CHAPTER XIII.

LAS PLAYAS AND PALENQUE.


The land route from S. Juan to Palenque is some thirty or thirty-five leagues; but we were obliged to go by water, which takes about a week, on account of our heavy luggage, consisting of seventy packages! Seventy packages may seem disproportionately large; but it should be recollected that we had to
take impressions, photographs, plans, and last, not least, provide for two months' living amidst ruins. A small steamer was secured, which was to convey us as far as Jonuta, where we should leave it for canoes.

Jonuta was once a populous centre, as the pyramids which occupy part of the village site amply testify. Here antiquities of all kinds have been unearthed, and an enthusiastic archaeologist, Mr. Nattes, possesses a fine collection, which he was kind enough to show me. In it I found many objects very like, sometimes identical with, those on the plateaux. Mr. Nattes is of opinion that the Toltecs occupied the country throughout, and that all the monuments we see were left by them. I need not say that I am delighted to find my theory shared by so distinguished a person.

On the 20th December we at last take possession of our canoes. We row up the Usumacinta, and the next evening are at Potrerillo—a miserable rancho, where the only accommodation is a low, filthy hut, our evening meal a monkey—rather a pleasant change after our salt provisions.

After Potrerillo we scud for some hours along El Chico; then by canal, "rumpido," as far as Catasaja, leaving on our right S. Carlos lagoons, inhabited by Indians who live partly on crocodiles and alligators—a diet which seems to agree with them, for they are accounted the hardiest men in the State.

I had visited these parts in my first expedition, when I noticed live tailless crocodiles in most huts I went into, lying on their backs, their claws and jaws nailed to the ground.

"The tail is cut off," said mine host, "lest in moving it they should break the legs of the person near."

"But how do you capture these horrible creatures?"

"In two ways: with a stout hook, or with the hand."
“Here,” I said, “is a piastra for the man who will procure me such a sight.”

Mine host looked round, called to a young Indian who was outside, and informed him of my wish.

“All right, Señor, nothing easier; come in a boat to the stream on the other side of the village.”

In a few minutes we were at the place of rendezvous, where we found the Indian ready awaiting us, a dagger in his hand, cautioning us to follow without making a noise, as he walked along the high grass which grew on the banks. Suddenly two alligators plunged into the water, and Cyrilo was after them almost at the same time.

After a few minutes, which seemed hours, we spied the tail of the monster violently beating the surface of the water, then the whole body emerged with Cyrilo adhering to the alligator’s belly, then both disappeared again, leaving behind a long bloody streak.

“Well done, Cyrilo, well done!” cried Don Juan.

Yet all that could be seen was the commotion of the water where the struggle was going on; a few minutes more and Cyrilo came up, this time alone, breathing hard, covered with mud, and swimming towards us. I stretched out my hand to help him in, but he leaped into the boat without assistance and sat down quite still for one minute.

“Este can me cortò el dedo—this dog broke my finger,” he said, holding up his hand, of which the first joint of the forefinger was hanging down. “Pero me lo pagò—but I paid him out, and I reckon we’ll soon see his ugly mug. But if not I’ll be after him again.”

Don Juan winked at me. The man was preparing to plunge once more into the murky water when Don Juan exclaimed:

“There he is belly upmost, his breast seamed by four thrusts.”
We secured and towed him to the village. He measured 14 feet 4 inches. I gave the man two piastres instead of one, and twenty francs for his dagger, in commemoration of his feat.

But to return. We plough along the swollen canal, we lose our way, and in a short time find ourselves among shrubs and towering trees; with some difficulty we get back to the lagoon and reach Las Playas de Catasaja late in the evening, when we take possession of an empty house in which to dispose of our party and our numerous packages.

Our next destination is S. Domingo, eight miles distant, but no carriers to convey our luggage are to be found for love or money; our plight might have been awkward had not the mayor offered to send to Palenque to procure as many men as can be had. Meanwhile, we find enough to engage our attention in the place. Don Rodriguez, a Government Inspector of Mines, has lately had the central stone cross which stood in the temple bearing the same name at Palenque, brought here. This tablet, now so well known, has had a chequered existence.

Some thirty years ago, it was taken from its place, and left lying in a forest adjoining the town by the thief, who was unable to carry it further. It was unbroken in 1858, when I found it covered with moss, and took a rather good photograph. A squeeze of the entire monument, composed of three pieces, is to be seen in the Trocadéro. Curiously enough, these pieces are scattered in different countries: one is still in situ, the second at Las Playas, whilst the third is in the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. We give a drawing of this interesting cross, crowned by a symbolic bird, to which a man standing presents an offering. Since the cross was a symbol of Tlaloc, the temple in which it stood must have been dedicated to him, and perhaps Quetzalcoatl also, and it is clear that it was of the same origin as the sepulchral cross at Teotihuacan;
but contrary to some writers, who make the latter proceed from the former, we make the first proceed from the second, for in everything we must go from the simple to the complex, and the primitive style, the simplicity, the archaic aspect of

the cross at Teotihuacan, make it an ascendant and not a descendant of the imaged cross at Palenque, covered with ornamentation denoting an advanced period.

Meanwhile, the men from Palenque have arrived, and our freight is transported in three days to S. Domingo, whither we follow by the last train. After Las Playas, the landscape
opens out into a noble perspective of fields and shady groves; now the eye wanders over the rich flora of the savanna, now it plunges into the unfathomable depths of the forest, through which the road is a succession of triumphal arches, sometimes so closed in as to seem impassable from a short distance. We start hares and peccaries innumerable; we hear the shrill cries of aras, mingled with the howling of zaraguatos, gravely regarding us from their leafy bowers, whilst on the outskirts of the wood, a timid deer gives an astonished look as we approach, ere he betakes himself to green and deeper retreats. To crown the enjoyment of this charming ride, we found a plentiful luncheon awaiting us at the Pulente rancho; bananas and oranges, which we plucked ourselves from the trees, composed our dessert.

