like a cool, pleasant grove, for each hut stands on ground covering a quarter of an acre planted with ramon. Meridan ladies are never seen out of doors except at church, or during their evening drive. Church hours are unusually early here; beginning at three a.m., when all the bells of the town are set ringing, to awake, I suppose, a slumbering population.

Meridans are sociable and more conversant with the questions of the day than might be expected: two scholars, Eligio and Canon Ancona, have written both of the times preceding and those following the Conquest; while the rising generation of men is studious, intelligent, and manly; literary meetings, periodicals, reviews, concerts, theatres, and dances, keep the population pleasantly occupied. The civility I experienced with regard to my mission was very welcome and flattering to my self-respect, the good canon presenting me with an obsidian sceptre, a marvel of workmanship, now to be seen in the Trocadéro. This people, unlike the Mexicans of the Uplands, are good men of business, and what trade or industry the country possesses is entirely in their own hands. They have the characteristics of a race in its manhood, enduring, self-possessed, patient, and industrious. The only falling off noticeable (due to the climate) is a diminution in their stature, and a disproportionately large female element. Never were their qualities better tested than during their social war, when they stood single-handed and succeeded, after years of hard fighting and sore distress, in recovering their municipal rights.*

Their soil may be poor, they may not have mineral wealth like their neighbours, but their thrift and industrious habits bring their own reward. It would be interesting to tell the

* See note at end.
long struggle of this gallant people to regain their independence; suffice it to say that the risings of the natives began in 1761, to break forth into a formidable insurrection in 1846, which has continued with hardly any interruption to the present day.

The Indian, whether his spirit is broken by long oppression, or from some other cause, seems to shrink and melt away at the approach of the white man, and to retire more and more from the beaten paths of civilisation.

The environs of Merida are interspersed with numerous haciendas; amongst these Ascorra is certainly one of the most picturesque. Three norias, or deep wells, give ample water
for the requirements of the household, the irrigation of the garden, and the plantation.

The house, with its verandah festooned with creepers, its flower-beds, shrubs, and palms, is a charming picture of beauty and comfort; multitudes of ducks, mandarins, swans, and flamingoes people the ponds, while rills of water cool the air and add to the enjoyment of this lovely spot. Here I noticed for the first time a liana bearing a curious large flower of 1½ feet long by 9 inches wide, with a filament of more than 1 foot 9 inches, making over 3 feet altogether. The colour is bluish green outside, while the inside is like a spring muslin, with red devices on a dazzling white ground, deepening down the calyx into a rich red velvet bordered with prone hairs. The bud resembles a web-footed animal swimming, hence its name *flor de pato*, "duck’s flower." It may not improperly be compared to an immense aristochia. This liana was, I believe, imported from the Antilles; but nothing is perfect in this world, not even this marvellous flower, which astonished both Agassiz and myself, for no sooner is it fully blown than it stinks so abominably that its immediate removal becomes an imperative necessity.

To lay out this lovely garden, it was necessary to blast the rocks forming the crust of this country; and as the work is still going on, it enabled Mr. Agassiz to study its formation, which, like Florida, belongs to the recent Tertiary epoch. We tarried but one day at Ascorra, for we wished to visit the Tepich Hacienda, where the largest henequen factory in these parts is to be seen, worked by machinery, a great innovation for this country. The exports of this important industry are reckoned at £600 a year. The want of hands, however, precludes the possibility for the present of any scheme being mooted to give it greater extension. The country is not suffi-
ciently favoured to tempt immigrants; unless it were Malay coolies, who would not suffer from the climate, and who, moreover, when crossed with Meztizas or Indian women, would produce a magnificent race.

We resume our seats for Acanceh, formerly a populous centre, as testified by three great pyramids still extant in the plaza, which supported ancient temples on their summits. In one of them which furnished the material for the builders of the station, fine sculptured blocks, like those employed at Uxmal for building purposes, were found; together with several funeral objects, fine obsidians, a magnificent sceptre, in my possession, and vases identical with those we unearthed at Teotihuacan. These affinities and resemblances between Yucatec vestiges and those of the Uplands, are of constant occurrence.

