



I VERA CRUZ



DAWN startled the night, and you could feel the heat coming. There was no morning in the east, only peaks of fire on the sea rim. The lifeless water shrank to the heat and the lank wind drooped under the burden. The shore lay inert

awaiting the hot impact of the day. Sky and water were pig-iron gray and the town grayed silver. The wan light on the pharos dwindled.

Mexico . . .

Thin towers of pale stone; domes of lilac tiles; red shanks of rusted cranes. . . . The west was shallow blue, spotless. Except for the hump of Orizaba rising white and frozen out of the dim valley.

A wave of heat submerged the reef of the morning, spattered the shore, waking

the three dirty buzzards limp on the gilt cross of the cathedral. The air was dead and hot. The silence was hot. Nothing moved but the heat.

The towers were lovely in the colorless light. Red balconies on white house fronts. Blue balconies on pale-yellow house fronts. Green balconies on pale-blue house fronts. The windows were black and empty. Bill said: "I don't know why . . . This place makes me think of Richard Harding Davis." It did. That was curious. . . . The town looked adventurous and not quite real. Dark women began unfurling great white sheets on the balconies to hide the interiors from the direct beat of the sun. It was as though the whole place were getting under sail; an expedition of clumsy ships bound for the low tangle of the foot-hills. The day broke in a tumult of light and color. A column of soldiers in assorted uniforms came abruptly around the custom-house. Two buglers and four drummers played a pagan march of three descending and three rising notes. It was like a dance. We half

expected to see the soldiers begin the opening pattern of a ballet, but they relaxed over their rifles and dabbed at their sweated faces.

The heat struck the back of your neck like a whip-lash. . . .

Mexico.

smelling spot where we sat. Going up—a long way—slowly. With great labor like being born again. Difficult to breathe; like being born. Calculating the height from the metre marks on the station signs. The valley falling away; tediously slow; winding up. The mountains turning old



Along the sky-line, black still mountains.

II

MOUNTAINS

ON the way up . . .

