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WATAUGA DEMOCRAT

An Independent Weekly Newspaper-Established in the Year 1888

Dr. A. P. Kephart Continues Story on **Travels and Experiences in Old Mexico**

By DR. A. P. KEPHART Mexico is our nearest foreign neighbor. I use the word 'foreign' because Mexico is so much more different and the extremes are so much greater than in Canada, in the sense that the whole design of living, the climate, and the topography are different and strange to us. Mexico is almost all of it farther south than Florida and extends as far west as California and east as far as the tip of Florida; almost all south of the Topic of Cancer and therefore tropical or semi-tropical; almost all mountainous and very high, making for the most part a tropical cli-mate tempered by high altitudes. The people in the different States and sections vary in illitheracy from 50 to 75%, and, while in one town they boast of more than thirty millionairs, for the most part they are very poor, a large proportion living in one room huts without floors, win-dows, stoves, sanitary facilities or furniture. This picture is changing very rapidly now with the coming of good paved roads. and electricity and new schools, mong the mountain Indians resistance to progress is very severe. The witch doctor has more influence than the government assigned graduate physician and the parental illiteracy more than the attractions of the new government schools and the pressures of compulsory attendance which cannot be enforced. For example, it is not unusual for the physician to find a pregnant woman as delivery time approaches in agony and turning blue from the cord tight around just below her ribs; as prescribed by the witch doctor, to prevent the unborn child from going in the wrong direction. Of course we do not have to go as far as Mexico to find similar and as stupid superstitions with which physicians and others have to contend.

President Aleman is almost universally admired. His people mourn because they cannot legally re-elect him for another term. They praise him for the new schools all over the country and for the provision that each college or university graduate, except physicians and lawyers, must teach for a year in some back country school, but the same hill people are not eager for the opportunities offered. Physicians and lawyers must also give a year of service where sent and then for the rest of their lives give several hours per day to government service. Why didn't we discover this device? We do provide for ap-prentice teaching and for internships but we have not sent graduates to the sticks to serve isolated and the less privileged. Twelve years ago, on our first visit to Mexico, as we drove along, almost every white clad man or boy we passed carried machete, the almost universal tool of the peasant, and wore a sarape. The loaded burro and men, women and children carrying on their backs or heads what seemed to us to be almost impossible loads, were everywhere. Now, after twelve years, these sights are, still common but not as numerous and trucks and autos have become more com Native markets are still everywhere and among the most picturesque sights. One visits all of such markets he can reach to make quick surveys of native life and products, handmade merchandise and to see the primitive people, some in family groups in their primitive or native costumes, tending their stands or booths, or preparing the noon meal right where they are, perhaps over a small charcoal pot, filling the streets and plazas in complete disregard of traffic. In fact, if informed, the "PAUL SAID TO MR ED" 'ONE WAY OUT Maybe the old colored woma had something when she said: "Lawd, honey chile, when yo' ain't got no ed-ucation, yo' just ot to use your rains." Friends, do the sensible thing your today erty The Wa-Bank Building, Boost

N. C.

PAUL

visitor does not venture to drive | eaten on the same day because through a market or into it. Oc- of lack of refrigeration, although casionally it is barely possible in the cities and resorts this is and we were caught once in the largest market in Mexico City, creeping slowly as reluctant na-most of the markets even in the most of the markets even in the tives made way for the foolish and stupid Americanos, an ex-long thin and flat strips, usually perience not to be sought or reon the outside of the shop. We peated. There was no unpleasant were told that the well-to-do treatment, merely surprise and and the fine hotels even send perhaps disgust. If you should their servants or representatives visit Mexico do not miss the two to the markets daily to buy perenormous markets in Mexico ishables for consumption, that City, at some distance one on day and that these things are each side of the Cathedral Plabought in small quantities.

