Why don't you write a book about Mexico? I once asked an American who perhaps knows as much about our southern neighbor as anyone living. "Because I have only lived here twenty years," he replied. Probably no country is as conducive to false impressions as Mexico. The real Mexico does not lie on the surface and a foreigner seldom, if ever, reaches it. The following observations, then, do not pretend to present a picture of Mexico as a whole, nor to have too much significance. They are the result of a rather careful study of some aspects of the country and of conversations with Mexicans of different classes in the capital and a few of the larger cities.

The visitor in Mexico is always struck with the power exerted by labor. It is the constant complaint of the American, Britisher, Canadian or Frenchman in business there. The owner of a large business there. The owner of a large restaurant on Madero, Mexico City's Fifth avenue, once said to me:

"I am only the theoretical owner of this place. Practically, my employees control it. I have a waiter here who I know is dishonest. But when I tried to discharge him I found that I could not do so without showing 'proper cause.' As I had no tangible proof, I am helpless. He can either continue to work here or leave with three months' wages, as he chooses."

The labor movement is perhaps the most important product of the Mexican revolution. (Contrary to popular belief, Mexico has had, not many revolutions, but one Revolution, and when they write about it they always spell it with a capital letter. It started in 1910—or, some say, in 1910—and is still going on.) In the constitution of 1917, with its famous article 123, labor's demands gained recognition. The Mexican Federation of Labor (known as the C. R. O. M.), organized in 1918, has been supported by the government since Obregón. There are many other labor groups, but the C. R. O. M. is dominant. In a land where ability to organize is not common, the C. R. O. M. stands as an almost unprecedented achievement.

One of the tenets of the labor movement in Mexico is "class warfare." There has never been a real middle class. All society is divided into "Los de arriba" and "Los de abajo"—the upper and the lower dogs. This idea has penetrated into the minds of practically all the working class. Enter any "cantina" or "pulqueria" and you will hear working men declaiming against their real or imagined oppressors. Much of this talk can easily be identified by the trademark "Made in Russia" and is not as serious as it sounds. In the summer of 1929, during the Russian-Chinese trouble, posters were displayed on the prominent streets of Mexico City, calling on the workers of the world to rally to the aid of the Soviets threatened by a China dominated by oc-cidental capitalism. The real extent of Soviet propaganda in Mexico will probably never be known. It may be less than is generally supposed by the visiting American. Notwithstanding all its faults and failings, one must admit that Mexican labor has been singularly self-controlled. When one considers the condition of the workers at the sudden advent of industrialism and the chaos of the armed struggles following the fall of Díaz, it is surprising that Labor has not committed more excesses than it has.

Another characteristic of the present administration is the growth of the prohibition movement. On Sundays, holidays and election days, all saloons in Mexico City are closed and the thirsty customer can obtain a drink only in a hotel or restaurant, and then only when ordered with a meal. On week nights, saloons must pull down their iron shutters at an early hour. Outside the capital, conditions vary. Puebla is drier than many a town in the United States. Cuernavaca, on the other hand, is wide open. A widespread movement is on foot to bring prohibition to Mexico again. (The Aztecs had stringent prohibition laws before the white man came to this continent.) The time may come when the parched American will have to seek another haven.

"Are conditions in Mexico settled? Will the present administration last?" These are frequent questions asked of me. No one should try to prophesy about what is going to happen in Mexico, but three events of last summer seemed to me to indicate the stability of Ortiz Rubio's administration.

On July 6 the National Revolutionary party, to which Rubio belongs, won a sweeping victory in the congressional elections. This assures their control of the congress meeting in September. Public interest was slight and few disorders occurred. As far as an outsider could observe, it was a perfectly fair election.

The religious dispute between the government and the catholic church seems to be definitely settled. The great cathedral of Mexico City, from which priests withdrew in July, 1926, at the time of the crisis in the relations between church and state, which officially has been in the custody of the government since November, 1927, was restored technically to the control of the catholic church by presidential decree on June 28. It was opened for public worship August 15, amid great rejoicing on the part of the people.

Mexico's foreign relations were improved by the agreement for the refunding of the Mexican foreign debt and the debt of the Mexican National railways, made public in New York on July 25 in a joint statement issued by the Mexican finance minister, Montes de Oca, and Thomas W. Lamont, chairman of the international committee of bankers on Mexico. The new agreement, based on the principle of capacity to pay, was enthusiastically received by the press, although this is not always a criterion of public opinion in Mexico.

Unless unforeseen domestic or international complications arise, the present administration will probably have a free hand in working out their problems.