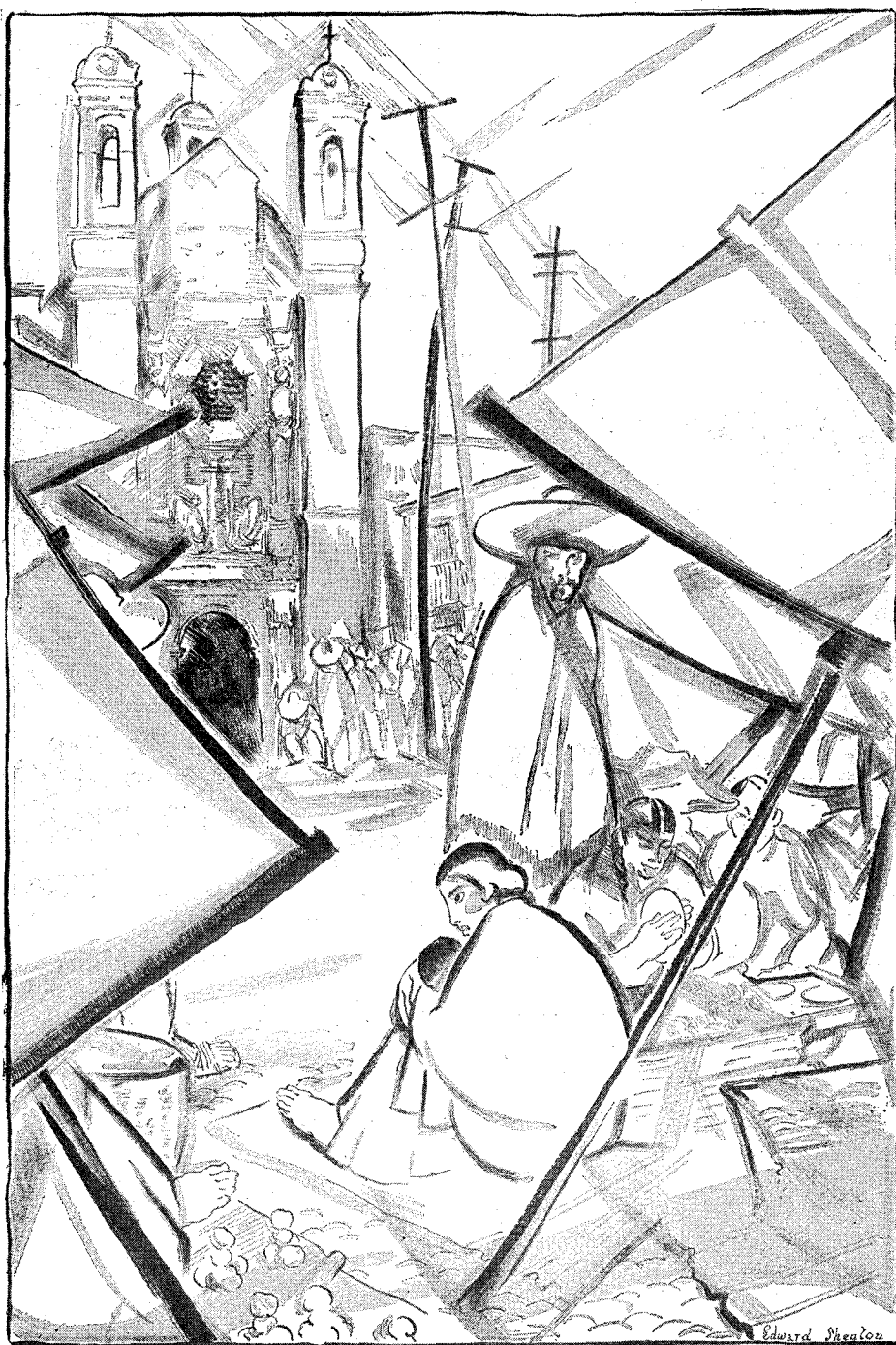
The heat still lay in the car, it hung like a great banner from the rear. Dust and heat flung back to the shore, toward Vera Cruz. Rapidly ascending, the twin converging rails. At a station all the passengers bought gardenias. The car smelled like a perfumery shop on the Rue Royal, like a rich sick garden. Every one had a lapful of the ivory, sweet flowers. On the way up . . .

The near mountains were friendly green. In the distance the mountains turned blue. And then black. An immense bowl with a green bottom, a blue band, a black rim. Filled with clouds. And a tiny sweet-

and barren; dying at the peaks. The continual death. Dead a long time . . .

Far below, the living valley of bright green. Up there, a keen wind blowing among the dead bones of mountains. Clouds and rain bursting. All the time the car smelling like a wan perfumed woman. No more heat. The hot banner torn loose. Torn out of a warm womb into a thin cold living . . .

Along the sky-line, black still mountains; east, south, north, west. Old, bitter mountains, weary of the game—squatting on the edge of the world. Watching the Aztecs building their pyramids. Watching the Spaniards building their cathedrals. Watching us taking photographs of the pyramids and the cathedrals. Having a good laugh at all of us . . .



Somnambulistic city, peopled by crowds waiting.—Page 462.

