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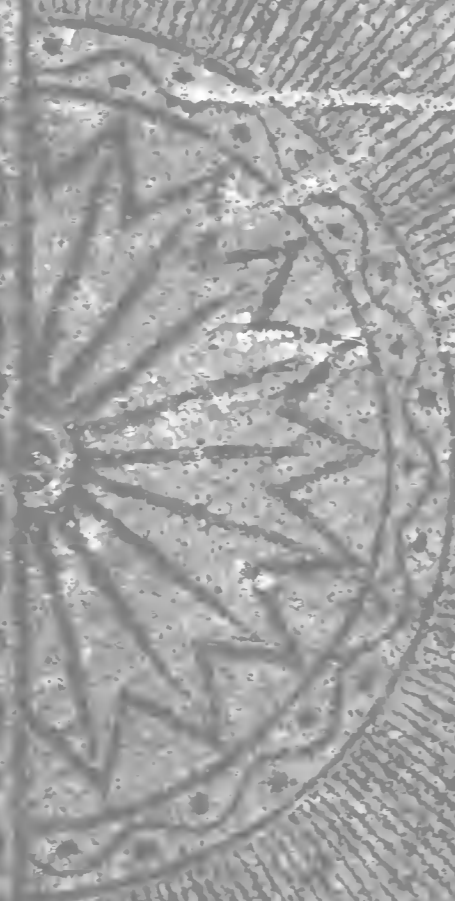
Journal

April - June 1900

E. W. Nelson

Jan.

1901



Apr.



April 11 -

Left Washington today for Mexico
by way of St. Louis. Trees in W.
just starting their leaves -

12th

Reached St. Louis. Sleet & a
little snow fell today & the landscape
was bare & wintry.

13th

South into Texas today, the trees
half in foliage & flowers coming
on.

14th

Today in southern Texas the
trees in full foliage & the fields
brilliant in grass & flowers
of many kinds. The change from
the country about St. Louis is
striking & agreeable. Transferred
at Laredo & at nightfall we
started into Mexico.

15 & 16th

Crossing the Plateau we had
a hard rain and heavy clouds
hung about the horizon as in
the rainy season. A heavy rain
fell in the city of Mexico on

the night of the 15th, and the
high mts. around the valley
were obscured with clouds
the next day.

17th

Took the Mexican R.R. at
7 am. for Vera Cruz which we
reached in the evening.

The tableland was dry & dusty but
from Orizaba City down the vegetation
was of the perennial green &
pleasant to the eyes after the
dull browns of the higher country.
Mt Orizaba was cloud
capped but rifts here & there
showed the gleaming white of
the snowy mantle.

Our train was packed nearly
all the way to V.C. & a number of
Germans & Americans were on
board.

18th was passed in
Vera Cruz, stopped at the
Hotel Diligencias where I
found ~~the~~ as at the Hotel Sany
in City of Mex. that the table

has deteriorated very much
in the past 2 years so I intend
avoiding both places hereafter.

Called on the Consul (Mr. Canada
of Indiana) at Vera Cruz &
found him a very pleasant
fellow & more of a credit to the
service than the rather unpolished
man who preceded him.

The ~~Quarantine~~ U.S. Marine
Hospital doctor had just
arrived in V.C. & told me that
last year yellow fever was already
causing numerous deaths in
the town at this date & that
a number were also dying now
with indications of a severe
epidemic again this year.
He also told me that the fever
which caused so many
deaths at Retalhuleu ^{at Retalhuleu in Guatemala} the year
of my visit to that country
was the Vomito. He visited
various west coast localities
& found yellow fever also to be

a more or less regular thing
at Tehuantepec City though not
so severe as in many other
places. He stated that the west
coast doctors do not seem
to diagnose this disease properly
& all it provisions from ^{some} or
other form of malaria as its
presence is often unknown.
The harbor of Vera Cruz is ~~now~~ has
been completed since my last
visit & the ships lie alongside the
piers now which is a great im-
provement.

19th Took the Romano
y Barrataga steamer, Mexico
for Coahuacalco & Fortera.
As usual on Spanish steamers
this boat is a filthy, evil smelling
tub with wretched accommodations,
soiled bedding and the generally
unkempt careless appearance
of these boats. Even the Mexicans
who accept dirt & bad smells
with the equanimity of language

peculiar to Latins make
unkind comparisons between
~~Spanish~~ the desirability of cleanliness
on Spanish vessels as compared
with ships run by Americans,
Englishmen, or Germans.
Even to lie at the water on one
of these boats brings one to the
 verge of sea sickness from
the odors alone and ^{passengers} ~~one~~ often
spend the night on deck in
preference to occupying the
black holes called steerage.
The crew officers on this
line are almost entirely Spanish.

