MAYA CITIES

THOMAS GANN

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IN AN UNKNOWN LAND

MYSTERY CITIES

ANCIENT CITIES AND MODERN TRIBES

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IDOL FROM THE TEMPLE SOUTH-WEST OF THE RUINS AT TULUUM; WITH THE AUTHOR SEATED, SHOWING RELATIVE SIZE.

[*Frontispiece*

MAYA CITIES

A Record of Exploration and Adventure in Middle America

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BY
THOMAS GANN
F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I., M.R.C.S.
Member of the Maya Society
Fellow of the American Geographical Society

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1928

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TO
ALL THOSE INTERESTED
IN THE
ANCIENT MAYA CIVILISATION
ONE OF THE GREATEST THE WORLD
HAS EVER KNOWN

THE MAYA AREA



1 I. of Cozumel
2 Tancah
3 Tuluum
4 Village of Tuluum
5 Ascension Bay
6 Chetumal Bay Church
7 Ruins. Date A.D. 333
8 Tzibanchè
9 Ambergris Cay
10 Honey Camp
11 Cayo
12 Uaxactun
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14 Yaloch
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16 Wild Cane Cay

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MAYA CITIES

CHAPTER I

Jamaica—Sport as a promoter of peace—Women's status in Jamaica amongst the negroes—A lost ancestor—Where a five-hour day works successfully—The day's work finished by breakfast-time—Brutality of Mexican convict regiments—Murder a fine art—We start up the Chetumal Bay—*Wanderlust* of the Maya a national characteristic—Our unprepossessing guide—Ichpaatun, character of mounds within great enclosure—Site likely to yield a rich harvest to the explorer—The finest game preserve in Central America, needing no keepers—Drawbacks to hunting in it—A gun accident—The site of Villa Real, possibly the earliest permanent settlement of the Spaniards in Yucatan—The rumour of gold attracts the Spaniards to Chetumal—Slaughter of Indians, armed only with bow and arrow, by mail-clad invaders—Villa Real held for three years by Alonzo Davila, at which time the old church, now in ruins, was founded—Davila has to abandon his conquest and retire—25 lbs. of vinegar for the pick of 100 young Indian girls, a chief's son for a cheese, the rate of barter amongst the conquerors—The Spaniard's dread of being sacrificed to their gods, and eaten, by the Indians—A place accursed, and deserted by the Indians.

I ARRIVED in Jamaica, by the S.S. *Bayano*, on the 15th November, 1926, about the same time that a Soccer football team from the Island Republic of Hayti reached the Colony. Jamaica was tremendously excited over the matches arranged between the visitors and various local teams, including an all-Jamaica combination. Nothing, I think, could be a stronger indication of the tremendous hold which Soccer football has taken, of recent years, on the people of all countries, and all colours, than the advent of this very excellent aggregation of players from the little black republic which, up to a few years ago, was undoubtedly the most backward of the West Indian Islands, a hotbed of revolution, superstition, and ignorance, and probably one of the last

strongholds of Voodooism and Obeah in the New World; but which has now become a progressive, peaceful, and go-ahead little State. I venture to affirm that sport has had a great deal to do in bringing about this result.

Sport, that greatest of all promoters of the *entente cordiale*, which brings all shades and nationalities together in friendly rivalry, compels them to keep their tempers under control, and play the game, rubs off the corners of insularity, abolishes colour prejudice and race antagonism, and teaches each that the other fellow is not such a bad sort, when you come into friendly rivalry with him on the football field, the tennis court, the golf links, or the nineteenth hole.

While in Jamaica I visited Port Royal, for years the capital town of the Colony, till it was destroyed by the earthquake of 1692. There was buried here, about the year 1714, an ancestor of my mother, one Bonaventure Garvey, to whose memory a tablet had been erected, which I was anxious to see, if it still existed. Unfortunately, the church had been completely restored since that date, and most of the memorial tablets lost, or removed to other churches on the island, so that my quest was unsuccessful. The name Garvey is not uncommon in the Island at the present day, as witness the celebrated Marcus of that ilk, Grand Potentate of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. They are, however, for the most part of pure Ethiopian strain, and I do not think my ancestor can be held responsible for the perpetuation of anything but the name, or, if he were, the white stream has now become so diluted as to defy recognition. But when it is remembered that, in former days, throughout the West Indies, it was no uncommon thing for slaves to adopt the names of their masters, it will be readily understood that the name was often transmitted without the blood.

Woman, amongst the coloured population of Jamaica,

had come into her rights—while retaining her privileges—long before the game of militant suffragism became a popular sport in England. The following notices, taken from Jamaica's principal paper, *The Gleaner*, will give a fair idea of man's status amongst the negroes, where his predominant partner regards him rather as an indispensable, but troublesome, factor in the production of piccaninnies, to be driven to work, which he abhors, and restrained from rum, which he loves, as frequently as possible, but to be promptly exchanged for a more satisfactory partner, if he becomes too much of a nuisance.

NOTICE

I hereby notify the public throughout, despite the publication by my husband, Jonathan James, " that he is in no way " responsible for me, or any debts contracted by me, I still hold him absolutely responsible for me being his wife.

(Sgd.) ELLEN JAMES.

Twitenham,
Hope Bay P.O.,
16/11/26.

NOTICE

This is to notify the public in general that my husband, George Narine (coolie), having left my home without my consent, I will not be responsible for any debt or debts incurred by the said George Narine.

Dated this 22nd day of November, 1926.

(Sgd.) LOUISA NARINE.

Bog Walk P.O.

I arrived in Belize on the 26th November, where I picked up Andres, my black boy, and my man, Amado Esquivel, commonly known as " Muddy," who has travelled with me, during the last twenty years, over most of the remoter regions of Central America in search of Maya ruins and dates. He is half Irish, quarter Spanish, and quarter Maya Indian, and, unlike most Mestisos, combines all the good, instead of all the bad, qualities of the three diverse races from which he has sprung, for in him the exuberance and irresponsibility

of the Celt are balanced by the taciturnity and dogged perseverance of the Maya, while the high courage and love of adventure of his Conquistador ancestors render him a reliable companion in such tight places, as one is bound, from time to time, to find oneself in in Latin America.

We left Belize for Corozal on the following Monday, and proceeded thence to my *cocal* ten miles farther north, along the coast. Here my little motor-boat, the *Booksie*, had been laid up during my absence in England, and we stopped for a couple of days to get her in commission again. It was good to sleep under the stars once more, after six months of cities and civilisation, to hear the dry rustling of the stiff palm-fronds in the sea breeze, the tree-frogs' nightly chorus, even the distant scream of a jaguar, deep in the forest ; to watch the little bats flitting in and out amongst the branches in the bright moonlight, and wish them good sport in their mosquito hunting, then, soothed by the exquisite perfume of the night-blooming jasmine, to fall into a dreamless sleep, undisturbed by the roar of traffic, the hooting of motors, and the thousand and one noises which turn city nights into nightmares for lovers of peace and quiet.

I was awakened about 1.30 a.m., however, by a persistent noise of chopping just beside my cot, and found three Indians from a neighbouring village vigorously at work husking coconuts with their machetes. These I promptly hustled off to work elsewhere, out of earshot.

Next morning, on enquiring into their misdirected energy, the Manager told me that it had become quite a habit amongst the labourers, most of whom were Indians, to start work about one or two in the morning, husk their task of six hundred coconuts, for which they were paid sixty cents, and, having finished their day's work about 6 or 7 a.m., to hurry off home for breakfast—a five-hour day, over at breakfast-time—an ideal, one would imagine, beyond the

wildest dreams of even a Mexican Liga, or British Trades Union. And yet it worked admirably for both labourers and employer, as the men, who always went to bed at sunset, woke up fresh and full of pep in the middle of the night, with nothing to do, and no desire to sleep any more, so they asked the Manager to let them start on their task in the small hours of the morning. As there is no chance of shirking the task of husking coconuts, for the husked nuts speak for themselves, he raised no objection, especially as he hoped to get an extra task out of each labourer, for which they would, of course, receive double pay—i.e. one dollar and twenty cents. The arrangement proved entirely satisfactory, but not a single Indian would husk a nut over and above his task of six hundred, no matter what he was paid for it, preferring to lay off in his hammock all day, and, in the intervals of dozing, watch his wife at work, or, if driven by an unwonted access of energy, take his cast-net out and catch a few stone-bass along the shore, or his gun and dog into the bush, and perhaps bag a gibnut, an armadillo, or a wild hog. All the men possessed small corn plantations of their own, the produce of which, supplemented by a little fish and game, kept them and their families very comfortably, and money was really of very little use to them except to purchase powder and shot, a few pots and pans, a few yards of cotton for the family clothes, and a gallon or two of rum for occasional fiestas to break the monotony of life.

Who shall blame them, then, for not exerting themselves unduly to acquire more than sufficient cash to satisfy these simple wants? They were absolutely without ambition, lived in the present only, with no care for the future, and were entirely untroubled by any sense of responsibility as to the fate of their wives and children, when their own earning powers had for ever gone.

Happy Indians! The word "worry," that bane of

modern civilisation, is absent alike from their minds and their language.

From the *cocal* we set out in the *Booksie* for Payo Obispo, the capital of the Mexican territory of Quintana Roo, there to obtain a permit to visit the shores of the Chetumal Bay, where last year I discovered a Maya stela bearing the date corresponding to the year A.D. 333 of our era, on a site named by us Ichpaatun, meaning "a stone within a fortification." I had heard of the ruins of an ancient church close to this site, and was anxious to visit it.

Before landing at Payo Obispo, Andres, my black boy, was unanimously elected captain of the *Booksie*, Muddy acting as engineer, and I filling the rôle of passenger. This disposition was made because to the captain of a small boat falls all the dirty work and responsibility of clearing, entering, visiting the Customs, and bearing the brunt of official wrath when any irregularity occurs, by no means an unlikely contretemps under the complicated Mexican maritime regulations. Whereas the passenger is a mere onlooker, and never held responsible for anything, unless it be the introduction of smallpox or yellow fever.

We were, however, very courteously treated by the Mexican officials, received our clearance, and permit to land anywhere on the coast, within half an hour, and were allowed to depart at once. I could not help contrasting the present régime with the bad old days, not so very long ago, of the convict regiments, who were sent down from Mexico by the Federal Government to fight the Santa Cruz Indians, by whom at that time all this territory was held.

I had myself, on one occasion, a very unpleasant little experience of the methods employed by those scoundrels, who constituted probably the most vicious and degraded body of troops in the world. The brother of a friend of mine had gone over one morning from Corozal, the nearest

British settlement, to attend a fiesta in Payo Obispo, and had evidently celebrated too strenuously, for quite early in the afternoon he was escorted by the military police to the *calabosa*. Sobering up in the evening, he asked permission to go down to the latrine on the wharf; this was granted, and, escorted by a soldier, he left the *calabosa*. This request had probably been merely a ruse on his part to enable him to effect his escape, for, on nearing the wharf, he foolishly made a dash for liberty, apparently with the idea of boarding a small British sloop which was anchored alongside, and gaining sanctuary on board her under the British flag. He was, however, captured, before reaching his objective, by the soldier guard, who had to jump into the water after him for the purpose, and haled ignominiously back to gaol.

The gaol, I may say, consisted of a bare, wooden-floored cage, so low that the occupant was unable to stand up, and must perforce spend all his time sitting up against the bars, or lying flat on his back on the hard and filthy floor. Within this dreadful contrivance, the unfortunate young fellow was next morning discovered dead. No external marks of violence were found upon him, and, a certificate of death from natural causes having been given, he was about to be buried the same evening. News of the occurrence had, however, in the meantime reached his brother in Corozal, and a request was submitted to the commandant of Payo Obispo, through the British authorities, for the holding of a post-mortem examination, to which the former at once agreed. At the brother's request, I went over to Payo Obispo on the following day to be present at this, as his representative. No external signs of violence were discernible on the corpse, and it almost seemed at first sight as though death had really been brought about naturally. On opening the chest, however, it was found to be full of

dark-coloured blood, indicating a very extensive hemorrhage before death, and on removing this the cause of death became at once apparent, for a thin, triangular file, some nine or ten inches in length, was discovered, the lower sharp end buried in the muscles at the back of the chest, the upper blunt end resting in the gullet, at the level of the Adam's apple. The ill-fated youth had evidently met with a very terrible death, the details of which were not difficult to reconstruct. At some period during the night, probably not very long after his return from the unsuccessful attempt to escape, he had been taken out of the prisoner's cage by the soldier-police guards, and seated on a chair, or box, where he was either bound or held firmly down while his head was forced back and his mouth prised open. Perfectly helpless in this position, the file was next thrust violently down his throat as far as it would go, and then, probably by means of a wooden pin and a hammer, driven in till its upper end was well out of sight behind his tongue and no trace of it remained visible from the outside. A slow, horrible, and agonising death, the very thought of which still makes me shudder, was then brought about, partly by asphyxia, partly by hemorrhage from the gullet and organs of the chest ; yet so cleverly was the murder planned and executed, that no signs of the means employed were discernible from the outside, and at the first glance a certificate of death from natural causes might easily have been—and as a matter of fact was—given by a medical man whose suspicion had not been previously aroused. So cleverly, indeed, was the whole diabolical crime carried out that one cannot help thinking that this was by no means the first occasion upon which the method had been employed to dispose of undesirable persons.

This shocking act could only have been committed by the military police, for no one else had had access to the prisoner,

and the only conceivable motive for it appears to have been the slight inconvenience which the prisoner's attempted escape had caused them, and the wetting received by one in effecting his recapture. How any human beings could have been led, by such a trivial motive, to the commission of such a ghastly crime is absolutely inconceivable to the normal man, but the Mexican convict soldiers, as the unfortunate Maya Indians found to their cost, were not men, but devils incarnate of cruelty, lust, and brutality.

A substantial claim was sent in to the Mexican Government on behalf of the murdered man's family, for he left behind him a widow and several small children totally unprovided for, but up to the present the matter has marched no farther than this.

On leaving Payo Obispo, we steered first to the east, and then, on rounding the point, due north along the western shore of the Chetumal Bay, passing Juan Luis—last year a prosperous little group of huts belonging to Maya fishermen and agriculturists, now completely deserted. For no conceivable reason, and apparently out of a sheer caprice, the whole population had melted gradually away to other villages, some even migrating as far as British Honduras. This extraordinary *wanderlust* appears to have formed a constant and ineradicable factor in the psychology of the Maya, from the days when, in the sixth century of our era, they emigrated *en masse* from their magnificent cities in Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras, leaving behind a vast capital as represented by public buildings, palaces, temples, sculptured monoliths, mural decorations, etc., to the comparatively arid and infertile peninsula of Yucatan, for no conceivable reason beyond pure *wanderlust.*

Exactly the same thing happened when the Maya of Yucatan deserted, in a night, so to speak, their splendid city of Chichen-Itza, to migrate to the wilds of Champoton, and,

some centuries later, when the citizens of Uxmal left what was probably the most magnificent city in the Maya area for the miserable little *pueblo* of Mani. These migrations, which are as frequent to-day as they were two thousand years ago—though naturally, owing to the vastly diminished population, on a much smaller scale—have always been a puzzle to archæologists and ethnologists, and though various theories—some of extraordinary ingenuity, if no great probability—have been put forward to account for them, none of these are entirely satisfactory. I think we must simply take it that the remarkable *wanderlust* was, and is, an integral part of the Maya make up, just as pugnacity is inherent in the Irish, thrift in the Scot, and uncleanliness in the Russian peasant.

We stopped, higher up the bay, at another small group of Indian huts, known as Calderitos, to pick up the guide, Sabas Ojeda. He was a short, square, powerful individual, with a thick thatch of glossy, jet-black hair, no forehead to speak of, the shiftiest little black beads of eyes I ever saw in any individual, and an immense flat nose. He had been a soldier of one of the first regiments sent down by President Diaz to conquer the Santa Cruz Indians, and was probably of pure Aztec blood ; nevertheless, he proved an excellent guide, and first rate bushman.

We put in for the night at Ichpaatun, and I spent the next day in revisiting the monolith, and getting a more accurate idea of the contents of the walled enclosure surrounding it, which, owing to the thick growth of bush covering the whole space included by the wall, was no easy matter. The inner citadel was surrounded by a stone wall, which described nearly a semi-circle, whose chord, formed by the sea coast, was perhaps a kilometre in length. This wall was built of roughly squared stones, and, where intact, was as much as fifteen feet in height. To the south it reached the coast,

but to the north ended in a great square stone platform, separated from the sea by perhaps thirty yards. In addition to the three great pyramids, faced with cut stone, standing immediately behind the stela, this citadel was literally covered with mounds of all sizes and shapes; some great oblong, stone-faced platforms, obviously forming bases upon which formerly stood temples, palaces, and houses of timber, centuries ago crumbled to dust; some look-out mounds; others possibly fortifications; others, again, judging by fragments of incense-burners found upon them, burial-mounds.

It will be impossible to make an accurate plan of the space enclosed by this wall—which in ancient times was probably a combination of sacred area, royal dwelling, and, when necessary, fortified place—till the bush has been completely cleared off it and burnt, a work of some magnitude, as the felling has to be done about December, and the burning after the green bush has dried in the sun, about May. It may be that within it are other dated stelæ. Great numbers of imperishable artifacts—such as spear, arrow, and axe heads, beads, malacates, obsidian knives, scrapers, etc.—are sure to be found, judging by the number discovered by us on the surface, without any clearing.

The burial-mounds, which are very large and numerous, should also yield a rich harvest on excavation.

Next morning we were up at daybreak, and watched the sun rising over the dark, gloomy waters of the Chetumal Bay, but even this event, which usually in these regions affords a gorgeous spectacle for the early riser, failed to enliven the picture, for the east, instead of presenting the usual transformation scene of rose, silver, and old gold, held throughout to a dull, threatening yellow, shading off into great banks of lead-coloured, cumulus clouds.

My objective was a ruined church, of which our guide

had told me, a few miles higher up the bay, and about half a mile inland. We soon reached the nearest point on the shore to this, and started into the interior. As we disembarked, a great flock of pigeons passed over us, and I had just raised my gun for a shot, when Sabas, laying his hand on my arm, said :

"Wait, señor, don't fire, or you will frighten the big game."

He was right. Hardly had we left the water-side, and commenced cutting a track through the thick bush, than we heard heavy birds of some sort getting up from the scrub all around us, and soon the bark of Sabas's ancient section of gas-pipe told me he had got a shot at something. He was leading, slashing the bush with a machete in one hand, his gun held in the other. When we came up, we found him vigorously chasing a great *cumbul* through the scrub ; the poor bird had been shot in the legs, dropped off its perch, and, falling to the ground, had been unable to rise, though it was still capable of fluttering along through the thick undergrowth and leading Sabas a merry chase. At last he retrieved it, a magnificent bird, almost black in colour, with a high, erectile crest of beautifully waved, jet-black feathers at the top of its head, as large as a good-sized turkey, and splendid eating. We heard great numbers of these birds all around us, but, owing to the thickness of the bush, did not get another shot.

A quarter of an hour later, however, I got a shot at a deer, bounding through the bush about ten yards in front of me, and, as the blood-drippings showed, hit it somewhere. We did not, however, follow the animal up, as it was far more at home in this thick scrub than were we. A little farther on Sabas held up his hand for us to stop, and sniffed around the bush, for all the world like a dog scenting a piece of meat, uttering the one word " *Warri*," and creeping cautiously along, making as little noise as possible. There

was soon borne to my nostrils a whiff of the curious, musty smell which emanates from these little animals, but our approach, though it appeared silent to us, to them was probably as the progress of an elephant through a hardware store—at any rate, long before we got within shot we heard them dashing off through the dense undergrowth. I was disappointed at not getting one of these *warri*, as the little wild pigs make excellent eating, something like very good pork, with a slightly gamey flavour added.

This great stretch of bush along the west coast of the Chetumal Bay is probably one of the finest game preserves in Central America, deer, wild hog, puma, jaguar, gibnut, armadillo, wild turkey, *quam*, and many other varieties of game abound here; nor is any keeper or game warden necessary for their preservation, for beyond an occasional wandering Indian hunter there is no one to slaughter them or poach on these vast natural preserves.

From a purely sporting point of view, however, the shooting is unsatisfactory, as one has to creep through the dense bush as silently as possible, clothing torn, face and hands lacerated by the spines and thorns which seem to be inseparable from Central American forest, bitten by mosquitoes and savage *tabanus* flies, covered with ticks and red-bug, tripped up by roots and lianas, sweating at every pore, exhausted by the moist heat which is a fair imitation of a vapour-bath, only to arrive just in time to see, or more probably only to hear, one's quarry dash off into the bush, without giving one a chance even of a snapshot, when the whole exhausting performance has to be gone through again.

Just after my shot at the deer, I very nearly had an unfortunate accident. I was pushing home the safety-clip of my gun, which worked rather stiffly, using what I thought was the trigger-guard as a lever for my forefinger. What I was actually pulling against, however, was the back

trigger, and, the safety-clip sliding forward suddenly, the gun exploded, the charge passing within a hair's breadth of Ojeda, who was immediately in front of me. No damage was done, however, except that my right thumb was split up and the nail half torn off—exactly how, it was impossible to say. After this contretemps Ojeda, I noticed, kept well off to the side of the bush.

After about an hour's walk from the water-side, we arrived at the ruins of the ancient church of which our guide had told us. There can, I think, be hardly the shadow of a doubt but that these ruins mark the site of the ancient Spanish town of Villa Real—possibly the first site in Yucatan to be permanently occupied by the Conquistadores—founded by Alonzo Davila in 1528, only a few years after the conquest of Mexico by Cortez. Its history is a peculiar one. In 1527 Francisco Montejo, the newly appointed Adelantado, arrived in the then unconquered and unexplored peninsula of Yucatan, and at once set about the subjugation of the Maya Indians. A rumour reached him of the existence of gold in a district known as Chetumal, in the south of the peninsula, and he at once dispatched messengers to the Cacique, or ruler, of Chetumal, asking whether this were true, and whether provisions for the Spanish troops could be obtained in his province. To this the Cacique sent back an answer: "Yes, there are provisions in Chetumal; but the fowls will be handed to the Spaniards on spear-points, and the corn-grains on arrows." This was a brave but indiscreet message, for, as the Cacique was soon to discover, it took more than the threat of spears and arrows to daunt the tough old Conquistadores once they had scented treasure, and, quite unaffected by the Cacique's veiled threat, Montejo at once sent off Alonzo Davila, one of his trusted lieutenants, to Chetumal, with forty infantry, fifty-six cavalry, and a host of friendly Indians—no mean army in those early days of the conquest.

Arrived at Chetumal, after an arduous journey, partly by sea, partly through the dense forest, Davila was attacked by the Cacique and a great host of his Indians. The result was inevitable, for the half-naked Indians, armed only with bows, arrows, and shields, were no match, however great might be their preponderance in numbers, for the mounted Spaniards, clad in arrow and spear-proof mail, and armed with swords and arquebuses. What happened then had occurred in the conquest of Mexico, and was to occur many, many times throughout Latin America before the fine spirit and tempered courage of the aborigines were finally broken and they yielded their beloved land, perforce, to the barbarous invaders. Many hundreds of the Indians of Chetumal were left dead upon the field of battle before the rest drew off, and a few of the Spanish soldiers were killed, and many wounded.

Davila's was, however, a barren conquest, as no gold was found, with the exception of a few poor ornaments worn by the natives, probably imported from farther south. For nearly three years Davila held the conquered territory, founding the town of Villa Real, near the shores of the Chetumal Bay, and erecting, doubtless with forced Indian labour, the very church whose ruins we now saw before us.

But in the meantime the Indians were not idle. They refused, from the first, to supply the Spaniards with food, and when foraging parties were sent out to commandeer it, they seldom returned without a number of wounded, and not infrequently a few killed.

Small parties of Spaniards, found wandering at any distance from their base, were set upon and exterminated by immensely superior forces of Indians. At last, in 1531, finding that he was losing rather than gaining ground, that he had no treasure to show, and that a large percentage of his small army was sick, wounded, or dead, Davila made up

his mind to abandon Villa Real, and, marching south to Honduras, took ship from thence to Havana, finally reaching Campeche in Yucatan, where he joined his chief, the Adelantado.

There can be little doubt but that Montejo and his soldiers treated the Indians throughout Yucatan with the utmost cruelty and inhumanity.

Wherever the Spanish arms were carried by them the Indians were enslaved, and, according to Bishop Las Casas, a regular system of barter was instituted; 25 lbs. of wine or vinegar being valued at the pick from 100 young Indian boys or girls, a chief's son at one cheese, and a horse at 100 able-bodied slaves. It must, however, be admitted that the Indians retaliated to the best of their power, by sacrificing and eating any Spaniards who had the misfortune to fall into their hands—a fate which, curiously enough, the Spaniards, who were, with all their faults, valiant soldiers, dreaded more than anything else.

The next we hear of Villa Real is nearly a century later, when Fathers Fuensalida and Orbieto, on their missionary trip to the unconquered Maya of Peten, passed down the Nohukun River (now known as the New River) from Bacalar, and, turning north on entering the sea, sailed up the Chetumal Bay to the site of the former Villa Real. All the information they give about it is unfortunately comprised in the short statement: "Now a freeholder from Bacalar is settled there." After this, history is silent as to the fate of Villa Real, though we may, I think, take it that it had a considerable Indian population up to, perhaps, a couple of centuries ago, when the whole region became depopulated, and the Indians left it, as if the neighbourhood were accursed—as indeed, even to this day, it appears to be—and the very location of the site was forgotten till we stumbled on it again.

CHAPTER II

Plan of the ancient church—Construction, but for arches, pure Maya in style—Evidently built by native masons—Appeal to the imagination of this unique little church—Here may be buried a Maya Rosetta-stone, for the early Spanish priests understood both the Maya language and glyphs—Forestalled, in search for key, by treasure seekers—No record of what they unearthed—Discovery of bodies buried at different levels, in front of the high altar, the earliest probably slain by an arrow in the pelvis—Long period of continuous occupancy of the shores of Chetumal Bay by Maya—A subterranean water channel thirty miles long beneath the bay—Curious experiences of our guide, when a prisoner amongst the Santa Cruz Indians—A bath in thin white-wash—An excursion into Spiritualism, with unsatisfactory results—A curious burial-chamber, possibly looted by the early Spaniards, though no gold would have rewarded them—I purchase a Mexican registered boat from a Chinaman—An extraordinary method of weather forecasting for the year—Visit to Honey Camp—Use of the chiclero in archæology—A night on a weird islet—An invasion of land-crabs by night—Mystery of what they subsist on.

THE little church is a remarkable structure, not quite like any ecclesiastical building I have ever seen. It consists of a chancel in the centre, to the north of which is a small sacristy, and to the south a little chapel. The chancel measures 20 ft. 8 in. wide by 28 ft. 4 in. deep. It is entered from the west through a great Norman arch 20 ft. high, still standing, which occupies its entire front. The arched stone roof has fallen in, and the arch of the entry, upon the summit of which trees of considerable size are now growing, must soon follow it. The roofs of the sacristy and chapel were constructed of wooden (probably sapodillo) beams, which have long since rotted away, though the recesses which supported them are still visible. The whole façade measures 57 ft. 8 in. in length. The walls are 3 ft. thick, and the style of masonry is pure Maya, such as may be seen in their

pre-Columbian temples—great blocks of roughly hewn stone, the interstices between which are filled in with wedge-shaped pieces and rather friable mortar. Indeed, but for the true arches, one might well have mistaken this building for a Maya temple.

Round all the arched windows and doorways in the church are found deep recesses, evidently to accommodate wooden frameworks, which have, of course, long since disintegrated. To the west of the church, to which it is joined by side walls, is a quadrangular yard 150 yards broad by 115 yards long. This is surrounded by a wall of roughly cut stones, about 3 ft. high, in which are entrances on the north, south, and west sides. Within this enclosure, 28 ft. from the front of the church, is a peculiar quadrangular structure, measuring 45 ft. by 21 ft., originally built of roughly cut stone, now completely ruined, which may possibly have been an altar, or may represent the ruins of the priest's house.

This little church, insignificant as it appeared, cannot but appeal very strongly to one's imagination, for it must have been one of the first, if not the very first, Christian temple erected in Central America, and stands as a monument of the indomitable courage with which the Conquistadores—brutal, greedy, ruthless, and ignorant though they might have been—carried the cross throughout the whole of the New World which came under their sway. But, apart from this, the church has a special interest of its own, for here for years must have laboured amongst the Indians, priests who understood, not only the spoken Maya languages, but the written glyphs, and who could, if they would, have left behind a key, or Rosetta-stone, which would have unlocked for us the great body of Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions which have been collected from various sources during the last few years, and made clear what is undoubtedly the most interesting problem presented by the New World—the rise

and fall of its greatest aboriginal civilisation, the Maya. That there existed, soon after the conquests, Roman Catholic priests who were capable of supplying this key there can be no doubt whatever, for Cogolludo, the historian of Yucatan, writing in the early seventeenth century, says of Father Villalpando, a Yucatecan priest who flourished in the middle of the sixteenth century :

" He learnt to speak Maya very quickly, and to write it, a thing which only their priests and kings can do."

We may, I think, accept it as a certainty that the priests who served this church must have understood, not only the Maya languages, but the Maya hieroglyphics, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that, either with the coins and other objects beneath the foundation-stone, or in one of the tombs in front of the high altar, a key may have been buried. Of these two places one of the tombs was by far the more likely, as the foundation-stone was probably laid in such early days that the Fathers had not as yet had time to acquire a knowledge of the language, much less of the hieroglyphics. But as soon as I stepped into the chancel I realised that, even in this remote spot, treasure-seekers had already been before me, for there, 10 ft. in front of where the high altar had stood, yawned a great oblong hole, 5 ft. long, 3 ft. broad and 10 ft. deep. It was impossible to tell when, or by whom, this hole had been dug, or what the searcher had found within it. It must have been opened, however, many years ago, as Ojeda told me that ever since he had known the church—probably twenty-odd years—the hole had looked the same. What the grave-robbers found is also unknown, and if they found a Maya key, it was probably lost or destroyed years ago ; in any case, it is lost to science. The non-discovery of what I had anticipated was naturally a great disappointment to me, yet I was not to depart entirely empty, for the grave

afforded me certain valuable information, the nature of which will be better understood if I give a somewhat detailed description of the excavation.

Over the whole floor of the chancel lay a layer, nearly two feet thick, composed on top of vegetal mould, formed in recent years, and beneath this of great flat stones and rubbish from the fallen roof. These rested on a layer of limestone dust, three feet thick, beaten into an almost stone-like consistency. On examining the sides of the excavation, it was obvious that the floor had originally been torn up to admit of the interment beneath it of human corpses, and that this had occurred on three separate occasions, separated from each other by a considerable number of years, the hole being filled in after each burial with a mixture of fine, dry earth and marl dust. The corpses had been laid in their graves fully extended, and the grave-robbers had only excavated the upper halves of the skeleton, to about the level of the pelvis, consequently the bones of the lower halves were found still projecting from the end of the excavation, at different levels, as they had been buried ; the oldest, thirty-six inches below the bottom of the chancel floor, the middle, twenty-six inches, and the most superficial, sixteen inches. The projecting bones were carefully examined, and it was found that the deepest—i.e. the earliest —were exceedingly rotten, and broke up almost at a touch, those in the centre were less so, while the bones of the topmost, or most recent, burial were in an excellent state of preservation. An interval of probably, at least, a couple of centuries was indicated between the uppermost and lowermost interments. In the lowest burial fragments of the pelvic bones were exposed, amongst which was brought to light a small, triangular, chert arrow-head. Now, this was an exceedingly interesting and important discovery, for unless the arrow-head had been accidentally shovelled in



Entrance to Sacristy of Old Spanish Church, Chetumal Bay.



Arch Opening into Chancel of Old Spanish Church where Early Burials were found.

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with the material used to refill the grave, which appears unlikely, it must have been introduced with the corpse itself. It seems highly probable, indeed, considering the innumerable skirmishes which the Spaniards had with the Indians during the first settlement, in which no inconsiderable number of them lost their lives, that this earliest burial was that of the body either of an ecclesiastic or of one of Davila's soldiers, who died from an arrow-wound, probably—judging by the situation of the arrow-head—of some of the pelvic viscera, which, with the surgical treatment of those days, would almost inevitably have proved fatal. He was buried here at the foot of the high altar, in the most sacred spot known to his comrades, facing the symbol of that religion for which they had fought so valiantly, and suffered so severely, in the vain endeavour to plant it in the infertile soil of Maya heathendom. If an ecclesiastic, he was no doubt considered to have won the martyr's crown.

The two upper burials belong, judging by the condition of the bones, to a much later period ; the middle one possibly to the early seventeenth century ; and the topmost one to any period up to the War of the Castes, some eighty years ago, when this territory was entirely abandoned by the Spaniards. This west coast of the Chetumal Bay is an extraordinarily interesting country, and appears to have been occupied continuously by the Maya for at least fourteen centuries, for at Ichpaatun we find the stela recording the date A.D. 333, connoting a considerably earlier date for the first settlement. Toltec influence is traceable in the stone-faced platforms, and in the great wall surrounding the whole group at Ichpaatun, while throughout the entire area fragments of censors are to be found, belonging to the last degenerate stage of Maya culture, immediately before, and perhaps a couple of centuries subsequent to, the Spanish conquest.

Close to the church is a curious subterraneous water-hole, or *cenote*, approached by an oblique passage. When the sun is in the right position, sea-fish, and numbers of crayfish, may be seen disporting themselves in this. The water is much salter than that of the Chetumal Bay, and the Indians say that the *cenote* itself communicates, by an underground channel, directly with the ocean outside the reef, some fifty to sixty kilometres to the east.

Ojeda, our guide, when fighting in the Mexican army against the Santa Cruz, had been taken prisoner by them, and had some curious adventures to relate, which were of especial interest to me, as we hoped to penetrate the Santa Cruz country during the dry season of 1927. The Indians, he said, allowed him the freedom of their sacred city, and what astonished him most was to see a number of fair-haired men and women amongst them, with blue eyes and light complexions, who seemed to lead the same life and be in no way distinguished from the other Maya. He only spent a few days in the town, which was known to the Indians as Santoka, or " The Holy City." During his entire stay the Indians treated him very well, giving him a good hut to live in, and plenty of corn-cake, beans, and bush meat to eat. All the time, however, he felt heavy, sleepy and stupid, and was impressed with the idea that his food was being drugged. The day before he left he was taken to the principal temple, and there baptised according to their rites ; but of this ceremony, which lasted some time, he could remember practically nothing, as they gave him some *pinole*—a drink made from burnt corn—for breakfast on the morning of the performance, which made his eyes so sensitive to light that he was almost blind, and also induced a singing in his ears, giddiness, and a feeling of stupidity. As a matter of fact, he thought he had been poisoned, and, the fear of impending dissolution having gripped him, the most interesting

ceremony in the world would hardly have appealed to him greatly.

After baptism he was blindfolded and taken into the bush, when, a day's march on foot from the city, he was turned loose, and shown a path which he was told would lead him to Pleia Carmen, a small coastal village nearly opposite Cozumel. This proved to be the case, and, reaching the village in safety, he was soon rescued by a dory from Cozumel.

Next morning, having found a place with a beautiful hard, sandy bottom, I took a bathe in the Chetumal Bay, not, however, venturing into more than two feet of water, as, though the Indians say big sharks are never found in these waters, *cazones*, or small tiger-sharks, about two feet in length, abound, for they form a staple article of diet amongst the Indians, who salt them, and then barbecue them over a smoky fire of cedar-chips. At any rate, I was taking no chances. After the bathe I sat on the base of a coconut tree to dry out in the sun, as our only two towels were being used as dish-cloths. As I dried, I turned a dead white all over, as if I had been lime-washed, or powdered with talcum. As a matter of fact, this was precisely what had occurred, for the waters of the bay are so highly charged with lime that on drying out they give one's skin a coat of thin lime-wash all over—a thing I have never seen occur before.

One heard so many tales from the Indians of the haunting of the bush around Ichpaatun, the extraordinary noises which were heard, and the supernatural things which were seen there—and we ourselves at our first visit had heard such weird and unaccountable noises, when we raised the stela for the first time—that I determined to sleep at the ruins alone one night, and see what happened. Such curious theories as to the denizens of the other world, and their

means of communication with us, are promulgated in these days by well-known scientific men that one hesitates to disbelieve anything, and if an uneasy Maya spirit should wish to return to the scene of its former life, and communicate with someone now alive, surely this was the place, and I—who have spent most of my life in working amongst the ancient deserted cities of this great dead race—the man. Accordingly, just before sunset, we put in to Ichpaatun in the *Booksie*, and I had my tent erected within the semi-circular wall which surrounds the ruins, after which Muddy and Andres put off and anchored for the night about half a mile up the coast, and well out, to avoid mosquitoes.

I turned in soon after eight, and was just dozing off, when I was suddenly brought fully awake by the same weird, unaccountable noise we had heard at our first visit. It is almost impossible to transmute the sound into words, as it was like no other sound I have ever heard before, but, starting with three staccato barks, or coughs, it ended in a long-drawn-out, melancholy howl, or ululation, which came swelling over the bush like the sound of a *tunkul*—the Indian drum—down river on a calm night. It died slowly and gradually away, and was not repeated. This appeared hopeful, and I determined to keep awake, and see what followed. We had, however, had a long day, and I must have dozed off again, for the next thing I remember was being suddenly awakened out of a sound sleep by terrific and blood-curdling sounds. The same hoarse barking, followed immediately by the same awful howl, but both magnified a hundredfold, seemed to come from immediately above my head, on the roof of the tent, and reverberated over the silent sea in front and the silent forest behind me. For a few seconds I was literally paralysed with terror, and all desire to interview any visitor from another world left me, then, just as the final wail was tailing off into silence, I

plucked up courage, and, tumbling out of bed, rushed into the little clearing, now bathed in bright moonlight. Not a thing, beyond bush in front and sea behind, was visible, not a sound audible! I returned to my cot, but did not sleep till the return of the *Booksie* at dawn, when I found that the two men on board had also heard the noise, but as if at a great distance. I am now convinced that it must have been caused by some owl, night-jar, or other silent, night-flying bird, which, attracted by the novel appearance of my tent, came to investigate, and, actually perched upon the roof, treated me to a solo, flying off silently into the night directly I jumped out of bed, scared by the noise I made even more than I had been by his nocturnal song.

Muddy had been suffering from symptoms of dysentery for several days, and, as the simple remedies at our disposal failed to check it, I thought it best to return to civilisation for further treatment, as in this climate dysentery neglected is apt to give rise to very serious consequences. Moreover, my thumb, which, as already stated, was split by the accidental discharge of the gun, had become very swollen and painful, and begun to suppurate, poisoned, as I believed, by my scraping the earth from some of the projecting bones at the bottom of the grave with my bare hand, before I had had an opportunity of disinfecting it with iodine.

On the following morning, accordingly, we turned the *Booksie's* head south once more. About five miles south of Ichpaatun we landed, and Ojeda took me to see a very interesting burial-mound, which had, unfortunately, however, already been opened, probably by the old Spaniards, and not impossibly by Alonzo Davila and his Conquistadores, between 1528 and 1531, in search of the treasure of gold, the false rumour of which caused him so much vain effort and suffering. The mound—a long, oblong structure, built chiefly of great rough blocks of limestone—was about

100 ft. long by 20 ft. broad, and 10 ft. high. Near its centre a narrow stone-faced passage, 10 ft. in length, ran steeply down to a small stone-lined chamber, or cyst, 6 ft. long and 4ft. wide, beneath the level of the base of the mound. The passage had evidently been discovered originally by tearing away a great block of stone which blocked its entrance. The chamber was, of course, now empty, but I could not help wondering, as I sat within it, what the original discoverers had found. Certainly not that gold, I was glad to think, which alone would have satisfied their avaricious souls.

From here we made our way to Payo Obispo and Corozal, reaching Belize without mishap, where Muddy, under proper treatment, soon recovered from his attack of dysentery.

While in Belize I purchased a decked motor-launch, with an 18 h.p. engine, for my trip along the east coast of Yucatan. She belonged to a Chinaman of Payo Obispo, and, as poignant fears were entertained there of a De la Huerta rising against the present Government of Mexico, he was anxious to dispose of her at almost any price, for Payo Obispo is one of the most isolated and easily captured towns in the whole Mexican Republic, and, being capital of the territory of Quintana Roo, is sure to be one of the first objectives of the revolutionaries.

As my Chino very truly and succinctly put it : " Money can belly if sloldiers come ; moty-boat no can do."

She had, at the commencement of her career, flown the Union Jack, and borne the name of *Grace W*, but on being acquired by the Departamento of Fomento of the Mexican Government, had changed this to the *Anahuac*. When I bought her she again became a good Britisher, and had to be re-registered under her former name of *Grace W*, on which, of course, my friends became exceedingly curious to find out " who the lady was." She bore traces of her Mexican

ownership in a very high cabin, so profusely windowed that it resembled a hothouse, and the remains of electric lighting.

Her Chinese owner had left behind, affixed to such small space on the cabin wall as was not occupied by windows, a choice selection of Chinese hieroglyphic inscriptions, a number of very gaudy-coloured prints of pretty little Chinese ladies in European costume, or rather lack of costume, and a magnificent collection of dirt and cockroaches.

I found it absolutely impossible to get started for the Santa Cruz country early in January, as I had hoped. First, my photographer simply refused to go, giving as an excuse the smallness of the *Grace W* for such a trip, for the east coast of Yucatan has, like the Bay of Biscay, perhaps even a worse reputation than it deserves. His real reason for refusing, however, was that, being a Mexican, he objected strongly to going amongst the Santa Cruz Indians, who have no love for his countrymen, and choose very unpleasant methods, on occasion, of rubbing the fact in.

Next, the pilot, an ancient, half Indian fisherman and beachcomber, refused to set out before the end of the month, being a firm believer in the Indian idea that January weather is invariably capricious and unreliable. The Indians believe, indeed, that the month of January is provided by the weather god, Tlaloc, as a sort of forecast of the weather to come throughout the year, for the guidance of them in their planting, fishing, hunting, and travelling enterprises.

Like all Maya calendaric computations, ancient and modern, it is quite complicated. The first twelve days of January foretell the weather for the twelve months of the year, from January to December. The next twelve days predict the weather for the months taken in reverse order, i.e. from December to January. The next six days—that is,

from the twenty-fifth to the thirtieth, inclusive—are each divided into two parts, from mid-day to midnight, and midnight to mid-day, and each half-day is again used as a weather index of the months from January to December, to act as a final check on the other two forecasts. For example, if fine weather is predicted for the month of March by both the 3rd and 15th of January being fine, then the half-days are not called into action, but if the weather for March is doubtful, the 3rd of January being fine and the 15th wet, then the first half of the 26th settles the question—if it is fine, March will be fine ; if it is wet or stormy, March will be wet or stormy. But they go even further than this, for, in the event of any doubt still existing as to the weather to be expected in any month, the twenty-four hours of the 31st of January—the only day still unused in the month—are applied to the months : the first twelve from January to December, the last twelve from December to January—a sort of House of Lords, or last court of appeal in weather prediction, in fact, when all the lower courts have disagreed. A more involved and irrational superstition it would, on the face of it, be difficult to conceive, and yet it has stood the credibility test for hundreds of years, and is as firmly believed in now by the Indians as it was when, very shortly after the conquest, they adopted the calendar of the Spaniards. The idea of using the days of the first month of the year as indices of the weather for the remaining months is, however, undoubtedly far more ancient than this, and was probably first minted in the ingenious mind of some priest of Tlaloc long before the Christian era, and applied to the days of Pop, the first month of the Maya's own year.

Being thus unable to start for Yucatan before the end of the month, I determined to give the *Grace W* a trial trip to the north of British Honduras, and up the Rio Nuevo to Honey Camp, a recently inaugurated station of the

American Chicle Company, where they are experimenting in the artificial intensive cultivation of the sapodillo-tree for its latex, known as chicle, the most important constituent of chewing-gum, which is at present obtained exclusively by chicleros, who bleed the wild trees throughout the depths of the Central American forests. Every year, as the pernicious habit of gum-chewing gathers in more and more victims, the demand for chicle increases, and in endeavouring to meet it the chiclero penetrates into remoter and still more remote fastnesses of the bush, bringing to light, not infrequently, in the process the ruins of great Maya cities and dated stelæ, unseen by the eye of man since they were deserted by their Old Empire architects and sculptors some fifteen centuries ago.

At Honey Camp, which is situated on a fresh-water lagoon in the northern district of British Honduras, a number of large mounds had been brought to light in cleaning the bush ; the remains of stone wharves, built by the ancient inhabitants, running out from the shore into the water at various points, had been discovered ; and a number of small islands in the lagoon were found to be so covered with potsherds and small artifacts that it appeared as if they must have been employed as burial-places, as were so many small cays and islets by the ancient Maya in sea, lagoon, and river.

For Honey Camp, then, I set out on January 4th, 1927, with the faithful Muddy, Andres, and a second youth, James, as engineer. We stopped for the first night at a small island a few miles from the northernmost point of British Honduras, known as Cayo Tostado—that is, toasted or burnt up cay. It is about five acres in extent, covered with a thick scrub of salt-water pimento, wild grape, buttonwood, a few calabash-trees, and stunted coconut-palms. It derives its name from the fact that, as soon as they reach a

height of from six to eight feet, all the trees die out, as is evidenced by the presence of hundreds of dead stumps and the fact that nowhere throughout the island does the scrubby vegetation exceed this height. It is a weird and forbidding-looking little place, with no signs of life upon it, not even the remains of a fisherman's hut, or barbecue for drying fish, which hardly one of the innumerable cays along the coast lacks.

It offered, however, excellent anchorage and good shelter in case a *norte* should start to blow in the night, and a narrow beach—composed entirely of shells of all colours, shapes, and sizes—afforded a convenient site upon which to pitch my little tent. While this was being put up I took a trip into the interior, which was covered with the same scrubby bush, interspersed with small, open patches of grey, hard mud : upon these nothing grew, but they were riddled with innumerable great land-crab holes. The whole place seemed to exhale a curiously unwholesome and depressing atmosphere.

Not a sound was to be heard, nor a sign of life was visible, not a bird or lizard or even an insect, while a faint earthy, ammoniacal odour pervaded the entire island, much stronger in the interior, where the sea breeze did not penetrate and the air was heavy and stagnant. I retired to bed soon after sundown, but was awakened about midnight by the cold, to find a stiff *norte* blowing. I noticed that the faint, unpleasant, earthy smell I had detected in the evening was much more pronounced in the tent, while a curious, faint clicking noise, which seemed to come from all around me, persisted all the time.

I reached behind my pillow for the electric torch, switched it on, and, pulling up the mosquito-curtain, turned the light on to the floor of the tent, where a truly disgusting sight met my eyes. The whole floor was literally covered with

enormous, greyish green land-crabs, so crowded together that there was literally not standing room for all of them, and they were crawling over one another's backs, their great claws producing the faint clicking noise I had heard, and their loathsome bodies exhaling the disgusting earthy odour. They had probably been attracted by the remains of a tin of lunch tongue left on the floor of the tent, and, having devoured this, were seeking anything else edible.

Fortunately, they were unable to get on top of the cot, being baffled in the attempt first by the thin steel legs which supported it, and, even on surmounting these, by the fact that the mosquito-net was tucked under the camp mattress.

