

**THE YOUNG ENGINEERS
IN MEXICO: OR, FIGHTING
THE MINE SWINDLERS**

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The young engineers in Mexico: or, Fighting the mine swindlers by H. Irving Hancock

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H. IRVING HANCOCK

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Around a Campfire Sat Four Bandits.

Frontispiece.

The Young Engineers in Mexico

OR

Fighting the Mine Swindlers

By

H. IRVING HANCOCK

Author of *The Young Engineers in Colorado*, *The Young Engineers in Arizona*, *The Young Engineers in Nevada*, *The Young Engineers on the Gulf*, *The Grammar School Boys Series*, *The High School Boys Series*, *The West Point Series*, *The Annapolis Series*, *The Motor Boat Club Series*, etc.

Illustrated

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The Young Engineers in Mexico

CHAPTER I

THE LAND OF GOLDEN EGGS

LUIS MONTEZ, mine owner, stood on the broad veranda in front of his handsome home, looking out over the country sweeping away to the eastward.

"Gentlemen, you are in a land of golden promise," began Señor Montez, with a smile and a bow. "I should call it more than promise. Why not? My beloved country, Mexico, has been shipping gold to the world ever since the days of Montezuma."

"Yes; in a mineral sense Mexico has truly a golden history," nodded Tom Reade, one of the engineers to whom Montez was speaking.

"And a golden history in every sense," added Señor Montez, with a quick rush of patriotism. "Mexico is the finest country on earth. And, though we are neither as numerous in population, or as progressive as your own great

country, still Mexico has greater possibilities than the United States."

Tom was too polite to argue that point. And Harry Hazelton, whom a seventy-mile ride in an automobile over dusty roads, that day, had rendered very drowsy, didn't consider an argument worth while.

"Mexico has almost incredible natural wealth," Montez went on, his voice soft and purring, his eyes glowing with something that might have passed for pride. "Yet, through all the centuries that white men have been here, I am confident that not one per cent. of the country's natural resources has yet been taken from the ground. Enough wealth lies at man's beck and call to change the balance of power between the nations of the world. I have been in your great city, New York. It is a place of tremendous wealth. Yet, within ten years, gold enough can be taken from the ground within a radius of twenty miles of here to buy the whole great city of New York at any sane valuation."

"That purchase would require billions of dollars," broke in the practical Hazelton.

"But the wealth is here," insisted Señor Montez, still smiling. "Truly, *caballeros*, as I have told you, this is the land of golden——"

Again the Mexican paused, eloquently.

"The land of golden eggs?" suggested Harry.

For an instant there was a flash in the Mexican's eyes. Then the friendly smile reappeared.

"Of course, you jest, señor," he replied, pleasantly.

"Not at all, Señor Montez," Hazelton assured him. "When gold is so plentiful that it can be picked up everywhere, there must be a goose at hand that lays golden eggs. Eggs are among the most common things that we have. When gold nuggets are as large and as abundant as eggs then we may properly call them golden eggs."

Señor Montez, flipped away the cigar that he had finished, and reached for another. This he carefully cut at the end, lighting it with graceful, elegant deliberation. The Mexican was a distinguished-looking man above medium height. A little past forty years of age, he possessed all the agility of a boy of twenty. Frequently his sudden, agile movements indicated the possession of unusual strength. Dark, like most of his countrymen, constant exposure to the tropical sun had made his face almost the color of mahogany. His carriage was erect, every movement instinctive with grace. Clad in a white linen suit, with white shoes, he wore on his head a Panama hat of fine texture and weave.

The house of which the broad veranda was a part, was a low, two-story affair in stone,