At America, 128.

still bore the festive trappings of the previous day's commemoration of Aguinaldo's birthday. Amid the gay decorations the party spent the night of the Twenty-third and the following day in relaxation and recuperation. On March 25th the column left Palanan and headed for the sea and the pre-arranged meeting with the Vicksburg. Shortly after noon the gunboat was sighted and within two hours all had embarked for the long journey home.

Aguinaldo and his companions were accorded the most favorable treatment after their capture but nothing could erase the memory of Funston's so-called treachery and, writing of the affair over a half-century later, Aguinaldo termed the colonel's exploit "an ungentlemanly and unsportsmanlike ruse".³⁰ The Filipino president subsequently cooperated with the United States and even appealed to his people to give up the hopeless struggle.

Funston was welcomed a hero in many quarters and was commissioned a Brigadier General in the United States Army. However, there were others who considered his actions to be below the dignity of an American officer. Intellectuals, fellow officers and a few journalists were among those who were repelled by Funston's effrontery in requesting food from his intended victim. The forged letters also drew a barrage of contemptuous criticism. Few ventured to question his courage or resourcefulness, however. Even General Emilio Aguinaldo could not bring himself to condemn the audacious colonel. In analyzing his sentiments toward Funston, the little president remarked;

Strangely, I developed an undefinable admiration for Funston. He had previously been in the Cuban War and

³⁰Ibid., 17.

spoke Spanish quite tolerably. The fact that we had both fought against the Spaniards gave us a common background, and the Spanish language enabled us to communicate directly. I now observed him to be a diamond in the rough.

A husky, almost muscle bound man, he was literally hard as nails. But I felt, too, that he had a big heart. He had fierce courage. He was resourceful to the extreme. And, at the height of his personal triumph, he was simple, matter of fact, and even humble.³¹

³¹Ibid., 129.

CHAPTER III

THE STORM BREAKS IN WASHINGTON

As a result of his record in the Philippines General Funston became the idol of those Americans who still cherished the rugged, individualistic frontier qualities which had accompanied the nation's meteoric rise to prominence among the most powerful states on earth. However, among more thoughtful Americans, an undesirable strain of opportunism and ruthlessness was perceived in the young officer. This was entirely inconsistent with the new role assumed by the United States in international politics. No longer could we afford the belligerence and irresponsibility that characterized the earlier American temperament. We had matured now and must cast aside childish things. Thus, Funston was censured in the popular literature of the day by such figures as E. L. Godkin and Mark Twain. The latter wrote a scathing denunciation of the methods employed in the capture of Aguinaldo, utilizing the stinging sarcasm of which only he was capable.¹

Unfortunately, many of Funston's detractors were not moved by moral considerations. A great deal of resentment existed because the young Kansan had not risen through the accepted channels to fame and status in the army. Of course, much of the controversy stemmed from the fact that Funston was forced to resort to unorthodox measures for he was not a West Point graduate, and had he been, the inertia of a

¹Mark Twain, "A Defense of General Funston," North American Review, CLXXIV (May, 1902), 613-624.

regular army career might have stifled one of his ambition. Funston was not alone in this respect, for many widely criticized promotions were made during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine conflict which followed. Especially did the elevation of Leonard Wood stimulate charges of favoritism.

The potential political impact of army abuses was not lost on the opponents of the administration, and the Democrats employed tactics that would have made a Funston blanch in their eagerness to discredit the Republicans. Had the army exhibited a greater degree of solidarity, it could have saved itself much anguish, but many rose from its ranks to indict the military policy of the United States before the watching eyes of the whole world. Aside from the accusations of volunteer officers, which will be dealt with shortly, the harassed administration had to contend with the extortionate demands of Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles. In the midst of the senate investigation of charges of cruelty by United States soldiers, Miles threatened to make public his report which included serious allegations of army brutality. Only the supreme command in the Philippine Islands could deter Miles from publicizing his incendiary account of army behavior.² Roosevelt refused to submit to this blackmail attempt and deplored Miles' holier than thou attitude, pointing to the outrages of the Indian wars in which the general played a major role.³ Roosevelt's belligerence gained him nothing and Miles aired his charges by releasing his report to the public.

²Elting E. Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (8 vols., Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1951), 232.

³Ibid., 232.

The Republicans noted with alarm the growing torrent of criticism and acted to head off any groundswell of popular reaction. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, under pressure, introduced a bill calling for an investigation of army conduct and the Senate appointed a committee. Lodge sat as chairman of the committee and in that capacity rendered valuable service to the administration, but he was destined to be overshadowed by the fiery Senator from Ohio, Albert J. Beveridge. Beveridge played the part of attorney for the defense, as it appeared that the army was on trial itself, not just those individuals who stood accused.⁴

Beveridge was not in dire need of publicity; his reputation had preceded him. He was known as the prophet of imperialism because of his persistent cries for economic expansion in the Orient. He considered it a disservice to American businessmen to abandon the newly won territory in the Pacific. In a geo-political sense, he considered control of the Pacific tantamount to control of the world.⁵ In January, 1900, he delivered a speech to a packed Senate chamber which resounded internationally. Galleries crowded with foreign diplomats heard him denounce any talk of withdrawing from the Philippines and espouse the cause of American nationalism and imperialism. He unabashedly struck a strong racial note, exalting the "English speaking and Teutonic peoples" who had been prepared by God to administer "savages and senile peoples".⁶ Such was the temper in an age when Kipling could write of the "white man's burden"; Beveridge was not crying in a wilderness.

⁴Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era (Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), 180.

⁵Ibid., 119.

⁶Ibid., 121.

The hearings before the investigating committee began in January, 1902 and continued until June. They were marked by frequent acidic exchanges among the Senators. William H. Taft, Admiral Dewey, Generals MacArthur, Otis and Hughes were among the prominent figures who paraded before the committee. However, the excitement was intensified when the enlisted men were brought before the senators. Beveridge exerted himself to the limit of his ability in attempting to discredit the testimony of the damaging witnesses, and if he could not do that, he endeavored to neutralize or soften their charges. An excellent illustration of his tactics was his handling of the "water cure" issue. Accusations that American soldiers had practiced this method of torture to extract information from the Filipinos had been a major source of irritation to the army. One man who had served in the Philippines swore that he personally had seen General Funston administer the "water cure", and declared that Funston had invented this loathsome procedure.⁷ Funston stated, in an affidavit presented as evidence, that he had never witnessed an application of the "water cure", but that from what he had heard it was "one of the most effective methods and one of the most humane" for obtaining information.⁸ He hastened to add that he did not believe in torture of any type and blamed the Macabebes for the use of the "water cure". Funston also opined that the tormenting device was not nearly as severe as it had been depicted in the press, and that it was accompanied by "nothing more than a few moments of strangling and never

⁷Statement made by John Nicholson submitted to Committee on Philippines, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 3, 2260.

⁸Statement made by Funston submitted to committee, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 3, 2261.

resulted fatally".⁹

Beveridge took up the argument that the "water cure" was comparatively harmless even though its use could hardly be condoned. He bombarded each incriminating witness with questions. Had anyone died under this treatment? Were they able to walk away afterwards? As he generally succeeded in evoking favorable responses, Beveridge deprived the Democrats of much political thunder. The American public was impressed by inhuman atrocities but could hardly be expected to be aroused greatly by a practice which was treated by a Senator with such levity. Beveridge had made the "water cure" appear more as a practical joke than a heinous form of torment. Few Americans could be as objective about it when the Japanese subjected United States soldiers to the same treatment during World War II.