20th Reached Coahuila
coahuila the middle of the morning.
The town has grown considerably since
my last visit & Pearson & Son
have contracted to build a
fine harbor here & at Salina
Cruz & reconstruct the Isthmian
R.R. so the future of the place
is pretty well assured. Pearson
has taken the ruins of the old

stone fork on the hill at the edge
of the town overlooking the harbor
He is building a 2 story building (stone
& brick) on the old foundation for
quarters of employees.

On the 21st

The Mexico returned from
Minatitlan with a deck load of
cattle & we left for ~~Frontera~~
~~Frontera~~ Laguna when we
arrived the next day and
after discharging cargo
turned back for Frontera
on the 22nd & I finally reached
that place on the 23rd
to find that Goldman had
not shown up on letter for
him. The 24th

Goldman arrived from
his trip to Teapa and as
the next boat leaves for the Usumacinta
in May, we turned our
attention to birds while awaiting.
Frontera is a pleasant little place
about 6 or 8 miles above the mouth
of the river which has a bar

with 10 ft. of water at high tide so only small steamers can get in to the town. Larger boats lie off the shore & unload into lighters. We anchored off shore in the night & early in the morning a small steamer came out & took off the passengers. While out at the mouth of the river a great many "mantas" or Blauket fish as large as those seen at the Iles Marées Is. were seen leaping out of the water 3 to 6 ft. & dropping into a great splash sending the water up in a cloudy spray as they struck. These mantas seemed to jump a shorter distance out of the water than those on the west coast. Their white bellies now & then glared in the sun as they half turned or curved up one ~~large~~ large fin. In swimming near the surface the thin upward point of one fin often projected a foot or more & sailed along cutting the ripples like the back fin of a shark.

Sawfish were also said to be numerous here & the captain of the little steamer said the fins seen now & then were of these fish.

¶ At Frontera we learned that white iguana & alligators were once extremely numerous along the river of this district but have been hunted until they are now very scarce & the iguanas are practically exterminated though a few plumes are shipped out each year.

¶ Frontera has a small wharf at the customhouse but the water part has a generally tumble down appearance. ~~The houses~~ The town is made up of one storied houses with tile ^{or thatch or iron} roofs & mud, board or jacal walls with dirt or tile floors. The houses are all stained & weather beaten until the place seems to be of great age. The streets are covered with a heavy grassy sod always bright green along which a mudding trail worn by the people show the lines of travel prefer the straight to the irregular, narrow tile sidewalks which are not situated

so to catch the drainage of the tile
from the eaves of the houses.
¶ On landing I went to the
Hotel Concordia where they showed
me a room with 3 cots, no window
but two doors which, when closed
shut in the unfortunate guest
into what must be a suffocating
box in this climate where the
heat is uncomfortable even when
sleeping by an open window.
I at once hunted up Mr. Arthur
Gehm, the U.S. Consular Agent,
and he gave me the use of a
well ventilated room at his house
which was very comfortable.

¶ Judging from what I heard, the place must
be a more than usually immoral commu-
nity and the little histories given of
even young women of the best families
would indicate, to say the least, a more
loose code but with all efforts directed
to keep up an outward appearance of
strict respectability. The place seems to
be becoming decadent in its effect
on young people.

At ~~Fronton~~ I found no word from
Gallman but on the 24th, the day after
my arrival, he came down the river on
the steamer from San Juan Bautista
bringing an extremely interesting lot of
birds from Teapa at the edge of the
foothills on the border of Chiapas.
The steamer only runs up the Usumacinta
once in 10 days so we must
wait until May 1st for the next one.
A steamer from Vera Cruz brought
in an American wherry cutter
Mr. W. J. Quinn and the manager
of a large plantation started a couple
years ago at El Salto, Chiapas.
~~He~~ Gehrman has visited the
place & reports that they have really
accomplished a great amount of
work & are pushing things with the
greatest energy. This is the Chicago
Co. in which I believe Senator
Clark, Mr. Welton, & others of
name or less prominence are
interested & which, in their pro-
spectus while selling stock, promises
to pay dividends from the products

of the plantation the 2^d year after
taking the plantation in hand in its
original state as virgin tropical
forest — a quite impossible prop-
osition unless the ^{gross} profits
of the sale of corn & other quick crops
should be devoted to this purpose
& the treasury drawn upon for the
total outlay — a questionable method
for the purpose of booming stock.
However this company appears to be going
ahead with good faith & desire to give
the stockholders something for their
money & will probably succeed in
the end — something which cannot be
said of various Mexican land
concessions which seem to be entered
for the sale of stock and after that
had been accomplished the actual
objects of the Co. materialize very
slowly!