I grabbed a machete and slew a dozen or so of them, but these crabs, unlike those on the mainland, which usually rush off at the first assault, showed no inclination to retire, but rather a determination to stop and devour the corpses of their friends and relatives, which they evidently regarded as a feast specially provided by providence. I could not reach my boots, and had no intention of stepping down in my bare feet amongst the seething mass of filthy crabs to get at them, but, sitting on the low cot, I managed to do tremendous execution with the long machete amongst the disgusting cannibals, until, slowly and reluctantly, the survivors at last retired. The mystery of the lack of life on the island was now explained, for no small animal, snake, lizard, frog, or even crawling insect could have withstood these battalion and army corps of horrible scavangers for even a day. What they managed to exist upon is still a puzzle to me, as the exceedingly innutritious and unattractive vegetation of the island would hardly support even a land-crab, and, unless they had developed a fishing technique, it is difficult to imagine what they found to eat, unless, indeed, they ate each other, in which case their fate must ultimately have been that of the Kilkenny cats.

CHAPTER III

Trip up the Rio Nuevo—Honey Camp started for intensive study of sapote-tree and its latex, used in making chewing-gum—Death from snake-bite—A lucky escape from a *tomagoff*—Burials by the ancients within the mounds upon which their houses stood—A curious lagoon, silent, and islet-dotted—Remains of ancient wharves found all round lagoon shore—Discovery of an islet which had been a sacred place for offerings to the gods—Curious objects found as offerings—Date of offerings fixed very closely by finding Toltec figurines, and objects showing Spanish influence—The earliest tea-cup made in America—How did tarantulas reach the sacred island?—Multiplicity of the gods worshipped by the later Maya—Air of silence and mystery which haunts the lagoon of On—Fishing extraordinary—Capturing a water-snake—The vast, uninhabited chicle forests of Central America, and the type of men who adventure forth into them as chicleros.

From Cayo Tostado we made an uneventful trip up the Rio Nuevo to the little town of Orange Walk, the last outpost of civilisation in the northern district of British Honduras. Here we found awaiting us an *arriero*, or muleteer, with two horses, two riding- and two pack-mules, to convey ourselves and baggage to Honey Camp. The two pack-mules proving inadequate for our vast load of food, camping, cooking, and photographic outfit, etc., a good deal of cargo had to be loaded on to the mules ridden by James and Andres, the former of whom carried the gasoline-lamp in his hand, and the latter a bunch of live chickens. Thus burdened, they were straddled on top of light but bulky cargo, with no means of guiding the mules, which simply followed the *arriero*. Wearing expressions of great anxiety, but determination withal, their appearance was ludicrous in the extreme. The cavalcade, as it jolted along through the narrow bridle-path, inches deep in sticky mud, mules

and horses cannoning against tree-trunks every few yards, necessitating constant watchfulness if one were to retain one's knees unbroken, with innumerable readjustments of the loads, sounded like a procession of White Knights from *Alice in Wonderland*, for the pots and pans tied on, wherever they would fit about the packs, kept up a constant rattle and clash, which must have scared the bush denizens for miles around.

No casualties, however, were reported at the end of the journey beyond the loss of one chicken, escaped into the bush—probably a welcome New Year's gift for the first tiger-cat or 'possum which encountered it—when, in collision with a tree-trunk, Andres was knocked from his perch and dropped the bunch of fowls.

The journey from Orange Walk to Honey Camp is not a great one, yet one feels that one is suddenly precipitated by it from comparative civilisation into the heart of nature, for but a short time ago the site of the camp was an uninhabited, unvisited stretch of virgin bush, swamp, and lagoon. The camp—which was started under the auspices of Mr. James Craik as an experimental station for the intensive study of the sapote-tree, the latex of which supplies the most essential constituent of chewing-gum—is situated on a high bank overlooking a beautiful greenish blue lagoon, dotted with tree- and reed-covered islands, varying from a few yards in circumference to several acres in extent. It is surrounded by reeds and saw-grass, broken at intervals by what look like sandy bays. These are in reality, however, composed of soft, marly mud, into which one sinks at once up to the knees.

I cleared a patch amongst the reeds on the north shore of the lagoon, disturbing in the process a small, harmless thunder-and-lightning snake, and casually asked the Manager if snakes were common around the camp.

" Well," he said, " snakes are not so very common, but there is something about this patch of bush that attracts all the yellow-jawed *tomagoffs* in Central America."

Now this was not reassuring, because the " yellow jaw," as he is commonly called, is probably the worst snake in tropical America, for not only is he exceedingly venomous, his bite almost invariably proving fatal, but, owing either to sheer laziness or pure devilment, he will not get out of the way of the pedestrian, as nearly all other snakes will if they have half a chance, but will actually coil up and await his approach, striking without even the sportsman-like warning of the rattler, if they come within striking distance of him. Only a short time before my arrival one of the labourers had been felling a large tree, when making a corn plantation at the back of the camp ; this tree was in contact with a big dead log, beneath which lurked a " yellow jaw." Every stroke of the axe sent a certain amount of vibration through the log, which evidently angered the reptile, for it suddenly struck the man just below the knee. He at once rushed off to camp, and was given large doses of whisky, pending the arrival of the nearest snake doctor, who administered the usual bush remedies, and demanded the production of the snake, whose " innards " form an important constituent of the snake doctor's pharmacopœia. The Manager at once set off with several labourers, located the snake beneath the same log (for the *tomagoff* seldom moves far from its lair), slew it, and brought the carcase in. It proved to be a huge female, with young, on seeing which the practitioner at once gave up the case as hopeless, for, said he : " Anyone bitten by a ' yellow jaw ' in this condition never recovers, but invariably dies within twenty-four hours, as they are ten times as venomous as an ordinary snake." His prognosis proved correct, for the unfortunate labourer, who had been struck about mid-day, died that night before ten o'clock.

The Manager himself told me of an extremely unpleasant experience which had recently befallen him. Entering his house without a light one night, he felt something strike his leather gaiter, and then a weight and constriction round his ankle. He felt sure it was a snake, and kicked out vigorously behind him, at the same time flashing his electric torch. He was right, for there, coiled upon the floor in readiness for a fresh onslaught, was a small "yellow jaw," which he promptly dispatched. After listening to these cheery tales, I immediately set about the construction of a layer of saw-grass all round my tent, a barrier which no snake will cross, and tucked my mosquito-net securely under the mattress all round, after which precautions I felt fairly secure for the night.

Just behind the camp, in a clearing made in the bush to plant corn, a large number of small mounds were exposed. Some of them were conical, others in the form of truncated cones, and they varied in height from five to ten feet. Next morning, selecting one of the conical ones, some fifty feet in diameter, I ran a trench through its centre down to the ground level. Five feet from the summit of the mound a layer of hard compact marl, averaging one foot thick, was encountered, which had at one time evidently formed the flat top of the original structure. Immediately beneath this, and near the centre of the mound, was discovered a single skeleton of an adult, resting on its back, in the fully extended position. The bones were very friable, and it was impossible to recover the skull. Over the face had been placed a large, flat plate of common red, polished pottery, fourteen inches in diameter, and at each side of the body were found similar, but smaller, plates. No other objects whatever were found in the mound, with the exception of enormous numbers of potsherds, all either of the rough, unglazed domestic variety or of the red glazed ware similar

to those found with the corpse. It seems probable that the original mound had been in the shape of a truncated cone, the flat summit of which supported a leaf-thatched, wooden hut, with a floor of hard-beaten marl. On the death of the owner a hole had been made through the marl floor into the substructure of the mound, in which the corpse had been placed, and lastly a conical capping of stones and earth built up on top of the mound.

We know from Landa's account of the customs of the Maya of Yucatan at the time of the conquest, that this was amongst them a not infrequent method of disposing of the dead. It seems, therefore, not improbable that all the mounds in the vicinity were originally merely substructures upon which houses had been built, and that these latter—composed of leaf, sticks, lianas, and mud—had long since turned into vegetal mould, leaving no trace behind. If this is so, the flat-topped mounds represent the original structures unaltered, and it may be noted that such of them as have been opened have been found to contain nothing beyond blocks of stone, marl dust, and earth, while the conical mounds represent the original structures used secondarily as burial-places.

While the men were excavating in the mounds in the corn plantation, I set out in a small dug-out to explore the lagoon. It is a still, mysterious body of water, pale sea-green round the edges, where it is only a few feet deep, but of a dark laurel-green towards the centre, where the depth reaches thirty or forty feet. The wooded islands are raised in the centre to a height of eight to ten feet, but flat and marshy round the edges, which are fringed with reeds, saw-grass, and buttonwood, while the centres carry large trees, as sapote, yaxnic, palma real, bread-nut, and canip, covered for the most part with great clusters of gorgeous orchids and air plants, with the result that the

isles appear like dark green jewels in pale sea-green settings, the little reed-covered islands being of a grass green, set in the dark green of the central area. When the sun strikes the lagoon obliquely, these various shades of green produce a most wonderful and beautiful effect, while drifting clouds, by throwing part of the scene in shadow, momentarily vary the shades of green in the most extraordinary manner.

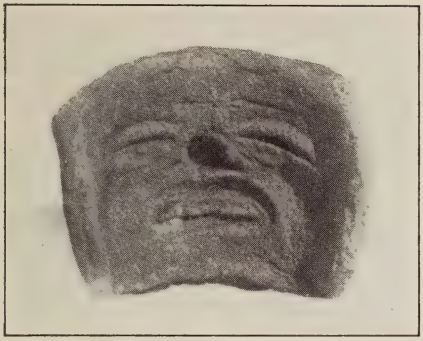
The lagoon is called Laguna de On (Onha in Maya), or the Lake of the Alligator Pear ; whether because, at one time, alligator pear trees flourished on the banks, or because it somewhat resembles in shape an alligator pear cut in half, it is now impossible to say. All round the shores are small stone wharves, evidently erected by the ancient inhabitants at various settlements for the accommodation of their dug-outs.

The first island visited, within a few hundred yards of my camp, measured one hundred yards by sixty yards, its high central plateau being seventy yards by twenty. No mound was found upon it, but towards the north extremity, at the end of the little plateau, was discovered an oblong space ten feet by six feet, roughly paved with large stones, amongst which, covered only by a thin layer of vegetal mould which had accumulated from decaying vegetation during the centuries, was found a great collection of offerings, left there by the ancient inhabitants.

These included skulls of tapir, peccari, deer, and gibnut, conch and hootie shells, fish vertebræ and turtle bones, obsidian knives and cores, jade beads, pieces of polished jade, a copper bell, fragments of a great number of pottery incense-burners, with the figure of the god in appliqué decorating their outer surfaces, fragments of pottery vessels of every conceivable shape and size, and a small, three-legged pot filled with jade and shell beads. But most remarkable of all these offerings were, first, a clay model of

a conch-shell, projecting from the open mouth of which was a squatting tiger, holding a human face between its open jaws ; second, a small earthenware tea-cup, and, lastly, a flat piece of iron, four inches long by one inch broad, completely oxidised through, and brittle as a biscuit. Now this conch figurine is precisely similar to one found by me some years ago at Santa Rita, the great Maya-Toltec settlement in northern British Honduras, and indicates clearly that this was a Maya settlement to which Toltec influences had penetrated, while the tea-cup and piece of iron afford positive proof that it was post-Columbian.

This cache goes to show, then, not only that the Toltec influence reached to the south of the Rio Nuevo, in British Honduras, but that it must have flourished long after the arrival of the first Spaniards. The little island was not a burial-place, for not a human bone was found upon it, but rather one of those " sacred places " found throughout the Maya-Toltec area, where it would appear that offerings were made to the gods, by being simply laid upon the surface of the ground within a space covered by large stones. Most of these offerings, but not all—as in the case of the beads, obsidian knives, conch figurine, and three-legged pot—were " killed " before being offered, by being broken into fragments. This was, undoubtedly, the sacred isle of the surrounding settlements, where the people, or more probably the priests, came at intervals to make oblations to their gods, and the objects found upon it represent probably from two to three hundred separate offerings. The clay tea-cup is especially interesting, as the Maya potters, notwithstanding the infinite variety of forms used by them in fabricating their wares, never seem to have hit upon this extremely convenient shape—it is indeed, so far as I know, the only one ever found in the whole Maya area, and must have been modelled on one seen by the Indians amongst the



Mould for Making Pottery.
From Sacred Islet in Lagoon of On.



Archaic Figurine dating back Four or Five Thousand Years.



Figurine from Island in Lagoon of On. A Human Face is projecting from the Mouth of a Tiger which is emerging from a Shell.



Side View Showing Shell, Tiger, and Face.

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Spanish conquerors in Yucatan, or the early British settlers in the Colony of British Honduras.

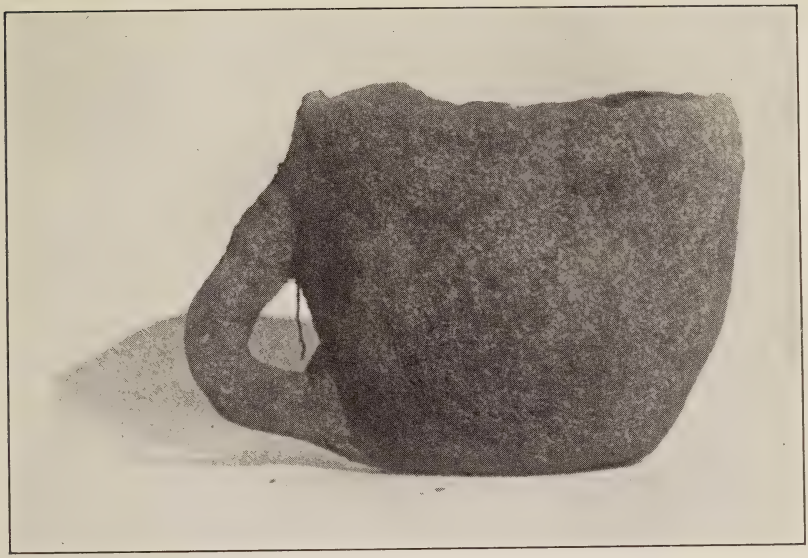
While digging very carefully amongst the stones on this altar, we disturbed an immense tarantula, its great bloated yellow body and hairy black legs covering an area almost as large as my hand. With it were about a dozen smaller tarantulas. Now the puzzle was, how on earth did this great spider reach the island from the mainland, several hundreds of yards away, and what did she and her progeny live on, unless they ate each other? Not a crawling insect was seen by us, even the ubiquitous ant being conspicuous by its absence. It struck me that the original tarantulas introduced possibly by the old priests as guardians of their sacred island may have been the remote ancestors of those we encountered; anyhow, on this hypothesis, I allowed them all to escape, much to the disgust of the men; but I felt that by killing the guardians of their sacred places, in addition to robbing them of their treasures, I should be adding insult to the injury I had already done the ancient gods. The number of these gods of the Maya-Toltec seems to have been legion, for to the purer religious faiths of the old Maya Empire had been tacked on the hero gods of Yucatan, and grafted on to these, again, many of the Aztec gods. Finally, a number of nature and household gods had been adopted, while every profession and calling had its own patron deity, the gods and goddesses of fishermen, hunters, doctors, midwives, agriculturalists, traders, painters, and enceinte women, to mention but a few of the many hundred, each having his or her own special shrines, priests, and idols.

There seemed to brood over these sacred isles of the lagoon of On an air of silence and secretiveness, an air of something concealed, something held back from us of the mystery which hangs over the closing scenes of that wonderful Maya

civilisation, which, long past its apogee at the coming of Columbus, was extinguished like a candle in a hurricane after the arrival of the first Spaniards in the Maya area. Round the now silent, uninhabited shores of On there must, judging by the number of mound groups and wharves, at one time have existed many prosperous settlements, while the now deserted waters were probably covered by fleets of dug-outs, carrying passengers and merchandise from one to the other. Now all is silence and desolation. Yet this must have been, and indeed is to-day, an exceedingly pleasant place wherein to dwell. The lake itself swarms with denizens of various kinds, the commonest of which is a small but palatable fish from four to six inches long, of an iridescent green, with a bright crimson lower-jaw. We went fishing for them one day in a dug-out, probably one of the most remarkable forms of the sport to be enjoyed anywhere.

The fish live in holes in the lagoon bottom, some being natural rocky clefts, others apparently constructed by themselves in the marly mud, to which they retire when frightened. We were armed only with a cast-net, as they will not take a bait. This is a large, circular net, weighted with lead all round the edges, which, when skilfully thrown —and the knack of throwing it is acquired only after long and painful practise—surrounds and imprisons the fish, or shoal of fishes, over which it falls before they have time to escape, provided the water is not too deep to allow of the weighted edge of the net sinking to the bottom before they have time to dart from beneath it.

It is impossible, however, to catch these little fish in this way, as directly the net descends they flash into their holes, over the mouth of which the net passes harmlessly; the only way, we found, was to get a flexible stick, and with it poke the hole beneath the net, thus driving the occupant out into the meshes. But even this manœuvre they were



Cup of European shape, possibly first ever made by Aboriginal Americans.



Crude Incense Burner of last stage of the Maya, probably not more than three or four centuries back.

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sometimes able to avoid, by possessing a back door, or bolt-hole, in which case, when poking down one hole, one not infrequently had the mortification of seeing the fish flash out of another, yards away. Once we got something wriggling under the net, and Muddy leant over the side of the dug-out and endeavoured to grip it through the meshes, under the impression that it was a fish. It proved extraordinarily elusive, and then the lime-clouded water began to clear, and the paddler suddenly shouted: "*Cuidado, es culebra!*" ("Look out, it is a snake!") Muddy let go as if he had grasped a red-hot poker, and, lurching back, nearly upset the cranky little dug-out; indeed he might just as well have done so, for she took in enough water to wet us all thoroughly. It was, however, a lucky escape, for the black water-snake we had captured was a horrible-looking brute, and, according to the Indian, very poisonous.

We saw several large fish of over three feet in length, jumping, but as one of these has never as yet been captured—for they will not take a hook—no one was able to say to what species they belonged. In addition to the fish in the lake, the pine ridge, close at hand, is full of deer, and harbours great flocks of parrots, while in the high bush are found, in abundance, peccari, gibnut, armadillo, *chichalaca*, and many other kinds of game; moreover, the land is good for the cultivation of maize, so that food must have been plentiful and life easy for the ancient inhabitants in pre-Columbian days.

The Indians have a remarkable way of catching *hicatee*, or fresh-water turtle, in this lagoon. One stands in the bow of the dug-out, stripped almost naked, with his eyes glued on the water ahead, while the other paddles gently and noiselessly along. Presently the bowman sights a *hicatee*, or *bucatora*—another variety of water-turtle—and over he dives after it, like an arrow from the bow. The turtle at

once dives beneath the surface, in the vain effort to escape, but even in his own element he is no match for the man, who can swim the faster, even under water, and nine times out of ten comes up with his quarry grasped in one hand.

I was sorry to leave the Lagoon of On, for the life here is peaceful and healthy ; bathing, shooting, fishing, and paddling filling in pleasantly the hours not devoted to excavation and exploration ; moreover, there is a delightful absence of ticks, red-bug, mosquitoes, sand-flies, *chigoes*, and other insect pests, which, at nearly all the ancient sites of Central America, prove such a trial to the archæologist. At the Old Empire sites, with their great temples, palaces, and monoliths, abandoned from one to two thousand years ago, where every perishable object left by the former inhabitants has vanished ages since, one gets an impression of immense antiquity ; here at On, where, probably less than two centuries ago, the last phase of the great Maya civilisation was drawing to its close, one seems to come in closer contact with this vanished race, and to obtain a clearer insight into their manners and customs, their food-supply, their burial ceremonies, their religion, and their art. Indeed, it was almost like coming on a deserted but long-occupied camping-ground in the bush, and endeavouring to tell from the refuse found whether it had been occupied by Europeans, Mexicans, chicleros, or wandering Indians.

But a move had to be made, for I had heard from a chiclero who had been bleeding sapodillo in that neighbourhood of the existence of a group of large and extensive ruins some forty or fifty miles north of the Rio Hondo, which forms the boundary line between Mexico and the Colony of British Honduras, and determined to set out for the nearest point on the river to these ruins, and make my way in on mule-back.

We were now about to adventure into the land, covering

many millions of acres throughout Central America, where chewing-gum is king, where no sound of human activity is heard except the click of the chiclero's machete, as he rings the trees to make the precious latex flow. Villages and settlements are unknown in this country, their place being taken by chicle *jatos*, or camps—collections of flimsy shacks consisting of a broad roof of palm-leaf, supported on sticks cut in the bush, which can be erected in a few hours. Women and children are conspicuous by their absence, for, with the exception of a few adventurous ladies of very easy virtue, they are left behind when the chiclero enters the bush.

Here every man is a law unto himself, the king's writ does not run, extradition is unknown, and he would be a brave " rural " or constable who entered a chicle camp with the object of arresting a prisoner. The men, it must be admitted, are recruited from the scum of Latin America ; escaped Mexican convicts and deserting soldiers, renegade Indians, murderers and bandits " wanted " in all the Republics, negro and coolie offenders under the Labour Laws of British Honduras, criminals, drunkards, degenerates—all find their representatives here. Yet one who knows him well cannot help entertaining a sneaking regard for the chiclero—dirty, reckless, degenerate, often diseased, he still presents a faint resemblance to the old Spanish Conquistador ; like him he sets out cheerfully on a journey into unknown lands, taking his life in his hands, in the search for wealth ; like him he knows that a thousand dangers, discomforts, and privations must be encountered : malaria, dysentery, black-water fever, snake-bite, falls from trees—very frequent occurrences in carrying out his work—exposure, poor and insufficient food, and bad water ; and, like him, he must possess the one redeeming virtue of dogged and reckless courage.

CHAPTER IV

The Rio Hondo—Pass procession of manatee resembling coils of gigantic sea-serpent—Awkward encounter with a manatee—The expeditions which have navigated the Hondo, from the archaic immigrants, who crossed it three or four thousand years ago, to Captain Cook, who passed up it in 1798—A miserable village—Difficulty in making a start—A mysterious crime—Camp under a haunted tree—A substantial ghost—A fruitful but uninhabited land—An execrable road through an *acaichè*—A wonderful country for orchids—A miserable camp—A plague of fleas—Bones of all the animals eaten by the chicleros left strewn around camp—A bad water-hole—A new species of wild hog.

DESCENDING the New River, we crossed the Corozal Bay, and entered the mouth of the Rio Hondo, first calling at Payo Obispo to obtain a permit to land at points along the river on the Mexican side, as it forms the northern boundary between Mexico and British Honduras. The lower reaches of the river are hot, steamy, and uninteresting, the banks covered with mangrove swamp, swarming with alligators of all sizes, the stream sluggish, and exhaling that peculiar smell of ancient primæval mud stirred up, which one notices in all mangrove swamps.

Seven kilometres up we reached the opening into the Sajamal Lagoon, a body of water some four miles long by two miles across. Here a really wonderful sight met our eyes. Passing across the opening into the lagoon was what appeared to be a gigantic monster of the sea-serpent type. It was forging ahead, leisurely and unhurriedly, parallel to our course, its great, grey, slimy, shining, wet coils alternately rising above the surface and submerging in exact conformity with the best sea-serpent traditions. For quite an appreciable time I was deceived, then I realised that

the phenomenon was caused by a procession of three large manatee, the mermaids of the ancient mariners, following each other in regular alignment, each diving beneath the surface and coming up again at regular intervals, exhibiting in the process their broad, wet, grey backs, for all the world like the coils of an immense serpent. I asked an Indian who lived near the opening to the lagoon if he ever hunted the manatee, which appeared to be singularly tame here. He replied that he was afraid of them, as on one occasion, when crossing the mouth of the lagoon in his dug-out, one of the great mammals, weighing perhaps a ton, rose directly beneath it, precipitating him into the river. He was scared out of his wits, as he thought the attack had been a deliberate one, and in the water he would have had no earthly chance in an encounter against the vast bulk of such an adversary. But it was evidently an accident on the part of the manatee, as it swam calmly on its way, taking no further notice of either man or dug-out.

As we slowly ascended the stream I could not help thinking of the extraordinary processions of men, women, and children who had passed up this river, or across it, during the last five thousand years. First, in point of time, were the people of the archaic civilisation, at least one relic of whom was found at the ruins we were now about to visit, as will be recounted later. Their culture was a very primitive one, their vocabulary probably very restricted. They would march light, having nothing to carry beyond their stone weapons, images of their gods, a few ornaments and cooking-pots, and the rough clothes on their backs. They must have lived on the country as they went along, killing game, which in those days, before the advent of man upon the scene, was doubtless extraordinarily tame and plentiful, and digging roots, and picking fruits, nuts, and berries. They probably marched along, a disorderly mob, without any

defensive precautions, for they had no enemies to fear either before or behind, being pioneers in a virgin country untrodden by the foot of man since the creation.

They probably crossed the river in crude rafts made from dry tree-trunks, lashed together with ropes of liana. Following these hardy pioneers, but not till many centuries later—not indeed till the early years of the Christian era—came waves of Maya immigrants from the south, to colonise Yucatan, who formed such early settlements as Coba, Tuluum, and Bakhalal. These tribes had reached a much higher cultural horizon than their archaic predecessors. They were led by great soldier-priests, who were later to undergo an apotheosis, and add their names to the pantheon of the Maya of the New Empire.

No doubt they, like their predecessors, found the land unoccupied, and encountered no enemies on their long march. For centuries after this there was probably a constant stream of Maya from the south, marching northward across the Rio Hondo, to help found the new Maya Empire. After the coming of the Spaniards, one of the earliest settlements in Yucatan was formed by Davila at Villa Real, on the Chetumal Bay, within a few miles of the mouth of the river, and no doubt many a raid was made from this early settlement by the Conquistadores, with Villa Real as a base, against the Indian villages along the banks of the river, in search of food and treasure, till its abandonment in 1531.

In 1618 there set out from Mérida the first of what may be termed the Indian crusades, led by those great soldiers of the Cross, the Franciscans, with a view to the conversion of the Maya of Peten, who were still unbaptised and unconquered. This expedition passed through Bacalar, and down the Rio Hondo, on its way to Itza, led by Fathers Fuensalida and Orbieto, one of whom was, later, to win the martyr's crown in the Itza capital. Theirs is the first description we

have of the Rio Hondo, and the Indians who lived in its neighbourhood.

From the middle of the seventeenth century onwards the hardy British logwood-cutters of Belize began to visit the river in search of the precious dye woods ; they were on good terms with the natives, but in an almost constant state of warfare with the Spaniards of Yucatan, which culminated, in 1798, in the battle of St. George's Cay, when a great armada, prepared by the Spanish Governor-General, under the command of Field-Marshal Arthur O'Neil—who, with such a name, ought to have been ashamed of himself—was dispatched from Bacalar down the Rio Hondo, with the object of completely wiping out the hated English settlers of Belize and getting rid of the interlopers for ever. This enterprise, however, met with no more conspicuous success than the greater armada of more than two centuries before, and, instead of teaching the despised English a lesson, itself met with most complete disaster, for the Baymen of Belize, fighting with their backs to the wall, and ably assisted by their loyal slaves, gained a decisive victory, in spite of the overwhelming odds, both in numbers and armament possessed by the Spaniards.

Most of the vessels of the armada were either captured or sunk, and only a small proportion were left to creep ignominiously back to Bacalar, up the Hondo River, with very different feelings, no doubt, to those with which they had descended it so short a while before.

In the year 1798 an expedition was dispatched from Belize by Sir William Burnaby, Rear-Admiral of the Red in Jamaica, under a Lieutenant Cook, the object of which was to convey dispatches to the Governor of Yucatan, in Mérida. I have never been able to ascertain definitely whether this Lieutenant Cook was the great Captain Cook of later years. The expedition passed up the Rio Hondo,

and, curiously enough, their pinnace was wrecked by a squall in this very lagoon of Sajamal. The wonderfully accurate and graphic account of the native Maya, encountered in the course of the journey, their manners and customs, appearance, dress, and religion, would certainly suggest that the leader was the great Cook himself.

And so, age after age, men, and even gods, have been borne upon the bosom of the river—now all are gone, leaving no trace behind them but the ruins of a vanished civilisation, lying hidden in the dense and gloomy forest stretching for many miles along both banks. Only the river itself flows on unchanged.

On arrival at Sac Xan, a little Indian village some fifty kilometres from the mouth of the river, we disembarked, as this was the nearest point to the ruins, and here we expected to pick up our mule team. The name is derived from the Maya words *sac*, white, and *xan*, a leaf. Now there was not a white leaf visible anywhere, and it was not till I learnt that it referred to the palm-leaf used in hat-making, which, when cleaned and split up, turns white, and which is very plentiful in the vicinity, that I understood the significance of the name.

The place was a miserable collection of huts—mud-floored, stick-walled, and leaf-roofed—and the inhabitants, their shock heads of stiff black hair uncovered, their feet bare, and their clothing reduced in many cases beyond the ultimate limit demanded by decency, were entirely in keeping with their hovels. Nearly all were pot-bellied and anæmic, and obviously full of malaria and hook-worm ; their clothes and persons smeared with the thick, yellow, adherent mud, which, like honey, seemed to possess the miraculous attribute of self diffusion. Starting in great gouts, sticking to one's boot-soles, it worked its way up, till hands and face, clothes, hat, and hair were smeared with it, and the loads of tents,

bedding, food, and photographic outfit were soon liberally daubed in the process of being conveyed to the mules' backs from the *Booksie*.

The so-called wharf was a most primitive affair, consisting of strips of cabbage-palm laid across sticks ; the cabbage-palm, being rounded and slippery, constantly slithered from beneath one's feet, letting at least one leg down into the water—indeed, the only way to negotiate it in safety was on all fours.

We were met on landing by a little, thin, wizened, anæmic-looking, yellow man, standing about five feet high, with an immense pompadour of stiff black hair and very prominent nose, but no chin. His manner gave us to understand that we were dealing with a person of surpassing importance, and indeed we found he combined in his own person the offices of postmaster, schoolmaster, Customs officer, constabulary officer, and Alcalde. After scanning our Payo Obispo pass, he informed us, right off the reel, that he could not permit us to leave for the *hinterland* as we had only obtained permits in Payo Obispo from the Customs, the Immigration, and the Sanitary Departments, and had no special permit from the Governor himself to visit the interior. I pointed out to him that we were only going in to take photographs, and that all the departments we had visited knew of our business.

To no effect ; he was adamant ! His only answer to all my pleas and arguments being : " *No, señor, la ley es la ley* " (" No, sir, the law is the law "). At last I could stand this parrot-cry no longer, and, calling Muddy, said to him :

" Take the *Booksie*, push off to Payo Obispo as quickly as possible, and tell my friend the Governor of the disgraceful way we are being treated."

Our friend's demeanour at once altered ; calling Muddy, who had already started for the riverside, he said : " No,

señor, do not trouble yourself. I will on my own responsibility give you permission to visit the ruins."

I had hired six riding- and three pack-animals from a chicle contractor, to be ready at Sac Xan with three good saddles and a reliable guide and *arriero*. The contractor was a long, lean, shifty-looking individual, who could never meet one's eye, of indeterminate lineage, for, though his complexion was almost pure Ethiopian, his features were decidedly Semitic. I expected trouble. Nor was I disappointed. The animals were there, but not a saddle, and even the *enjalmas*—sack-like contrivances of stuffed fibre upon which the pack-mules carry their loads—were in the last stage of decay, while nothing but old rope was available for harness. Fortunately, anticipating trouble, we had brought with us three good saddles for Muddy, Lizarraga, the photographer, and myself, and an ample supply of rope, and with the help of these we soon had all the party mounted and all the baggage stowed, though, as we had to use his mount as a pack-mule, we were compelled to leave Andres behind at Sac Xan, and James had again to be mounted on a mule carrying half a load.

James's animal was, for a mule, particularly skittish, and, straddled as he was on top of two light but bulky bundles, with nothing to guide the animal except a rope halter, navigation was far from smooth, and his temper was not appreciably improved by loud laughter, jeers, and cries of " Ride him, cowboy," from the other lads. Trying to light a cigarette, he scared his mount, which promptly reared and slid him gently off into about six inches of mud, where it must be admitted he presented a most ludicrous appearance, the cigarette still held in one hand, the half-burnt match in the other, and a look of mingled surprise and indignation on his usually broadly grinning black face.

With the mules, we took on Sandoval, as guide, and

Garcia, as *arriero*; the latter, a stoop-shouldered, yellow-faced little man, with an enormous moustache, and a tired manner—which we later found was entirely deceptive—kept protesting that he was a sick man, and should by good rights be in bed.

Sandoval, also a small man, but stout and well built, was as active and restless as a bird, and, we found later, a tireless and indefatigable worker, if he were only permitted to grumble uninterruptedly at the mules from daylight to dark.

We pitched our camp that night at a place called Chan Mahas, or " Little Swizzlestick," so named because the trees which produce these useful articles are found here in abundance. The place bore rather a sinister reputation, as, only a short time before, a most remarkable crime, even for this lawless country, had been committed there. It appeared that a large mule-team, in charge of two *arrieros*, had set out from Sac Xan, loaded with provisions for a band of chicle-bleeders camped in the bush far in the interior. The *mulada* was to return empty, as the men had not been long enough at work to have prepared any chicle to load it for the return journey. On the day when the *mulada* was expected at Sac Xan, it did not turn up, but this caused no anxiety, as a thousand and one things may occur to delay a mule-team in the bush, even with the most reliable *arrieros* in charge. When, however, the second and then the third day passed without any news, the proprietor began to get anxious, and sent a scout into the bush on horseback to find out what was delaying them. This man had only gone a few miles when he found two of the mules browsing lazily along the trail, as mules will when there is plenty for them to eat, their pack-saddles still on their backs. Continuing farther, he found more mules, singly and in groups, some with their saddles on, some without, till, on reaching the camping place, near Chan Mahas, he found the

balance of the mules, some loose in the bush, others tied to trees, and, lying by the side of the trail, the bodies of the two unfortunate muleteers, presenting a ghastly spectacle, as they had been chopped and carved with machetes out of all recognition, and, judging by the condition of the corpses, the murder had evidently been committed some time before. Now, human life is never very highly regarded amongst chicleros, and murder may be, and frequently is, committed for as small a sum as a couple of dollars, or for a fancied insult, but here neither of these causes seemed to have been operative, for the men, a couple of quiet, peaceable, inoffensive muleteers, had no enemies, and—so far as was known—no quarrel with anyone. Robbery could not have been the motive of the murders, for everyone knew that muleteers on a bush trip would carry neither money nor valuables—moreover, their machetes and few poor possessions were untouched, and none of the mules had been stolen. Nor did the scene of the crime afford any clue. Upon the trail, covered thickly with dry leaves, constantly blown about by the wind, moccasined feet leave no trace. No object which did not belong to the murdered men themselves was found. One thing only seemed certain, the men must have been taken completely by surprise, for there were no indications of a struggle, and their machetes were still in their scabbards, strapped to their sides, indicating that the murderers, whether known or unknown to their victims, had been able to approach quite closely, and probably get into conversation with them, before treacherously chopping them over the head from behind.

The crime may be reconstructed somewhat as follows. Early in the evening the mule-team, on its return from the interior, had arrived at this spot, and the men, tired after their long journey, had decided to make their last camp there before pushing on next morning to complete the last

few miles of their journey. They were, no doubt, in excellent spirits, with the prospect of rejoining their families early next day, and enjoying a little home cooking, and a few drinks, after long days in the bush on a straight diet of corn-cake and beans, cooked by themselves. They dismounted, and had just got some of the mules tethered, and the *enjalmas* off others, when they were joined by another party, whether mounted or on foot, and of how many consisting, it is impossible to say. They evidently felt no suspicion of these others, and allowed them to come to close quarters, and probably started talking to them. Then, for some unknown reason, possibly an old quarrel or feud, possibly some disagreement which arose at the moment—who shall say?—they were suddenly set upon and chopped to death, before they had even time to draw their machetes and defend themselves, their corpses hacked about and mutilated in the most barbarous way, being left lying by the trail-side. The murderers, their dreadful work completed, vanished for ever into the depths of the forest by one or other of the innumerable trails open to them, leading to the river, to Campeche, to British Honduras, or even to Guatemala, and were heard of no more.

Even amongst a community so calloused to crimes of violence, this murder created a considerable stir, but the excitement soon died down, for what, after all, are the lives of two poor *arrieros*? Investigations were held, but, as nothing was discovered, these soon ceased, and everyone went back again to the all-important business of getting as much chicle out of the bush as possible, and making sure that no one got a chance of appropriating any of it before it had been paid for by the contractor.

I pitched my tent for the night several hundred yards away from the old camp, as these ancient palm-leaf huts are usually the abiding-places of innumerable fleas. As it

chanced, I chose a spot immediately beneath a magnificent *ceiba*-tree, to the horror of the Indians, who believe that the forest beneath these trees is the especial haunt, particularly on moonlight nights, of *Stabai*, beautiful, but malignant, female spirits, condemned, for their sins in life, to wander after death through all eternity over the face of the earth, where the one satisfaction permitted them is that of, under certain conditions, leading mortals—men only—astray. *Pishan*, or souls of the dead in general, who have not yet passed out from the earth, also find these trees very attractive for some reason. I was too tired, however, to take much interest in these tales of the pranks and vagaries of ghosts they had encountered, and turned in soon after sundown. I was awakened in the early hours of the morning by the most extraordinary roaring, booming noise, which seemed to come from right over the tent and went rolling and reverberating through the silent bush in mournful yet threatening cadences. It would stop for a few minutes, and then go on again, and sounded something like a cross between a fog-horn and a lion's roar. At first, on waking, I thought all the company of Maya ghosts in Yucatan must be holding an indignation meeting to protest against my invasion of their territory. Then the real cause of the horrible sounds gradually dawned upon me. The cotton-tree under which my tent was pitched almost touched an immense sapodillo-tree, full of fruit, in which was perched a great ape. This was evidently his combined larder and breakfast-room, which I had invaded, and I have no doubt the terrific noise was partly an expression of anger and disgust, and partly a warning to me to clear out. I contemplated getting up, fetching the gun, and silencing the intruder; instead, however, I turned over and went to sleep, as I felt he had some justice on his side, and, anyway, the gun was quite a way off, and the night was chilly.

Our path led, at first, through high virgin bush, where the undergrowth was sparse and the lofty trees formed a pleasant, shady arch over the trail. We passed cedar, mahogany, sapote, *gumbolimbo*, palma real, and other great giants of the Middle American forest ; indeed, this stretch of country would appear to be extraordinarily rich in valuable woods and gums ; also, the land is unsurpassed for raising corn ; all that is required in order to convert it into a fruitful, smiling land is population, which, with the exception of a few chicleros and wandering Indian hunters, is at present entirely lacking. We passed an outcrop of beautiful marble-like stone, which anywhere near civilisation would, no doubt, be of great value, but may not be tapped in this remote region for centuries.

For miles we had been passing through country which, as far as the thick forest growth would permit one to see, was literally covered with remains of the ancient inhabitants : mounds of all sizes and shapes, some faced with stone, others mere heaps of earth ; pyramids, walls, and platforms were encountered in great numbers on either side of the trail. Beyond a cursory glance in passing, however, we had no time to examine them more closely, but, if the pyramids are all sepulchral structures, it would appear that the whole country for miles around is one vast necropolis for the people of the dead civilisation who have succeeded each other as its inhabitants throughout the ages.

We stopped for lunch at a deserted chicle camp, and immediately after, resuming the march, debouched from the forest road into a tract of *acaichè*, or low, swampy bush, converted in the wet season into a lagoon, sometimes so deep in places as to render the road impassable. At the time of our crossing, it was a sea of sticky, adherent mud, covered with a low, thick, thorny scrub, constituting the worst piece of road I ever travelled anywhere. The scrub

consists of wait-a-bit and bull-thorn trees—a small palm, the trunk of which is covered with sharp, needle-like spines two inches long, and another tree covered with nipple-like projections, at the apex of each of which is a stiff spike ; the very lianas have spines and prickles, some of which are poisoned—indeed it is almost impossible to touch any of these shrubs and bushes without getting stung, scratched, or lacerated.

Add to this that the road, owing to the depth of mud underfoot and thickness of the scrub on either side, twists about like a corkscrew in whatever direction the mules can most easily pass, and that it is roofed in by a thatch of the same malignant vegetation, so low as to necessitate an almost constant crouching attitude over his saddle on the part of the rider, and one can form some idea of what travelling through this *acaichè* was like. One's head is naturally the first thing to protect, but in neglecting one's lower extremities one's knees are constantly being brought into painful contact with thorny-barked trunks, by the vagaries of the mule, which is naturally looking for the most solid foothold available, usually nearest the edge of the trail. Then, one bends down to avoid a spine-covered palm-branch, and, raising one's head to see if the course is clear, receives a stunning blow on the forehead from a thick, overhanging limb, or perhaps only a rake, fore and aft along the side of the face, from a prickly liana.

One curious fact I noticed about the *acaichè* was the extraordinary profusion of orchids of all varieties which grew there, many of them new to me. Hardly a tree, bush, or rotting stump but was covered with them, and some of the blooms were perfectly exquisite in shape and colouring.

At length we passed through this horrible stretch of trail, though not without considerable damage to clothes, skin, and baggage, and arrived about sundown at a large clearing,

on high ground, surrounded by lofty virgin bush, where still stood the ruins of the tumble-down bush shacks which had formed the old chicleros' camp.

The high-sounding name, " Central," applied to this camp, was a ghastly misnomer, for, beyond the rotting leaf huts and a few scurvy-looking pepper-bushes, their stems tied round with umbrella-like palm-leaves, resembling short skirts, to keep the ants off, it presented no conveniences whatever, and the water-hole from which we obtained our drinking water, after the mules had done wallowing in it, was a small, stagnant pond with a muddy bottom and unhealthy-looking green slime rimming the edges.

I felt extraordinarily stiff and sore on dismounting, with headache, and pains all over, which I put down at the time to the exhausting ride through the *acaichè*, not realising that it was the first incidence of an attack of malaria which was ultimately to drive me out of the ruins. I pitched my tent about three hundred yards from the main camp, in order to avoid the plague of fleas which always haunts old chicle camps. If five hundred fleas—a very conservative estimate —are left by a chiclero in his hut at the end of the season, I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that by the beginning of the next season, when he returns, they will have increased to two thousand, and be actively and eagerly awaiting the visit of anyone who may arrive in the camp during his absence. I know nothing about the natural history of the flea, but what they live on in the absence of their chiclero hosts is one of those mysteries no one can understand.

The bones of all the denizens of the bush slain and eaten by the chicleros during their last season were strewn around the camp, and I recognised remains of deer, *corasow*, gibnut, *quash*, monkey, and various other game animals, amongst which were numerous skulls of a large wild pig, much longer

than the little peccari to which I am accustomed, and the carapace of a huge water-tortoise, both of which were new to me. I also found bones of the *woula*, or Central American boa-constrictor ; but he may have been killed during a visit to the camp inspired by curiosity, and not for food by the chicleros.

CHAPTER V

A confiding deer—Barbecuing by the Indians and by chicleros—Location of the new ruins—First view of the ruins—Temple No. 1—Extraordinary narrowness of the temple rooms—Uses to which these three-feet broad rooms were put—An hour-glass-shaped room, only two feet wide in the centre—Measurements, ornamentation, and orientation of temple 7—A unique roof—Muddy makes an important discovery—A sapote lintel discovered, with a calendar round date carved upon it—Importance of this dated lintel, which may solve the problem of when the earliest New Empire builders entered Yucatan—Curious structures encountered at the ruins, caved-in *chultunes*, circular walls, and altars—Absence of carved stelæ—Curious that but a single inscription should have been found at the ruins, where so many must have formerly existed—Probable reasons—Single skeleton found at ruins—Ruins occupied by large population, over long period—Dead buried close to dwellings of the living—Discovery of archaic figurine, four to five thousand years old, at Tzibanchè—How did it get there?—Discovery of very crude incense-burner, belonging to last stage of Maya civilisation—Attack of malaria, and quinine left behind—Leaving the ruins—Loss of a mule—Chills come on suddenly in midst of *acaichè*—A night adventure—Return to Belize—Ruins christened Tzibanchè.

On our first morning in camp we were all up at daybreak, and Lizarraga, the photographer, taking our only gun, went off with the *arriero* to see how the mules were getting along in the clearing, where their supper of bread-nut branches had been set out the previous night.

Hardly had he gone when a pair of giant crested woodpeckers settled on a tree, right in camp, offering a splendid pot-shot. These birds are excellent eating, and one need no longer object to them as insectivorous, as, within the last few years, for some mysterious reason, they seem to have completely changed their habits and become strict vegetarians. With their pickaxe-like beaks they peck holes in young coconuts, oranges, cacao, bananas, sapotes, and other

fruits to get at the contents, doing incalculable damage in the more settled parts of Central America where these plants are cultivated.

I was just registering regret, when we heard the gun go off, and hoped for the best. A few minutes later the wanderers returned, carrying between them a fine half-grown deer. They had, it appeared, encountered this confiding infant in the clearing made for the mules, and were within twenty paces of it before either side observed the other. The deer simply gazed at the intruders, allowing Lizarraga time to raise the gun and pull the trigger. The hammer, however, was weak and old, and the cartridge refused to explode. The deer, evidently regarding it as some sort of game, still stood and gazed, giving Lizarraga another opportunity to raise the trigger. This time there was no misfire, and the unfortunate victim of misplaced confidence, which had evidently been attracted to the spot by a supply of luscious bread-nut branches all ready to eat, cut for the mules, paid the penalty, and literally " got it in the neck." The carcase was at once cleaned and cut up—a gory and unpleasant job, which attracted all the flies for miles around —and the joints put on a barbecue. Amongst the Indians barbecuing is an extremely complicated procedure, the joints being scored, well rubbed with salt and sugar, and hung up in a small room, on the floor of which a constantly smouldering fire of cedar and other aromatic chips is kept up. My men's barbecue was quite a different affair. A platform two feet high was hastily constructed of small sticks, upon which the joints were placed, a fire being lighted beneath, built chiefly of punk and green bush, which gave off immense volumes of smoke and an intolerable smell. To my mind the barbecued meat was not a success, but the men seemed to enjoy it, and it was a great help to our larder, as none of us had any spare time in which to do

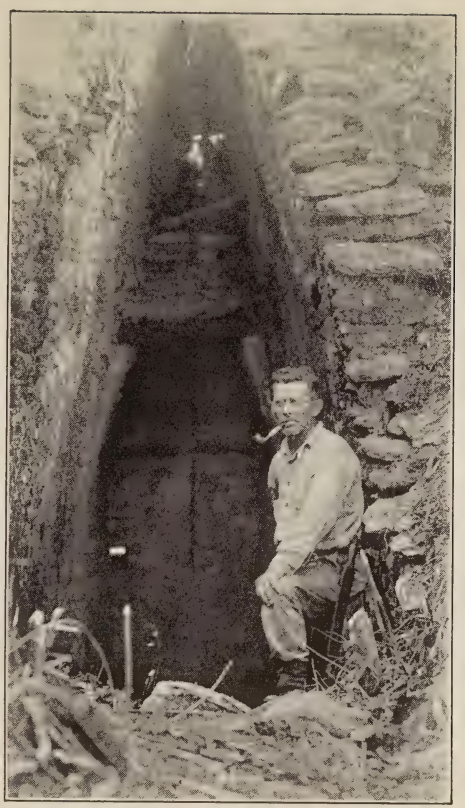
regular hunting, even for the pot. During our journey I had taken careful observations with a prismatic compass of the route followed, and, on plotting out our course, I found that we had arrived to the west of the Bacalar Lagoon, in the territory of Quintana Roo, Mexico, and almost exactly behind the ancient city of Salamanca de Bacalar.

