UNEMPLOYMENT AND ALCOHOLISM

The Case of Manuel Zarco

Manuel Zarco -- don Manuelito (Mickey) to his friends -- is a little man, 77 years old, short, blue-eyed, white-haired, peaceful and good-natured. For the past three years he has begged at the door of San Juan de Dios church. He wears a ragged, dirty, grey coat, brown trousers patched with various colors, tattered shirt (apparently never washed), vest, cracked patent leather shoes, and a black felt hat. He uses a cane and walks very slowly. He is very amiable and would like to be exact; he tries hard to answer questions, but he has a bad memory when dates are in question -- he speaks of what happened twenty years ago just as he talks of what happened a year ago. Sometimes it seems that he is not entirely sane; he himself says that he is "gone" and attributes this to attacks which he has suffered since he was hit by a motorbus (he does not remember when this happened).

Manuel was born in Morelia, Michoacán. His parents, Juan Zarco and Petra Guía, legally married, were also from Morelia. His father was a farmer and cultivated his own lands, raised pigs and chickens, and lived, with his servants, in his own fairly large house. Don Manuelito says that his father was Governor of Acapulco but he does not remember when this was, only that he heard it said when he was little.

He had three sisters; two of them died young and the eldest died the year "they killed Madero" (1913). He barely remembers his mother, who died of heart trouble when he was about

six. His father died when he was twelve; he does not remember of what. His grandfather, Pedro Zarco, also a farmer, took care of him until Manuel was about 14 years of age, when the grandfather died of old age.

His parents lived happily together; his memories of childhood are pleasant ones. Among other things, he remembers that when he was little he served as altar boy and helped with the mass. His parents, he says, were devoted to the church. All his relatives knew how to read and write. He does not know whether his parents were given to drinking or other vices; he remembers only that his father and grandfather smoked.

He went to school, but does not know when; learned to read and write a bit; says that he liked to go to school but liked better to go to the fields with his grandfather, who taught him to ride and break horses. He learned the trade of shoemaker, but says that since he came to Mexico City he has never worked at this trade because "here no one makes a whole shoe" -- some one makes the sole, others the upper, etc. -- and he likes to make the completed shoe as he was taught to do in the village. Two years after his grandfather died, he left his sister in care of a priest who was a friend of the family and came to work in Mexico City.

His first job, he says, was in the Military College of Chapultepec where he worked as stableboy cleaning, saddling, taking care of the horses for the students and employees of the place. Afterwards, he worked in the Government Palace and remembers that in 1882, "when the comet came", he was groom for Porfirio Díaz, president of the republic at that time. At this work he earned about $1.25 a day.

Then, from the Palace coachmen who were his friends, he learned to be a driver and worked for some of the important personages of that time, such as Sebastían Camacho, with whom he worked four years (this gentleman lived in Rosales street and don Manuelito says that during the 1910 revolution he was hidden in the Japanese legation); Ignacio de la Torre; Emilio Velásquez, lawyer and minister to Italy, for whom he worked eight years; Pliego; Dr. Aspe; Manuel Sáenz, a lawyer. While employed by this last named man, he was sent to Veracruz as valet for some young men who came from Europe to visit Sáenz. He was in Veracruz "at the time of the work on the port" when the epidemics of vomit were over (about 1905), earning $50.00 monthly and expenses. In 1906 he worked for Francisco Madero, father of Francisco I. Madero, afterwards president. In 1910 he was employed by a foreigner named José Cid who rented carriages and dealt in horses. With this man he made various trips to Guadalajara, Monterrey, and other cities of the Republic, for the purpose of buying and selling horses.

About this time he went back to Morelia to see his sister. She had sold their land to build a church, but had not yet sold the family home because she was waiting for don Manuelito's consent. He authorized her to sell it for 6,000 pesos, saying that since he had never sent her anything after leaving Morelia it was only fair that she dispose of the money as she thought best. He thinks she spent all the money in building the church. A little while afterwards, she died.

Don Manuelito's last job was with Dr. Viramontes (he does not remember the first name) for whom, according to don Manuelito, he worked "until carriages were done away with." While working

for the Doctor, he was kicked on the leg by a horse and had to spend some time in bed. The Doctor attended him personally, but the accident left him a little crippled in the leg. At this job, he earned, usually, $2.00 pesos a day and nearly always had room and board free.