HACIENDA OF ASCORRA.
CHAPTER XVI.

AKÉ AND IZAMAL.


On our return from Merida, an expedition to Aké was organised consisting of the American Consul, Mr. Aymé, his wife, her pet dog Shuty, and ourselves. Mr. Aymé is an energetic archaeologist, well acquainted with the ruins, so that his offer to accompany us was most welcome. The ruins of Aké are on
a hacienda which belongs to Don Alvaro Peon, from whom a
permit was easily obtained; he furnishing us besides with a
large hamper to supply our wants, which his Chinese cook was
to take to the hacienda.

Journeys in the interior of the peninsula may be performed
either by diligence or "volan coché," a national vehicle, made
entirely of wood, save the iron tires of the wheels. An oblong
box balanced on two leather springs is placed on a heavy under-
frame, the bottom of the carriage lined with a stout flax net,
on which is spread a mattress, to deaden to some extent the
jolting of these abominable roads. The coachman sits in front,
while the back is occupied by the baggage; when the coché
has but one occupant, he generally lies full-length on the
mattress; but if not he sits Turkish fashion, which in time
becomes very irksome to one not to the manner born; as to
the natives, it seems to be immaterial how many are packed
away in a "volan." Although well hung, the swaying of these
cochés is truly amazing, especially when the driver is drunk
and sets his mules full gallop; but most wonderful of all is that
nothing ever happens, and in my numerous expeditions I was
only once upset.

Aké lies ten leagues east of Merida, which can be reached
by the Izamal road, through immense estates of agave, leaving
on the right two mounds covered with ruins and passing Tixpénal,
a wretched-looking village, as indeed is the whole country
around; but the half-burnt, tumbled-down hovels are the work
of the revolted natives, who in 1846 occupied the village and
set fire to it.

Some three leagues further lies Tixkokob, where we halt to
have a cup of chocolate. The inhabitants are great hammock-
makers, and through the open doors, multicoloured nets may
be descried in every stage of progress. They are the only
beds used by the natives, and cost from half-a-crown to four shillings, but those made at Valladolid are more expensive. Here we leave the main road for a cross path, when we may be said to become fully acquainted with a *cochitre*'s peculiarities. We are rocked to and fro in the most alarming manner; we hold on to the net like grim death, for fear of being pitched out on the stony road or landed among prickly pears at every turn. It is with a sigh of relief that we reach Ekmul, long after the curfew has been sounded, and the place lies wrapped in the silence and deep shadows of night. We found the hacienda strongly bolted, for the inmates had given us up; but the loud barking of the dogs brought Don Peon's mayordomo, and we were soon made at home and as comfortable as the somewhat dilapidated nature of the dwelling would allow.

We were up at early dawn, when we found under the thatched verandah a number of Don Peon's servants, with hatchets and machetes, awaiting our orders for clearing the main pyramid, and while so engaged, we proposed to visit a *cenote* lying on the other side of a thick wood containing various ruins. This hacienda is stocked with horned cattle, and we were warned to provide against garrapatas, the most terrible wood-lice in existence. We had taken, or fancied we had taken, all the precautions which the ingenuity of man, alarmed at the approach of danger, could devise. But against the voracity of a famished garrapata what can avail? This insidious insect is invisible in its early youth; thinner than the thinnest paper, it steals, it creeps in quite easily between two stitches!

But what is a "*cenote"?"

Although Yucatan is uncut by rivers or streams, an immense sheet of water and ill-defined currents occupy its under surface; these waters are near the surface along the coast, but low down in the interior of the peninsula, where the
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calcareous layer is of great thickness. Localities where these waters can be reached, whether through the natural subsidence of the soil or artificial pits, receive the name of cenote. When the water flows at a slight depth, and the calcareous layer has only been partly eaten away, there follows an irregular sinking which forms a cave open from side to side; but when the crust is thicker, and the stream has a regular course, the soil is generally corroded in a circular space; and the vault thus formed lacking support, falls in, when an immense open well is made, as for instance at Chichen-Itza. Often the crust is so deep, that the soft parts only crumble down or are carried away, leaving frequently a small aperture towards the top, fashioning a real grotto with stalactites and stalagmites, as at Salacun and Valladolid. It sometimes happens that the calcareous crust is exceedingly thick, when a gigantic subterranean passage is formed, as at Bolonchen; in a word, all the varieties which are produced by the silent work of an undisturbed stream in a friable soil, may be witnessed. It is worthy of note that most civilised centres in Yucatan rose around these natural reservoirs; for the early settlers were probably unacquainted with the means of sinking artificial wells or cisterns, as they did later at Uxmal.

