

Mexico City,D.F.,
September 27,1927.
Apartado 538.

My dear Mr. Rogers:

The current joke going the rounds in Mexico City is that the choice of the new American Ambassador may not be so bad for Mexico after all, for whenever his honor requests any information from the government the Mexican officials can always say: " we will be pleased to send it tomorrow." I do not offer this as an example of Mexican humor. Only an American could have invented such a bad pun. However, it will serve to introduce the fact that, like everyone else in Mexico, and, judging from the number of articles published, a large part of the journalistic population of the United States, I have been speculating about the significance of the good Calvin's latest adventure in international politics.

As the joke implies, the question is: will the Mexican government still be able to follow its "mañana" tactics with Mr.Kellog and his able assistants, or will the House of Morgan carry a new message to Garcia?

At the present time anyone at this remove is at a disadvantage in attempting to interpret the meaning of Morrow. Basing one's speculations, however, solely on what has appeared in the newspapers about Mr.Morrow's past and present connections, certain hypotheses suggest themselves anent the possible program which the new ambassador will pursue in Mexico. Knowing that Mr.Morrow is (has been) intimately related with the banking interests which hold a large share of the bonds of

Mexico's national debt, and knowing that the gentleman is a director of the General Electric which has extensive investments in Mexico, one would assume that he would have very little interest in upsetting the local political apple cart. Quite the other way around, in fact. The interests of Wall Street in general, and the House of Morgan and the General Electric in particular, will certainly be best served by maintaining the status quo of "business as usual". Translated into Mexican politics this means that the strong man, Obregon, will not be discouraged in his efforts to regain power.

Also, it is not without its bearing on the case that the Morgan controlled oil companies are among those which have complied with the oil laws. These companies are, to be sure, not very big fish in the Mexican pool. According to my friend Carleton Beals, however, even in indirect financial relations the Morgan interests have never been disposed to play tag in a nice friendly way with the oil gang. Beals cited me the case of the action of the International Banker's Association a few years ago when the oil crowd had jockeyed the Mexican government into allowing them to pay half of their taxes in Mexican bonds. The bankers simply put their collective foot down and refused to let the deal go across. I have not had an opportunity to check these facts, but if they are true, here again would seem to be evidence that, insofar as Mr. Morrow carries over his old attitudes, he will be much more interested in maintaining the financial solvency of the Mexican government than he will be in joining in the hymn of hate with the oil chorus.

Finally, on purely a priori grounds it seems to

me that, whatever may be the diplomatic capacities or inadequacies of Mr. Morrow, at least he has the advantage of being used to thinking and talking in terms of six figures. He will be able to smoke fifty-cent cigars with the oiliest of the oil lads. To take the new ambassador up on a high mountain in the wilderness and show him the riches of the world, will perhaps not have the same psychological effect that it has had on other Mexican diplomatists. The lords of oil will have to work in other and more devious ways their miracles to perform.

.....
My educational studies have been given a new impetus this week through the kindly offices of Moises Sáenz, the Sub-Secretary of Education. Sáenz is the most important figure in the modern educational movement in Mexico. I planned my interview with him with the greatest care possible. Not only did I write out an outline of my proposed report on education, but I also prepared a typewritten memorandum on the progress which I had already made in my study and a list of the matters on which I needed his assistance (see the enclosed copies). The results of the interview were even better than I had hoped for. Mr. Sáenz introduced me to his secretary and instructed him to do whatever was necessary to help along the good work. And now I am all set to make a tour of the state of Oaxaca. I have general letters of introduction, special letters of introduction, official documents of identification, - "and if there is anything else that you need, Mr Simpson, we are at your service".

I am sending along in this letter an experiment in interview reporting. As you see, I have tried to put the frame around the picture and to fill in some of the background. This is not the sort of thing that could be published, of course, but if

I understand correctly the criticism which you made of some of my other reports, I believe that this is a closer approximation to what you have in mind.

The extra funds which I requested have been credited to my account here and are being expended in ^{the} manner in which I suggested.

By the way, is John still intending to come to Mexico? I would like to know for I am now making my plans to leave Mexico City for the west coast in the early part of October. I will be gone for about two weeks. This weekend I am going to pay a three day visit to a Cultural Mission in the state of Hidalgo.