Directly after early tea we set out for the ruins, the nearest of which was situated about three-quarters of a mile from camp. It took the guide, who had the reputation of being a first-rate bushman, nearly an hour to find his way, though he had been there little more than a month before, which will give some idea of the extraordinary density of the forest and the difficulty of finding one's way about in it. On arrival at the first ruin, known hereafter as temple No. 1, I felt well repaid for all my trouble, for there, rising before me almost perpendicularly from the bush, was a vast mass of masonry, covered with great forest trees, upon the summit of which, dimly visible through the foliage, appeared the walls of the temple, at a height of 120 ft. above the ground-level. Seen thus, for the first time, rising through the sea of silent, gloomy, primæval forest which encircles it for many miles in all directions, this great structure induced in me a feeling of awe and wonder, which, though we later discovered larger and far more interesting temples, was never perhaps quite equalled again. The temple itself was 15 ft. high, 66 ft. long, and 12 ft. broad. It contained a single narrow room, 3 ft. broad, 18 ft. high, and 58 ft. long. The height of the almost perpendicular stone substructure upon which the temple stood was 120 ft., and the roof comb, of which only 13 ft. remained, and the lower part of which contained the upper part of the chamber, probably rose, when intact, to a height of 25 ft. The total height of the summit of the temple above the ground level, before the fall of the upper part of the roof comb, was, consequently, about 160 ft.

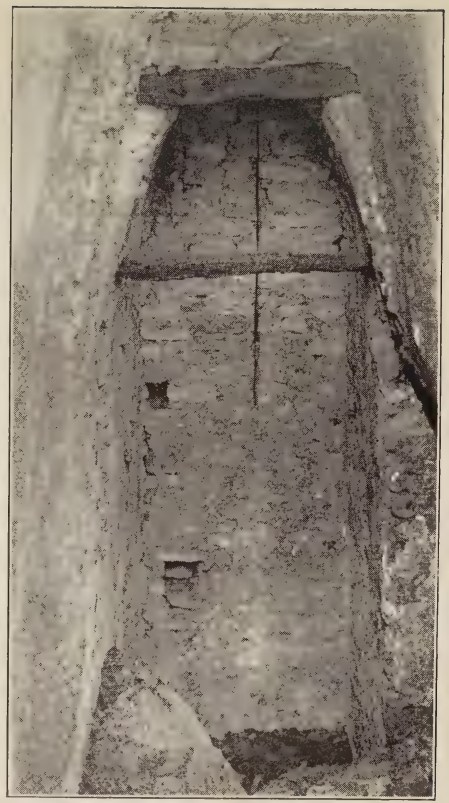
The extraordinary narrowness, in comparison to the height and length, of the single chamber will be noticed. The Mayas were greatly restricted in their architectural achievements, and more especially in the width of their rooms, by the fact that they never discovered the principal of the true arch, and had to resort to the clumsy expedient of overlapping courses of masonry, covered at the summit by flat flags or capstones. This restricted the breadth of their arches to about 16 ft., but rooms of only 3 ft. in width—and, as will be shown later, hardly any of the rooms in these temples exceeded 3 ft., and some did not even reach it—are practically unknown elsewhere in the Maya area. It is impossible that they should have been used as dwelling-places, either for the priests or nobles, as moving about in such a restricted space would have been impossible. Moreover, the back rooms in those temples which possess them must have been in almost complete darkness, and required artificial light both by day and night.

The only conclusion one can arrive at, therefore, is that the temples were used purely for ceremonial purposes, and that such ceremonies as took place in the holy of holies were performed either by artificial light or in the dark.

Another reason, and perhaps the chief one, for making the walls of the temple so thick, and the chambers so narrow, was that this arrangement permitted the erection of a very lofty and imposing roof comb, the front and back of which, with the walls of the temple, were covered by painted stucco. Elevated on the great, almost perpendicular substructures, faced with stone, and probably painted white, these coloured temples must have presented an extraordinarily magnificent and impressive spectacle, when the whole of the surrounding country was completely clear of bush and covered with the palaces of the rulers, nobles, and priests, the villages of the poorer classes, and the vast sea of cultivated lands which



Muddy at Entrance of Narrow Room.



One of the Long Rooms,
only 3 feet wide.

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must have stretched out in all directions around these cities in order to support such a population as they connote.

Temple No. 2, to the west of the last, and distant from it about 50 yards, was very similar in structure. It stood upon a stone substructure 100 ft. high, the temple itself was 13 ft. high, 66 ft. long, and 20 ft. broad, and 15 ft. of the roof comb were still left standing. The total height of this temple, from the ground level to the summit of the roof comb, had been originally in the neighbourhood of 140 ft. Upon the west side the doorway opening into the front chamber of the temple was approached by a steep stone stairway 36 ft. broad. This temple contained two rooms, one immediately behind the other. Each was 58 ft. in length, by 18 ft. in height. They both presented the extraordinary characteristic—which I have never before encountered in Maya rooms—of being broader at their ends than in their centres. Each chamber measured 6 ft. 4 in. in breadth at both ends, and narrowed down to but 2 ft. in the centre. This is a unique condition, and the only explanation of it which I am able to suggest is that the temple walls had to be thickened along the central part of the building, at the expense of the chambers, in order to take the thrust of the immensely heavy roof comb which they supported.

Temple No. 3, situated to the north of No. 1, was in a very ruinous condition, but from what is left of it one can see that it resembled very closely the two already described. Temple No. 4, to the west of No. 3, was even more completely ruined, and beyond the fact that, like the others, it stood on a great stone substructure, its original plan was difficult to make out.

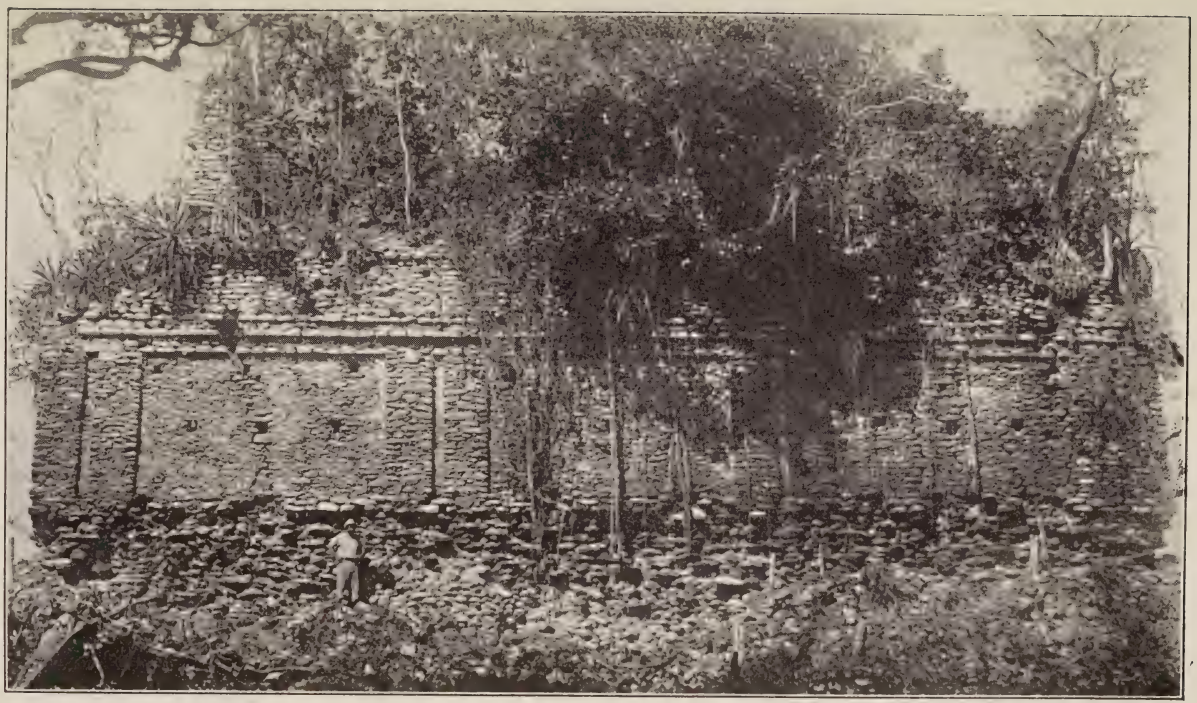
These four substructures, and the temples upon them, stand at the four angles of a quadrilateral space, some 50 yards by 30, which was raised nearly 15 ft. above the surrounding ground-level, and evidently at one time formed a raised

plaza or court. The whole group may consequently be regarded as a single unit, probably dedicated to the worship of a single god. Some two miles to the north-east of camp we visited a fifth temple, smaller than the others, measuring only 30 ft. by 12 ft. From the summit of temple 2 a magnificent view is obtained over the bush for many miles around.

In every direction, as far as the eye could reach, no break was visible in the undulating sea of green. About a mile to the south-west a tree-covered mound of considerable size stood up plainly above the surrounding bush, which our guide told me was the largest and highest of all the temples in the group. I had intended visiting this structure, which may be called temple No. 6, after I had finished with temple 3, but, unfortunately, was deterred by an attack of malaria, and had to leave it till a future occasion.

In all directions green elevations were seen in the forest, some close at hand, some at considerable distances, which probably represent other forest-covered temples and substructures of a similar type. And the guide told us that for two *jornadas*—a chiclero's *jornada*, the distance a mule loaded with chicle will travel through the bush in a day, is from ten to twelve miles—to the north the country is literally covered with mounds and ruins.

Most of our time was occupied in the thorough clearing, for photographic purposes, of temple No. 7, by far the most interesting one at the ruins, for not only is it in a better state of preservation than any of the others, but it shows admirably the unique manner in which the interior rooms have been roofed, and contains the only hieroglyphic inscription found throughout the whole area, recording probably a Maya calendar round date. This temple was situated between 200 and 300 yards north of temple 4. The external measurements of the main structure were : 66 ft. in length,



TZIBANCHÈ: THE TEMPLE OF THE CARVED WOODEN LINTEL.

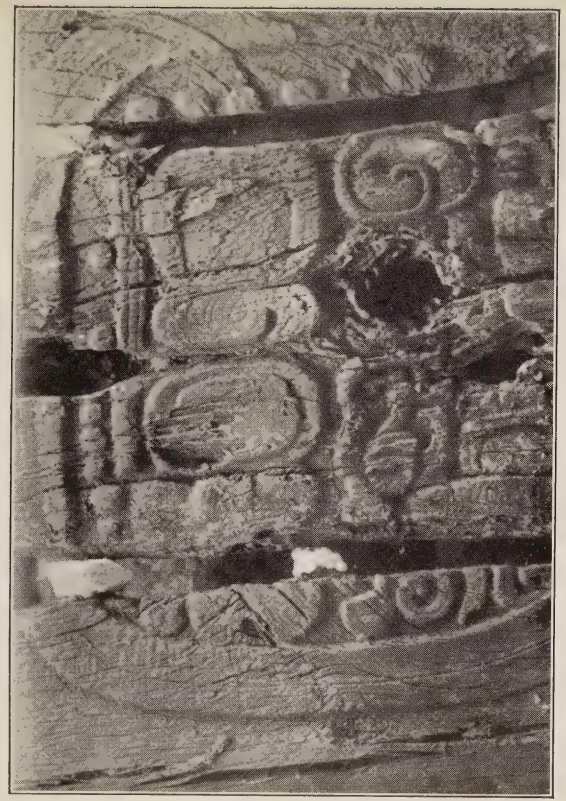
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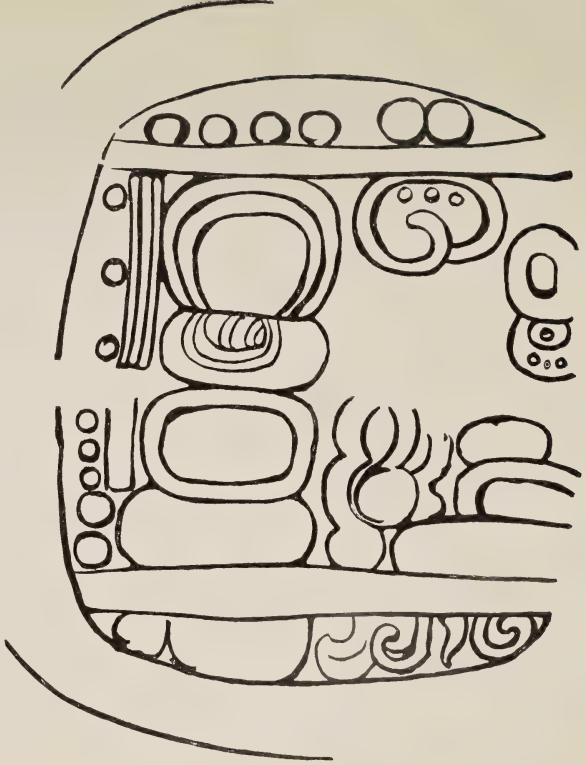
22 ft. in breadth, and 25 ft. in height. It stood upon a substructure precisely similar to the others, but only 52 ft. high. The roof comb, a great part of which had fallen, had been, probably, 25 ft. high, so that the whole building from the ground-level to the top of the roof comb was, originally, approximately 102 ft. in height. The temple was almost exactly orientated, its long diameter running north and south. The outside was decorated by alternating broad and narrow oblong sunk panels. Both walls and roof comb had originally been covered with smooth stucco, painted throughout in various colours, and traces of red and green paint were found still adherent to this in two places. On the western side of the building a steep stone stairway, 26 ft. wide, extended from the ground-level to the only entrance to the temple, situated in the centre of its western façade, and opening into the western room. The doorway had completely collapsed, probably owing to the fact that the lintel had been made of sapote wood, which, after centuries of exposure, had gradually rotted away, and at last fallen in under the tremendous superincumbent weight of the roof and roof comb, which it supported. The interior of the temple was divided into two long, narrow rooms, each 57 ft. long, 20 ft. high and 3 ft. wide. The dividing wall between the two chambers was 5 ft. thick, and was pierced, near its northern and southern extremities, by doorways, leading from one chamber to the other. These doorways were 16 ft. high, by 5 ft. wide, and the lintel of each consisted of three squared sapote-wood beams placed side by side.

The beams of the lintel of the northern door had almost completely rotted away, but those of the southern lintel were still *in situ*, and in a moderately good state of preservation. Both rooms had been filled up by the débris of falling masonry, and rotting vegetation, to within a foot or so of

the lintels. The roofing, which at the southern end of the eastern chamber was perfectly preserved, was, so far as my experience goes, absolutely unique in the whole Maya area. The chamber went up to a height of 20 ft., with a diameter of 3 ft. At this height, long, narrow stone brackets projected on each side, supporting sapodilla beams, placed in a row, in contact with each other, and completely roofing this part of the chamber. Above this roof, for six feet, the walls gradually inclined inwards, till they were separated by a space of less than one foot, which was bridged over in the usual way by flat capstones. The lower part of this space, between the sapodilla roof and the capstones, was filled in by masonry, resting on the upper surface of the wooden beams ; the upper part was hollow. The sapodilla roof-beams, having been preserved from contact with moisture, were in perfect condition. I have described this method of roofing in some detail, for, so far as my experience goes, it is absolutely unique, nor can I offer any explanation for the employment of such a cumbersome and elaborate method, which appears to possess no advantage over the ordinary Maya arch, with capstones, and must have been infinitely more costly and difficult to erect.

As before stated, the southern doorway, communicating between the two rooms of the temples, was filled by débris to within a foot of the lintel. Muddy, projecting his head into this narrow space, called out that he believed he saw some hieroglyphics on the under surface of the lintel. Now, Muddy's confidence in his ability to recognise glyphs had had a rude jolt only the previous day, when he announced that he had found an extensive inscription on one of the stucco-covered panels decorating the side of temple No. 2, which turned out to be nothing more than an intricate series of cracks in the stucco, produced by weathering, many of which, it must be admitted, presented a curious





Tzibanchè: Carving on Sapote Wood Lintel of one of the Temples; with Calendaric Hieroglyphics and Numerical Coefficients.

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resemblance to grotesque faces. Consequently I approached the new find with no very great hope of discovering an inscription. But this time Muddy had really made an important discovery, for, on clearing away the débris from the doorway, and bringing the gasoline lantern to bear on the under surface of the lintel, two beautiful little oval cartouches were brought to light, each measuring 25½ by 21½ ins. Both these ovals were filled with hieroglyphics.

The first hieroglyphic, on the cartouche nearest the centre of the chamber, had attached to its side the numerical coefficient 18, and above it the number 4. The second glyph had above it the number 2 ; to the side of the third glyph was placed the number 13. The fourth glyph had no numerical coefficient.

The first glyph on the second oval had above it the number 2, and by its side the number 13. The second glyph had above it the number 2. The other glyphs possessed no numerical coefficient. All these numbers were written as bars and dots, one dot standing for one, and one bar for five.

Stylistically there can be little doubt but that these glyphs belong to the Maya Old Empire, and record a date, almost certainly that of the building of the temple. Unfortunately, this date is not given as an Initial Series, which is comparatively easy to decipher. It is, therefore, premature to hazard an opinion as to its exact position in the Maya Long Count (which, by Morley's correlation, will enable us to fix its position in our own calendar) till other scientists, who have made a special study of the Maya calendar, have had an opportunity of examining and pronouncing upon it.

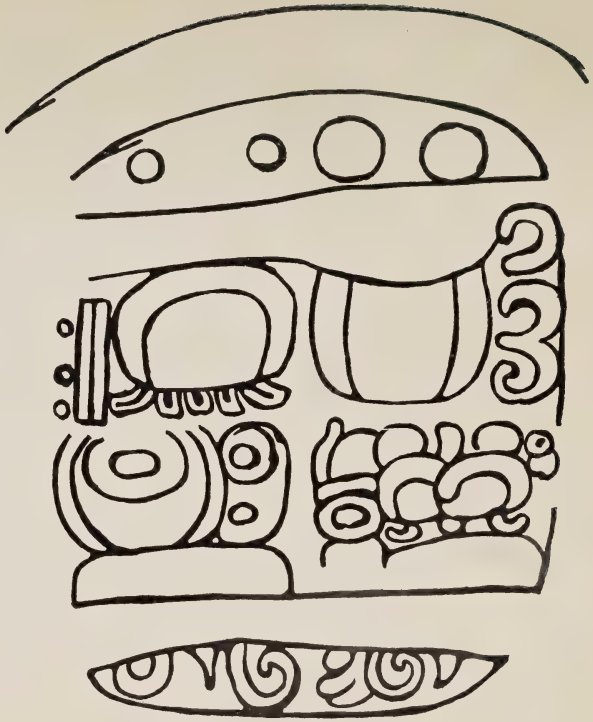
This country of Bakhalal—Hispanicised into Bacalar—is one of the most interesting spots in the whole Maya area, for it is the first place-name mentioned in the ancient Maya records—known as the Books of Chilam-Balam, which can

still be definitely associated with a known locality. Three of these books record the discovery of Bakhalal Province as occurring in Katun 4 Ahau, which Morley identified with 9.15.0.0.0, 4 Ahau 13 Yax, or A.D. 472.

In view, however, of the fact that last year I discovered a monolith on the Chetumal Bay, within this same province of Bakhalal, bearing the date 9.8.0.0.0, or A.D. 333, I do not consider that it is possible to accept the date A.D. 472 as that of the discovery of the province, which was the first step in the founding of the Maya New Empire.

It has always been considered that, after its first discovery by the Maya, there followed a considerable period, estimated at several centuries, before they founded the earliest cities of the New Empire; yet here we have, in this province of Bakhalal—the very gate of Yucatan, so to speak, for the Maya of the Old Empire—a series of magnificent temples and an enormous aggregation of mounds, platforms, walls, pyramids, and other remains, covering every acre of an extended area, and connoting not only a large population, but occupation over a prolonged period. Amongst all these relics of the past a single hieroglyphic inscription records a date. Now, it can well be imagined that extraordinary interest and importance attaches to the correct reading of this date, for on it may hinge the elucidation of the exact period at which the earliest New Empire founders entered Yucatan, and the mystery of what became of them during the centuries which elapsed between their first arrival, according to their ancient records, in the province of Bakhalal, and the next definite news we have of them, when, centuries later, they founded the great city of the Plumed Serpent, Chichen-Itza, in the northern part of the peninsula. The question naturally arises as to whether these early immigrants did not settle down here, to the west of the Bacalar lagoon, and build up the great civilisation





TZIBANCHÈ: CARVING ON SAPOTE WOOD LINTEL OF ONE OF THE TEMPLES; WITH CALENDARIC HIEROGLYPHICS AND NUMERICAL COEFFICIENTS.

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whose ruins we contemplated, and not, as has generally been supposed, wander about for centuries seeking a suitable site for a permanent settlement.

We encountered many curious structures throughout the ruins—large circular pits, like shell-holes, indicating where *chultunes*, or underground chambers, had caved in, and circular, walled spaces, some 18 ft. in diameter, such as I had never seen before. These may have formed the walls of circular houses.

We did not encounter a single sculptured stela, but came across several large squared stones, some 3 ft. in diameter, upon which traces of stucco were still apparent, and which probably represented altars that had formerly been covered with stucco, upon which had been, either painted or incised, hieroglyphic inscriptions.

It seems curious that we should have discovered but this one Maya inscription throughout all the ruins, for in their highly developed civilisation they must have employed numbers of documents of all sorts, deeds, letters, records, etc. In Babylon the number of inscribed tablets found is legion, and they deal with practically every known human activity. But then the medium used by the Babylonians—hard-baked clay tablets and cylinders—was almost indestructible. Yet the Mayas were acquainted with this art, for we find on their best pottery both incised and painted hieroglyphics, though used obviously, in this situation, purely as decorative motifs, or possibly as conventional greetings, just as we see sometimes inscribed on our own modern china in letters of gilt : " A present from Brighton " ; " For a good girl " ; " A Memento of Margate " ; and similar semi-decorative banalities. Apparently the Maya never used these inscriptions to record dates.

Throughout these ruins this was the only inscription found, yet we know that at the time of the Spanish conquest they

possessed historical, medical, and astrological works. The only inference is, I think, that these were all written on *agave Americana* paper, wood, or other perishable material, and have in the course of the centuries entirely disintegrated in the damp, warm climate. It may well be that the great majority of Maya inscriptions were, at this time, recorded on wood, which would have presented a far more easily worked medium than stone to sculptors having only stone tools at their disposal.

The preservation of this inscription was due solely to the fact that it had occupied an exceptionally sheltered situation—a situation, moreover, where, when the temple was entire, it could not have been read without the aid of artificial light. In the course of a very few years, as soon as the tottering upper wall, and roof comb which it supports, cave in, there will perish perhaps the last recorded date of this section of the Maya nation.

The question naturally arises: What were the ancient inhabitants of this area like physically? We partially opened one small burial-mound, and found only a single human skeleton, in a moderately good state of preservation. It was that of a muscular, adult male, probably not exceeding 5 ft. 2 ins. in height, with a magnificent set of teeth. It fits in quite well with what we know of the ancient Maya, who were a short, powerful, stockily built race. The skull was unfortunately too much broken up to enable us to determine its type.

As I sit writing, with the little heap of bones before me, I cannot help thinking, could they again be clothed in flesh, what a tale their original owner might tell of the manners and customs of the people of this great civilisation of which he was a member, their knowledge of science and art, their religion, and the gods they worshipped, the kings who ruled them, and the wonderful social system which kept them free

from war through so many centuries, and, above all, the meanings of their hieroglyphics, and the cause of their final extinction.

As already remarked, we were told by the guide that the whole country for miles around was a mass of mounds, walls, and ruins of all sorts and sizes. The place seems, in fact, to have been not so much a city as one of the centres—probably religious, and ceremonial—of a vast population, over a number of centuries, not merely a halting-place of the Maya on their route from the Old to the New Empire. Judging by the number of what are almost undoubtedly small burial-mounds interspersed between the other structures, the dead must have been buried in close contact with the living, and probably the same belief existed amongst the ancient Maya as still persists amongst their modern degenerate descendants, that the dead are lonely, and, when they return to the scene of their former labours, like to do so in places occupied by the living, and preferably by their former friends and relatives—moreover, that if buried away in lonely, out-of-the-way places their *pishan*, or ghosts, are apt to return and make it extremely unpleasant for those responsible.

With the exception of fragments of pottery, we found no small artifacts at the ruins ; indeed, the time at our disposal did not admit of our searching for them ; but I obtained from chicleros two objects found by them in the vicinity. The first of these is a celt-shaped block of dark green, compact, serpentine-like stone 10½ ins. long, and roughly polished. Upon one surface is depicted crudely, in broad, shallow lines, a seated human figure. Now, there can be no doubt whatever but that this is a product of the archaic civilisation which flourished some four thousand to five thousand years ago. It is, in fact, almost an exact duplicate of similar crude stone figurines discovered by Dr. Gamio

during his recent excavations in Guatemala, which undoubtedly belong to the archaic horizon.

So far as I am aware, archaic objects have not before been found in Yucatan, and this find should stimulate research, especially in the caves of the peninsula, for similar objects. Of course, it is always possible that this archaic piece—which would not be difficult to carry, and is an exceptionally fine one, both in material and workmanship—may have been carried here by the Maya of the Old Empire, from Guatemala or Honduras, where archaic objects have been found in considerable numbers, and probability is lent to this theory by the fact that the object was found within a Maya mound. The second object was a small, crude, clay incense-burner, $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high, with the head of the god in appliqué on the outside. This was found lying uncovered on top of one of the small mounds, and undoubtedly belongs to the very last degenerate phase of the Maya civilisation, which persisted in out-of-the-way places long after the conquest, and traces of which exist even to-day, especially in the manufacture and use in their religious ceremonies of such incense-burners as these amongst the Lacondon Indians of the valley of the Usamasintla River, who, owing to their isolated position in the middle of almost inaccessible forest and swamp, have as yet come very little in contact with civilisation. The finding of this *incensario* simply means that the land was occupied till after the Spanish conquest, and long after the builders of the temples had disappeared, by degenerate tribes of bush Maya, allied to the Lacondones, who had not unnaturally been attracted there by the richness of the soil, and the freedom from interference by the conquerors, due to its isolated situation.

The first night I arrived at the ruins I had a slight rigor and a temperature of one hundred and two degrees, heralding an attack of malaria, and, on going to search for the

quinine, I found I had been fool enough to leave this absolutely essential drug behind, while bringing in a regular apothecary's shop of other medicines.

Next morning I felt fairly fit, and went to work as usual, but the following day, about noon, the fever came on, ushered in by a shivering fit, and my temperature went up to one hundred and three. The following day again I was feeling fit for work. And so it went on, for the lack of a little quinine I was unable to curb the malaria, and it was much too far to send out and bring in a supply. At last, finding the fever getting higher, and leaving me weaker after each attack, I made up my mind, with great reluctance, to leave the ruins and return to civilisation, or at least to a place where quinine was procurable.

Our last day at the ruins was one of disaster from beginning to end. First, on rounding them up at daybreak, one of the mules was missing, and the *arriero* was unable to find it. The mules ate only bread-nut ; indeed there was nothing else for them to eat. This is the leaf of a tall forest tree, the foliage of which, as if in self-protection, does not begin till twenty or thirty feet above the base of the tree. On reaching camp every night, the *arrieros* have to swarm up these trunks like monkeys and cut the mules' suppers—no easy task after a hard day's ride, and rendered much more difficult on a frequented track from the fact that other *arrieros* have been up all the trees in the immediate vicinity and cut the more accessible branches. To the great joy of our *arrieros* we cut down several large *ramon* or bread-nut trees in clearing the ruins, so their task was rendered easy, as all they had to do was to lead the mules to their meals, and not provide them. It was by the side of one of these trees that the mule had been lost. Her absence, however, made little difference to us, as we had eaten more than a mule-load of provisions during our stay, and the remaining

animals would only be lightly loaded on the return journey. It was, on the other hand, a serious matter for the *arriero*, who was responsible for the loss to his employer. He took the matter very philosophically, and decided to return with us, rather than stay behind and search for the wanderer, as was his obvious duty, being probably so deeply in debt that the addition of a few more dollars to the debit side of his account was not a matter of any great moment.

I led the way with James and Garcia, the *arriero*. Muddy and Lizarraga, who had to take two last photographs, followed two hours behind us, and about an hour behind them came Sandoval, the guide, who had stopped for a last look round after the lost mule.

Only two hours out of camp, right in the middle of the *acaichè*, or swampy ground, the fever came on me with a terrific chill, and a temperature, later, of one hundred and four degrees. I had to dismount at once, my teeth chattering and my body shaking with the ague.

After the boys had cut a small clearing in the thick, scrubby *acaichè* with their machetes, they soon had the little tent up and the cot erected, on which, wrapped in all the clothes and blankets I could raise, I awaited the onset of the hot spell. Soon Muddy and Lizarraga rode in, and brewed a great potful of hot tea, after liberal doses of which I felt better, but not sufficiently well to move on.

None of them had anywhere to sleep, and no means of constructing even a lean-to in the swampy *acaichè*, so I sent them ahead to the nearest old chicle camp, some three miles away, to spend the night, and return in the morning, when I knew the fever would have left me. I told them I would send Sandoval after them when he passed my tent, as he was bound to do, for it was right on the side of the trail.

Just as dusk was falling I heard a mule approaching, and shouted to attract the rider's attention. It proved to

be Sandoval, who said he had not found the lost mule. I told him where the others were camped, and he rode on.

Next morning Muddy and James appeared quite early, and, feeling much better, I got up. They told me Sandoval had only just arrived in the camp. It appeared that on the previous night darkness had overtaken him before he could reach his destination, and he quickly lost the narrow, winding trail, which, even by daylight, required a professional bushman to follow. Afraid of tigers as he was, like most chicleros, he climbed a large tree and settled down in a crotch for the night, tying himself in, lest he fall to the ground in his sleep. Soon after he had settled himself, it came on to pour with rain and the night got very cold, so his plight became, as may be imagined, a pretty miserable one, for he had no clothes, except his thin cotton shirt and trousers, soon saturated with rain. To him, in this unpleasant predicament, came a most peculiar adventure, which I relate in his own words.

" *Pues, señor,* I sat in my tree, very cold, very wet, and very miserable. I could not move much, and consequently was stiff and cramped. About the middle of the night I must have been dozing, for I was all at once awakened by something coming along through the trees, and suddenly I saw two large monkeys making their way towards me, swinging through the branches as fast as they could move, chattering noisily. They did not notice me, till they were quite close up, when one of them either jumped or fell to the ground. Hardly had he reached it than he uttered a howl of agony, and then made no further outcry. The other monkey turned aside, and, not waiting to see what had happened to his fellow, made off through the tree-tops as rapidly as he could move, chattering and growling angrily to himself. I heard nothing more of the monkey who had fallen to the ground, but have no doubt that a tiger, which

was lurking beneath the tree thinking out the best way of reaching me, had snapped him up, carried him off, and eaten him, and that he had been sent by the good God to save my life, by providing a meal for the hungry beast."

From here we made our way to Sac Xan, where I succeeded in getting some quinine, and loaded myself full of the drug, after which I had no return of the fever.

From Sac Xan we made Payo Obispo, and from there Belize, without incident.

I have christened these ruins Tzibanchè, or "Writing on Wood," which seems a not inappropriate name for them.

CHAPTER VI

Proposed visit to Santa Cruz Indians—Ambergris Cay—Cay civilisation—Cannibalism amongst the Maya—Unearthing the hoard of a buccaneer—The ideal spot to live in—Our pilot and *marinero*—A narrow escape from shipwreck on the reef—A desolate coast, with curious flotsam and jetsam—Attacked by fire-ants and mosquitoes—Ruins buried beneath the sand—Possibility of cities buried under sand, where perishable objects, and even books of the ancient Maya, may exist—Curious Maya place-names—Tracks written on the sand as on snow—Curious unknown trails—A tragedy recorded on the sand—Flying octopi—A desolate spot—Another breakdown—An upset boat, and a miserable night—Puma a cowardly beast, and scavenger—Shoals of *baracouda* round the boat—More dangerous than sharks—Fishing extraordinary.

I RETURNED to Payo Obispo towards the end of February, with the object of obtaining permission from the Governor of the Mexican territory of Quintana Roo to land at any point along the almost uninhabited east coast of Yucatan in search of new ruined sites of the ancient Maya, for, though now almost completely uninhabited, this land was once densely populated, as is indicated by the vast number of cities, temples, palaces, market-places, monoliths, and other remains found throughout its entire extent.

I also desired, if it could possibly be managed, to visit the Santa Cruz Indians, whose villages are scattered over the *hinterland* of this inhospitable shore. These Indians are the last direct descendants of the ancient Maya, degenerate and degraded, it is true, from centuries of struggle to maintain their very existence under an almost constant state of guerilla warfare, but still keeping their independence and their little strip of territory in the face of all efforts to drive them out.

The Santa Cruz strenuously oppose the entry of strangers into their territory, and they are particularly opposed to Latin Americans of any brand. Unfortunately they have an uncomfortable habit when, as occasionally happens, strangers do get into their country of first exterminating them from the cover of the bush and afterwards enquiring into their nationality and business. I had, however, arranged with one of the chiefs, a good friend of mine, who had once visited Belize, that in case I wished to visit his country, he would guarantee that I should do so in safety, if I, and the members of my party, wore a red bandolier, as he would give notice to all the other chiefs that such a party was on no account to be molested till enquiries had been made as to their business and credentials.

I was fortunate in finding at Payo Obispo, on a visit of inspection, an old friend of mine, Vice-Admiral O. Blanco, who, many years ago, when the Territory was first opened, was Commandant of the town, but is now Chief of the Mexican Navy. With his good offices, I obtained from Governor Ancona permission to call at any point I wished along the whole east coast of Yucatan.

I had obtained a small cabin launch, the *Cara*, for the trip, as I found the *Grace W* too small for safety along this coast. The members of the party consisted of myself, Muddy, James, Andres, and Lizarraga, the photographer. We intended to pick up at Ambergris Cay, the northernmost island along the coast of British Honduras, a pilot and sailor who were well acquainted with the east coast, one of the most treacherous and dangerous in the world, bounded throughout its whole extent by a sharp-fanged coral reef, on which, even in the finest weather, perpetually breaks a heavy swell, and woe to the boat driven ashore there, for, with inconceivable rapidity, she is torn to pieces between the

upper millstone of the terrific breakers and the nether millstone of the sharp coral rock.

The trip was unfortunate from the start. We towed my little motor-boat, the *Booksie*, which, in case of a break-down, would at least keep us from drifting on a lee shore. But the *Booksie* was so pounded by the heavy seas on the trip from Payo Obispo to Ambergris Cay that not only was a good deal of her thin copper torn off, but some of her planks were sprung, and she developed such a leak that we had to leave her behind in Ambergris, and take in her place a large dug-out—a poor substitute, it is true, but one that would at least get us ashore safely should we break down and drift on the reef.

Ambergris Cay—so called, it is said, because an immense lump of this valuable commodity once drifted ashore there—is a long, narrow island, surrounded by a beautiful white sandy beach. The interior is a desert of mangrove swamp, scrubby bush, and sour grass savanna, interspersed with waterways and small lagoons. This part of the island is quite uninhabitable owing to the swarms of mosquitoes, which make it impossible even to penetrate without the aid of a face-veil, mosquito-boots, and gloves. It was nevertheless occupied at one time by a branch of the Maya, as the innumerable burial and kitchen-midden mounds along the coast attest. But this branch of the race seems to have developed along lines of its own, for they worshipped a god quite different in appearance from any of the deities of their neighbours in Yucatan—a short-nosed, round-faced individual, wearing a curious arrangement over his face resembling a cross between a baseball catcher's mask and a horse's bridle.

They appear to have lived almost exclusively on sea food—conchs, cockles, whelks, crabs, crayfish, turtle, and fish, enormous quantities of the indestructible remains of which

are found in their kitchen-middens. They seem, however, not to have confined themselves solely to this diet, and must, I fear, be convicted of cannibalism, for I have found human bones so mixed with other food remains in their kitchen-middens as to leave no doubt as to their guilt of this charge.

They manufactured small, very well-modelled figurines of animals in polished red pottery, quite different from anything found elsewhere amongst the Maya. Ambergris Cay is reputed to have been a favourite resort of both buccaneers and pirates, and of course the repository of much treasure buried and left by them, but almost every one of the innumerable little Cays along the British Honduras coast has this reputation. At Ambergris Cay, however, it has been to some extent justified, as not very long ago a Mexican labourer, working there on a coconut plantation, came across a cache of gold coins, and, like a wise man, before any inconvenient questions as to title or ownership could arise, promptly departed, without beat of drums, for his own country.

On one of the mounds excavated by me a Georgian half-guinea was unearthed ; this, though not—as far as one could judge—forming part of a cache, for nothing else was found with it, at least indicated that someone possessing gold coins had passed that way, and the only person likely to have been in that enviable position on this remote little island would have been a pirate or buccaneer.

The inhabitants of this happy spot are free from Adam's curse, for the great majority of them own coconut plantations, which require no more strenuous labour than picking up the nuts as they fall, and selling them to the nearest trader, while those not so fortunate as to possess *cocals*, fish for those who do, and, as fish of all sorts and sizes may be captured literally at one's back door, this is almost as soft a job as that of the coconut proprietors.

Our pilot, an ancient mariner well on in the sixties, was reputed to know every foot of the east coast, with which he had been familiar all his life. His entire face and head were covered with a sparse thatch of long greyish hair ; his skin, from constant exposure to the tropical sun, was a network of wrinkles and the colour of old oak ; his arms were long and his fingers bent permanently inward, like claws, from constant hauling on ropes. His brown eyes seemed to carry an expression partly pathetic, partly curious, and these characteristics, with his habit of squatting on his hams, long arms hanging by his sides, led to his being christened "Mono," or the ape. But he proved an excellent pilot. The *marinero* was a nondescript youth, covered as to so much of his skin as was visible with a crop of unsightly warts. The first day we made seventy miles, and in the late afternoon ran in under the reef and anchored close to the shore, here a long stretch of beautiful white sandy beach.

Next morning, just as we were engaged in the *boca*, or opening in the reef, the engine broke down. A strong sea breeze was blowing, and for a moment everything was confusion on board, as it looked as if we must drift on to the coral fangs, and, though we could save ourselves in the towing dug-out, the launch would go to pieces in no time. The scratch crew, however, worked together with a will ; our small sails were set, and the four long poles we had fortunately taken the precaution to bring along quickly manned. She was drifting broadside on to the edge of the reef, the men thrusting her off as soon as the poles began to touch bottom, then, just as we began to feel an ominous scraping, the piffling little sails commenced to draw, and we just cleared the coral fangs which had so nearly brought our trip to a premature end.

Sailing up the coast a few miles, we found another opening in the reef, and put in again for repairs. These took us all

day, and I determined to sleep ashore, to avoid the sickening roll of the launch, so had my tent pitched on a stretch of the beautiful white soft sand. This shore, which is hardly ever visited, must be the receptacle of the flotsam and jetsam of thousands of miles of ocean, and in a stroll along it I found the most varied collection of objects which had drifted ashore at various times. These included half a great mast, five feet in circumference, mute witness of a tragedy somewhere in the Caribbean and a good ship gone to the bottom; several small casks, two wicker-covered galephones, a new gasoline drum, two lifebuoys, a number of mahogany logs—probably broken adrift from rafts of the wood being towed down from the interior—curious brass-tipped wooden standards, of unknown use, and innumerable smaller objects.

That evening, on retiring to the tent to sleep, I encountered a remarkable and unpleasant instance of the adaptation to environment of the insect world. When it was erected a strong breeze was blowing, and not a mosquito was in sight, not a creeping thing visible on the virgin white of the sandy floor, yet when I retired at night, though the breeze was still blowing as hard as ever, the sheltered interior of the tent was full of mosquitoes, while the floor was a mass of fire-ants—whose name is no misnomer—already busily engaged in the construction of a nest. Attacked below, on my bare legs, by fiery little pincers, and above by the needle-like probosces of " strikers," I beat a hasty retreat, and chose the discomforts of the sea, rather than those of the land, for the night.

Next morning, the engine having been repaired, we made an early start, and put in under the reef at a place called Majaual, just south of the opening into Santo Espiritu Bay. The pilot had heard a rumour of some ruins, buried in the sand, recently discovered there by turtle-fishers, who

occasionally frequent this coast in the turtle season; and I determined to visit them.

We landed on a beach of soft white sand, and set out to the north on what we expected to be a three mile journey. Lizarraga and the pilot were on foot, the rest of us in the sailing dug-out, leaving only James and Andres on board to clean up.

About four miles up the coast we had to go ashore, as the reef here bent in and met the land, and the pilot said that Tantaman, our objective point, must be a little farther on. So off we started again. After two miles of loose sand, into which one sank two or three inches at every step, I had had enough, and sat down for a rest, while the others went on. In half an hour I started again, and saw them fully a mile ahead, still trudging on, so perforce followed.

As a matter of fact, when we arrived at the ruin we must have covered at least eight miles of the heaviest walking it has ever been my misfortune to encounter.

I felt well repaid, however, for the visit, even when contemplating the walk back under the burning sun and over the scorching, loose sand, for the ruins, or such small part of them as was visible, are of very great interest. The loose sand has been piled up here, probably by the prevailing easterly breezes, all along the shores of a sickle-shaped bay, till it reaches in places a height of nearly twenty feet. The sea is encroaching on this pile of sand, which, at the point of contact, it has cut into three terraces, the first, nearest the water, 2 ft. high, the second, 4 ft., and the last, whose summit, covered with salt-water pimento, sour grass, and scrub vegetation, is continued on inland, about 10 ft. At one point, where the sea has washed away the face of this highest terrace, a number of great squared stones, evidently forming part of a building, have been exposed for the whole depth of the terrace, and for a considerable distance inland

similar stones are scattered over the ground, while on excavation, close to the edge, the masonry was found to extend downwards for an unknown distance.

Here indeed was something entirely new to me, a veritable "buried Maya city," not buried, figuratively, in the depths of the forest, as are the majority, but literally in the fine, drifting sand. The discovery was an extremely important one, not so much on account of the extent of the ruins themselves, as because of the possibility which it opens of the existence, beneath the vast extent of sand dunes and ridges which fringe the whole coast—in many places extending for a considerable distance inland—of other ruined cities of the ancient inhabitants of a similar type. These, protected by their sandy covering, should be in an almost perfect state of preservation, and it may be that, when this inaccessible and almost unvisited coast has been more thoroughly explored, they will be brought to light by excavation, and add materially to our knowledge of the ancient builders.

It is, moreover, possible that buried in this dry, soft sand, which should act as a splendid preservative, may be found some of the more perishable objects made by the Maya, from cotton, fibre, wood, bone, and leather, only fragments of which have ever, as yet, been brought to light. But a far more interesting possibility is that of the discovery of some of the Anhaltes, or ancient books of the Maya, recording their history, astronomy, religion, and medical knowledge, of which, though at the time of the Spanish conquest great numbers were known to exist, only three have survived to the present day. These were written, or rather painted, upon paper made of the fibre of the *agave Americana*, covered with a wash of lime, and, if protected by a deep layer of soft sand, there does not seem to be any reason why some of them might not still be found in good preservation.

We had neither the time nor the means available for excavation in this site, which had been sprung upon us unexpectedly by the pilot, so were unable to ascertain whether or not it resembled other typical Tuluum style buildings extending all along the coast. The few fragments of pottery found—washed out by the sea—threw no light on the subject, for they were all either of the heavy domestic variety or of the polished red ware, both of which seem to be common to all stages of Maya cultural development.

The origin of the Maya name Tantaman, which the few Maya fishermen who know this part of the coast say has been applied to it from time immemorial, is a little doubtful. It may be derived from the two words *tan* (are you) and *tanam* (passing by), the latter having the n and m transposed ; or from two words signifying " salted liver," though the word for liver is pronounced *tāman*, and not *tamān*, as is the place-name. " Salted liver," to us, seems rather a curious name to give a place, yet nearly all Maya place-names are derived either from some characteristic of the locality or from an event which occurred there, as : " Stinking Water," " Wait-a-while Swamp," " Crushed Skunk," " The Well of the Drowned Tiger-cat," " The Woman of Bad Character," etc.

Returning from the ruins, along the shore, we kept to the second terrace, where the sand was a little harder and easier to walk on than elsewhere. On this virgin page of sand the tracks of everything that had passed across it were as clearly marked as upon newly fallen snow. Everywhere were visible tracks of wading birds, from the great crane, known to Creoles as " full-pot," for obvious reasons, to the tiny sandpipers, found in great flocks all along this coast. Here a small tiger-cat had strolled down from the upper terrace to take a closer view of the sea, but, evidently finding nothing to interest it, had returned on its own

tracks; farther on was plainly written on the sand the account of a battle between half a dozen john crows, or black vultures, over the extremely rotten carcase of a stranded rock-fish, fragments of the bones, head, and skin of which were still left to identify it. The tracks which intrigued and puzzled me most, however, were found in great abundance crossing each other and running in every conceivable direction. One of these consisted of a wide, shallow, concave trench, such as a medium-sized snake leaves, upon each side of which were lines of oblong indentations, placed very close together. The whole track was about four inches in breadth. The second of these tracks consisted of a double row of parallel indentations, much smaller than those of the first. The size of the indentations, and the space between them, varied very much in these second trails, showing that they had been made by individuals of the same species, but of different sizes. Both tracks ran in all directions, and ended sometimes in the seaweed by the water's edge, sometimes in the scrub covering the upper terrace.

Now, two or three days previously a cholok—a large omnivorous lizard, always ready to fight his weight in tiger-cats—had strolled for over a mile, sometimes by the water's edge, sometimes on the middle terrace, in search of anything edible the sea might have washed up for him, a small crab, a clam, a little fish left in one of the rocky pools by the receding tide—all would be treasure-trove to him. In a number of places these curious tracks of unknown beasties crossed the cholok's trail, which was exceedingly easy to read—the double line of his long toes, at regular intervals along each side of a central groove, made by his trailing tail, being plain as a pike-staff. Some had been made before the cholok passed, others afterwards, but in at least two cases he had actually encountered one of

the unknown trail-makers, evidently with disastrous consequences to the latter, for one could see where the cholok's trail converged to meet that of the unknown, then a little flurry in the sand, then the cholok's trail continuing on alone, and the sudden and complete cessation of the other one.

We never did discover what made these curious trails, but came to the conclusion that they were those of different varieties of land-crab which came out only at night.

From Majaual we made Xoquen—pronounced Shawken—where, a heavy norther suddenly coming on, we had to run in under the reef for the rest of the day.

I was standing in the bow of the boat as we passed into the smoother waters behind the reef, when suddenly there arose from the sea, not ten yards away from the port side, an extraordinary, pinkish white creature, resembling a good-sized cooked lobster more than anything else I know. It sailed gracefully, and rather slowly, into the air in a perfect arc, perhaps twenty feet high, and with a chord of, possibly, forty yards, before descending again to the water. I had never seen such a creature before. It was not in the least like a flying-fish, nor did its flight resemble that of the latter—a skimming along the surface of the water, wide, wing-like fins extended, and touching the little wave crests from time to time. The pilot, who was looking on, did not seem in the least excited, and told me that the creature was a *calamar volando*, or flying-cuttlefish, and that they were found only inside this east coast of Yucatan reef, the giant squid, or octopus, being found in the deep water outside the reef.

