

towns. Increased mobility is one of the most significant outcomes of the revolution.

Sunday, May 24



Another hard day's ride brought us once again to Xalpatlahuac. We arrived in time to witness the proceedings of the "Domingo Cultural" (Cultural Sunday). This is a recently implanted scheme of the government to make the federal rural schools centers of adult education. Every other Sunday an effort is made to get the whole village together for a few hours of recreation. The school children recite, sing songs and engage in organized games; the band plays, the municipal authorities hand around free cigarettes, and the school teacher makes an inspirational, or educational talk. This time his address was mainly devoted to the necessity of organizing the village to combat the smallpox now prevalent in these parts. He reported that his efforts to obtain medical supplies from the state government had been unsuccessful. It appeared that in this whole village there are no medical supplies whatever. The nearest doctor is in Tlapa, three hours away by horseback.

It was rather significant that the program of the Cultural Sunday was interrupted for an hour or so while the band and various other citizens went up to the church on the hill to perform some sort of ceremony in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Monday, May 25



Getting up at 5 this morning we made the trip to Tlapa in time for breakfast at 8. The remainder of the day has been spent in resting and getting

organized for the next stage of our journey from here to Huajuapán.

A couple of Spanish merchants with whom we had supper at the hotel tonight have been regaling us with stories about how dangerous the road is between Tlapa and Huajuapán. They report that the Indians have the pleasant custom of shooting you off your horse without warning just on the chance that you might have something worth stealing. They also told us what is known as the "grease story." Keith first ran into this tale last year when she went to Oaxaca with Stuart Chase and his wife. The story is: throughout this region the Indians believe that the government sends out agents to kidnap and kill people (especially children) in order later to get the grease from their bodies. The grease, it is believed, is extracted with a special kind of an infernal machine and is greatly in demand for use in running aeroplanes. Wherefore, according to our Spanish merchant friends, it is exceedingly dangerous to pull out a kodak, movie camera or anything else that might look queer to the Indians; for they are more than likely to think that it is the above mentioned grease extracting machine. There is some truth in all this -- i.e. there is one pretty well authenticated ^{report} of a German washing-machine salesman who was hacked to death with machetes last year in a little village in Oaxaca because the natives misunderstood the purpose of his machine.

Tuesday, May 26



This morning we enjoyed the rather unusual luxury of having breakfast before we set out on our travels. A long stretch of seven hours brought

us to the town of Alcozauca (place-of-the-yellow-water).

The school here appears to be rather more successful than others which we have seen in this region. There are about 85 children out of a possible 125 in attendance. There are two teachers of which one -- an unusually bright young fellow -- is a graduate of the regional normal school at Tixtla. The young assistant school teacher told me that he had been paid only once since January. His salary is 1.50 pesos per day. (This complaint of delay in receiving their pay from the Federal government has been voiced by a number of school teachers with whom we have talked on our trip.) We were also told that here, as in other villages in this area, the local priest is anything but friendly to the school.

An old gray-haired chap whom we picked up in the plaza told us many interesting things about the community. It seems that the village has had a school for many years. This bears out our growing impression that there were more rural schools operating during the time of Porfirio Díaz than one is led to believe by the group now in power. He also said that before the revolution the peons used to receive 50¢ a day for farm labor, but that now they only get 37¢. There is lots of malaria in the community and smallpox usually appears every January. The women of the village usually marry around 16 or 18 years of age. In a nearby village of almost pure Mixtecs they marry at the age of 12 -- "so that they will be obedient to their husbands."

The only industry besides farming in the village is the weaving of straw hats. These sell for 5¢ a-piece in the market and it takes all day to make two of them!

There is a gasoline mill in the village for grinding corn,

but since the price of gasolene went up to 70¢ a liter, it is not run any more.

There is no doctor in the community.

Tonight we were entertained by the city fathers in the municipal building. The local orchestra played and we were all given a bottle of lukewarm beer. The orchestra was exceptionally good. All of the string instruments were made by the Indians in the nearby village of Cuecoyan. Although the Indians have only a saw, a knife and a machete to work with, the instruments (violins, base viols, guitars, mandolins, etc.) which they make are really surprisingly good. A mandolin will be sold for 1.00 peso.