Sincerely yours,

ENS.

Mexico City,D.F.,
 Apartado 538,
 October 5,1927.

My dear Mr.Rogers:

The presidential election in Mexico has taken place in quite the regular way. According to the custom of the country, as Mr.Cabell would say, all those things which were requisite have been done. The Generals are dead! Long live the Generals!

The newspapers and all those given to speaking in a loose and popular way use the word "revolution" in referring to the quaint, old-fashioned procedure which the Mexicans follow when they want to change the personnel of their government. I assure you, however, that this is a misuse of the term. In recent years Mexico has had only one revolution, if one gives this word the ordinary dictionary meaning of "a general uprising of the people resulting in an overthrow of the government and a fundamental change in its constitution". The Madero revolution may have been something of this sort. But the other disturbances which occur from time to time in Mexico are more in the nature of a sort of game which the Generals play with each other. A tragic, bloody game in which the army is the pawn and the losers play with their lives. Such is the present case. For weeks and months past the chief players have been shifting the chessmen about the board which is Mexico. And now, once again, the game has been played to its bitter, fatal end. Generals Calles and Obregon have cried "Checkmate!" General Serrano and thirteen of his followers have lost the game and paid the price of losing. Still striving to avoid the last move, General Gómez awaits his doom. The boards have been swept clean and washed with blood.

The new game begins!

As I have indicated in previous letters, for the past several months predictions have been freely made here in the capital that a "revolution" would take place before the first of the year. The only really surprising aspect, therefore, of the events of the last few days is that they have come to pass somewhat earlier than the political prophets had foretold. No one who has followed the public declarations of the candidates in the newspapers (not to mention what gossip has spread as their private statements) could fail to note their increasing bitterness, and the increasing number of the threats of ^{the} use of force. Serrano is reported to have said to his captors just before he was shot: "Well, boys, you are doing the right thing; if we had won we would have done even worse." Whether he actually made this statement or not is of little moment. The point is that both sides proceeded on the principle implicit in his words. Early in the campaign it was clear that no quarter was to be asked or given. The dictatorship of the ballot and the rules of the democratic conduct of elections were apparently never seriously considered. It was a case of dog eat dog and those in power were clever enough to take the first bite.

On paper and in theory the plans which Serrano and Gómez had worked out, that is to say the line-up of generals on which they thought they could depend in case of need, promised an even chance for a successful coup d'etat. Gómez was avowedly the candidate of the reactionary forces of the church, the old aristocracy of Díaz, and also had the tacit approval of many of the large foreign interests. In addition to this he could

count on the support of a good part of the army in the state of Vera Cruz. A number of the northern frontier states were ranked as pro-Serrano-Gómez. The state of Chiapas was in open revolt against the Calles government and Oaxaca was reported as only awaiting a *casus belli* to enter the ranks of the anti-reelectionistas. Most ^{necessary} ~~important~~ of all, the anti-Calles-Obregon forces counted on the moral and military support of General Martínez, commander of the army in the Valley of Mexico. The strategic position of Martínez, controlling as he did the capital, was, of course, supremely important.

But however nice all this looked on paper, fortunately or unfortunately - pay your money and take your choice - when it came to the showdown everything went wrong. The trump card, Martínez, was undoubtedly bought off by the government. In any case, bought or not, he was put on the train for Laredo. When the storm broke the old man was already as far as Monterey, speeding along under a close guard for the border. Serrano himself, while on a week end visit to Cuernavaca, was betrayed and arrested by one of his closest friends, General Domínguez. After a summary court martial Serrano and thirteen of his officers and associates were shot on the road between Cuernavaca and the Capital. This was the signal for the execution of various and sundry other suspected generals and civilians. Many "anti-reelectionistas" are still in jail in momentary danger of their lives. All of the deputies and senators who supported the campaign of Serrano and Gómez have been expelled from the national legislative body and if they escape with only this relatively minor punishment they can count themselves lucky.