Soon after our start next morning it came on to blow a heavy *norte*, and we were compelled to take refuge under the reef, at a spot not fifteen miles north of Majaual, where we were delayed all day. I landed that evening to sleep

ashore, and never encountered a more desolate and sinister-looking spot. Behind the sandy beach, as far as the eye could reach, stretched a dead, flat country, covered with sour grass, reeds, low scrub, and swamp.

Paralleling the beach lay a long, narrow, evil-smelling, ochre-coloured lagoon, stretched out like a great snake, its muddy banks fringed with wire-grass. Low-hanging, lead-coloured clouds covered the whole sky, and the bitter *norte*, carrying spurts and dashes of rain, did not enliven the scene. The only sign of life visible was two *zopilotes*, or black vultures, planing ceaselessly to and fro, high in the empyrean, scouts of that great army which patrols all Middle America, waiting for something to die, that they may call their kinsmen to the feast.

Next morning, the *norte* having turned to a land wind in the night, we set out at daybreak, but there seemed to be a voodoo resting on the boat to prevent our reaching the sacred city of the Santa Cruz, and their talking cross, for within fifteen miles of the ancient ruined city of Tuluum the engine again broke down—fortunately, this time, opposite a *boca*, or opening in the reef, which enabled us to put in and anchor.

It was too late to start again, so I sent Muddy, the pilot, and the *marinero* ashore in the sailing dug-out to erect my tent for the night. We watched the progress of the boat shorewards in the failing light, when, just as she was about to be beached, a great breaker caught her up like a match, rolled her over, and spilled cargo and passengers into the water. We saw them frantically endeavouring to rescue portions of my cot, tent, and bedding, then the rapidly falling tropical night shut down and hid the scene. We awaited their return on board, but two, then three hours passed without any sign of them, so we went to bed, hoping for the best, though fearing that both boat and men might

have been swamped in endeavouring to make the return voyage. Next morning, however, they were on board at day-break, looking like drowned rats, with a hard-luck story of having been upset in a triple line of terrific breakers which broke on the high sandy beach, and a sequence of no less than three further upsets while trying to put off in the dark, after which they abandoned it as a hopeless proposition, and spent a sleepless night in their wet clothes, frozen by the bitter blast of a *norte* which came on after sundown. They met with very scant sympathy, however, as all three should have been out into the water, waist deep, to steady the boat in the passage through the breakers.

We found that our engine trouble was due to exhaustion of the batteries, and this notwithstanding the fact that we had started from Belize with a set and a half. Next morning I sent Muddy and the pilot along the coast to the northward, in hopes of finding an Indian settlement or chicle camp where they possessed a boat sufficiently large to run over to Cozumel, some fifty miles away. After a trip of twenty miles they were fortunate enough to come across a small chicle settlement, called Tancah, where the chicleros were just about to leave for Cozumel in a little eight-ton sailing vessel, which was then tied up under the reef awaiting the moderation of the wind to get out.

During Muddy's absence I pitched my tent on shore, and enjoyed probably the finest surf-bathing to be obtained anywhere in the world. The smooth sand on the upper beach was here covered with tracks of all kinds, particularly noticeable amongst which were those of a puma, or Central American lion, of moderate size, its slots being approximately three-and-a-half inches both in length and breadth. I traced it for nearly two miles, always keeping just above high-water mark, with occasional excursions down on to the great mass of seaweed thrown up by the sea below this.

There is nothing in the least regal in this king of beasts, as he is a cowardly, slinking brute, and in the present case was merely a scavenger after crabs, dead crayfish, squid, or anything edible the tide might wash up. I felt not the slightest fear of him, as the flapping of the tent was quite enough to send him scurrying off, his tail between his legs, directly he caught sight of it.

I found out here what one of the curious tracks I have already described was made by, namely that consisting of a double row of indentations only. As I came along silently, on my bare feet, I surprised a good-sized crab, which made off at a terrific pace directly he noticed me. He was extraordinarily thin, perhaps three or four inches across, a light yellow in colour all over, and so exactly harmonising in hue with the sand that when he squatted down upon it and kept perfectly still he was practically invisible. He bolted for a large round hole in the sand, leaving behind him an exact replica of the tracks which had so greatly puzzled me. I tried to dig him out, but after getting down a couple of feet gave it up as hopeless, for he probably burrowed quicker than I could dig.

Round the boat were great numbers of *picuda*, or *baracouda*, varying from two to three or four feet long, evidently attracted by the refuse thrown overboard from time to time. These brutes are far more dangerous than sharks, as, though they cannot, like the latter, tear off a limb, they manage with their terrific jaws, armed with great peg-like teeth, sharp as needles, to tear out a mouthful of muscle and skin, and come back for more. I determined, in future, in my surf-bathing, to keep only in the shallower water, where I could retreat in time should one approach.

I never saw fish at the same time so ravenous and so reckless. Several times we threw the spinner out from the deck of the *Cara* as far as we could heave it, and then pulled

it rapidly in, giving a very poor imitation of a live fish; yet twice in the morning we hooked and landed a *bara* of nearly three feet in length. These fish at certain seasons are poisonous. Persons affected develop symptoms not unlike those of ptomaine poisoning. On this account I am always loth to eat them, as no one seems to know very definitely exactly when the poison season is. The fishermen usually judge by the behaviour of the fish after it has been caught. If it is quite quiet, refuses to flop about, and dies almost at once, it is not fit to eat. If, on the other hand, it is of a bright, clean colour, flops about vigorously, and is hard to kill, it may be eaten safely.

CHAPTER VII

A hurricane—The *Cara* drags her anchors, and drifts ashore—A lucky escape from the reef—We are left stranded on the coast, but fortunately get a *mulada*—Arrival at the ancient city of Tuluum—Indications of a Maya religious ceremony having taken place recently in the Castillo—Canul, Chief of the Tuluum Indians, turns up—The Chief's staff, and appearance—The English popular with the Santa Cruz—The Chief allows his photograph to be taken on two conditions—Canul's punishment of his wife's obstinacy—He refuses a cigarette-case, and the reason—The Maya love a practical joke—Preparations for the Indian ceremony—A woman priest officiates—Status of women amongst the Maya—Invoking the ancient wind gods—Maya beauties and their toilet—Travesties of the modern flapper—Status of the witch amongst the Santa Cruz—Punishment inflicted on witches in former days—An unfortunate prophet.

DURING the two days the *Cara* was anchored the wind seemed to increase in force hour by hour, till in the early morning hours of the second day it was blowing almost a hurricane from the east, and, though we had three anchors out, we began to feel serious doubts as to whether they would hold her, for she was dancing up and down on the terrific breakers like a cork, and it was impossible to stand upright on the deck without holding on to something. The wind would ease off for a moment, and then come in a sudden squall of almost tornado-like force. Our fears were but too well founded. Just at daybreak the starboard chain, the weakest of the three, parted, and she began to drift, very slowly, but surely, towards the shore.

The men got out the great poles with considerable difficulty and made a plucky effort to fend her off, and take some of the strain from the anchors, but it was like trying to stand on the saddle of a bucking broncho, so they soon desisted, and she slowly drifted towards the triple row of breakers booming

on the sandy shore. Viewed from the deck of a small boat, these waves were really awe-inspiring and fearsome. At last her stern touched the sand, and the rudder and propeller went with the first few bumps; fortunately, however, the two remaining anchors partly held, and allowed her to drift slowly broadside on to the sandy shore. Her copper sheathing was stripped off like paper, and she began to take in water immediately from sprung planks, but she was stranded in comparatively shoal water, and under her lee the sea was fairly smooth, so all hands were enabled to jump overboard and reach the land without mishap.

Later, when the gale modified a little, as it soon did when the damage had been done, we got off food, instruments, baggage, etc. Our experience gave us a vivid idea of what would have happened had we drifted on the coral reef, instead of on the sand of this iron-bound shore. The *Cara* could not have lasted an hour, and all hands would probably have been torn to pieces on the coral spikes, without even the remote chance offered by a swim from the reef to the land.

There we were, seven of us, on a desolate, sandy beach, twenty miles from anywhere, with our possessions piled up in front of us in a wet, soggy heap, just as they had been rescued from the wreck. The question naturally arose, What were we to do next? Having come so far, and endured so much for the purpose of visiting the Santa Cruz Indians, I determined to get there, if I had to walk. But Muddy, whose brain-waves usually synchronise with catastrophies, had one now, which saved the situation. He remembered that, while at Tancah, the chicleros were getting in their mules preparatory to departure, as the chicle season was over, and if we could beg, borrow, or steal a few of these we might transport all our effects to the ancient ruined city of Tuluum, where, in the best of the still standing temples, we should at least have roofs over our heads, and, better still, be within

a few leagues of the Santa Cruz capital of Tuluum, which, buried in the bush, lies almost due west of the ruins.

Early next morning, accordingly, he set forth, with the pilot, for Tancah, and the following day, soon after mid-day, we were rejoiced to see approaching over the sand a *mulada* of five pack- and three riding-mules, with an *arriero*.

The chicle *contratista*, who had read in one of the Mexican papers translations of some of my last year's articles in the *Morning Post*, had most kindly volunteered to lend us as many mules as we required, and had even ridden down himself to see if he could be of any assistance.

The most essential part of our outfit was soon loaded on the five mules, and we left the scene of the disaster, if not joyfully, at least thankfully. James and the pilot were left to guard the balance of our belongings till we could send for them next day.

The ride along the sandy beach showed us that we were not the only victims of this pestilential coast, for everywhere we passed fragments of masts and spars, ship's timbers and upper works, sawn lumber, mahogany logs, and, most curious of all, great numbers of thick glass globes of various colours—green, yellow, white, and black—all about four inches in diameter, evidently from some wreck, but the use of which we were unable to imagine. We had to cross a piece of salt-water pimento bush for about a mile, and as no path had been cut through it I got down and walked, for the great, broad leaves, hanging around in festoons, made it impossible to see where one was going, so that one's knees were constantly bumped against the stiff, unyielding stems, and one was apt to be precipitated on to the rocky road at any minute by the mule—whose vision also was obscured—putting its foot in a hole or stumbling over a stump. At last we could hear the roar of the waves breaking against the rocky headland upon which stands the ancient city of



TULUUM: THE RUINS FROM THE WEST.

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Tuluum, and we soon arrived at the great twelve-foot wall (so broad that five men could walk abreast on its summit), which surrounds the city itself. At my last visit to Tuluum it was covered with a thick, dense, impenetrable bush, which rendered it difficult to find one's way about, even within the enclosure surrounded by the wall, but now the Indians have cleared this space completely of jungle, which they have burnt, so that one obtains a magnificent view of the entire city from the summit of the Castillo, as the great temple is called, which, standing at its eastern extremity, dominates the entire city.

The mules, sure-footed as they were, could not cross the twelve-foot wall, so, unloading such clothes, provisions, and photographic outfit as were absolutely indispensable, we sent them on to Tancah with the rest of the baggage, and ourselves carried the essentials across the wall and on to the ruins. I took up my quarters in the Castillo, the chief drawback of which as a residence is that one has to climb up thirty feet of an exceedingly steep, narrow, stone staircase every time one approaches it ; moreover, many of the stones are loose, and, unless one watches one's step, one is apt to be precipitated from the top to the bottom.

The front room, facing the west, is well lit and ventilated by a great doorway, divided into three by two stone columns, representing the bodies of Kukulcan, the Maya Feathered Serpent god, but the back room, entered by a small doorway from the front room, is in a permanent state of twilight, even at high noon. On the bench, or altar, which runs along three sides of this room I was greatly surprised to find a small cross, clothed from top to bottom in a nicely embroidered *pik*, the skirt worn by Maya women. In front of the cross were the remains of many candles, while by the side of it lay a bundle of *jabin*, the sacred Maya herb, which was a pretty sure indication that, though Christianity

had entered to some extent into the ceremony which had taken place here, the old gods had by no means been forgotten.

I slept in the front room that night, undisturbed by gods, old or new, though I was awakened several times by bats, whose resting-place I had disturbed. They were apparently trying to get under the mosquito-net for a meal of blood, but I had taken careful precautions against this by tucking it well in all round.

Next day was spent in bringing in on mule-back the balance of our things from the wreck, and, as the weather had now moderated very considerably, we were able to sail the ship's boat up to Tancah with the heavier articles we had succeeded in salving.

I sent a messenger to Canul, the Cacique of the Santa Cruz Indians, at their town of Tuluum, about five miles back in the bush to the westward, asking permission from him to visit the place. The following morning, soon after breakfast, the Chief himself, with his staff, turned up, and I was delighted to see him, as it showed the Indians were entirely friendly and would probably raise no objections to my visiting their settlement. The Cacique himself is independent chief of this branch of the Santa Cruz Indians, and holds the rank of General in the Santa Cruz Army, the insignia of this rank consisting of a single large gold earring worn in his left ear. This earring was a beautiful piece of work, apparently representing the sun's disc, having a conventionalised bird, with outspread wings, above, and movable rays, attached by gold rings, below. When a general died, it was handed on to his successor, and must have been of considerable antiquity. Canul himself was tall for an Indian, being perhaps three or four inches over five feet. He was very thin and very old, but still as upright as a dart, and his thick, coarse hair had not a single strand

of grey amongst the jet-black locks. His eyes, however, were, perhaps, the most remarkable feature about him—large, well apart, and widely opened, they were almost black in colour, and possessed something of the glitter and fixidity of a snake's, and looked one unblinkingly in the face all the time he was talking; indeed, but for a little twinkle every now and then, when anything amused him, there would have been something sinister and uncanny about them.

He wore a curious purple jacket, frilled and pleated down to the waist, where it was tight, and loose and standing out like a woman's skirt below. His trousers of white cotton were very short, ending a little below the knee, and on his feet he wore Maya *xanap*, or sandals of tapir-hide, held on by henequen bands passing between the great and second toes, and ending in ornamental rolls covering the ankles for three or four inches—exactly like those worn by the ancient Maya for nearly two thousand years, as depicted in the codices and on the monoliths. His manner and bearing were suave and dignified, and indeed the old man might well have passed for the ruler of one of the cities of the Old Empire, or the Cacique of the ancient city of Tuluum in the days of its greatness. With him were his son, a sergeant, a soldier, and two younger men. There were also three women, dressed in the Maya *huipil*, or loose, sleeveless, low-necked garment reaching almost to the knees, and *pik*, or skirt reaching nearly to the ankles, both beautifully embroidered around the neck and hem in many-coloured floral and conventional designs.

The sergeant was a small, melancholy-looking Indian, well under five feet in height, with the saddest eyes I think I ever encountered, and the typical short head and coarse black hair of the Maya. He hardly spoke a dozen words during the whole of our acquaintance, and then only in

answer to direct questions, confining himself to a brief "*Ma*" ("No"), and "*Bey*" ("Yes").

The soldier was a short, squat, powerfully built, sullen-looking individual, also silent to dumbness; but the General's son took after his father, and was quite lively and communicative. All were armed with loaded Winchester rifles, from which, at first, they were very loth to part.

The General had heard of me in connection with a previous visit to the east coast, when we had been promised free entry to the Santa Cruz country should we ever return—hence his hastening down to bid me welcome himself. He had also been informed of our accident, at which he expressed great regret. "But," said he, with a twinkle in his eye, "if, at your last visit, you had only made offerings and said prayers to the Santos of the Santa Cruz, this misfortune would not now have happened to you, for they would not have allowed the winds or the water to have harmed you."

"But," I replied, "I knew nothing about your Santos. Do you worship them here in old Tuluum?—for I see someone has been making offerings of candles, *habin*, and *pom*, incense, to their gods here in the Castillo."

"Yes," he said, "we often come over and worship here, though we have a chapel of our own at the *pueblo*, and, if you wish, we will come over to-morrow and perform the ceremony."

I said I should be delighted, and let it go at that.

Then, as we sat talking and smoking our cigarettes, the General drinking some of the single bottle of whisky we had saved from the wreck, in a pause in the conversation, like a bolt from the blue, and *à propos* of nothing in particular, he suddenly asked me the extraordinary question:

"Does your English King talk with God?"

I was completely flabbergasted, and could only answer:



Chief Canul's Cherished Possession.



Tuluum: Canul, Chief of the Santa Cruz Indians, with his Aide-de-Camp.

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" I really don't know, as I have never had the honour of conversation with the King. Why do you ask? "

" But," he said, " isn't the King a son of La Reina Victoria? "

" No," said I ; " he is her grandson."

" Ah," returned Canul, " that may account for it. We always heard that La Reina Victoria was the greatest and best woman in the world, and that she actually talked with God, and I thought the gift might have come down to her son ; but her grandson—that would be too much to expect."

The Santa Cruz have for many years been desirous of becoming British subjects, as, ever since the War of the Castes, in 1848, they had, till the coming of chicle, been completely cut off from any outside communication, except with the Colony of British Honduras, where bands of them resorted once a year—about Christmas time—to purchase such necessaries as they could not produce themselves. They maintained that they always met with courtesy and fair dealing on these occasions, and consequently became very much attached to the British—in fact, to be an " Ingles " is still to possess an " open sesame " to any part of their territory, if one's nationality is known.

Canul had brought with him a cotton handkerchief, wrapped up carefully in a clean cloth, which he evidently regarded as his most cherished possession, and produced with great pride. Upon it was printed, in crude colours, a picture of King George and Queen Mary. It had been purchased in Corozal, and brought in as a gift by one of his men. I was very anxious to obtain a photograph of the Chief and of the whole group of his retainers, but on suggesting this to him, he answered with a curt " *ma*," or " no." At last, after a great deal of argument and persuasion, he consented, on two conditions—namely, that I should bring or send him a large photograph of King George, and send His Majesty a

copy of his, Canul's, photograph, to both of which conditions I agreed. First, he insisted upon being done holding the side of the handkerchief depicting the King, his wife holding the other side representing the Queen. We got him posed, but the lady was too bashful for her part, and neither threats nor persuasion on his part would budge her; she simply giggled, and held her place with the other women in the background.

Later on, when I persuaded all the women to come into the group, by remarking that it was a pity such beautiful clothes and such pretty faces should not be seen by other people, the lady changed her mind, and was quite eager to join the others; but the old man said: "No; as you refused to have your picture taken when I wanted you to, you shan't have it done at all." And from this decision nothing would move him.

The Chief was quite greedy for gifts, especially such things as appealed to him particularly. I had given him a few cork-tipped Egyptian cigarettes, which he started by lighting at the cork-tipped end, but on having it explained to him that the cork was to prevent the cigarettes from sticking to the lips, he was pleased as a child with a new toy, and kept on smoking them till they were finished, to see how it worked.

Amongst the little presents I had brought for distribution amongst them was a gorgeous-appearing gilded cigarette-case, and on presenting this, and explaining its use to the Chief, a look of regret came into his eyes which was quite pathetic. Waving it gently and firmly away, he said, "Ah, no, señor, this beautiful case is too good to hold our poor native cigarettes, and unless I had some of the nice cork-tipped ones with which to fill it, I should not like to take it."

Having eaten and drunk, smoked and talked, to their hearts' content, they all departed, early in the afternoon,



Tuluum : Part of the Ruins, from the North.



Chief Canul, Author, and Aide-de-Camp.

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with the utmost expressions of friendliness, promising to return on the following day.

Next morning, not expecting them before 10 o'clock, I went down, after tea, for my surf-bath, and returning, clad only in thin pyjamas, found the whole party assembled in front of my bed-dressing-dining-room, on the terrace of the Castillo. There was nothing for it but to assume an ingratiating smile, and go up and shake hands all round, which I did, then turned to summon Andres to take my clothes where I could dress in privacy.

Directly I turned I was greeted with a perfect storm of laughter. At first I could not make out what the joke was, but, seeing Andres grin, I began to realise that *I* was it. Seated on a ledge of the jagged limestone rock while wiping the sand off my feet, I had simply made mincemeat of the seat of my old pyjamas, and seeing me so obviously unconscious of my condition had proved too much for the Indians, for, though their manners are usually above reproach, they love a practical joke of any kind. However, all was for the best. If "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," there is nothing on earth like a touch of humour for establishing the *entente cordiale* with any branch of the Maya, and from then on, any little touch of formality which may have seasoned our relations ceased, and I could do practically anything with them.

We all gathered in the dark back chamber of the old Maya temple for the ceremony. Before it could begin, however, a lot of preliminary preparation had to be gone through. First the chamber, and then each individual, was fumigated with a censor of burning *pom*, or white acacia gum, which, with aromatic resins, makes a very sweet-smelling incense, highly objectionable to all devils, taking the place, in fact, of holy water amongst the Santa Cruz. Next, great balls of corn, ground into a thick paste, were mixed with honey

and water, and calabashes equal in number to the participants were filled with this, and placed, with fresh *jabin* branches, in front of the image. Lighted beeswax candles were finally arranged all round these.

Everything now being ready, all the company knelt in front of the altar, and then, to my astonishment, I found that the rôle of priest was filled by a female—a typical elderly Maya woman, with leathery, wrinkled face, bare feet, and protuberant teeth. It was explained to me afterwards that the Tuluum priest—quite a celebrated practitioner in his own line—had died only three months before, and that this woman, who was his widow, was the only one who had learnt from him the prayers and incantations proper to the various occasions—consequently, till she could instruct her young son in the mysteries, she had to be accepted, perforce, as priest and chief servant of the gods.

At first I feared that the pandemic of femininism had found its insidious way even into this backwater of civilisation, subverting all the traditions of the ancient Maya, but, on closer acquaintance with the people, I found that this was far from being the case, for the women herded together, never volunteered a remark, and hardly answered when spoken to, as long as their lords were present, though when these turned their backs the younger girls exchanged smile for smile, and probably only required a little practice to develop the technique of the glad eye.

The woman priest chanted a number of Christian prayers, in Spanish, amongst her Maya invocations, though she cannot have had the least idea of what they meant, as she could not understand a word of Spanish. She had rather a pleasant, sweet voice, and between her and the other performers a sort of low, monotonous, antiphonal chant was kept up, which, in conjunction with the strong, sweet smell of the burning incense, induced a not unpleasant sort of soothing



TULUUM: VIEW OF EASTERN SECTION.



CHIEF AND STAFF ON STEPS OF BUILDING WHERE THEY PERFORMED THE CEREMONY.

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auto-hypnosis, dulling of the senses, and slight sleepiness. But we were kneeling on the hard, cold stone floor, and after the ceremony had proceeded for half an hour or so the discomfort from my outraged knees quite obliterated all other sensations, pleasant or otherwise.

The men used no Spanish in their chants, but confined themselves exclusively to Maya, which, in the droning monotone they employed, running the words all together, was almost impossible to understand.

I was next Canul, however, and I caught the word *Ikoob* on several occasions. Afterwards I said: "Ah, General, you were invoking the *Ikoob*" (the ancient wind gods).

"Oh, no, Señor Doctor," he replied, with a grin, "I was only petitioning your god to preserve you from the winds, which have already done you so much evil." I may say that *Ikoob* may be translated either as winds or gods of the winds.

Two of the younger women stood out very markedly from their sisters, and had evidently obtained dress material and ideas from Mérida, for each was clothed in a single tight, sleeveless, short-skirted wisp of thin, gaily-coloured cotton cloth. They had also obtained face-powder, but not, apparently, explicit instructions as to the method of using it, for it was laid on their bare necks, faces, and legs in large dabs, giving them a curious piebald appearance. They were, indeed, travesties of the modern flapper, and would have provided splendid "awful examples."

The women carried on the ceremony long after the men had retired, their prayers being punctuated every now and then by a long-drawn-out "u-u-u" which died down to a soft and almost inaudible "o-o-o." I do not know how long the invocation might have gone on, but Lizarraga brought it to a premature conclusion by suddenly igniting a liberal portion of flashlight powder, which, after its dazzling

illumination, left a decidedly brimstony smell behind in the close, dark, airless chamber. This proved too much for the women, and they all scuttled silently away.

I never thought I should have knelt through a ceremony performed by a Maya priestess; but unless I took part in it they obstinately refused to go through with it at all. After the ceremony the great bowls of *sacha*, a sickly mixture of ground corn and honey, had to be drunk to the last drop, but here I drew the line, and the old Chief very kindly drank mine for me.

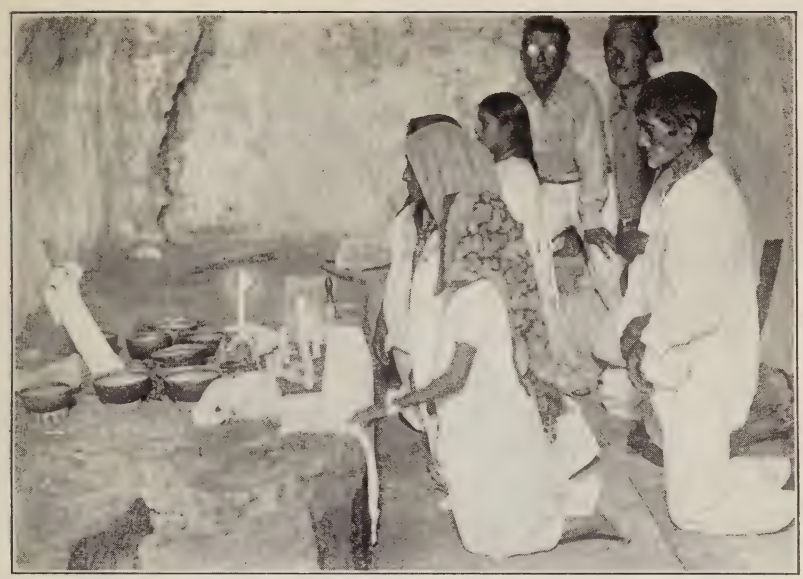
I asked the Chief as to the status of the *xculya*—sorcerer or witch—amongst the modern Indians, but, with a shocked expression, he said: "Oh, we don't allow that word to be mentioned at all amongst us now, and any man who is heard using it gets fifty lashes, and any woman twenty-five."

Now, in former days a "black witch" was both hated and dreaded amongst the Santa Cruz, and if the crime was proved against her the heaviest punishment known amongst them was meted out to her. She was chopped up with machetes, and her remains left unburied, for the black vultures to feed on. Notwithstanding this fearful punishment, however, the cult still flourished, probably on account of the very dread which it inspired, and the consequent power which it conferred on its possessor. I have no doubt that witchcraft flourishes to-day amongst them, notwithstanding Canul's emphatic denials. The diviner certainly still exists, and I heard two curious little tales of practitioners in this art.

At the birth of a child the diviner was called in by the parents to foretell his future.

"He will," said she, "lead a happy and prosperous life, up to the age of seventeen years, but between then and eighteen he will die of a knife-thrust."

The parents firmly believed this prophesy, and, in order



TULUUM: CEREMONY IN THE CASTILLO. CANUL ON RIGHT; OFFICIATING WOMAN NEAREST THE CANDLES.



LISTENING TO THE PHONOGRAPH, IN FRONT OF THE CASTILLO.

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to take every precaution against its fulfilment, sent their son away on his seventeenth birthday to a remote and isolated plantation, where there did not seem to be any possibility of his becoming embroiled in any quarrel or love-affair.

All went well for some months, till one day the boy wished to cut down a bunch of ripening bananas, which was hung high under the eaves of the house. For this purpose he took with him a knife, and, standing on a stool, grasped the bunch, and, reaching up, severed the henequen fibre by which it was suspended. The bunch of bananas, however, proved too heavy for him to hold, and, losing his balance, he fell from the stool. The bananas fell on top of him, and the knife, which he held in his hand, coming down point upwards, penetrated his chest and slew him instantaneously.

In the second case the prophet was not so successful. A woman, whose young husband made his living by going about from village to village as an itinerant musician, being of a naturally jealous disposition, and realising the opportunities which her man had of dalliance at the many dances where his work made it necessary for him to attend, called in a diviner one evening, and made a bargain with him for a generous payment to tell her exactly what her husband was then doing. The expert at once produced his divination apparatus and started in on the job.

" I see," said he, " your husband in the village of San Pedro "—where he was supposed to be at the time. " He is sitting in a house where there is no light. Beside him, in the hammock, sits a young and pretty girl ; she is beautifully dressed, has flowers in her hair, and is evidently going to a dance. His arm is round her waist, and they are smiling at each other. She says : ' It is time we were starting for the ball.' ' No,' he says, ' we have more than half an hour yet.'

They whisper together, and draw closer. She giggles, and pretends to draw away. Ah, señora, I can tell you no more without further payment," said the diviner.

" Oh, go on, go on," replied the jealous lady; " hide nothing from me, and I will pay you anything you ask."

" Well," said he, " your husband is now giving the girl money."

At that instant the door of the house opened to admit the husband, who had returned from the village without making any stay there at all, as the dance at which he was to have played had been postponed. Needless to say, that diviner was out of business for some time afterwards.

CHAPTER VIII

Recrudescence of ancient religion amongst modern Mayas—Fostered by attitude of Mexican Government towards Roman Catholic Church—Canul's ideas of how the ruins were built, and the powers of the ancient priests—We set out for Canul's capital—Signs of individual ownership of land in ancient times—Present ruins represent only religious centre—The " Santa Cruz," the idol of the Indians—The Santa Cruz condemns a batch of prisoners—Method of their execution—Present location of Santa Cruz unknown—Very probably Tuluum—The Chief shows us round his village of Tuluum—Canul will not allow us to see the church—Is the Santa Cruz housed there ?—His excuse for not letting us see the interior of the church—Primitive burial-customs of Indians—Were the ancestors of the Santa Cruz a race of dwarfs ?—We start for the temple never before seen by Europeans—The water-supply of the suburban population of Tuluum—Description of the new idol and his temple—Last offerings made to this idol still in front of him—Importance of the find—Idol regarded as a devil by the Santa Cruz—That Tuluum feeling—Characteristics of the Indians, ancient and modern.

THERE can be little doubt but that a considerable revival of the old pre-Christian religions has taken place of recent years in Guatemala, but far more markedly in Yucatan. The Indians have established a curious cult of their own, consisting of a blend of Christianity with their old faiths, the relative proportions of each depending to a great extent on the degree to which each tribe had been Christianised by the early Missionaries, and the regularity with which Roman Catholic priests had visited them. It is not improbable that the recent attitude of the Mexican Government towards the Roman Church may also have had some influence in turning the Maya towards the old gods and the ancient ritual. The position is not, however, a unique one, for though in A.D. 324 Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, after the Roman

evacuation of Britain the old gods came into their own again, and it was not till the coming of St. Augustine that Christianity was reintroduced, and became again the national religion.

I asked the General how long he thought it took to build the great number of ruined palaces, temples, and cities along this coast with the aid of stone implements only, and by whom he thought they had been built.

" Oh," he said, " there can be no doubt about that ; they were built by our great ancestors, but not with stone implements, as you think. In those days the Maya priests had powers which we have lost now ; when they wished to build a temple, they called the stones together, commanded them to take the required shapes, and then to arrange themselves in walls, terraces, and roofs as was desired. It was not necessary for them to use their hands at all. Whenever they had cut great billets of wood, in the bush, for building purposes, or bundles of firewood for burning, it was not necessary to carry them in ; the priest had only to command them to follow after him, and they did so at once, and this applied to all big or heavy objects which they wished to move."

I could not help thinking what scope there would be at the present day for an individual endowed with these powers, if he would consent to use them in constructional work, say on a battleship or a sky-scraper !

Before he left, the Chief insisted on my making a list of the things he wished me to bring him at my next visit. It was a long, long list, covering several pages of my note-book, and extended from a phonograph, with records, to needles and thread. I took it down gravely. Most of the articles, he assured me, were for the Santo, and these I was to have the privilege of paying for myself ; the articles he required for his own personal use, however, he would, he assured me, pay for on my return. The second in command, on being

asked if he required anything, said he could not do better than duplicate the order of his Chief!

The next morning we all set out early to visit the Chief at his village of Tuluum, by special invitation. We travelled for about six miles along a narrow, stony pass, through the thick, low scrub, almost due west from the ruins. All the way along the trail we passed a series of stone walls, now more or less in ruins, varying in height from two to four feet, enclosing rectangular spaces of various sizes. On our journey from the wreck we had passed great numbers of these walls, to the south of the ruins, and later on, proceeding to Tancah, to the north, we again encountered them. There can be no doubt but that these walls enclosed the land belonging to different families of the poorer sort, just as one finds individual peasant holdings in modern Maya villages at the present day each surrounded by its stone wall. This would rather seem to negative the idea that land was ever held in common by these east coast tribes, as it was by others of the Maya, for otherwise there would have been no object in plotting it out so carefully. It also gives one some idea of the tremendous extent of the old city, the suburbs of which must have stretched for many miles in all directions around the present ruins, which probably represented merely the religious centre, and contained the residence of the king, the nobles, and the priests.

On arrival at the village, we were greeted very cordially by Canul, given hammocks in his own house, and regaled with calabashes of coffee. My chief object in visiting the place was to endeavour to see the "Santa Cruz," which I had heard was now kept at Tuluum. This curious idol, from which the Santa Cruz Indians derive their name, is usually known as the "Talking Cross." To it were submitted all the knotty points, both civil and religious, which arose amongst the Indians, and, when doubt existed, from

it advice was asked as to the punishment to be inflicted on criminals, or the ransom to be demanded from prisoners, and in all cases its counsel was followed to the letter. There can be little doubt but that it was the voice of one of the priests which was made to proceed from the cross, but whether by ventriloquial effect or by means of bamboo or reed pipes leading into a hollow in the cross, no one had ever been close enough to be able to ascertain. For many years prior to the War of the Castes, in 1848, the cross had been regarded with great veneration by the Santa Cruz, but it was not till 1859 that its fame as an oracle became widely spread outside their immediate territory. In that year the Indians had captured a number of Spanish prisoners of both sexes and all ages, who were held in captivity at their chief town of Santa Cruz, and whose fate for some time hung in the balance. The Superintendent of British Honduras, with which colony the Indians were, even in those days, on very friendly terms, sent a deputation to intercede for the lives of the prisoners, and to offer ransom. This mission was unfortunately unsuccessful, and I quote from a manuscript account of the final procedure, left by one of its members.

> "About 11 o'clock the Indians were heard running backwards and forwards, and an order was given to bring out the prisoners, who were placed in a line before the Santa Cruz, and a large body of soldiers was placed with them. They all knelt down in the road. There were about forty female prisoners, with one arm tied to the side, and twelve or fourteen men pinioned by both arms. All were calm, except the children, although it was known the Santa Cruz was pronouncing their doom. A squeaking, whistling noise was heard proceeding from the oracle, and when it ceased it was known that the Santa Cruz wanted a higher ransom for the prisoners."

The increased ransom was, of course, not to be produced at a moment's notice, and the fate of the prisoners was sealed; indeed, it is probable this had been decided on by the priests long before, the only reason for the delay being to throw the onus of the execution on to the idol, and to save their faces with the English, with whom they did not wish to quarrel. Further on, the author says, in describing the end of the incident:

> "Some of the women and children were separated from the rest, amongst whom was a young Spanish girl well known in high circles. A procession was then formed and marched off to the east gate: first came a strong body of troops, and then, alternately, in Indian file, a male prisoner and his executioner, who drove him in with his machete, holding him by a rope. Next came the women, thirty-five in number, driven and held in a similar manner; then another body of soldiers closed the rear. The Englishmen were not allowed to follow. The procession halted under a clump of trees about one hundred and fifty yards off. Soon the butchery commenced, and shrieks were heard, but in ten minutes all was over. The Santa Cruz was mixed up with some Catholic rites, but retains the leading characteristics of the god who was best propitiated by placing bleeding human hearts within his lips."

The idol was removed from the town of Santa Cruz, but as to its present situation no one has any certain information. I had, however, been informed that it was at Tuluum, and the fact that a great fiesta had just been held there, at which the Chiefs from Chun Pom and Chan Santa Cruz—the other two branches of the Santa Cruz Indians—were present, lent probability to this rumour.

The Chief showed us all round the settlement, which proved very like any other Indian village, with houses built of sticks and thatched with palm-leaves, fireplaces of three stones, and smoke-blackened roofs. The furniture consisted of hammocks, small three-legged stools, little low tables, and quantities of calabashes and earthen pots. The family wardrobe, such as it was, hung on the stick walls, or more frequently lay on the earth floor, and pigs, dogs, hens, and chickens were everywhere underfoot.

He showed us the great house, with interwoven twig walls and hard, level, limestone floor, a masterpiece of modern Indian architecture, which had been built to accommodate the other Indian chiefs and delegates from the towns of Chan Santa Cruz and Chun Pom during their visit for the great fiesta.

The one thing, however, which we particularly wanted to see, namely the church, he would neither show us nor allow us to enter. We flattered, we cajoled, we promised offerings to the Santo, and might even have threatened, had we been in a position to do so. All was absolutely unavailing. He simply refused to let us enter the church, his excuse being, " I have no order to do so." I pointed out that he was paramount Chief, and took orders from no one, but he merely repeated this phrase, and we could only suppose that the " order " he referred to should come from the gods. I did catch a glimpse of the church, in a private stroll, while the Chief's attention was taken up with the others. It was an almost hermetically sealed, very ordinary-looking structure, nearly in the centre of the village. I just got a peep under the door-lintel of a nave lit up with numbers of candles and a completely screened off sanctuary. The most we could ultimately get from Canul was, " Well, if you are brave enough to take the consequences of visiting the church yourselves, I have no



TULUUM: SANCTUARY OF THE SEATED IDOL. ANOTHER REMARKABLY SMALL STRUCTURE.



TULUUM: THE DIVING GOD. SIZE LITTLE BELOW THAT OF AVERAGE INDIAN BEFORE THE CONQUEST. [*p.* 128

' orders ' to stop you." As he said this, there was a nasty cold glint in his eye, and I thought his glance wandered towards the four loaded Winchesters, stacked handily near the door; moreover, I remembered the unpleasant things which had happened in former years to visitors who had interviewed the Santa Cruz idol, not improbably now within that church, and I replied that on no account would I go counter to his wishes or strain the friendship he had shown us. I had my reward. The *entente cordiale* was renewed, and the old man told us that, on the following day, he would send over his son to show us what no white man had ever seen, a perfect little temple of the ancient inhabitants, with the idol of clay and stucco, painted in the original colours, sitting enthroned upon a stone dais within it, just as it had been left by its worshippers some five centuries before.

The burial customs of these Tuluum Indians are exceedingly primitive. The corpse is simply dumped in a hole dug by the side of the house in which the individual died. Nothing is buried with it, and there is no special graveyard, or burial-place. The recently deceased priest, who seems to have been held in great veneration, was buried in the nave of the church, but he was, so far as we could ascertain, the only person ever thus honoured.

After more coffee, cigarettes, and conversation, the subject of the church being carefully avoided, we parted, on the most amicable terms, and set out on our way back to the ruins.

One thing is especially noticeable about the Santa Cruz Indians, namely their extremely short stature, the men hardly averaging five feet in height, and the women perhaps an inch or so less.

Now in ninety per cent. of the shrines, temples, palaces, and other more or less ruined structures, along the east coast, the doorways are well under five feet in height, and

some much less. An entire human figure which was found, modelled in the round, within a temple opposite the Island of Cozumel represents an individual just over four feet in height, and the idol, presently to be described, shown us by the priest's son was, when in the standing position, not much over three feet in height. Bones of the ancient inhabitants, found by me in the southern part of Quintana Roo and northern part of British Honduras, would indicate a stature of well under five feet. Taking all these facts into consideration, one cannot but conclude that, short as the present Santa Cruz are, their direct ancestors of, say, five centuries ago, were even shorter, and might almost be classed as a race of dwarfs. Further evidence, however, is necessary on this point, and especially extended excavation in the ancient graves around Tuluum, before we can come to any definite conclusion.

On the following morning the Chief's son turned up early, and we at once started off with him in search of the temple and idol never before seen by white men. We travelled south for about three miles, and then due west into the bush, along a narrow, stony little trail hardly to be traced in the scrub, which is here composed almost exclusively of salt-water pimento. We passed on the way great numbers of the enclosing stone walls already referred to, and at least twenty water reservoirs. These were conical depressions, dug out in the ground, varying greatly in size. The bottoms were neatly paved with stone, and at the deepest part of each a well-like excavation still held water when the rest of the reservoir had dried up. These stone reservoirs had evidently been the sources of water-supply for the suburban population of the ancient city, and they were so large and so numerous that it seems probable that they held enough water, not only for domestic uses, but for irrigation purposes, during the long dry season of this thirsty land. Quite



Tuluum: Seated Idol within newly discovered Sanctuary, possibly the only perfect one existing.

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suddenly we came upon a beautiful little oblong temple, standing upon a low stone platform composed of three narrow terraces, which at a distance of twenty yards was, owing to the density of the bush, quite invisible. The stones were bleached to a snowy whiteness by the rains and suns of five centuries, and both temple and platform were in a state of almost perfect preservation. It had but a single opening, a low, narrow doorway on the south side.

On looking through this doorway into the cool, dark interior of the little temple, a curious sight met our eyes, which made us start back momentarily in surprise. Sitting upon the highest of three small terraces, forming a platform at the back of the temple, and staring straight out through the door, between half-closed lids, as it had stared unblinkingly for more than five hundred years, was the figure of the idol. It represented an individual who, when standing up, could not have been much over three feet in height. He wore the stiff, formal head-dress—from the bottom of which extensions reached outwards and downwards almost to the shoulders—so commonly found in appliqué on Maya pottery incense-burners. In his ears were huge round *orejeras*, or ear-plugs, and round his neck a string of beads, coloured alternately red and green, probably to represent shell and jade. Extending outwards from the head-dress to the waist were curious, stiff, wing-like ornaments, nicely carved and painted. The usual *maxtli*, or small apron, hung down in front, and crude sandals were worn upon the feet. The upper part of the idol was carefully modelled in pottery, covered with a wash, or slip, of lime ; the lower part, from the waist down, was made of cement, and much more crudely modelled. The whole figure had originally been painted, the colours used being red, green, yellow, blue, and plum colour, but a good deal of the colour had worn off.

Directly in front of the idol we found a small incense-burner of clay, standing on three spherical legs ; part of a second censor ; three broken turtles modelled in stucco ; and a large obsidian knife, probably the last offerings made to their god by his ancient worshippers before his overthrow by the new religion of the conquerors. The lips of the idol were extremely prominent, and the mouth drawn to the left, as if in the act of whistling.

This was probably a unique find, as I doubt if, throughout the whole of Yucatan, there exists to-day a temple, perfect in itself, with the unaltered figure of the god within it, practically in the same state and the same position as he was left in by his worshippers. Furthermore, it is of extreme importance, as proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that these little shrines, which are found all along the coast from Cape Catoche to Espiritu Santo Bay, contained various gods of the Maya pantheon, whose name was Legion. There has always existed some doubt as to their function, but this find should completely clear the matter up.

It seems not improbable that this idol represented the god of the turtle-fishers, as three broken turtles were found in front of him, and turtles and their eggs must have formed one of the staple and most easily obtainable of the foods of the ancient coastal dwellers.

The General's son was, I believe, the only individual who knew of the situation of this temple, and it is, so far as I know, the only one of the kind ever found in which both god and temple were both perfect. He would, on no account, enter the temple himself ; in fact, he kept at a respectful distance from the door. I asked him if they did not bring offerings to this god, but he said : " No, certainly not. It is evil, it is a devil, and is to be let alone, and not interfered with in any way." Indeed, I think he would have been only too pleased if I had taken it away with me, and this I was, at



TULUUM: TEMPLE, SHOWING LOW NARROW DOORS AND SMALL ROOMS.

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first, tempted to do, but ultimately overcame the temptation in the hope that, as the shrine and its occupant have been undisturbed in this desolate, uninhabited spot for five hundred years, it may be many more before they are rediscovered, and possibly removed, by some less sentimental archæologist.

Soon after our return from this trip we were rejoiced to hear that a small sailing boat from Cozumel had put in at Tancah. The ruins and the Indians were full of never-failing interest, but we were compelled to drink the water of the local *cenote*, an underground limestone cave, in which existed a small pool of dark, unpleasant-looking water. It was strongly impregnated with lime, and quite brackish, as it was situated but a few yards from the sea. Not only was it extremely unpalatable, but it acted on most of us like repeated doses of Epsom salts. I tried it in every possible way, and found, at last, that the only method of rendering it endurable was by boiling, and allowing it to stand till the sediment sank to the bottom, and then mixing it with plentiful libations of sour orange-juice. Even treated thus, however, it gave us all that Tuluum feeling.

The mules were sent over from Tancah, and we packed our remaining belongings upon them. The *arriero* was a cross-eyed Mexican, carrying a machete and automatic, with two bandoliers of cartridges slung around him. He looked a typical brigand, and I don't know that I should have cared to meet him alone in the bush, but he proved an excellent *arriero*, and got us in safely to Tancah, when we embarked in a little eight-ton sailing sloop and made a fair passage to the Island of Cozumel, from which we reached Belize without further adventure, except that several of us, whether owing to the food, the water, or the exposure, suffered from sore mouths and completely skinned lips.

The photographer was the worst sufferer, and in his case

it was most to be deplored, as he was to be married only three days after our arrival.

A few words as to these east-coast Indians themselves may not be out of place. Both men and women are, as already stated, short and stocky, and both have long, coarse, jet-black hair on the heads, which hardly ever turns white, and never falls out, so that baldness is unknown amongst them. The reason for this I tried to find out, from purely personal motives, but could not, as they seem to do everything civilised man is warned not to do if he wishes to preserve his hair. They bathe their heads frequently in hard, cold water, wear tight straw hats, and still tighter straps over the forehead, on which they carry heavy loads. The men have a few long, straggling hairs on the face and chin, but the women, except on their heads, are absolutely hairless. They are of a light brownish colour, muscular and well made, with beautifully formed hands and feet, many of the younger women being, even from a European point of view, quite pretty. They are immensely fond of a joke, especially a practical joke, and are great conversationalists amongst themselves, but shut up like a clam directly a stranger appears on the scene, and only open up very slowly and gradually, when they get to know him extremely well.

Most people who have mixed with them for a short time only, go away with an entirely erroneous impression of the Maya, for they have never actually seen the real Indian. It would appear that at the time of the conquest they possessed some very remarkable customs, mentioned by both Bishop Landa and the Abbé Cogolludo, who knew them well.

They took only one meal daily, and were addicted both to cannibalism and human sacrifice. It was customary for both litigants in law suits to make presents to the judge, and



TULUUM: SMALL SANCTUARY. THE INTERIORS OF MOST OF THE BUILDINGS ARE LIMITED AS TO SPACE AND THE DOORS VERY SMALL, AS IF CONSTRUCTED BY A RACE OF DWARFS.

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in civil suits the relatives were responsible for the debts of anyone who owed money which he was unable to pay. They used copper bells and grains of cacao for money, in addition to copper axes and precious stones. The cost of provisions never fluctuated, as everything, except corn, had a fixed price. Those guilty of adultery or rape were shot to death by arrows. They tattooed themselves with powdered charcoal. They were very fond of acting farces, and comedies, and chanted fables, and historical romances, accompanied by a band consisting of flutes, trumpets, turtle-shells, and *tunkuls*—a sort of wooden drum. At these entertainments they were wont to get very drunk on a fermented drink made from corn and roots, known as *balchè*.