za, and the most unique one at The visitor wanders about Toluca, about forty miles west without embarassment and atof Mexico City. You cross he tracting little attention from the mountains at above 10,000 feet. natives, even if he is taking pic-Toluca has changed to be almost tures, unless he is foolish enough, unrecognized after twelve years as some Americans unfortunateand the market has changed al- ly are, to make himself offensive so for it seems a little better or-ganized, but is just as strange, es or shows interest in buying native, and varied as ever. It he is treated with kindness and fills the streets over an area gentle courtesy. In fact we have which seems like about a third found in some twenty-five difof a mile each way, making alferent foreign countries that most a square mile of market, from the most primitive to the all centered about a great cen-tral market building, 200 by 300 ple are kindly and helpful but feet. The streets are filled with that there are exploiters and tables, stands, stalls, covered and rascals everywhere alike, (exuncovered, and many many sel- cept of course in the United lers with their meager wares States!) At Acapulco on the merely spread out on a cloth or Pacific in Mexico, the American paper or in baskets on the pav- Riviera, as in Nice, on the ing of the street. We hastily French Riviera we paid our peso estimated that there must be not or franc for a chair on the beach less than 500 different persons or promenade where one could engaged in trying to sell a color- sit all day if he wished without ful variety of goods from fruit, molestation except from the atvegetables, meats, to clothing, tention of peddlars and beggars hardware, trinkets and orna- and no one seemed to care

ments of all kinds. Animals are whether we were prince or pauusually butchered, sold, and per, movie star or beggar, as



AIR DELIVERY . . . A C-119 flying boxcar delivers medical supplies, blankets, rations, am-munition a n d gasoline to ground forces in central Korea.

long as we ourselves were modest and courteous.

One wonders who is really with the peaks of these two volcivilized, particularly when he canos. Since the pyramids have discovers for himself that near religious significance in Mexico, Mexico City there are' ruins the being adjacent to a large temple antiquity of which no one venarea of ancient times, we judge tures to estimate accurately, prothat these two volcanic peaks bably at least ten thousand have entered into and become a years, indicating a kind of civili- part of that significance. Popo

zation and religious worship seems now to be smoking or which could follow only many steaming. This is easily to be front of our room, its trunk thousands of years of slowly confused with clouds which hovevolving culture. What were the er over such peaks but it has people like? Were they civilized been established to be steam or or primitive, illiterate, or cul- smoke and some fearful souls tured? fear that it is the beginning of a

The above reminds me of the period of activity which may be area south of Mexico City, two responsible for the many earthor three miles long and wide, completely covered by a lava flow from ten to thirty feet year, many occurring right along thick from a volcano which has in a short period of time. We exdisappeared. Excavations uncovering skeletons and struc-tures indicate at least pre-his-that we did and can see the toric-times. As you drive around humorous aspects of them but at this kind of discovery and see in the time we were not just sure the distance the towering snow- whether they might not be traclad peaks of Ixtaccihuati and gic. We were preparing for our Popocatepeti which have not journey to Acapulco, 300 miles been active for centuries, one wonders about the naive conception of the age of the earth housing at least 50 cars, to get which puts it at something just the car for the trip. As I stood over 6000 years.

by to open the door I felt a very Popo and Ixta tower up over peculiar whirl, as if I had pivot-17,000 feet high. They dominate the Mexican skyline for nearly all of the central and southern part. For forty miles north and south they are still to be seen. As they dominate the scene so they seem to have figured in the life and beliefs of the ancients for it has been observed that if one sights alongs the tips of the two pyramids north of Mexico they are. exactly in line City

in five minutes, the severity of which can be best realized by the fact that a water tower near by was rocking from side to side and the water was spilling out

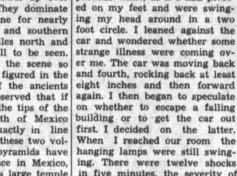
on both sides; a tree just in strike the side of the building right by their own rooms. My wife said she thought a big truck about thirty inches in diameter, was weaving from side to side from the base, and the branches as if in a strong wind. My sister had collided with the wall outside our room. Others thought the same thing. Of course we was in her bath-room brushing her teeth. She had asked her found that there had been a fair sized earthquake shock at about mid-night. We appreciated havphysician what to do in case of quakes. There have been recordfainting and he told her to lie ing these two big shows put on ed as many as 1000 shocks down on the floor and call for while we were there. help. When things began to weave and sway she assumed sion from what has been said to perienced two of the more that a fainting spell was on so this point that all Mexicans are she lay down and called to another sister in the adjoining illiterate natives, that all buildings are huts, and that all are room .She called to her husband dirty and primitive. Let me tell that Pearl was fainting. He repliyou another time about the con-trasts along this line. ed, "Well I feel dizzy myself." Damage was slight. After much experience buildings are plannto the southwest. I had gone to ed to take the shocks and the only visible damage in the city the garage, a big brack building

was a twenty foot crack in the wall of one of the larger hotels. At Acapulco one morning a number who lived where we did



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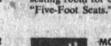


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