As for General Gómez, although he is still at large in the state of Vera Cruz, it is almost certain that he will be defeated in the next few days by the federal troops and killed, or that his few remaining soldiers will desert one by one and that he will be left to the mercy of his enemies, unless by some miracle he escapes out of the country. The "week-end revolution", as one of the American newspapers called it, was just that. Nothing remains but the shooting.

Here in Mexico City it is very difficult to get any sense of the reality of these events. The operatic air which always seems to characterize much of Mexican official life, is only accentuated by tragedy. Even with the bodies of Serrano and his fellow victims lying in state a few blocks from my house, and with the newspapers publishing daily, in all their gruesome details, pictures and stories of the executions, the feeling of unreality persists. This sort of thing is the subject matter of dime novels. One is not expected to believe that it actually happens.

To the casual observer walking the streets of Mexico, life seems to go on much as usual. The shops are open, the street cars are running, old men sit in the park and get their shoes shined, and beggars and lottery ticket vendors are quite as numerous as ever. Underneath these surface appearances, no doubt currents of hate and revenge are cutting new and deeper channels. For the most part, however, the attitude of the people appears to be that of either total indifference, or its next door neighbor- fatalistic acceptance. And even for the student of the situation seeking to analyze and understand what has happened,


there is the temptation to fall into the easy acquiescence of this same fatalistic attitude. "Nothing can be done about it", they seem to say, "it is the nature of our life; it is the rule of the game." For the foreigner this quality in Mexican life will, perhaps, always remain more or less paradoxical. Things happen in Mexico with that same illogical compulsion that distinguishes a bad dream. Nothing is stable, nothing is sure. The kiss of Judas is on every brow. In a country whose constitution solemnly declares that there shall be no capital punishment, especially for political crimes, a hundred men are lined up against the wall and shot.....The picture shows are advertising today:"Lillian Gish in a Tremendous Drama of Love, Passion, Hate, and Intrigue". And next week you can see:"Dolores del Rio-the Famous Mexican Movie-Star- in 'What Price Glory'".

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My own personal experience was more amusing than otherwise. Sunday night I made a trip to the little village of Actopam in the state of Hidalgo for the purpose of observing the work of one of the "Cultural Missions". It was only when I was on the train coming home Tuesday that I discovered what had happened. I reached Pachuca in the middle of the afternoon to find that there were no trains running to Mexico City. I was told that one of the rebel generals had persuaded a goodly part of the garrison at Pachuca to desert with him ~~in order~~ to join the forces of the "revolution". This rebel group was supposed to be wandering around in the hills somewhere between Pachuca and Mexico City. Now I had no desire to become more intimately acquainted with ~~any~~ rebel generals, but on the other hand, neither had I any desire to stay a week or so in Pachuca. So with some vague and not very

comforting reflections on the great advantage of having one's life insured, I decided to take the automobile bus which, luckily, was still running. The trip, despite my dire forebodings, was without incident except for one thing. Just as we reached the outskirts of Mexico City the car was stopped by a heavily armed guard of soldiers. Somebody announced that we would all have to be inspected for concealed weapons. But for some strange reason the only person searched was the little boy who took up the tickets on the bus. When the soldiers found that he had no machine guns concealed in his overalls, they apparently felt that the occasion still demanded some sort of gesture. What did they do but confiscate the poor lad's pocket knife. Can you beat it?

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'E. W. S.', written in a cursive style.

Mexico City, D.F.,
 Apartado 538,
 October 10, 1927.

My dear Mr. Rogers:

The most serious problem which the Mexican government had to face when it undertook to launch its program of mass education was to discover and train teachers. The whole rural school movement would stand or fall depending upon the success with which the educational authorities were able to solve this problem. In a country torn apart for years with revolutionary strife and political disorder it was much easier to provide logs than it was to find a sufficient number of Mexican Mark Hopkins' to sit on them. What is true of all schools is peculiarly true of the small, isolated, one man, rural school: the teacher must not only be an individual devoted to his profession, but, also, obviously he must know something to teach. Furthermore, even after rural school teachers have been obtained in sufficient numbers to man the schools, there still remains the formidable administrative task of keeping them on the job. The nature of their work is such, denied as they are the stimulation of association with their fellows, and subject at best to only a cursory supervision, that some system must be devised for improving their technique and renewing their spirit.