Wednesday, May 27



Up at 4 a.m.; off at 5, arrived at Tlapancingo (little-place-of-the-dyers) for breakfast at 11; and at Silacayoapan at 5.30 p.m. Ten hours and more in the saddle, during two of which it rained like hell! However, we are in such good condition now that we really are not as tired as we have been on other and much shorter "jornadas" (one day's horseback ride). We plan to stay all day tomorrow in this place and I will save my impressions until tomorrow night, when I will feel a little fresher.

Thursday, May 28



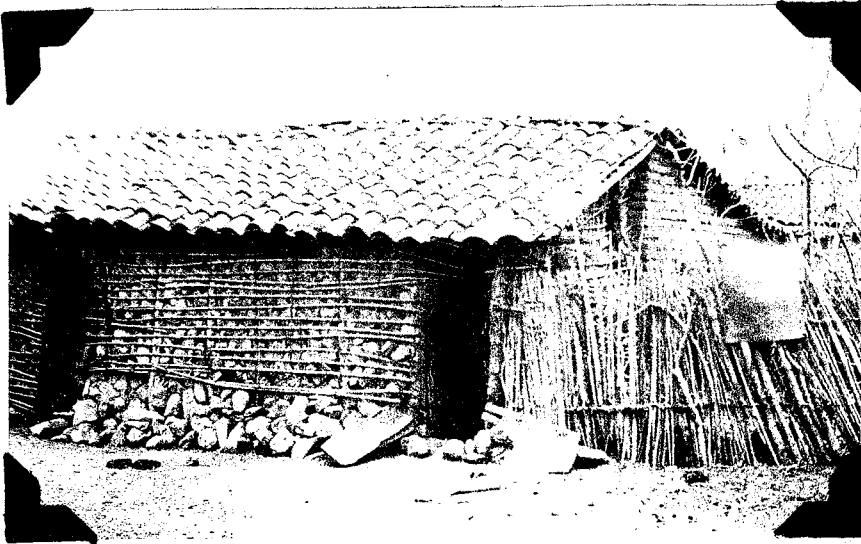
Our descent into Silacayoapan (river-of-gourds) yesterday afternoon was greeted by a burst of rockets and the clanging of church bells. We soon discovered however that all this was not

in our honor but rather in that of the Virgin of Guadalupe. It appears that throughout the month of May here every afternoon is devoted to the celebration of what is known as the "Rosario de Mayo." All of which is very good for the fireworks business, but rather hard for those interested in taking "siestas." We are decidedly to be numbered among the latter; for we have done practically nothing else all day long.

In passing it might be recalled that fireworks play an extremely important part in all religious celebrations throughout Mexico. In addition to the rockets which are shot off on any and every occasion, there are for the special festivals very elaborate fireworks mounted on frames in the shape of animals, men, houses, etc. There are even fireworks "colleges" to which bright young boys are sent by the village elders in order that the village may have someone versed in the art.

Late in the afternoon we worked up enough energy to present our letters of introduction to the local school authorities. The inspector in this zone we found was out of the city, but we were very pleasantly received by the director of the Federal rural school here, señor Daniel Castillo, Jr. This young man answered our questions and later on gave us some typewritten notes on Díaz and letters of introduction to school and municipal authorities all along the line between here and Huajuapán.