III

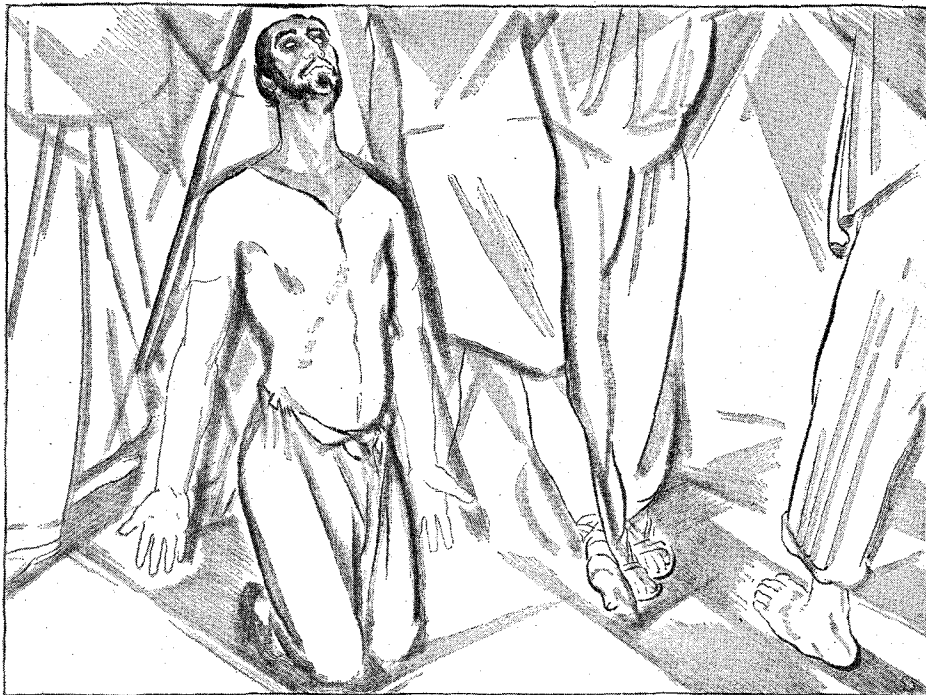
NIGHT IN MEXICO

Up and down the half-lit street.

Señorita con ojos de China, standing on the balcony, leaning on the rusted iron balcony, arms folded on the chilled iron railing, among the dull flowers folded to

... Soft the hands applauding; pat-pat-pat-pat. In the dim tortilleria ... "Navar go on street. Navar go in trolley. Navar go in camion. Mexican girl no do no nothing. I do not like." ...

Ojos de China, black Chinese eyes; gazing over Mexico, over the flat roofs, the frayed towers, the pyramids of Sun and



He knelt in the middle of the pavement, his blind head back thrown.—Page 462.

the cool mountain wind. Stupid little song-birds in wicker cages, all sleeping.

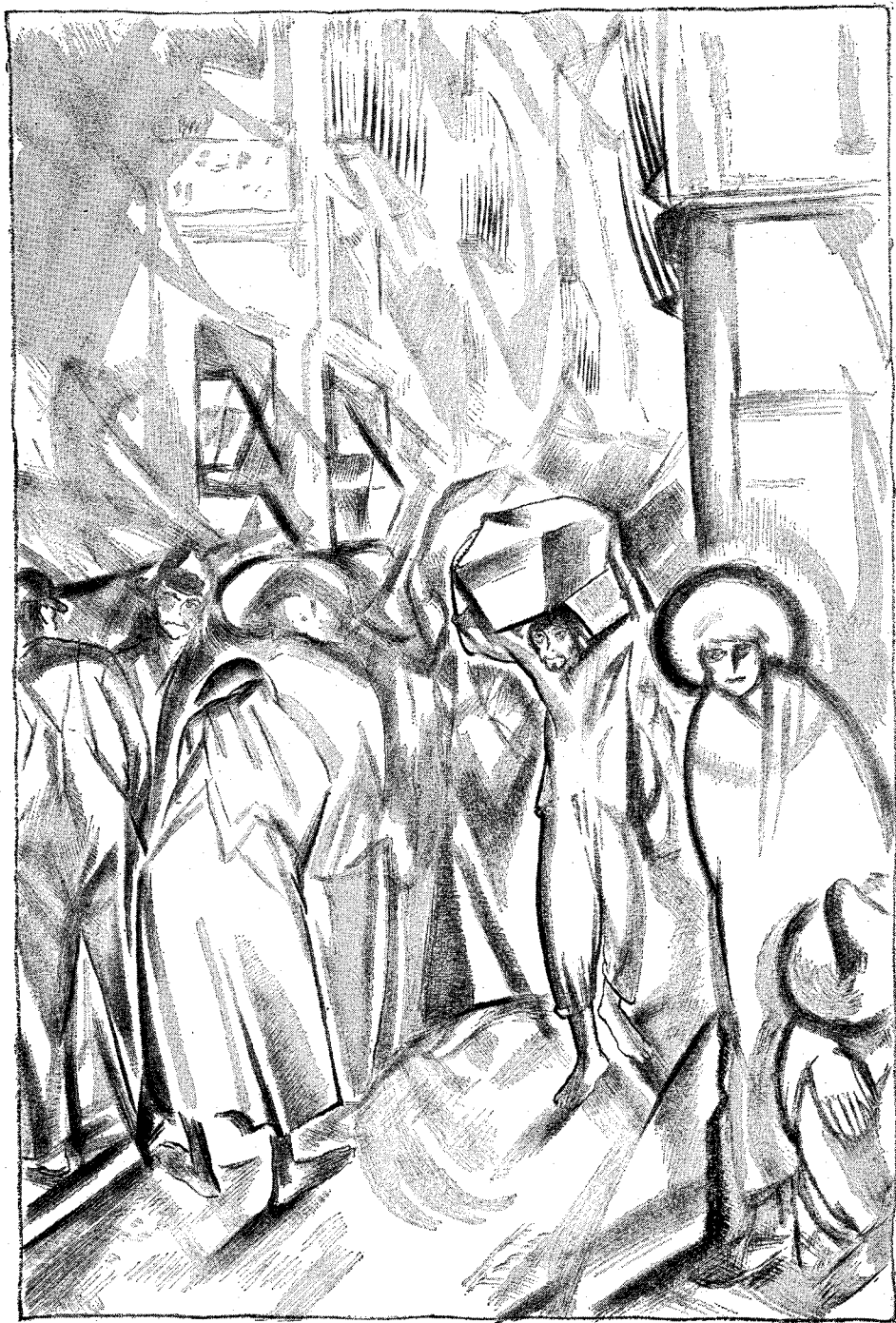
Ojos de China, slant dark eyes; the lids half folded like dark thin wings: folded on her cheeks ... Dreaming of the "States," longing to go to the "States." Eighteen years old and crazy to go to Boston, to Chicago, to New York, and Philadelphia. With small hands amber color, and amber skin. *Querida!*