¶ One disputable affair connected
with Mex. land schemes is the
evidence at Fortuna now. When I
landed I was surprised to see the
grassy plaza & corridors of some

buildings fronting ^{same} filled with
what seemed to be a lot of German
peasants, men women & children.
These proved to be part of a lot of several
hundred German-Russian who were
brought here by glittering promises
of the most extravagant kind by a
St. Louis man who was one member
of a firm which proposed to
start a large Chiriqui colony but
failed to get a foot of land yet
brought over hundreds of peasants
who were left stranded here and
now ~~are~~ gradually managing by the
aid of friends to get to the U.S.
Some of them were taken up the river
to the plantation near El Salto but
the climate was too warm & they proved
to be very poor workmen mainly
notable for their desire to avoid work.
They went up to Salto to
arrange about their leaving the
country & one day ~~some of the~~
~~young women~~ When all were
gathered for discussion about their
going and the man who brought them

present
to the country was present
with John & some of the plantation
people, one of the young women got
up & expressed herself in very
forcible style on the methods that
had been resorted to to bring them to
the country. Referring to the man
who brought them, she told us the
Indians were dressed ⁱⁿ silk & jewels
but we find them going naked;
he told us the water melons had
silvery seeds in this beautiful
country but we find no water melons;
he told us we would find beautiful
gardens with ^{fruit} ^{growing} ^{about}
without effort but we find only a
great forest with no farms and
much more of the same kind.
Gold was as common as pebbles in
the stream & ~~but~~ we had only to
reach this favored place to be rich
happily according to the promises
of this man.

During our stay at Fronton we
were several times on board the

with undergrowth. A few beautiful
royal palms were seen & now when
the river was bordered by a bit of marsh
covered with tall green grass & bushes.
In the afternoon the banks became a
little higher & the forest heavier, taller
with not other a group of Howling monkeys
in the top of a tall tree. In one case
the monkey's were only 75 or 80 yds away
& the whistle was blown for them, but they
did not pay any attention to
the noise which had ~~little~~ but little
effect on creatures which can make as
much noise on their own account.

~~In the morning of the 9th we~~
The ^{early} morning of the 2^d we stopped
for a short time at Jonuta - a grassy
little place kept clean & conse-
quently attractive by the heavy summer
rains and the absence of all horse
traffic. ^{It remained till after dark.} Just behind the village
rises a fine artificial mound
(called Culla in this region) in which
I was told some excavating of a superficial
character has brought to light idols &
vessels made of clay & other interesting objects.

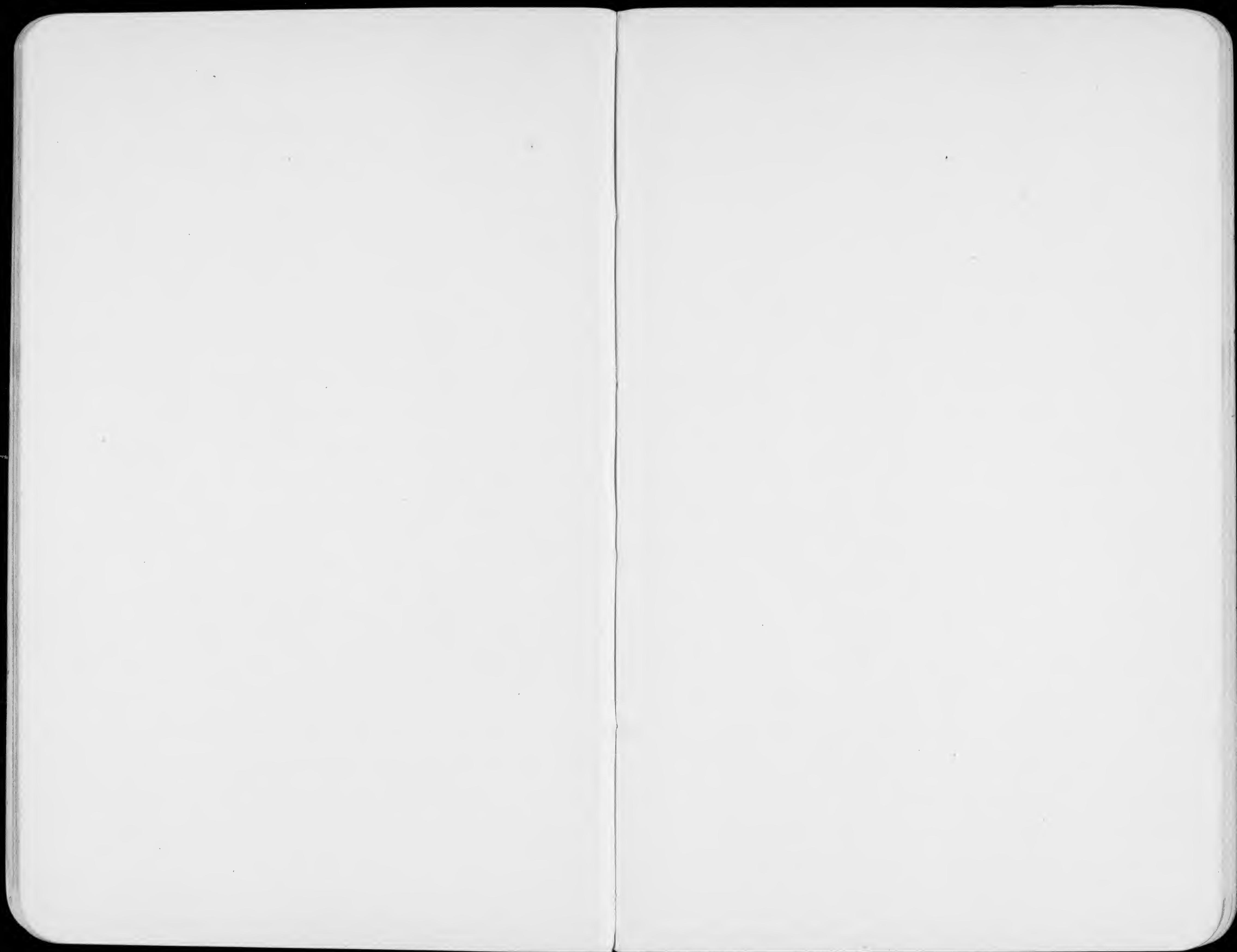
The mound appears to be about 100 ft. high + is very striking from its situation on the flat plain bordering the river.