The charges of rape and the burning of entire villages were much more difficult to deflect and Beveridge and his cohorts were taxed severely in their efforts to maintain the honor and dignity of the army. On the alleged practice of putting native villages to the torch, Beveridge was forced to take a harsh military position of expediency. Had not the houses containing women and children also shielded snipers who fired in ambush on American soldiers? Were not the structures that were burned of a very flimsy, cheap construction that could be replaced in a short time with a minimum of time and labor?¹⁰

The Democratic opposition on the committee included such able men as Edward Ward Carmack of Tennessee, Charles Culberson of Texas

⁹Letter from Funston to Adjutant General of the Army, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 2261.

¹⁰Testimony of Seiwad J. Norton, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 3, 2904.

and Thomas M. Patterson of Colorado. They proved to be formidable adversaries in the bitter political duel. Patterson was a free silver Democrat who had refused to support Cleveland in 1892 and had embraced the Populist party the following year. In 1900 he had actively supported the rabidly anti-imperialist Bryan. Elected to the Senate by a coalition of Populists, Democrats, and Silver Republicans, he had announced his intention to return to the Democratic fold upon taking his seat.¹¹

On March 27, 1902, Patterson launched a verbal attack on Funston, managing also to smear the administration very effectively by identifying Roosevelt with the rash statements which the often tactless young general was prone to make. On the floor of the Senate, Patterson quoted an article in the morning press in which Funston wrathfully retaliated against the eastern newspapers who had the audacity to criticize his Lotos Club speech in New York. He denied using dishonorable means to capture Aguinaldo and refuted charges that he had violated the Articles of War. According to Funston, Roosevelt had approved of his speech and had expressed a desire to have him deliver a similar speech in Boston at the invitation of Senator Lodge. Skillfully, Patterson avoided any comment on the substance of Funston's speech. He declared that he ignored Funston's suggestion that those people who demanded justice for the Filipinos and evacuation of the islands deserved hanging more than the insurgents.¹² Funston considered that the anti-imperialist furor in the United States was costing American lives by encouraging

¹¹57th Cong., 1st Sess., Official Congressional Directory, 10.

¹²Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., part 4, 3326.

the Filipino rebels in their resistance. What Patterson objected to was the fact that Funston had taken refuge under the protective wing of Roosevelt.¹³

Patterson then proceeded to quote from international law books on the subject of civilized warfare and referred to the recently ratified Hague Treaty and the code approved by President Lincoln in 1863 as General Orders no. 100 which governed the conduct of United States armies in the field. Continuing, Patterson next read from Funston's account of the capture of Aguinaldo, interjecting frequent comments on the degree of conformity with the rules of war displayed in Funston's actions. James C. Spooner came to Funston's rescue by inquiring whether the rules of war were applicable in the insurrection which was not civilized warfare but an exceptionally vicious type of guerilla conflict. Patterson was asked if he had read the rule concerning guerilla warfare.¹⁴

The verbal exchange was concluded by Patterson's return to the original issue. The Senator from Colorado expressed doubt as to whether Funston was warranted in using the name of Theodore Roosevelt or Henry Cabot Lodge in his defense. He deduced from Funston's statements that the general would render valuable service to the Republicans as a campaign orator. In view of this Patterson stated that he was only concerned that the American people got the facts. A month later, President Roosevelt was compelled to rebuke Funston publicly for his attack on Senator George F. Hoar, the anti-imperialist Republican

¹³Ibid., 3326.

¹⁴Ibid., 3329.

from Massachusetts. Funston had expressed sympathy for Hoar, whom he considered was suffering from an "overheated conscience".¹⁵ The general was ordered to refrain from further public discussion of the Philippine situation. Roosevelt also expressed his regret that a United States Senator should be made the object of public criticism.¹⁶ Apparently the pronouncement from Roosevelt was prompted by a request for a leave of absence on the part of General Funston for the purpose of delivering an address at the Middlesex Club in Boston.

The army suffered much embarrassment during the hearings, but certainly one of the most damaging witnesses was Richard T. O'Brien, a former corporal with the American forces in the Philippines. O'Brien put Beveridge and his associates to the acid test. He apparently had an intimate knowledge of nearly every category of abuse charged against United States soldiers. His testimony covered everything from rape and the shooting of prisoners to the use of dum-dum bullets. Indeed, many witnesses could relate a choice few instances of brutality that they had seen or heard about, but none were as versatile as the corporal. O'Brien testified that he had seen heads of Filipinos literally torn from their bodies and that he had noted at various times that some insurgents were eviscerated by rifle fire. This he attributed to the use of expanding or exploding bullets which he said were issued by army ordnance. The Republicans immediately brought before the committee the United States chief of ordnance who deftly refuted the allegations of the young corporal and gave technical reasons for the

¹⁵New York Times, April 25, 1902, p. 3.

¹⁶Ibid.

phenomena described by him.¹⁷ Senator Carmack conceded that none of the committee believed that dum-dum bullets had been issued by the army but the possibility that the ammunition had been tampered with by individual soldiers was not overlooked.

O'Brien also told of observing the cold blooded killing of two old men who were shot down when they approached advancing American troops. According to the witness, they were walking hand in hand and waving a white flag.¹⁸ A Republican Senator harried the corporal into admitting that perhaps the flag could have been obscured for an instant but the fact remained that the vision of the Americans was unimpaired to the extent that they could perforate the two Filipinos with Krag bullets.

The big sensation of O'Brien's testimony was the alleged rape of a beautiful Spanish woman. Although it was not expressly stated, undoubtedly much of the revulsion felt by the Senators stemmed from the fact that the woman was at least part European. Similar charges involving native women did not invoke as much righteous indignation. Four officers and an undetermined number of enlisted men were accused of participating in the crime. Beveridge, anxious to limit the ghastly affair to specified individuals, pressed for the names of those involved. Patterson objected, pointing out that the witness had merely quoted the woman's husband and other dubious sources and that he was therefore not subject to perjury charges. Patterson was probably correct in assuming that Beveridge would attempt to discredit the testimony by legal action. At this juncture there occurred the

¹⁷Testimony of Brig. Gen. William Crozier, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 3, 2576.

¹⁸57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 3, 2550.

following argument indicative of the nature of the investigation.

Senator Patterson: I think the committee is doing a grave injustice by mentioning the names of these men.

The Chairman (Lodge): Instead of doing an injustice, it seems to me that the committee is on the road to doing justice.

Senator Patterson: The attitude of Senator Beveridge as well as the chairman has been in the nature of a menace to this witness.

The Chairman: No more in the attitude of menace than you [addressing Senator Patterson] have been in the attitude of defending him.

Senator Patterson: I deny that I have been defending the witness, and there is no call for such a statement.

The Chairman: And I deny that I have in any way attempted to menace the witness.

Senator Dietrich (Rep., Nebr.): I want to say that ever since this investigation commenced, you [addressing Senator Patterson] have encouraged everything to besmirch the American army and done nothing to bring out anything to the honor of the army.

Senator Patterson: The Senator from Nebraska ought to be ashamed of himself for making such a statement. The truth is exactly contrary to what he has said, and what he has said is absolutely untrue.

Senator Dietrich: I say it is true, and I repeat that the Senator's efforts have been to bring out everything he could against the army.¹⁹

In the course of the investigation, the committee uncovered two army inquiries involving the Twentieth Kansas. Both were ordered by the Department of War as a result of accusations made by members of Funston's regiment. Primarily, these allegations centered upon the execution of two or three Filipino prisoners at the battle of Caloocan on February 10, 1899. Colonel Wilder S. Metcalf was accused of issuing the order to shoot the prisoners and of killing one of the captives

¹⁹Ibid., 2579-2580.

personally while the poor wretch pleaded for mercy.²⁰ Funston was charged with attempting to interfere with the inquiries to shield Metcalf and also with giving instruction that no prisoners should be taken at Caloocan. Several officers and enlisted men made sworn affidavits in which they indicted Funston and Metcalf for these offenses. The most damaging witnesses later retracted their statements, one of them claiming an enemy of Funston had persuaded him to sign, while inebriated, a document which incriminated Metcalf.²¹ This incident was not the only indication that regimental animosities were the source of many of the charges made against Funston and his friends. In another instance, Edmund Boltwood, a former captain of the Twentieth Kansas who was instrumental in gathering evidence against Funston and Metcalf, admitted that he resented certain "unfair" promotions that had been made in the regiment.²² Boltwood was a veteran of the Civil War who expected, in view of his military experience, to be elevated in rank, but his aspirations were frustrated by Funston.