Don Manuelito says that he used to "like the girls," dances, theatres, etc. a lot, but that best of all he liked horse racing and everything related to the sport. He was not given much to friendships and preferred to go about alone. He says that he never got drunk, although he used to take two wine glasses of aguardiente in the morning and two in the afternoon. At the present time he says that (when he has the money) he drinks one or two glasses of light wine that costs him five centavos a glass in the morning and again in the afternoon.

He was never legally married, but lived temporarily with various women. With one of them, Juanita García, he lived some seven years. She died some five years ago of typhus and from pains "in the mouth of her stomach." He remembers this woman with affection, because she was good to him. They had one child who died when a year old. He does not remember exactly the date of his wife's death, but thinks it was after he had left Dr. Viramontes' employ and that the Doctor lent him money to bury her.

Some time after he left the employ of Dr. Viramonte, don Manuel was badly injured in an accident. According to his story, the accident happened when he stepped off the sidewalk to let some girls pass and a motorbus hit him. He was taken to the Sixth District Police Station and from there to the Juárez Hospital where they operated on his spine, near his lungs. He says he does not

know where he was hurt; but that they "put a needle in his back and it broke off"; then they chloroformed him and operated. After the operation for fourteen days he could not eat because he was very sick from the chloroform. Since his accident, every twenty days or so, he has "attacks" (they never come singly but in rapid succession, even ten times in an afternoon) in which he says he falls to the floor, "a trembling enters him and he spews foam from the mouth."

Previous to the accident, he claims that he had been healthy and had never been seriously ill. He now has a kind of boils or eczema which he believes to have resulted from their having bathed him in the Penitentiary when he did not want to be bathed. He was put in the Penitentiary for begging. He does not know just when, but says it was "when General Calles gave that order to shut up all the beggars." He remembers he was there one year, one month and ten days. He was contented in the Penitentiary; the employees treated him well and shared their meals with him. In the shops of the Penitentiary, he learned to be a shoemaker /again?/ but says that he never worked at the trade because he does not see well and moreover can't sit on the low shoemaker's bench because his legs are stiff and cramp painfully.

At present he has neither home nor relatives. All his old employers are dead or gone away from the country and he has only one friend left from the old days -- the man who taught him his trade as coachman. Don Manuelito lived with this man some time and was living with him when the accident occurred.

In San Juan de Dios church where don Manuel usually begs, there is an image of St. Anthony of Padua which is said to

be miraculous. Tuesday of each week is the day of this saint and many of the faithful attend the religious ceremonies celebrated in his honor. The people who attend the church on this day give money and bread to the beggars, for this is a part of the worship of the saint -- "he is the mediator of the poor" (and of lovers, too). Tuesdays, especially between 6 and 8 at night, the hour of the rosary, 60 or 70 beggars gather at the door of the church. Don Manuelito has his clients among the worshippers who come (especially among the "young ladies") and on these days he collects from 75 centavos to a peso.

Monday he goes early to the church of San Diego. Here an image of San Nicolás de Bari Obispo de Mira is venerated; and the devout of this saint go on Monday to say a prayer known as the "three Mondays." These days he gets about fifty centavos.

The rest of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays, he says he collects about thirty centavos a day.

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon (when the church is closed until 3), don Manuelito goes walking through the streets of San Rafael district where he has his clients, too -- families who know him and give him tortilla tacos (a sort of sandwich) of rice, meat, beans, etc. Sometimes in the afternoon he buys himself a sandwich or a cup of atole (a drink made of corn) in the market which is near the church.

At 6 o'clock he walks slowly back to the Mesón (lodging house) de Aldana in Paraguay street where for six centavos they give him lodging and a straw mat to sleep on. He complains of the other lodgers, some of whom arrive drunk and talk until very late.

The Mesón de Aldana is a very old building falling into ruins. The sleeping galleries are poorly ventilated; the floors are cement; and everything is dirty. On the ground floor, some one hundred beggars, men and women, sleep. There are also very small independent rooms for fifty centavos a day; and there are some beggars who sleep in the courtyard, without shelter, paying three to five centavos. Don Manuelito sleeps in the clothing he wears; for he has no other.

In the morning he gets up at 4 o'clock and goes to church to hear mass at 6. He is a very devout Catholic and attends mass daily; he used to confess and take communion often, but the last time was in the Hospital before his operation. Sometimes he gives an offering to the Virgin so that she will help him.

In the morning he takes a cup of coffee and milk, which costs him ten centavos; this, usually, before going to mass, except when he has no money and must wait until someone gives him some. Sometimes, when he has only five centavos, he drinks orange-leaf tea.