The Aké cenote is thirty feet below the surface, and belongs to the early series of these natural phenomena. It forms a gigantic vault slightly curved, to which the accidents of the rock give a picturesque and grand aspect. The bottom is occupied by an extensive piece of clear fresh water, peopled by a multitude of small fish some three inches long, while thousands of swallows flit about, filling the whole place with their joyous twitter.

We left the cenote to come back through the woods, spying out if peradventure we could perceive any ruins from under
their deep, green shroud, brushing unwittingly past the trail-
ing branches of the trees, suffocating literally in our well-
closed garments; no unusual sensation, no unseemly irritation
had as yet alarmed us. Shuty was the first to show that
all was not well with her. We had already noticed some
signs of uneasiness as we emerged from the cenoté; she
would suddenly stop, to nibble her paws, or perform some
extraordinary gymnastic feat; gy rating, running, and barking
joyously at the empty space.

We came presently to some very intricate parts of the
wood, when the somewhat fictitious gaiety of Shuty turned
into groans of acute agony, rolling madly on the grass, biting
herself, and howling lamentably until her mistress took her into
her arms, to find her alive with garrapatas, as indeed we all
were; there was nothing for it but to return to the hacienda
as quickly as possible, and institute a minute and conscientious
investigation. A complete change of clothes became necessary,
ere we could sit down to the very excellent breakfast prepared
for us by Don Peon’s cook; as for Mrs. Aymé and Shuty,
they did not venture on the perils of another exploration in
the fated woods.

Here I again noticed the same curious phenomenon I
had observed at Palenque with regard to concentric circles in
the trees; on the great pyramid which Don Peon had caused
to be cleared only six months before, and which was now
thickly covered with young shoots our men were fast demolish-
ing, I counted no less than seven or eight circles on the twigs.

The ruins of Aké are hardly known; Stephens, their only
visitor besides myself, calls the gallery “colossal, the ruins of
the palace ruder, older, and more cyclopean in aspect than any
he had previously seen.” Quoting Cogolludo, apparently from
memory, he adds that the Spaniards halted at a place called
Aké, where a great battle was fought; had he read Cogolludo properly, he would have seen that the place meant could not be Aké, which lay out of the line of march of the conquerors. We have had occasion to observe before that Montejo landed on the eastern coast of Yucatan at a place now opposite to Valladolid, where he took possession of the country; various other points are also given, but it is certain that he made his way to Coní in Chiapas, halted at Coba, and continued his march to Ce-Aké, where he had to fight the Indians for two days; hence he directed his course to Chichen-Itza, which he wished to colonise, because "its great buildings made it easy of defence." * This was in 1527; but Ce-Aké was thirty-five leagues east of the ruins of another Aké, once a populous centre, as shown by fifteen or twenty pyramids of all dimensions, crowned with ruinous palaces, scattered over a space of about half a square mile. The largest are grouped so as to form a rectangle, encircling a vast courtyard, the centre of which is occupied by a large stone of punishment called *picoté*, of universal use before and after the Conquest, and still found at Uxmal and various other places. An old Indian of Tenosique assured me that such a stone was standing some thirty years ago in the plaza. The culprit was stripped and tied to the *picoté* previous to receiving the bastinado. This custom still prevails at Tumbala, an Indian village lying between Palenque and S. Christobal. According to the Indian moral code, punishment makes a man clean, and I have seen natives who, to have a clear conscience, requested a punishment no one dreamt of inflicting.