The evening found us at S. Domingo, where we took up our quarters with one of two European families settled here. Again the delay caused by the carriers gave us time to take an impression of two slabs, which were formerly inlaid in the pillars supporting the altar in the Temple of the Cross No. 1. In 1840 Stephens found them in the house of two elderly spinsters, who refused to part with them; but after their death the Municipality declared them public property, and had them put up in the church façade, where they are now to be seen; one of them, however, is broken into three pieces. Their dimensions are 6 feet by about 3 feet. The left slab represents a young man magnificently arrayed; he wears a richly-embroidered cape, a collar and medallion round his neck, a beautiful girdle to his waist; the ends of the maxtli are hanging down front and back, cothurni cover his feet and legs up to the knee. On the upper end of his head-dress is the head of a stork, having a fish in his bill, whilst others are ranged below it.

The cross on the altar justifies our seeing in this gorgeously-
attired young man another personification of the god of rain, of spring, of verdure and water, symbolised by the fishes and the stork's head, attributes which are found also on the basement of the Tlaloc of Tacubaya. The other slab represents an old man, clothed in a tiger's skin, blowing out air, with a serpent round his waist, whose tail curls up behind and coils in front, the well-ascertained attributes of Quetzalcoatl, god of wisdom. Tlaloc and Quetzalcoatl are often seen side by side; and we shall meet them
in the Temple of the Cross, when we shall be in a position to advance with some show of truth that the same was dedicated to both deities."

After much disagreeable and unavoidable delay, we found ourselves at Palenque, some six and a half miles east of S. Domingo; we start immediately for the ruins, which are made accessible by a path through the woods opened by Don Rodríguez. El Rio Michol, to the north, seems the limit of the ancient city on that side; to the right and left, starting from the Rio. mounds, hillocks, and vestiges of ruins are noticeable. To the south, the Rio Chacamas washes the base of lofty peaks, which, on this side, encompass the last traces of habitations; the path winds up broad rising ground, seemingly artificial. At a turn of the road, the men carrying our baggage admonish us to look at the palace, which we should never have spied out owing to the luxuriant vegetation which completely hides it. But before we describe the ruins, we will say a few words respecting Cortez’ march through Acala and Honduras. Some writers, thinking the former a city, have attempted to identify it with Palenque, an error which we hope to be able to dispel.

In this ill-advised expedition, his personal retinue consisted of two pages, several musicians, dancers, jugglers, and buffoons, showing more of the effeminacy of an Oriental than the valour of a hardy commander. The Spanish force, amongst whom was Guatemozin, the cacique of Tacuba, and a number of Indians as carriers and attendants, was swelled by 3,000 Mexicans.† Two ships with supplies were to sail along the coast under the command of Simon de Cuenca. From Goatzacoalco, Cortez followed the coast, halted at Tonala, at Ayagualulco, and

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* Sahagun, "Hist. General de las Cosas de la Nueva España," lib. i. cap. v., and lib. ii. cap. i.
† Bernal Diaz, "Conquest of New Spain," tome ii. chap. clxxiv.
seven leagues further crossed a river over a bridge 3,250 feet long; next came Mazapa, whose course runs from Chiapas to Los Dos Brazos. After this point the names mentioned by Diaz are not known; but the march must have been continued along the coast, since inland caciques, some even from distant Teapa, sent Cortez fifty transports with supplies; now the only way for canoes was by El Blanquillo and modern Tabasco. The force must have passed near Frontera or east of it, skirting El Chilapa, an affluent of El Tabasco, and halting at Tepetitan at the head of Chilapa, called next at Iztapan and Acala Mayor, where Cortez was informed by the natives that they would have three large streams and three smaller ones to cross; probably the Usumacinta and its tributaries. That this was the line of march is certain, for had Cortez passed Palenque, he would have had no rivers to cross, and could have marched south without obstacles; whereas the compass and the map furnished the only clue to extricate them from the gloomy labyrinth in which they were involved, and Cortez and his officers, with their chart on the ground, anxiously studied the probable direction of their route, which they decided was to be in an eastern direction.

With the aid of the map furnished by the Indians, and such guides as they could pick up, they continued their march through other villages, and must have passed Ziguatepec, sixteen leagues further, when Cortez inquired of the caciques where the deep and large river he saw discharged itself, and whether they had observed vessels sailing on the sea. He was told that the river discharged itself at Xicalango, situated on one of the tributaries of the Usumacinta, some twenty or twenty-five leagues from Palenque as a bird flies—a considerable distance in these wooded regions.

From Ziguatepec Cortez sent two of his followers to look for the ships, which had orders to wait at Xicalango; but when
they reached the place they found the crews had been massacred and the ships destroyed by the Indians.

The Spaniards next halted at Acalan, a *district composed of some twenty villages*; very unlike the approaches to Palenque, which is situated on the first rising ground of the Cordillera. Cogolludo,* who follows Herrera, says that the capital of the great province of Acalan was Izancanac, whose king, Apoxpalon, had a palace sufficiently large to accommodate all the Spaniards without displacing the inmates, and that the multitudes of Indian auxiliaries were quartered in the town. This does not tally with what is known of Palenque, where, save the palace, all the houses and temples were too small ever to have made it possible to accommodate large numbers, unless they were distributed all over the town.