Usually don Manuelito does not beg aloud; he only looks with a kind smile at the faithful. On bad days, in order to attract their attention, he says "niñita" (little mistress). At one time, he says, he was very much ashamed to beg, but now he is resigned to his fate.

Don Manuelito feels very worn out; he is afraid of being knocked down again by an automobile when he is crossing the street or suffering from one of his attacks. The long walks to the church, and to the San Rafael district where they give him his dinner, from the lodging house are very tiring for him. He wants

to enter the Beggars' Home; and he would like, also, to be treated for his "attacks."

In the foregoing pages, don Manuelito's story has been presented essentially as he told it himself to the case worker. For the most part, it was found upon further investigation, he told the truth. On only one point -- and that of the utmost importance -- did he falsify: don Manuel is now and has been for some years a confirmed drunkard.

After having lost his work with Dr. Viramontes in 1919, Manuelito worked no more; he lived with his friend Ignacio Guerrero who then had a job as a coachman and lived with his family in a house in Versalles street in which he was janitor. There don Manuelito's wife died; and don Manuelito, little by little, sold everything, even his clothes, to buy drink, until he was left with only the clothes on his back.

He was already a beggar when the automobile accident happened, and was probably drunk at the time. In the Juárez Hospital these few data are all that is to be found: "Record 1903 -- Manuel Zarco, April 29, 1922." (That is, three years after having lost his job with Dr. Viramontes.)

In an interview with Dr. Viramontes, the following information was obtained: Zarco was in his service as coachman in 1918 and 1919; he was an excellent coachman and a very honest, hard-working man. At 4 in the morning he would wash the carriage and at 6 he was in front of the door of the house ready to drive. He was always attentive and polite, and very clean. But in spite of all this, the Doctor had to fire him because he drank too much and was very unpleasant in his cups. In the coach-house, where Manuelito preferred to live, rather than in a room in Dr. Viramontes,

house (probably because of his "wife"), the other servants complained a great deal of him because he was aggressive and troublesome when drunk. On one such occasion, don Manuelito was kicked by a horse. Manuel used to begin in the morning drinking aguardiente and drank pulque the rest of the day. As a rule, the Doctor kept him busy only in the morning, but when he happened to need him in the afternoon he was always found drunk. It was this which finally caused the Doctor to get rid of him. Previously, Manuelito had worked for a friend of the Doctor who had had to fire Manuel for the same reason.

Doctor Viramontes says that Manuelito was a very healthy man, quite strong. He liked to dress well and the Doctor gave him some of his own used clothing. He was paid $2.50 a day and given room, board, and clothing; nevertheless, he never had a cent because he spent all he earned in drink. One of Manuelito's duties was to take the Doctor's son each day to school and he was always kind and careful with the child. After Manuelito was fired, the Doctor says he saw him several times in the street; he does not remember if he gave him money to bury his wife but thinks it may be true. It is true, according to Dr. Viramontes, that Manuelito worked for all the various people for whom he said he did.

The Doctor sold his carriage and horses in 1920, when he bought an automobile; but after Zarco he had another coachman who worked a year in his service.

Margarita Reyes, natural daughter of General Bernardo Reyes, and who lives at present in Valerio Trujano street 12, and earns her living selling lottery tickets, says that she knew Manuelito in 1885 when he was coachman for Sebastián Camacho; that "he was

a very fine fellow and went about always elegantly dressed -- the livery became him very well." She also says: "Who would have thought we'd come to this state, for from lottery tickets to begging is only a step." Margarita says she first saw Manuel begging at the door of San Antonio church some five years ago.

The woman in charge of this church as well as other beggar companions of Manuelito who ask for charity at the same place have known him for about the same time. These people say that as long as they have known him he has drunk a lot; in the afternoon when he goes to the church he is already quite drunk and then before he goes to the lodging house he goes to the bars "La Vaquita" and "Los Pericos" ("The Little Cow" and the "Parakeets") and drinks a mixture of pure alcohol and chamomile, a bottle of which he carries with him in his pocket all the time.

The man in charge of the Mesón de Aldana, too, has known Manuelito for about six years and confirms the other reports of Manuel's drunkenness. At one time this man put a shoemaker's bench in the hallway of the lodging house for don Manuelito; but Manuelito threatened and attacked his companions with the knives and shoemaking tools so often that the bench had to be taken away. Manuelito is likeable and well mannered when he is sober; but when drunk he is very offensive and quarrelsome.

