

SCENIC GRANDEUR
OF GUATEMALA.

Travels of Brigham Young Academy Expedition In
Central America—That Wayward Mule—More Ruins
—Guatemalan Hospitality—Wants Emigration—Scen-
ery Above the Clouds.

Special Correspondence.

Huehuetenango, Guatemala, April 3.
—Early Saturday morning, March 29, we were on the trail again. Crossing the Dolores river we ascended a steep hill for five hundred feet and came to the fork of the road. One of these we knew was a short cut to Jacaltenango, but which one we were not positive. Luckily an Indian hut was near, and from a little boy who was so frightened he could hardly talk, we learned that our road was on the left hand. This was unfrequented, very narrow and scarcely passable for animals but we determined to try it, as we would save at least three leagues. Mexican mules are very sure footed, and climb like a goat, so we had no difficulty from the narrowness of the road. The trail led along the side of a mountain, sometimes a thousand feet from the blue river below, and at other times descended nearly to the stream. We passed several little cane plantations, where we saw the Indians crushing the cane with wooden rollers, and using oxen for motive power. The cane is carried by the workmen on their backs from the field to the mill, and the panels in the same way from the mill to the market, sometimes a distance of three or four days' travel.

SCENIC GRANDEUR.

Another steep hill of a thousand feet added the strength of our animals, as well as our own, for we all walked. The sun was very hot, and not a breath of air was felt. At times I feared a stroke, but with no more incoherence than a profuse perspiration and tired limbs we reached the top. What a beautiful view presented itself! Two miles away, on the very brink of a precipice was the town, with its church and a little chapel, both on prominent hills. Below us ran the river, beautifully white and blue. The little things we had passed could be seen, and in almost every ravine were banana plantations. There the great mountains ten thousand feet high, were on both sides and covered with vegetation and trees from base to summit. Even we who are neither artists nor poets could enjoy such a picture.

At eleven o'clock we reached the spreading trees, on a ditch bank this side. Many women were washing clothes in the stream and a number of little children whose clothes were evidently in the wash, were playing on the bank. Our appearance created no little

stir, for strangers seldom visit these parts, and the women hurriedly slipped on a jacket, or threw a shawl around them as they were dressed, or rather lacked dress, more for convenience than for looks.