All the various indications we can glean with regard to Izancanac, lead us to assume that it was situated somewhere on the banks of S. Pedro, a confluent of the Usumacinta, an assumption which becomes almost a certainty, since that was the direct road to Honduras, and still more so when we find that they held on their toilsome way in the direction of Peten, reaching Chaltuna and Tayasal after three or four days' march, to do which, had they come from Palenque, they must have employed at least twenty days.

But what has become of Izancanac? Where are the great buildings which could accommodate hundreds of people? The very site is unknown, whilst Palenque is still to be seen.† Although it is so difficult to determine the route held by Cortez, it affords, nevertheless, the best account we have relating to the organisation of the regions he traversed. He observed throughout independent caciques, a country divided into more or less important

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† Bernal Díaz, tome ii. chaps. clxxv., clxxvi., clxxvii.
provinces, making it probable that the civilising and powerful influence which had knit these peoples into a mighty empire, had long ceased to be felt among these restless populations which, left to their warlike instincts, lived in constant warfare, as, for instance, in Yucatan after the fall of the dominant Cocomes and Tutulxius.

But to return. That Palenque was standing at that time, or at any rate had not been long abandoned, is placed beyond a doubt by Jose Antonio Calderon,* in his letter dated 15th December, 1774, in which he mentions having discovered eighteen palaces, twenty great buildings, and a hundred and sixty-eight houses, in one week, clearly proving that the forest which has grown since over the structures had not assumed such vast proportions, and that some idea could still be formed of the city; and if such was the case at that date, are we not justified in our assumption that this city was standing and inhabited at the Conquest in 1520?

Before Calderon, Garcia in 1729 had already mentioned the ruins of Palenque, but unfortunately his work has not been found; and Juarros, in his account of Chiapas,† says: “There is no doubt that this region has been inhabited by a cultured and mighty nation, shown in the imposing piles of buildings at Culhuacan and Tollan, traces of which are noticeable near Ocosingo and Palenque.” Tollan (Palenque), Culhuacan (Ocosingo), bespeak that these names were still remembered by the Indians as late as the seventeenth century, that they owed their origin to the Toltecs, since the same appellations occur on the plateaux, and were carried by the emigrants to their later settlements in remembrance of their older ones—a constant practice among the Indians; and their wanderings from north to south were marked by cities and colonies having appellations which are found both on the plateaux and in Chiapas. The same thing happens now

† Juarros, “Compend. de la Hist. de la Ciudad de Guatemala,” tome i. chap. iv.
in every new colony, for which instances might be given *ad infinitum.*

Fray Tello tells us that the Spaniards found in Jalisco localities and cities whose names existed already in the Mexican Valley, such as Ameca, Culhuacán, Tequicistlan, Juchitan, etc.;* and Díaz, in his account of Rangre's expedition, writes: "They set out to subdue the provinces of Cematan and Tulapan in the south." Unfortunately the narrative stops at Cematan, and we have to be satisfied with the bare mention of Tulapan, which is, however, sufficient for our purpose.

Taking the palace as a starting-point, it may be said that the city is built in the form of an amphitheatre, on the lowest slopes of the lofty Cordillera beyond; its high position afforded a magnificent view over the forest-covered plain below stretching as far as the sea. Some travellers have fancied they saw the sea from the summits of the temples, but it is more likely to have been Catasaja lagoon, some ten leagues to the north, for it is doubtful if at this height (650 feet), the ocean is visible even on the clearest day. We find ourselves on the pyramid, we are in the palace, and my impressions, as a mature man, are very different to what they were seven and-twenty years ago, when my appreciation of the structure was very indifferent, while now my admiration for this massive palace, these ruined temples, these pyramids, is profound, nay, almost overpowering. In all these structures, the builder levelled out the ground in narrow terraces, on which artificial elevations of pyramidal form were reared, which on the hillside were faced with hewn stones, and divided into storeys, as we have seen at Teotihuacan. I notice many changes since I was here before; portions of walls, the whole front of the Temple of the Cross (No. 1) have given

way, and in the Lion's Temple the fine bas-relief over the altar has disappeared. It is sad to calculate how much more havoc another fifty years will make; there will be nothing, probably, but a mass of mouldering ruins, such as are met with in the woods, on the low hills, and the plain around.

Whilst our men are clearing the palace, we penetrate the thick forest through which some of our Indians open out a passage. We recognise the buildings that have been described, but throughout our progress we see nothing but heaps of unformed ruins. We take up our quarters in the palace itself; our kitchen and dining-room are in the outward gallery of the eastern entrance, whilst our sleeping apartments are in the eastern gallery of the inner wing. From our dining-room we look out on the forest, and our bedrooms open on the courtyard of the palace. Although Indians as a rule are apathetic, they are brisk and energetic enough
with the *machete*, with which they open out a path so rapidly that one can walk after them a normal pace without stopping, and they fell enormous trees as easily as Europeans would shrubs.

We will begin with the palace, giving the plan of the north portion of the corridors and the tower; we can vouch for the accuracy of our plan, although it differs entirely from those which have been hitherto published.

The palace consisted of two distinct parts (this has not been understood by any of my predecessors, not even Waldeck); a double gallery ran along the east, north, and west sides, surrounding an inner structure, likewise with a double gallery and two courtyards of different dimensions; it was a kind of covered walk or cloister quite separate from the remaining edifice, which to the south must have constituted the dwelling proper. The entire pile of building was reared on the same platform, forming an irregular quadrilateral, and if we except the galleries, nothing seems to have been constructed systematically or on a given plan: the various parts are of different dimensions or different heights, and the courts enclosed within the galleries form trapezes instead of rectangles, one measuring 6 feet 7 inches more to the north than to the south, so that the structures are not parallel. To the south, which it is agreed to consider as forming the dwelling apartments, this confusion is more apparent and complete, for here they seem to have dispensed with any plan at all; buildings large and small reared on different levels are found, in juxtaposition, or at some distance from each other; the roof is sloping or perpendicular, the decorations copious or scanty according to the whim of the artist; some of the apartments, as compared to others, are underground and entered by gloomy steps which receive a dim light from the south side of the pyramid, here only a few feet from the ground.
In these subterraneous apartments are three large stone tables with sculptured edges; they are called altars, beds, sacrificial and dining tables, by different writers, the latter appellation seems the most probable. The independent position of the cloister is very clear in our cut; the left pillar is seen supporting the extremity of the frieze and the end of the roof, which terminated here as it did on the west side.