They were very dexterous hunters with the bow and arrow, and trained dogs to assist them in the chase. They believed in a single supreme god, Hunab Ku, who, being incorporeal, could not be represented by an image ; but they possessed, in addition, an immense pantheon, amongst whom they worshipped the " Unknown god." They practised confession, but not to the priests, the wife confessing to the husband, and the husband to the wife—an embarrassing procedure, one would imagine, at times. They were, indeed, as the Abbé Cogolludo naïvely remarks : " Very devout idolaters, but very remiss in the Catholic observances."

CHAPTER IX

Beautiful Maya pottery discovered by a chiclero in a caved-in burial-cyst—Captain Joyce, of the British Museum, and I determine to visit the site together—We start up the Old River—Comparison between motor-boat and pit-pan travelling—An invitation refused—We reach Succots, but fail to obtain labourers, on account of a *velorio*—We visit the ruins of Xunantunich—Our Benque Viejo labourers—We set out for the new ruins—Interesting limestone caves, containing pottery, etc.—We pass many terraces, used by the ancient Maya for agricultural purposes—Water-liana our only supply of drinking-water—Our arrival at the ruins—We find a ruined city instead of a single mound—We start exploration and excavation at the site—What we discovered—We find a subterranean room, but have to leave before we have time to clear out the rubble with which it had been filled—Problems presented by this room, built underground, and later filled in, sealed, and covered by a mound.

WHEN visiting the ruins of Xunantunich, or Stone Maiden, described in my book *Mystery Cities*, I stopped for a few days at the Indian village of Benque Viejo, in the western district of British Honduras, and was shown by Father Versaval, the Jesuit priest in charge of the mission there, some interesting specimens of Maya pottery, consisting of cylindrical vases, bowls, and saucer-like vessels ; they had been beautifully decorated, in yellow, red, black, and white, with geometrical devices, and upon one of them human figures and hieroglyphics were still discernible. Unfortunately they had all been very much defaced by long exposure to the weather, and it was impossible to make anything out of the glyphs beyond the mere fact that they were of Maya origin. These vessels, the Father told us, had been given to him several years before by a chiclero, who said he had found them while searching for sapodillo-trees some twelve or fifteen miles to the south-west of Benque Viejo



BENQUE VIEJO : ARCHAIC FIGURINE, ALMOST EXACT DUPLICATE OF ONE FOUND AT UAXACTUN. THE LATTER WAS ALSO MADE OF GREEN MUDSTONE AND WAS SMEARED WITH RED PAINT.



SIDE VIEW OF THE FIGURINE.
(See reference on p. 196.)

in a very remote part of the bush. He had suddenly come upon a great stone-faced mound, and, climbing to the summit of this, had found himself upon an extensive *mesa*, or platform, on the north, south, and west sides of which stood other smaller pyramids, faced with stone.

On examining the pyramid to the north, he found a cave-like hole near its summit, which proved to be the entrance to a small chamber lined with cut stone, and roofed with great slabs of limestone, two of which had caved in, leaving an aperture sufficiently large for him to enter the chamber. On removing the débris of fallen roof stones, and of earth, leaves, and branches which had drifted in, he reached the floor of the chamber, composed of a hardish cement, and upon this discovered the pottery vessels, which he had given to the Father.

Now, these vessels had probably been exposed to the dripping of lime-impregnated water from the roof of the cave for centuries, as upon several of them a thick calcareous crust had accumulated ; they were, moreover, exposed to rain beating in through the fallen roof ; nevertheless, sufficient of them remained to indicate that they belonged to the very highest and rarest type of Maya ceramics—hard, thin, porcelain-like ware, sometimes painted in various colours, with devices representing gods, men, animals, mythological beasts, or hieroglyphics ; sometimes having these devices moulded in the pottery, or incised upon it in low relief, either before or after painting ; occasionally with all these methods employed in the decoration of a single vessel. On seeing these vessels, I determined at once to visit this site at the first available opportunity.

In March of this year Captain T. Joyce, O.B.E., of the British Museum, visited this Colony on behalf of the Museum, and we determined to make a joint expedition to these ruins, with a view to examining thoroughly the new site,

and obtaining, if possible, some pieces of this exquisite, and extremely rare, Maya pottery for the British Museum.

The first part of our journey would take us up the Old River, from Belize to Cayo, the westernmost town in the colony, from whence we would go by road to Benque Viejo, where we hoped to be able to hire mules to take ourselves and outfit to the ruins.

The party consisted of Captain Joyce, myself, Muddy, a new photographer named Avery, and Andres. The former photographer, Lizarraga, had got married since our unfortunate expedition to Tuluum, as a last desperate method, I am convinced, of getting out of another archæological trip, by providing his honeymoon as a really valid excuse ; for his nerves, which had been shattered by the dread of tigers at Tzibanchè, had quite given out after the wreck near Tuluum.

We set forth from Belize in a small, flat-bottomed motor-boat about 10 p.m. on the first of April, an inauspicious day, one would imagine, but the hoodoo ends, I understand, at mid-day. At 2 a.m. the next morning we passed Little Falls, the first of the many runs and falls we were to encounter on our journey, and at 9 a.m. negotiated Big Falls, the highest and longest of them all, where the river runs very swiftly down a steep incline between great limestone boulders.

I could not help contrasting our journey to Cayo, in a motor-boat, with the many I had made in the old days in pit-pans, those great, flat-bottomed dug-outs, propelled by negro and Indian paddlers, by means of which all the river transport of the Colony was done in former years.

The pit-pan was slow—she might very well take fourteen days, instead of the two occupied by the motor-boat, under favourable conditions, on the trip—cumbersome, uncertain—she might easily be held back for a week by a flood in the

river, or turn over through colliding with a submerged snag or mahogany log. Yet I preferred the old pit-pan, with the rhythmic splash of the paddles, and the cheerful, barbaric chants of the Indian and negro paddlers, the constant air of alfresco picnicking, induced by stopping twice daily to cook food at some clearing round an Indian or negro hut on the bank, or on some sandy island in the river, the willing halt of the paddlers whenever one wanted to get out and examine anything of interest, an iguana, an alligator, Indians fishing by torchlight, or spearing by daylight, an ancient burial-mound, or a curious bird's nest. Then the camp at night, and the curious tales of African *obeah*, or Maya witchcraft, or adventures in the bush, and up the river, caches of gold found in ancient, unknown ruins, in unexplored corners of Central America, told sitting round the glowing wood fire, before turning in, memory, or perhaps sometimes imagination, stimulated by the generous tot of rum provided by the patron.

The old pit-pan is extinct as the dodo, yet I could not help contrasting her favourably with the smelly, fussy, noisy little motor-boat, bent on making the journey in two feverish days and nights of concentrated discomfort and hurry for all on board, to stop which, without adequate reasons, would be almost as criminal as stopping a train to get out and look at the scenery. The pit-pan, like the stage coach, represented Romance in travel, the motor-launch—like the train, the aeroplane, and the great liner—represents Progress.

We had started out with the intention of running all through the second night without stopping, but the shallow, intricate channels of the runs became more and more difficult to negotiate in the dark, and at last, about 11 p.m., we ran hard aground on a sandy shoal, and determined to await the dawn there, and give the men a chance to rest.

I had no delusions as to obtaining any sleep myself, so

was not disappointed when, two minutes after we stopped, loud snores, in ten different keys, rent the calm beauty of the night and drowned the pleasant, soothing chirping of the cicadas and quacking of the little tree-frogs.

We started at dawn next morning, and about mid-day, to relieve the monotony of the voyage, I stopped at a little leaf hut, perched on top of a high clay cliff by the riverside. On climbing this, I was met about half-way up by a pack of yapping dogs, preceded by an ancient black lady, woolly-headed, wrinkled, and ugly as sin, her broad smile disclosing a vast chasm filled with jagged, decaying stumps, like the rotting piles of an old wooden wharf. She remarked ingratiatingly: "Yo no wan' go bed?" On which I fled, slithering down the clay bank, back to the boat.

Just after dark we arrived at Spanish Look Out, and here the Captain put in to the bank and announced that we would have to spend the night there, as the runs on the remaining stretch to the Cayo were too bad to cross in the dark. But both Joyce and I had noticed two black ladies stealing down to the shore directly the boat put in, and, being very sceptical about the bad runs to Cayo, and determined on no account to spend another night on board, we insisted on restarting, which was done, though with great reluctance on the Captain's part.

We were quite justified, as it turned out, for, after a perfectly uneventful run of three hours, we arrived in Cayo at 9 p.m. Here we spent the night in the very comfortable house lent us by Mr. Shufeldt, the largest chicle contractor in the colony, who had been exceedingly good in providing me with mules, and letters to all his agents through the Peten district of Guatemala.

From Cayo we started next day for Benque Viejo, our jumping-off point for the ruins, stopping on the way at Succots, a large Indian village, to try and engage labourers

for excavation. This, unfortunately, proved impossible, as a funeral was going on when we arrived in the village; most of the men had been drunk at a *velorio*, or wake, on the previous night, hoped to be drunk again that night, and probably would not be available for work for several days.

From Succots, Joyce and I made our way to the ruins of Xunantunich, where I did some digging two years ago. Although when I left, the principal plaza and a good deal of the rest of the group had been left clean as a billiard-table, on returning, I was for a time unable to find my way about, as the whole area was covered with a dense growth of bush, from twenty to thirty feet high, which completely obscured even the lofty main temple from a distance of fifty yards.

The only date recorded at this ruined site is in the first decade of the seventh century of our era, and the end of the second Katun of the tenth Maya cycle.

Joyce was greatly interested in these ruins, as they were the first of the Peten type cities with which he had come in contact, and naturally a great contrast to those of Lubaantun—where the British Museum is this year carrying out an extensive programme of intensive exploration and excavation, and from a visit to which he had just come.

Returning to Succots, we made our way to the village of Benque Viejo, the last outpost of British rule in the Colony. Here we put up at the Cabildo, a queer little adobe hut, at one end of which stood a large table, the judicial bench of the Alcalde, where drunks and disorderlies, and other minor offenders, had their sentence meted out to them. It was flanked by the Alcalde's gorgeous silver-headed staff of office and a large flag bearing the effigy of his late Majesty King Edward VII. The other end of the hut was utilised as a store-room for the Town Board, and was filled with an assortment of picks, shovels, rakes, machetes, and other

road-making implements, handy for the use of those delinquents who were sentenced to work on the streets.

That evening we sent Muddy about the long and troublesome task of obtaining mules and men for our trip to the ruins next day. We required five riding- and three pack-mules, two mounted *arrieros*, and six labourers, and after a great deal of trouble, the notice being so short, he at last succeeded in obtaining these, sealing the bargain with an advance payment for both mules and labourers. The mules had been particularly difficult to hire, though we had hoped that, the chicle season being over, pack-mules would have been a drug in the market, but it appeared that the people of Flores, in Guatemala, all of whose imports have to be carried for three days on mule-back from Benque Viejo, had taken the opportunity to get this year's supplies in, and so engaged all the available animals. We could not help wishing that Professor Elliot Smith's elephants would again materialise in Central America, and become available for bush transportation.

The men, ex-chicleros, now all out of work, as the chicle season was just over, were a remarkable-looking crowd, The head man, Eglesias—the original discoverer of the ruins and the chamber containing the pottery now in the possession of Father Versaval—was a typical chiclero, with long black hair hanging over his forehead, cynical mouth, scoffing, reckless eyes, and one ear partly eaten away by leichmaniasis —commonly known as Bay Sore—which gave him a particularly rakish appearance. Henrique was quite different from the others, possessed of a magnificent physique, his face a fine oval, and his features pure Greek in outline ; his eyes a deep brown, large, well open, and wide apart, his expression benevolent and thoughtful. His face was smooth, but a great mop of black, wavy hair covered his head. His colour was a deep brown—not, however, the brown of the

creole, denoting a mixture of black blood, but the brown of some of the darker-skinned aboriginal Americans. His origin was a mystery, both to us and himself, but we came to the conclusion that he never could have acquired such a profile and physique without some mixture of good European blood. A third labourer, a mixture of east and west Indian, was one of our most useful men, and, notwithstanding Kipling's assertion to the contrary, east and west had met in him with the happiest result, for he was a hard worker and always contented and obliging. The other three were ordinary Indian *mozos*, their original good qualities considerably obscured by many years of "Chicleando," and the recklessness and dislike of regular work which that occupation always induces.

About 8 a.m. the following morning Joyce and myself, with Muddy, Avery, and Andres, left Benque Viejo with the two *arrieros* and pack-mules. The labourers had started two hours before, to cut a track for us through the bush. For the first two miles we passed through low, dense, secondary growth, the site of the former corn plantations of the Indians of the village, after which we entered high virgin bush, with thin undergrowth. About 6 miles out we passed into a deep rocky gorge, whose almost perpendicular sides of limestone rock, over two hundred feet high, created a perpetual twilight in the dense forest between them. The scenery here was magnificent, but gloomy, and not a sign of animal life was visible in this deep chasm, where the direct rays of the sun penetrated only for a few hours about mid-day.

The going was very bad, as in places we had to ride along the dry bed of a stream, covered with great water-worn boulders. We passed the dark entrances of several caves, and the *arrieros* told us that in some of these pottery and other "*cosas de los antiguos*" were to be found. Both

Joyce and I were very anxious to explore a few of them, but we had no outfit of lamps and ropes at our disposal, and time was precious, so we had to push on, but determined to return on some future occasion, and make a thorough exploration of these limestone caves.

On leaving the gorge by an almost perpendicular rocky path, we debouched into an old pass, formerly used for trucking mahogany out of the forest, and, following this for a mile or two, again took to the virgin bush at a point where the men had cut a narrow pass for our passage. We came up with them comfortably camped out for the night, sitting round the cooking-fire, their hammocks slung from adjacent trees.

I called Eglesias up, and asked why they had stopped there instead of going straight on to the ruins. He answered that it was impossible to reach them that evening, as there was no road, and the whole country was a mass of great boulders, so we must camp by the "spring." This turned out to be two small holes in the muddy earth, each about a foot across and a foot deep, full of scummy, brown water, from which we filled about a dozen bottles, as we now learnt for the first time that there was no water at all at the ruins.

While this altercation was going on the *arrieros* had unloaded the mules and dumped the packs on the ground, but we soon made them load up again, and started the men cutting a track through the bush in the direction of the ruins, though it must be admitted that they moved with great reluctance and much grumbling.

Eglesias was not exaggerating when he said the country was a bad one to travel through. The trail cut by the men was simply awful, up and down steep little limestone hills, and in and out amongst vast boulders, ascending gradually all the way. Even the mules found it difficult to find a foothold on some of the smoother rocky slopes, and amongst

the heaps of loose boulders which covered the path in places. Moreover, the men, thoroughly disgruntled at being turned out of their comfortable camp, took, I imagine, a malicious pleasure in cutting the track through the worst country they could pick out.

We passed great numbers of ancient terraces along the hillsides, where the earth had been retained in place by semi-circular walls built of great blocks of limestone, and the *arrieros* told us that these terraces, which had evidently been used by the ancient Maya for agricultural purposes, extended for many miles in all directions, connoting, at one time, a large population and intensive agriculture throughout a country now completely uninhabited and covered by a dense growth of forest.

At last, as night was falling, we arrived at a long, flat terrace, and Eglesias announced that we had reached as near to the ruins as it was possible for the mules to get, and the balance of the journey, up the side of a mountain, would have to be undertaken on foot. We were too tired to argue, and only too glad to off-saddle and, having cleared a space in the underbush, sling our hammocks between trees, light a fire, and settle down for the night.

Our first visit next morning was to the water-hole, which we found dry as a bone, and we had to make coffee out of a couple of bottles of our precious soda-water. The men could not work without water, so all hands were sent off into the bush to look for water-*bejuco*, a reddish liana covered with black spots, somewhat sparsely distributed in the bush, which grows almost as thick as a man's thigh. When this is cut in sections of two or three feet in length, about two or three ounces of clear, cool water run from each section. It took half the morning for the men to get enough water to make their coffee in this way, for the liana is rare, and it was rather like sending children to gather strawberries

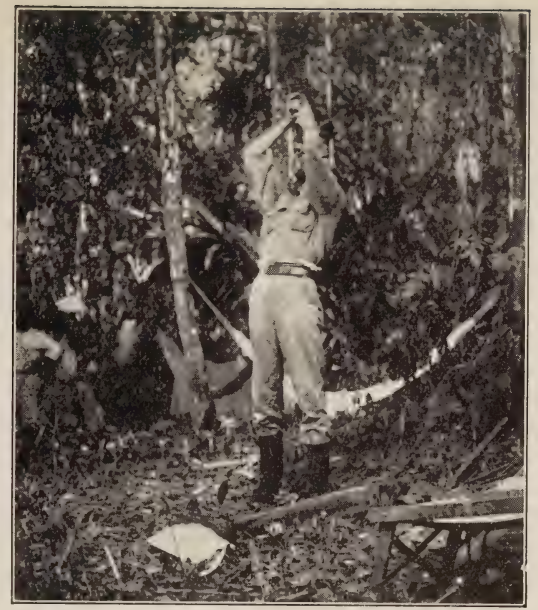
—they eat more than they pick—so the men, on finding the liana, drank more of its water than they collected for the common use.

We sent one man off with a great bag, made from brown cotton covered with a coat of native rubber, to get water at the "spring," while Muddy was dispatched to Benque Viejo to bring in a couple of mule-loads of good vat water on the following day.

All these things attended to, we set off for the ruins. We had to make our way for perhaps half a mile, up a hill almost as steep as the side of a house, zigzagging about between great boulders of limestone, and hacking a trail through cactus, *bejuco*, and scrubby bush.

On reaching the summit, we expected to find only the single large mound described by the Jesuit Father, but what was our surprise to discover not one mound, but a vast complex of pyramids, plazas, terraces, and causeways—evidently the remains of a once extensive Maya city. The whole group was covered with virgin bush, and, though the undergrowth was not very thick, it was almost impossible, in the time at our disposal, to make anything like an accurate survey of the entire site. We made a hasty sketch plan of the main complex of structures, beginning with the large mound, upon the flat summit of which stood the smaller pyramid in which the painted Maya pottery was found.

This mound, built in the shape of a truncated cone, was 63 ft. high, or, including the height of the terrace upon which the whole group stood, 88 ft. above the level of the surrounding ground. Its flat summit measured 96 ft., both from north to south and east to west. Its southern side was divided into two terraces, and a stairway, 54 ft. wide, built of roughly squared blocks of limestone, reached from the ground-level to the level of the first terrace. At the northern side of the flat top stood a stone-faced pyramid, 11 ft. 6 ins.



Capt. Joyce of the British Museum drinking from water liana at our dry camp.



Mr. Oliver Ricketson of the Carnegie Institution with Author beside one of the Altars at Uaxactun. (See p. 168.)

[*p.* 146

high, in the southern face of which a small cyst, or chamber, had been exposed, owing to the caving in of several of the great flaps which formed its roof. This chamber was lined throughout with stone, oval in shape, and measured 6 ft. by 4 ft. 6 ins. Within it were found, as already stated, six very beautiful painted Maya vessels, upon one of which remains of a hieroglyphic inscription were still discernible; this, however, had suffered severely, either from the fall of the original roof stones, the beating in of rain, or the constant dripping of lime-impregnated water from the roof.

This chamber was situated well to the south of the centre of the mound, and as it seemed not improbable that a similar chamber might exist at a corresponding point on the northern slope, we began our excavation at that point. Nothing, however, was discovered beyond the great stone blocks of which the mound was constructed, and it soon became evident that the little eccentrically placed stone cyst was the only one within the mound. At the summit, about a foot beneath the surface, fragments of a single human skeleton were discovered, accompanied by great numbers of obsidian flakes, two cores, and part of a curiously shaped object of the same material.

It was not till the penultimate day of our stay at the site that we excavated an oval mound, 6 ft. in height, on the southern edge of the flat top of the principal pyramid. This was constructed of blocks of limestone and rubble, and, with the exception of fragments of pottery vessels, contained nothing. On sinking the excavation, however, beneath the ground-level, immediately under the mound, we came upon large flags of slate, placed side by side to form the roofing stones of a Maya chamber of considerable size. This, before being sealed up, had been completely filled in with loose rubbish and limestone dust. It was very difficult to remove the filling, for, entering the chamber, as we had, through a

hole in the roof, all the filling material had to be placed in gasoline-tins, and hauled up through this orifice.

The space was so confined that only one man could work in it at a time, and the deeper he got into the chamber the farther the material had to be hauled up. We succeeded in clearing a space about 10 ft. long and 8 ft. deep in this room, and found that it was 4 ft. 8 ins. wide, and 4 ft. 7 ins. from the spring of the arch to the top of the roof. The walls were built of beautifully cut and fitted blocks of limestone.

We found nothing whatever in the space excavated, but had probably not reached within six or eight feet of the floor of the chamber. It was with great reluctance that we left this curious subterranean chamber, but Joyce had to return to Belize for a meeting of the Executive Council, and I had already got my *mulada* hired for the trip to Tikal.

This was in many ways a very remarkable find, because, with the exception of the little burial cyst, it was the only vestige of a room found by us throughout the whole great mass of ruins. It had been constructed subterraneously, a rare thing in Maya architecture, and had been filled in later with rubble. Now, the filling of the rooms in Maya buildings is an extremely common occurrence, and may be encountered at all the main sites which have been occupied over a long period. The Maya, as I have said before, did not understand the principle of the true arch, and consequently, when they wished to enlarge a building, and make it more imposing by the addition of a second or third storey, they were obliged, in most cases, to fill in the rooms of the original building in order to provide a solid foundation for the proposed addition, otherwise the whole structure was apt to collapse. But in this case there was no top storey to support, and not only had the chamber been sealed, but a small stone mound had been built over it to conceal it further.

The question naturally presented itself, Was this chamber

one of a series extending all round the great pyramid? And, if so, were some of the other great pyramids similarly built upon, the structures within them being later sealed up and hidden in the same manner? And, lastly, why had the chamber been filled in, sealed, and hidden in this extraordinary manner? Had we only started on this mound on the first day of our arrival, and concentrated our work upon it during the whole of our stay, we should no doubt have been in a position to answer at least two of these questions, but, except in the case of the mound containing the cyst, our excavation had to be undertaken blindly, and there was nothing particularly to direct our attention to this little mound—indeed it was more or less by chance that we ultimately started to excavate it.

CHAPTER X

We suffer from want of water—The ruins named Minanhà, or Waterless Place—White sand-flies—Shooting monkeys at night—Description of the ruins—*Chultune*, or underground chamber, discovered in one of the plazas—Many ruins outside the acropolis—Probable date of these ruins—Reported discovery of a sculptured monolith quite recently in the vicinity—Many of the reports of new stelæ are mare's nests, owing to the fact that there is a standing reward of twenty-five dollars for each new Initial Series found by chicleros—Conditions under which the former inhabitants lived—We return to Cayo, and reach Benque Ceiba in a pit-pan—Assistance afforded by Shufeldt Chicle Company in entering the bush—Joyce leaves for Belize—His strategic position in the pit-pan—"Chiclerinas"—Drawbacks to bush travelling—A misunderstanding—Yaloch, our first halting-place in Guatemala—Never occupied during the Old Empire, though a most favourable site for a town—A courteous Customs official—New Holmul.

On returning from the ruins to camp that night, we had again to have recourse to soda-water for coffee-making, as Muddy had not yet returned from Benque Viejo with the water-supply, and we did not care to drink the water from the spring, even boiled, a reluctance which the men did not share, for they finished the rubber bagful in half an hour. I may say that this shortage of water troubled us more than anything else during the whole of our stay at the ruins. We never got a bath the whole time, and the morning face-wash consisted merely of a wipe over with the slightly damped end of a towel. Now, with the temperature hovering around ninety degrees in the shade, after a strenuous day's work in a dust-impregnated atmosphere, a bath ceases to be a luxury, and becomes a necessity. Future explorers will have to establish a regular mule water transport service between the ruins and the village of Benque Viejo if they are to enjoy any degree of comfort.

When searching for an appropriate name for the site, which is at present nameless, I hit upon that of "Minanhà," or "Place without Water," in Maya, and this suggestion was carried unanimously, with acclamation.

As soon as the sun set we were troubled by hosts of small, nearly white sand-flies, which left large itchy red spots behind, but disappeared early in the night, to reappear at daybreak next morning. Joyce got rid of these by retreating beneath his mosquito-curtain, which was made of a particularly small meshed netting, but I was denied the same relief, as my net was of such a large mesh that the tiny insects easily found their way through it, though they did not seem to be able to find the way out again.

On our second night at the ruins we were awakened about midnight by three terrific explosions, and found that the men had been shooting at monkeys overhead with the aid of a flashlight, though entirely without ill effect to the monkeys, for they had not acquired the knack of sighting accurately along the flashlight's ray. They were warned on no account again to shoot at anything, short of a tiger or a brigand, during the night, as our nerves, roused suddenly from sleep as we were, had received a severe jolt, for in this remote locality, close to the Guatemala frontier, almost anything might happen without anyone being much the wiser of it for weeks and perhaps months.

In travelling with Joyce, however, I always felt that I had invested in a policy of insurance, as it were, against trouble, for, though I might disappear and not be heard of for months, no one would bother about the fact, as all my friends would suppose I was following the crazy quest of the ancient Maya. He, on the other hand, was a person of official importance, who had to be in certain places on time, and whose non-appearance would be sure to give rise to enquiry, and trouble for someone.

Ticks were quite rare at the ruins, though we all acquired a few of the great silver-headed variety, almost as large as a split pea. But this species of tick is a gentleman when compared to the miserable little, almost microscopic fiend which attacks one in battalions ; he always comes singly, and gives fair warning of the declaration of hostilities by the needle-like jab of his proboscis beneath the skin ; moreover, he is easily visible, and can thus be spotted and pulled off, though he often takes away quite an appreciable section of skin attached to his proboscis. I found that an excellent way of getting rid of them was to hold up their tails, and apply a hot cigarette end beneath, which procedure caused them to loosen up almost immediately. It was impossible, owing to the shortness of the time at our disposal, and the density of the bush, to make anything like an accurate map of even the central acropolis of the ruins, and mounds, terraces, and plazas extended apparently in all directions for an unknown distance beyond this.

Unlike many Maya ruins, the acropolis was not orientated to the true north, the long axis running nearly west-north-west. Starting at the south-east extremity of the acropolis, we came to a stone-faced pyramid 60 ft. in length, and approximately 25 ft. high, built out from the angles of the eastern side of which were two curious projections, composed of large, unworked blocks of limestone. One of these was excavated, but nothing was found within it. This pyramid was connected to the south by a stone-faced causeway 32 ft. long and 6 ft. high, with what appeared to be a great natural mound some 150 yards in length, which sloped down gradually all round to the ground-level upon which the acropolis stood. Excavations were made in the flat summit of this pyramid to a depth of 6 ft., but, with the exception of numerous potsherds, and two small, very neatly chipped spear, or javelin, heads, nothing was found. The pyramid

was apparently solidly constructed throughout of large blocks of limestone and rubble, and had at one time probably supported a wooden temple, or house—now completely disintegrated. Twenty feet to the north of this last were two small twin pyramids, each 54 ft. long, by 32 ft. broad, and 9 ft. high. Both came to an edge at their summits, and obviously could not have supported buildings; both were faced with stone. An excavation was made in the eastern of these two structures, about its centre, and carried almost through to the opposite side, for it appeared not improbable that, as they could not have supported buildings, they might have been erected as burial-mounds. We were, however, completely disappointed in this hope, as, with the exception of the rubble and great blocks of limestone of which the pyramid was constructed, it contained nothing whatever.

Thirty feet north of these pyramids was the southern wall of the great flat-topped mound which formed the centre of, and was probably the most important structure in, the acropolis. Its southern slope was approached by a stairway 54 ft. broad, built of large, roughly squared blocks of limestone—now in a very ruinous condition. This stairway could only be traced to the top of a terrace about half-way up the side of the mound, but no doubt the upper half of it, from the terrace to the summit of the mound, had completely fallen away. The summit itself was 63 ft. above the ground-level of the acropolis, which was at this point some 25 ft. above the general ground-level. On its southern lip were two long, narrow mounds, each about 6 ft. high, beneath the easternmost of which, as already described, was a typical closed-in Maya chamber. On the eastern and western lips of the summit long, flat mounds were still standing, though that on the eastern side had been almost levelled by weathering.

On the northern lip of the platform was the mound in which the painted pottery had originally been found. The platform itself was perfectly flat, and no doubt had been the scene of the most important religious ceremonies of the ancient inhabitants. At its northern side it sloped down through a couple of terraces, bounded by almost perpendicular walls of roughly square stones, of a total length of 12 ft., to a curious oval platform, 64 ft. broad by 32 ft. long. On each side of this were two long, low, narrow mounds, with a broad passage-way between them, from the terraces which led to the platform to those which led away from it. At its northern extremity the platform ended in two terraces, 40 ft. in height, the supporting walls built of roughly squared blocks of limestone, which led down to a small plaza, or court, completely surrounded by broad, flat-topped banks. The extreme breadth of this plaza, including the surrounding walls, was 100 ft.; the extreme length 92 ft. The walls were approximately 10 ft. high—though they varied a good deal in places—and 18 ft. broad.

From the northern side of this first plaza there extended a stone-faced causeway—25 ft. long by 75 ft. wide—to a second small plaza, also surrounded by flat-topped walls of earth and stone, but much lower than those of the first. The second plaza measured, approximately, 112 ft. broad by 78 ft. long. On its floor was found a small *chultune*, one of those underground chambers hollowed out in the limestone by nature, and very frequently enlarged and lined with cement to act as water reservoirs by the ancient Maya. This *chultune* was nearly filled with rubbish and vegetal débris, which had fallen into it in the course of the ages. All this was carefully removed, as it was hoped it might have been used secondarily as a burial-chamber, but not a single object of any interest was found beyond a few pieces of coarse domestic pottery.

The northern side of this last plaza sloped down through a series of three terraces, of a total height of 25 ft., to the ground-level. The walls of these terraces were, as usual, of roughly dressed limestone blocks. Here the acropolis proper may be said to end, for, though the mounds and terraces are continued on, they are not an integral part of the main structure, as are those already described.

We bade a reluctant farewell to Minanhà. We had come expecting to find a single, large, flat-topped pyramid, with several small burial-mounds on its summit, in which we had hoped to find a few specimens of that very beautiful and rare Maya pottery, with dates and figures of gods, men, and animals painted upon it. We were disappointed in this quest, but, on the other hand, had discovered a very large ruined site, the thorough exploration, clearing, and excavation of which would probably require a large force of labourers, over a number of years, to accomplish.

The question naturally arose, To what period of the Maya civilisation did these ruins belong? We had found no dated pottery or stelæ to assist us in determining this question, and the single date on the vase in the possession of Father Versaval was so badly obliterated as to be quite illegible. I think, however, judging by the type of the pottery found, and the style of architecture of the subterranean Maya chamber, that there can be little doubt that these ruins belong, approximately, to the same period as those of Xunantunich, near Benque Viejo, where there exists a single dated stela placing them in the early part of the seventh century A.D.

As far as we were able to ascertain from the Indians, great pyramids of a similar type extend for several miles towards Vaca, on the Cayo branch of the Old River, and it was also reported to us that within the last few months a great carved stone had been discovered within a few miles of

this place, upon the surface of which was sculptured a human figure, surrounded by rows of hieroglyphics.

Lack of time, unfortunately, prevented us from visiting this find, which may solve the whole question by providing a contemporaneous Initial Series date. I hope, however, to have an opportunity of returning to this field later in the year.

One always has to accept these tales by the natives, of the discovery of inscribed stelæ, with a grain of salt, as there is a standing reward of twenty-five dollars on offer for every new dated stone, and a wanderer in the bush, hunting game, mahogany cruising, or seeking sapodillo-trees, coming across a great natural block of limestone, with weather markings upon it, will not hesitate to report an inscribed stela, on the off-chance that it may be one. Even if it is not, it is the unfortunate archæologist who suffers, as he may have to undertake a journey varying from a few days to a few weeks through the bush, with bitter disappointment awaiting him at its end.

This branch of the Maya must have practised intensive cultivation—quite unlike their descendants of the present day, who, year after year, fell and burn a fresh patch of virgin bush for the cultivation of their corn plantations—as for miles around the stony, infertile hillside had been carefully terraced, and the sparse soil kept in place by retaining walls built of great rough blocks of limestone.

Indeed, it seems wonderful that such a large population as these great masses of ruins, scattered over a wide area, seem to connote, should have been able to support life at all on such a limited area of poor soil, for some of the terraces are little bigger than a large table, and all necessarily required an immense account of labour in their construction.

These Indians must, indeed, have lived under very much the same conditions as the present-day hill natives of

Guatemala and Honduras, where every square foot of the rugged hillsides is terraced and planted in corn, to supply a precarious livelihood for man and beast, and where a bad harvest may bring the unfortunate cultivators to the very verge of starvation. These poor Indians are almost cut off from the pleasures and amenities of life, as they have no time for anything beyond a mere struggle for bare existence, yet the dwellers in and around Minanhà found time for the erection of great pyramids, and other structures, and for the manufacture of some of the most beautiful ceramics in the Maya area.

Making a very early start from the ruins, we reached Benque Viejo that same evening, as we found a much shorter route by the Arenal road, which for a great part of the way took us through another immense limestone gorge, with nearly perpendicular sides, exhibiting some of the most beautiful scenery to be found in the colony.

The same evening we went straight on to Cayo, hoping to get passage to Belize the following day. In this, however, we were disappointed, as the river was so low that the little flat-bottom launches, shallow draught as they were, could not make their way over the runs and falls. We could not afford to wait indefinitely for the arrival of a launch, so hired a pit-pan, which, with a crew of two sturdy polemen, can be shoved anywhere that a trickle of water exists. In this we reached Benque Ceiba, the point on the river where Joyce and I parted, he returning to Belize and I joining my *mulada* for the trip to Uaxactun and Tikal.

We spent the night at Benque Ceiba, which was uncomfortably crowded with chicleros and their womenfolk leaving the bush for Belize, as the chicle season was now over. The *encargado* of the bank was a Chinaman named Hopun, in the employment of the Shufeldt Chicle Company, who made us very comfortable, under somewhat adverse conditions, in

the company's store, which is sacred ground, where even the boldest chiclero dare not enter, and from which rations, cigarettes, canned milk, and other luxuries are issued from a little hole in the stick wall.

I must here take the opportunity of acknowledging the immense assistance which I received from Mr. Shufeldt, of the company, whose concession from the Government of Guatemala extends practically over the whole of the Peten District. From him I obtained my *mulada* of nine mules, my guide, and two excellent *arrieros*, with letters of recommendation to all the *estacioneros* at the various stations of the company between Benque Ceiba and Uaxactun, all of whom did their best to forward my project—indeed, without Mr. Shufeldt's assistance, it would have been almost impossible to make the trip at this time of the year.

Next morning Joyce left on a little river motor-boat, which, with much difficulty, had succeeded in getting thus far up, bringing in supplies and taking out bales of the precious chicle. She had as passengers fifteen women and children, who were packed into the little cabin like sardines in a box, with just sufficient room to sit, tightly packed, upon the hard wood benches which surrounded it, and no prospect of moving for the next thirty-six hours (it turned out to be three days and nights).

Joyce, with the connivance of Hopun, had succeeded in getting his cot in first, and extending it so that it formed a sort of barrage across the latrine door (and I may say this was almost the only river-boat which possesses such a modern convenience), but the position was not really quite as strategic as it looked, for anyone who wanted to enter had to crawl across the foot of his cot to do so.

The women were mostly wild, shy ladies straight from the freedom of a bush life, and some of the younger girls, in whom Maya blood predominated, were, even from a

European point of view, not at all bad looking. Several of them were obviously wearing shoes and stockings for the first time, as their peculiar stilted walk, with an occasional glance at their feet, as if they did not recognise them, proclaimed. "Chiclerinas" we called them, as they are the *vivandières* of the chicle camp, following the great army of chicleros scattered throughout the Middle American forests.

Two of my eleven mules had not turned up, so, after waiting till nearly mid-day, I started without them, leaving their cargoes to be sent on that night and overtake me, as Yaloch, our first stopping-place, was only distant seventeen miles from Benque Ceiba.

The party consisted of myself, Muddy, Avery (the photographer), Andres, Allen, the guide, two *arrieros*, and four pack-mules.

The first part of our journey was through the Duck Run pine ridge—open, dry, cool, and breezy, the delightful smell of pines filling the air, and fine, open savanna underfoot, with here and there patches of great trees, reminding one of an English park. But this soon gave place to the horribly monotonous bush trail, which we were to get to loathe so heartily during the next few weeks.

Bush travelling through this country, even in the dry weather, is about as unpleasant an experience as it is possible to imagine. To begin with, it is impossible to get the mules out of a two to two and a half mile per hour gait, as this is the pace set by the cargo animals, beyond which it is hopeless to try and urge them, and the cargo-mules represent the commissariat, and can never be left to the muleteers, otherwise one is almost certain to arrive at one's camping-place minus food, water, or cot.

Through the high bush, where there was little undergrowth, the going was pleasant enough, as the leaf-covered

track was smooth and the great trees cast a pleasant shade, but in the *acaichès*—low-lying stretches, swampy in the wet season—the bush was stunted and thick, covered with spines and prickles, and offered no protection from the scorching rays of the sun. The surface, covered with deep mud, now dry and hard, had been converted into a succession of humps and deep holes, over which the mule constantly stumbled. Before one had gone very far an intolerable itching on one's legs warned one that the ticks were getting in their fell work, from which there would be no surcease till the gasoline rub-over at night, and mosquitoes—though heaven knows where they find sufficient water to breed in, in this waterless land—added to one's discomfort.

Towards the end of a ten-hour day in the saddle, under such conditions, the temper of even the most inveterate optimist is apt to acquire an edge, and if bickerings and recriminations are to be avoided, it is best to jog along in silent misery.

We reached Yaloch, the first settlement in the Republic of Guatemala, that night long after dark. On passing a deep dry stream-bed, I asked our guide how much farther we had to go, and he replied, as I thought: "*Como cuarto milla, señor*" ("About quarter of a mile, sir")—at which I was greatly rejoiced. We went on and on for at least a couple of miles, without any sign of the settlement, when I turned and reviled him as a rotten guide, to which he replied, "*No hemos venido cuatro millas todavia, señor*" ("We have not covered four miles yet, sir."). He had said four miles, not a quarter of a mile, or so he maintained, the two words sounding almost alike in Spanish.

Yaloch exists only as a station for the examination of chicle in transport from the interior of the Peten district of Guatemala to Benque Ceiba, whence it is shipped to Belize. There is a Guatemala Customs officer there, who

examines every bale as it comes through, and assesses the duty upon it.

The village is a collection of a dozen or so of large palm and wattle houses, built on a hill, overlooking a beautiful little lagoon—an ideal site, one would have imagined, for the ancient Maya to occupy, as not only is there a constant supply of excellent drinking-water always available, but the land in the vicinity is well suited for the cultivation of maize. But the more one learns of the Old Maya the more one realises that only one thing is to be consistently expected of them, i.e. the unexpected.

With the exception of a few large mounds, which, judging by a very crude *incensario* found upon one of them, are of quite recent date, not a vestige of Maya occupation is to be found, and it would almost seem as if some sort of taboo existed, preventing the occupation of this, certainly the most desirable site for a large town for many miles round. Yet at no great distance huge, ruined cities are found—Naranjo, Tikal, Uaxactun, Nahkum—all on dry, arid sites, where, in the dry season, the water-supply for a big population must have been a very serious problem, for at this period of the year they are, as we were to find to our cost, almost completely waterless.

Our two cargo-mules not having arrived, I left Muddy behind to hurry them on when they came in, thus, much against my will, splitting our party into three. Just as we were about to start, the Guatemala Customs officer put in an appearance. He was a most imposing-looking old gentleman, with strongly marked aristocratic features, and a huge grey military moustache, and might well have passed for a Spanish hidalgo. His dress consisted of an enormous conical Mexican hat, with an eight-inch brim, a cotton singlet and trousers, and pair of cow-hide boots, but his manner was courteous and affable. We discussed things

in general for a while, then I mentioned the little matter of duty on my outfit, but he waved this aside, as not worthy of discussion between gentlemen, and afterwards told Muddy I could pay three per cent. on forty-five dollars, when I was in the neighbourhood of the main Customs station, near Benque Viejo. Peace be with him! I wish a few of his kidney could be exported to the U.S.A.

Our next stop was at Dos Arroyos, or Two Streams, a very poor little chicle camp, with only one man in charge, and nothing more than a wall-less, thatch roof for shelter.

We passed on our way the newly discovered site known as New Holmul, to distinguish it from Holmul, farther down the creek, of the same name. Nothing now remains but a number of large, flat-topped mounds, of about fifty feet in height, not arranged, apparently, in groups, but scattered about indiscriminately. On the flat tops of some of these mounds are small pyramids, reminding one very much of those at Minanhà.

The water at Dos Arroyos was brown, rather unpleasant to the taste, and full of decaying vegetal matter, but we were before long to look back upon it with regret, as we soon came to still worse water, and then none at all.

I had pitched my tent near a large empty corral, well away from the station, as, with the men talking half the night, and the mules stamping and fighting, sleep is not easy to woo in the neighbourhood of any chicle *jato*. About one o'clock in the morning a terrific disturbance woke me up: over fifty mules, laden with chicle, had arrived from San Clemente, travelling by night to escape the intense heat of the day. All these mules were turned into the old corral, right under my nose, and there fed and watered. Between the noise made by the mules and the shouting and swearing of the *arrieros*, which lasted till daybreak, my night was a very disturbed one.

CHAPTER XI

Fondness of mules for sapodillos—Cargo-mules' manœuvres to obtain them—Cure for straying in a mule—Muddy's position in the procession—*Chultunes* must have been source of water-supply for ancient inhabitants—Ruins at San Clemente—Garden suburb of Uaxactun—Report of carved stela—We arrive at Uaxactun—Terrific heat—Our future water-supply—Bird life; orioles and parrots—Last stronghold of the native American turkey, ancestor of our own domestic turkey—Scarcity of mammals, probably owing to water shortage—The howling monkey an exception—Reincarnation of souls of ancient Maya—Absence of visible birds' nests, and the cause—Uaxactun, oldest city on the American continent, and occupied for longest period consecutively—The western city—Ruins favourite haunt of snakes; fate of an archæologist—An ancient Maya home—Graffiti on walls—Curtained doorways—Untidy kitchen arrangements—Burial beneath floor of house—Discomforts and drawbacks of a Maya noble's house—Small ovens for cooking single dishes—Kitchen-middens, and the light they throw on the life of the people who made them—Maya residences much more imposing than those of the twentieth century.

NEXT day, early in the afternoon, we reached San Clemente, another chicle *jato*, somewhat superior to Dos Arroyos. We would have gone on, as we had got in so early that several hours of daylight still remained, but one's journeys in this Peten bush are governed entirely by the water-supply. These little *jatos* are built wherever water is to be found, and outside of them it is impossible to water the mules, so, whether one arrives early or late, one is driven, perforce, to stay.

Muddy caught us up here, with the two cargo-mules which had been left behind; unfortunately, however, Hopun had forgotten, on dispatching them from Benque Ceiba, to include our picks, shovels, and machetes in their loads—a very serious omission, but too late then to remedy. We were

now well within the sapote country, and almost every other tree we passed along the trail was a chicle producer, and quantities of sapodillos lay all over the trail. This fruit is about the size of an apple, with rough brown skin surrounding a sweet, juicy, pink pulp enclosing a black stone. The mules were extraordinarily fond of the fruit, and often stopped to nose about amongst the dry leaves beneath a tree when they smelt one.

I usually led the procession, as I disliked the dust kicked up by the cargo-mules, with the result that my mule got first chance of sapodillos lying beneath the trees, of which she did not fail to avail herself, and she was wonderfully expert in picking them up, almost without a halt. This did not suit the cargo-mules at all, and whenever a possible chance presented itself of passing my mule, they made a dash ahead to obtain the lead, often to the prejudice of their cargoes, which were bumped against the trunks and overhanging branches, or caught up in loops of liana in the uncleared bush by the side of the trail. Once they had got in front, it became a difficult operation to turn them back in the narrow trail, involving an immense amount of shouting and swearing on the part of the *arrieros*. One of these rode the bell-horse—usually a mare, by the way—round whose neck was suspended a large cow-bell, the sound of which was supposed to keep the mules together, a result which, in my experience, it fails to accomplish, if the mules are offered the slightest inducement to go elsewhere. Riding the bell-horse is considered about the meanest job in the outfit, and fell to the lot of our second *arriero*, a sullen, slouching, dirty, evil-eyed Guatemala Indian, who fitted it to a nicety. One of our mules proved to be a constant strayer, and broke into the bush at every opportunity. It was a difficult matter to find her in this thick jungle, and often several hours were wasted before she could be located.

At last the *arriero* hit on the plan of tying the cow-bell round her neck, so that, even if she strayed, every movement would give her position away. This proved entirely efficacious, for, as if recognising the futility of it, she never strayed again.

Muddy was usually placed as nearly as possible at the tail end of the procession, or else sent well ahead, for he had acquired an unpleasant habit of whistling tunes—usually hymns entirely out of tune—for hours at a stretch. The action, I am convinced, was almost entirely automatic, for when he remembered he would check himself at once. When one's endurance is almost at breaking-point, towards the end of a long, hot day in the saddle, the least little thing will act as the last straw, and a hymn out of tune is quite sufficient to induce an explosive psychosis in the meekest.

On the road from Dos Arroyos to San Clemente we passed a number of the circular openings into *chultunes*, or underground chambers hollowed out in the limestone, which the ancient Maya used for the storage of water for use in the dry season. When one passes a number of these along a single trail, the inference is that a great many more exist in the surrounding bush ; moreover, the majority of them have been filled up with vegetal débris during the passage of the centuries, so that it is quite possible that many hundreds of them are in existence—enough, in fact, to have supplied the inhabitants with water during the whole of the dry season, otherwise it is difficult to imagine how they managed to exist during the last two months or so of the dry weather, when no water at all was to be found in the water-holes.

Near San Clemente we passed a three-sided stone structure surrounding a small rectangular plaza, open on one side. This was almost completely in ruins, but one end of a typical

Maya room still remained intact, sufficient to indicate that the ruin was of Maya origin. It obviously had been a dwelling-house, and not a temple. The walls were built of rough blocks of stone, bevelled on the outer surfaces only, and held together by very hard mortar, so that, instead of disintegrating stone by stone, as Maya buildings usually do, great masses of masonry had fallen down, still held together by the mortar between the stones.

We found quite a number of these structures around San Clemente, which all seemed to be residential in character, and it is quite possible that this place in ancient times formed a sort of garden suburb of the great city of Uaxactun, where the principal people had their country houses, to which they retired for rest and recreation, and where a plentiful supply of water was always available. The old Spaniard in charge of the station, one of the smallest men I have ever seen, had cut a patch of virgin bush not far from his house, with a view to burning it off, and, when the rains commenced, planting a crop of maize. He told us that in carrying out this operation he had passed a large stone, lying flat on the ground, with " writing " inscribed upon it.

We set out with him to try and locate this stone, but the ground was littered with a mass of huge tree-trunks and branches, through which it was almost impossible to make one's way, much less to find a single stone, so we had to give up the search, but he promised, if possible, to get the burning off done before our return, when everything would be quite clear, though I feared the sculpture on the block of limestone would not be improved by having the raging fire of a burning milpa passing over it.