In the tortilleria with the fancy name, the dark women pat the dough, sounding applause. Pat-pat-pat-pat. Applauding her dream; the sad-eyed women who never had been beyond San Angel or Xochimilco. ... "Woman is to give love to that one she love. How she know who she love if navar she go nowhere?"

Moon, the mountains; over the dust of Montezuma, the lost bones of Cortez, the remembered beauty of Carlotta, the stupid grandeur of Diaz, along the wind-worn valley to the jungle, Orizaba, heat-drugged Vera Cruz—where the boats go north to New York and Boston and Philadelphia—the "States" ... In the "States"—*Muchas cosas felices* ...

Restlessness in the hearts of women the world over. Restlessness in her heart, Mexican child-woman. ... "I do not want to do no nothing. Sit and sew all day. And wait." ... Pat—pat-pat-pat. The dark women flattening the silver cakes of the tortilla in their dusky hands.

"Tsst"—to the black cat at her ankles —"We go north someday." Drinking bit-



The street of the coffin-makers.

ter freedom from the chill cup of the night; drinking restlessness. . . . "Sometime I go—how you say?—Return? To the 'States.' I like there. . . ."

Up and down, below the balcony, the half-lit street.

IV

ORIZABA

THERE was silver patterned down the legs of his tight black trousers. There was a design in silver on the edge of his enormous sombrero. He wore a pale shirt embroidered in orange and green and scarlet and gold; and brass spurs three inches across the rowels. His pony had a blond mane and tail. All the women turned, sighing after him, that Sunday morning in Orizaba. He rode down the street past the row of lousy Fords and looked at no one.

V

FEET

ALL night you could hear them, bare dark feet with splayed toes and cracked heels, dragging softly over the pavement. They clung to the earth, they moved with great effort, never swinging free of the hard surface . . . All night long . . . Muffling the sound of the wind, submerging the low voices. The thick music of bare feet; in a single phrase, unchanging; coming endlessly, departing. . . . Feet indifferent to heat, cold, wet, sharpness, and hardness. Feet of families passing; of single wanderers. Feet stamping a pattern without logic, without comprehension; treading an idle pilgrimage. In the darkness the sound rises; from the silver-mines, the oil-fields, the sugar-cane growths, the north deserts, the maguey-fields; from the ruins of Mitla, from the green henequén-fields of Yucatan. It is the monotonous song of Mexico, the history of Mexico written in dust. At night you can hear clearly . . . But the sun rises . . . Swift click of French heels, soft suck of motor tires, steady beat of leather and rubber . . . Only at night . . .

