

Monsters on the Rampage, Mexican Provincials Allege

from our Mexico City correspondent

Reports from the small Mexican provincial town of Maguarichi indicate a curious and perhaps startling manifestation of dangerous wildlife hitherto considered mythical. However, government officials insist that the concerns expressed by the people of this quiet northern province are exaggerated and possibly the products of superstitious imaginations.

The first indication of problems in outlying parts of the state of Chihuahua reached the capital two days since, in the form of confused appeals to the Ministry of Justice for assistance following a series of wild animal attacks on townsfolk. Such matters would surely rarely be considered worthy of attention by officials above the level of municipal police captains, and the only explanation for an appeal to Mexico City might lie in the numbers of the fatalities claimed. However, the reports which reached the Mexican press employed terms which implied, not merely the action of some injured and anthropophagous mountain lion or enraged wild bull, but the presence of monsters out of legend.

The national government appears unwilling to respond to these reports in any haste, however. Only a cynic might associate this steady caution with the involvement of towns such as Maguarichi in the *Cristero* war of a few years past, but those same revolts, which pitched the authority of the secular government against the Catholic faith of many of the masses, have left law enforcement in such remote parts spread thin and little liked by the ordinary, pious peasantry. Suggestions of monstrous incursions, even in these strange times, are in danger of being shrugged aside by ruling officials. As yet, indeed, no strong response to these tales has been announced.

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