Our living arrangements have been rather more amusing than usual. We have rooms at the "mesón" (inn) of one Doña Rosa Davila. Our rooms front on the little interior patio. An enormous pig, several assorted smaller pigs, sundry chickens, and various horses and burros share the patio with us. Our rooms



BREAKFAST HERE AT TILAPANCINGO



MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY IN SILACAYOAPAN



SILACAYOAPAN, OAXACA

have been somewhat damaged by recent earthquakes and last night I finally had to give up the mattress on bed to a number of those unmentionable bugs who seemed to resent my presence. However, by carefully disposing my extra clothing, etc. on the criss-crossed ropes which served as springs on the bed, I passed a very comfortable night. All things considered, Doña Rita's is both amusing and educational. Our meals we have been taking in a little hole-in-the-wall of a restaurant facing the main plaza. The place is about as dirty as can be imagined; we share our table with mule drivers and other traveling gentlemen; some very quarrelsome chickens roost over in one corner when they are not busy picking up crumbs off of the floor; and various persistent and very hungry looking dogs take up whatever space remains. Yet, despite all these rather unsavory surroundings, the food is the best we have had on our whole trip. The old lady who prepares it makes a rather pathetic effort to be clean -- even to the extent of carefully wiping the prongs of the forks on her very dirty apron.

Sanitary conditions in this village are a little worse than usual due to its somewhat greater population. The only water supply for some five thousand people is a single fountain in the plaza, and a muddy little stream that runs near the edge of town. All day long there is a constant procession of individuals of all ages and sorts dipping water from the fountain and carrying it away in large earthenware pots or 5-gallon "Aguila" oil cans balanced on the two ends of a pole. There is no doctor here and smallpox is endemic.

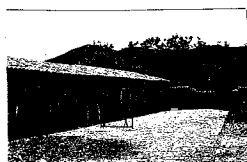
The principal industry of this town is saddle-making. The saddles are famous throughout the whole region. A very

serviceable one can be bought from 18 to 25 pesos. A really elegant one may cost as much as 80 pesos.

We found a man here tonight with a collection of Mixtec idols. Beals bought a large one for 4 pesos and I got a small one for 1 peso.

The day was brought to a close by a very formal visit which the municipal secretary paid us in our mesón.

Friday, May 29



Something little short of a miracle took place this morning: the boy from whom we rented our horses promised to get us up at 3:30 and off at 4:00 a.m. The miracle was that as the church clock struck four we were actually in the saddle and on our way.

Some five hours later we stopped for breakfast at San Francisco Paxtlahuaca (St. Francis-of-the-place-that-has-priests). Here, thanks to our letter from the school teacher in Silacayoapan, we were the guests of the "Agente Municipal" who from some place or other managed to produce some scrambled eggs, tortillas, and "pitahaya" or cactus fruit. The latter, by the way, tastes something like figs and is very refreshing.

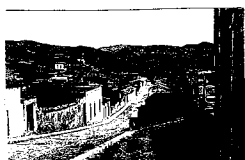
During the course of our conversation while we were waiting for breakfast, the municipal agent expressed a very great interest in New York and wanted to know how long it would take to get there on horseback. He also wanted to know how fast trains could go in comparison with horses. We were informed that a nearby village was named San Mateo de los Libres (St. Matthew of the Free Ones). This name was given to the village a few years ago to indicate the fact that the inhabitants of the village were free men -- i.e. did not have to be subject to the local municipio with

which they had a long standing quarrel.

Our next stop was at San Augustine Atenango (St. Augustus-of-the-place-near-water). Here we had a pleasant little visit with the school teacher and the municipal authorities. The school, which originally belonged to the church and was built as a house for the local curate, was recently taken over by the Federal government.

After consuming a great many more pitahayas we finally broke away and in two hours reached our present stopping place -- Tonalá (place-of-the-sun). The latter is one of those miserable betwixt and between places which seems to be suffering from some sort of a blight. The plaza is dirty and unkempt, and the town generally run down at the heels. We are staying the night in another mesón not unlike the one described above in Silacayoapan, the only difference being that there are fewer pigs.

Saturday, May 30



An interesting index of the extent to which modern civilization has invaded the region through which we have been passing is the fact that last night for the first time since we left Chilpancingo we encountered a wheeled vehicle of any sort or description -- and that was an old Chevrolet truck that wouldn't run! In other words, every pound of freight, every object of any sort throughout the Mixteca which needs to be moved from one place to another must perforce be transported either on mule back, horse back, or the back of some human being. There are not even any wheelbarrows. The wheel and mechanical power -- the basis of modern industrial civilization -- do not yet exist for the Mixteca

of Guerrero and Oaxaca. This has been the situation for four centuries and more. But even as I write, the walls of isolation begin to crumble and the modern world and modern techniques begin to flow in. The net-work of roads which the Government is slowly extending over the Republic are beginning to have their effect. The first automobile actually running which we had seen in almost three weeks was a truck which we encountered on the road this morning just this side of San Marcos; and it was loaded with machinery!