VI

CALLE BOLIVER

HE knelt in the middle of the pavement his blind head back thrown, his arms

rigid at his sides, the thumbs pointing out. He had no legs below the knee. Black hair curled over his forehead. Fine dark hair drooped at the corners of his mouth. Little curly hairs grew at the edges of his jaw. The people stepped about him. Every day he knelt there. Once a woman gave him a battered two-centavo piece. He opened his toothless mouth and made a strange sound, as though he were cursing God.

VII

MEXICO CITY

THE city moves with a heavy, slow rhythm. The graph of its pulse is labored and equal. On the Avenida Madero the motors creep patiently. The dark women rise languidly from the curbs at the market-place and squat again listlessly. In somnolent gestures hands and faces follow the drowsy words, the harsh singing voices blurring the hard syllables; keeping time to the regular beat of the patted tortillas.

All the color is heavy, as though the mountains shadowed the city. The flow of life seems to resemble the worn line of the dead volcanoes. There is no brilliance even under the midday sun. A weary city, breathing with effort. The church towers lean exhaustedly away from the original perpendicular intention.

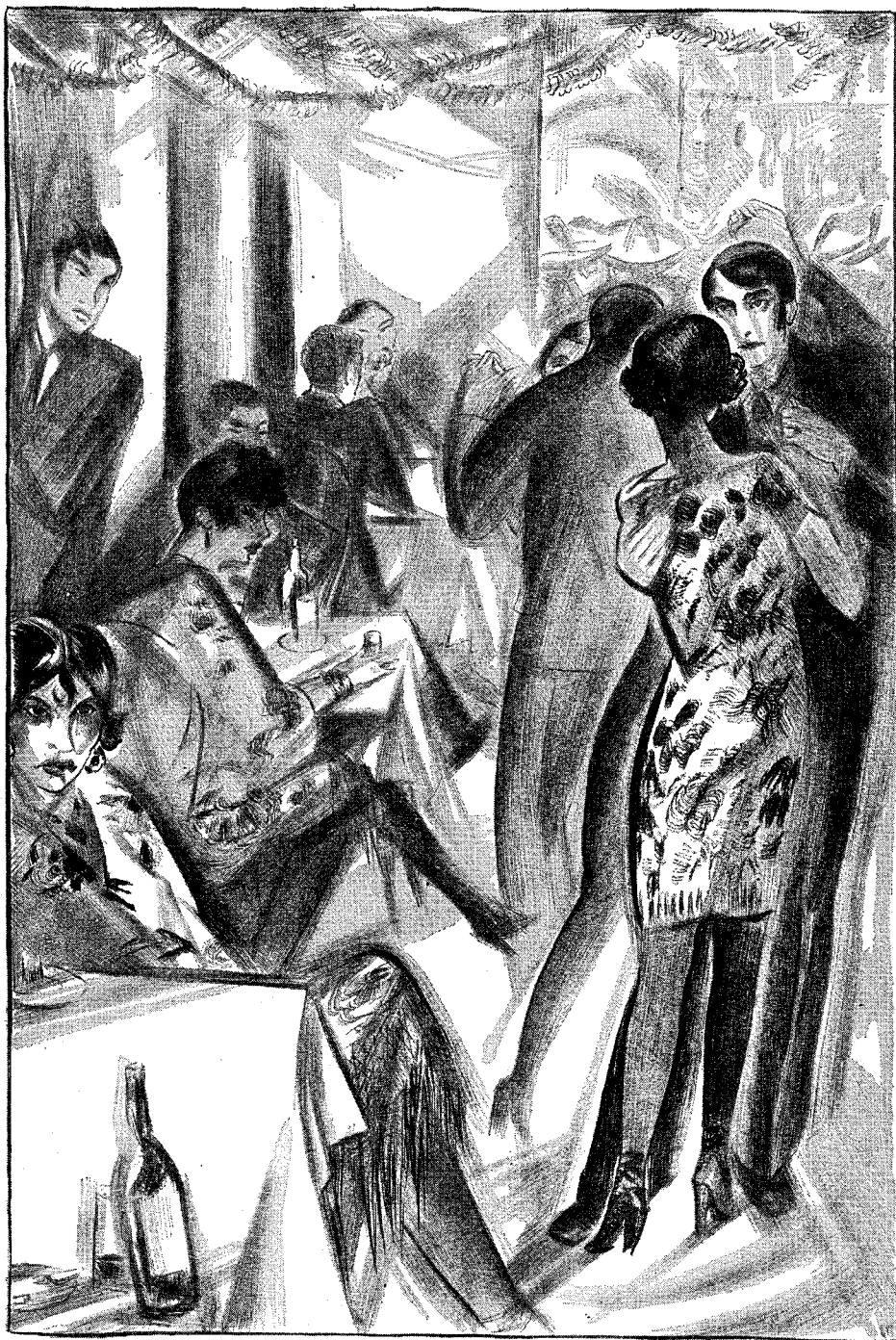
The centre of the city is a space of patient activity engulfed by an immobile vastness of adobe and plaster one-story houses. Silently they circumscribe the small citadel of modernity, presenting their impassive drab walls in an endless beleaguering of poverty.