All travellers before us have surrounded the entire palace with this gallery, as they have surrounded the great pyramid on which the palace stands with a continuous stairway, but quite erroneously, as is clearly shown in our photograph, which cannot be wrong, and which presents a perpendicular wall throughout its length. The pyramid was divided on the east, north, and west sides,
which were higher, into three or four platforms of which we found traces in the north portion.

We have mentioned in a former chapter that similar sections or platforms are found in all the pyramids of a certain height discovered by us at Palenque, which, according to tradition, had their prototypes in the Uplands; and this is particularly noticeable on the north side of the pyramid, where the palace façade is completely destroyed. Here, and not on the east side, as some have supposed, was the entrance, sufficiently proved by the wealth of ornamentation displayed on this portion of the pyramid, and

![Elevation, Section, Plan of Pyramid in the Palace of Palenque](image)

not observable anywhere else. The base was incrusted with fine slabs some 4 feet 8 inches high, with intervening pillars in relief some 6 feet apart, topped by a cornice of some 6 inches. Above this stood the wall of the second platform, indicated by traces of a stairway which occupied the centre and led to the gallery. This pyramid was the basement on which the palace was reared; it is irregular on all its sides, contrary to the drawings of some explorers, who have given it a symmetrical shape and equal elevation. It is not easy to see how the mistake could arise, for its irregularity is very apparent. The highest elevation is found on the north side, measuring over 22 feet; the east and west sides slope down, ending at the south-east angle with a perpen-
haya detenido en la desembocadura del río, descendemos por él siguiendo la orilla izquierda. Dos horas después doblamos la última punta del Parú y entramos en las aguas del gran río de las Amazonas, que vemos por segunda vez. Enfrente hay una casa donde veo a mis hombres ocupados en hacerse la comida.

Hace cincuenta días que hemos salido del país de los trios y cuarenta y uno de navegación por el Parú.

He terminado mi segundo viaje por la Guayana, pero todavía tengo que completar un trabajo: cuando mi primer viaje estaba tan cansado, tan enfermo, que no pude terminar el trazado del Yary. Tenía ya la parte más interesante del río, surcada por vapores. Habíanme asegurado que este trazado estaba ya hecho; pero después de adquirir informes, supe que el Yary carecía de carta desde su origen hasta su desembocadura. Sé que dos vapores remontan el bajo Yary el 1.º de cada mes; si queremos aprovecharlos, no tenemos tiempo que perder, porque sólo me quedan dos días para pasar del Parú al Yary. No es posible andar el camino a pie, porque las tierras bajas del Amazonas están surcadas por inﬁnidad de corrientes: forzoso es, pues, navegar, pero nuestras piraguas sin quillas no pueden resistir el embate de las oleadas del Amazonas, que es un verdadero océano de agua dulce. Las canoas buenas están de viaje, y sólo me queda una embarcación vieja que hace agua como una cesta. Pido al patron que me conduzca al Yary, pero se niega, pretextando, y no sin razón, el mal estado de su barca. Me encojo de hombros, y sin hacer caso de sus objeciones, le contesto con un tono que no admite réplica:

—Que calafateen en seguida esa barca de cualquier modo; es menester que partamos esta noche con el reﬂuo.

Arreglo mis cuentas con los indios apalais que me han acompañado hasta aquí: como he quedado muy satisfecho de sus servicios, les pago generosamente y les entrego una caja de machetes y de hachas para Olori y los indios que huyeron por temor á una batalla.
dicicular corner of 6 feet 6 inches; whilst at the south-west corner they are level with the ground. It is the arrangement of all pyramids which were raised on platforms imperfectly levelled out; they are always found higher on the north side facing the plain, than on the south side towards the sierra. This was observable in the pyramids supporting the four buildings to the north of the palace, in the Temple of Inscriptions, the Temple of the Cross No. 1, that of the Cross No. 2, and in the mound known as Cerro Alto, over 487 feet high on the north side, and nearly on a level with the crest of the low hills to the south, and many more.

At the south-east angle of the great pyramid, is a covered canal which drained a mountain stream from the south, but has been long since blocked up, whilst the torrent has found a natural bed some 75 feet from the pyramid, and falls back into the canal 162 feet beyond. Our cut of the outer façade of the east gallery will enable the reader to see the mistake pointed out by us; it shows clearly the extremity of the gallery, and its outline at the angle of the frieze to the south. This outline, while restoring the projecting cornice now wanting, faithfully reproduces the outline of the Toltec calli, given in our chapter on Tula. The west front, as seen in the plan and subsequent photographs, has exactly the same arrangement, so that doubt is impossible. The same writers have given a flight of steps to the eastern façade, while in our drawing a perpendicular wall replaces it, and agreeably to what has been stated, we place the stairs on the north side, where traces were found by us. That this is its proper place is made probable by four beautiful buildings situated on this side some 487 feet beyond, on the same platform, and apparently part of the same pile of building. This side of the gallery was supported by six pillars 6 feet 7 inches wide, by 12 feet high; the corner pillar is decorated with forty katunes in fairly good preservation; the others with bas-reliefs of two or three figures and inscriptions
in stucco or hard plaster, partly destroyed. Stephens reproduced the one on the fifth pillar to the right, which stands alone, the building it supported having fallen. It was then in good preservation, though now much defaced; from Stephens' drawing, however, it would be difficult to form an idea of the high degree of perfection of these reliefs.