Next morning we made an early start from San Clemente, a place in which the traveller finds no inducement to linger longer than necessary. The road at first passed through high bush, and the going was not unpleasant in the cool of

the morning, but towards mid-day we came upon an interminable swamp, now dried up, where there was no protection from the almost vertical rays of the sun striking downwards from a cloudless sky ; even the hardy mules seemed to feel the heat, and could hardly crawl along, being too lacking in energy even to take a bite at any inviting piece of vegetation along the trail. It was, in fact, one of the hottest days I have ever experienced in the bush, and not a breath of air was stirring.

On arrival at Uaxactun, in the afternoon, we found that the thermometer registered ninety-six degrees in the shade within the cool bush house, which, situated as it was at the top of a hill, with the forest cleared all round, caught all the air there was moving. But that ninety-six degrees in the shade felt like paradise to me after the terrific heat of the *bajo*. Just before arriving at the *jato*, or collecting of chicleros' huts which constitutes the modern Uaxactun, we passed the *aguada* which was to be our sole water-supply for many days to come. It consisted of a large, shallow pan or depression in the earth, covered with a vivid green, unhealthy-looking weed. At one point a hole had been dug, into which the last remnants of water had sunk, and this provided a precarious supply of dark brown, musty-tasting water for the staff and men working on the excavation of the ruins, and for the *arrieros* and numberless mules engaged in taking chicle out to the river from this the last station along the trail of the Shufeldt Chicle Company.

During the wet season this water-hole is a good-sized lagoon, and as, in the dry season, it gradually evaporates down to the lowest point, and finally to the pit dug for the reception of its last few gallons, it naturally takes with it a solution of mules' droppings and other perhaps even more undesirable matter, so that it is hardly to be wondered that it leaves something to be desired in taste, smell, and odour.

The water at the bottom of this pit was covered with what looked like moderate-sized cabbages, of a pale, unhealthy green colour, growing in serried rows, as if they had been deliberately planted. They were a new species of water-plant to me.

Riding through the cluster of small bush huts, occupied by the chicleros, we ascended a hill, and arrived at the house of the Carnegie Institution's staff. This is a fine large bush residence, with stick walls, a palm-thatch roof, lime-stone floor, and big, wide verandahs front and back. It proved a delightful change after our accommodation during the previous four days. It is situated upon the artificially flattened top of a natural elevation, and almost certainly occupies the exact site of a very similar house of nearly two thousand years ago, for right in front of the door is the opening into a *chultune*, now nearly blocked up, from which the ancient inhabitants obtained their water-supply. I was greeted by Mr. Oliver Ricketson, who has been carrying out splendid work here, with a gang of men, in clearing the bush, excavating the temples, and taking astronomical bearings from the ancient observatory. It will be a vast pity if he should be unable to complete his season's work owing to the shortage of water. Yet it is possible that his whole force, with all the chicleros, may be compelled, within a couple of weeks at the outside, to evacuate the site till after the next rainy season.

In this remote part of the bush the birds are extra-ordinarily tame. In a great tree within fifty yards of the house a number of beautiful orioles had started a colony, and clusters of their wonderful hanging nests were to be seen in every stage, from the first few straws to the completed structure—rain-proof, snake-proof, and lizard-proof. Their exquisite, clear, flute-like notes awoke one at daybreak, and their comical antics and nest-building architecture were a

constant source of interest and amusement at any period of the day.

In a hole about half-way up the trunk of the same tree a brace of small green parrots had started housekeeping, and apparently resented very much, with loud squawkings, the near approach of their neighbours in the top flat. Pairs of great *wacho* parrots perched fearlessly in the great trees all around, though usually it is impossible to get within gunshot of these wary birds.

I passed a covey of bush hens feeding in the ruins, and they let me come within a few feet of them before scuttling off into the bush, not even taking wing.

The beautiful ocellated native American turkey can frequently be heard here in the early morning. He, poor brute, is, however, outside the armistice, and is usually slain on sight, for not only does he provide meat for the camp, far superior to that of his tame cousin, but his gorgeous plumage further helps in his undoing. These magnificent birds are becoming rarer and rarer every year in Central America, and these vast, uninhabited forests of the Peten district of Guatemala are probably their last stronghold. We owe this gorgeous bird a debt of gratitude, for he is the ancestor of our own domestic turkey, an unworthy descendant which has lost in flavour and æsthetic qualities more than he has gained in weight and size. They are, I fear, like the Maya themselves, unfitted to cope with modern conditions, and are consequently on the road to rapid extinction.

Curiously enough, one comes across hardly any of the larger mammals ; deer, wild hog, tapir, jaguar, and puma are conspicuous by their absence, and even the gibnut and armadillo are rare, the reason probably being that during the dry season they are compelled to migrate to other regions where water is more plentiful, as the few scattered

water-holes, many miles apart, are now surrounded by the huts of chicleros.

Little birds, living chiefly on pulpy fruits, require but a small amount of water, and this they can always obtain from the reservoirs between the leaves of the gigantic cacti, found on almost every tree, a source inaccessible as a rule to animals. Larger birds think nothing of a twenty or thirty mile flight to the nearest water-hole. One mammal, however, is an exception to the rule, namely the howling monkey, usually known as the "howler." Great droves of these brutes are to be found everywhere throughout the entire region, but where they obtain their water in the dry season is a mystery as yet unsolved. They are particularly plentiful in the great trees around the ancient ruined city of Tikal, the nearest water-supply of which is distant fifteen miles. They hold frequent concerts in the tree-tops, usually in the small hours of the morning. The performance starts with a dull roaring noise, which, reverberating over the dark and silent bush at these the most uncanny hours of the twenty-four, is terrifying unless one knows the cause of it. This is followed, after a short interval, by a low wailing, as of lost souls in Hades; another interval follows, to be followed by the roaring again, and so the performance goes on for half an hour or so, rendering sleep quite out of the question.

The Indians believe that the "howlers" of Tikal are reincarnations of the souls of the ancient inhabitants condemned to haunt the scene of their former lives for all time, and when one is awakened from a sound sleep, about 2 a.m., one is apt to believe that there may be something in the superstition. One curious fact is brought to one's notice, as one rides through the bush, namely the almost complete absence of birds' nests, either in the high trees or in the undergrowth. In England, during the spring, nests are in

evidence everywhere, in hedges, bushes, and trees; sparrows, robins, thrushes, blackbirds, and starlings building with the utmost confidence in every hedgerow and coppice, without any very elaborate effort at concealment. But then in England large snakes and lizards, quashes, and other egg thieves, are not in evidence, and, with the exception of man, the birds have few enemies to fear.

That this is the reason, is, I think, proved by the fact that the only really conspicuous nests in this bush are those whose structure or situation renders them impervious to all nest robbers. The oriole, hanging its wonderful tubular nest, opening downwards, from the slimmest branches of the tallest tree, can defy the most venturesome robber, as can the little fly-catcher, its nest clinging to the very slenderest twig which will support it, suspended well out over the water of a river or lagoon. The gorgeous little kingfisher, with its nest at the end of a narrow tunnel, burrowed in the clay of the river-bank, has no objection to publicity, and flies fearlessly in and out with food for her young, but of the nests of other birds one hardly ever sees a trace, and the nesting-place of the disgusting, black, carrion-eating vulture, which is to be encountered in thousands all over Central America, is still a mystery to me.

Uaxactun may be termed the Alpha and Omega of Maya cities, for inscribed upon one of its stelæ is the earliest date known in the whole Maya area, and upon another the latest date in the Old Empire. It was discovered by Dr. Morley, and named by him Uaxactun—*uaxac*, Maya for eight, and *tun*, stone, to commemorate the fact that here was found, recorded on stelæ, the only cycle 8 dates known. It has the distinction of being the oldest city upon the American continent, and, according to the inscriptions found in it, was occupied for the longest period consecutively,

i.e. from 9.8.14.10.13.15—corresponding to A.D. 68—to 10.3.0.0.0—or A.D. 639—a period of 571 years.

The city may be divided into an eastern and western group of ruins, separated from each other by about a mile, the one situated to the east, the other to the west of the *aguada*, or water-hole. The western group occupies the summit of a high natural eminence, the eastern the flat tableland of a much lower elevation. The ruins cover a tremendous area, all buried in dense tropical jungle, with the exception of such small clearings as have been made around the stelæ, and in the eastern city, and the probabilities are that its extent is not as yet fully known, for numbers of other buildings—temples and palaces—may exist in the surrounding forest, hitherto unsuspected.

It would be impossible in the space available to deal with all the buildings and monoliths at present discovered, but a short account will be given of the most interesting and typical of each.

The western city is approached from the *aguada* by an exceedingly steep ascent, and here it may be said that almost perpendicular approaches, both natural and artificial, to their sacred places were beloved by the Maya at all times. Whenever possible, they chose the summits of natural elevations whereon to build their cities, and their temples were invariably approached by immense steep stone stairways, with little narrow treaders and very high rises.

On reaching the summit of this elevation, one finds oneself in a court, known as the eastern plaza, upon the northern side of which is found one of the largest and best preserved buildings throughout the whole ruins. This was built upon the summit of a great artificial stone-faced pyramid, up the southern side of which a steep stairway led to the main entrance of the building. This stairway has now collapsed, and the climb up the almost perpendicular

side has to be undertaken on all fours, and with great circumspection, for the vegetal humus which has accumulated during the centuries slips from under one in the dry weather, with the result that one may be precipitated from top to bottom of the mound, while in the wet weather it forms a sticky mud, slippery as butter.

At all times, in climbing these Maya ruins, one must keep a watchful eye out for snakes, of which they are a favourite haunt, as the numbers of discarded skins always found amongst the stones evidence, and it is not very long since an explorer, climbing up a mound on hands and knees, disturbed a poisonous snake, exactly of what variety was never ascertained, but most probably a yellow-jawed *tomagoff*. The snake struck him in the cheek, one of the worst conceivable places, as it is impossible to apply any kind of ligature there to prevent the spreading of the poison, and within a very short time he died in great agony.

The building consisted of three main rooms, or galleries, with two smaller chambers at each end. The southern of the main rooms had collapsed, and was represented merely by a mass of ruins; the central chamber was still in a fair state of preservation. It was the usual Maya room, long and narrow, covered with fine, smooth stucco, roofed with the Maya arch, and possessing holes on each side through which once passed supporting beams of sapote wood. The northernmost chamber was in an excellent state of preservation ; it was approached by two entrances from the middle room, the sapote lintels over which were still in place. The floor was of hard cement, and the walls had been painted a bright red throughout, most of which had, however, worn off.

On the northern wall were a number of graffiti, some of them still bearing traces of having been covered by the topmost coat of red paint, a sure indication that they were scratched in during the occupancy of the structure by the

original builders, and not by wandering Indians at a later date. The graffiti show crude human heads, a scorpion-like creature, and what are probably intended for phallic symbols.

To the east of the northern and central rooms are two small recesses, or closets, opening on to the east side of the building, and to the northern gallery, by doorways, the sapote-wood lintels of which are still in place. These curious little closets must have been separated from each other, and from the northern gallery, by curtains, for the recesses on both sides of the doorways, both above and below, to which the cords suspending them were attached, are still in good preservation.

To the west of the northern gallery are two further little rooms, one of which contains a small interior stone stairway leading to the roof of the structure. These interior stairways are rare in Maya ruins, but they have been found at cities so far apart as Palenque, in Chiapas, Quirigua, in Guatemala, and Rio Bec, in Quintana Roo. The outer wall of the north gallery is pierced by a number of windows, probably for lighting and ventilation, and on the floor-level are two square openings, possibly for drainage, or the discharge of rubbish.

In the smooth cement floor of the north gallery were found a number of little round holes filled with ashes, potsherds, and the bones of small rodents. In the floor of one of the little closets, on the east side, a much larger oblong hole was discovered, which, on being excavated, was found to contain ashes, potsherds, and the bones of various mammals, amongst which those of the gibnut and native rat predominated. Beneath these, and buried in hard cement-like material, human bones were brought to light, and the excavation of these is now being undertaken with the utmost care, in order, if possible, to preserve the skull intact, and to avoid breaking any pottery or other fragile material buried with them. This is an extremely tiresome job, for the worker

has to sit, day after day, in a cramped, uncomfortable position, separating and removing the material which surrounds the bones, literally teaspoonful by teaspoonful.

The occurrence of human burials beneath the floor, and of circular hearths dug in it, render it almost certain that this building was a private residence—probably that of one of the nobles or chief priests—rather than a temple, which, judging by the arrangement of its rooms and the lofty substructure supporting it, one might at first be inclined to consider it.

To find burials of the dead beneath the floor of their houses is not surprising, as Landa speaks of this custom having been prevalent amongst the Maya at the time of the Spanish conquest, and I have myself come across instances of it in various parts of the Maya area.

These hearths, scooped in the floor of the back room, which was probably used as the kitchen of the establishment, and holes, which one can only regard as rubbish shoots, through the walls on the floor-level, close to the hearths, are quite new features, and would seem to cast a considerable slur upon the neatness and cleanliness of the domestic habits of the Maya. The building is supported upon a lofty and almost perpendicular, terraced, stone-faced substructure, and could be approached only on its southern side by an extremely steep flight of steps, now fallen. The summit of the building was crowned by a lofty roof comb, upon panels in which are sculptured five gigantic human heads, now very much weathered and broken up.

This building has been described at some length, and in unusual detail, as it is fairly typical of what was, so far as we know, the usual residence of the upper classes amongst the Maya of two thousand years ago—not of a king, but certainly of a noble or priest of some importance, otherwise he would not have lived within the sacred city.

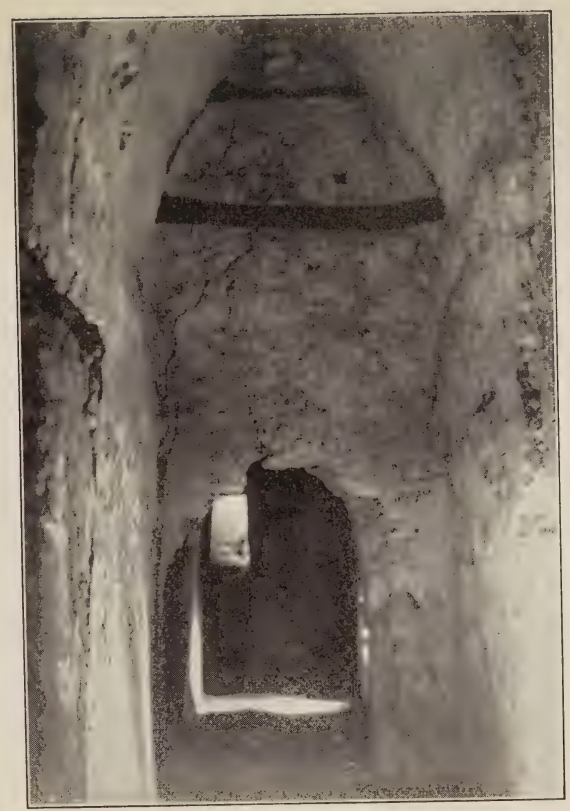
It must be admitted that in the matter of space, comfort,

and convenience, it compares very unfavourably with the average middle-class residence of to-day. It possessed in all but seven rooms, and four of these were mere closets. The lighting in all of them, except in the now fallen south gallery, and the little closets on the west side, was effected either from the adjoining chambers or through little slits in the walls—in fact, a perpetual twilight must have prevailed on the brightest day. The nearest water-supply was half a mile away, and down a very steep incline, while every time one of the occupants wanted to leave home he had to climb an almost perpendicular flight of narrow stone steps.

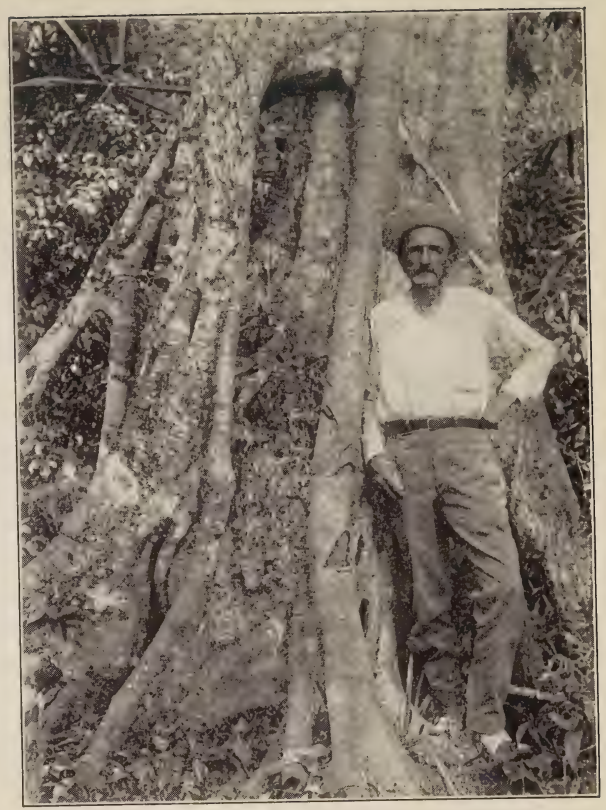
Amongst the Maya of to-day, as amongst their ancestors, the *pib* is a favourite method of cooking, though, with the introduction of modern appliances and utensils, it has fallen into desuetude, and its use is now almost exclusively ceremonial, during the festivals given in secret to their ancient gods. The *pib* consists of a hole dug in the ground, lined throughout with stones, upon which a roaring wood fire is kindled till they become red hot. Upon these are then placed the various articles to be cooked—bread of mixed corn and beans, turkey, chicken, or pork, surrounded by a paste of maize flour, etc.—all wrapped round in two jackets, the inner of wild-plantain-leaf, the outer of tough palm-leaf.

The earth dug out of the hole is next piled on top of the bundles of food, and the whole left for three or four hours, when it is opened up, and the leaf coverings removed from the food, which is found to be exquisitely cooked, the meat being tender, and with all its juices preserved intact.

I cannot help thinking that the small ashes-filled excavations in the floor of this chamber were nothing more nor less than small *pibs*, just large enough to cook a single meal for the family, and that while in one of them the *buliua*, or bean bread, was cooking, another accommodated the *pibishcash* or chicken *tomali*, while a third prepared the



UAXACTUN: AN INTERIOR, PROBABLY A KITCHEN.



A STELA AT UAXACTUN SURROUNDED BY A TREE-TRUNK.

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pibikekem, or roast of wild hog. When cooking was completed, the ashes would be simply raked together and thrust through the holes in the back wall of the dwelling, on the floor-level, to fall into what corresponds to our backyard.

When a little more clearing has been done, it will be extremely interesting to excavate beneath these refuse-holes in the kitchen-middens which must necessarily have formed there in the course of the many years during which the city was occupied, for all sorts of indestructible refuse, such as potsherds, flint, and obsidian knives, beads, malacates, etc., must have collected there.

If stratigraphy—the study of the layers formed in rubbish heaps, century by century, as fresh material is added to them—exists anywhere in the Maya area, this seems to be one of the most likely places to look for it. As already stated, the city was continuously occupied for nearly six centuries, and great changes must have taken place during that long period in the form of weapons, implements, and utensils, of pottery, stone, shell, bone, and other more or less indestructible materials.

Imagine the discovery of a kitchen-midden, constantly in use, at some great mansion in England, from the Norman conquest to the Protectorate, and the light which its contents would throw on the social and domestic life of the Middle Ages, and the changes which took place during them in the forms of small and more or less indestructible articles of domestic use and personal apparel—beads, buttons, pottery, porcelain, glass, etc. This will afford some idea of the value of a similar discovery in the Maya area, where, as the inhabitants were living practically in a neolithic horizon, the finds should be even more representative and characteristic than those of a civilisation into which iron and other destructible metals entered so largely.

But if the house of an ancient Maya noble left much to be

desired from a modern point of view in the matter of comfort and convenience, at least from a spectacular point of view it far surpassed any modern building of a similar character. The great square stone structure, with panelled walls, standing upon the summit of a lofty terraced substructure, approached by a flight of stone steps, and crowned by a towering sculptured roof comb, the whole constructed of worked blocks of white limestone, as it glittered like polished marble under the rays of the tropic sun, standing as it did upon the summit of a lofty natural elevation with similar buildings surrounding it, forming a shining white islet elevated hundreds of feet above the sea of green cultivated lands which surrounded the city on all sides, must have been a truly magnificent and impressive sight —at which, no doubt, many a humble cultivator of the soil, as he went about his day's work, looked up with awe and reverence.

CHAPTER XII

The acropolis—An important pyramid—The most important stela at the ruins, if not in the whole Maya area—Fitting monument to a great archæologist—Date on stela A.D. 68—Re-use of older stela to form an altar—Maya system of numeration—All numbers recorded at Uaxactun expressed by bar and dot system—These monuments indicate that the Maya were erecting stelæ of stone before the commencement of the Christian era—Stela recording the latest date known in Peten, A.D. 639—Stela recording the date 10.0.0.0.0, 2 Ahau, 18 Zip, the commencement of Bactun 10—This must have been a most significant date for the Maya—Destruction wrought by forest growth at Uaxactun—Quarries—New theory to account for the desertion of their ancient cities by the Maya of the Old Empire—Stela depicting a warrior holding a weapon closely resembling the Toltec spear-thrower of one thousand years later—Hieroglyphics giving his name and rank—Figures on stelæ throughout the Maya area were those of priests and rulers, not of gods—Unlikelihood of finding a Maya Rosetta-stone—Need of a Maya hieroglyphic dictionary.

THE western side of the east plaza is bounded by a vast mass of ruins—consisting of courts and squares, at various levels, and buildings, now almost completely fallen—covered by a dense growth of forest, which forms a sort of acropolis of this western group. The forest will have to be cut over this area, and burnt when the bush has thoroughly dried the following season, then an extensive area will be ready for intensive exploration and excavation, which will occupy a large gang of labourers for years.

The western side of this acropolis forms the eastern boundary of the main plaza of this western group of ruins. The south side of the main plaza is occupied by a pyramid, which once supported upon its summit a building, now almost entirely in ruins, but which must at one time have been of exceeding importance, for in front of it are placed no less than seven stelæ, while behind it are two.

It is most unusual in Maya buildings to find stelæ erected both in front of and behind them, and is a sure indication of the great importance attached by the builders to the structure so adorned.

To the west of the main plaza is a large terraced substructure, the building upon the summit of which is now in ruins. In front of this building are three stelæ. On the north side of the main plaza a graded causeway starts, which leads to another group of ruins. At the entrance to this causeway is found the most important stela in the whole group, if not the most important in the entire Maya area. It is a crudely dressed block of stone, standing some 9 ft. 2 in. above the ground-level, narrower at the apex than at the base, and canted a little backwards, as if during the centuries it had shifted slightly on its foundation. This stone gives the name Uaxactun to the ruins, for it was the first stela ever discovered recording a Bactun 8 date. Dr. Morley was, as already recorded, the discoverer, and it must be regarded as the culminating point in a very distinguished archæological career; indeed, I have heard that he has expressed a wish to be buried beneath this stone, and no more noble and fitting monument could be erected over a Maya archæologist than this the earliest known record of the race whose history and chronology he has done so much to elucidate. Upon one face of the stone is sculptured in extremely crude hieroglyphics, very badly weathered, the date of its erection, 8.14.10.13.15—that is, 8 Bactuns, of 400 years each, 14 Katuns, of 20 years each, 10 Tuns, or years, of 360 days each, 13 Uinals, or months, of 20 days each, and 15 kins, or days, after the date 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu, the starting day of Maya chronology, which, using Spinden's correlation, corresponds to the day, 10th June, A.D. 68, of our era.

Beside this stela stands an altar, roughly circular in form.



UAXACTUN: THE EARLIEST DATED STELA, WITH ITS ALTAR.



THE ALTAR, SHOWING WARRIOR WITH FORKED APRON. OBSOLETE AS A STELA BY A.D. 68, IT WAS THUS TRIMMED DOWN.

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It is obviously an older stela, cut down to form an altar, for on both sides of it are the lower parts of human figures, consisting of the legs from the waist down, with the *maxtli*, or apron, hanging between them, the upper parts of both figures having been broken away to give the stone its conventional, round, altar shape, for all the altars found standing in front of stelæ at Uaxactun were roughly circular. But if this stela were cut down, and re-used to form an altar for the other, it must itself have been in use as a stela at an earlier date. Now the Maya frequently broke up and re-used the sculptures of their ancestors, both for use as lintels and for ordinary building purposes, but this was not usually done till the stones to be re-used had acquired a considerable antiquity, when the events and dates which they recorded had faded from men's minds and were no longer considered worthy of commemoration, or perhaps, in some cases, because the art of the sculptor who carved them appeared crude and archaic to the new generation.

Whatever the reason, we find the Maya, time and time again, breaking up and re-using the sculptures of their predecessors when they had become out of date. We may, then, I think, take it that the stela which was trimmed down to form the altar in front of our A.D. 68 stela was considerably older than the latter, and that it was either considered an eyesore from an artistic point of view or recorded events so remote from A.D. 68 as to be no longer of interest to men then living.

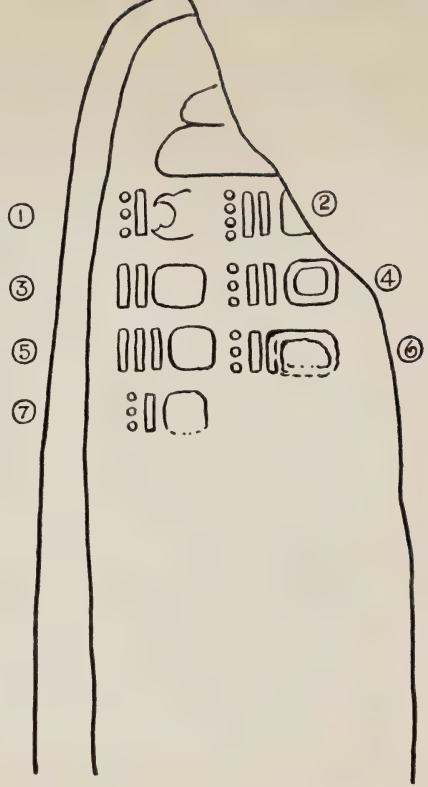
This would surely indicate an antiquity of at least a century, so I think it not unreasonable to suppose that the altered stela was originally sculptured at least before the commencement of the Christian era. Unfortunately there remains upon it no faintest indication of a date, so its actual age must always remain a subject of speculation. The

numerical coefficients upon the stela are all of the bar and dot variety—one bar representing five, one dot one, up to nineteen, the highest number the Maya found it necessary to record in this way, as their higher numbers were, like our own Arabic numbers, expressed positionally; the only difference being that, whilst ours is a decimal, theirs was a vigesimal, system, and while our positions count from right to left—the first position representing units, the second tens, the third hundreds, and so on—theirs were counted from below upward—the first position representing units, the second twenties, etc.

All numerical coefficients at Uaxactun are expressed by the bar and dot, and the face variants are never used. Now, it has been supposed that the face variants were older than the bar and dot, yet here is a clear indication, in the earliest known inscription, that the bar and dot are the older. Before the discovery of Uaxactun it was believed by most Maya archæologists than an eighth cycle stela would never be discovered, as, prior to Bactun nine, stelæ had been carved from wood, which, naturally, in this climate had perished centuries ago. Yet here is a stela recording a date over a century before the end of cycle eight, and possessing an altar which takes us back to even remoter times, showing, moreover, that the extraordinarily complicated and accurate calendar system employed by the Maya had already been fully developed at this early date. These facts must stimulate archæologists in the Central American field to search for still earlier dates, and especially for those likely to throw more light upon the genesis of the Maya calendar, and possibly upon the origin of the Maya civilisation, and of the Maya themselves.

Two other very interesting stelæ, recording dates, are found in this western group. Upon the first of these is inscribed the date 1 Ahau, 3 Yaxkin, probably referable





Glyphs read: (1) 8 Bactuns; (2) 14 Katuns; (3) 10 Tuns; (4) 13 Uinals; (5) 15 Kins; (6) 8 Men; (7) 8 Kayab.

THE EARLIEST STELA, RECORDING DATE 8.14.10, 8 MEN, 8 KAYAB, CORRESPONDING TO 10TH JUNE, A.D. 68. THE DOT BLACKED IN IN GLYPH 4 AND THE BAR IN GLYPH 3 HAVE BEEN WEATHERED AWAY, BUT FROM THE CONTEXT, AND FROM TRACES OF THEM STILL VISIBLE, THEIR ORIGINAL PRESENCE IS CERTAIN.

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to the Initial Series, 10.3.0.0.0, 1 Ahau, 3 Yaxkin, corresponding to 6th July, A.D. 639, of our era. This is the latest date recorded at Uaxactun, and indeed the latest recorded throughout the whole of the Peten district of Guatemala, proving that the Maya still occupied some of their Old Empire sites long after the general migration northward towards Yucatan and the foundation of the New Empire. The second records the date 2 Ahau, 18 Zip, probably referable to the Initial Series, 10.0.0.0.0, 2 Ahau, 18 Zip, corresponding to 17th May, A.D. 576, of our era.

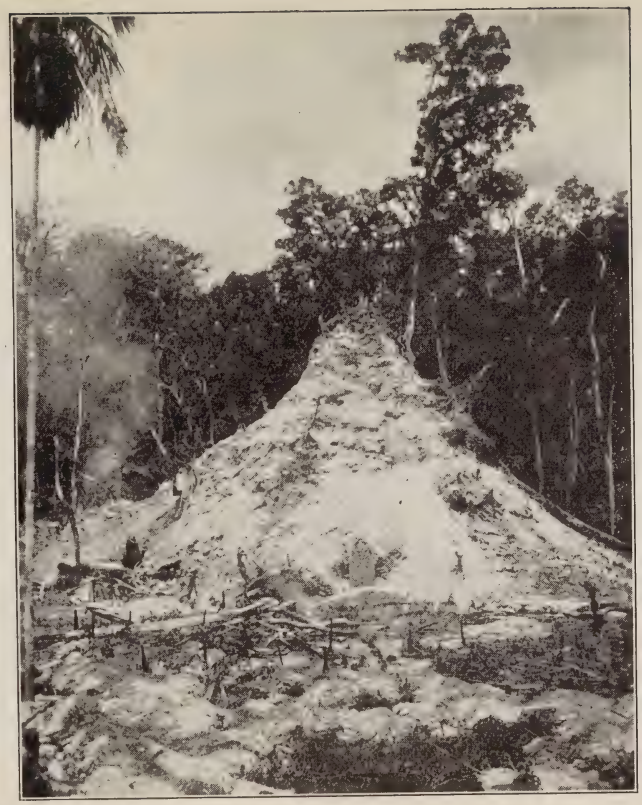
This must have been a date of extraordinary significance to the Maya, practically worshipping time as they did. The commencement of a new Bactun, or period of four hundred years, an event which no living person had experienced before, or could ever experience again, was probably made the occasion of very solemn and elaborate ceremonials. One would have expected to find this date recorded more than once, or at least expressed as an Initial Series date, but up to the present no further record of it has been found, and, like most other matters connected with the Maya, one can only say that it is only the unexpected which may be looked for.

A third stela, at the western group, is of considerable interest, as showing the destruction which growing trees can effect amongst the buildings and stelæ. In this case the trunk of a good-sized tree has completely surrounded the sides and front of the stela, leaving the back only exposed, the stone being held upright in its natural position; whether there is any inscription upon the hidden surfaces of the stela we did not ascertain. The roots of great trees penetrating between the masonry have been the most destructive agents in bringing these ancient cities to their present deplorable condition. The seeds are blown upon the roof combs and upper stories, and, taking root there,

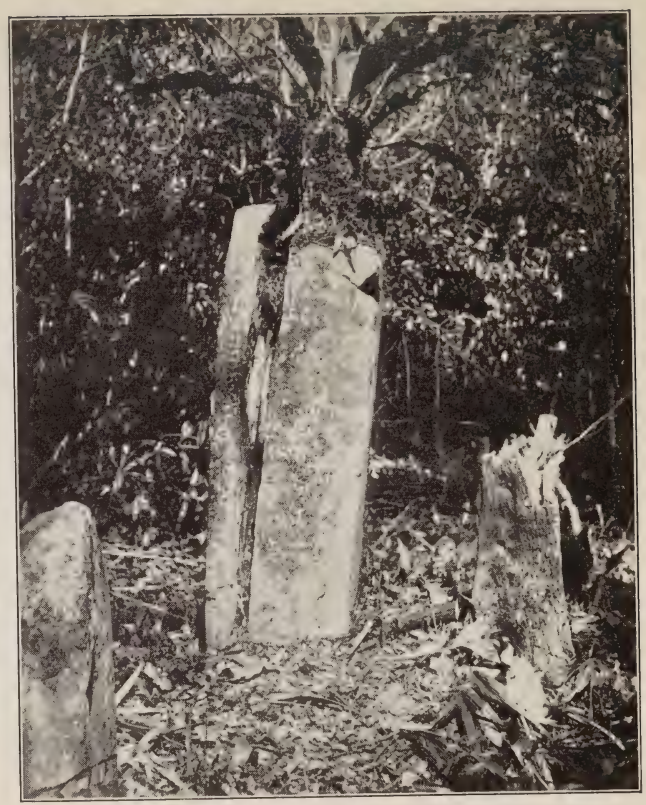
rapidly spread, loosening and separating the stones, and ultimately bringing down the whole of the top structure, which frequently carries with it the lower part of the building as well. The perpendicular walls, lined with cut stone, forming the terraces are loosened and fall, and even the great treaders of the stairways are displaced, till the whole building presents the appearance of a great conical mound of cut stone and rubble. One generation of trees follows another, each continuing the work of destruction. Not only in life, however, but after death, are the trees of the forest destructive agents, for great trees die—struck by lightning or undermined by fire—and, falling on standing stelæ, smash them, often into dozens of fragments, which are separated by the growth of vegetation, buried in vegetal mould, and often very difficult to reassemble.

Following the graded causeway down from the main plaza, one noticed some extensive excavations by its side hewn out of the rock, which appear to have been quarries, from which was extracted part of the stone used in building the city, as blocks of stone still lie *in situ*, left apparently by the builders when, for some unknown reason, they left their work for the last time, never to return.

With regard to this sudden desertion of all the cities of the Old Empire by their inhabitants, within a comparatively brief period, numberless explanations have been advanced, some plausible, some fantastic, but none convincing. Mr. Vans Agnew, who has had a large and varied experience of the Peten bush, suggested to me a theory to account for this incomprehensible exodus, which, judging by my own experience of the country, is at least plausible. He believes that, as the population of these Peten cities increased, the land became gradually deforested in order to provide corn plantations for the support of the people. This deforestation was naturally accompanied by a corresponding erosion



UAXACTUN : PYRAMID WEST OF OBSERVATORY, AND STELA FROM WHICH OBSERVATIONS WERE TAKEN.



STELA SPLIT BY TREE ROOTS.

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of the soil, which was washed down, filling the low-lying places, or *bajos*, in which were found the water-holes, providing the principal water-supply of the people during the long dry season. This process went on slowly, century by century, till at length approximately the present condition was reached. The water-holes in the rainy season now become great lagoons, but in the dry season they dry up completely, and not sufficient water is available for a few chicleros and mules, much less for a population of, possibly, several hundreds of thousands of souls.

A second theory, put forward by a geologist recently visiting the Peten district of Guatemala, is to the effect that the whole of this region is undergoing a gradual process of elevation above the surrounding country, which, by draining the water from its surface, curtailed the supply of the ancient inhabitants at a time when their numbers were rapidly increasing, and so rendered the country unsuitable for a dense population during the prolonged dry seasons.

Beyond these quarries we encountered a very remarkable stela, still standing, and in fairly good condition, though naturally a good deal weather-worn. The back is plain, and upon the front is executed, in low relief, the nearly life-sized figure of a warrior. Unfortunately this stela, surrounded as it is by great trees, and facing north, is exceedingly difficult to photograph. The warrior's great headdress is ornamented by an entire bird, probably a parrot. His ears are decorated with the usual large, circular earplugs so beloved of the Maya of all classes and times. In his left hand he holds a club-like object, and in his right a curious weapon which suggests the *hulchè*, a wooden spear-thrower, so frequently used by the Maya of the New Empire, amongst whom it was probably introduced by the Toltec conquerors of Chichen-Itza more than a thousand years after the date recorded on this stela. If found in the hand

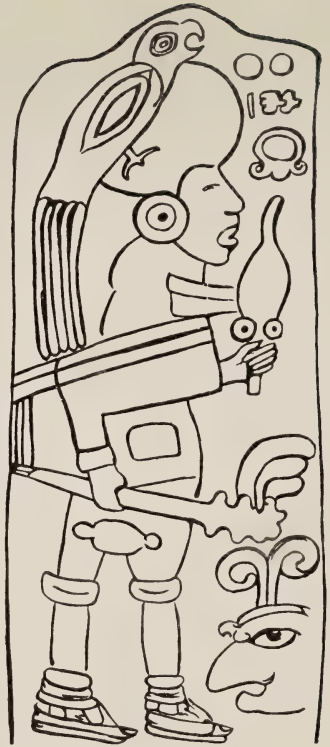
of a Toltec warrior, sculptured on one of the columns at Chichen-Itza, one would not have the slightest hesitation in identifying this object as a *hulchè*, but one hesitates to do so here, for in no single instance has this weapon ever been identified on any of the sculptured stelæ of the Old Empire—just as one would refuse to identify an object held in the hand of a warrior of the time of the Norman conquest, depicted on a contemporaneous tapestry, as a revolver, no matter how close the resemblance. The only other alternative is to class it as one of those extraordinary eccentric-shaped flints, usually called ceremonial objects, of whose use we are entirely ignorant. Their shape is protean, and they vary in length from a fraction of an inch to a couple of feet ; they are found in almost all situations—though usually associated with burials—throughout the entire Maya area, and are amongst the few objects which seem to have been in use from the earliest days of the Old Empire right up to the Spanish conquest.

What lends further probability to the theory that this object represents a ceremonial flint is the fact that I discovered, in a large burial-cyst within a mound on the Rio Hondo, British Honduras, an object almost exactly similar, both in size and shape, exquisitely chipped from flint, and now in the Liverpool Museum.

Immediately in front of the head-dress of this warrior are seen three hieroglyphs so weathered as to be very difficult to decipher. The lowest is undoubtedly the Maya sign Ahau, which represents the last day of the Maya month, and also connotes lord or ruler. The upper two glyphs—to the left of the middle glyph is seen the numerical coefficient five, represented by one bar—may record a calendar round date, and the ingenious suggestion has been put forward by Mr. Blom that the whole represents the name and title of the individual depicted on the stela, the calendar



Stela from W. Group. In front of armed warrior three Hieroglyphics, probably recording name and rank. On side is recorded date, read by Mr. Blom 8.16.1.0.12, 11 Eb, 15 Kankin. 11th April, A.D. 98.



Warrior armed with club and spear thrower. First century A.D.

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round date recording his birthday, after which the Maya were sometimes named, and the Ahau his status as lord, or, as he is obviously armed and therefore presumably not a priest, war lord.

In front of the feet of the warrior is the grotesque head of an ancient man, with feather-decorated head-dress. I think it may be accepted that the individuals sculptured upon the monuments, not alone at Uaxactun and other Peten ruins, but at every Old Empire city throughout the Maya area, were portraits of contemporary persons—priests, warriors, rulers—and not of gods or mythological beings, for not only are many of them obviously portraits, but there is a lack of uniformity in the elaborate clothing, ornaments, and head-dresses worn by all of them which would not be present were they gods, whose personal appearance, vesture, and ornaments centuries of religious teaching must have cast in a mould of rigid conventionalism. Moreover, if the figures on the stelæ represented gods, we would not find them being ruthlessly broken up and re-used as altars, lintels, or building-stone by iconoclasts of succeeding generations, as we have already seen not infrequently occurred.

The streets and open spaces of London and other modern cities have been swept of the statues of more than one nonentity, held in great veneration in his own day and generation, why not the plazas and courts of the great Maya cities?

We have no key to the hieroglyphic inscriptions which invariably accompany these figures, except those having a purely calendaric significance—in other words, we can decipher the date of the erection of the monument to a day, but of the events recorded upon it we are absolutely ignorant. Some of these glyphs almost certainly record the names of the individual represented, others the names of cities, and

still others probably indicate such inevitable occurrences in all human history as wars, floods, epidemics, droughts, and dynastic changes ; yet to not one of these has the key as yet been discovered. The way of the Rosetta-stone—the discovery of a bilingual inscription, or document ; in this case, Maya and Spanish—would be the easy, the romantic, and the spectacular method of elucidating the meaning of the Maya glyphs ; but I am beginning to despair of the possibility of this in a climate so hot and damp that even a codex inscribed upon the tough paper made by the natives from the fibres of the *agave Americana*, covered with a coat of lime-wash, cannot, unless hermetically sealed, withstand it for long. No, the Maya glyphs will have to be elucidated by long and patient work, by collecting and comparing all the many thousands already known, scattered throughout the various cities of the Old and New Empires, extending over a period of nearly two thousand years, by analysing their component parts, and noting the variations in their form, from century to century, and their association with other glyphs—in fact, the formation of a Maya Hieroglyphic Dictionary, with elaborate cross-references, a gigantic and costly undertaking, requiring the expert labour of many workers over a number of years, which can only be taken in hand by some individual, or institution, with ample funds available for the project.

CHAPTER XIII

The eastern city at Uaxactun—Boundaries of main plaza—Steep pyramid on its western side—Stela at base of pyramid recording date 3rd April, A.D. 235—Vast importance of structure occupying the eastern side of the plaza—Description of pyramids on its summit and stelæ at its base—These stelæ and temples constituted, with the plaza, an astronomical observatory from which to record the positions of sunrise at the spring and autumn equinoxes, and summer and winter solstices—Gigantic stucco masks—Votive offerings beneath the altars—A beautiful Maya vase, with true glaze and exquisite decorative painting—A child's skeleton within an altar—An archaic figurine, dating back three thousand years before the Maya, found within another altar—An extraordinary coincidence—Find of beautiful jade jewellery—Human heads as votive offerings beside each altar, possibly preserved or mummified—These skulls indicate the practice of human sacrifice, and possibly ceremonial cannibalism, amongst the Maya from the earliest times—No stelæ erected at Uaxactun between A.D. 248 and A.D. 452—Had all the inhabitants migrated during that period to the great new city of Tikal, only twelve miles away, and did they return to their former home when the decline of Tikal set in?—Curious structure decorated with panels covered with life-sized, naked human figures on stucco, three miles north of Uaxactun—An overground burial-vault?

FROM the western we pass to the eastern group of ruins, situated to the east of the *aguada*, on rising ground well above the surrounding valley. They are much smaller, but in many respects far more interesting, than the western group, for the main plaza, the most important structure of the complex, seems to have been used by the ancient priest-astronomers for observing the movements of the heavenly bodies, and very remarkable discoveries were made during our stay of votive offerings within and by the side of certain temples surrounding this plaza.

The plaza itself is a quadrangular court 94 metres in length by 41 in breadth; the floor is flat and covered with

cement, now buried beneath 18 ins. of detritus washed down from the various terraces and mounds which surround it, and the vegetal mould accumulated during a period of nearly two thousand years.

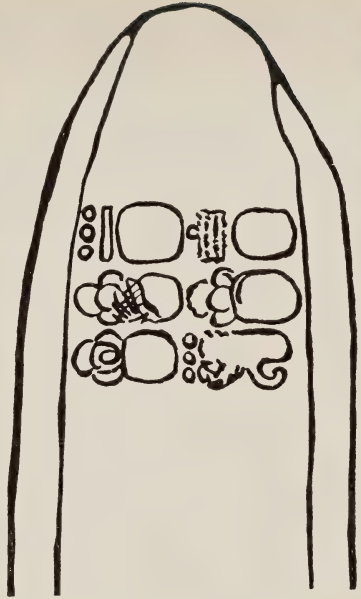
To the north it is bounded by a high, flat-topped, terraced mound, approached by a stairway leading up its southern side. No traces of buildings are to be found on the very extensive flat summit of this mound, and it would seem as if it had either been occupied by wooden structures—a very incongruous and inartistic arrangement—or served as a burial-mound, a point which only excavation can determine. To the east of this mound is a lofty substructure, upon the summit of which stands the ruins of what was once a magnificent temple, though but one room of it is still intact.

In two of the partly fallen chambers may be seen the inverted stairway roof, rare in the Maya area, but found by me at Coba last year.

To the south the plaza is bounded by a terrace, upon the summit of which stand three small conical mounds, occupying the angles of an isosceles triangle, and enclosing a small court. These mounds represent the ruins of three small temples, which it is hoped careful excavation may to some extent restore. The two most important structures in the plaza are situated on its eastern and western sides respectively. That to the west is a lofty, terraced, stone-faced pyramid some 50 ft. in height, with a flight of exceedingly steep steps ascending from the ground-level to a terrace about half-way up, but no trace of their extension from there to the summit, which comes to an almost acute point, and shows no sign of ever having had a building erected upon it—though, owing to the softness of the stone, and the tremendous erosion caused by the rainfall in such a steep structure, this may have completely disappeared during the centuries.



Stela, showing Altar behind.



Stela recording 8.16.0.0.0,
3 Ahau, 8 Kankin. 5th April, A.D. 97.
Glyph 1 = 8 Bactuns, 2 = 16 Katuns,
3 = 0 Tuns, 4 = 0 Uinals, 5 = 0 Kins,
6 = 3 Ahau.



Uaxactun: Stela with Author beside it, indicating size.

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Around its base is a series of gigantic, grotesque, human faces, moulded in stucco upon the masonry. These are 8 ft. in length and breadth, and closely resemble the Toltec god Tlaloc—the god of rain—with curious, projecting, curved tusks on each side of his mouth. It seems impossible, however, that this god should have been worshipped at Uaxactun, for he was not introduced amongst the Maya till nearly a thousand years after this pyramid was built, and Mr. Ricketson suggests that the masks may represent Zotz, the bat god, whose image is handed down to us as the hieroglyphic for the fourth month in the Maya year.

Extending out from the south side of this pyramid is a platform of considerable extent. At the base of the east face of the pyramid, and immediately facing the stairway, is a large stela, upon the eastern side of which is sculptured, in low relief, a human figure, and upon the western the date 9.3.0.0.0, 2 Ahau, 18 Muan, corresponding to 3rd April, A.D. 235, of our era. This figure is typically early Old Empire in style and technique, and resembles very closely similar figures sculptured upon very early monoliths, and upon jade, in the ancient Maya city of Copan, in Honduras, dating from the same period.

We may therefore be certain that the date recorded upon it is contemporaneous. The structure occupying the western side of the plaza is undoubtedly the most important of the four, if not the most important building in the entire city. It consists of a great rectangular substructure, upon the extensive flat summit of which stand three temples, all in a more or less ruined condition.