May 7th

Continued up the river with the only variation being a occasional fern, alder, or ~~oak~~ the changes in the forms + combinations of trees along the banks. These last produced many beautiful vistas as we passed from bank to bank. White herons were not seen ^{though some were seen} ~~owing to their having~~ been practically exterminated by game hunters. However, all the way up the river we saw a few small marshes on the banks and late in the afternoon today we tied up at the largest one seen where the collection of thatched houses of wattle frames appeared like a small village. Our arrival brought a crowd of natives to the river bank + while two of them were busily making fast to ropes our Captain (an old Indian) made various injurious comments on their national parent + their descent which nearly seemed to cause the objects a certain

amount of amusement. We took
on wood here & going on reached
Montevideo about 9 P.M. & tied up
for the night. Owing to the low water
the river bank appears very high
here & as soon as we were tied up
a row of natives could be seen sitting
along the top of the bank stretching
down at us. They decided to remain
on board we turned in at once.

May 3 -



— 1900 —

Chapultepec City. June 1—

This is one of the most picturesque places I have seen in Mexico, as a large part of the huge wall built around the town a couple of centuries ago, which took 50 years to build, is still standing with the gateways, watch towers, moat & all the complicated stairwork of an ancient castellated structure. It is said to have been built by a local tax on salt & made to protect the town from the unbrotherly hands of English & other pirates.

There are many two-story houses with balconies of great age with the Spanish balconies. The streets are narrow with side walks of stone & tile one 2-4 ft wide. Electric lights are still unknown but a street car system running out to Suburbano Tomas is in operation, & is the newest affair of the kind I have ever seen. The doors are 90° changing their level

Bells as if in delight at the noise produced.

The town had about 23,476 when in 1895 according to the census of that year. Pop. of the state in same year a little over 88,000.

Judging from the people seen on the streets there is ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~amount~~ ^{smaller amount} of Indian blood in the veins of the people of this town than usual in Mexico although it is still very apparent.

Called on the Governor whose name is ~~W. ...~~ for a scotch note. He promised to help arrange our trip to the Triangulo keys for seals.

Rain has now begun here & come on as terrific terrific showers in afternoon & night often accompanied by heavy squalls.

In addition to the streets the town is abundantly supplied with horse coaches of the queerest shapes I have seen. They seem to be peculiar to the place.

1900 Misc. Notes

Hda. El Culllo on the coast
near Isla Mujeres - Fine
groves of Royal Palms near there.

in a generally dilapidated state
yet the people seem to get great
pleasure from riding over the rocky
wrecks.

The suburbs are almost wholly
integrated with the town & there are
fields on the 3 low sides of the
3 forts - about a mile from each
side along the coast.

Just back of town on all sides are
hills 75-100 ft high and in the
view. There are in limestone rock
caves with a double row of
small tombs.

In front of town the rocks are very
shattered by the 800 ft sea which
is very high.

— 1901 —
Jan. 9th

Sailed on S.S. Orizaba from New York at about 4 P.M. and the 2^d day after at dusk we passed Jupiter light & Palm Beach, Florida, going within a quarter of a mile of the end of pier at latter place. ~~The following day~~ On Sunday we reached Havana in the afternoon (3 P.M.). Several of the passengers went ashore & the party I was with looked for the P.O. in a series of irregular streets meeting & crossing at various angles along the waterfront & finally asked a policeman. He very politely went 3 blocks with us escorting us within sight of the door. The police of Havana are a very presentable lot of young men in neat, well kept uniforms & apparently a very polite & efficient lot of men. We were told that when the U.S. took charge many young men of good families more or less reduced by the war entered the force & from the appearance & conduct of those seen this was easy to believe.