In a similar vein was the bitter, wrathful testimony of John F. Hall, who had served in Funston's command as a First Lieutenant. This man's inflammatory charges prompted the War Department to initiate the second inquiry into the behavior of the officers of the Twentieth Kansas.²³ Hall did not disguise his hatred for Funston, and in his

²⁰Affidavit made by Harris O. Huskey submitted to committee, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 1442.

²¹Retraction of earlier statement by Harris O. Huskey, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 1452.

²²Statement of Lt. Col. John S. Mallory, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 1456.

²³Dispatch from Adjutant General's office to the Commanding General, Department of the Pacific, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 1446.

apparent eagerness to malign the general's character he revealed his irritation with the publicity given to his regimental commander. In words dripping with venom, he termed the general a fraud, referring specifically to Funston's celebrated feat of swimming a river in the face of enemy fire. This famous incident was nothing but a figment of Funston's fertile imagination. Not only was he a liar but he also was a coward; he left the dangerous tasks to others and then claimed credit for their heroics.²⁴ Concerning such accusations, Funston explained that on April 26, 1899, he and a small skirmishing party swam the Bag-Bag river, a stream about 100 feet wide which emptied into the Rio Grande river. On the following day, two Kansas men crossed the Rio Grande with a small rope which they used to bring across a larger rope. Then Funston and a detachment of 45 men were towed to the opposite shore on a raft. The first crossing had been confused with that of the Rio Grande, and, quite understandably, some believed that Funston had taken credit in his official reports for an accomplishment for which others had risked their lives.²⁵

After establishing the fact that the motives of Funston's accusers were questionable, the case against the general cannot be dismissed completely. Neither of the army inquiries found sufficient evidence to indict Funston, but the investigations left many unanswered questions. Damaging testimony, in most cases, was deemed either untrustworthy or conflicting. The guilt was effectively transferred to

²⁴Affidavit made by John F. Hall, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 1443.

²⁵Anon., "He Snared Aguinaldo," Literary Digest, LIV (March 10, 1917), 644.

enlisted men and company officers. Most notable, however, was the failure of the army to institute court-martial proceedings against those who had admittedly lied in their earlier affidavits. Their immunity from prosecution for what could be considered a reprehensible crime was the result of army reluctance to press the issue.

Major General Harrison Gray Otis, in a letter to the Judge Advocate of the Department of the Pacific, suggested that action be taken against privates Charles E. Brenner and William H. Putnam.²⁶ Brenner had stirred a hornet's nest with his published account of the execution of several Filipino prisoners. He had quoted one company officer as lamenting the fact that the captives had to be shot but that he was merely obeying orders from his superiors. Putnam had admitted shooting a prisoner during the battle of Caloocan. The Judge Advocate replied that it was not conclusive that Brenner had made false charges for he had merely intended to quote the officer's relation of the incident. Concerning Putnam, the Judge Advocate pointed out that his only defense would be a lawful order from his superior officer. On the advisability of trying Putnam, he commented:

If put on trial, it is probable that facts would develop implicating many others. I doubt the propriety of his trial and am of the opinion that considerations of public policy, sufficiently grave to silence every other demand, require that no further action be taken in this case.²⁷

Upon receiving this frank estimate from the Judge Advocate, General Otis wrote, in a dispatch to the Adjutant General of the Army; "After mature deliberation I doubt the wisdom of a court-martial in this

²⁶57th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Document 331, part 2, 1447.

²⁷Ibid., 1447.

case..."²⁸ Otis justified his conclusion on the grounds that prosecution would give the Filipinos legal basis for their charges of inhumane treatment at the hands of American soldiers. He granted that conditions existing early in the insurrection had given rise to abuses, but he said much good will had since been won by the Americans and this amity should not be jeopardized by further scandal.²⁹

The committee hearings closed in June, 1902. Funston's reputation was damaged somewhat, but, otherwise, he came through the ordeal unscathed. For that matter, so did nearly every other officer implicated in the investigation. The Democrats were more interested in political capital than in the quest for justice. In the process, however, the army officers were "over their heads in party politics," as Bowers so aptly expressed it.³⁰ For years Beveridge enjoyed a large measure of popularity with the army and for good reason. The Senator from Ohio had rendered invaluable aid both to the army and to the Republican party in their hour of need. Yet, in the final analysis, it was the apathy of the American public that prevented the Democrats from reaping their full propaganda harvest. The people were weary of hearing about the Philippines, and were largely unconcerned about an alien race.³¹ And so, the intellectuals raved on, but they were crying in a wilderness.

²⁸Ibid., 1448.

²⁹Ibid., 1448.

³⁰Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era, 182.

³¹Karl Schriftgiesser, The Gentleman From Massachusetts (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1944), 203.

CHAPTER IV

ON TO VERA CRUZ

After the capture of Aguinaldo, General Funston remained in the Philippine Islands until November 1, 1901, in command of the Second Separate Brigade, Department of North Philippines. His tour of duty in the far east had been immensely successful. Once a romantic adventurer, he now had a promising future opened for him and he assumed his new role with the sincere and responsible attitude so vital in his chosen profession. True, he had become involved in petty regimental politics, but this would have been a trivial matter but for the untimely Senate investigation which allowed his enemies an excellent opportunity to overcome the military impediments of rank and influence and to appeal directly to the nation. On the positive side of the ledger, however, Funston had won some valuable friends in civil and military life, particularly the esteem and admiration of General Arthur MacArthur.¹ His son, Douglas MacArthur, who was to become a popular hero to a later generation of Americans, idolized Funston.

Upon his return to the United States, Funston was placed in command of the Department of the Colorado with headquarters in Denver. Here he weathered the storm that broke in Washington with the convening of the Lodge committee. Years later, William Allen White,

¹Frazier Hunt, The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur (New York, Devin-Adair Company, 1954), 17.

close friend and fraternity brother at the University of Kansas, wrote that Roosevelt had asked him to impress upon Funston the impropriety of publicly excoriating his many critics.² White surmised that his old college chum was suffering from the same weakness which had plagued him in his student days; Funston could not hold his liquor.³ He was probably deeply immersed in his cups when he made the statement which prompted the chastisement from the president. When White reproached the general for his antics, "Timmy" (Funston) replied; "O Billy, look not upon the gin rickey when it is red, and giveth color in the cup, for it playeth hell and repeat with poor Timmy."⁴ Although some accusations were made against the general concerning his consumption of alcohol, there was no substantial evidence that his low saturation point ever interfered with his duties. His excesses were probably confined to social functions, and, in view of his limited capacity for spirits, he could not have been guilty of any sizable intake of intoxicants.

Funston attacked the abolition of the post canteen's dispensation of beer in his annual report to the Secretary of War in 1902.⁵ This forced those who desired nothing but a few drinks and a little relaxation to resort to the various saloons and dives which had sprung up around the army posts. Here the men were accosted by prostitutes and were often robbed and physically abused. Venereal disease took a heavy toll of army men every year and Funston, in the course of his

²White, Autobiography, 501.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵57th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Document 2, volume 9, 26.

career, offered many suggestions for combatting the scourge.

