

Taxco, Guerrero Mexico -

Sept 15, 1930

Dear Mother:

Nannie's letter of Sept 6th tells me that you are having a hard time of it again. That you have been behaving badly falling around and have been sent to bed. And I expected to see you much better, and still hope I shall; and that will be in a little more than two weeks. I am sailing from Vera Cruz on Wed. Sept 24, ^{if I don't miss the boat} and will be in New York six days later. If you wish to send word to me there write me c/o Minton Balch & Company

205 East 42nd St. N.Y.C. as I will probably have to stay there a few days before coming on to Woodbury.

Again it has been a long while since I have written you. Was it as long ago as my last visit in the City the end of August? That was pleasant

with visits to studios and parties at the homes of some of the young Mexican artists. Also another visit at the home of Diego Rivera in Cuquean.

He has done some small canvases recently, and his work continues to improve if that is possible. However he continues to get fatter and uglier every day, rather hard on his fourteenth wife who is young and pretty. I went to fiestas at Tepepam near Tlaxpam and managed to do two etchings there. There were the usual dances of Moros y Christianos, in an unusually charming setting - the graveyard! I also drove about the plateau a bit, and saw material for innumerable pictures. Uncle Ned

Gertrude & Madge went to Pachuca for three days (all of which is stale news to you) and the two youngest were away as I guarded the house with the criada, or rather she did the guarding as I was out night and day. Life is so quiet in Taxco, that I go quite mad in the excitement of the City. What will happen to me in New York? When I drove back here I had the company of two ladies, Frances Toor, the editor of Mexican Folkways, and Helen Appleton Reade who writes the Art notes for the Vogue, as well as her regular job on the Brooklyn Eagle. Her itinerary this Summer has been Sweden, Berlin Paris, Norway and Mexico! - a mouthful, no? She is a delightful person - and a lady which is some contrast to Frances Toor. They staid in Moises Saenz house (he was away and didn't know it) and had the use of the only tiled bathroom in town.

When they left, I resolved to settle down to some real work, but was tempted off again, on a trip which proved to be the most amusing four days that I have spent in Mexico. On Sunday the 7th, Natalie Scott and I drove to Chilpancingo, a four hour drive thru the hot country, the most interesting part being around the Balsas, ^{a very rapid river} which we cross on a tiny ferry. At Chilpancingo we met Roberto Montenegro, a well known Mexican artist, with a car full of his friends; we took horses and mules and rode across the mountains for three hours to Tixtla. It is the third largest town in the State, and the only means of communication is by almost impassable trails! There was a grand Fiesta there, with many religious dances, and 100 Torritos, which are set pieces of fire works in the shapes of bulls

and carried on the backs of men who dash thru
the crowd, terrifying and often burning the people
with the sporting rockets and pinwheels of fire.
Bill Sprattling of other friends joined us there but
as the market was not as important as we had
expected we stayed only one night, some of us in
luggy beds and some in no beds at all. The
next morning we rode over the mountains again.
(Tixtla is in a very fertile flat valley by a lake
and probably attained its present size two cen-
turies ago) back to Chilpancingo stopping only
for lunch, then into the automobiles again, and
by night fall we were on the hot tropical shore
of the Pacific at Acapulco! It is the most marvelous
sensation to swim by moonlight in sandy coves
in that tepid salt water, come out to sleep on the
cots by the lapping water, only to dive in again
a day break. The water is as clear as air, the fine
sand hard, and compact, and myriad, multicolored
tropical fish swim about the rocks. We come out
to cool off under palm thatched shelters, and drink
coconut milk, but the heat is so extreme that it
is intoxicating - exhilarating. (Fatigue is not noticed
until we come back to higher cooler altitudes)
Then we drive to the laguna filled with orchid-
choaked weeds, and sheltering vermillion flamingos
scalets, wild geese and many other birds.
Beyond that is the ^{sand} bar, where ~~is~~ a basket-
work grass hut, a lanky American, gone native,
lives with a beautiful ~~native~~ ^{Indian} women - a picture
out of a story by Joseph Conrad! The phonograph is
started and we tango on the beaten earth floor.
The spray of the Ocean surf beyond the bar
is carried over to us by the hot breeze. We

widress, and having no bathing suits, plunge across the bar and into the surf. in our birthday garments, and try not to be tempting to the sharks!

This is heat, but in such a romantic setting who cares? We return to the plaza, sip lemon & pineapple-~~add~~, watch the lithe, slender semi-negroid natives passing by, and forget to think. After the second night, we drive back, nine hours, to our mountain retreat of Taxco and then comes the relapse!

And now while I am writing (we are celebrating the Mexican Independence Day - rockets are popping over head, bells are ringing, the band is playing in the plaza and ~~and~~ a fake army is firing at a clay dummy of the President! It's just one damn thing after another.

It's a mystery your not getting the handsome photos of me in charro costume. I wonder who the lucky bird was? Enclosed are two others, taken in my garden, one of Madge and myself, the other of Natalie, and, again, supercilious me.

Hasta luego. try to be good and take care of yourself. I am coming soon to tell you fabulous Tales of Guerreros.

Much love.

Selo.

P.S. If it is necessary to pay the annual premium on my life insurance before I arrive in Woodbury, will you please do so? and I will reimburse you later. They have sent me no notice here and I do not know the exact amount.