Another significant commentary on the economic development of the Mixteca is the fact that so far as we were able to discover, there is not a single bank of any type in the whole region. Private money lenders undoubtedly exist, but a bank in the generally accepted sense of this term is simply an unknown quantity.

Our arrival this afternoon in Huajuapán de León (place-of-the-huaxis-trees) after a seven-hour ride from Tonalá marks the end of the horseback stage of our trip. From here on we expect to travel by automobile. The last three hours of our trip this morning were rather exciting due to the fact that we lost the trail and had to ford the Mixteca river a half-dozen times. Due to the fact that the river was swollen by the recent rains this proved more hazardous than might be expected. At one place the horses sank in the mud up to their bellies and we had to wade in water above our knees.

The Hotel Española at which we are staying here in Huajuapán is really first rate. This may be due partly to the fact that the building was until recently (when the government seized it) the home of the Bishop for this district.

Huajuapán is something of a church center. There are a dozen or more churches for a population of some 6,000 souls. Indeed, the place has the reputation of being one of the most fanatical Catholic towns in the whole region. It is not without interest, in any case, to note that a very imposing wall has just been built around the principal church while at the same time the central plaza is in a very run-down condition and badly in need of attention.

We have discovered that the water situation here is even worse than in the towns through which we have passed. With the exception of the priest's house, the city hall, our hotel and about a half-dozen other houses the only water supply for some 6,000 people is a fountain in the center of the town. Moreover, the water is so bad that our hotel obtains drinking water for its guests by sending burros laden with large earthen jars to a spring in the mountains a whole day's pack away. In response to my request for a bath when we arrived this afternoon, I was told that the hotel had no facilities for such exotic indulgences but that there was one shower in town, arrangements for the use of which could probably be made. Knowing that such arrangements usually take several hours, I reluctantly gave up the idea, and took a bath in the washstand basin.

We have been trying to negotiate some sort of transportation to get us out of here tomorrow. Due to the recent heavy rains all the gentlemen with whom we have talked seem to be very pessimistic about getting automobiles over the roads. It begins to look like we will either have to stay here all summer or continue our horsebacking for another four days.



TLAPANEKAN TYPE,
ZAPOTITLAN TABLAS, GRO.



CITY OFFICIALS AND LEADING CITIZENS
SAN AGUSTIN ATENANGO



SOMBRERO WEAVER, TLAPANCINGO

Sunday, May 31



After interminable discussions and hours of waiting this morning we finally arranged for an auto to take us the 176 kilometers to Tehuacan for 80 pesos. After a good deal more waiting, while a battered old Dodge of the vintage of around 1921 was tied together with wire, rope and what not, we got under way at 11 a.m. Since that fateful hour, life, to say the least, has been rather strenuous. In the first place, as I have already intimated, the old bus in which we started out saw its best days a good many years ago. Second, with an additional passenger in the back seat, the chauffeur, his assistant and some señorita (slipped in by the chauffeur at the last moment at the edge of town -- nobody knows quite why) in the front seat the car is badly overloaded. And, lastly, the roads are little more than horseback trails a little wider than usual. All day long our procedure has been to bump along for about an hour and then spend an hour making repairs or digging the car out of a mud hole. About 5:00 o'clock a perfect deluge of rain descended upon us. The roads immediately became raging mountain streams; all of which, of course, added neither to our comfort nor our safety. By some miracle, however, we kept going in the general direction of our goal, until we reached the banks of a branch of the Mixteca river. Here our progress was abruptly brought to an end. The driver was unwilling to ~~try to~~ try to cross. So we just sat there waiting for something to happen. After two hours when darkness had already begun to close in on us, it was decided to abandon the car until morning in the hope that the river would subside. An Indian appeared from somewhere out of the darkness and volunteered to carry us across the