The narrow streets-like alleys with side-walks 1-3 ft. wide look like deep ditches or canals cut through the buildings & from the roofs a network of signs are hung across the streets overhead so that one has the same crowded feeling as in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco. The streets were swarming with small victorias drawn each by a single rat-like little pony. These were the public conveyances of the town & were an odd sight to a stranger. The red-dinner in the restaurant kept by Gen. Weyler's ex-mistress who is a coarse Spanish woman with an evil smile & wearing quantities of diamonds. In the evening went to Tacón theatre to fair Italian opera & a small audience. The stage is extremely large said to be next to largest in the world. The next day we visited El Moro & Cabanyá fortresses. They are deserted now, the only soldiers being a small guard at the main gate of each. They are interesting relics of ancient fortifications with massive walls sometimes 20 ft. thick & deep moats 50 to 70 ft deep

in places. In one of the moats of
El Moro. is a stretch of wall 100 yds
long thickly pitted with bullets. This
is where Cuban prisoners were executed.
In one place the bullet marks outline
the form of a man standing against
the wall & are especially numerous around
the head & shoulders. The part of the
wall covered by the man being nearly
free from marks. This was probably
the favorite place for shooting single
prisoners. Many of the bullet marks are
flat or irregular showing that the balls had
traversed the target before striking the wall.
In spite of this evidence close at hand
of the tyranny of Spanish rule yet the
Cubans today dislike the Americans very
much and have apparently not the
least feeling of gratitude for what
we have done for them.
That they will ever be able to
run a stable government does not
seem to be believed by anyone ex-
cept themselves & they have all the
childish impatience to try it of a boy
with a new toy.

On the ramparts of Morro Tabanas
are many old ^{muzzle loading} cannons of iron &
bronze from 1754 & other ancient dates.
The hills about Havana show various
earth works & if we had been forced
to capture the city by assault it
would have been a costly matter.
The hills are bare of woods & only here
& there a little brush is to be seen but
a bright green sod covers the slopes
on all sides.

On the afternoon of the 14th (Monday)
we were ready to leave Havana when
a telegram came telling that the
str. Vigilancia of the Wash line on the way
from Mexico was on the Colorado
Reef near the west end of Cuba & the
Orizaba was ordered to run down & take off
her passengers. At 9 the next morning
we were at anchor a ~~quarter~~ half a
mile off the Vigilancia which was
standing upright on a reef where she
had drifted run in the night. All
day was passed in driving the passengers
& baggage on board in a fairly smooth
sea - though with enough swell on

The west end of Cuba is roughly
mountainous - the abrupt slopes, often
forming fantastic outlines, rise ^{apparently} 500
to 3 or 4000 ft. Columns of smoke from
clearing fires wafted ^{up} them.
From our anchorage a belt of beautiful
green water lay up the coast & white
lines of foam marked the locations
of reefs. Now & then the sail of some
fishing boat glided along shore adding
to the interest of the scene.

to cause some trouble in getting the
passengers aboard.

At dark we returned to Havana, reaching
there the next morning (16th).

We laid ^{nearby} all day at Havana but
got away for Mexico in the afternoon.
On the 18th at day break we were
off the coast of Yucatan and early
in the forenoon anchored in 4 fathoms
water about 6 miles off the wharf at Progreso.
The sea was rough from the norther which
had been blowing for a day or two & no one came
off to us so we passed the day in idly
watching the shore & sailing.

Jan 19th

In the morning a tug brought off the
quarantine officer but it ~~was~~ was
too rough to land passengers so the
boat again went ashore. In the P.M.
the boat again came off & getting my
luggage aboard I went ashore leaving
the other passengers on board as it
was so rough the Capt. advised us to
remain on board. Reaching the wharf
the nose of the steamer was run up
to the rub bit & then a favorable

moment was waited to make a
flying leap to the pier where a crowd of
| Slovaks stood ready to catch one
upfront a possible stumble back into
the sea, ~~and~~ ~~pieces~~ of baggage were
pitched into the midst of the crowd -
My baggage was ~~own~~ at the Custom house
& by virtue of my letter from Mr. Aspinow
was passed without duty being required
for my supplies. From the Custom house
I went to the R.P. station & a ram-shackle
little narrow gauge train took me to
Merida in about an hour & a half
for a 20 mile run.