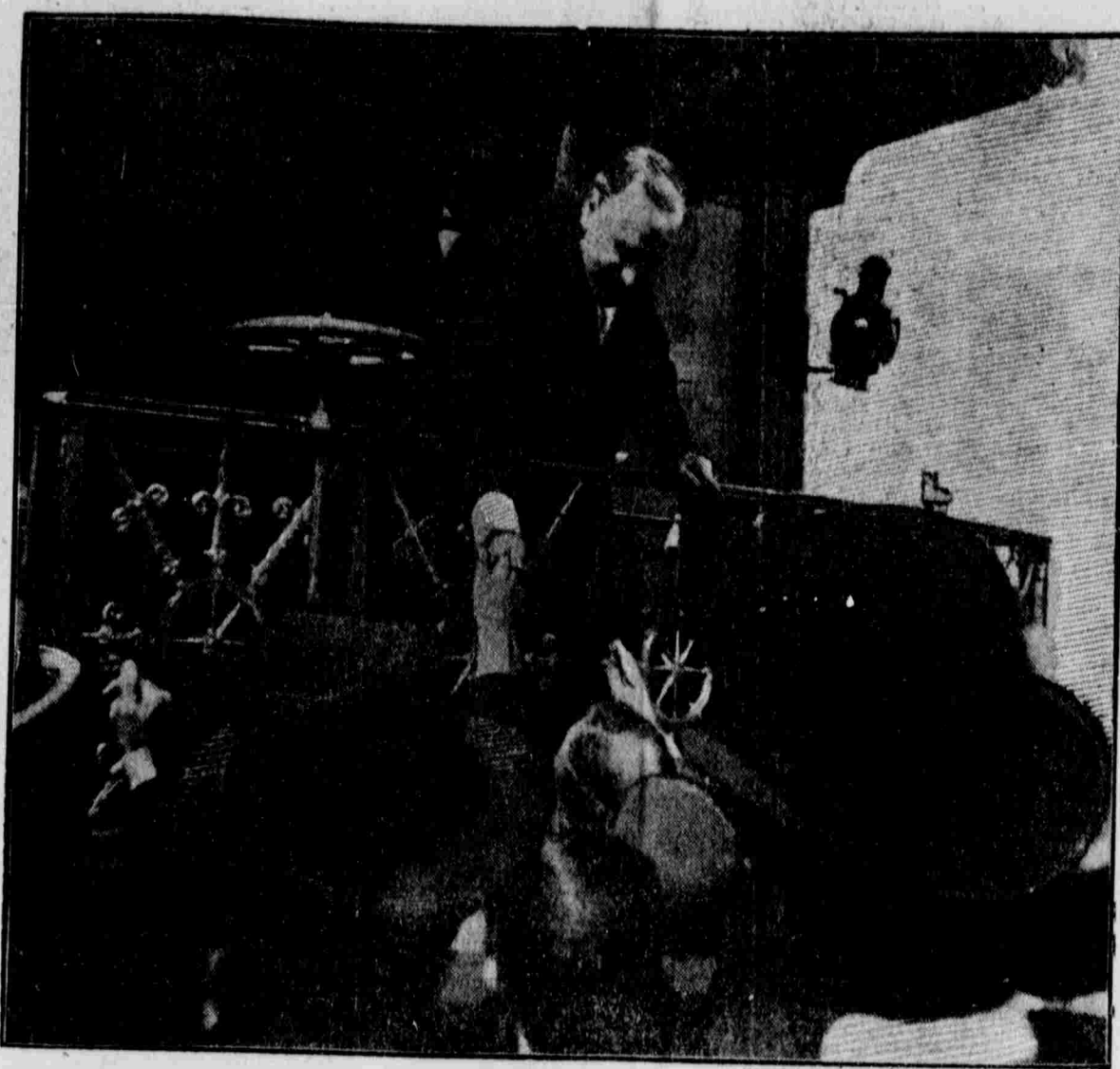
A stroll around the town revealed the fact that scarcely anything edible could be had. The market hour was passed and the vendors had gone home. But we succeeded in getting some meat, a few tortillas, and a bunch of posol, or corn dough from which we make a gruel.

Brothers Wolfe and Henning and I had come on ahead of the packs to look out a camping place and secure feed, and when the packs came in we were all surprised to discover that my loose mule was missing. Several times the animals had gone off into bypaths and had been all but lost in the thick brush and weeds. The loose mule had succeeded in getting lost, but just where no one knew. After a hurried lunch Brother Henning and I started back. The others were to proceed on the coming trail, and we were to overtake them near Todos Santos or Huehuetenango.

THAT WAYWARD MULE.

We enquired about our mule of every Indian we met, but invariably the "no hay" would be given. Some of them had come from the Tierra Caliente (hot lands) and had, therefore, been on another road. Those were carrying heavy loads of corn, or bananas on their backs fastened with a strap over their head in such a way that the principal weight rests on the head. A hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds is a load, and often these are carried for a week's travel, and over the very roughest country. At last we met a man coming along our road, but he had not seen the mule. Enquiry at the little cane plantations as we passed brought the same answers. I began to suspect, and seeing some animals of the horse kind down in a pasture below the cane fields, I asked my companion to go down and look at them. But our mule was not there. Continuing our way back we reached, about sundown, the hill where the road forked, and finding a woman in the hut enquired of her. "No hay," was the reply. Descending the hill we soon came to our former camp ground, and enquired of the people near by, but no one had seen the mule. We returned to the top of the hill, and as the grass was good and water handy, determined to camp for the night. Across the little hollow were several Indian huts and word was sent to them asking about the animal, but no one had seen any animal whatever other than those in

MAGNETISM IN MCKINLEY'S HANDSHAKE.