In the Penitentiary these data were found: "Record 115, Manuel Zarco, brought from the Fifth District, January 11, 1928, for begging; released February 11, 1929" -- exactly the time Manuelito said he remained in the Penitentiary.

As no other data were found in the Juárez Hospital except the date of Zarco's entry on April 29, 1929, it was impossible to

find out what kind of operation was performed on him.

Manuel Zarco furnishes an illustration of one of the most important types of beggars. Here is a man, old, broken down, sick, and homeless. If it were the purpose of this study to make judgments involving praise and blame, it would be hard to say who or what should be charged for the unhappy and unfortunate situation in which we find don Manuel today. Obviously, he is now and has been for many years, a confirmed drunkard. But it is equally obvious that he is a man whom the world has passed by. The coming of the machine and the industrialization of Mexico have deprived him of two legitimate methods of making a living. When he could no longer "make a whole shoe", as he had been taught in his youth, he became a cochero, only to find again in a few years that his job had moved out from under him. Now, as an old man, he has joined the great army of the useless and unemployed -- unemployed because the things he knows how to do are no longer required, and useless because old age and drink have undermined his strength and his ability to adapt himself to the changing world about him. It might have been that some system of old age insurance or of pensions or even the habit of saving his money would have allowed don Manuel to pass his declining years in relative comfort and happiness. But Mexico has no system of old age pensions, and the people of Mexico have yet to learn the lessons of thrift.

How many individuals in Mexico have been forced to beg on the streets because of alcoholism and unemployment is not known at the present time, but even a superficial examination of the available data concerning the amount of alcohol consumed in Mexico

and the increasing number of the unemployed leads to the very strong supposition that alcoholism and lack of work are two of the most important factors responsible for beggars and the institution of begging in Mexico.

Unemployment

The phenomenon of unemployment, it is well known, is to be found in all countries. In Mexico, however, where revolutions and other social and political disturbances have continuously acted to upset the economic life of the country for the past two decades and more, and where a number of the most important industries such as oil and mining are of an extremely unstable type and given to periodic expansions and depressions, it would appear that the problem of unemployment is a constantly recurring one and often of a most critical nature.

In the absence of actual statistics, it is impossible to give the data relating to the history of unemployment in Mexico or the number of unemployed at the present time. It is known that the mining and oil industries have, during the past few years, due to the local and international market situation, been progressively restricting their operations and cutting down the number of workers employed. At the end of 1928, for example, according to the figures of the National Department of Statistics, some 20,000 miners were let out; and in the same year more than 2,000 workers in the oil fields and an equal number in the cotton and wool factories were dismissed (1). It is said that in the cotton region of Laguna there are at present more than 10,000 workers without jobs (2). Concerning the total number of unemployed in Mexico at the present time, estimates vary from 250,000 (3), to

1,500,000 (4). With reference to the number of unemployed in the Federal District, statistics gathered by the Department of Labor for 1929 indicate a total of 23,500, distributed as follows: day laborers 4,500; skilled laborers 18,000; and small contractors 1,000. These figures, which are based on the number of individuals registering in the government employment offices, give only a very approximate idea of the actual number unemployed for a greater or less period of time during the year. (5)

In connection with the foregoing discussion of unemployment, it is interesting and pertinent to note the figures with reference to industrial accidents. Although, as may be noted in table X workers suffering injury are, under the labor laws of Mexico, indemnified by the employers, it is very likely that the amount paid, at least in the cases of the more serious types of accident only partially recompense the worker for the loss of his time and potential working capacity. In 1929, the number of accidents reported in the Republic by the companies sending data to the Department of Labor was 21,253. Most of these accidents, to be sure, were of a minor character, allowing the worker to return to his job within less than fifteen days. However, in some 120 cases the accidents resulted in permanent loss of some part of the body, and 248 workers were killed. How many of the more seriously injured workers are forced in time to give up their job entirely or to seek other and less well paid occupations is not known. It should be noted also that the above figures do not include the statistics of workers injured in agricultural occupations, or cases of injuries such as those suffered by Manuel Zarco when he was kicked by the horse.