This was the first R.R. built in Yucatan
& was done entirely by a native of Merida.
This enterprising man had the material
landed at Progreso & started to Merida
from which place he built the road
precisely back to Progreso in the
course of several years. This idea was
a good one from a business point of
view even tho' expensive for as soon as
a few miles were in running order the
owner ran ~~with~~ excursion trains out from
Merida & bring a great novelty it became

the rage to do this so the road began at once to have an income which aided in extending the line still further. From Progreso to Merida the country is a flat limestone plain with a thin cap of soil in depressions & irregular places which supports a scrubby growth of brush 10-15 ft high when not replaced by the extensive fields & plantations of Yucatec which extend for some miles along the track, with small farmways leading away here & there.

In Merida I put up at the Hotel Regent where rooms are rented at high rates but one has to skirmish about at poor restaurants near the place to get food. The rooms at the hotel were dirty & unkept & the restaurants very poor but very high prices are charged for everything.

On Sunday the 20th I hunted up Mr. E. H. Thompson the U.S. Consul, at his home just on the border of town & found an attractive house in the midst of fruit trees & flowers on a grassy terrace, with a well kept lemon hedge about the lot. From the Consul I learned that Goldman has not turned up.

On Jan 21 I got in communication
with Goldman & he reached Merida
the 23^d. We at once set about preparing
for a trip to Mr. Thompson's hacienda
of Chichén - Itz'á.

Jan. 24-25 Merida.
Preparing for trip.

Jan. 26 Took train about
1 P.M. on a rickety narrow gauge road
for Tunkas - the present terminus of
the road to Valladolid. The route
leads over limestone plains cov-
ered with low and trop. forest, thick
with undergrowth. Now in the dry season
many of the trees are leafless &
the forest has the appearance of a second
growth woods at the approach of
winter in the north. At one station
we heard an outbreak of the most barbaric
discord of musical instruments
as the train came to a standstill &
found the platform crowded with
people while saddle horses & dingy
vehicles of various archaic types
were hitched ready. Several officials in
~~red~~ gold laced military caps were in evidence

visiting provided the occasion to be
the presence of Gov. Canton &
his staff. The Gov. sat in state
in a small chair on the platform
surrounded by a crowd of people paying
court to his highness while the band
of Indians kept up the terrific banging
& tooting without any semblance of
time or unison. The effect was indeed
absurd for the performers of this charade
were in solemn earnest while the Gov.
& his staff closed by, endured this moderated
enthusiasm in stolid calm.

Fortunately the train moved on as soon
as a considerable number of the passengers
had alighted & paid their respects to the
Gov. who owns the R.P. on which we
were travelling.

Shortly before dark we reached Tunkas
& the Conductor looked at our baggage
& assessed me 2⁰⁰ extra charges for
excess. Brass checks had been
given me at Minda on 8 pieces
after considerable skirmishing about
in the station & when we reached Tunkas
the Conductor made a special request that

I returned the checks before he returned to Merida in the morning as the Co. would need them to use. So I judged that I had monopolized all the visible stock of checks.

Railroading in Yucatan has many old features. The several roads in existence are all owned & run by Yucatecos who believe in Yucatan for the Yucatecos in every way. The first road built in the state was the narrow gauge from Progreso to Merida. At the time it was begun the builder had all the material hauled 15 m. to Merida on carts & built the road from Merida back to Progreso. This was done to placate the cart men whose business was ruined by the R.R.

This road had a concession for the exclusive right to a line from Merida to Progreso but others seeing that the business was a good one secured a concession for a broad gauge R.R. from Merida to Valladolid with branch to Progreso & then proceeded to build the branch at once & the main line has been in slow process of con-

struction for some years. The various roads in the state have been projected by private parties & built piecemeal as they were able to secure the money. They are all poor specimens but having no bridges or other engineering difficulties to overcome manage to keep going & pay good returns.

The horsefeed in Yucatan is mainly the branches of the Ramona or Ojite tree which all stock appears to like very much & will eat. The men climb the trees & top of the outer 2 or 3 ft. of the branches with leaves ^{an armful} of them is enough for a good feed. The animals eat even the branches until they reach the size of one's finger.

The Mayas are small people but the women though short are more robustly built than the men, being plumper & more inclined to flesh as they grow old. Mr. Thompson assures me that he has known of a case of an Indian girl having a child when 11 years old. The mestizos reach puberty later than

the Indians & the whites at a still later age. According to Thompson the Indian girls think nothing of giving themselves to a man they like but consider it disgraceful to sell themselves for money. Nothing is thought of an Indian or mestiza girl living with a man for some years even if she has children by him & if she has a little property the former alliance proves no bar to a regular marriage later with one of her own class. In such marriages the husband accepts the children ^{though} as his own. A curious thing in connection with the attitude the people of the state assume toward the Indians is that the upper class women make no objection & appear to treat the matter as unpleasant but of little consequence if their husbands take an Indian girl as mistress but become violently jealous if he takes a mestiza.