Funston's next command was the Department of the Columbia which he held for two years until he was transferred to the Department of the Lakes in September, 1904. These were uneventful years for the general; the army had settled into a lethargic state best evidenced by the large desertion rate and the many military offenses reported by Funston. Low pay and the monotony of peace time garrison duty were partly responsible for the poor morale in Funston's command. Fortunately, there were still enough foreign military commitments to justify the maintenance of some semblance of an army. However, as late as 1914, there were less than 100,000 men under arms out of a nation of over 100,000,000 people. Funston pleaded in vain for an increase in pay of 50 percent for the officers and 30 percent for enlisted men in the hope of enabling the army to attract more desirable personnel.⁶ This would be no more expensive than the practice of trying to make soldiers of an "inferior class of men".⁷ Funston admiringly observed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police just across the border from his department. There was no reason, opined the general, why the United States Army could not attain the excellent standards of the R.C.M.P., where desertion was almost unknown and even privates could be entrusted with confidential and difficult tasks.⁸ In contrast to this splendid military organization, Funston complained of shirkers who preferred living the soft life of the guardhouse to soldiering. Apparently the guard

⁶Funston's annual report to the Secretary of War, 57th Cong., 3rd Sess., House Document 2, volume 3, 200.

⁷Ibid., 201.

house was most popular during bad weather. Funston suggested remedying this situation by making prison rations less palatable than normal army fare.⁹

In the spring of 1905, Funston moved to the Department of California, with headquarters in San Francisco. Here he was destined to win recognition and also to enjoy a great deal of respect and affection from the inhabitants. The people adopted him as their own hero and long after his departure he had their support and good will. San Francisco was the home of Funston; his wife was reared there and it became his final resting place after his death in 1917. While stationed at various posts in the United States and abroad, the family residence was maintained in that city. He was residing in a hotel when the famous San Francisco earthquake struck.

Early in the morning of April 18, 1906, Funston was awakened by the terrific shock waves which were to be the cause of much agony in the ensuing days.¹⁰ The earthquake ruptured gas, water, and sewage lines throughout the city, and disrupted communication lines. As Funston hastened on foot to the business section of the city, he saw, from his vantage point on high ground, the beginning of the fires which eventually destroyed most of San Francisco.¹¹ Realizing the great peril to the citizens and the inadequacy of the police to protect life and property, the general placed the federal troops at the disposal of the city.¹² Finding it impossible to communicate with the

⁹Ibid., 201.

¹⁰Report of the Secretary of War to the President, 59th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Document 2, volume 1, 19.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

army posts because of the destruction of the lines, Funston alternately ran and walked to the quartermaster's stable, over a mile away. There he dispatched a rider to the commandants of Fort Mason and the Presidio, with instruction to turn out their entire garrisons and report for duty to the chief of police.

Funston was acting in the absence of the Pacific Division commander whose headquarters was also in San Francisco. Major General Adolphus Greeley was on leave and at the time the news of the catastrophe was being spread across the nation, he was in Omaha. As his baggage had preceded him to Chicago, Greeley continued to that city where, upon learning the magnitude of the disaster, he decided to return to his command.¹³ Although he was probably not pleased that Funston had monopolized the attention of the country with his swift and effective action and had left only the less glamorous task of cleaning up and feeding the populace to him, Greeley sanctioned Funston's policy. Obviously, it would have been difficult to consult with Greeley in view of the destruction of the communication lines and the time consumed by contacting the division commander could hardly have been justified on humanitarian grounds.

From April 18 to the twenty-second, General Funston was in charge of the efforts to save the city. He found that national guardsmen, regular army troops, naval units and city police were scattered indiscriminately over the city, making it difficult to coordinate and direct the activities of the various forces. To provide some order in the rescue operations and the enforcement of martial law declared

¹³Funston's report to Maj. Gen. Adolphus W. Greeley, commanding Pacific Division, 59th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Document 2, volume 1, 91.

by Funston, the general met with the mayor, the commander of the California National Guard and the chief of police, and divided the city into three districts which would be administered by the federal, state, and local organizations separately.¹⁴

Besides protecting the citizens and the property of the city, the army undoubtedly played a very important role by inspiring confidence in the populace and preventing mob violence resulting from panic. Rumors flew through the area; some said that the whole country was destroyed or inundated by tidal waves. Several men were shot by national guardsmen and the newspapers expanded these incidents into accounts of large scale slaughter of looters and trespassers by the soldiers. In an atmosphere such as this, the army was an important stabilizing factor. Later, when examined in a more sober light, many of the wild stories of the earthquake proved to be unfounded in fact. The army denied that any regular had been involved in the shootings and stated that all the furor resulted from the few instances when the guardsmen had fired on civilians.¹⁵

Until the crisis in San Francisco, Funston had displayed dash and daring but little else. However, he exhibited cool courage and the ability to think and act in the midst of the confusion and hysteria which resulted from the earthquake. His powers of organization, developed by his years in administrative positions, were a valuable asset to the embattled citizens of the bay city. Certainly his handling of this situation gave Funston added stature.

¹⁴Ibid., 95.

¹⁵Special report of Greely, 59th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Document 2, volume 1, 98.

In his report for the fiscal year 1906, Funston again complained that army pay was far too low to allow the army man to maintain a living standard commensurate with his importance. He declared that in San Francisco a captain of twenty years service earned less than a bricklayer, plasterer or plumber. A hod carrier enjoyed greater income than a Second Lieutenant.¹⁶ Funston admitted that "exceptional conditions" prevailed in that city (presumably inflated wages resulting from the huge reconstruction projects in the ruined areas), but added that the officers had to bear the expense of sustaining a level of socially respectable standing which the laborer was not compelled to do. General officers were often stationed near metropolitan areas where their commutation was wholly inadequate to furnish them suitable accommodations.¹⁷ Usually they were the recipients of much hospitality which they were often unable to repay. An officer solely dependent upon his regular compensation could not meet these social obligations. The enlisted men received such miserable wages that most of them did not re-enlist and many deserted after only a few months service.¹⁸ Funston recommended a 50 percent pay raise for non-commissioned officers and a similar increment for privates after their initial term had been completed. His efforts were not rewarded until May, 1908, when Congress acted on the matter after persistent demands from many army officers had been ignored.¹⁹ Under the provisions of

¹⁶Funston's annual report to the Secretary of War, 59th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Document 2, volume 3, 190.

¹⁷Ibid., 191.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹William Addleman Ganoe, The History of the United States Army (New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942), 431.

the new law, enlisted men's wages during their first term ranged from \$15 a month for a private to \$45 for a First Sergeant. Commissioned officers' salaries began at \$1,700 annually for a Second Lieutenant and reached a peak of \$11,000 for a Lieutenant General. As a Brigadier General, Funston's yearly income was \$6,000.

In the late summer of 1906, an insurrection in Cuba prompted the United States to intervene in that island's internal affairs. On September 14, the president directed William H. Taft, the Secretary of War, and Assistant Secretary of State Bacon to take measures to bring about a peaceful settlement of the revolt. By order of the president, Funston was assigned to command the United States forces in Cuba, consisting of a unit designated as the First Expeditionary Brigade.²⁰ He received this appointment by virtue of his familiarity with some of the Cuban leaders and his acquaintance with the fighting methods of the islanders. Apparently, Funston was considered important to the mission primarily because open guerrilla warfare between the revolutionists and the American troops was feared, in which case the general's experience in such matters would make him a great asset.²¹ He was expected to command the troops in the advent of hostilities but otherwise the administration had no intention of giving him supreme command of the forces in Cuba.²²

After only a few days service in Cuba, Funston relinquished his command on October 12. Taft, who acted as governor of the island

²⁰Funston's annual report, War Department, Annual Reports, 1907, volume 3, 313.

²¹New York Times, October 18, 1906, p. 5.