TABLE X

REPORTED INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS, MEXICO 1921-29[1]

| Year | Class of Accident: Temporary: Partial[2] | Temporary: Total[3] | Definitive: Partial[4] | Definitive: Total[5] | Mortal | Total Accidents[6] | Percentage of accidents of total number of workers exposed | (Pesos) Total Indemnization |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1921 | 3987 | 834 | 105 | 15 | 283 | 5224 | 6.12 | 355,266 |
| 1922 | 3648 | 1365 | 110 | 13 | 362 | 7498 | 6.61 | 598,280 |
| 1923 | 13482 | 3666 | 57 | 1 | 469 | 17675 | 10.86 | 1,195,866 |
| 1924 | 13474 | 4296 | 76 | 7 | 348 | 18201 | 15.17 | 1,010,001 |
| 1925 | 17647 | 4282 | 143 | 3 | 389 | 22464 | 20.23 | 1,550,260 |
| 1926 | 24339 | 5094 | 162 | 2 | 405 | 30002 | 16.25 | 1,866,957 |
| 1927 | 21476 | 4795 | 187 | 18 | 384 | 26860 | 17.65 | 1,987,366 |
| 1928 | 18261 | 4118 | 167 | 2 | 343 | 22891 | 13.97 | 1,728,901 |
| 1929 | 17139 | 3746 | 110 | 10 | 248 | 21253 | 14.96 | 1,480,836 |

1/ Unpublished statistics supplied by the Departamento de la Estadística Nacional, March 28, 1930

2/ Recovered within 15 days

3/ Recovered after 15 days

4/ Lost some member of the body

5/ Lost more than one member

6/ Reports of accidents, and consequently the number of accidents, increased from 1921 to 1926. Since 1926, industries have reported accidents with greater care and regularity.

Alcoholism

It has long been acknowledged, both by Mexican and foreign students, that alcoholism is one of the most serious problems of the country. Total abstinence in Mexico is practically unknown. Even children are accustomed to drink almost from infancy. Some kind of a stimulant is considered an essential part of the meal in practically every home, high or low. One of the major industries is the manufacture of the so-called national drink, pulque, made from the fermented juice of the maguey plant. Madero viewed the drinking of pulque in Mexico as one of the principal causes of "the national decadence." Calles declared publicly that he was an "enemy of pulque because it is prejudicial to the people." Various attempts have been made to regulate the drinking of pulque and other alcoholic beverages in Mexico, but up to the present time all have been shortlived and ineffective, and the per capita consumption of intoxicating drinks in Mexico remains one of the largest of any country in the world. (6)

According to the study published in Estadística Nacional, February 15, 1925, and entitled "El Alcoholismo en la República Mexicana", in 1923 taxes were paid on a production of 294,117,150 litres of pulque (litre equals 1.0567 quarts). For that year the per capita consumption in the nine pulque-growing states and the Federal District was estimated to be 458 litres, or one and a quarter litres per person per day. Undoubtedly the consumption was much greater than this figure indicates, for no statistics are available with reference to the large amount of pulque consumed in rural areas.

In addition to the consumption of pulque, the total production and importation of wines, liquors, and spirits of all kinds was given in the year 1923 as 42,848,035 litres -- also, probably a large underestimate in view of the fact that aguardiente and mescal are home-made products to a large extent and hence do not appear in the official statistics. Consumption of beer in the year indicated was 48,485,746 litres.

Reduced to terms of alcoholic content, the Department of Statistics has calculated that there is an annual consumption equivalent to 7.93 litres of pure alcohol per person in Mexico, compared with 4.20 in Holland, 2.31 in Norway. It is interesting to note that in the year 1924 there were in the limits of Mexico City 4,093 establishments selling alcoholic beverages, or approximately one to every 160 inhabitants.

TRINIDAD GARCIA

# PERSONALITY AND FAMILY DISORGANIZATION

## The Case of Trinidad García

Trinidad García is 12 years old. Despite the fact that he is small for his age and appears sickly and undernourished, with his brown wavy hair and large brown eyes he is an attractive youngster. Usually he is barefooted and hatless -- his only clothing is a pair of ragged trousers and a dirty shirt.

Trinidad's chief interest in life is the movies. He goes to the movies every day either at the Goya, the Cervantes, or the Díaz de León. He says his favorite actors are Lupe Vélez and Ramón Navarro and adds that he doesn't like films about love -- only the funny ones.

For the last two years, Trinidad has lived in the streets until about a week ago (when he friend took him to the public dormitory) he slept in the central plaza, where, he says, a great many other boys also spend the night. Now he sleeps at the dormitory and is very content there; they are good to him and give him orange-leaf tea and bread in the morning and at night.