By a lucky chance, we were able to bring to light one of the figures, as perfect and as fresh as on the day it left the artist's hands, and from it we are able to find out the way the artist did his work. In our cut this relic is on the centre pillar, which was entirely covered with a thick calcareous coating, caused by water trickling from the cornice; under this coating the faint outline of three figures was just perceptible. My first attempt to uncover the standing figure was not successful, for the hammer brought both the layer of lime and part of the head of the figure with it. I was more cautious in attacking the sitting figure to the left, and fortunate enough to bring it to light without breaking so much as a bead round his neck, a charming specimen of an art which was not even suspected. It represents a man seated Turkish fashion, his head turned in a contemplative attitude towards the standing figure to the centre of the pillar, the forefinger of the left hand pointing to him, while the right rests on his knee; his head-dress is a kind of mitre with a tuft of feathers in strong relief, a head-dress we shall meet again at Lorillard; a beautiful collar is round his neck, his cape like that worn by ladies at the present day, bracelets are round his arms, his dress below
the girdle is like the cape. I immediately had a drawing taken of this *chef-d'œuvre*; but, having inadvertently broken some beads and the spangles round his arm, I was surprised to find it perfectly modelled underneath. I undressed the figure, which was throughout beautifully finished. From this it was clear that the artist modelled first his figures, and that drapery and ornaments were added afterwards, which we found was also the case for the ornamentation on the monuments, as well as for the Toltec idols, the Tlalocs of our cemetery, and some figures at Teotihuacan.

The inside of the gallery where we had our drawing-room and kitchen was decorated with medallions, personating, in all probability, priests and priestesses; our cut is of the only one in pretty good preservation. To judge from the head-dress and delicate features, it portrays a woman of the same type as our sitting figure; it is a Palenque, a conventional, a deformed type, of which we shall speak again. The medallion is topped by four hieroglyphics, "Katunes," giving the name of the person, surrounded by curious but elegant ornaments, recalling the rococo style of Louis XV.; while to the right is seen the outline of a head deficient of its head-dress. This medallion, although somewhat defaced, shows as careful modelling as the sitting figure, and seems to us very remarkable.
The east gallery measures 114 feet in length; the north gallery, which is broken down, 185 feet; the west gallery 102 feet only; and the intervening space between the two northern galleries, about 175 feet; consequently there is a difference of 11 feet in the length of the north and south galleries, proving once more the confusion mentioned above. The main court is reached by an arch widening at the top, shaped like a trefoil, giving access to a broad staircase of seven steps 16 inches high. On each side are sculptured, in low relief, a group of human figures, occupying the basement of the gallery formed by huge stone slabs inclined at the same angle as the
stairs, five to the right, four to the left, representing priests in uncomfortable attitudes. Mitres cover their heads; collars, bracelets, and maxtlis are their only covering; the maxtl of the first figure is covered with hieroglyphs. The court measures upwards of 61 feet to the north and east, only 55 feet to the south, and 71 feet to the west; in fact, as irregular as can be well imagined. To the south of this court is a small structure

![Small building to the south of the palace court.](image)

with three openings, giving some idea of what the dwellings were like, and the curious medley of these edifices.

In effect, we find one sunk about the gallery to the right, with a lower building to the left, and a frieze or perpendicular entablature topped by a flat roof, whilst both roof and entablature slope on the small edifice. In this portion of the palace Stephens found some wooden fragments, of very rare occurrence at Palenque, on account of its damp climate; while at Comalcalco, which is older and damper still, none have been found.
The dilapidated condition of the small edifice robs it of some of its interest; yet the interior and the frieze furnish valuable details of ornamentation. First comes a decorative fragment round the niches or openings in the shape of a Tau, found both in the galleries and the apartments of the palace; next a portion of a frieze decoration in the same building, but so defaced that nothing is distinguishable, save the head of a fantastic dragon, whose neck is framed with coils, palms, or feathers, emblems of Quetzalcoatl; and lastly the ornamentation over the entrance of a round, flat-topped edifice, by far the most interesting because of the head seen in the centre with nose and forehead straight, contrasting with the retreating foreheads of the reliefs on both pillars and temples; proving that the latter are conventional types, exaggerated likenesses of a particular family, whether warrior or priest, rather than the faithful portraiture of a race. We shall also find this type at Uxmal.

Torquemada says with regard to these deformations in Mexico: "They defaced their faces so as to acquire an appearance of ferocity, enlarging their ears, nostrils, and lips by introducing silver, gold, or stone jewels. It had the twofold use of acting as a scare against their enemies and as a personal improvement; and that they might look fierce in war, chiefs were obliged in some districts to make their heads long and their foreheads broad; as Hippocrates relates of microcephales, so did these people practise." And again: "Some have pointed heads, square flat foreheads, whilst others are like the Mexicans and Peruvians, who had and still have heads something like a martillo, hammer, or better still, like a ship (navio)," meaning oblong, probably.

Landa tells nearly the same thing as to these practices in

* Torquemada, "Monarquia Indiana," lib. xiv. cap. xxiv.  † Ibid. cap. xxv.
Yucatan, corroborating Torquemada. These defaced heads have given rise to wild theories; some saw in these reliefs sun-
kings who, in mythical times, had travelled thither from Europe; it had been more natural to take them as representations of microcephales worshipped by these people as monstrae.