The plan we give is, unfortunately, very incorrect, but such as it is it will enable the reader to follow out our description

* Cogolludo, tome 1. lib. ii. caps. v. and vi.
of the ruins. To the north-west is a three-storeyed pyramid like those at Palenque, built with large blocks laid together without mortar, about 40 feet high, crowned by a small structure whose roof has crumbled away but whose walls are still standing. We recognise the same style of structure we observed at Tula and Teotihuacan, a style we shall meet again both in Yucatan and in the district of the Lacandones. It may be stated that pyramids with esplanades, both here and at Palenque, although built with large stones, are smaller
than those of the monuments in other places, and if the blocks were laid in mortar it has crumbled away like the cement which formed the outer surface.

The dimensions of this structure are so diminutive that it cannot have been anything but a temple, forming part of the next monument which it commands. The latter from its rectangular arrangement recalls to mind the so-called fortresses at Tula and Teotihuacan, which were in reality *tlachtli*, "tennis-courts."

The third monument has given rise to many conjectures; it is a large pyramid with an immense staircase, presenting a new and extraordinary feature, entirely different from all we have seen in Yucatan. Was this a specimen of a different civilisation, or simply a particular building which belonged to an earlier epoch?—were the questions which presented themselves to my somewhat bewildered imagination.
This strange monument is surmounted by thirty-six pillars (only twenty-nine are still standing) each 4 feet square, and from 14 to 16 feet high. These pillars are arranged in three parallel rows 10 feet apart from north to south, and 15 from east to west; whilst the esplanade supporting them is 212 feet long by 46 feet wide, rounded off at the extremities like the Hunpitolc pyramid at Izamal looking north-south. Each pillar is composed of ten square stones 3 ft. 10 in. on one side, varying in thickness from 1 ft. 3 in. to 1 ft. 6 in. A gigantic staircase with steps some 4 ft. 7 in. to 6 ft. 7 in. long and about 1 ft. to 1 ft. 6 in. thick, leads to the summit.

It was urged that all these monuments had been constructed with uncemcnted stones, as neither cement nor mortar were found at Ake. This, however, is an error, for I observed that the builders used stones cut on the side facing the outer surface of the pillars, leaving the inner sides uncut; and as they did not perfectly fit one into another, but left cavities sometimes 3 inches deep, they were filled up with fragments of stone rubble which I found, and the whole was no doubt smoothed and polished over with mortar or cement.*

But what was this singular structure intended for? If for a covered gallery, the wood or thatch roof has long since disappeared and left no trace. Could it have been a commemorative monument? We know not, save that it is the only monument of the kind in Yucatan, and that its dimensions are far from colossal. Not that theories are wanting; some writers have gone so far as to imagine this monument to have been erected to commemorate periods or reigns, and each block to represent either a ahuu-katun, "twenty-four years," or a century, katun, "fifty-two years." Now, as there

* See note at end.
La casa tolteca nos parecía un ejemplo nuevo y curioso de la manera de construir de los antiguos habitantes: su tendencia dominante era edificar sus viviendas y sus templos sobre pirámides, elevaciones que eran naturales ó artificiales. La primera casa que tuvimos la suerte de descubrir había sido construida en una eminencia natural modificada; las varias piezas que componen la morada siguen las ondulaciones del suelo, y todas se escalonan a niveles diferentes, partiendo de cero la más baja, elevándose á 216,555 la más alta, y comunicando entre sí por escaleras y pequeños corredores.

Las paredes son derechas y los techos planos; tanto estos como los pavimentos están hechos con gruesas capas de cimento de una composición que es siempre la misma y que se aplicaba á las calles y caminos lo mismo que á las casas.

Examinando los materiales empleados por el creador de Tula, nos encontramos con un constructor de instintos extraordinarios y que le hará capaz de las más diferentes creaciones. En efecto, al paso que todos los pueblos, en el principio, y según su origen, sus instintos ó su genio, no empleaban más que tales ó cuales materiales, como ladrillos cocidos, piedra ó madera, adobes ó cimento, piedras mezcladas con argamasa ó barro, el tolteca se servía de todos estás materiales á la vez. Empleaba la piedra y el barro para el interior de las paredes, el ladrillo cocido y la piedra labrada para los revestimientos exteriores, el ladrillo y la piedra para sus escaleras, y la madera para su techo. Conocía la pilastra; yo las he encontrado en sus casas: empleaba la columna empotrada, la cariátide y la columna libre. En sus monumentos apénsas hay asuntos arquitectónicos que no conociera ó utilizara.