A great feature of the trip President McKinley is making to the Pacific coast will be the number of handshakes he will be obliged to make. In the above picture Private Secretary Cortelyou is to be seen smiling at the enthusiastic reception accorded his genial chief. Such scenes will be common all along the route of the big trip to the Pacific coast.

our train. I thought the Indians began to suspect some other purpose on our part, or else they had our mule in hiding, for they appeared nervous and frightened, and returned into the house at our approach to buy tortillas. But we unsaddled and turned our animals to feed, and just as we were discussing the situation, and wondering what to do next or where to go, as several paths in different directions led off from the main path, to our surprise and delight the lost mule came walking slowly out of a thicket of brush, and joined our party. The questions we were asking ourselves were now answered, and I think our standing among the Indians strengthened. At least their standing improved in their estimation, for here, at the forks of the trails, the mule was last seen, and as the feed was good, had, perhaps, not gone a hundred yards during the day.

We were up at daylight next morning

after an almost sleepless night. Sleepless because of the bright moonlight, the strange circumstances that surrounded us, and the pestering of some small gnats that were flying about. It was the first time we had ever felt gnats after dark. Mosquitoes, fleas, wool-ticks, and other similar insects have robbed us of sleep, but usually gnats have satisfied themselves by the time dusk approached. Not so this night. Perhaps, however, the bright moonlight, for it was in the clear atmosphere of mountains, almost as bright as day, misled them. They ceased troubling us when the moon set.

To avoid the steep mountain, and to see as much of the country as possible, we determined to go by way of San Antonio de Huista. Our trail was a good one, though at times steep and rough. We passed some beautiful little valleys in which Indians are living, sometimes a family, sometimes several

families, and at one place quite a little village. Everywhere at our approach children ran from us, and even the grown people were timid. White people dressed as we were dressed seldom travel in these parts. At nine o'clock, after following down a steep canyon for a league or so, we entered the most beautiful of all the little valleys. It contains about two thousand acres of level land. The hills surrounding it were somewhat rolling and were cultivated by the inhabitants to corn. The valley was covered with a thick growth of grass, as high as our heads, except the few acres planted to bananas. The green grass and canes tempted our animals, and we turned them loose to feed for an hour.

MORE RUINS.

Here were some ruins in which we were interested. They consisted of mounds of rock and dirt, some large

and others smaller. Some were long, measuring fifty feet, and in one place two ran parallel. The natives know nothing of them, only that they had always been there, and that they were very ancient. It was quite plain in our opinion that they corresponded in date with the mounds and terraces we had seen further back. Here was a large valley, and within a few leagues were other smaller valleys. The mountains too, could produce good corn for miles around. There is no reason why a large city could not have existed here.

A few leagues further, over a steep mountain of six hundred feet, brought us to the valley of San Antonio, following up which for a league, we reached the town. Here the country was wild and beautifully grand. The mountains were high and steep, the ravines and canyons deep and precipitous. Small level, or comparatively level places we found amidst this steepness, and on these were houses, and farms of corn or cane. San Antonio is built on a larger place of this kind, perhaps the available land would measure a thousand acres. It is on the side of the mountain, a thousand feet above the bottom of the canyon, and two thousand below the top of the valley, or broad mountains. Its altitude above sea level is about six thousand feet. The principal part of the inhabitants are Indians, Quiche, but there are a few of the Ladinos. The Indians are known as naturals, and in places there is not always a friendly feeling between them and the Ladinos.

GUATEMALAN HOSPITALITY.