But to return. The east front in the inner wing of the palace is nearly intact—the richest in ornamentation, and the portion of the palace where the peculiarities of this architecture are best studied. The structure intervening between the two courts consists of two roofed galleries, supported on each side by six pillars, enclosing five large arches. The entrance is through the central arch, which is somewhat larger than the others, and is preceded by a flight of steps having hieroglyphics in relief; on each side of it were two large decorative figures, one of which is still standing. The base, which is remarkable, has three small platforms, sustained by sculptured pillars divided by large retreating slabs, with small squares of hieroglyphics. The pillars were covered on the outer and lateral sides with reliefs in cement, vestiges of which are still discernible. The lintels over the doorways of the gallery have disappeared; they were of red zapote wood, and their impress is unmistakable. These ornamental woods cannot all have long been demolished; for in Palenque, Mr. Kohler showed me a yard-measure and a stick he had had made out of a lintel found among the ruins.

These facts, taken altogether, seem to indicate that the buildings at Palenque are not so old as is supposed. The roof in the upper portion of the palace slopes gently, and the entablature is so marvellously rich, that I found fresh details every time I visited it. The frieze was decorated with seven enormous heads; the last one to the right has still visible the mouth, nose, and eyebrows. These heads were obtained by means of slabs enclosed in the wall as stays to the cement, which was modelled by the sculptor whilst in this soft state. The central figure over the door of the gallery is the largest; each seems
sólo tienen agujereadas las orejas, sino también el lóbulo y las alas de la nariz así como los labios. Treinta personas que viven en una gran cabaña (*maloca*) cubierta de hojas de palmera, nos reciben gritando: *Osu, osu* que sin duda significa amigo. En el descampado encontramos cinco cráneos humanos puestos en estacas. El estudio de estos objetos antropológicos que actualmente están en el Museo de París, nos permite afirmar que los indios del Iza no se diferencian de los de la Guayana.

Al llegar a bordo, no me falta trabajo. Durante mi ausencia, ha caído un árbol corpulento y podrido sobre un indio que se ocupaba en cargar leña y el cual ha tenido la gran suerte de que el árbol no le rompiera la columna vertebral: verdad es que ha recibido una ancha herida, muy parecida a un sablazo, en la región lumbar. Después de contener la hemorragia, junto los tejidos haciendo algunas suturas.

Navegamos por espacio de diez días sin detenernos más que para cargar leña. A partir de las islas Repiniuna, por las que pasamos a las seis de la mañana del 3 de mayo, tan sólo viajamos de día. En este franqueamos el primer punto que presenta algún riesgo, el banco del Apihy, así llamado del nombre de un vapor que ha encallado cuando bajaba por el río con un cargamento de quina.

7 de mayo.—Observamos que el río ha bajado un pie durante la noche, lo cual nos sobresalta tanto más cuanto que llegamos a parajes de difícil paso. En efecto, el paso de Cosacunti requiere mucha prudencia; el río, que es aquí muy ancho, sólo tiene de dos a tres metros de profundidad, y es preciso buscar el canal sonda en mano. Al querer doblar la isla Patana nos vemos obligados a retroceder, y encontramos un paso cerca de la orilla izquierda. Un poco más arriba, tenemos que esquivar un gran banco de arena.

Siguiendo la orilla derecha encallamos en un banco en donde el *Apihy* ha pasado diez días varado. Una ligera avenida que ocurre durante la noche nos pone á flote, y el 6 por la mañana retrocedemos para seguir la orilla izquierda; pero no tardamos en varar de nuevo. Salimos del mal paso, y cuatro kilómetros más arriba nos metemos de tal modo en un banco de arena que nos es imposible salir de él, y nos quedamos encallados desde el medio día hasta las dos y media de la tarde del día siguiente. Todos los esfuerzos hechos para sacar el buque han sido inútiles, y únicamente hemos podido salir del banco gracias á una crecida de medio metro.

El 7 á las seis de la mañana la temperatura es de 22°, 5 y á las 12 de 24°. El promedio de la presión barométrica es de 736 milímetros.

8 de mayo.—Navegamos todo el día, pero muy despacio y sondando siempre. La velocidad del vapor ápenas es igual á la de un hombre á paso regular.

El 9 al medio día llegamos á un caserío llamado Concepción y habitado por unos veinte indios medio civilizados, los cuales van á veces al Yapura remontando un pequeño afluente situado dos kilómetros más arriba, y después de tres días de marcha por tierra, llegan á un afluente del Yapura llamado Meccaya por el cual bajan en canoa.

Nos sorprende la noche un poco más abajo de un platánar junto al cual viven dos familias de indios dirigidas por un colombiano. Estamos muy cerca de un afluente de la derecha
to have had on either side statues life-size in high relief, and traces of them occur throughout. Sometimes it is the distinct outline of the fallen relief, sometimes it is a leg, sometimes part of a torso. Near the central figure to the left, we traced the entire lower portion of one of the figures, which brings to our mind the fragment we found at Comalcalco (vide chap. Comalcalco). If this frieze were crowned by a light cornice, with stucco ornaments lozenge-shaped, if the roof were likewise enriched with sculpture and reliefs, some idea would be had of this magnificent and noble edifice. Besides a photograph, we
give the restoration of the palace, as near the truth as could be obtained with the aid of a plan and details drawn upon the spot.