Hé aquí pues un hombre admirablemente preparado para todas las eventualidades, y que según el clima ó las circunstancias que le rodeaban, sabrá aprovechar todos los materiales, cambiar su estilo y trasformar su genio. Es además pintor y decorador, porque encontramos en la vivienda exhumada una porción de fragmentos procedentes del revestimiento de las
are thirty-six pillars having each ten stones, this monument would be, by the first computation, 8,640 years old, and by the second, 18,720. It is clear that were this the case the first stone would have disappeared long before the last one had been placed, and that the earlier would have looked older than the later ones, whereas the same air of decay is observable in all. It is more simple and consistent to suppose this monument to have been a thatched gallery which was used for games, meetings, or public ceremonies. Its central position as regards other monuments would seem to bear me out. Is a ruin to be interesting only in ratio of its obscurity and antiquity?

After the pyramid, we visited the ruin known as Akabna, "House of Darkness," in which the rooms still standing are
perfectly dark; for the only light they receive is from a
doors communicating with other apartments. Here we again
find the boveda, the corbel roof, the pointed arch observed in
previous buildings. The Aké vault is built with large rough
blocks, which has caused these monuments to be called
cyclopean, an appellation hardly deserved, for cyclopean structures
were built with far larger blocks, irregular in shape, yet
fitting so well that it would be impossible to introduce the
slightest object between the joints, whilst the stones employed
in the constructions at Aké are uniform, consisting of thick
uncut slabs, with large gaps intervening. This I observed to
Mr. Aymé: "You hold that Aké structures were built with-
out mortar or cement, and that no sculpture or decoration of
any kind have been found, but I lay down as a principle,
that it is altogether impossible, without wishing to deny the
very novel features of the phenomenon we are confronted
with; and nothing except the most irrefragable proofs will
bring me from my position of total denial, for I am con-
vinced that the builders would not have left structures so
important unfinished. If these stones fitted originally, the gaps
which are noticeable would be the work of time, and this
were to give them an impossible and incredible antiquity,
since the slabs are rounded off or sharp at the edges as if
quarried yesterday; further, both in the interior or facing
the walls, they are exactly in the same condition, from which
I conclude that all were originally laid in cement, and
coated over in the usual manner."

Soon after this conversation we visited the ruin called
Knuc, "Owl's Palace," and on reaching the top of the great
pyramid, the first thing I noticed was a very pretty bas-relief
of cement, consisting of diamonds and flattened spheres, of
the kind met at Palenque. This relief formed the right side of a frame, topped by figures, traces of which were still discernible; below the projecting cornice was a thick coating of plaster, filling the joints, well smoothed and polished on the surface, and also a coating of paint on the wall.

"Well," I said to my companion, Mr. Aymé, "what do you say now?"

"That you were perfectly right."

And, indeed, this discovery proved that the monuments could no longer be considered the work of a different race, a different civilisation, or a hoary antiquity. In effect, their cement decorations are similar to those of the older edifices in Tabasco and many in Yucatan. I shall therefore distinguish the Aké period under three heads: the cement epoch, the cement and cut stone, and the cut stone only, when the builders used only the latter in their decorations, examples of which are to be found in the later edifices at Uxmal and Kabah.

The Aké builders lived in a country where the calcareous layer was taken up in sheets varying from 10 inches to 1 foot 7 inches thick. They used them exactly as they came from the quarry, thus saving great expenditure in labour. When the shell of a structure was run up, it was thickly plastered over, painted, and ornamented with mouldings in relief. This explains at once why the stones on the pillars of the gallery and the blocks of the grand stairway are irregular. The discovery of the bas-relief and cornice filled me with joyful expectation, but although I was indefatigable in visiting the Succuna and other nameless pyramids, I brought to light nothing more of the kind; everything had crumbled away. Here are also found the typical superimposed layers of cement, which we mentioned in various places inhabited by the Toltecs.
To sum up, Aké seems to belong to the early times of the Toltec invasion in Yucatan; an epoch which may not improperly be termed Maya-Toltec, as the civilisation in Tabasco and Chiapas may be termed Tzental-Toltec, and that of Guatemala, Guatemalto-Toltec.
CHAPTER XVII.