The central of these temples is much the largest of the three, and is approached by a stone stairway leading from the ground to the terrace upon which the temples stand. The plan of all three temples is very similar. Each is approached by a flight of stone steps leading from the top

of the terrace upon which the temples stand, up the side of a small secondary pyramid, to the entrance to the front room of the temple. This gives on an inner room, at the back of which stands an altar, contained within a cupboard-like stone recess somewhat resembling a sentry-box. The altars are merely flat, raised surfaces, covered with stucco, with which the interior of the recesses containing them is also lined. On each side of the small rooms containing the altars are doors leading to still smaller chambers. At the base of the great central stairway leading to the summit of the pyramid upon which the temples stand are found three stelæ, upon the middle one of which is found recorded the date 8.16.0.0.0, 3 Ahau, 8 Kankin—5th April, A.D. 97, of our era. This stela occupies a position exactly in the centre of the base of the stairway, and is on a line, due east and west, with the stela—already described—bearing the date 9.3.0.0.0, on the eastern side of the plaza. The Maya did not know the magnetic north, consequently the line through these two stelæ runs due east and west.

When the two smaller temples on the east side of the plaza were excavated, a further fact was brought to light. It was found that lines of sight between their centres and this same stela, recording the date 9.3.0.0.0, were respectively twenty-four degrees north and south of due east. In other words, this whole complex of pyramids and stelæ was nothing more nor less than an astronomical observatory, recording the positions at which the sun rose at the spring and autumn equinoxes, and at the summer and winter solstices. There can be little doubt but that the lines of sight between the 9.3.0.0.0 stela and the two stelæ on each side of the central one, on the opposite side of the plaza, are of some astronomical significance, but exactly what they indicate has not as yet been ascertained. The astronomical knowledge which enabled the ancient Maya



Uaxactun : Two Stelæ. Line due East and West passes through their centres



Stela and Altar in Plaza of Observatory.

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to construct this observatory must have been in existence long before the earliest contemporary date—A.D. 97—recorded upon it, and it is not impossible that a further and more intensive study of the whole group, now being carried out by Mr. Ricketson, may lead to important discoveries as to the astronomical and mathematical knowledge of the Maya, and even the definite fixation of the unit of measurement in use amongst them.

In front of each of the three stelæ on the eastern side of the plaza stands a large circular stone altar, all of which are somewhat crudely sculptured on the upper surface, and stand upon three irregularly spherical stone legs. The vegetal mould, and detritus washed down by the rains from the buildings surrounding it, have covered the plaza to a depth of about 2 ft., completely burying the lower parts of the altars and the legs upon which they stand.

During my stay in Uaxactun excavation was carried out in the three altars, in the floors of the rooms in which they stood, and the smaller rooms on each side of them. Extremely interesting results were obtained from these excavations, which will be described in some detail.

Beneath their covering of smooth white stucco, all the altars were found to be composed of stones, rubble, and friable mortar, in which were embedded a number of votive offerings.

The altar of the small temple to the north contained great numbers of potsherds, amongst which were found good-sized fragments of two of the most beautiful Maya vases it has ever been my good fortune to see.

One of these was painted a rich lustrous brown, on a yellow background, ornamented with geometrical devices, and appeared to have been covered with a true glaze, not the fine polish found on many Maya vases, nor the lustre developed during firing in clay objects containing lead

salts, but a true glaze, an art of which it has always been supposed that the Maya were ignorant. The second piece, rather larger than the palm of one's hand, was a fragment of a cylindrical vessel, of fine, thin, porcelain-like pottery, some 6 to 8 ins. high, and upon it was painted in white, red, yellow, black, pink, slate, and dark brown a procession of curiously clothed and decorated individuals. The colours are as bright and clear now as upon the day, some nineteen centuries ago, when they were first painted. Only one of these figures is complete, with parts of those immediately preceding and following him in the procession. He is probably either a priest or a noble. He wears a head-dress something like a tall hat, coloured white, with a curious arrangement of yellow ovals, like two rows of eggs, where the brim should be. From the front and back of the hat project plumes of feathers. The face is painted yellow, and the cheeks, below the mouth, ornamented with curved lines of yellow and brown, probably representing tattoo-marks. On the nose is worn a large black cap, or false nose. From the ear depends, half way to the waist, a white, club-shaped ornament, and the circular ear-plugs, almost invariably found in Maya figures, are also worn. The individual wears a short cloak of dark brown, not reaching to the waist, from the back of which projects a curious triangular, fin-like arrangement, probably representing some sort of collar. He wears white cuffs, and holds in the left hand an object very closely resembling a napkin, as held by a waiter, as a badge of office. The *maxtli*, or loin-cloth, is striped alternately pink and white, with a triangular tongue hanging down in front, coloured a bright red. Just in front of the chest are lined in, on the dark slate-coloured background of the pot, three hieroglyphics, the topmost one accompanied by the numerical coefficient 8 ; the whole, like those already described by the side of the warrior sculptured on the stela,





The Stela with Author beside it to indicate its height.

Stela recording 3rd April, 235; from which lines through three Temples indicated sunrise at Spring and Autumn Equinox and Summer and Winter Solstice.

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indicate, possibly, the name and title of the individual portrayed.

In beauty of colouring and design, and in fineness of texture of the material employed, this sample of Maya ceramic art, in my opinion, compares favourably with the best example of Greek or Egyptian art in the same material. Yet this specimen does not belong to the Great Period of the Old Empire, when we know that beautifully decorated pottery was being turned out by the Maya, though only in very restricted quantity. It belongs, if the inscription upon the stela facing the temple where it was found is to be relied upon, to an epoch at least two centuries prior to the commencement of the Great Period, an era when the Maya were supposed to have but just emerged from semi-barbarism.

Yet here we find the fragment of a vase which, when entire, must have transcended the best art of the Old Empire, and equalled any similar production throughout the world at that day, indicating that the Maya had reached a very high state of civilisation centuries before they were believed to have done so, and that even during what we know as the Great Period, or Golden Age, this civilisation may have been already on the decline.

Within the altar of the central and larger pyramid were found (1) a small eating-pot of reddish domestic pottery, and (2) the skeleton of a very young child. Around this skeleton were scattered broadcast a large handful of pieces of jade, some crude and unpolished, others partly worked, and others apparently fragments of broken ornaments. Within the altar of the third and southernmost temple was found perhaps the most remarkable object of all. This consisted of a small human figurine, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in height, cut from green mudstone, and crudely daubed in front with red paint. Now this figurine was typically archaic—

that is, it belonged to a civilisation which flourished more than two thousand years before the Maya began to develop their culture—as is evidenced by the crouching position, the crudely outlined arms and legs, and the large, well-defined square eyes, and, most remarkable of all, it is almost an exact duplicate of a similar figurine found near the ruins of Benque Viejo, in British Honduras, buried in river-gravel, probably once the bed of the Mopan River.

So similar are these two figurines that one is almost forced to the conclusion that they are the work of the same artist. Here, then, are two almost identical images, the one found in what might be considered its proper environment, an old river-bed, the other in a first century Maya temple! The only way in which this extraordinary coincidence can be accounted for is, I think, that the Uaxactun figurine was picked up by some early Maya, on the ground where it had been left perhaps three thousand years before by its archaic owner, and naturally regarded by the finder as a gift from heaven, to be worshipped as a god, and enthroned in the most sacred spot of the whole city.

The statuette was contained within a small cylindrical vase, covered with a round lid, which just held it comfortably. I could not help thinking, as I looked at this little god, of the extraordinary sights which his great square eyes must have witnessed, and how, were he only gifted with the power of speech, he might elucidate for us the whole intricate history of the development of aboriginal American civilisation, from his own period to its culminating point in the Maya Empires.

The cement floors of the small rooms to the south of each of the three altars had evidently been opened up after their first construction, for circular patches were found in each of them where the cement had been relaid. On excavating these more recently laid areas of cement, it was



Uaxactun : Partially fallen Temples, which formed astronomical observation points.



Uaxactun : Altar from Observatory, with Spherical Legs.

[*p.* 196

found that each covered a cylindrical cavity, at the bottom of which appeared two large basins, each shaped somewhat like a truncated cone, one superimposed upon the other, each pair containing between them a human skull. No other bones were present, except that in one case the atlas, axis, and first cervical vertebra had been removed in severing the head, and in a second case the first two vertebræ only. The skulls were those of young adults, probably males, in which the sutures had not yet ossified and dentition was not complete. They were, like all Maya skulls, brachycephalic, that is, wide in comparison to their length, but not markedly so, and certainly no artificial deformation had been employed upon them—binding down to boards, or compression by bands, such as was used by the Maya of the New Empire to produce an exaggerated broadening of the head, which they considered a mark of beauty.

One of the skulls was absolutely complete, no separation having taken place, even at the sutures, and of this I took the following measurements: length 15.2 centimetres, breadth 14 centimetres, height 11.2 centimetres. These measurements must be accepted, however, with reservation, as I had no craniometric instruments with me, and had to improvise wooden ones, while the skull was so extraordinarily friable that it had to be handled with the utmost delicacy.

The cephalic index was, approximately, 92, which may be taken perhaps as a fair average for the undeformed Maya skull, from this, the earliest ever discovered, to the Maya Indians of the present day. The skulls were all treated with amberoid, in the hope of preserving them, but it was heartbreaking to watch the process of disintegration going on, almost visibly, under one's eyes, once they had been exposed to the air after their nineteen centuries of occultation. The ethmoid and other delicate bones just dried up,

and wilted like fading flowers, while the larger bones cracked on the surface and flaked off, notwithstanding all precautions taken to preserve them.

With the skull in the northernmost temple was found a small necklace of very fine jade beads, the head of some indeterminate animal in the same material, and two of the smallest ear-plugs of serpentine I have ever seen, measuring hardly ⅛in. in diameter. In the orbits and the nasal cavities were found the dried remains of tissue. Now, so far as I know, pre-Columbian Maya bones with traces of tissue still adherent to them have never before been found.

We have skulls of the Old and New Empire, and skulls, of Maya of the last degenerate period, before the conquest, but all are bare of soft tissue, and usually in an extremely bad state of preservation. Yet here were three skulls, many centuries older than the oldest we know of, all in an excellent state of preservation, with part of the soft tissues still adherent to them. Even allowing for the favourable position in which they had been placed—between two vases, in an almost hermetically sealed cyst—I think there can be no doubt but that some artificial process in the nature of embalming had been employed upon them, with a view to preserving them from decay.

Landa, the bishop of Yucatan, who had more intimate knowledge of the manners and customs of the Maya immediately after the conquest than any other individual, described an elaborate process by which they preserved the heads of their priests and chief men, at that day, but the most important part of this was a modelling in hard gum over the bones of the face of the original soft tissues, in order to effect as close a likeness as possible to the individual during life.

These statuettes, modelled on the bony framework of

the subject's own head, were preserved by the relatives as memorials of the great dead. It is conceivable that some similar process had been carried out on these Uaxactun heads, and that they represent members of the aristocracy, or priesthood, who had died in early youth; but against this theory are the following facts: (1) No opening had been made in the skull to extract the brains, and no trace of gum was to be found, as would have been the case had the heads been treated as Landa describes; (2) The heads were all of individuals who had just about reached the age of puberty: (3) The mummification described by Landa was carried on some fourteen centuries after these Uaxactun heads had been buried.

I fear we cannot get away from the fact that these skulls indicate a very strong probability of the existence of human sacrifice amongst the Maya from the very earliest times. It has always been supposed that this infamous practice, with that of ceremonial cannibalism, was introduced by the Toltecs at the time of the conquest of Chichen-Itza, towards the end of the twelfth century A.D., and that both were unknown to the Maya of either the Old or New Empires, who, up to that period, sacrificed fruit, flowers, and incense alone, to their gods.

But these heads, all of healthy young male adults, who had just about arrived at the age of puberty, must, I think, be accepted as strong presumptive proof of the existence of human sacrifice at Uaxactun in the first century A.D., and not only of human sacrifice, but of ceremonial cannibalism, for how otherwise would the bodies of the victims have been disposed of? It would indeed appear that the Maya, even from the earliest Old Empire days, cannot be absolved from those infamous practices which characterised the bloody religion of the Aztec at a later date.

The following is a list of the dates which occur at Uaxactun, as worked out by Drs. Sylvanus and Morley and Mr. Blom :

8.14.10.13.15	=	8	Men	8	Kayab	corresponding to	10th June,	A.D. 68
8.16.0.0.0	=	3	Ahau	8	Kankin	,,	,, 5th April,	A.D. 97
8.16.1.0.12	=	11	Eb	15	Kankin	,,	,, 11th April,	A.D. 98
8.18.0.0.0	=	12	Ahau	8	Zotz	,,	,, 8th Sept.,	A.D. 136
8.19.0.0.0	=	10	Ahau	13	Kayab	,,	,, 26th May,	A.D. 156
9.3.0.0.0	=	2	Ahau	18	Muan	,,	,, 3rd April,	A.D. 235
9.3.13.0.0	=	2	Ahau	13	Ceh	,,	,, 22nd Jan.,	A.D. 248
9.14.0.0.0	=	6	Ahau	13	Muan	,,	,, 3rd Feb.,	A.D. 452
9.16.0.0.0	=	2	Ahau	13	Tzec	,,	,, 9th July,	A.D. 491
9.19.0.0.0	=	9	Ahau	18	Mol	,,	,, 29th Aug.,	A.D. 550
10.0.0.0.0	=	7	Ahau	18	Zip	,,	,, 17th May,	A.D. 570
10.3.0.0.0	=	1	Ahau	3	Yaxkin	,,	,, 6th July,	A.D. 639

It will be noticed that between A.D. 248 and A.D. 452, a period of 204 years, no monument appears to have been erected—a most significant coincidence when taken by itself, but doubly so when taken in conjunction with the fact that during this very period the vastly larger city of Tikal, with its much finer temples, palaces, and monoliths, situated only twelve miles from Uaxactun, in a straight line, was at the height of its power. The dates at Tikal extend from the early part of the first to the early part of the last quarter of cycle nine ; in other words, Uaxactun was in existence some century and a half before Tikal was founded, and was inhabited for nearly a century and a half after Tikal had been deserted, but was uninhabited for two centuries during the great period at Tikal. Are we, then, to conclude that during these two centuries all the people of Uaxactun had migrated to, and taken up their residence in, Tikal, and that, at their expiration, the inhabitants of Tikal left that city and returned to Uaxactun, the ancient home of their ancestors ? As well imagine the inhabitants of Manchester leaving that city to take up their residence in Liverpool for a couple of centuries, and at the end of that period returning from their little trek to their former home. Yet

how otherwise is this extraordinary coincidence to be accounted for?

I left Uaxactun—this city of beautiful pottery, human sacrifice, and mysterious migrations—with great reluctance, for I believe that here, in their oldest city, may be found the secret of the origin of the Maya and their many inexplicable migrations, but my objective point was Tikal, and thither I set out, having dispatched Muddy a few days before, with several men and a *mulada*, to spy out the land.

In the next chapter will be given a full account of the reason for my visit to Tikal.

A short time before my arrival at Uaxactun some recently reported ruins, discovered by chicleros, three days' journey on mule-back to the north of that city, had been visited by Mr. Amsden, one of the Carnegie Institution's staff. I had intended visiting this site, but, on hearing his description of it, made up my mind it was not worth the long ride and expenditure of at least seven extra days. It consisted of a curious structure resembling a Maya roof comb perched on top of a vast mound, unconnected with any building. It was 58 ft. in length, 16 ft. in height, and 5 ft. thick, built of stone, divided into oblong panels covered with a layer of stucco, upon which were moulded in low relief a number of life-sized naked figures, one of which undoubtedly represented a pregnant woman, nearing full term.

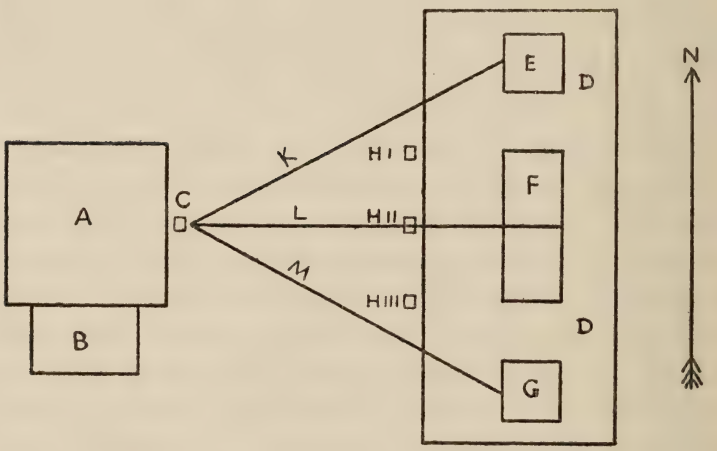
This is a most remarkable structure, and, so far as my experience goes, quite unique in the Maya area. It is possible that it may have been a sort of overground vault for the reception of the dead, and that the naked figures represented persons buried therein. The human figure was never depicted naked by the Maya, either in their paintings, reliefs, or sculptures in the round, and this is, I believe, the single exception to the rule.

It would be very interesting to open up this structure

and excavate the mound beneath it. Unfortunately, it is in an extremely inaccessible situation, on the borders of Peten and the Mexican State of Campeche, and takes at least six days' hard riding to get there, and the same to return.

UAXACTUN :

Sketch plan of Structures on Eastern and Western side of Observatory.



A. Steep Stone Pyramid
B. Terrace
C. Stela, from which observations were made, bearing date 9. 3. 0. 0. 0.
D. Great stone platform upon which three Temples stand
E. Small Northern Temple
F. Large Central Temple
G. Small Southern Temple
H^{I}, H^{II}, H^{III}. Stelæ in front of platform D
K. Line passing between C and E Marking Sunrise at Summer Solstice
L. Line between C and F Marking Sunrise at Spring and Autumn Equinoxes
M. Line between C and G Marking Sunrise at Winter Solstice

CHAPTER XIV

Arrival of John Carmichael in British Honduras—He buys an estate—Loses his money in mahogany, and has to sell the estate, which subsequently becomes very valuable—John Carmichael has a son greatly interested in Maya archæology, who lived largely amongst the Indians—His own tale—Appointed by the Government Commandant of the Frontier Force of British Honduras, in 1867, to guard against Indian raids—He captures two armed Indians—Finding that they are peaceful traders, he releases them—They return to thank him, bringing a present of ancient gold objects, said to have been found in a Maya temple—He visits the Indians at their village—They take him to the treasure temple—He goes to India, acquires and loses a fortune, and returns to British Honduras to try for the treasure—He makes an abortive attempt, with some Americans, to re-locate it—Death of John Carmichael, in his last effort to reach the temple—Value of his notes—His persistence and doggedness—I take up John Carmichael's quest—Difficulties in the way of re-locating the ruins.

SOMEWHERE in the late 'thirties of the last century there arrived in Jamaica from England a ten-ton brig, aboard of which as passengers were one John Carmichael and his newly married wife, who had made the trip with the idea of spending a few weeks of their honeymoon on the island. So intrigued did they soon become, however, with the delightful climate and free and easy life of the West Indies that their return was postponed, from month to month, and year to year, till at last, having given up all idea of ever returning home, they made their way in the early 'forties to the Colony of British Honduras, on the mainland. Here John Carmichael, having established himself as a mahogany and logwood cutter and exporter, managed in a very few years to accumulate a considerable fortune, most of which he invested in the purchase, from the Government, of the great estate of Corozal, in the northern part of the colony,

at that time an unexplored and uninhabited stretch of dense forest, valuable only because of the great number of mahogany and logwood trees which grew upon it.

One hundred years ago, as to-day, there was probably no more uncertain and precarious business on earth than that of a cutter and exporter of mahogany from nature's inexhaustible storehouse, the virgin bush. The painfully accumulated hoard of years of hard labour might be lost in a season by a sudden and unexpected drop in the price of mahogany, an exceptionally heavy rainfall blocking the roads, and rendering it impossible to truck out the season's cut of wood, or by sickness or desertion among the gangs of negro slaves and woodcutters. This John Carmichael soon found to his cost, for after an exceptionally bad year he was compelled to mortgage his newly acquired estate of Corozal, which ultimately passed into other hands.

By the irony of fate, soon after he had been compelled to part with it this estate became one of the most valuable in the colony for, following the War of the Castes in Yucatan, in 1847, most of the refugees, both Mexican and Indian, drifting over the frontier into British Honduras, settled on this land, which happened to be nearest, and there rapidly grew up upon it the *pueblo* of Corozal, now the second largest and one of the most prosperous towns in the colony.

To John Carmichael and his wife was born a son, John Carmichael, junior, who was sent to England to be educated. He was attached to the 4th West India Regiment, and by a curious quirk of fate came to be stationed with a detachment of this regiment who were acting as a guard against incursions of the hostile Santa Cruz and Icaiche Indians, in the very town of Corozal once owned by his father.

This John Carmichael the second became, during the late 'sixties, rather well known as a student of local

archæology and ethnology. He learnt to speak the Maya and Kekchi languages fluently, spent a great deal of time amongst the Indians, living their life, getting to regard things from their point of view, and gaining their confidence and liking. He visited with them previously unexplored parts of Mexico, Guatemala, and British Honduras, and in his travels through this vast tract of unknown Middle American bush, accompanied only by native guides, appears to have encountered many extraordinary adventures, and to have heard many curious tales from the Indians as to the existence of great ruined cities, buried in the forest, hidden treasure, and gold-mines worked by the aborigines, and deserted when, at the coming of the Spaniards, they were compelled to seek safety in the remoter fastnesses of the wild.

Now, curiously enough, two of these tales at least were subsequently proved to be true, for a gold-mine, of the existence of which he states he was told by the Indians, in the mountains of the Quiche country of Guatemala was afterwards discovered, and is now being worked very successfully; while ruins on the Columbia river, in the south-west of British Honduras, described to him by a Roman Catholic priest who had visited them, were many years afterwards revisited and exhaustively explored by Lady Brown, Mr. Mitchell-Hedges, and myself, and christened by us Lubaantun, or fallen stones. These are the same ruins excavation and exploration of which the British Museum has now undertaken. I give an extract from John Carmichael's notes dealing with this city of Lubaantun:

"Some years ago an Italian priest had occasion to visit a mahogany camp on the Sarstoon River, the southernmost boundary of British Honduras. The camp was, in fact, situated on the Columbia River, which flows into the upper waters of the Sarstoon." [This is an error, for, as we now

know, the Columbia flows into the Rio Grande.] "He determined to visit them, but had to go alone, the negroes being too superstitious to accompany him. . . . He" [Sir Alfred Maloney, then Governor of British Honduras] "caused the priest to draw up a map exactly locating this city. A copy of this map is now in my possession, and I could find my way there to-morrow without hesitation."

John Carmichael left British Honduras for India about the end of the 'sixties. Here he resided for over twenty years, accumulating a considerable fortune, the greater part of which he, like his father before him, lost through no fault of his own. Realising what remained of his estate, and drawn apparently by the lure of hidden treasure, which more than twenty years of absence had not banished from his memory, he returned to British Honduras about 1894, and, with very inadequate resources, set about the re-location of a treasure, the secret of which had been confided to him by two Indians whose lives he had saved during his first residence in the Colony many years before.

This is, perhaps, the most extraordinary of all the many remarkable adventures related in the papers handed over by the Indians who accompanied John Carmichael on his last journey, to the British Consul in Guatemala, and I cannot do better than set down in his own words the account of it, which was probably written for the information of some person whom he wished to interest financially in his last disastrous expedition.

. . . . . .

"In the years 1867 and 1868 I was appointed by the British Government as Commandant of the Frontier Force of the Colony of British Honduras, a body of sixty-four men raised to patrol and protect the colony from the raids

and invasions of the hostile Indians of Yucatan, a province of Mexico, and was at the same time made Acting Magistrate of the Northern District and a Justice of the Peace of the Colony. These Icaiche Indians in their raids had killed many British subjects, carried others—men, women, and children—as prisoners across the frontier, only to be given up on a heavy ransom being paid. They had plundered and burnt mahogany works, sugar plantations, etc., and had looted many head of cattle, mules, and horses. Severe measures had therefore to be adopted in suppressing these raids and dealing with the Indian raiders.

"Accordingly martial law was proclaimed all along the frontier, and my instructions were to shoot all Indians found within the British boundary line with arms in their possession, who could not give a satisfactory account of themselves. On one of my patrol marches, I had reached a point within a mile or so of the frontier of Peten, when my advance guard captured and brought in to me two Indians, both carrying arms. On being questioned, they said they were father and son, José and Bel Chen, from a village in Peten, were friendlily disposed to the English, knew nothing about the law prohibiting Indians from bearing arms in British territory, and were on their way to Belize to buy salt. Having reason to doubt their story, I remanded them till the morning, informing them they would both then be shot, in pursuance of martial law.

"A few hours afterwards they sent entreating to be allowed to have conversation with me, a request I at once granted, when the son, Bel Chen, very earnestly reiterated the truth of his former story, and begged that I would allow his father to return to Peten to procure a letter from the Alcalde of his village, and the Commandant of Peten, vouching for the fact that they were peaceable Indians of Peten, and were actually on their way to Belize, adding

that if his father did not return within four days he, the son, was perfectly willing to meet his death.

"The simple and earnest manner of these Indians impressed me so much that I gave them their liberty, at which they were naturally overjoyed, and vowed all manner of gratitude. I further allowed them to accompany the column on its return march, and had many interesting conversations with them on the subject of the Aztec ruins, which are numerous in that part of the country. They maintained that some of these temples contained gold, and that those that did might be easily known by their having their doors and windows blocked up with concrete of a much more recent date than the buildings themselves.

"I placed no credence in these statements at the time, having heard so many delusive ones of a similar nature. When we arrived at the junction of the path leading to Belize, I parted with my two Indian friends, and resumed my march to the frontier town of Corozal, my headquarters. About six months after the events above related, I was surprised to receive a visit in Corozal from Bel Chen, the son. He had come, he said, to express the gratitude of his father and himself for my having spared their lives, and had brought a small offering, of which he begged my acceptance, believing it would be interesting to me. He thereupon produced, from a handkerchief tied around his neck, a gold whistle of oblong form, and a gold shoulder plate, evidently forming part of a suit of armour. These he had found, he said, in a small *open* temple, near to some very large ruins called in Maya, Noh-Ca-Chan-Ha, or The Large City by the Small Waters,[1] and that in one of these temples was buried a large treasure, believed by some to be the wealth of the now ruined Aztec city of Tikal, by

[1] A better rendering would be, perhaps, "The Great Temple by the Small Water, or Lake!"

others to be part of the treasure sent by Montezuma, for safe keeping, to the Usumacinta district on the advent of the Spaniards.

" There was no room *now* any longer to doubt the existence of gold in these ruined Aztec cities. These were the first specimens of Aztec gold ornaments I had ever seen ; and I may here mention that on the occasion of my reading a paper entitled ' The Ruined Indian Cities of Central America ' before the British Associated in Liverpool, in 1870, I produced these two ornaments, and subsequently presented them to my friend Sir Roderic Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society.'[1]

" After a long conversation with Bel Chen, it was arranged that I should visit him and his father at their village, on the pretext of a hunting expedition so as to allay the suspicions of the Indian villagers, and he promised that his father would, when circumstances favoured, conduct me to the ruined Aztec city, and point out to me the very temple said to contain the treasure.

" It was not till a year afterwards that I found time to pay this visit, when, after a very arduous and roundabout journey, I eventually arrived at Tulunche, where I lived for four or five months with my Indian friends, shooting all around in the neighbourhood, and never alluding to Aztec ruins in the presence of the other Indian villagers.

" One evening José Chen and I started out on foot, giving out that we should be absent four or five days, hunting. We travelled due north for the first two days, through a tolerably level and open country, with large clumps of

[1] This paper may be consulted in the archives of the British Association. There is in the British Museum an ornament consisting of part of a human head and torso in gold, found at the ruins of Palenque, at no great distance from Carmichael's temple, which Joyce believes to be of Maya origin, while others consider that it is of Aztec manufacture. It at least indicates that, whether manufactured by the Maya themselves or brought in later by the Aztec conquerors, there is nothing improbable in the existence of a hidden cache of gold in one of these great ruined Maya cities of Peten, at no great distance from which gold nuggets were to be picked up in considerable numbers in the beds of adjacent streams.

timber, which we skirted to save time. On the third day we struck off due west, cutting our way through dense primæval forest, with only a couple of hours rest at night. On the afternoon of the fourth day we reached a detached group of ruins—Aztec temples elaborately carved. The one standing farthest to the east, and facing the east, had its porticos and all entrances blocked up with cement, which, as the old Indian had said, was of a comparatively recent construction compared to the great age of the buildings themselves. My guide pointed due west, and informed me that in that direction, not too far, perhaps a day's journey, lay the ruins of Tikal. I thereupon formed the conclusion that this treasure temple was the most easterly of the outlying temples connected with Tikal. I had taken bearings as frequently as possible on the march, and did so again here at the temple, cutting a good-sized cross with my machete in the cement, which I found comparatively soft. After an hour's observation (my guide would allow no more), we returned by the route we had come, and reached Tulunche safely, having been absent about a week.

" Shortly afterwards I left the village, having been recalled to England, whence I went to India, where I have resided for twenty-one years.

" Some two years ago I lost all my savings by the failure of a local bank there, and resolved, rather than begin life again there at my age, that I would return to Peten and search for the treasure temple I had in former years visited. I therefore realised my interest in the bank's dividends, and with the proceeds left India, travelling by way of China, Japan, and California to Mexico. Circumstances compelled me to remain in the City of Mexico for about two months. I spent two hours of each day in the Public Library searching old Spanish records, and MSS., and found one MS., dated 1640, written by a Spanish priest, whose

name I cannot just now remember, alluding to the sending away of a part of his treasure by Montezuma to the Usumacinta country. My funds becoming exhausted, I was obliged to enter into partnership with two Americans, who engaged to find the necessary funds for the search expedition. We accordingly travelled to Coban and Peten, where it became evident to me that they had not sufficient funds to prosecute the search.

" However, we pushed on, and reached the great ruins of Tikal, where on the second day funds and provisions gave out entirely. They returned somehow to the States, while I proceeded to Belize, to await developments. I ascertained that the village of Tulunche, having in later years proved to be a haunt of smugglers, had been destroyed by order of the Government of Guatemala, and the roads to it closed up. I further learnt that José Chen, the father, had died from rheumatic fever shortly after my departure from the village, and that the son, Bel Chen, had been conscripted for a soldier and killed in the war with Salvador.

" I am now most anxious to make another, and this time an effectual, search for the treasure, which I firmly believe to be stored in the temple alluded to, and I am quite confident of being able to find my way to it again."

. . . . . .

It will be noticed that the writer always alludes to the ruins in the Peten district as Aztec temples or buildings. As a matter of fact, they date, for the most part, from the Maya Old Empire, and were in existence nearly one thousand years before the Aztec ever even entered the valley of Mexico, though this part of the country fell afterwards under the dominion of the native Mexican Emperors; but at the period when John Carmichael wrote it was customary to describe all ruins encountered in the bush of Central America as of " Aztec " origin.

In 1903 John Carmichael appears to have been successful in raising sufficient funds for a third expedition in search of the treasure. He started from the village of Coban, in Guatemala, with an outfit of mules, Cobanero Indian guides, and *arrieros*, having evidently determined to make his way, if possible, to the temple of the treasure by the original route, *viâ* Tulunche, which he had travelled with José Chen, rather than through the ruined city of Tikal, the route followed unsuccessfully with the two Americans.

I quote here again from John Carmichael's own notes, brought in after his death by the Cobanero Indians.

. . . . . .

"As all the clumps of timber in the savanna resemble one another most closely, my chief difficulty will be to know exactly where to turn off to the west into the primæval forest. The mules will have to be left outside the forest —that is, if water can be found for them—while the men and myself make several cuttings into the forest in different parts of the same, but always in a westerly direction. If a small expedition like the present is successful in striking the temple and the city, it will be a wonderful piece of good luck. A large and well equipped expedition, with plenty of time and means at command, could eventually hardly fail to succeed. I may mention that on the cement of the centre portico of the treasure temple I carved with my machete a large deep cross, so that I might know it again ; the material was comparatively quite soft, and there would be no difficulty at all in effecting an entrance into the interior of the temple, which, I take it, owing to its being blocked up, contains, if not treasure, at least valuable works of art."

. . . . . .

The "small expedition" was not, indeed, destined to meet with success, for nothing was ever definitely ascertained

as to what happened subsequently to its leaving Coban; all we do know for certain is that, some weeks after it had set out, the stolid Cobanero Indians returned to their *pueblo* with the report that John Carmichael had died of malaria in the bush, and that they had buried him where he lay by the trail-side. They brought back with them his papers and other effects, which ultimately reached the British Consul in Guatemala City, and were forwarded by him to Mr. Gordon Carmichael, son of John Carmichael. This gentleman, an artist, resident in Florence, took no special interest in archæology, ethnology, or exploration, and after going through his father's papers, consigned such of them as dealt with these subjects to the seclusion of a bureau drawer, where for more than twenty years they remained forgotten and undisturbed.

Last year, happening to read in the *Morning Post* some of my articles on archæological discoveries in Central America, he remembered his father's papers dealing with travel and exploration in the same region, and very kindly wrote asking me to call and look over his notes, maps, correspondence, etc., should I ever visit Florence.

In 1926 I was appointed Delegate of the British Government to the Americanists Congress, held at Rome, and on my way there stopped off for a few days at Florence in order to avail myself of Mr. Gordon Carmichael's offer.

These papers appeared to me to be of surpassing importance, for not only did they allude to the presence of numerous ruined sites in the Peten district of Guatemala, whose existence was confirmed by chicle bleeders many years later, and give the approximate location of the Quiche gold-mine, and the ruined city of Lubaantun, the existence of both of which, as already stated, has been verified since John Carmichael first heard of them, but they also described the approximate position, in the vast, desolate, unexplored,

forest-covered region of northern Peten, of an ancient Maya ruined city, whose monoliths, covered with sculptured hieroglyphics and figures of priests and rulers, are in such a perfect state of preservation that they still retain their original colours. This would be, from a scientific point of view, a far more interesting discovery than a mere cache of gold, for it would indicate that this region was occupied up to a much later date by the Maya of the Old Empire than has hitherto been supposed.

John Carmichael must have been convinced of the truth of the tale told him by the Indians as to the existence of a temple containing treasure, or, as he himself puts it, " at least valuable works of art," otherwise he would not have spent nearly ten years of his life in trying to re-locate it, poorly equipped as he was, lacking means to finance an efficient expedition for the search, and suffering, no doubt, the innumerable hardships—including insect pests, bad food, lack of water in the dry season, malaria, *granos*, and dysentery—all incidents to be expected in the day's work of the meagrely outfitted traveller in these regions.

Yet, apparently, constantly upheld by the courage of his sure conviction that this treasure did actually exist, and that one day he must discover it, he continued doggedly to follow the quest, till death intervening terminated his search for ever. One cannot but admire a faith so strong and a conviction so fixed as to hold their possessor with unwavering singleness of purpose on the difficult and uneaseful path of tropical exploration over a period of nearly ten years, at an age, moreover, when most men are thinking of permanently withdrawing into the restful retirement of late middle age.

Equipped with the sketch map left by John Carmichael of his travels in northern Guatemala and southern Mexico, and the very meagre details supplied by his notes and

correspondence, in the possession of his son, Mr. Gordon Carmichael, I have taken up the dead explorer's quest of the treasure temple, though not with any very pronounced hope of success, for the whole of the area between the ruined city of Tikal and the western boundary of the colony of British Honduras is covered with forest so high and dense that within it one might pass within a hundred yards of a building as large as the Washington monument and be unaware of the fact ; yet it is from Tikal that I propose to make a start, taking with me Muddy the invaluable, mules, Indians, and *arrieros*. Should the Tikal expedition prove fruitless, there remains only to endeavour to locate the former site of the village of Tulunque, from which the explorer made his first trip to the temple with José Chen, and to effect a fresh start from there.

This again, however, will be no easy matter, for an Indian village of one thousand or more inhabitants may, and often does, completely disappear within the space of twenty years. The people die off, or, attacked by that extraordinary *wanderlust* which appears to have been the heritage of the Maya for the last two thousand years, drift away to new sites, while their bush houses—constructed of no other materials than sticks, lianas, and palm-leaves—are rapidly converted, with other waste material of the forest, into vegetal mould, over which the all-engulfing tropical flora of the surrounding jungle rapidly spreads, so that after the lapse of twenty years (and it is nearly sixty years since John Carmichael visited Tulunche) it would be practically impossible to identify even the largest village site, were it not for the presence of a few sour orange- and plum-trees, cacao-plants and coconut-palms, which may still be found putting up a losing fight against the indigenous trees, shrubs, and lianas of the forest.

CHAPTER XV

Start for Tikal, and search for the treasure temple—If Carmichael's temple has fallen in ruins since his day the treasure, if it exists, is lost for ever—Serious water shortage ; we have to send to Uaxactun for all we require—Immediately to the east of the city is found a *bajo*, where it was impossible that the temple should exist—Search of country between ruins and *bajo*—Conclusion arrived at that the temple must be to the east of the *bajo*—Impossibility of searching this waterless country during the dry season—Debt owed by the archæologist to the chiclero —We discover ruins of houses, with great quantities of pottery, and some corn-rubbing-stones—Probably belong to period of Indian settlement from Yucatan—This was abandoned, it is said, on account of a plague of vampire bats, but more probably on account of the failure of the water-supply—Vandalism of these colonists and its cause—Origin of name Tikal—Return of spirits of ancient inhabitants —Evil-doers return as monkeys, to haunt the scene of their former crimes—Great aboriginal population of the city of Tikal—Description of the city and its suburbs.

THE trail from Uaxactun to Tikal was very much grown over, and it took us seven hours to make the fifteen miles. We passed on the way several small buildings, as we were approaching the east side of the city from the north. These structures were in a complete state of ruin, and any one of them might have been the temple marked by Carmichael, collapsed since his day. I had always realised the difficulty of finding a single small building amongst a host of others, all buried in the depths of a dense forest growth, but encountering these buildings so totally ruined brought home to me a further handicap which I had not before taken into account—namely, the possibility that Carmichael's temple might well have fallen into ruins since his day, and be now represented solely by a heap of unmarked ruins. If this should be the case it will never be found, or only by some archæologist, perhaps centuries hence, doing intensive

systematic excavation at Tikal, for all those who knew its exact location are long since dead.

On arrival at the ruins we found our worst fears realised—not a drop of water was to be obtained; both water-holes were dry as a bone, and even digging in them produced nothing except slightly damp mud. Muddy and the men had been on short rations, but fortunately I had brought with me from Uaxactun a good supply in kerosine-tins on mule-back. I could see that this water shortage was going to be our undoing, for we should have to send to Uaxactun for every drop of water we consumed, the double journey occupying two days. Now, with our means of transport, each mule could carry only two gasoline-cans—sometimes known as Rockefeller water-holes—containing ten gallons, and, if they are to be kept in condition, mules need at least five gallons of water each daily to drink. Washing of everything—plates, cooking utensils, faces—was strictly prohibited, and every drop of water reserved for drinking purposes. I found that Muddy and the men, notwithstanding the water famine, had done good work before my arrival. They had cleared little *picados*, or trails, through a considerable part of the ruins, and cut passes over a great part of the bush to the east of the city, as Carmichael had stated, in the letters left by him, that he believed the temple formed one of the easternmost buildings at Tikal. In consequence of this, my first procedure was a thorough examination of the bush immediately to the east of the ruins. But here disappointment awaited me, for I found that a very short distance from the eastern section of the main group the forest sloped downwards, and ended in a *bajo*—country, as already explained, covered with thick, scrubbly bush, and turning into a swamp in the wet season—on which it was useless to search for the temple, as the Maya never built stone structures on these *bajos*. This

left us with a comparatively restricted area to search, in the immediate vicinity of the ruins, and we went very carefully over this piece of bush between the ruins and the *bajo* without finding any trace of the Carmichael temple, cutting passes and penetrating the forest in all directions. I have therefore come to the conclusion that the temple must be located somewhere to the east of the *bajo*, which averages about half a league in breadth. It was absolutely impossible for us even to attempt a search in this vast stretch of country during the present expedition, for we were already short of water, and every mile added to the distance from our only supply, at Uaxactun, and increased that shortage; moreover, no water-holes still containing water were known to exist to the east of the *bajo*, and to search for them in the dense jungle would be a task as difficult as searching for the temple itself. The country to the east of the *bajo* is covered with virgin forest, untouched since Tikal was occupied, and, as no chicle is being bled there, there is no network of chiclero's passes cut through it, and no encampments of chicleros within it where men are to be found who have gone over every yard of the bush in their own immediate vicinity with a fine tooth comb in search of the precious sapote-trees, and incidentally of ruins—for the discovery of a New Initial Series date brings automatically, as I have already said, a reward of twenty-five gold dollars to the lucky finder. Indeed the archæologist never thoroughly realises the debt of gratitude he owes to the chiclero till he gets into the bush entirely on his own, with no one to show him the water-holes and new ruins, no trails anywhere, no one to help him out with the loan of a little flour, a few beans, or a mule, and no one to care a hoot should he get laid up with fever or an accident in the bush, whether he takes up his permanent residence there, with the *pishan* of the ancient inhabitants, or not.

One curious discovery we did make when searching the eastern bush, in the neighbourhood of one of the dry water-holes, namely the stone foundations of a number of rectangular dwellings, such as are in use amongst the modern Maya, with a single sapote post still above ground. On the floor of these houses, partly covered by an accumulation of vegetal humus and leaves, we unearthed a considerable number of clay vessels of all sizes and shapes, including large amphora-like water-vessels, cooking-pots, wide-mouthed vessels for containing corn and beans, and small shallow vessels for table use. With these were two rubbing-stones, for grinding corn, with a single hand-rubber, all of what is known as Esquipulas stone, a porous, volcanic rock, which must have been brought in from a considerable distance.

Now, in the 'forties of the last century, during the War of the Castes, when the Indios Sublevados, or uncivilised Indians of Yucatan, rose against the Spanish settlers and the more peaceful tribes, a number of the latter fled from that country to escape from the wrath to come. A small colony of these settled in and around the ruins of Tikal, where they lived for some years, gradually decreasing in numbers. Their final exodus was brought about, it is said, by a plague of vampire bats. These attacked not only their horses and mules, which is not unusual, but their pigs, dogs, and even their fowls, together with themselves and their children, becoming at last so intolerable that the people were obliged to leave their settlement. This plague of the bats may, of course, have been a contributory cause to the exodus, but in my opinion the main reason was the complete failure of the water-supply during an exceptionally dry season, such as we were ourselves experiencing. I am convinced that the house foundations we found were the work of these people, for the ancient Maya almost invariably

raised their stone houses above the ground on pyramids; furthermore, that the pottery was also fabricated by them, though, as the same material and the same technique were employed by both the ancient and modern Maya, it is not always easy to distinguish the ceramics of one from those of the other, when both have undergone a considerable amount of weathering. The finding of these vessels, much weathered, but unbroken, and two imported rubbing-stones —always highly prized by the Indians—is, I think, a clear indication that the people all left in a great hurry, without time to carry away any but their most valuable and readily transportable possessions. Now a plague of bats could easily have been combated by protecting both people and animals at night from their onslaught, and need not have driven them out in any violent hurry; but a sudden failure in the water-supply, at a time when the water-hole at Uaxactun, not having then been dug out as it is now, was also dry, and no water was available within a radius of twenty miles, would have proved a catastrophic event for the little colony, and probably brought about their immediate and hurried departure, *en masse*. Notwithstanding their misfortunes, I have no great sympathy with this little colony of Yucatecans, for to them is ascribed the mutilation of the beautiful sculptured figures upon the stelæ, which makes one's blood boil to contemplate. They recognised these as images of the gods worshipped by their ancestors, but believed that, owing to their partial conversion to Christianity, these deities had now become inimical to them, and though unable, in nearly every way, to cope with the new gods, they still possessed a certain control over natural phenomena, and could, and did, ruin their milpas by sending rain when dry weather was required for the corn crop, and vice versa. They further believed that the mutilation of the heads of these gods upon the stelæ rendered them



TIKAL: STELA WITH FIGURE RESEMBLING KNIGHT IN ARMOUR, DELIBERATELY MUTILATED.

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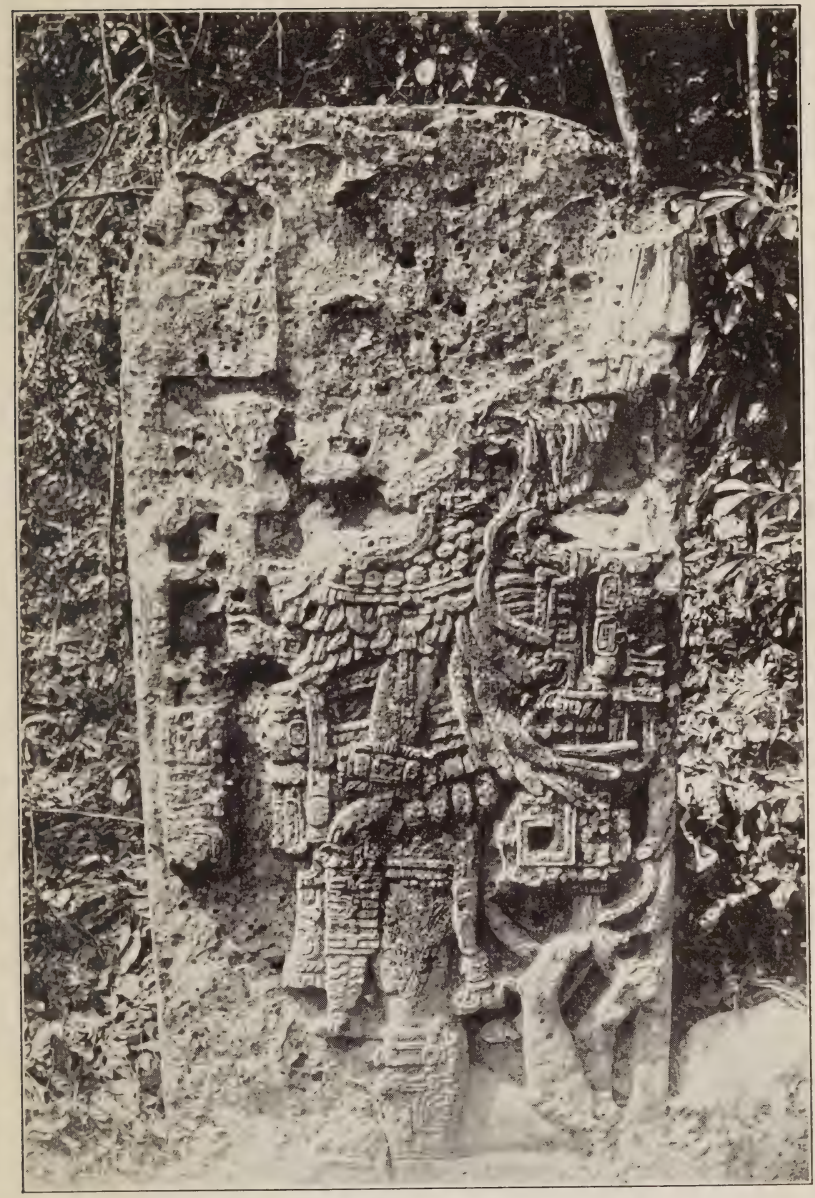
impotent, hence the destruction of beautiful and priceless carvings.