The gallery inside was decorated with fantastic, terrible, monstrous figures of Indian deities. Our cut shows the best preserved, if we except the relief, which recalls the masks on the frieze. It may also be observed that the north end is a plain wall, which was separated from the fallen gallery by a narrow passage, while to the south the double gallery ended with two apertures leading to the yard where stands the palace tower. The gallery opposite to this is connected with the west gallery by a narrow doorway, the interior of which is quite plain; if medallions were here, no trace is left of them on the polished stucco walls. This gallery opens on a small courtyard, blocked up by the west wing of the palace to the west, by the main gallery to the north, and by the tower to the south. This courtyard is likewise irregular and much narrower than the other, measuring 19 feet 6 inches to the north, and 22 feet to the south. The basement of the gallery in this court is as rich as in the main gallery; sculptured pillars are distributed at a distance of 6 feet, divided by beautiful flags with katunes, which fit admirably.

The tower is not the least curiosity in this wonderful palace; trees grow over and about it, whose roots surround the walls like iron circles; unfortunately every explorer, whether to draw or photograph it, has had the roots of the trees removed, and this will greatly accelerate its complete downfall. It is a square tower, which rose by three storeys over a ground floor, ornamented to the north with pointed niches; the top storey has disappeared, and the great trees to the right bend over, ominously threatening it with utter destruction. It is not unlike the Comalcalco tower; but the decorations were in all probability less rich, for beyond
—¿No ha oído V. hablar de un inglés que acaba de ser asesinado en el Napo? me dice.
—Sí.
—¿No conoce V. al asesino? Pues es su futuro compañero de viaje.
Esta mañana el pirata de los Andes había bebido mucha cachasa (aguardiente de caña); estaba fuera de sí y hablaba solo mirando unos papeles que había en su pagara. Después de ofrecerme un vaso se durmió, y entonces yo lei un papel que había dejado en el suelo. Era un acta de acusación de asesinato contra el llamado Santa Cruz.
—No se marche V. con él, me repite Valeriano; de lo contrario tenga V. por seguro que le asesinará.

Por la tarde, regalo unas cuantas botellas de vino á mis compañeros de viaje: es el trago de despedida. Estoy firmemente resuelto á ponerme en marcha mañana temprano.

El 16, á las ocho de la mañana, estrecho la mano á mis compañeros y me acomodo en una embarcación. Valeriano me sigue con la vista desde la popa del vapor, y habiéndome vuelto, veo que agita el sombrero, gritando: ¡Adios! Un minuto después, el Canumán dobla una punta y dejo de verle.

El río es muy angosto y por tanto rápido, teniendo mis hombres que remar vigorosamente contra la corriente. Al medio día pasamos por delante de un pequeño afluente de la derecha llamado Cuemby, y á los pocos momentos nos detenemos en una playa que se llama Kuri.
—¿Qué significa esa palabra? pregunto á Gonzalo.
Sin contestarme nada, coge un puñado de arena, lo coloca sobre su ancho remo, y manteniéndolo sobre el río, la lava echando agua con la mano. Quitadas las guijas, arrastrada la arena poco á poco, quedan en medio del remo algunas partículas amarillas y brillantes.
—Kuri, me dice, es esto: oro.

Me dicen que el río San Miguel tiene ricos aluviones auríferos. Santa Cruz ha encontrado vestigios de un placer ocupado por los españoles poco tiempo después de la conquista. Los indios actuales recogen todavía un poco de oro que venden á Santa Cruz á cambio de los objetos más indispensables.

17 de mayo.—Ha llovido toda la noche: obligado á dormir en la canoa, sobre los fardos, me levanto con mucho dolor en los riñones. Gonzalo, que se había acostado á mi lado, ha tenido que levantarse á cada momento para achicar el agua de la canoa. El río, que ha crecido metro y medio durante la noche, baja de pronto por la mañana, y siendo muy corta la amarra de mi canoa, queda esta fuera del agua por la proa y se va hundiendo poco á poco por la popa.

Almorzamos un agami cocido con plátanos: este plato, condimentado con mucho pimientó, se llama sancocho.

Antes de partir, cortamos varas y horquillas para empujar la canoa apoyando las primeras en el fondo ó enganchando las segundas á las ramas de los árboles que bordean la orilla.

El 18 andamos muy despacio á causa de la velocidad de la corriente, y por la tarde nos cuesta trabajo encontrar un sitio á propósito para pernoctar, teniendo que detenernos en un banco cenagoso cubierto de cañaverales que está sumergido durante las grandes lluvias. Santa
some stucco coatings still facing some portions, I saw nothing in the remains which could compare with the great decorative subjects of that city.

The west wing of the palace is the best preserved, but unlike the other two, it has no longer a double gallery. The interior has three long, narrow apartments which open on the courtyard, and communicate with the exterior by two doorways at each end. The outer gallery is also the best preserved; the façade is entire, except the centre of the north-west angle, while all the pillars still bear traces of the beautiful reliefs with which they were once ornamented.

The south end of this gallery shows clearly that the monu-
ment ended here, and that the cloisters, as we have named them, constituted a separate pile, which was divided from the group of dwellings. Opposite to this, some 325 feet distant to the west, rose another pyramid crowned with a temple, of which nothing but mouldering ruins remain.
CHAPTER XIV.

PALENQUE. TEMPLES.


Some writers have called Palenque a capital, and the great edifice known as the palace a royal mansion, but they have erred, for if there was a royal palace it was not the one we have described. Like Teotihuacan, Izamal, and Cozumel, Palenque was a holy place, an important religious centre, a city which was resorted
to as a place of pilgrimage, teeming with shrines and temples, a vast and much-sought burial-place. In this and in no other way can be explained the silence surrounding this great city, which was probably peopled by a floating population dispersed at the first alarm of the Conquest.

This important city is apparently without civic architecture; no public buildings are found, there seems to have been nothing but temples and tombs. Consequently the great edifice was not a royal palace, but rather a priestly habitation, a magnificent convent occupied by the higher clergy of this holy centre, as the reliefs everywhere attest.