river on his back for 15 centavos a-piece. This was accomplished without mishap and a half-hour's plodding down the road in the dark and rain brought us to the village of Tonahuixtla (place-of-many-hot-thorns). The place was utterly deserted, but after about an hour's wait we succeeded in getting hold of the "Presidente Municipal". He read our official letters and agreed to let us sleep on the floor of the city hall. After another hour he appeared with a couple of straw mats and some food -- the inevitable beans, tortillas and hard scrambled eggs. And so here we are for tonight and God only knows how many more nights.

We have been making use of our various waits to extract what information we could about the place. The population is about 500 at the present time. Last year over 100 people died of smallpox and there are a number of cases of typhoid in the village now. The school is a state school and apparently functions only intermittently. For the time being it is closed because the roof is about to fall in. The Presidente claims that the villagers are not very content with the priest who visits them from time to time because his prices are too high: 15 pesos to say mass, 15 pesos to perform a marriage and 3 pesos for a baptism.

An interesting thing happened tonight when Beals brought out the Mixtecan idol which we bought in Silacayoapan. The half dozen individuals present gathered around the idol and began to talk rather excitedly in Mixtec and one of them kissed the idol in a rather furtive, but nonetheless serious manner.

Monday, June 1

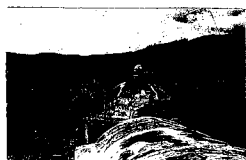


We were up a little after dawn this morning and ready for action. However, due to the fact that most of the males in the village were engaged in

putting a new roof on the annex to the church (not on the school!), we cooled our heels until about 11 o'clock. At that time the Presidente consented to get a few men together to help get the car across the river. Nothing ever sounded better to me than the half-lunged chugging of that old Dodge when they finally got it across and it started up the hill.

Once under way, except for stops of an hour or so here and there to push the car out of a mud hole or to take the engine to pieces and put it together again, our journey continued without anything of unusual importance happening -- and here we are in Tehuacan (place-of-the-stones). We are so battered and sore from being banged about that we can hardly move. However, we are so thankful to be here at all that we are not disposed to complain. Thanks to the fact that Tehuacan is a sort of health resort, the hotels here are above the average. And now that my bath is ready I will call it quits for the day. After five days of dirt, not even scientific zeal can keep one from the joys of a bathtub.

Tuesday, June 2



The world now looks much brighter. In an hour I will be in Mexico City. I have managed to pass the long hours on the train since 7:15 this morning doing just exactly nothing. Beals left Tehuacan about two hours after I did, bound for Oaxaca where he will stay for a month gathering more material on Díaz.

By way of having it on record for future reference, and perhaps as a matter of general interest it has occurred to me that

it might be useful to set down in these notes a list of the equipment which it is desirable to take along on a trip of the type which I have just completed.

Clothing

1. Corduroy riding suit. (There should be lots of pockets in the coat and all of them should button securely -- otherwise papers and other miscellaneous articles will fall out when the coat is tied to the blanket roll during the heat of the day.)
2. Three shirts. (These ought also to have a pocket which buttons.)
3. Three changes of underwear. (Shorts and gymn shirts are much more comfortable than union suits.)
4. Six pairs of white socks. (Colored socks are to be avoided because of the danger of infecting blistered feet.)
5. A broad brimmed hat. (One of the native straw hats which sell for 50 centavos in the market serves very well.)
6. Good stout boots. (Horseback riding in the mountains involves a very considerable amount of walking -- it is highly important therefore that your boots be heavy but comfortable.)
7. A half dozen bandana handkerchiefs.
8. A black bow tie. (If that's the kind of person you are.)
9. A large poncho. (This is the most important single item of your equipment -- especially if you travel in Mexico any time between May 1 and Nov. 1. The poncho not only keeps off the rain, but it also serves as an extra blanket, tablecloth, mattress or what have you.)
10. A light slip-over sweater.
11. A pair of gloves. (Mainly as a protection against insect bites.)
12. Some sort of a night cap. (I use an old aeroplane helmet.)