The name Tikal is probably derived from the Maya words *ti*—there, or in the place of—and *kal*—voice—and signified The Place of Voices, for the Indians believe that their great ancestors, the builders of this stupendous city, are still permitted to return to the site of their former magnificence, and, dressed in the shadowy simulacra of their gorgeous robes of office and jewels, to re-enact the scenes of their earthly lives. These reappearances occur only on very infrequent occasions, but when they do the *kal*, or spirit voices, are to be heard whispering through the temples and palaces, courts and plazas of the city. They also believe that the innumerable monkeys, great numbers of which are to be seen swinging from branch to branch in the giant trees with which the whole of the city is now covered, are reincarnations of the former people, who, having during their earthly lives done evil, are condemned to expiate their crimes by haunting the scenes of their former life in this objectionable guise, and it must be admitted that, if there is any truth in this superstition, Tikal, in the days of its greatness, must have been a very close rival of Sodom and Gomorrah, for the monkeys are innumerable, and of an extraordinary tameness, since no one visits the place, and even a hungry chiclero would hardly care to waste a valuable cartridge on a tough, stringy spider-monkey whose mangy hide was covered with ticks and beef-worms.

Tikal is the most extensive of all known Maya cities, and the buildings are larger, handsomer, and in a better state of preservation, owing to their immense thickness, than those of other Old Empire ruins. It is impossible to give anything like a detailed account of the vast mass of temples, palaces, pyramids, plazas, and stelæ comprising

the group, but it may be said that the unit in laying out the city was the quadrangular plaza, around which clustered the temples and dwellings of the priests. These were added to century by century, till the city reached the gigantic proportions which it had attained at the time of its desertion by its inhabitants. This immense extent of great stone buildings connotes a very large population, and if, as we are informed, the city of Chichen-Itza, in Yucatan, at one time contained a population of a quarter of a million souls, that of Tikal was, during the height of its power, probably far larger, for it must be remembered that the city as we now see it comprises only the temples and the dwellings of the priests and ruling classes, and that the houses of the vast majority of the people, constructed as they were of wattle and daub, with palm-leaf roofs, have ages ago become an integral part of the vegetal humus which forms the forest floor.

There are three great acropolises—natural hills terraced, faced with stone, having their summits levelled for the reception of stone buildings. Five main temples are found, the loftiest of which reaches a height of over two hundred and thirty feet. These form the most conspicuous—indeed, the only conspicuous—points in the whole ruins, for their lofty summits tower above the surrounding forest. In addition to these, there are a number of smaller temples, and innumerable houses and palaces. All these buildings stand upon stone-faced substructures, and are approached by flights of stone stairs, but the substructures of the temples are much loftier than those of the other buildings. In addition to these temples and palaces, a number of curious structures are found whose function is not at present understood, called, for lack of a better name, sacrificial pyramids. These consist of large, quadrilateral, truncated pyramids, faced with cut stone, whose flat summits are approached



TIKAL : FINELY SCULPTURED STELA MUTILATED BY INDIANS FEARING VENGEANCE OF THEIR GODS.

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by stairways on all four sides. No traces of buildings are found upon any of them. The temples stand upon the tops of lofty, almost perpendicular substructures, and are approached by very steep flights of steps on one side only. They usually contain three chambers, placed one behind the other. The walls are much thicker than those of the other buildings, in order to support the immense weight of the gigantic roof combs which crown them. These roof combs are, for the most part, partially fallen, and it is difficult to estimate their original height. They contain, in their interiors, small chambers, with no communication externally, whose use was probably partly to economise building material and partly to lessen the vast weight to be supported by the temple walls.

The residential buildings may extend to as many as five storeys and twenty rooms. Two or three large rooms usually occupy the central position, with one or more small rooms on each side of these, running at right angles to them. All the buildings through the city were covered with a very fine, smooth white stucco, both within and without.

The most important spot in the entire city was the great plaza, situated near its centre. This is bounded on the south by the great central acropolis, covered with a complicated mass of buildings, many of which are now in ruins. To its north stands the northern acropolis, whose summit is also covered with a group of stone structures, in a better state of preservation than those crowning the summit of the central acropolis. Occupying the east and west sides are two of the five great temples already described. Within the plaza, immediately in front of the northern acropolis, is a triple row of stelæ and altars. To the north of the great plaza, and separated from it by a wide *barranco*, or natural cleft in the ground, lies the northern suburb of the city, containing temples, palaces, and four of the great

structures known as sacrificial mounds. To the south of the main plaza, and also separated from it by a great deep *barranco*, lies the southern suburb of the city, containing on its eastern side a great mass of residential buildings, near the centre one of the five great pyramids and the southern acropolis, the smaller of the three, and west of these temples and residences, with the largest and highest of the sacrificial mounds. To the west of the great plaza lies the western suburb of the city, containing small temples and palaces, and two of the five great temples. East of the great plaza is the eastern extension of the main acropolis, and a number of residential buildings, mostly in ruins, and beyond these the ground slopes gently down to the *bajo*, or low-lying land, where, as before stated, the Maya never built stone structures, though it is fairly certain that when the city was occupied this *bajo* was covered with the huts of the labouring classes, for, with the bush completely cleared, as it must have been in those days, this would have been in the dry season a pleasant enough site, while in the rainy season it could have been made quite habitable by running a number of shallow surface drains into the *aguadas*, or water-holes, and so leaving the higher parts of the *bajo* quite dry.

CHAPTER XVI

Graffiti at Tikal, record of contemporary events and costume—An ancient execution portrayed—Prototype of the modern cupboard—A night alarm—A Simian tragedy—Beautiful wood carvings in the ruins—The oldest stela at Tikal, dated A.D. 267—An Initial Series date going back five million years—The Maya possessed a juster appreciation of the age of the earth than any nation up to modern times—Destruction wrought by giant trees at the ruins—Picture of life in the ancient city—Mysterious eclipse of its people—Silence and desolation of Tikal—The most important site for excavation and exploration, but for its inaccessibility—Possibility of aeroplane journey to Tikal—The route to be followed on my next expedition—Were all these Maya cities separate City-States or were they ruled by a single king?—Return to Belize.

SCRATCHED into the smooth stucco of several of the buildings at Tikal, notably two of the temples and one of the palaces, are a number of graffiti. These are not disfigurements, such as are surreptitiously made by the modern vandal upon the walls of ruins, but actual delineations of gods and men, customs and costumes, which would, in many cases, be difficult to sculpture on stone, and which now form valuable contemporaneous records of the times, somewhat analagous to those afforded by the three Maya codices which survive, painted upon a paper made from the fibre of the *agave Americana*. These graffiti are executed with a considerable amount of skill and liveliness, probably by means of sharp, pointed chips of flint or obsidian. They depict animal-headed gods, with priests and warriors in the most diverse and elaborate robes and head-dresses; indeed, if one is to believe the record afforded by these drawings, no two persons at Tikal seem to have dressed alike. One very spirited little scene is depicted, probably

recording a contemporaneous event, which took place in the great plaza right in front of the temple where it occurs, and it is not impossible that the priest-artist made the sketch immediately after witnessing the event. It portrays the execution of a criminal, who is naked but for a narrow loin-cloth round his waist, and stands upon a raised platform. His outstretched arms are bound to two upright posts, and he has just received in his abdomen a large javelin, thrown by a warrior with an immense head-dress, standing in front of him. By the side of the victim stands a female figure, possibly his wife, turning away as if in horror from the spectacle of his suffering. Lofty, terraced temples, similar to those which contain the graffiti, are shown, with figures of animals, birds, serpents, and ceremonial masks, and in several places hieroglyphic inscriptions are found, though none of these, unfortunately, record a date, otherwise an extremely interesting point might be solved—namely, the approximate date of the desertion of the city—for the interiors of the temples were covered from time to time with fresh and very thin layers of stucco, thick enough, however, to completely obliterate the graffiti on the underlying layers. It follows, therefore, that the drawings now visible were executed upon the last layer of stucco applied, and presumably not very long before the occurrence of the general exodus of all the inhabitants. One curious feature noticeable in many of the rooms of residential buildings is the occurrence of great numbers of stucco-lined recesses of all sizes, across the front of some of which stretch narrow sapote beams. These were, I think, prototypes of the modern cupboard, and were no doubt used, in the living-rooms, to hold pottery, vases, fruit, flowers, etc., and possibly the images of the household gods ; in the bedrooms, clothing, sandals, head-dresses, and ornaments, and in the kitchens, cooking and household

utensils and food. The horizontal beams in front were probably used for the suspension of a curtain, to act as door, and just as a modern housewife desires a house well supplied with cupboards, so, no doubt, did the housewife of Tikal fifteen centuries ago.

I had pitched my tent in the forest, to the east of the city, in order to be near the search for Carmichael's temple, and during the first night was awakened about midnight by a sound something like that made by a dog crunching a bone just beside the tent. I at once jumped to the conclusion that a jaguar, or puma, had had the audacity to drag his kill to the side of my tent, and start devouring it there. Jumping out of my cot, I seized the electric torch, and, lifting the flap of the tent, shot a beam of light in the direction of the sound. Quick as I had been, however, the intruder was quicker still, and I only saw the agitation of the undergrowth as he disappeared into it. On examining the spot, all I could find was an empty milk-can, gnawed and bent at the edges, where some animal had evidently been attempting to extract the last of the contents.

Next morning, when I observed a large male spider-monkey, accompanied by his wife and child, whom he had evidently brought to see the novel show, performing the most astonishing acrobatic feats in the great tree over my head, chattering away angrily all the time, I felt pretty certain of the identity of my disturber of the night before. Poor spider-monkey! Both he and his wife were later shot by the photographer, and the baby left to fend for himself in a cold world, where, though food, in the form of sapodillos, is plentiful and easy to find, snakes, pumas, and wild cats are ever on the look-out for incautious little monkeys. Peace to their ashes, if they are indeed the returned *pishan* of the ancient inhabitants, condemned to expiate their sins by a return to their native city in the form of monkeys;

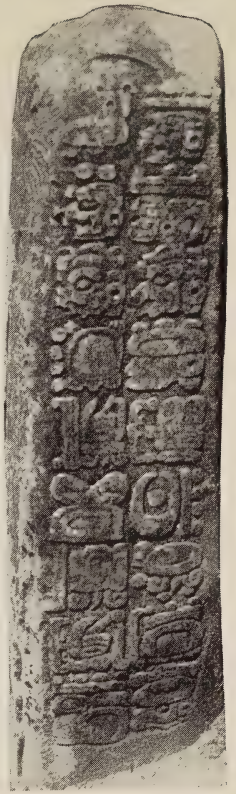
may plenary absolution now be accorded them, and this be their last reincarnation as apes!

Throughout the ruins, both in temples and residences, a great number of sapote wood beams and lintels are still to be found, in an excellent state of preservation, wherever they have not been exposed to the weather, showing for the most part but little sign of their fifteen centuries of use. In one of the temples I noticed over the front entrance a number of what appeared to be logwood beams, forming the lintel. This is the first time I have ever seen this wood used in ancient buildings, and I had no idea that it rivalled sapote in its resistent qualities.

Quite a number of these beams were, at one time, carved; grotesque human figures, with elaborate head-dresses and ornaments, mythological animals, and hieroglyphics being represented on them in low relief. Judging by the few pieces of this work which now remain—for most of them were destroyed by the same Indians who defaced the stelæ—it compares favourably in beauty of design and technique of execution with the finest specimens of wood carving of any period, ancient or modern. Over seventy stelæ, with a number of circular altars, have been found in Tikal, most of them in the great plaza. The vast majority of the stelæ are quite plain, and were obviously never sculptured, the probability being that those of this type were originally covered with a layer of stucco, upon which were painted hieroglyphics and other devices, similar to those sculptured in stone. Two of these stelæ are specially worthy of notice: one because upon its side is sculptured in low relief the earliest date as yet found at Tikal; the other because it records the longest time count found throughout the Maya area. The date in question is 9.2.13.0.0, 3 Ahau, 13 Kayab, that is 9 Bactuns, of 20 Katuns each, 2 Katuns, of 20 Tuns each, 13 Tuns, or years



STELA WITH AUTHOR AT SIDE TO SHOW HEIGHT.



STELA RECORDING A.D. 267, THE EARLIEST DATE AT THE CITY.
[*p.* 228

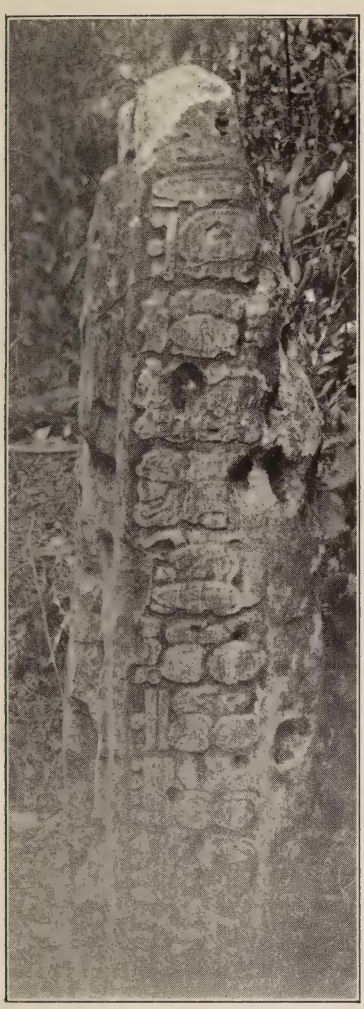
of 360 Kins, or days, 0 Uinals, or months, and 0 Kins, or days, after the day 4 Ahau, 8 Cumhu (the commencing date of Maya chronology, which falls on 14th October, 3373 B.C., according to Spinden's correlation), falling on a day, 3 Ahau, 13 Kayab, in the year A.D. 267 of our era. That is, this stela, the oldest in Tikal, was erected in the year A.D. 267.

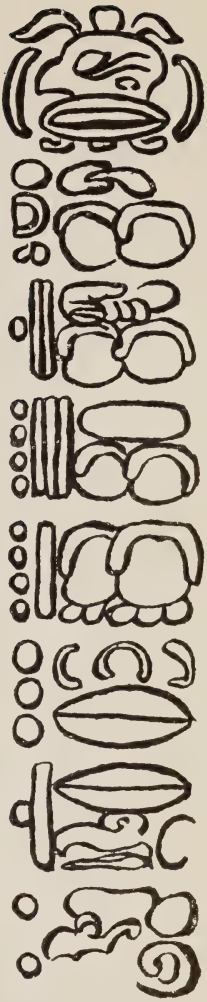
The second stela records 1 Great-great-great Bactun, containing 1,152,000,000 days, 11 Great-great Bactuns, each containing 57,600,000 days, making a total of 633,600,000 days, 19 Great Bactuns each containing 288,000 days, making a total of 54,720,000 days, 9 Bactuns, each containing 144,000 days, making a total of 1,296,000 days, 3 Katuns, each containing 7,200 days, making a total of 216,000 days, 6 Tuns, each containing 360 days, making a total of 2,160 days, 2 Uinals, each containing 20 days, making a total of 40 days (the day sign in the last place has weathered away). This gives a grand total reaching the stupendous number of 1,841,639,800 days, or approximately five million years!

This is the sole instance throughout the whole Maya area where their numeration is taken to the eighth place, and the Great-great-great Bactun sign employed. At Palenque the Great-great Bactun is used, and at Copan the Great Bactun. What the recording of this vast period of time is meant to indicate it is, of course, now impossible to say, but it may possibly record some such event as the birth of the gods, the creation of the world, or the universe, or the commencement of time. It would seem to show, however, that the Maya possessed a far juster appreciation of the age of the earth than was possessed by any contemporary nation throughout the world, or, indeed, by any nation up to the nineteenth century.

One of the unsculptured stelæ still standing, and projecting

from the ground for about 6 ft., is of considerable interest, as showing the havoc which vegetation can play with the ruins. This great monolith has been split clean in two, from side to side along the lines of natural cleavage of the stone, by the root of a comparatively small tree growing on top of it. In a plaza, to the east of the great plaza, an enormous tree has become uprooted, leaving a hole 30 ft. by 15 ft., and averaging nearly 2 ft. deep; thus shifting nearly 900 ft. of soil from the floor of the plaza. These great giants of the forest take root, century after century, upon all the buildings and terraces, insinuating their roots between the masonry, the stones of which they displace, and finally, falling, bring down with them the whole roof, side, or façade of the building, leaving a heap of rubbish and humus, which affords a better roothold for another generation of trees, and so the mischief is continued endlessly. Tikal has suffered in this respect perhaps less than any other city of the Old Empire, probably owing to the thickness and solidity of the walls of its buildings and the hardness of the cement which covers them internally and externally. From a spectacular point of view, no other city in the Maya area, and indeed no other work of the aborigines on the American continent, can compare with Tikal. Copan, and Quirigua may show finer stone sculpture, Palenque may rival it in the matter of stucco moulding, and even possibly in extent, when both cities have been thoroughly explored; more modern Yucatecan cities of the New Empire, such as Chichen-Itza and Uxmal, dating from seven or eight centuries later, naturally present buildings in a superior state of preservation—but for sheer grandeur and magnificence Tikal is unrivalled; and the view from the summit of one of the five great temples, over the endless sea of bush stretching in every direction as far as the eye can reach, with shadowy white outlines of great palace-crowned acropolises,





TIKAL:

STELA WITH LARGEST NUMBER EVER RECORDED BY THE MAYA IN THE FORM OF AN INITIAL SERIES DATE

1. INTRODUCING GLYPH
2. ONE GREAT GREAT GREAT BACTUN CONTAINING 1,152,000,000 DAYS
3. ELEVEN GREAT GREAT BACTUNS CONTAINING IN ALL 633,600,000 DAYS
4. NINETEEN GREAT BACTUNS CONTAINING 54,720,000 DAYS
5. NINE BACTUNS CONTAINING 1,296,000 DAYS
6. THREE KATUNS EACH CONTAINING 7,200 DAYS
7. SIX TUNS, MAKING 2,160 DAYS } Do not appear on the photograph, but are
8. TWO UINALS OF 20 DAYS EACH } shown in the sketch
9. THE KIN, OR DAYS, SIGN HAS WEATHERED AWAY

THIS GIVES A GRAND TOTAL OF 1,841,639,800 DAYS, APPROXIMATELY 5,000 YEARS, BEFORE THE CONTEMPORARY DATE OF THE STELA.

THE FOUR TOPMOST GLYPHS SHOWN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THE INITIAL SERIES RECORDING 5,000,000 YEARS.

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sacrificial pyramids, courts, and plazas, dimly outlined through the green shroud which has veiled them for fifteen centuries, once seen, can never be forgotten. Perhaps no other Maya city gives one such a sense of desolation as Tikal, for in no other is the contrast brought home to one so forcibly between what the city now is and what it must have been in the days of its glory : hundreds of thousands of inhabitants busily going about their daily avocations; sculptors, stone-masons, carpenters, wood-carvers, at work on the great temples and public buildings ; thousands of Indians bringing in corn on their backs from an area of probably twenty miles all round ; processions of gorgeously arrayed priests, musicians, and singers, slowly ascending the stairways of the great temples; palanquin-borne nobles and Caciques passing along the streets, with their retainers; women clad in their snowy white *hiupils* and *piks*—for the graffiti show us that their costume was very similar to that of their modern Maya sisters—probably then, as now, forming the greater, and certainly the more devout, part of the congregation in the innumerable temples ; possibly the execution of a criminal going on in the great plaza, attracting its crowd of curious spectators, or possibly—a far more exciting spectacle—a slave being sacrificed at one of the temples, where the crowd would be patiently awaiting the headless body coming hurtling down the almost perpendicular, two hundred-feet high, stone stairway into their midst, when the struggle would begin for a small piece of the flesh, which would confer upon its devourer some of the attributes of the god.

All these visions flash through the eye of one's mind as one gazes over the ruins, and they seem to be re-peopled with their shadowy builders, equally mysterious as to their entry on, and exit from, the stage of pre-Columbian American civilisation, who yet filled the most important rôle on that

stage for nearly twenty centuries, and then disappeared quietly into the unknown, as mysteriously as they had emerged from it two millennia before. This vision of the past fades, and one is confronted with the absolute desolation and stillness of the present, for the almost tangible silence which has closed down over the bush-enshrouded ruins is unbroken, save for the chattering of a monkey, the screech of a parrot by day, the scream of a jaguar by night, or the laughing note of the chichalaca, in the early dawn.

Of all the known Maya ruins—and one must always make the reservation, for there may be, and very possibly are, ruins in the bush of Central America, as yet undiscovered, larger than any of those at present known to us—Tikal would probably best repay intensive exploration and excavation, and yield the most important results. Unfortunately, it is at once the greatest and the most inaccessible of all Maya cities. In the dry season the Mopan River is low, and the average time taken in the journey from Belize to Benque Ceiba is five days. To this must be added five days taken up by the trip on mule-back from Benque Ceiba to the ruins, and at least a couple of days in getting the *mulada* and labourers together—so that on the double journey alone three or four weeks are expended. In the wet season the passage up the Mopan River is shortened, but the bush journey is lengthened indefinitely, owing to the muddiness of the trails, which may be closed entirely. If one goes in during the dry season there is no water available, and if one goes in during the wet season, water is everywhere, for it rains incessantly, and the *bajos* are all converted into swamps and shallow lagoons. Owing to these various drawbacks, no expedition has ever remained more than a few days at Tikal. Practically no excavation has been done, and the bush has never been cleared, except

immediately around a few of the large temples. The most satisfactory method of reaching the ruins would be by aeroplane from Belize, nor should this be difficult, for it would be quite easy to make a good dry-weather landing-place on the level *bajo* to the east of Tikal by completely clearing part of it from bush. The danger would arise from a forced landing in the forest, as, once lost in this trackless jungle, finding one's way out, hacking a path through the stiff, scrubbly undergrowth of the *bajos*, would be by no means easy.

On my next expedition to the ruins, I propose going in early in February, when, though the roads are bad, the rains will have stopped, and there is no chance of a shortage of water for at least a couple of months. I propose trying to get in from Cayo, that is from the east, instead of from the north, as on this occasion, and so getting a chance of examining the forest country to the east of the *bajo*, where, if anywhere, Carmichael's temple should be found, before arriving at the ruins themselves.

A circle drawn, with Tikal as the centre, and a radius of fifty miles, would embrace a great number of major ruined cities, including Naranjo, Ucanal, Yaxha, Holmul, Porvenir, and those clustered around the Lagoon of Flores, in addition to a host of minor ruins, and, if the circle be extended a little to the north, the cities grouped around Rio Bec, Chamil, and Ramonal would be included. It has usually been held that the great Maya cities were independent of each other, like the Greek and, later, the Italian City-States, and that each was governed either by a king, who probably held the office of high priest, or by a body of nobles and priests, which may have been elective or hereditary. I am inclined, however, to think that all these cities were under the sway of a single ruler, whose capital city was probably Tikal, for how, otherwise, can we account

for the complete absence of war which seems to have prevailed during the whole of the Old Empire? A congeries of small City-States, crowded into a comparatively small area, the land—to which each looked as the sole support of its population—overlapping the land of other cities on all sides, constant rivalry existing between the several states in the magnificence of their buildings and the beauty of their works of art; water and hunting rights, rights of way, quarrying and mining rights, and other fruitful sources of trouble constantly presenting themselves—given all these conditions, the people would not have been human if they had not occasionally indulged in war. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine the great majority of the inhabitants of an independent City-State suddenly, on their own initiative, deserting their capital *en masse* and migrating to that of another State, as appears to have taken place when Uaxactun was abandoned and Tikal superseded it, as already related.

But if we postulate a single ruler with supreme power, governing all these cities, the absence of war is easily explained, as, requiring all the available men for architectural and agricultural work, he would simply forbid it, and, deciding to make Tikal his capital city, he would merely have to order the major part of the population of Uaxactun to leave their own homes and settle in Tikal, in order to push on the erection of the vast crop of temples, palaces, pyramids, and other buildings which arose there within a comparatively short period.

We left Tikal without any violent regrets, for we had not had a wash since our arrival, and made our way to Uaxactun, where we found the water shortage growing daily more acute. From Uaxactun we had an uneventful trip to Benque Ceiba, and were fortunate enough, within a few hours of our arrival, to catch a boat to Belize, which had

just arrived with a cargo of merchandise. When we left, Avery, Andres, and the guide had not yet arrived, but we were not going to miss such a heaven-sent opportunity of getting down quickly, so left a message for them to follow us in the first available boat. We made a record passage, in twenty-four hours, and it was not till two days later that they turned up, having arrived in a well-laden boat, which, in addition to her own heavy cargo, had a string of chicle-loaded dug-outs in tow.

CHAPTER XVII

Trip to Lubaantun as member of the British Museum Advisory Committee—Fauna of the cays of British Honduras—Wild Cane Cay—Its virile octogenarian owner—An ideal life, with no hard work and no anxieties—Punta Gorda—Carib dogs—A bad trail—Arrival at San Pedro—A girl prisoner—Uses of the Alcalde's court—Work done at Lubaantun during present field season by the British Museum expedition—The megalithic terrace—Excavating stone-faced pyramid—Cache of beautiful jade ornaments—Extraordinary complexity of the buildings constituting the citadel—Reason for the numerous architectural changes, effected at various times, inexplicable—Bottom of the acropolis never reached—Numbers of figurines found, many showing great artistic skill—Possible date of A.D. 521 found in superficial part of the acropolis—Possibility of tracing evolution of Maya culture from stratigraphic evidence at Lubaantun—A communal corn-planting—Malignancy of land-crabs—A dreary cay—A summary of the work done this field season.

SHORTLY after returning to Belize from Tikal, I paid a visit of inspection, as member of the British Museum Advisory Committee, to the ruins of Lubaantun, where a short field season of excavation has been carried out this year by an expedition from the museum.

I left Belize in my boat, the *Grace W*, somewhat late in the day, for Punta Gorda, jumping-off point for Lubaantun and southernmost settlement in British Honduras, and consequently had to stop for the night at a small cay opposite Point Placencia, situated about half-way between Belize and Punta Gorda. The little cay, about the size of a large main-sail, possessed all the characteristics of the larger cays along this coast—a tiny sandy beach on the windward side, mangrove and mud to leeward, and in the interior salt-water pimento, sour-grass, and even two forlorn-looking coconut palms, owing their origin no doubt to nuts

which had drifted down on the current, and evidently, judging by their scrubby appearance and lack of fruit, resenting bitterly the unhealthy proximity of their old enemy, the mangrove.

The crew slept on board, and I in my tent, opened up all round, as there were no sand-flies or mosquitoes. There seemed to be no life on the cay with the exception of small brown crabs, equally at home on land and in the sea, and quite innocuous, as their business claws were rudimentary.

But soon after seven, as darkness rapidly blotted out the brief tropical twilight, the whole place was illuminated by the twin lamps carried by each of a swarm of little fire-beetles, till one would have thought it was lit up for a gala night or a garden fête, the only difference being that these lights, instead of being stationary, were constantly on the move, gliding, planing, and whirling gracefully amongst the sour-grass and mangrove-bushes. These exquisite little fire-beetles are, I think, the only insects found in Central America which are both harmless and ornamental.

Almost every cay along the coast of British Honduras and Yucatan seems to possess a distinctive fauna of its own. Here the little brown crabs predominated ; in Cayo Tostado, already referred to in a previous chapter, great land-crabs have exterminated every other form of life not possessing wings ; Isla de las Mujeres swarms with snakes of all sizes and varieties ; some of the more distant cays are inhabited solely by sea birds, which seem to have succeeded in driving out everything else, and here build their nests and rear their young undisturbed by anything, save egg-hunting man.

The Range, a long, narrow cay of mangrove swamp, bordered by a ribbon of white sandy beach, swarms with lizards of all sizes, from the tiny little brown chaps one encourages about the house for fly and insect catching purposes,

to the hideous *matlala*, with his needle-sharp teeth and powerful jaws, which one dares not encourage, as he will pick up anything, from fruit to small chickens or eggs. The small lizards get so tame that they will run over one, and even jump on to one's lap from the roof quite fearlessly, but the *matlala* always scuttles off, not exactly with his tail between his legs, for this would be a difficult attitude for a lizard to assume, but with an air half furtive, half defiant. He never attacks, but if cornered can give a bite the recipient will remember for many a long day. Ambergris Cay, to the north of British Honduras, seems to specialise in alligators and mosquitoes.

On the following day we called in at Wild Cane Cay, a little coconut-covered islet not far from Punta Gorda. Here resides Señor Cabral, the owner, with his extensive family, representing three generations. The cays must be extraordinarily healthy places to live in, as this ancient patriarch, with his upright carriage, and mane of grey hair surrounding a face burnt mahogany-colour by constant exposure to sea and sun, looked like a hale man of sixty, though he is in his eighty-second year. His only complaint was that within the last few years he could not jump from the forward to the aft thwart of a dug-out, as he used to, but had, as he expressed it, to "go crawling along," and that he could not now swing a 150 lb. bag of copra on to his back without assistance. When I told him that I had never possessed either of these accomplishments, he just looked at me with a pitying smile.

This islet was built up from a mangrove cay, and used by the ancients as a cemetery. Great numbers of interments have been found, in four large mounds, upon it—in fact, when the Cabral family need a little ready money, they excavate a small area and sell the beads, pottery, spear-heads, etc., which invariably turn up. At my visit

they had quite a nice jade necklace, but as the old man's son was the owner, and he was away on a week's trip fishing for the hawksbill, or tortoiseshell turtle, they did not like to part with it till his return.

Their life was an ideal one ; when a little money was required, it was only necessary, as I have said, to spend an hour or so in excavating in one of the mounds or to pick up a few hundred coconuts. Fruit and vegetables grew plentifully on the cay, and fish could be had by throwing a line or a cast-net in from the end of the little wharf, while fowls, having no snakes or four-footed enemies, and no bacillary diseases to contend against, flourished exceedingly. No work, no anxieties, hardly any communication with the outside world ; but, I wonder !—or, as Muddy remarked, when I put it to him, " *Quién sabe ?* "

We spent the night in Punta Gorda, and very uneasily, for dogs howled and barked every hour of it. While those in one part of the village rested, those of another section took up the chorus, and carried on the continuous performance till the early hours of the morning.

Punta Gorda is inhabited almost exclusively by Caribs, who are even more given than negroes to keeping—though not supporting—droves of flea-spangled, mangy, half-starved, useless dogs. Their excuse, when asked why they keep them, is almost invariably, " To keep off thieves " ; but, as no Carib residence ever has as much as five dollars worth of portable property, this can hardly be the real reason. Punta Gorda is almost the only place in the colony where this dog nuisance exists, for since the recent outbreak of hydrophobia—perhaps a blessing in disguise—the dogs have everywhere been shot on sight by the police, and night is no longer rendered hideous by them.

We left Punta Gorda for the ruins at 6 a.m. next morning, Muddy leading a single pack-animal, with the loads fixed

on each side of an ordinary saddle, as such a thing as a *pukka* pack-saddle did not exist in the village, and we had not brought ours with us. The load kept slipping under the horse's belly, and had to be readjusted every half-hour or so, consequently it was not till 3 p.m. that we arrived at San Pedro, the Indian village near the ruins. Part of the road had been well cleared by the Government, and the creeks—there are, I think, twenty-six in all, big and little, in the twenty-five miles—bridged, but the last part is very bad, and appeared not to have been cleared out in years.

Large trees had fallen across it, and the Indians, rather than go to the trouble of chopping up the trunks, had made long cut-offs round them. Other large trees had fallen across these cut-offs, around which secondary cut-off tracks had been made, till the original trail was almost lost. In places this passed beneath great tree limbs, just high enough for a stooping Indian to pass under, but too low for a horse, and here we had to dismount and hack out cut-offs of our own.

On arrival at the Indian village of San Pedro, we made straight for the Cabildo, where we found the Alcalde and a collection of the youths of the village of both sexes. They were watching, evidently with considerable amusement, quite a pretty young woman chopping down, in a very reluctant manner, the weeds in front of the Cabildo with a machete. She had a sullen, shamed look and bearing, as she tried to ignore the facetious remarks made by the onlookers, which were evidently meant for her to hear.

On enquiry, we found that she had parted with her lover, after a quarrel, the previous day, and on leaving him taken with her his receipt from the Government for his land-tax—apparently the only portable article of any value which he possessed. On being haled before the Alcalde, he had

sentenced her to be kept in gaol till she gave it up, which she stubbornly refused to do, and so was employed, as a start, on clearing the land in front of the Cabildo.

Now the " gaol " was a little cubby-hole fenced off by a few sticks from the Cabildo, where I proposed to sleep that night, and I pointed out to the Alcalde that it would be highly improper for the lady and myself to sleep together practically cheek by jowl. Apparently she also recognised the delicacy of the situation, for she promptly volunteered to deliver up the receipt, and on doing so was set at liberty, so everything ended happily.

These snap, Solomonic judgments of the Alcalde have a good deal to recommend them. He is usually a sensible, elderly man, with a thorough knowledge of the people he has to deal with, and too old to be much influenced by feminine wiles and cajoleries, and this sort of *nisi* punishment not only acts as a deterrent, but in most cases admirably " fits the crime " and redresses the wrong—a combination very rarely effected by more formal and civilised courts.

On the evening of my arrival I went up to take a preliminary survey of the work done at the ruins, which had been under the supervision of Major Cooper-Clark, with Mr. Eric Thompson as Maya archæological expert.

Considering the shortness of the field season, excellent progress had been made by the expedition, chiefly in the form of excavation in two situations :

1. Around the megalithic terraces forming the eastern boundary of the acropolis.

2. Amongst the complicated group of mounds, courts, and terraces to the west of the central way or street, which, running almost due north and south, divides the acropolis into an eastern and western half.

The megalithic terrace was exposed for a considerable part of its extent, and was found to pass beneath, and

consequently to antedate, the great pyramid lying immediately to the north of it. Unfortunately, when cleared of the rubbish and stones which had covered it in, a considerable part of this great structure collapsed, owing to the sagging of its foundations and the removal of the support afforded it by the great wall of rubbish in front. Luckily photographs were secured of this, possibly the only megalithic terrace in the Maya area, before it collapsed.

Starting from the north of that part of the acropolis to the west of the central way, the first structure excavated was a large, stone-faced, truncated pyramid. The sides of this sloped up gradually to an extensive, flat, rectangular summit. On excavation it was found that these sloping sides had actually been built around the perpendicular sides of an older pyramid lying beneath, the masonry of which was far superior to that of the newer structure—indeed, the inner perpendicular wall of this great pyramid contained some of the most beautiful mason's work I have ever seen. No mortar was used, but the stones fitted with such meticulous accuracy that nowhere did the joints between them exceed $\frac{1}{8}$in. in breadth. Both the old and new walls of this pyramid had originally been covered by a coat of hard, white stucco, now for the most part peeled off.

On top of this mound was found one of the many burials encountered, which, unlike most of the others, contained some very beautiful personal ornaments. These consisted of five finely polished and perforated beads of light, translucent jade; two oblong plaques of greenstone, each measuring about 2 by $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins., perforated near the centre, and evidently used as *orejeras*, or ear-plugs; two smaller oblong plaques of very fine jade, bored through the centre, and each carved on the outer surface—these also were Maya ear-plugs; and a single, unusually small, circular ear-plug, about the size of a sixpenny piece, the fellow of which had

evidently been lost either before burial or during the process of excavation. Numbers of burials were encountered scattered about the excavated area, apparently not arranged according to any definite plan, and not even on the same level. The bones for the most part were in a poor state of preservation, but numerous teeth were recovered, some with circular depressions drilled out of their fronts for the reception of plugs—of jade, iron pyrites, etc.—which had, however, dropped out, and were not found.

Just south of this large square pyramid stood a second and smaller structure. This was rectangular in shape, with rounded corners covered with cut stone, and terraced. The two pyramids were separated by a stone-lined passage, approached from the east by a flight of steps.

Against the eastern side of this round-cornered mound had been built flights of steps enclosing between them a tiny court, which later had been completely filled in with rubble. To the south of the round-cornered mound, three walls had been built out at right-angles to its side, enclosing between them two small sentry-box-like recesses. Immediately to the south of these recesses a flight of stone steps was unearthed, covered with a layer of beautiful, hard, white stucco, leading from the central avenue of the acropolis to a small cruciform enclosure, also covered with white stucco.

From this a second flight of steps led westward to a lower level, but the space between these steps and what is now the western boundary wall of the citadel had been completely filled in with rubble.

To the south of this flight of steps a long line of the terraced side of a mound was unearthed, with two recesses breaking it, and toward its southern extremity an extension, of much inferior work, built out from it.

The above brief description will serve to give some idea

of the extraordinary complexity of the various structures—pyramids, courts, terraces, walls, enclosures—unearthed by the expedition. Why many of the changes were made originally in this highly complex mass of buildings it is impossible to imagine, unless out of sheer caprice.

Why, for instance, somewhat crude walls should have been built out at right-angles from the side of a pyramid covered with beautifully cut stone, and terraced, and later the whole space between the walls filled in with rubble, to form a flat surface, is as difficult to understand as why a flight of steps, covered with beautiful stucco, and what was apparently the lower part of a cruciform room, covered with the same material, should have been filled in with the same rubbly mass, merely again to form a flat surface.

Up to the present, three very distinct architectural periods have been brought to light, and fortunately the architects, while covering up the work of their predecessors with rubble, in order to construct a flat surface upon which to erect their own buildings, had, almost invariably, respected the older structures, and left them standing, nearly intact, so that excavation, while necessarily destroying the more recent part of the ruins, brings to light the older structures, probably in a much better state of preservation than if they had never been covered over.

Excavations were made at a number of points in the floor of the citadel, and everywhere below the surface were found walls and terraces of cut stone, covered over with rubble, and beneath these again more walls and terraces, which had been treated in a similar manner. But *in no case was the foundation of the citadel reached*, and it would almost appear as if this stupendous structure were actually of artificial construction throughout, gradually enlarged through the centuries by generations of builders during

different occupations, and not, as was originally supposed, with a natural hill as a core.

During this year's excavations, as in former years, great numbers of small clay figurines, for the most part ornaments attached to whistles, but a few in the form of small plaques, were brought to light. These little objects were all moulded, and in some cases were found fragments of the clay moulds in which they were formed. Many of them show considerable artistic skill in modelling, and some portray with a realism almost approaching genius scenes from the life of the people—a palanquin-borne noble, a woman of the people grinding corn on a stone *metate*, a hunter giving the *coup de grâce* to a deer with his flint knife, a woman, naked to the waist, suckling a curious little quadruped somewhat resembling a *pisote*—in fact, the converse of Romulus and Remus in Maya mythology.

The most interesting of these little pottery objects found this year, however, was, unquestionably, one upon which was inscribed the date 10 Ahau, the end of a Tun 10, followed by the sign for the planet Venus.

This has been referred by Mr. Eric Thompson to the Initial Series date, 9.18.10.0.0, 10 Ahau, 8 Zac, in the year A.D. 521 of our era, according to Spinden's correlation.

Now, it has already been stated that nowhere has the bottom of this part of the acropolis been reached, the deepest excavations showing only the foundations and walls of older buildings. It stands to reason, therefore, that, if this reading of the Initial Series part of the date is correct, the superficial part of this great mass of the acropolis dates from towards the end of cycle nine—that is, the middle of the Maya Old Empire ; but how far back the lower strata of ruins go it is impossible, as yet, to predict, though the extremely un-Maya megalithic terrace might lead us to hope that towards the bottom of the structure may be discovered

evidence which will enable us to link up the Maya with the archaic civilisation, which flourished probably from two to three millennia B.C., and from which it is generally admitted that the Maya may have originally sprung.

Not only may intensive excavation in these ruins of Lubaantun throw light on the origin of the Maya, but it may actually give us a stratigraphic picture of the evolution of their culture throughout the ages, for here, if at all, where stratum overlies stratum, each covering the artifacts and burials of the preceding one, without materially injuring it, will such a record be found.

I spent the last night in the Cabildo, but a very uneasy one, for the communal corn-planting was in progress amongst the Indians, and on the morrow the whole settlement would turn out to aid the individual whose turn it was to plant his corn. He, in his turn, had to feast his assistants royally all that night and the following day. Their training for a hard day's work would hardly be approved by a modern athletic coach. Till midnight all the men of the village sat in the house of their host, eating, drinking, and playing an extraordinarily complicated and noisy game with grains of corn, which gave rise to shouts and loud bursts of laughter at frequent intervals. At midnight the men got up and retired, and their place was taken by the women, who had gone to bed early. The latter's game with corn, however, consisted of the ancient one played by the Maya women through the ages—namely, grinding it on stone *metates*, literally watered by the sweat of their brows, to make corn-paste for the *tortillas* of the workers. In addition they cooked fowls and pork, and were, in fact, kept busy till sunrise, when everyone started out for the plantation.

Next morning we set out early for Punta Gorda, where we arrived soon after mid-day, and at once embarked for Belize in the *Grace W.* We were delayed by grounding on

a shoal, and night overtook us at a little unnamed mangrove islet near Wild Cane Cay. It had a tiny patch of solid land in the centre of the mangrove swamp, upon which grew four scraggy-looking coconut trees. I noticed on landing a number of large land-crabs' holes, and slew two gigantic blue specimens before they could reach safety. I put up a sand-fly net over my cot, as no breeze could penetrate the ring of mangrove by which I was surrounded, and it looked an ideal place for these pests. Next morning, on waking and lifting the net, I at once admitted a cloud of sand-flies, evidently impatiently awaiting an opportunity to attack, and though this close-meshed net is frightfully stuffy to sleep under on a windless night, with a temperature well up in the eighties, it is far preferable to being eaten alive by bloodthirsty phlebotami.

On starting to dress, I found my socks, drawers, and undershirt missing, and, looking around, found the undershirt and one sock projecting from a couple of large land-crab holes, of which there were half a dozen or more beneath my cot. On pulling them out, I found that they were literally torn to ribbons. The second sock and pair of drawers I never saw again. The wretched brutes had evidently, out of sheer malignancy, torn my clothes to shreds with their powerful claws while I slept during the night, and then tried to secrete the fragments down their burrows.

Next day we stopped for lunch at False Cay, even in the bright sunlight a gloomy and repulsive place, covered with mangrove swamp, the trees of which have, for some unaccountable reason, all died over a circle perhaps half a mile in diameter in the centre of the cay. This dead area is dotted with rotting stumps, projecting from a mud flat, covered with half an inch or so of stagnant water, in which disport millions of tiny land-crabs, for which it evidently

forms a splendid breeding-ground. They all scuttled off to their holes like a retreating army on the approach of an enemy. Besides these no life was visible, except a sluggish-looking, slimy, black water-snake, a few almost black lizards, and, hovering in the blue vault overhead, an occasional vulture the colour of a very ancient and dingy black suit, evidently thinking that if there were nothing dead in sight to interest him, there ought to be in such a gloomy place, where the predominant colour-note of the fauna was a dirty black.

The approach to the cay was over a bottom of sandy mud, covered with the long strands of dirty, mud-stained, green sea-grass, from which protruded monstrous corals, some—shaped like great cauliflowers—weighing half a ton, others graceful and pretty, their branches shooting out in all directions like trees, others again with long, thin tendrils resembling lianas. Well hidden beneath the grass lurked colonies of echinids, their black spines constantly erect, awaiting the unwary bare foot, while monstrous red star-fish, like animated masses of raw meat, crawled sluggishly over the sea-grass seeking their prey.

From False Cay we reached Belize that evening without further incident. The season in the bush had, on the whole, been a very successful one. The most important discovery was undoubtedly that of the series of lofty, narrow-roomed temples on the west of the Bacalar Lagoon, to which the name of Tzibanchè was given. A single hieroglyphic inscription only was found amongst these, but further exploration, which I hope to be able to undertake next year, should be productive of valuable information as to the earliest migrations, and possibly the origin, of the Maya race.

The region of Bacalar, in which these temples lie, was, according to their ancient records, the highroad by which the Maya entered Yucatan, and it is not unreasonable to suppose

that here should be found hieroglyphic inscriptions recording the date at which this event occurred.

My discoveries at Ichpaatun, in 1925, show that it took place centuries before it was usually supposed to have done, and Tzibanchè may carry it back to a still earlier period. The idol within its temple at Tuluum is of considerable interest, as it proves conclusively the use to which these curious little shrines, so common along the east coast of Yucatan, were put by their builders, and is probably now unique as the only complete and unbroken temple, with the god within it, still in existence in the Maya area.

It was unfortunate that, owing to a succession of unusually dry seasons, the search to the east of Tikal for the treasure temple described by Carmichael was unsuccessful. Valuable information was, however, acquired as to the nature of the country to be explored, the best means of reaching it, and the best time of the year at which to arrive. Furthermore, as already stated, a part of the territory examined this year may now be excluded, and the search confined to the forests to the east of the *bajo* which lies on the eastern side of the city of Tikal.

I hope to continue this search in 1928.

The discoveries made at Uaxactun are, in my opinion, of great importance, and have already afforded much valuable information with regard to the manners, customs, and religion, architectural achievements, and astronomical knowledge of the early Old Empire Maya.

I hope next year to continue work in Central America, and also to visit certain parts of the east, between the former civilisations of which and that of the Maya it would seem, as the result of recent excavation and exploration, that architectural and artistic affinities exist, too close to be merely fortuitous, which may tend to throw further light

on that vexed question—the possibility of Asiatic influence on pre-Columbian American civilisations.

At Lubaantun a great field seems to be opening up where stratigraphic evidence may be obtained which will give us a picture of the Maya from the earliest times to the post-Columbian decadent period, and may even link them up with the archaic civilisation.

ROUGH SKETCH OF ACROPOLIS OF RUINS OF MINANHÀ

(*See page* 154)

A Great Natural Mound.

B Stone-faced causeway leading to

C Large mound with

c Extension at its north corner.

D D Two pyramidal mounds.

E Flight of stone steps leading to

F Lower platform of great central pyramid.

G Second terrace.

H Small mound on flat summit beneath which was found the filled-in chamber.

K K K Small mounds.

L Mound containing burial cyst.

M Series of terraces leading to

N Oval platform.

O Causeway leading to

P Plaza surrounded by

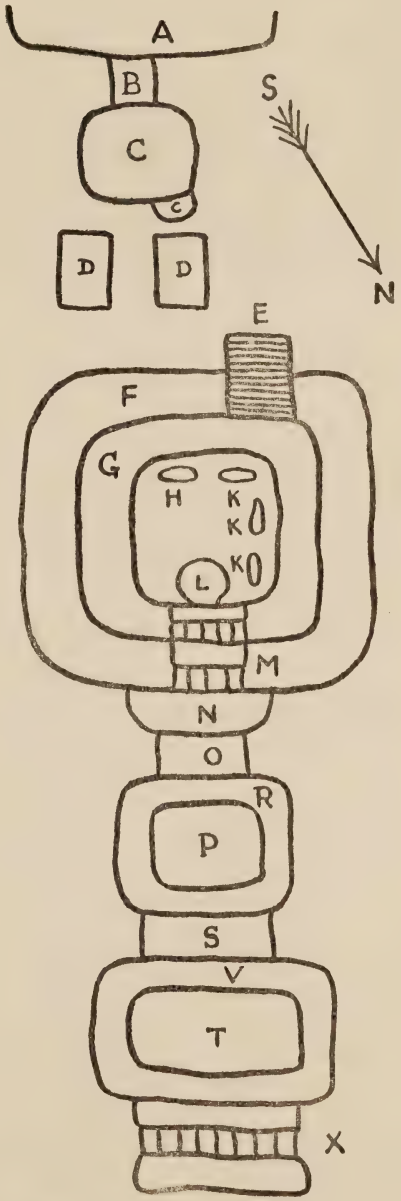
R Wall.

S Causeway leading to

T Plaza surrounded by

V Wall.

X Series of terraces leading to ground level.



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