Every morning he goes to the newspaper office near the central alameda and buys papers to sell. He buys ten or twelve papers at two for a nickle and sells them for five cents each. Around noon, he goes to the lunch stalls at the Merced market or at the Alameda (when there are stalls there) and carries water or does some other errand for his food. They give him, he says, "what's left over, like they do the dogs." Sometimes for a sandwich or a nickle he sings to the people eating at the stands. In the afternoon (and at other times) when he hasn't any money for food or for the movies he begs on the streets. Most of the money he gets for food

is spent on sweets. When his clothes are worn out, he goes to private residences and begs for an old shirt or some underwear. They always give him something and he throws away whatever he takes off.

Trinidad's parents, Trinidad García, 34 years old, and Guadalupe Soto, 31, are from Guadalupe Hidalgo. They were married in the Villa de Guadalupe in 1912, when they were very young -- García 16 and Guadalupe 13.

At the time of his marriage, García was peddling bread and earning 1.25 pesos a day. Little by little he advanced in his trade, but there were times when the young couple was very poor. They lived at first in the Villa de Guadalupe. Then they went to Veracruz where García worked for his brother in the restaurant for three years. After this they returned to Mexico City.

The first years of married life were passed in harmony. But quarrels and tribulations were not long in coming. García went about with other women and his wife, of a violent and impulsive nature, was very jealous.

The home life of the Garcías was further complicated by the appearance of children in rapid succession -- in all, ten children were born. (However, only four are now living: Carlos, 13; Trinidad, 12; Cecilio, 9; and Leonardo, 7. The last mentioned is deaf and dumb.)

As time went on, the quarrels in the García home became more and more frequent and bitter. García drank a great deal and continued to run after other women. The wife, in turn, felt herself justified in living as she pleased and began to grow

careless of the children.

About three years ago, according to García, when he came home late one night he found his children asleep and his wife gone. The next day when she returned she said that she had been out on a party with some friends. This was the end. In a few days García left his home and went to live in another part of the city.

Guadalupe, his wife, continued to live in the old home. Matters apparently rapidly went from bad to worse; Guadalupe began to drink heavily and her sexual relations became more and more promiscuous. She treated the children badly, especially when she was drunk. It was at this time (about 2 years ago) that Trinidad, unable to stand any longer the jeers of his companions about his mother's loose life, or the beatings which his mother gave him, ran away from home and started his career as a beggar and vagabond. Trinidad explains that the reason he did not go to his father's house was because "his father was then living with a woman of the streets" and Trinidad "could not bear to hear this woman's child call his father papa."

Some seven months ago, Guadalupe took her children (except Trinidad who had already run away) and went to live in the home of her brother-in-law, a man by the name of Suárez. Guadalupe told her brother-in-law that her husband would no longer give her money. Suárez, whose wife had recently died, agreed to let Guadalupe stay if she would take care of his house and his children (three girls from 3 to 9 years of age and one boy 14). This arrangement was continued for only two months because, according to Suárez, Guadalupe beat his children (Accord-

ing to Carlos García, however, his mother and Suárez could not get along together because Suárez wanted her to be his mistress). While Guadalupe was living at Suárez' house, she gave birth to a still-born child.

After leaving Suárez' house, Guadalupe went to stay with a friend who owns a pulque shop. At present no one knows where she is living.

Trinidad's father, Trinidad García, is short, dark, rather ordinary looking, about 34 years old. He is serious, quiet, and does not seem to be very strong. At the present time he lives with a woman named Brígida and her five-year-old child in a small tenement at 22 Niño Perdido street. García is now making around eight pesos a day as a master baker. He seems to be honest and a hard worker.

Cecilio and Carlos are now living with their father and the latter is being taught the trade of baker. Leonardo, the youngest boy, has been put in the deaf and dumb asylum. García says that he is very ashamed to have his other son, Trinidad, begging on the streets. He has tried on several occasions to get Trinidad to come and live at home, but without success.

(A few weeks ago, at the instigation of one of the case workers for the Beneficencia Pública, Trinidad was put in the Industrial School. He ran away from this school when the boys fought with him and called him a "guttersnipe," and isagain living in the streets.)

Trinidad García is at once the product and the victim of the "freedom" of the city. For only in a large metropolitan area such as Mexico City has become in the last few decades is it so easily possible for a child to run wild in the streets and to live without interference almost completely out of the range of those controlling and restraining influences which characterize the normal family and group life of the small community. Trinidad is a vagrant and a beggar, but back of this conduct lies a history of a disorganized and disintegrated home. And back of this broken home is the story familiar to all students of the city, a story of alcoholism, irresponsible sexual behavior, -- of parents unable to adjust themselves under the strain of the demands of life in the large secondary group. To understand Trinidad's behavior, we must first understand the environment which has produced it and made it possible.