At night the movement subsides. The quiet deepens over the countless rooms with their lithos of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the crucifixes hanging beside copper pans and gaudy calendars from business houses. For a while young girls in very short skirts, cheap silk stockings, and bright scarfs stand in groups about the dark entrances. Whispering voices cadence the night wind. After these have gone only the sleeping beggars and the police occupy the dim streets.

Somnambulistic city, peopled by crowds waiting.

Waiting . . .

Sitting on the curbs about the Zocalo.



The silent bored girls dancing at the Café Iris.—Page 465.



Afloat on the canals of Xochimilco.—Page 465,

Squatting under the three-pronged sunshields in the markets. Dozing in the doorways. Slumped on the stone benches of the Alameda—waiting.

Women with flat faces and black slant eyes; men with intent swart faces; children with worn dull faces. Endlessly patient. . . .

Waiting.

For what?

Food to appease hunger? . . .

Sleep to revive bodies? . . .

Passion to stir hearts? . . .

Children to be born? the old to die? a thrown centavo? rain? sun? night? day? for the great Serpent? the comforting Christ? . . . Rags worn by thousands accumulate a grandeur. Thousands waiting for an unknown coming acquire a dignity.

VIII

DEPARTURE

AFTER the siesta we took a car and drove to Boca del Rio. The road was along the beach, winding between the small waves of the languid surf and great dunes and banks of matted foliage. The heat was still intense. The rush of the car cooled the air slightly. We relaxed and gazed drowsily at the two distant islands. Buzzards hopped from under the wheels of the car. They did not fly. They hopped clumsily and glared at us from savage red eyes. There were hundreds of them, feeding on refuse from a near-by slaughterhouse, hundreds of dirty, wrinkled birds.

Sometimes the car entered the surf where the beach was compressed by the rising tide and the heaps of drift. The drift was different from our beaches. It was mostly bamboo and enormous stumps of trees. The driver talked constantly, but the heat was too great for the effort to understand Spanish.

At Boca del Rio we sat for a long time looking across the brown river with rows of ochre nets staked in the current to trap the fish; watching the dugout canoes and the huts with their deep-thatched roofs. The scene resembled Africa. The peons glanced at us carelessly. When we returned the sun had gone. The whole sky was pale blue and objects against the sky had an astonishing purity of line and depth of color. We stopped at La

Playa and went to sit at the small tables overlooking the wire-enclosed bathing-grounds. Twenty or thirty Mexican men and women were bathing. They swam badly. The water is very warm and swimmers tire easily. We ordered some beer. The day was still bright. It was peaceful there, and comfortable. The buzzards flew heavily up the beach from the south. They flew in pairs back toward the thickets behind Vera Cruz. The color of the evening changed to orange and faint pinks. The houses were brilliant in the glow. The white costumes of the people had an extraordinary sheen. We came on into Vera Cruz and went aboard the steamer. Night enveloped the town. There was no great amount of illumination. Pale flares of light accented the flat house fronts and the balconies. Only the pharos was bright. . . .