²²Ibid., October 19, 1906, p. 7.

during the American intervention, accused the general of bungling the operation of returning property seized by the rebels to the rightful owners.²³ The revolutionists were issued certificates which authorized them to retain the horses they had taken until the original owners appeared to repossess the animals. However, the certificates, which were written in Spanish, were so worded that it seemed that those who were in current possession of the horses had been given permanent title to them.²⁴ To resolve the problem, it was decided to allow the rebels to keep the horses they had seized and to compensate the real owners from state funds. Some believed that this mistake was the cause of Funston's removal, but others considered the whole incident indicative of Taft's eagerness to appease the insurrectionists.²⁵ However, on October 10, two days before Funston vacated his position, the Cuban provisional government, in a formal statement, announced that the work of the Peace Commission was finished and that Secretaries Taft and Bacon, as well as Funston, were to return to the United States.²⁶ This would seem to imply that the general left Cuba because his services were no longer required and not because he had improperly discharged his duty.

The fact that Funston was not entrusted with the delicate task of unscrambling Cuban politics after disarmament had been effected might have been an indication that the general was not yet enjoying

²³Charles E. Chapman, A History of the Cuban Republic (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927), 228.

²⁴Ibid., 228.

²⁵Ibid., 229.

²⁶New York Times, October 18, 1906, p. 5.

the full confidence of the administration. On the other hand, it might have reflected the nature of the situation as dominated by political considerations and the part the State Department was playing in the matter. Taft stated that Funston had done his particular job well, but that thereafter there was no need to retain two generals on the island, and so Franklin Bell was selected for the demanding administrative work which followed pacification.²⁷

Shortly after Funston's return from Cuba, he found himself involved in an ugly labor dispute which proved to have far reaching constitutional implications.²⁸ Governor John Sparks of Nevada wired Roosevelt that he anticipated labor troubles which might result in violence and destruction of property in the mining area around Goldfield. He requested federal troops to prevent such an occurrence, intimating that local authorities were unable to cope with the situation. Roosevelt doubted the legality of such action and wanted the governor's call for troops made in accordance with the constitution and statutes of the United States. The legal situation, as later explained to the Governor by Secretary of State Elihu Root, was as follows:

The calls upon the president on the part of the government of Nevada for the interposition of troops do not at present satisfy the requirement of the Constitution and the laws so as to justify orders that the military force now at Goldfield shall take any affirmative action. If such action should be desired under the Constitution and section 5297 of the Revised Statutes to suppress an insurrection a call must be made by the legislature of the State unless circumstances are such that the legislature can not be

²⁷Ibid., 5.

²⁸Bennet Milton Rich, The Presidents and Civil Disorder (Washington, D. C., The Brookings Institute, 1941), 125-135.

convened, and no statement or intimation has been made that the legislature of Nevada can not be convened. Action under 5298 of the Revised Statutes relates only to the enforcement of the laws of the United States. Action under section 5299 of the Revised Statutes is to be taken not upon the call of the government of a State, but upon the judgment of the President of the United States that some portion or class of the people of a State are denied the equal protection of the laws to which they are entitled under the Constitution of the United States.²⁹

The presence of troops at Goldfield mentioned by Root referred to an action taken by Roosevelt which distinguished between making units available and actually using them. This occurred when Sparks dispatched a second message to the president which technically did not fulfill the statutory requirements, but Roosevelt was more interested in substance than form and he complied with the governor's request for troops.³⁰ He directed the acting Secretary of War to order General Funston to send a sufficient number of men to be "wholly adequate to meet any emergency."³¹ However, as the facts began to emerge, Roosevelt's attitude changed and he refused to allow the army to intervene without legal justification.

At Goldfield, the local branch of the Western Federation of Miners, led by Henry McKennon, a brother-in-law of "Big Bill" Haywood, had gone on strike. The immediate cause was the decision by the mine operators to pay the workers in scrip instead of cash because of the currency shortage resulting from the economic crisis.³² A great deal

²⁹60th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document 607, 6.

³⁰Rich, The Presidents and Civil Disorder, 127.

³¹Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, 863.

³²Ibid., 863n.

of resentment already existed among the miners because of the refusal of the operators to recognize the union. When the soldiers arrived, the operators intensified the hardships of the workers by reducing wages, blacklisting union members, and importing strikebreakers.

The mine operators admitted that they were responsible for the appeal to the president, and they assumed that the administration was acting in their behalf. Funston undoubtedly thought so too, for he wired the Adjutant General that he understood his duty to be the protection of the mines and those who were working them, if the governor so desired.³³ This message caused a furor in Washington, and Roosevelt, after a conference with the chief of staff, the Commissioner of Corporations and the Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor, sent Funston a sharp reminder that the troops were not to guard the mines nor to take any other action until orders to that effect were issued from the White House.

In the meantime, Roosevelt, apparently not relying too heavily on the reports he received from Funston and the officer in command at Goldfield, sent a special three man investigating committee to Nevada. The committee found that Funston, who had supported the governor's call for troops, had given a distorted account of the situation to the administration.³⁴ No breakdown of civil authority was apparent, and the miners were not preparing an insurrection. In all probability, Funston was not really acquainted with the situation well enough to make an adequate appraisal. The committee, consisting of Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor Lawrence O. Murray, Commissioner

³³Rich, The Presidents and Civil Disorder, 128.

³⁴Ibid., 131.

of Labor Charles P. Neill and Commissioner of Corporations Herbert Knox Smith, apparently dug deeper than Funston and obtained a more partial picture of the labor dispute. Whereas Funston had reported that the miners' union had driven 500 persons from the area within two years, the committee asserted that not over 25 such cases could be documented. As for the collapse of civil authority, the committee found that none of the county officials had been consulted before the troops were called.³⁵ The investigators also learned that the mine operators had conspired to reduce wages but feared to put the pay cut into effect without the support of troops.³⁶ The bitter legacy of violence stemming from past labor disputes in the West had made them cautious.

In reality, the only legal justification for federal intervention which the administration considered applicable in this instance was a request from the convened legislature of Nevada, but Sparks refused to call the legislature into session. He preferred to stall, for the mere presence of troops at Goldfield strengthened the position of the intransigent operators.³⁷ When he finally called the members into session, the legislature, without a dissenting vote, asked that the troops remain at Goldfield until a state force could be organized to police the area. However, the dilatory tactics of the legislature and Governor Sparks delayed the withdrawal of Funston's detachment until March 7, 1907.

The Goldfield incident displayed Funston's impatience for action. In the midst of a crisis, something had to be done; this aspect of his

³⁵Ibid., 131.

³⁶Ibid., 133.

³⁷Morison, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, 863n.

character was evident in the Philippines and, later, at Vera Cruz. While in command of the American forces on the Mexican border, General Tasker Bliss noted Funston's eagerness to act, to seize the initiative, regardless of the consequences.³⁸ At other times, however, Funston showed remarkable restraint and composure, as revealed by his overall record while in command at Vera Cruz and on the Rio Grande.

In August, 1908, Funston left the Department of California to assume the command of the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In a humorous vein he wrote to William Allen White: "I am a College President. Break it gently to the boys in the fraternity. Me a College President--my God!"³⁹ Among the amusing stories told about Funston was one which concerned the little general and Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was known for his dare-devil stunts and he was equally notorious for dragging his guests into dangerous feats to test their mettle. Wagenknecht commented on this practice; "One marvels at the spineless acquiescence with which most of T. R.'s guests allowed him to dragoon them into these tortures."⁴⁰ Funston was a noted exception. "Come on, General," shouted Roosevelt, "you are not afraid to swim the canal, are you?" "No I'm not afraid," retorted Funston, "and I am not a damned fool either."⁴¹

After a few years of a relatively placid existence, Funston returned

³⁸Memorandum, June 16, 1916, quoted in Frederick Palmer, Bliss, Peacemaker (New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1934), 114-115.

³⁹White, Autobiography, 532.