The Yucatan ~~of~~ Mexicans are not so well inclined toward foreigners as the people elsewhere in Mex.

On the roads in most parts of Mex.
the people salute one by a good day
Sir or with a motion of the hand
in passing but in Yucatan they
apparently fail to see one or give a
stare at passing & this is a character-
istic attitude.

and a difference is noticeable in
this respect between Campeche &
Yucatan. The people of Campeche
comment on this attitude of veiled
dislike of outsiders. It is said that
it is a case of dog eat dog in
business between Yucatecos but
all unite when a question arises against
an outsider - usually meaning a foreigner.

The Indians everywhere in the country
when going about carry shot guns
- cheap single barreled affairs - even
when only going out for a short
distance from haciendas as well as
when travelling. Chichen Itza is the
last occupied ranch bordering
the territory held until recently by
the rebel Indians of Chan Santa Cruz.
The movements of the state & federal
troops against these Indians is now
going on & every day the most pompous
bulletins are published sent the Governor
from the seat of war & he replies with
congratulations & the entire mass is
published in the *Mercurio* papers.

The series of 'battles' recently announced record 2 men wounded, a dog killed + some hundreds of cartridges expended. After having held the jungle depths for years the Indians now appear to have lost heart and retreat promptly after the soldiers appear.

Like most Mexican newspapers the *Bohita de Merida* appears in the evening with date of following day. Its first pages are full of general matter with the telegraphic news on last ~~part~~ part of 2^d page. The local notices of births, deaths, marriages + arrivals or departures are always concluded with some phrase such as for death "we feel this loss"; birth "may it have a long life"; marriage: "may they have a perpetual honeymoon; arrival: "we welcome you"; departure, "may you have a pleasant voyage. There is a continuous series of these little comments which are sufficiently amusing to the outsider.

The Germans appear to be the only foreigners who do well in Mexico - then they have most of the hardware business in their hands but Americans & Englishmen are at such a discount that I could not learn of a single one of either nationality who was engaged successfully in business in all Yucatan though nearly the total product exported from the country goes either to the U.S. or England.

The Yucatan papers justify this exclusiveness by preaching against permitting foreigners (Am. or Eng.) ~~to~~ to have concessions. One large editorial in spring of 1900 was an exhortation against permitting Americans to build a R.R. from the dock of Tehuantepec to Merida saying that while the enterprise would be beneficial to the state it would be far better to wait years for the enterprise to be carried out by local capital rather than to give the foreigners an opportunity to get a foothold in the state; at the same time pointing out how many of the resources of the country were being developed by

foreign capital in other parts of Mexico
thus depriving natives of the opportunity.
Ignoring that the natives lack both capital
& enterprise to do the work. This spirit
of antagonism to foreigners is an inher-
itance from the Indian ancestry of a large
share of the people who are mixed
bloods between the ^{early} Spaniards & Indian
women who were taken as concubines
by the conquistadors. It is rather
interesting in reading the history
of Yucatan by native authors to see
them criticising the reserve that has
always characterized the Indians ^{of the Peninsula} who
have from the first to present day objected
to foreigners & fought ~~with~~ bitterly against
the Spaniards & their descendants while
the latter, true to their ancestry, try to
force out foreign sojourners & nations
who try to get a footing in Yucatan today.
The inconsistency of this attitude
has failed to reach their consciousness.

The city of Merida is absolutely without
drainage & the streets become lakes
of liquid mud after every heavy rain.

The narrow sidewalks & walls of houses including doors & windows up to 6 or 8 ft. become completely plastered with pattern mud thrown by the passing carriages & carts. At such times the foot passengers turn & run for the nearest corner when they meet a carriage or other vehicle in order to avoid being splattered from head to foot. The city of Merida was founded in 15- and ~~today~~ to the present day the people ~~are~~ have made no effort ~~to~~ to do away with this nuisance by any system of drainage but object to foreigners & their innovations and accept this coating of mud during 5 or 6 months each year ~~as~~ with equanimity as a characteristic of their city of which they are very proud.