The first attempts on the part of the government to deal with these questions of teaching personnel took the form of "Institutes" held during the vacation periods in the larger towns, generally the capitals of the states. This type of work, however, failed on two counts. It did not produce teachers

fast enough to meet the demand; and it did not reach the very teachers most in need of help- those in the rural schools. The idea of the "Cultural Missions" was conceived in an effort to make these Institutes more effective in the rural field. The notion was in the air, and some tentative experiments had already been made, but not until the early part of 1926 did the Sub-Secretary of Education, Moises Sáenz, building upon the ideas of José Vasconcellos and Roberto Medellín, and with the able assistance of Elena Torres, succeed in devising a practical working scheme for the Missions.

A separate department was created in the Secretariat of Education known as "La Dirección de Misiones Culturales. After five months spent in organizing and training the personnel of six groups, in May 1926 the department was ready to send forth its "Missionaries" into the Mexican wilderness.

In brief outline, the constitution of each Mission was as follows: (a) A "Jefe" or Chief of the Mission whose duties were to co-ordinate and direct the work of the whole group and to teach the classes in the theory of education-with especial reference to the organization and conduct of rural schools; (b) a "Professor" of Agriculture to teach the theory and practice of vegetable and flower gardening, fruit raising, and "general farming"; (c) an instructor in Physical Education, in charge of games, sports, and physical education; (d) a Social Worker, entrusted with the difficult task of teaching the elements of simple medicine; hygiene, sewing, cooking, and anything else that might be of value in making life more healthy and comfortable in the rural districts; (e) a varying number of instructors in "pequeñas industrias", i.e. small industries, such as tanning, the preserving of fruits and

vegetables, the making of soap, and the construction of simple furniture for the home and school.

When a Mission goes into the field, generally a small village is selected as headquarters. The places chosen-- often they are miles from the railroad-- are elected almost entirely on the basis of their need. The program followed for the three weeks duration of each Mission is standardized, but at the same time flexible enough to be easily adapted to the needs and problems of the place. Care is, of course, taken to hold the Missions at such times and such places as to insure the greatest attendance possible of federal and state rural school teachers. After a building has been obtained (a school, a church, or even an old abandoned house) the equipment for the kitchen, library, manual training classes, agriculture, and sports, furnished by the Secretariat of Education, together with what can be borrowed in the village is installed and the work is ready to begin. Appropriate classes are organized by the various "professors " of the Mission for the student-teachers and for the townspeople. Model gardens are planted, minature model houses and schools are made in the carpenter shop, and demonstrations are given of how to preserve fruits, wash babies, build toilets, make furniture, cook bread, and play volley ball. In short, everything possible in the course of three weeks, both in theory and practice, is done to realize the two major aims of the Mission: (a) the training and improvement of the rural school teachers; and (b) the raising of the cultural level of the pueblo in which the Mission is held.

The work of the "Cultural Missions" is still

more or less in the experimental stage. However, the results which have already been obtained appear to give evidence of the fact that the educational authorities have hit upon a novel, effective, and relatively cheap scheme for the rapid development of the rural schools and the "incorporation of the neglected rural masses into the cultural life of the nation". The success of the Missions is in part due to the excellent manner in which the whole idea has been adapted to the immediate educational needs of the nation. Even a casual reading, however, of a few of the official reports of the work of the various Missions makes it very clear that the greater part of the credit for whatever has been achieved belongs to the "Missionaries" themselves. To work ten and twelve hours a day, week in and week out, often under the most uncomfortable conditions, for only 10 pesos a day (something less than \$5.00) requires a type of devotion and a spirit of self-sacrifice as unusual as it is commendable. (Each member of the Mission is paid the same salary and out of this he must defray all of his expenses with the exception of railroad fare.)

During the first year of its existence the "Dirección de Misiones Culturales" held 44 Missions in 13 different states, reaching approximately 3000 teachers. The total cost of this work was 114,742 pesos (c.\$57,250.00), or, on an average 19,123 pesos (c.\$9,400.00) per year, per Mission.