The Growth of Mexico City

The growth of the population of Mexico City in the last three decades, whether judged in terms of the previous history of the city or in comparison with the growth of the Republic as a whole, is little short of amazing. In 1900 the population of the City was 368,889. In 1910, it was 470,659, an increase of 27.2%. By 1921, the population had increased another 30.7% and totaled 615,367. Finally, the preliminary returns of the census just completed for the year 1930 indicate an increase of 57.3% over the year 1921 and give the total population as just under 1,000,000. In thirty years, the population of Mexico City has increased by 162.5% (see table XI ). The figures for the Federal District (in addition to the City itself, the District includes various outlying suburbs which

TABLE XI

COMPARATIVE GROWTH OF POPULATION IN MEXICO CITY, THE FEDERAL DISTRICT, AND THE WHOLE REPUBLIC -- 1900-1930 1/

| | 1900 | 1910 | % | 1921 | % | 1930 | % | 1930 over 1900 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico City | 368,889 | 470,659 | 27.2 plus | 615,367 | 30.7 plus | 968,443 2/ | 57.3 plus | 162.5 plus |
| Federal District | 541,516 | 719,052 | 30.9 plus | 906,063 | 24.6 plus | 1,217,802 | 34.4 plus | 124.7 plus |
| Whole Republic | 13,607,259 | 15,160,369 | 11.3 plus | 14,334,780 | 5.4 minus | 15,000,000 3/ | 4.6 plus | 10.2 plus |

1/ Figures for 1900-21 from Jesús Galindo y Villa, Geografía de la República Mexicana, México, 1927, Vol. II, pp.448 ff.; for 1930 the figures are provisional, see "Universal", May 21, 1930.

2/ Including the suburbs of Tacuba, Tacubaya, and Mixcoac, which were not part of the City in 1921.

3/ Estimated; see "Estadística Nacional", Aug. 15, 1928.

taken together form a metropolitan area which is little more than an extension of the City) run parallel to those for the City. The population of the Federal District in 1900 was 541,516. By 1930, this number had increased to 1,217,802, or 124.7%.

The real significance of these figures can, perhaps, best be appreciated by comparing them with the trend of population of the Republic as a whole. Between 1900 and 1910, the population of the Republic increased only 11.3%. In 1921, there was manifested an actual decrease in the number of inhabitants as compared with 1910 to the amount of 5.4% which was only partly regained by the 4.6% increase indicated in the estimated figures for 1930. In other words, while the population of Mexico City was increasing at the rate of 162.5% in the thirty years 1900-1930 the population of the whole Republic only increased 10.2%!

The concentration of population (i.e. the number of people per square kilometer) in the Federal District in 1921 was 13.8 times that of the next most densely populated state in Mexico (Tlaxcala) and more than 350 times greater than that in such sparsely settled states as Chihuahua and Sonora.

Some of the reasons for the unparalleled growth of Mexico City during the last two or three decades -- such as the generally unsettled condition ~~of the country~~ and the increasing industrialization of the country, resulting in the concentration of small factories in the capital -- have already been touched upon in a previous section of this study. It is not, however, our purpose at this point to delineate the causes of the growth of the capital city, but rather to establish the fact of this growth as a basis for raising certain questions concerning the social significance

of such a rapid increase in population as the above figures indicate.

The researches of modern sociologists in the field of urban life seem to show that certain types of pathological phenomena are peculiarly characteristic of large cities. The city represents the extreme of what may be called the secondary society. In it such control as exists is formal in character and in definite contrast with the face-to-face primary type of control which exists in the small village. Social control in the city is loose and transient; in the small village it is intimate and impelling. In the city, control is removed to the external agencies of law and government; in the village, control is more a matter of personal response. The city is essentially a place in which to survive one must be able to adjust quickly by learning new modes of behavior. The city demands more rapid movements on the part of its inhabitants than does the small community; it increases the number and variety of contacts; it intensifies the struggle for status, and accelerates competition; the city uses more of the learned and fewer of the native capacities. In a word, the city means movement and change, the breaking up of old associations and habit patterns and the forming of new ones. The individual who cannot adjust himself to the demands of the city, who cannot achieve the habits and attitudes called for by the large secondary group is inevitably the individual who becomes disorganized and dislocated and is often the individual who in one way or another becomes a problem for society.