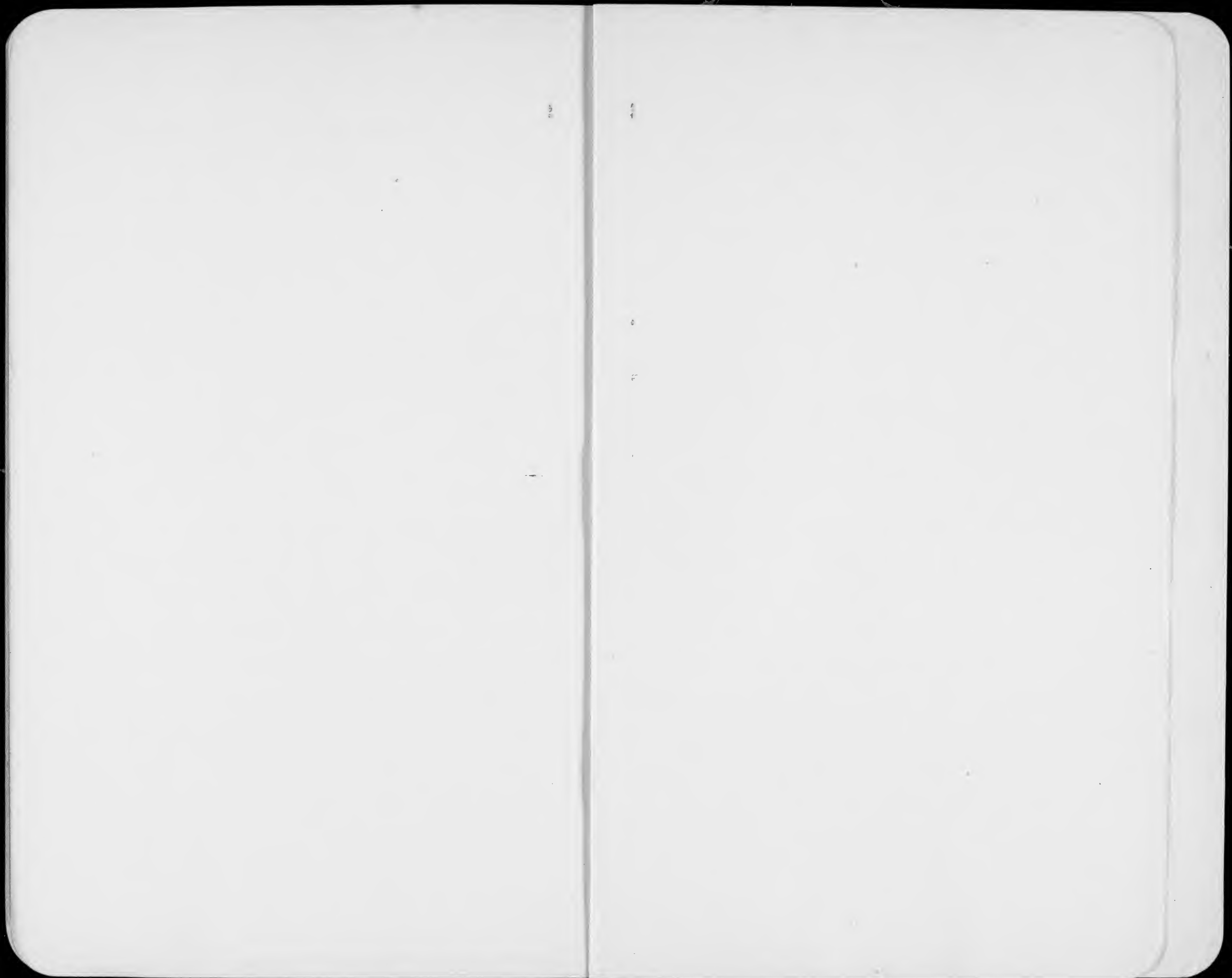
The common people (natives) seem to consider their being citizens of Yucatan as a mark of special value & when they become ^{troubled} drunk ^{or} frequently strike their breast with the closed fist & exclaim with absurd pride 'I am a Yucatecan' as though this gave them special standing

They are not hospitable & ~~always treat~~
a foreign ^{stranger} with sufficient lack of
courtesy to show him quite plainly that his
presence is not a pleasure. In Vera Cruz
& most other parts of Mexico a stranger
has a certain amount of consideration
shown him it is rare that he receives any
direct rudeness but in Yucatan he
can meet this without trouble.

Just at dusk on eve. of the 7th Jan-
we reached Tunkas - half Indian
town on the R.R. and found our way to a
small store & hotel combined. Fortunately
~~we~~ we carried our camp cots & bedding with us
for we found that at this hotel you pay 50¢ for
occupying a vacant room with dirt
floor & every guest is supposed to have
a hammock & bedding. This custom is
so usual that the people of the country
always carry a hammock & blanket with
them. The days are not oppressively warm
at this season and at night one needs one
or two blankets for it becomes quite cool
toward morning. Our room was between
two others & we were prevented from sleeping

for some time by the noisy talk of some gamblers
on one side & after finally getting asleep we
were awakened by 2 natives on the other
side who carried on a loud discussion of the
rascally manner in which the doctors &
druggists managed to turn them to rob
poor people & gain large amounts of money.





Photographs

1-2-3 Wooded island in river
near Frontier Aug 25, 1900 -

4 View up river near Jonuta
Sabasco May 2, 1900

5 Golden Antelope descending
river. Matucristo May 5