A year's experience is perhaps too little on which to base a final judgement of the value of the work of the Cultural Missions- especially on that aspect of the work which looks to directly raising the standard of living in the small centers where the Missions have been held. A careful follow-up study, for example, in the state of Oaxaca where six Missions were held last year, is needed to test the extent to which the

seeds have actually taken root. However, certain facts are obvious; and one of these is that twenty-one days is a pitifully short time in which to hope to change and improve folkways and mores which have been centuries in the making. Simple as the program of social amelioration is which the Missions are seeking to propagate, it, nevertheless, represents a veritable revolution in the life of the rural population of Mexico. A people that has for centuries slept on a straw mat on the floor, shared their little "jacal" with the pigs and chickens, and subsisted mainly on a diet of tortillas and frijoles, is not likely in the course of three weeks to see any due and sufficient reason for beds, baths, pig pens, and pickled fruits. That part of the program which has for its aim improving the technique and raising the ideals of the rural school teachers will, no doubt, continue to meet with appreciable success. But even here no miracles are to be expected. For the most part the rural school teachers are shackled by the same traditions and superstitions as the people with whom they work. And, furthermore, their good will more often than not exceeds their intelligence and knowledge of the social forces with which they are seeking to deal.

All of which is not so much a criticism of the work of the Cultural Missions as it is a statement of the fact, which the educational authorities themselves have been the first to recognize, that there is a long hard row yet to be hoed in Mexico before the fruits of education will begin to bloom. Centuries of neglect and virtual slavery, and decades of revolution and social disorder have left their marks upon the people. These marks cannot, and will not, be effaced over night. If any proof of this generalization were needed, the very obstacles which have impeded the work of the Missions in the various states- class stratification

and prejudice, religious fanaticism, inefficient and ignorant political appointees as school inspectors, the inertia of age encrusted customs, the hogging of the land by the rich and the powerful, the jealousy of state and federal educational officials-are proof enough. The fate of the movement for mass education in Mexico is inevitably bound up with the larger fate of the whole social revolution. And social revolutions are not consummated by the overthrow of governments or the execution of generals, but only ^{by} years of patient study and careful leadership.

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The Cultural Mission at Actópam, Hidalgo-A Case Study.

The little "pueblo" of Actópam is two hours by train, north and west from the famous mining town of Pachuca in the southern part of the state of Hidalgo. So far as the place itself is concerned there is nothing to distinguish it from a thousand other villages that dot the great central plateau of Mexico. That is, nothing save the very interesting old church of San Nicholas Actópam. With its tower rearing ~~its~~ straight, simple lines stark against the sky, and with its square masses dominating the town, this church is something of a curiosity in Mexican ecclesiastical architecture, for it is distinctly Gothic in style and spirit. History has it that it was founded in 1546 by a group of Italian friars. Like so many churches in Mexico the greater part of the structure has been allowed to fall into ruins, empty and desolate, with only a section here and there taken over for secular uses. The church proper is still used for religious worship, but one of the adjoining buildings is now a municipal hospital and the ground floor of what was once the

cloister has been turned into barracks for a sleepy little garrison of twenty-odd soldiers.

A few weeks ago it would have been difficult to find a quieter, dreamier, little "pueblcito", or a more neglected old church in all Mexico. But not so now! Today the whole building fairly hums with life and activity. Children are running in and out of the door; from within comes the noise of saws and hammers; there is a pleasant smell of burnt tortillas. In front and to the side the ground has been freshly spaded and parcelled out into little gardens. Even the soldiers have been inspired to clean a little of the eternal filth out of their quarters and to set their ^{women} to washing their uniforms in the neighboring well. One might think that the old friars had miraculously come to life to labor once again for the glory of God and the King of Spain. And as a matter of fact this would not be far wrong, for the Missionaries have come again- not, to be sure, in the name of God nor yet the King of Spain, but in the name of education and the good life. A Cultural Mission has installed itself and started its activities on the second floor of the old cloister.