Bedding

1. A good heavy blanket. (One is enough if you use your poncho as suggested above.)
2. A piece of cheesecloth about 6'x10'. (En contra flies as well as mosquitoes; it can also be used to stave off bed-bugs -- at least to some extent.)

3. A small inflatable rubber pillow. (This is for your head.)
4. A small feather pillow. (This if for your hips!)
5. A piece of water-proof canvas about 6'x5'. (In this you roll up your bedding and extra clothing.)

Toilet Articles

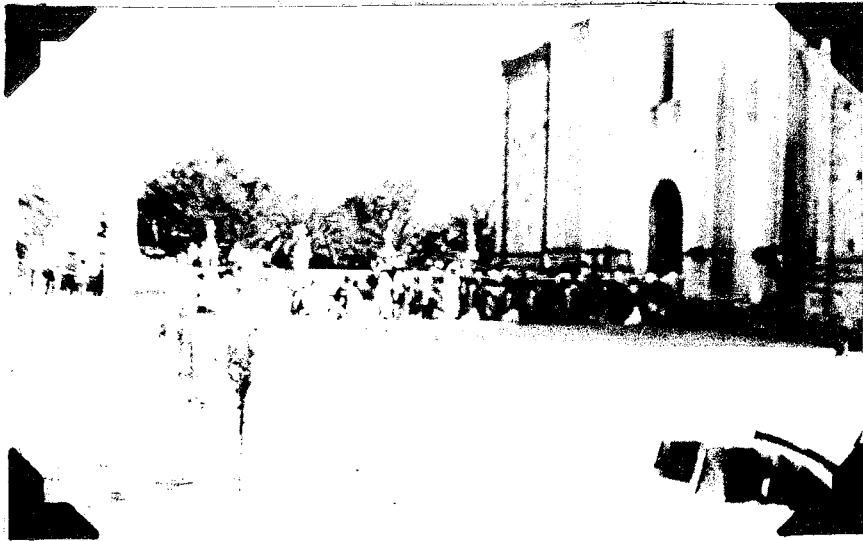
1. Shaving Kit. (If you think you will want to, but don't carry shaving soap in a tube -- it always gets punctured and makes a nice mess.)
2. Tooth brush and powder.
3. Pocket comb and mirror.
4. Soap.
5. Finger nail clipper and a small pair of scissors.
6. A small canvas bag. (In which all of the above can be carried.)

Medical Equipment

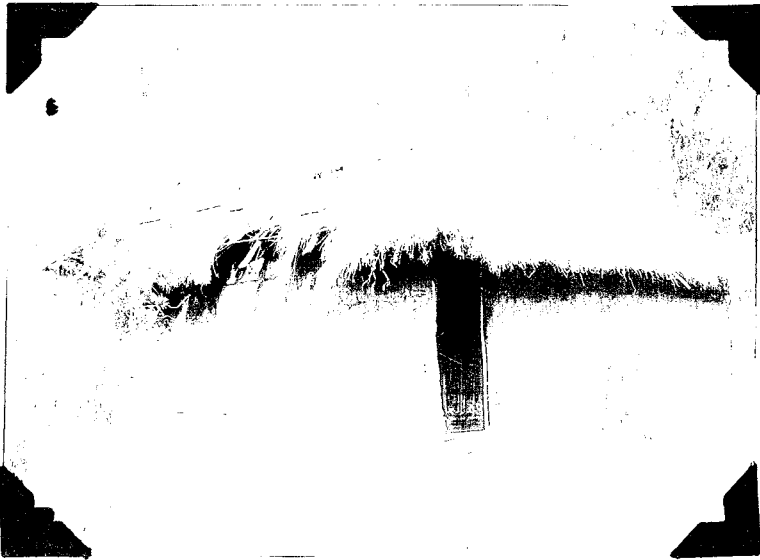
1. Something to purify water. (Hydro-clonazone tablets are very good.)
2. A good laxative. (Also a small bottle of Nujol is helpful.)
3. Surgical tape.
4. Small tin of mentholatum.
5. Something for dysentery.
6. Iodine.
7. Small bottle of oil of cloves. (A first class toothache can ruin a trip more effectually than almost anything else.)
8. Assorted bandages.
9. Quinine.
10. A small tin box (in which all the above can be compactly carried).