The capital of Mexico has, as shown above, during the last two decades rapidly become a large metropolitan area. As such it has increasingly exhibited the pathological phenomena of

personality and family disorganization characteristic of all large cities. Indeed, the phenomena of disorganization here referred to have perhaps been more serious in Mexico City than in urban centers in other countries due to the fact that its rapid growth has been largely the result of an accession of great numbers of individuals from the small village and ranch communities in which the majority of the population of Mexico has lived from time immemorial.

It is precisely these people coming from the protected primary type of group life who have the greatest difficulty adjusting themselves to the demands of the formal secondary life of the city and who most often turn up in the criminal courts, hospitals, asylums, and other institutions whose business it is to deal with those who fall by the wayside. (See Tables I and II for statistics on Urban and Rural types of beggars.)

Indices of social and personal disorganization in Mexico City

Crime represents at once the most outstanding and significant index of the extent of social disorganization and the breakdown of social control in a community. In large cities the amount of crime is almost always greater both relatively and absolutely than it is in communities of rural population or of small towns and villages. Mexico City is no exception to this general rule. In 1926, according to a study made by the National Department of Statistics of the number of criminals in the Federal District as compared with other political areas in the country having the same or a larger population, it was shown that in the Federal District with a population of 1,025,377 there were 11,206 criminals, whereas in the state of Jalisco with a population of 1,208, 874 there were only 1,308 criminals; in Puebla (population -- 1,032,941), a total of 1,469 criminals; and out of the 1,226,890 people in the state of

Vera Cruz, only 1,659 criminals. (1)

Moreover, it would appear that not only are there a very large number of criminals in the Federal District as compared with other and less urbanized areas in Mexico, but that for some years there has been a definite trend upward in the number of crimes committed. Thus, for example, in 1922,-27,689 crimes were registered with the Ministry of Public Justice in Mexico City; in 1923, the number was 28,608; in 1924, it had increased to 29,809; and in 1929 the total was 31,917. (2)

A second significant indication of the increasing amount of social maladjustment in Mexico City is to be found in the figures for suicide. As may be noted in table XII, in the first five years of the decade 1917-26 the number of successful suicides in Mexico City averaged 27.4 and the number of attempted suicides 2.4. In the last five years of the decade in question, the average number of successful suicides had increased to 51 -- i.e. a little less than 100% over the previous five years -- and the number of attempted suicides to 25, or well over 1000%. (3)

Still another index of social and personal disorganization, and one of especial interest in connection with the case study presented at the beginning of this section, is to be found in the number of divorces and desertions in a given period of time. Statistics relating to desertions are, of course, not available and there is no way of telling how many broken homes there are in Mexico City of the type from which Trinidad García was launched on his career of begging and delinquency. Since Mexico is a Catholic country, the statistics on divorces are also very unsatisfactory and inadequate in revealing the amount of family disorganization.

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF SUICIDES AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDES REGISTERED IN THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC JUSTICE IN THE CITY OF MEXICO -- 1917-1926 1/

| Year | Suicides | Five-Year Average | Attempted Suicides | Five-Year Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1917 | 28 | | 2 | |
| 1918 | 19 | | 3 | |
| 1919 | 32 | | 4 | |
| 1920 | 31 | | 2 | |
| 1921 | 27 | 27.4 | 1 | 2.4 |
| 1922 | 53 | | | |
| 1923 | 57 | | 1 | |
| 1924 | 45 | | 14 | |
| 1925 | 60 | | 45 | |
| 1926 | 40 | 51 | 65 | 25 |

1/ "Estadística Nacional", Jan. 15, 1927, p.9

The most that can be said on the basis of the available facts is that since the revolution of 1910 there has been a definite movement toward more liberal divorce laws in Mexico. This change in the legal attitude undoubtedly reflects an important change in public opinion.

The role which the broken, inadequate, and abnormal family plays in relation to child begging of the type exhibited in the behavior of Trinidad García and to more serious forms of delinquency can perhaps best be indicated by quoting the following figures published in a report by the Juvenile Court of Mexico City: According to this report 32% of the children appearing before the Court in the year 1929 were without a father, 10% without a mother, and 24% lacked both parents. Sixty percent of the children came from homes in which the parents were alcoholic, 50% from homes in which one or both of the parents were infected with syphilis, and 24% from homes in which one or both of the parents were classified as psychopathic. (4)