The day on which I arrived, in company with the Chief of the Department of Cultural Missions, ^{Señor Rafael Ramirez,} was the beginning of the second week of the program. We were received by the "Jefe" of the Mission, Señor Javier Uranga, and the Social Worker, Miss Vesta Sturges. The "Jefe" is a rather tall, good looking man, with an air of the military about him. Despite the gray hair about his temples, he is still somewhere in his middle thirties. He has the enthusiasm for his work.

of a man who has voluntarily spent ten years traveling around his native land and an appreciation of the problems with which he has to deal that comes from sixteen months spent in the field as head of a Cultural Mission. Miss Sturges, although an American, has been in Mexico a number of years and is what the Mexicans call "simpática" ("just right"). She brings to her work not only a sympathetic understanding of native rural life, but a technique and a knowledge acquired ^{from} ~~in~~ a varied experience with social problems. (She is a graduate of Columbia University and has worked with charity organizations in the United States.)

A tour of inspection reveals the fact that all the regular activities on the standard program of the Cultural Missions are underway. In one corner of the spacious gallery surrounding the patio of the old cloister a class in canning and preserving fruits and vegetables is busily at work; in another corner a few students are working on the crayon drawings ~~which are~~ tacked up all over the walls; here is a class in soap making; downstairs a noisy and enthusiastic group is being given instruction in manual training; outside a dozen students are spading and digging in the garden plots under the direction of the teacher of agriculture.

It is interesting to note that even the business of living together and conducting the affairs of the Mission are utilized for the purposes of instruction. The student body is divided into three small groups- A, B, and C. During the three weeks of the Mission each group takes its turn in helping in the kitchen, waiting on the table, and policing the

building. The students also form a cooperative society with their own officers and directors to defray the expenses of food and materials.

A typical daily program for the 41 rural teachers in attendance reads something like this:

- 7-8 Group A.-Commissariat.
" B.and C.- Physical culture.
- 8-10 Group A.-Class in Education.
" B.-Agriculture.
" C.-Social Work.
- 10-11 Group A.-Social Work.
" B.-Education.
" C.-Agriculture.
- 11-12 Group A.-Commissariat.
" B.-Pottery making.
" C.-Manual training and weaving.
- 3-4 Group A.-Agriculture.
" B.-Social Work.
" C.-Education.
- 4-6 Group A.-Commissariat.
" B.-Small Industries.
" C.-Pottery Making.

Twice a week there is a "social hour" after supper. Tonight happens to be the occasion of one of these "fiestas". A number of the village folk drop in and sit down rather shyly on the long benches. Some of the students dress up in improvised costumes and stage a mock wedding(my own mosquito net is commandeered to serve as the bridal veil.) Others burlesque the national dances, give dramatic recitations, or sing songs. On certain nights, we are told, music is provided and the whole village is invited to dance.

This particular Mission has apparently been very successful in its work with the people of the village. The "Presidente" of the pueblo is very enthusiastic. He has done every thing in his power to help along the good cause, even to

the extent of taking two old ladies convicted of murder out of jail to help in the kitchen. Twenty-four village mothers and about fifty girls are attending the classes given by the Social Worker and the "Professor" of "pequenas industrias".

A visit to the classes in Education or Social Work convinces one of the simple, practical nature of the program of social improvement which Mexico is seeking to realize through its rural schools. "Your chief aim", said Señor Ramirez in talking to one of the classes, "should be to make your school a true community center. I mean this not only in the sense that you make your school a natural and pleasant gathering place for the people, but, also, that you should constantly strive to raise the level of life in your community. No matter how well you teach the children to read and write, if there are still homes in your village where people sleep on the floor, allow animals to stay in the house, wear dirty, ragged clothes, and eat unhealthy food- then you are a failure, as a teacher. Furthermore, remember that the school must be flexible enough to meet the needs of the community. If, for example, the children must help their parents and cannot come at 8 O'clock, the hour which you have set, then let them come at 9 or 10 O'clock. And in the night schools, if the adults want only to learn to write and not to read, then teach them to write- or whatever else they may desire. You are to be at once a servant and a leader in your community."