Had Palenque been the capital of an empire, the palace a kingly mansion, the history of her people, fragments of domestic life, pageants, recitals of battles and conquests, would be found among the reliefs which everywhere cover her edifices, as in Mexico, at Chichen-Itza and other cities in Yucatan; whereas the reliefs in Palenque show nothing of the kind. On them we behold peaceful, stately subjects, usually a personage standing with a sceptre, sometimes a calm, majestic figure whose mouth emits a flame, emblem of speech and oratory. They are surrounded by prostrated acolytes, whose bearing is neither that of slaves nor of captives; for the expression of their countenance, if submissive, is open and serene, and their peaceful attitude indicates worshippers and believers; no arms are found among these multitudes, nor spear, nor shield, nor bow, nor arrow, nothing but preachers and devotees.

The interest attaching to these studies is certainly profound and sincere, yet it does not entirely banish the consciousness of our very arduous life among these ruins. The rain is incessant; the damp seems to penetrate the very marrow of our bones; a vegetable mould settles on our hats which we are obliged to brush off daily; we live in mud, we are covered with mud, we
breathe in mud, whether amongst the ruins or wandering away from them; the ground is so slippery that we are as often on our backs as on our feet.

No rest for the explorer, is the fiat that has gone forth. At night the walls, which are covered with greenish moss, trickle down on our weary heads and awake us out of our sleep; in the day-time we are a prey to swarms of insects, rodadores, mosquitoes, and garrapatas. It is impossible to bear up long against such odds, and first young Lemaire, next Alfonso the cook, are laid up with malaria. Julian and I are the only two of the party whom this scourge has spared. Yet this wretched life is not without some gleams of sunshine. Since our men opened a large space in front of the palace, and cleared the courtyard of the dense vegetation which blocked it up completely, allowing a free passage for the air to circulate, the birds have not been slow to avail themselves of this new retreat, and our mornings and evenings are cheered by their sweet notes. We have our night concerts also, when innumerable creatures, whose names we know not, mingle their voices with the chirping of the cricket, the song of the cicala, the croaking of frogs, followed by the howling of huge monkeys, which sounds like the roaring of lions and tigers; all this is new to us, and not without a certain amount of excitement, yet it sinks into utter insignificance as compared with the great joy of our discoveries, the ever fresh interest of our photographs, the looking forward with immense satisfaction to the time when we shall produce the splendid squeezes of these grand, mysterious inscriptions, not yet found in any museum. Well weighed together, these things are calculated to make us forget the hardships and troubles of the moment.

Quinine has done wonders; our men are themselves again, and Alfonso, to make us forget the meagre fare he inflicted
upon us during his illness, served up a magnificent luncheon to celebrate his recovery. The reader may like to read the menu of a déjeuner in the wilds of America:—


I am not sure about the order of succession, but I can vouch for the items being correct, from which it may be seen that even at Palenque, with fine weather and a grateful cook, one need not starve, but he would be greatly mistaken who thought that this was our every day's fare. Let us return to graver concerns.

The Temple of Inscriptions is the largest known at Palenque, standing on a pyramid of some 48 feet high, to the south-west angle of the palace; its façade, 74 feet by nearly 25 deep, is composed of a vast gallery occupying the whole front, and of three compartments of different sizes, a large central chamber and two small ones at the sides. The front gallery is pierced with five apertures, supported by six pillars of 6 feet 9 inches by 3 feet 7 inches thick. The two corner pillars were covered with katunes, and the other four with bas-reliefs. No sanctuary is found in the building known as the Temple of Inscriptions, but both the gallery and the central room have flagstones covered with inscriptions. Two panels enclosed in the wall of the gallery measure 13 feet wide by 7 feet 8 inches high, one in the central chamber is over 7 feet by 6 feet. Amidst the katunes of this panel Waldeck has seen fit to place three or four elephants. What end did he propose to himself in giving this fictitious representation? Presumably to give a prehistoric origin to these ruins, since it is an ascertained fact that elephants in a fossil state
only have been found on the American continent. It is needless to add that neither Catherwood, who drew these inscriptions most minutely, nor myself who brought impressions of them away, nor living man, ever saw these elephants and their fine trunks.

But such is the mischief engendered by preconceived opinions. With some writers it would seem that to give a recent date to these monuments would deprive them of all interest. It would have been fortunate had explorers been imbued with fewer prejudices and gifted with a little more common sense, for then we should have known the truth with regard to these ruins long since. Of all the buildings the temple was the best preserved, as seen in every detail. The floor, which in the palace is but a layer of plaster, is laid down here with beautiful slabs 9 feet 9 inches on one side by 5 feet by 7 inches thick.

The roof is unfortunately in a very ruinous state, and the dense vegetation which covers it prevents seeing anything of the large figures which presumably occupied its surface; even a photograph is difficult to get, for want of sufficient space, and the one we give is not a success.

Three other temples are found on a plateau, some 200 yards south-east of the palace at the foot of Cerro Alto. First in order is a small temple of the Sun, in a perfect state of preservation; the front measures 38 feet by 27 feet deep. The pilasters, the roof, and superstructure, were all covered with sculptures and complicated decorations. Any one who is acquainted with sacred Japanese architecture would be struck with the resemblance of this temple to a Japanese sanctuary; and this is very clearly seen in our cut. How is this to be explained? A theory might be started with respect to the probable Asiatic origin of the Toltec tribes; of the influence of a Japanese civilisation, through the steady traffic they formerly
carried on, on the coast north-west of America, as also by fortuitous immigrations resulting from shipwrecks. In the present day, the average of Japanese vessels shipwrecked on
Biblioteca

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