A couple of hours' rest refreshed us and at 1:30 o'clock we proceeded around the side of the mountain, about a thousand or fifteen hundred feet above the sand creek. The mountain was covered with oak trees, some of which would make good lumber. Across the canyon were pines. There was but little underbrush and no grass. A league and a half brought us to another valley, or broad plain, leading to the east. This we followed. The scene was beautiful. Just ahead of us, ten miles away, was the highest mountain in Guatemala, not the highest peak. Almost immediately below us ran a creek, lost at times in the overhanging trees. At the head of the valley, standing prominently on a hill, was the little village with its large, white church. We reached the village at 3:30. Its inhabitants were all Indians, some of whom, however, could speak Spanish, and we learned that a little further on was a Ladino from whom we might obtain accommodations for the night. The gentleman, whose name was Felipe Garcia Aguilar, was very pleasant and very hospitable. We were made to feel at home at once, and our animals were well cared for by the servant. We saw immediately that Don Felipe was a sugar and coffee planter. Perhaps twenty-five acres of cane surrounded the house, and a few thousand coffee trees were partly hidden by a banana orchard. The coffee plants do better in the shade, and as bananas grow rapidly and are easily handled, they are usually planted for shade in preference to trees. We saw no sugar mill, but learned later that by accident it had burned down and a new one had not yet been built. It would not take long to build one for the house consists merely of a thatched shed on posts. Under this the rollers are placed on solid foundations, and a piece from them is the pan to bolt the juice. With this crude machinery, so

rich is the cane, that he has produced as high as ten tons of panela from one acre. At present his sugar pays better than coffee, and is as easily worked. But formerly, when coffee was high, it brought more for the outlay. His coffee is shipped to Guatemala and thence some is exported, but the panela and the bananas are sold in local markets.

The gentleman proved to be an enthusiast over his country, Guatemala to him was the best country in the world, though he did not intend by this remark to discount the United States or Mexico, to in fact any other country. We were entertained until long after bed time in listening to him on the history, present standing and physical and commercial features of his country. We found him intelligent and well posted, not alone on Guatemala, I explained that I desired to visit the region of the Montagua river, Lake Izabal and Puerto Barrios. "It is a beautiful country," said our host, enthusiastically, "with large rich valleys and mountains covered with fine timber, much of which is valuable wood. There is good pasture also, and in my opinion the construction of the railroad now being completed will open up many opportunities for men to make good fortunes. 'The country,' he continued, 'will produce almost anything and everything in abundance. It will be a good place to establish large sugar factories, a good place to establish coffee plantations, rubber plantations, or cacao (chocolate) plantations. Fruits of all kinds that grow in a warm climate, grow there. If you visit that country, you will never want to leave it again,' he finally said.

WANT EMIGRATION.

We learned also from our host that in the department of Huehuetenango there is much good country still unoccupied.

"What we need now more than anything else in Guatemala," continued our host, "is emigration. Every opportunity is offered for colonization, and that too, in one of the richest countries in America."

"What people would Guatemala prefer?" we asked.

"Any good, industrious people would be welcome. Of course, we are all acquainted with American push, and the Americans would be as welcome as any. With the cheap labor furnished by the country, and American brains to guide and direct, nothing would prevent the amassing of great wealth."

There is already much foreign capital in Guatemala. Germany has been very liberal, and now has millions invested in coffee plantations, but I believe that not until recently has American capital found its way here to any great extent. The railroad, which is to follow down the Montagua river and furnish a highway from the Atlantic to the city of Guatemala, is an American enterprise, and some of our countrymen are in the coffee business. No doubt there are good opportunities for men with capital, perhaps, but little capital is needed, but for the poor man, the country so far as I now see it, is no better than any other. There is much cheap labor. Senor Garcia pays his men but 750 per year in the silver of the country, which is worth less than that in Mexico, and I learned that any amount of labor could be had at that price. Land also is cheap, so that one of little capital might become well located in a few years.

The next morning after a good (Continued on Page Eighteen.)

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ASSETS.

Bonds and Mortgages..... \$11,877,631 07
Real Estate..... 6,892,770 35
R. R. Bonds and Stock (Market Value), ... 12,950,092 50
Municipal Bonds (Market Value) .. 3,767,966 25
U. S. Gov. Bonds (Market Value), ... 116,750 00
Cash in Banks and Office..... 2,534,110 34
Interest and Rents, due and accrued..... 333,007 21
Loans on Collateral Securities ... 807,900 00
Loans on Policies..... 471,891 63
Premiums Deferred and in course of collection (net)..... 1,367,872 48

LIABILITIES.

Reserve on Policies..... \$33,724,393 00
All other Liabilities..... 465,467 01
Surplus to Policy-Holders .. 6,410,121 92
Total..... \$40,599,991 93