In her classes the Social Worker puts this same emphasis upon the necessity for the rural teacher to make his school a focus of community life and an inspiration for a

higher standard of living. Through lectures, demonstrations, and the construction of little completely equipped model houses she makes every effort to make the rural teachers see that they must be more than mere teachers- they must be apostles of the "good life" . Futhermore, she trys to show them that the "good life" is not necessarily something that is strange and foreign to be imposed from above, but that it can best be achieved by building upon the native arts and crafts of the people. The materials are already there, the people have only to be taught to use them. They must be taught to eat more eggs and vegetables, to drink milk, and make cheese. They^{women} must be made to realize that their own simple, one-piece garments, are at once cheaper, easier to make, and more artistic than the ugly, two-piece^{dress} introduced by the Spaniards... "And when you attempt to teach your people the principles of hygiene and simple medicine", Miss Sturges tells her students, " do not ride rough-shod over what you have learned to regard as religious superstition. Do not try to destroy at one blow their faith in religious charms or in the folk remedies of the old "medicine men". Often these have their value. Be content to work slowly and to introduce your health reforms only after you have demonstrated their superiority over the old ways".

This the Missionaries preach their new gospel. And thus they seek to pour new wine into old bottles. Today- 6 Missions and 3000 rural schools; tomorrow- a Mission for every state and 5000 rural schools. This is the program. This is the new note in Mexican education.

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Enclosed you will find a financial statement for the month of September. Also I am sending along a revised copy of my statement for August. In checking over this latter statement I found that I had made a mistake in addition. Please destroy the other copy and insert this new one in the proper place in the files.

My funds for this month arrived today. Due to the fact that the recent revolutionary disturbances made the train service very irregular the letter of transmission was delayed four days. ~~In view of the fact that~~^{Since} my expenses have been such that I have not yet been able to build up a reserve fund, this delay was something of an inconvenience. Wherefore, I wonder if it would not be possible for you to give instructions to have the New York office wire my funds to me each month instead of sending them by mail. Later on this should not be necessary, but for the present, while I have no other resources, and while the Mexicans are engaging in their favorite outdoor sport of staging revolutions, I believe that this would be a much safer and more convenient way for me to receive my money.

I had planned to leave today for a ten day tour of the state of Oaxaca, However, everyone advises me to wait until things quiet down a little more. Unless another revolution breaks out I will try to get away on Saturday or Sunday of this week.

Sincerely yours,

ENS.

Mexico City,D.F.,
Apartado 538,
October 20,1927.

My dear Mr.Rogers:

I have been turning over in my mind these last few weeks the advisablility of preceeding my study of the agrarian problem with an inquiry into what might be called "The Physical Basis of Life in Mexico". This study, at once more general and more fundamental than the specialized studies of education, oil, labor, etc. which I have projected, might very well serve the purposes of general orientation and act as a guide for the observations made in my travels about the Republic. It would, of course, in the first place, involve a systematic investigation of Mexican geography, climatology, and geology. But, in addition to this, the report as I have tentatively planned it, would also include sections on health and vital statistics, food resources and customs, and the biological and racial composition of the population.

I have already made a preliminary survey of the published works in English and Spanish in the general field of geography and now have in my posession several of the standard manuals and an excellent collection of political and physical maps published by the "Secretaría de Agricultura y Fomento". This part of my proposed study should, therefore, not present any great difficulties. I must admit, however, that I had almost despaired of locating any really adequate data on the other subjects listed in my outline. (Only just this week have I discovered an insitution which is not only working out the very type of

information for which I have been searching, but is itself in its own right an organization of great interest and importance . And that is why, with your permission, I will interrupt my reports on education long enough to describe the nature of the work of the "Nuevo Instituto de Higiene".

The director of the Institute, Dr. José Zozaya, is a man eminently fitted for his job. During his ten years sojourn in the United States he studied medicine in Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and Columbia and did special special research in the field of public hygiene. In the latter part of 1924 when Dr. Zozaya was called to take charge of the work of the Institute, according to his own statement, "conditions were just about as bad as they well could be". The work, such as it was, was carried on in a small six room house more or less remodeled for the purpose. Small-pox vaccine was being prepared in large quantities, but examination revealed that for the most part it had no potency; and, worse still, on the average, 24% of the vaccine contained pathogenic germs in such numbers as seriously to endanger the health of the people vaccinated. The other serums- typhoid, diphtheria, etc. - were equally bad. "And, indeed, what else could be expected when one learned that the laboratory assistants and the servants were accustomed to go riding on the experimental horses every afternoon?" The biological research, while fairly well planned, was of such a type as to be relatively useless- especially in a country with very little money to spend for that sort of work. ^{And} ~~But~~ even this "scientific" endeavor was seriously hampered by the counter attractions of a pleasant tennis court conveniently

located near the laboratory... Meanwhile, epidemics raged, the death rate from small-pox increased, Vasconcellos wrote a series of articles attacking the doctors, and school children went on strikes rather than submit to the dangers of vaccination.

