

Miss Madge Conwell Describes Mexican Revolution Incidents

Miss Madge Conwell, graduate of Chowan in the class of 1912 has written for publication in the Chowanian the following very interesting article on her recent experiences in Mexico, which she entitles "Scenes from the Mexican Revolution."

Miss Conwell's father was a medical missionary in Puebla, and she herself was reared there. She left as a refugee during the Mexican revolution in 1914. She had previously graduated from Chowan, and at this time she entered Cornell, and was graduated in 1915. During 1916-17 she was a student at the Missionary Training School in Chicago. In 1917 she returned to Chowan as professor of Bible, history, and sociology and remained here until 1920. At present Miss Conwell is a teacher in a Methodist school in Puebla, Mexico.

"Since the fifth of last December, the thought of all Mexico has been centered on one thing, the Revolution. Suddenly life had changed its dull grey for the vivid red of war interest, and soon it was difficult to even recall the feeling of calm security which had preceded this colorful existence. A situation growing daily more tense had given warning of the possibility of war yet until the last there was hope among the people that it might be avoided.

"It would be imprudent at this time to attempt to give more than a few glimpses of the revolution, as it has touched Puebla and some of its inhabitants. From the first day of fighting, its effects were felt in the rise in price of all commodities, the scarcity of various foods, the delay of mails, and great economic depression. Yes, we have no bananas, became an actual experience since that fruit, as common to all Mexico as the poor could not be procured in many places; however, that was the least of our worries.

"From the first, rumor selected this city as a storm center and when airplanes began to glide over us like giant birds, we realized that rumor would in all probability become a truth. A menacing stillness settled over Puebla, the very spirit of the city seemed to be waiting with abated breath for some catastrophe. Finally the tension was broken in a way very different from any we had expected. One afternoon the troops lined up and evacuated the city while in a short time the rebel forces marched in and took possession without a ripple of disturbance. The expected had happened in a gloriously unexpected manner. We were cut off from all communication with the outside world by letter, telegraph, or train, but strange to say, though the people realized that the situation, if prolonged for any length of time would become serious, they seemed very little disturbed.

"This time of comparative calm was very brief, for soon airplanes began to fly over again and rumors of a great battle were to be heard on all sides. Once more the streets took on a breathless quiet, stores were closed and people began to watch the airplanes with an air of anxious waiting. The levying of a war tax and the sight

of dead and wounded carried through the streets brought us the realization that we were in the midst of real warfare. The sounds of fighting came nearer and nearer until at last there was a battle just outside the city. From that time the tensioned unbearable. About four o'clock on the morning of December 22 continuous heavy firing could be heard, gradually approaching and growing in intensity. By eight o'clock we realized that we were to be the scene of the long expected "big battle." Shells began to literally rain down as well as whiz by in all directions. The doors and windows of every Mexican house are provided with heavy wooden shutters for just such occasions and it is needless to say that these were all closed, giving the city an air of desertion.

"After some time had passed, the shouts of the soldiers could be heard as they entered the city; and hand to hand fighting began at our very doors. About two hours later there came a lull in the firing, and we heard the beautiful clear victory call of the bugle. Almost immediately a most weird sound, somewhat resembling the American Indian's tom-tom, could be heard accompanied by the tramp, tramp of marching feet. It was the Yaqui Indian drums beating out their march of victory, which meant that the price paid for the possession of the city had been very great for both sides in dead and wounded. The fear of looting had been ever greater than that of the battle itself, but fortunately that was not added to other troubles. Since that time Puebla has not been the scene of active fighting, though it has narrowly escaped it at times.

"Another part of Southern Mexico now became the storm center and involved some of the American residents of Puebla. Three teachers and a nurse had left this city, December fourth, for the town of Oaxala which is near the famous Mitla ruins. Soon after their arrival, the city came into the hands of the rebels, thus cutting off all means of communication with Puebla. As there seemed no possible way of return they waited as patiently as could be expected for five weeks. At that time a train was announced for Tehnacan, a town a few hours' ride from Puebla and against the advice of everyone, they decided to take it. Much to their surprise they arrived without any difficulty, but found it necessary to wait for the town to change hands before they could hope to get a train for Puebla. At the end of two days the government troops gained possession of Tehnacan which enabled them to resume their journey. They left Sunday afternoon, expecting to reach this city in a few hours. Just at dusk, they were greatly startled by the sound of rapid firing; instantly the Mexican passengers realized that the train was being attacked, and flung themselves on the floor of the car which action was soon imitated by the Americans.

"After what seemed to them sev-

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