⁴⁰Edward Wagenknecht, The Seven Worlds of Theodore Roosevelt (New York, Longmans, Green and Company, 1958), 15.

⁴¹Ibid.

to the scene of his past glory, this time as commander of the Department of Luzon. The troops had been equipped with sun helmets to combat the tropical rays, but many of the men had complained that the headpieces were cumbersome in drill and were heavy when wet. In his report for 1911, Funston defended the much criticized helmets, pointing out that they afforded the wearer some protection from the burning sun and that they gave the men a neat appearance.⁴² The soldiers were attached to the old campaign hats, partly, perhaps, for sentimental reasons. The hats, however, were often abused because the average soldier took the first opportunity to use his for a pillow. After a few of these treatments, they acquired a disreputable appearance which caused the men to lose respect for themselves.⁴³ Funston argued that the British had supplied their tropical units with the sun helmets and had experienced no difficulty with them. Certainly American troops could wear them under the same conditions.

Funston's Philippine tour terminated in 1913, and in April he took charge of the Hawaiian Department with headquarters in Honolulu. In that year new territorial units were established for the army, and the United States and its possessions were divided into six geographical departments--Eastern, Central, Southern, Western, Hawaiian, and Philippine.⁴⁴ Funston wielded more power in his new capacity than he had formerly as departmental commander, for there had previously been more departments, and, for a time, the departments were subject to the

⁴²Funston's annual report, War Department, Annual Reports, 1911, volume 3, 211.

⁴³Ibid., 212.

⁴⁴Ganoe, The History of the United States Army, 446.

jurisdiction of the division command. The new organization was in the interests of greater efficiency and effectiveness in time of war.

The Mexican situation looked threatening at this time, and Funston was appointed commander of the Second Division at Texas City in January, 1914.⁴⁵ There were other major changes in the army high command. Major General W. W. Wotherspoon was elevated to chief of staff and Brigadier General Hugh L. Scott was selected to fill Wotherspoon's former position as assistant chief of staff. Scott had been promoted from colonel scarcely a year before by President Wilson and it was generally believed that his new position would bring him the rank of Major General.⁴⁶

Scott was a former superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point and his brother was a professor at Princeton and an intimate friend of Wilson. Despite his favorable circumstances, however, Scott faced a prolonged Senate struggle if Wilson promoted him, for Funston's friends could hardly be expected to sanction the appointment.⁴⁷ In 1912 they had blocked for three months the confirmation of Wotherspoon when he was made a Major General. Wotherspoon was only one of eleven officers who had been promoted over Funston. The latter had been the senior Brigadier General on the list since July 16, 1902. When Wotherspoon was selected to fill the vacancy left by the death of Major General Frederick Grant, the Denver Post quoted an unidentified Kansas Republican as stating that voters in the western states, especially in Kansas, Colorado, and California, would

⁴⁵Army and Navy Journal, February 24, 1917, p. 818.

⁴⁶New York Times, April 2, 1914, p. 6.

⁴⁷Ibid.

be reminded of Taft's treatment of their hero. In addition to his magnetic popular appeal, Funston had supporters among some of the western congressmen, including Senator William E. Borah of Idaho who was a former colleague at the University of Kansas. Other fellow students at Lawrence included Vernon Kellogg, who later became prominent through his work with the Belgian relief project directed by Herbert Hoover, William Allen White, nationally known editor and proprietor of the Emporia Gazette, a governor of Missouri, an attorney-general of Oklahoma, and several noted businessmen and college professors.⁴⁸

Funston did not seek support from influential friends, at least not overtly, and there were some instances in which he declined the assistance offered to him. As late as October, 1914, he wrote to Senator William H. Thompson of Kansas that he believed he would again be passed over and that he guessed his "youth" was an obstacle to his promotion. "I used to be young but have been getting over it at the rate of 365 days a year," he commented.⁴⁹ However, he did not want the Senator to make an issue of his sad plight, although he thanked Thompson for his unsolicited appeal to the President and the Secretary of War. Some months before his death, Funston learned that Brigadier General Edward H. Plummer had written to various congressmen in an attempt to obtain a Lieutenant General's commission for him. At the time he had been a Major General less than two years and he did not want to antagonize or embarrass the others of his rank by being elevated to

⁴⁸ White, Autobiography.

⁴⁹ Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., volume 54, part 4, 3973.

that exclusive level, so he squelched the movement.⁵⁰ Funston had endured the resentment among the regular army officers when he received his commission in 1901. He had risen rapidly from a colonel of volunteers, and he realized the necessity of not pushing too fast and too far. Hence, he did not object when junior officers of longer service were advanced over him on several occasions.⁵¹ Funston did not want his next promotion to be the object of vengeful criticism. Finally, in November, 1914, the long awaited appointment came and none came forward to dispute his promotion to Major General. Now no one said of him as General Henry C. Corbin did in 1901; "...I am making lieutenants of better stuff than Funston every day. Funston is a boss scout--that's all."⁵²

In the spring of 1914, the antagonism between President Wilson and the Huerta regime in Mexico culminated in open intervention by United States forces with the seizure of the port of Vera Cruz. Wilson's stubborn idealism would not allow him to follow the traditional American policy of recognizing de facto governments.⁵³ Huerta had risen to power over the dead body of Francisco Madero, and was apparently attempting to restore order in his strife-torn land by establishing a centralized government reminiscent of the days of Porfirio Diaz. Wilson believed that the solution to Mexico's problems was to be found in strict adherence to democratic procedures; once an election

⁵⁰Kansas City Star, February 26, 1917.

⁵¹Army and Navy Journal, February 24, 1917, p. 818.

⁵²Ibid., April 13, 1901, p. 791.

⁵³Howard Cline, The United States and Mexico (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953), 141.

was held in Mexico and a duly constituted government was erected, all would be well south of the border.⁵⁴ Such vicious, feral characters as Zapata and Villa would then presumably abandon their bloody tactics and accept a representative democracy in the grand old Anglo-American tradition. Wilson did not perceive the unreality in his policy of applying the western political heritage to a nation which was just emerging from a near-feudal state.

In this strained atmosphere, a relatively minor incident was seized upon by the administration as justification for a rather obvious attempt to unseat Huerta. Seven American sailors and an officer were arrested in Tampico while on official business. When the extreme and humiliating demands of the United States for a twenty-one gun salute of the American flag were rejected, Wilson intervened by directing the navy to occupy Vera Cruz. This action was substituted for the contemplated naval demonstration at Tampico because Wilson had learned that a German ship was approaching Vera Cruz with a cargo of arms and ammunition for Huerta.⁵⁶ Although the shipment of war material was not unloaded at Vera Cruz, it eventually reached the Huerta forces through another Mexican port.⁵⁷

The landing at Vera Cruz took place in the morning of April 21, 1914, and, after a few days of sporadic fighting, Admiral F.F. Fletcher, commanding the American forces, proclaimed Robert J. Kerr the Civil

⁵⁴Ibid., 140.

⁵⁵Guy Renfro Donnell, "The United States Intervention in Mexico, 1914," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1951), 184-185.

⁵⁶Cline, The United States and Mexico, 158.

⁵⁷Donnell, "The United States Intervention in Mexico, 1914," 232.