Miscellaneous

1. About 12 feet of light rope.



SUNDAY IN HUAJUAPAN, OAXACA



TYPICAL NATIVE HOUSE OF THE MIXTECA ALTA



CITY OFFICIALS IN SAN FRANCISCO PAXTLAHUACA

2. Two leather straps. (For the blanket roll -- also several leather thongs are very useful.)
3. A canteen for water.
4. Camera and films.
5. About a dozen safety pins. (These have innumerable uses.)
6. About the same number of large rubberbands. (And ditto the above.)
7. Notebook paper
8. Passport and other identification documents.
9. A small bag for money. (Traveler's checks may be carried but be sure to find out where they can be cashed.)
10. A good camp knife and a spoon.
11. Several large heavy envelopes. (These serve to protect your letters of introduction, notes and other papers.)
12. Maps of the area to be traversed.
13. A cheap watch. (But not too cheap!)
14. A saddle cushion. ("Asentadera" -- this is very important -- Mexican saddles are an invention of the devil).
15. Flashlight and an extra set of batteries.
16. Fountain pen and ink. (The latter in a special non-breakable bottle and case.)
17. A block of toilet paper. (Extremely important and it has many uses other than that for which it is intended.)
18. A saddle bag. (The native ones made out of ixtle fibre are quite satisfactory.)
19. Cigarettes, pipe, and tobacco, and pipe cleaners. (The cigarettes are important even if you don't smoke because they serve as an introduction to the good will of the natives.)
20. A small package of tea. (On occasion this can be a real life saver.)
21. A small whiskey flask. (Filled!)
22. About two tons of patience!

SUMMARY

1 --

There is a marked and significant contrast between the Mixtecs of today and the Mixtecs of the pre-conquest period. On the average it would appear that there has been a progressive degeneration in every aspect of Mixtec life from the relatively high civilization attained before the coming of the Spaniards. This is clearly the case in economic and political organization and in artistic expression; it is perhaps less true on the side of religion.

2 --

There is an even more marked contrast between the present mode of life of the Mixtecs and that of those sections of Mexico which have been brought into definite contact with modern industrial civilization. The Mixteca Alta, except for a few items here and there such as sewing machines, gasoline lamps, factory made cloth, etc. is at least one hundred years removed from western culture and in its most typical aspects. The Mixtecs live in a pre-power and a pre-wheel age.

3 --

On the other hand, however, even in this remote and relatively isolated region of Mexico the signs and portents of the invasion of western mechanized culture appear on all sides. Schools and roads are battering rams already pounding at the walls of age old customs. Even now here and there a great breach appears; inevitably the Mixtecs will become part and parcel of the complicated economic structure of the great

society. What this will mean in terms of cultural disorganization remains to be seen. It is safe to guess, however, that unless the schools can supply leaders and unless the government works out a plan which will temper the wind to the shorn lamb, much which is valuable and useful in the present political and social organization of the Mixtecs will be lost. The problem is: how to introduce modern sanitation and medicine, how to teach the people to exploit the resources of the land, how to raise the standard of living from its present level of monotonous poverty, how, in short to open up and broaden out the lives of these peoples without destroying the little which they have of value and without subjecting them to the more unfortunate aspects of life in the machine age.

NOTES

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4. Gay, José Antonio -- Historia de Oaxaca, México, 1881, Tomo I, pp.40-41.
5. op.cit., p.45.
6. op.cit., p.44.
7. Paso y Troncoso, Francisco del -- Papeles de Nueva España, Segunda Serie -- Geografía y Estadística, Tomo IV, Madrid, 1905, pp.163-176.



THIS REALLY DOESN'T DESERVE
A SEPARATE PAGE BY ITSELF