The steamer sailed slowly out the harbor, turning in a wide arc, barely having headway.

We did not want to go; neither did we want to stay. We could not remember clearly anything we had seen; but we hadn't tried to see very much; not pyramids or cathedrals or archaeological remains. We weren't sure why we felt sorry, leaving. Remembering was difficult, even with the pharos still shining to starboard. Mexico was receding not only into the dark, it was falling back into itself. As though created by our arrival and dissipated by our departure. It fell back through time, year after year, through endless centuries. Worn, subtle old country. The flower of Mexico eternally plucked at the bud, as the peons strip the maguey before the blossoming. . . . Only fragments remained in our memories; the bull-ring looking from the outside like a modern velodrome; the enormous valley of Cuernavaca sunk in a sea of tinted mountains; the singing of Tapia and Rubio in the absurd, amusing Teatro Lirico; the dreary boat-loads of Mexicans afloat on the dull canals of Xochimilco; the silent, bored girls dancing at the Café Iris, the gorgeous murals of Diego Rivera. These—and the wind blowing; the wind blowing and blowing. Down from the brooding mountains—and hosts of people wandering quietly, waiting . . .

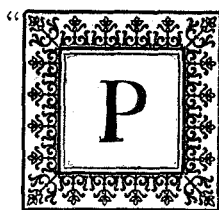
Adios, Mexico.

The Job of Governor

BY GEORGE S. SILZER

Governor of New Jersey, 1923-1926

"A man's a man for a' that."



PLEASE send me ten dollars for carfare and expenses. I want to go to your inauguration. I worked hard for your election and want to be on hand."

Thus began the term of one governor, and thus began his troubles and the demands upon his purse, his time, and his energy.

The job of being governor is much like any other—it depends on the type of man who happens to be the governor, just as the job of being a bank president, a railroad executive, lawyer, doctor, business man, or a taxi-driver depends on the type of man who is doing that work.

Then, too, temperament plays an important part. A lazy man will be a lazy governor; a weak man will be a weak governor. An unambitious, incompetent, or dishonest individual will not change when he puts on the robes of state; he will carry these characteristics into office with him.

I do not mean to say that no change comes after induction into office. Many changes do take place. The demagogue placed in a position of responsibility is no longer a demagogue, or at least not so much of a one or one so radical as before. Many men honestly advocate on the stump policies which they afterward learn cannot be carried out, and often they find a change of policy not only advisable but necessary.

Too many burdens are placed upon the conscientious governor. One who takes the duties lightly throws off as many burdens as possible, but he who takes them seriously, and who wants to know his job and do it well, has little or no time for other matters, even though he be thoroughly trained for the task.

If the man who does any job is mentally

and temperamentally fitted for the work, he will do well; if not, he will be more or less of a failure.

Many governors are chosen because of their fitness and training, but the chance of gubernatorial success is much less than that in other professions or occupations. In the latter, men are usually trained for the task; they have deliberately chosen them as a life-work, generally because they had a taste for them or an enthusiasm that made them worth while and interesting. In these circumstances success naturally follows.

It is not so in the former. Few men are trained for the gubernatorial office, and many are nominated notwithstanding their lack of training. Some are chosen for other reasons.

Charles E. Hughes became available because of his success in handling an insurance investigation; Charles Whitman by reason of his able handling of the famous Becker trial in New York City; Colonel Theodore Roosevelt because of his popularity as the head of the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War.

Others are selected because they are known to have firm views on public questions. Such was the case of Governor Ritchie, who strongly opposed prohibition.

Others have been selected in order to groom them for a possible presidential nomination, as was Woodrow Wilson. There are still others who are selected for no other reason than that they were the choice of those who control the dominant party in the particular State, as in Republican Pennsylvania and Massachusetts and in the strongly Democratic States of the South. These and other similar reasons account for the choice.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that there are more failures among executives than in business and the professions.