Governor of the city.⁵⁸ In the meantime, General Funston had been ordered to Vera Cruz with as much of the Fifth Brigade of the Second Division as could be accommodated by the available transports.⁵⁹ He and his command arrived on April 28, and two days later the army took over the administration of Vera Cruz. Neither the President nor the Secretary of War had approved of placing a civilian in charge of the city's government.⁶⁰

On April 30, Funston set up a system of Provost Courts which had jurisdiction over criminal law as defined by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Mexico, the municipality of Vera Cruz, the statutes of the United States, and the common law.⁶¹ Capital offenses and political crimes were not included in the jurisdiction of these courts, and neither were United States military personnel. The maximum sentence that could be imposed by the superior Provost Court was a fine of 3,000 pesos or three years imprisonment or both.⁶² The courts were composed of commissioned officers of the U. S. Army. The judicial procedure was the same as in the courts of the United States. Company commanders and higher officers on police duty were authorized to

⁵⁸Proclamation by Admiral F. F. Fletcher, April 28, 1914, in Record Group No. 141, Records of the Military Government of Vera Cruz, (Classified Files, United States Intervention in Vera Cruz (hereafter referred to as Record Group No. 141), Bureau of Insular Affairs of the War Department, National Archives. Photostatic copies obtained by Guy Renfro Donnell supplied to the author.

⁵⁹War Department, Annual Reports, 1914, volume 1, 135.

⁶⁰Donnell, "The United States Intervention in Mexico, 1914," 240.

⁶¹General Orders No. 2, issued by General Funston, April 30, 1914, in Record Group No. 141.

⁶²Ibid.

investigate infractions of the law in their districts. They could release an offender if they considered the evidence against him insufficient or they could prosecute him in the Provost Courts.⁶³ All persons charged with offenses had a right to be represented by counsel and were guaranteed a speedy trial. The judgments of the Provost Courts were final.

On May 2, Funston announced himself as the Military Governor of Vera Cruz, in compliance with instructions from Washington. The Military Government, stated Funston, would continue the administrative system to which the people of the city were accustomed, as far as was consistent with military control. The new organization was described as follows by Funston:⁶⁴

2. There shall be a Provost Marshal General. He will institute, or continue in force, the usual departments of city government. He will make request to the Military Governor for the detail of officers to be placed in charge of the principal departments and bureaus; and for such other officers as may be necessary.

3. In the exercise of police powers the Provost Marshal General will continue for the present, the Provost courts instituted by General Orders, No. 2, from these headquarters, dated April 30, 1914.

4. The Judge Advocate at these Headquarters is appointed Administrator of Justice. Upon his recommendation the Military Governor will establish courts for the trial of civil causes.

5. The funds received from whatever sources will be deposited in the Treasury and credited to the proper fund. The current and necessary expenses of the military and civil government shall be paid on requisition from the proper departments or bureaus approved by the Military Governor.

⁶³Ibid., Record Group No. 141.

⁶⁴General Orders No. 3, issued by General Funston, May 2, 1914, in Record Group No. 141.

6. The following administrative offices are exempt from the control of the Provost Marshal General and are under the immediate control of the Military Governor:

- a. The Treasury.
- b. Customs, including Light House Service.
- c. The Civil Courts.
- d. The U. S. Mail Agency and the General Post Office.

The office of the Provost Marshal General was composed of six departments; Legal, Public Works, Public Safety, Education, Finance, and Purchase and Inspection of Supplies. These were staffed by army officers, but naval officers were appointed by Funston to administer the customs and supervise the port of Vera Cruz. The Mexicans had destroyed the records which might have guided the new appointees in their duties, and competent Mexican employees were difficult to obtain for the penal code of their nation prescribed severe penalties for those who collaborated with a foreign power in occupation of Mexican territory.⁶⁵ Even school teachers were reluctant to return to their positions. Especially was the administration of justice hampered by this factor. The Americans could dispose of criminal cases after a fashion, but civil suits were complicated by the fact that it was considered improbable that the Mexican government which would follow the army evacuation would recognize the judgments of American courts as valid. Mexican judges could not be readily induced to serve. However, there was some agitation for the establishment of Courts of the First Instance which legalized real estate transfers, wills, and various other public documents because they were a source of revenue which was lost to the city of Vera Cruz when the Mexicans transacted such business elsewhere. Apparently, it was believed that

⁶⁵Donnell, "The United States Intervention in Mexico, 1914," 244.

Mexican officials could, in this case, be persuaded to serve.⁶⁶

General Funston instituted a crusade against vice, which had increased after the occupation by the military forces. The operation of gambling houses was prohibited, and prostitution was restricted to women of Mexican nationality. Cocaine and marihuana could be sold only with a doctor's prescription. The citizens were warned that spitting in public places made them liable to prosecution in the Provost Courts. All garbage was to be placed in covered receptacles. That the army campaign to clean up the city was effective can be documented by the steadily decreasing rate of sick calls among military personnel which Wotherspoon reported on June 30.⁶⁷

Another thorny problem which faced the Military Governor was the collection of federal, state, and local taxes, and the customs duties. The administration of the three levels of taxes was entrusted to the Finance Department. Once again, the unfamiliarity of the American officers with Mexican procedure prompted an appeal to the former employees of the tax offices to return to their jobs. Some of them were lured back to their vacated positions by American guarantees that they were not obligated to discharge their duties in case actual warfare ensued between the United States and Mexico. Until then, the Americans argued, they would not be guilty of crimes against their country. However, there was not enough cooperation from the Mexicans to enable the Military Government to do an adequate job of collecting taxes. The citizens of the city feared that after the occupation they

⁶⁶H. H. Basham to Captain H. B. Fiske, July 21, 1914, in Record Group No. 141.

⁶⁷War Department, Annual Reports, 1914, volume 1, 135.

would be required to pay the same taxes to the Mexican government.

Most of the important records pertaining to the operation of the customshouse and the status of the merchandise stored in the warehouses were destroyed, and, as usual, the Mexican employees could not be enticed back to their former capacities. The warehouses had been looted and further damage was done by American troops in their search for arms and ammunition. To complicate what was already a formidable task, many merchants objected to paying duties to the American operated customshouse. The importers were also required to pay additional imposts on goods to the Mexican government, since the acts of the military government in Vera Cruz were not deemed legal.⁶⁸ Upon his accession to power, Carranza ordered this duplicate taxation to cease, but it continued to be the practice, although on a limited scale. One result of the customs confusion at Vera Cruz was the redirection of commerce to other ports. When asked about the disposition of the customs receipts, Funston admitted he was uncertain. It was estimated that in normal times a million dollars in duties was received every month.⁶⁹

At Vera Cruz, Funston had to combine great powers of organization with patience and moderation. When he first arrived, the old Funston was revealed when he advocated seizing a bridge on the Interoceanic Railway leading to Mexico City.⁷⁰ He believed the bridge, which was 27 miles from Vera Cruz, would be vital in case the American forces

⁶⁸Donnell, "The United States Intervention in Mexico, 1914," 261.

⁶⁹Anon., "The Taking of Vera Cruz and What Followed," American Review of Reviews, IL. (June, 1914), 670.

⁷⁰Ibid., 669.

advanced on the capital. Washington refused to allow such a venture and on May 17 the Mexicans blew up the bridge. However, if Funston thought in terms of a projected invasion of Mexico, he could hardly be blamed. The general staff had drawn up a plan of war which included the evacuation of Vera Cruz as soon as that port was secured, and an advance into the healthier interior plateau, some 50 miles inland. To carry out this scheme, the bridges on the railroad would have had to be seized intact.⁷¹ In another display of belligerence Funston, when informed politely by the Mexican commander outside Vera Cruz that he feared he would be unable to restrain his troops any longer, replied: "If you can't hold your troops back, I can."⁷²

In the last analysis, however, Funston performed admirably while in command of the city. When he was sent to Vera Cruz, many expected him to "start something".⁷³ Despite the pressure under which he was operating, Funston obeyed orders. The city was crowded with foreign refugees who shouted for war and cursed the army for not capturing Mexico City and rescuing their office furniture or their new cash register.⁷⁴ Sentries were insulted, soldiers were kidnapped, camps were raided, and one American in Funston's command was killed and his remains burned. The Mexicans had also threatened to cut off the water supply of the city. Despite the provocations he was forced to endure, the general kept his head and even won the respect and admiration of

⁷¹Ibid., 669.

