

When we reached the lake shore we found another mineral well, called Coyame, a short distance from the shore. A stone wall has been built around it and several dugouts lay alongside it, and some Indians were there filling their bottles with the water. All the inhabitants around the lake send for their drinking water to this place.

Here the trail runs along the foot of a vertical cliff, the cliff on one side and the lake on the other, a favorite place for ambushes during many revolutions.

At Tebanca we passed through the remains of a coffee plantation. There are now no signs of coffee bushes, and the houses lie in the most picturesque ruin. This plantation was situated somewhat above the lake on its eastern shore. Don Juan informed us that the peak of the snow-clad Orizaba volcano could be seen from here on a clear day.

Finally, about 2 o'clock, we reached Cuezalapa, our destination. Here ended our first day's ride and we certainly were a little stiff, but a drink of bush-cognac, concocted of very little water, some sugar and lemon, and a large amount of sugar cane rum, soon brought us to life again.

The houses of the finca were in a sad state of decay caused by time and the shifting tides of revolution. During the evening Don Juan told us of the extraordinary life he has been living at this place. The ranch was a favorite haunt for bandits and rebels. Some nights they would come and stay until dawn, and a few hours later federal troops would arrive. Sometimes fleeing men would hide here — one rebel general stayed here for months curing his wounds, alone in a little hut, hidden away in the forest. The federal troops passed by, and all the time Don Juan had to be friends with everybody. "And when they stopped coming because of peace in the country, it was quite strange and lonesome," he told us.

We were sitting by a fire outside the house when an Indian boy turned up with a bow and some iron pointed arrows. We had long before heard that the Indians we were going to visit used bows and arrows, but not until now, on the verge of entering their country, had we seen any of them. The sight was highly suggestive. The mountains lay as a black silhouette against the night sky, and we sat wondering what lay in store for us.