Then, as the movies put it, "came the dawn"- ✓ or, at any rate, came Dr. José Zozaya, and an engineer by the name of Joaquín Segura Gutiérrez . But unlike the movies the story does not end there. These gentlemen had ideas about what a proper Institute of Hygiene could and should be, and they proceeded to put their ideas into action. The end result of their efforts, "El Nuevo Instituto de Higiene"- officially opened on September 18, 1927, is just about the most perfect thing I have yet seen in Mexico.

Dr. Zozaya very kindly called for Keith and myself the other morning and drove us out to inspect the plant. Departing from the usual Mexican style in public buildings- a huge, square, stone structure built around a central patio- the architect has deployed a series of small pavillions over the three or four acres at his disposal. These white, cement structures (some eight or ten in all) variously contain laboratories, stables and dis^scetion rooms for the experimental animals, administration offices, and libraries. Al^hthough the style of architecture is obviously one which has been designed primari^aly in the interest of economy and ample lighting facilities, the whole effect of the white buildings contrasted with the green grass plots and set off by a discrete use of carved stone ornaments, is exceedingly pleasant. The research equipment, as the Director proudly points out to you, is the best that ^{can} be bought. And

for the layman, as he walks through the gleaming rows of instruments and machines or inspects the ingenious contrivances in the immaculately clean stables, this is not hard to believe. I was constantly reminded of the "researcher's paradise" described by Sinclair Lewis in "Arrowsmith". The whole institute, according to the official statistics, has been achieved at a cost of about 500,000 pesos (c.\$250,000). It is not without interest that an appreciable amount of this sum was made up of contributions from public health employees.

The physical equipment represents only one half of the new regime in the work of the Institute. The other half of the program is, if anything, even more marvellous to behold in Mexico: gone is the tennis court! and its place there now stands a new symbol- the time clock. "If they are late one minute," said Dr.Zozaya, refering to the staff of thirty or more technical assistants, " we dock them one day. Three days late or absent, and we dock them ten days. The second offense means dismissal. If this discipline seems a little rigid for scientific work, the results which we are achieving must be our defense for the means used". And a very adequate defense they are, for the work of the Institute in collaboration with the department of health is already beginning to tell in the improved health of the nation. The production of clean, effective, vaccines and serums for small-pox, typhoid, diptheria, and scarlet fever, has been reduced to a matter of routine and the Institute is beginning to devote a goodly part of its time to a more fundamental program of biological research. Some of the typical problems of national health which are now being attacked are: 1. A study

of the "Pinto Disease"- a species of skin trouble affecting some 30,000 persons in the states of Oaxaca, and Chiapas; 2. the investigation of the nature of "Onchocerca"- a curious disease which forms tumors in the head and produces blindness; 3. experiments looking to the production of serums for scorpion and snake bites (last month in one of the southern states in one mine seven men died of scorpion bites) ; 4. research in food problems- an attempt to investigate the national food customs of Mexico and their effects on basal metabolism; 5. research in the pharmacology of medicinal plants in Mexico.

As I have suggested above, my interest in describing the work of the Institute of Hygiene, aside from giving you some idea of the recent advances in Mexican biological research is to express my hopes that I will soon be able to get some reliable information on certain phases of the physical basis of life in Mexico. I am convinced, for example, that a thorough going scientific analysis of the food habits of the Mexican population would do more to explain their reputed laziness, instability, etc. than all the racial theories ever invented.

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I do not wish to be bothersome, but the magazines and newspapers which I requested some two months ago have not yet arrived. Please have the office check this up before you leave for foreign parts.

Yours very sincerely,

ENS.