⁷²Anon., "He Snared Aguinaldo," Literary Digest, LIV (March 10, 1917), 644.

⁷³Ibid., 644.

⁷⁴Richard Harding Davis, "When a War is not a War," Scribners Magazine, LVI (July, 1914), 48.

some of the Mexicans. Colonel Edmundo Martinez, who succeeded Funston in command of Vera Cruz when the Americans ended the occupation, praised his conduct. "Gen. Funston has done more than any other American to increase and develop the friendship of Mexicans for Americans. He is particularly admired because of his ability in conducting the difficult negotiations while in command of Vera Cruz."⁷⁵

Illustrative of the diplomatic and political morass of the American occupation were the comments of a journalist who was present during the period preceding Funston's arrival when the navy controlled the city. In a note of nostalgia, he described the sounding of retreat at sunset at which time the flag was supposed to be lowered. Americans rose from their sidewalk tables and stood rigidly facing the flag pole;

In their mind's eye, creeping slowly down the pole they saw an American flag. But nobody else saw it. At other tables were officers and men of British, French, and Spanish war-ships. They noted the attitude of the American officers, they also tried to see an American flag creeping down the pole, but they had not been trained in the diplomatic ethics of Washington. So they apologetically shrugged their shoulders and remained seated. So also did every Mexican.⁷⁶

The situation was probably confusing to quite a few others besides the whimsical journalist. The United States flag was raised finally on April 27, 1914.

In July, Victoriano Huerta resigned and Wilson achieved a victory of sorts. His successor, Venustiano Carranza, pushed for the evacuation of Vera Cruz. On September 15, Wilson directed his Secretary of War to prepare for the immediate withdrawal of United States forces from the city. However, before the evacuation was

⁷⁵New York Times, December 22, 1914, p. 8.

⁷⁶Davis, "When A War is not a War," 45-46.

effected, Wilson exacted a promise that the Mexicans who had worked in official capacities under the military government would not be subject to reprisals from the Mexican government or local citizens. Wilson was also assured that those who had paid taxes and customs duties to the military government would be exempt from further payments for the same period and commodities.⁷⁷ A few refugees and Mexican nationals were given transportation out of the city, as were the priests and nuns who requested aid in leaving Vera Cruz.⁷⁸

On November 20, Funston received orders regarding the evacuation. He was to take with him all funds held by the military government, including taxes and customs duties; also all records necessary to establish the integrity and accuracy of his administration. Especially, he was directed to make no arrangements with Mexican authorities outside the city, and no declarations which could be construed as giving United States recognition to Carranza or any other leader who claimed jurisdiction over the city.⁷⁹ On November 23, 1914, the United States forces withdrew from Vera Cruz.

Funston had no sympathy for the "watchful waiting" policy of Wilson. He expressed his opinion on the subject to William Allen White in the last meeting of the two old friends. The general came to White's house in a torrential rain and was admitted, dripping wet;

⁷⁷New York Times, December 22, 1914, p. 8.

⁷⁸Ibid., 1.

⁷⁹Acting Secretary of War Brechinridge to General Funston, November 20, 1914, in Record Group No. 126, Records of Bureau of Insular Affairs of the War Department, Classified Files, United States Intervention in Mexico, 1914, National Archives. Photostatic copies obtained by Guy Renfro Donnell supplied to the author.

he sat down before the fire and burst out in bitter profanity. After he had cursed himself into repose, tears filled his eyes. He then told White his story:

Billy, you won't believe it. I never thought I would have to do it. God knows it cut my heart out but I had to retire American troops in order under the sniping fire of those /here he burst into a set piece of pyrotechnic profanity/...greasers from windows as we embarked. God, Billy, fancy that! Fancy the American flag, with me in charge of it, going meekly out of a dirty, stinking, greaser hole--withdrawing my command under fire!⁸⁰

Funston was scornful of Wilson's bluff; he had more respect for Huerta when he called the bluff.⁸¹ His account of the Mexican snipers was in sharp contrast to the general belief that the evacuation was without incident. Funston's antipathy toward the administration's policy made his creditable performance all the more laudable. In true army fashion, he had not allowed personal convictions to interfere with his duty.

On a more somber note, White described Funston's departure on that bleak day. As he went out in the rain, the general turned back, saw White lingering at the door, waved his hand and gave the same old gay smile.⁸² "God bless you, old timer," shouted Billy. "Same to you, Billy, you old hell-raiser," the general replied.⁸³ So saying, Frederick Funston turned and disappeared forever into the twilight mist.⁸⁴

⁸⁰White, Autobiography, 502.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In February, 1915, Funston assumed command of the Southern Department with headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A year later he was given charge of the entire military force along the Mexican border, from Texas to California.¹ In this capacity, Funston proved that he had the ability to handle an army. Previously, his commands had been small and the crises of short duration. At Fort Sam Houston, however, he took care of 150,000 men along 2,000 miles of border during many months of tension between the United States and Mexico.² The troops had to be fed, clothed and trained. Funston was burdened with a huge volume of paper work, much of which had to be carefully examined for many of the officers commanding the various units were from the militia and were ignorant of army red tape. As the troops poured into the department, Funston had to organize them into regiments, brigades and divisions. Commanding a trained army of this size would be a task, but these soldiers came in widely varied units from forty or more states, and most of them had not the barest rudiments of military training.³

Difficulties with Mexico almost brought war in 1916 when Pancho Villa crossed the border into Columbus, New Mexico and shot down

¹New York Times, February 20, 1917, p. 5.

²Ibid., February 25, 1917, V., p. 2.

³Ibid.

everyone in sight in broad daylight.⁴ After a brush with an American cavalry patrol, the Villistas disappeared into the Chihuahua hills, but the public was outraged and a demand for retaliation against these bandits arose across the land. On March 16, 1916, General John J. Pershing, by order of President Wilson, crossed the border with 6000 men in pursuit of Villa.⁵ Funston had recommended the "punitive expedition" and had asked to command it.⁶ Although he said nothing for publication, he chafed at the bungling attempts to capture Villa. However, when the War Department informed him that he could set the date for the evacuation of Pershing's force from Mexico, he could not contain himself. At a public dinner at Corpus Christi, Texas, he exploded; "They can't 'pass the buck' to me that way. If the Pershing expedition is to be withdrawn, the orders for its withdrawal will come from Washington."⁷ In this statement, one can detect Funston's old forthrightness which had only been obscured for a time by his mantle of circumspection.

Frederick Funston died on February 19, 1917, while dining in the St. Anthony hotel in San Antonio. Had he lived, he would have been the most likely choice to command the American Expeditionary Force. Palmer, the biographer of Pershing, commented: "A heartbeat, Major General Frederick Funston's, had been between Pershing and the future command in France."⁸ However, Funston's health was such that

⁴Cline, The United States and Mexico, 176.

⁵Ibid., 177.

⁶New York Times, February 25, 1917, V, p. 2.

⁷Ibid., 2.

⁸Frederick Palmer, John J. Pershing (Harrisburg, Pa., The Military Service Publishing Company, 1948), 73.

he could hardly have survived the strain on the western front.⁹

Funston's merit as a military leader lay in his administrative ability and his unquestionable courage. He had no opportunity to demonstrate his capacity as a strategist, but then neither did Pershing until 1917. While at times he seemed headstrong and irresponsible in his public utterances, he was composed and deliberate in action, as evidenced by his showing at Vera Cruz. Yet, tact is an essential quality in a situation such as Pershing faced in France. Perhaps the most adequate appraisal of Funston was printed in The Nation shortly after the general's death: "Funston was not a great man, but a man of resources, who knew what to do in an emergency and did it without the loss of an hour."¹⁰

⁹Ibid., 74.

¹⁰Tattler, (Psuedo.), "General Funston," The Nation, CIV (March 1, 1917), 248.

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