IZAMAL EN ROUTE FOR CHICHEN.


Our expedition to Izamal and Chichen was a somewhat serious undertaking; we required a large number of hands for our work in mid-forest; we should have to camp out for three weeks at least, removed from all human habitation; finally a military escort, fifty strong, was deemed necessary to secure us against a sudden attack from the revolted natives, respecting whom alarming rumours of pillaging were afloat. Our heavy baggage had been sent on, and armed with twelve-shot Winchesters, and provided with letters from the Governor for
the officers in command of the district garrisons which were to supply the escort, we started on January 4th, travelling over a monotonous, dusty, abominable road. Our drivers, however, were such good whips, that we went over the distance in no time.

There is hardly a soul to be met on the road, save at rare intervals some carts loaded with henequen; some natives returning from the next village, the women veiling their faces or turning their backs upon us at our approach; now a company of reserve on their way to the front or homeward-bound, for the borders are strictly guarded against a coup de main from the revolted natives.

We stop at Cacalchen; for our early start, the crisp morning air, and the jolting of the road, have sharpened our appetites. We breakfast under a shaded verandah opening into a central court planted with cocoa-trees. We are waited upon by a very pretty Meztiza, whose fair complexion, rosy mouth, large black eyes, and exquisite figure, are shown to the utmost advantage in her transparent uipil, doing her work with simple, quiet grace, while her presence and her bewitching smile seem to light up the whole place. What dish would not have tasted sweet, offered by her shapely hands?

Izamal, where we arrive at three o'clock, is an important place numbering some five or six thousand souls. It looks beautifully white, for it has just undergone its annual cleaning, when every building is whitewashed in honour of the patron saint.

It has been urged by some writers that the civilisation of Yucatan and Tabasco belonged to a remote past; but these writers often speak from mere hearsay, accepting everything without the slightest criticism; their accounts, however valuable, are filled with uncertainties, are often obscure and contradictory,
so that they may be made to square with the idiosyncrasy of all or any particular man. Consequently the difficulties in arriving at the truth are almost insuperable, unless it is one who has visited the regions he writes upon, studied the monuments, collated ethnographical documents, compared the various manners and customs, fitting himself to catch a word or a sentence which from time to time shoots across the darkness of their undigested narratives, and correcting with their help errors with which they abound. But the general neglect by ancient writers of monuments which everywhere met their gaze makes me unjust, while our gratitude is due to such industrious writers as Bernal Diaz, Sahagun, Torquemada, and many more.

Izamal, like many other places in the peninsula, was built on the site of an Indian city; here, as elsewhere, the chief care of the Spaniards was to destroy alike palaces, temples, and written documents, biding the natives forget their ancient traditions. Landa, who wrote forty-five years after the Conquest (1566), speaks of the edifices at Izamal as twelve in number, adding that the founders were unknown; whilst Lizana, sixty years later (1626), with fewer opportunities for collecting legends, gives their history in full, together with the Indian names and their signification; but unfortunately in his time the monuments had dwindled down to five.

Landa, as we have remarked, says these monuments are of unknown origin, yet in another place he affirms they are the work of the existing race, since he writes: "Among the remains of monuments which were destroyed are found fragments of human figures and other decorations, such as the natives make even now with very hard cement." He further mentions having found in a tomb "stone ornaments artistically wrought, similar to the currency in present use among the natives."
At Merida he demolished an Indian temple, which crowned the upper part of the great mound, giving a ground plan and describing it as “built with square blocks, beautifully carved, and of such height as to produce a feeling of awe in the beholder” (its real height is 80 feet); thus proving the monument to have been entire when he wrote. Nevertheless it is from an assertion such as this that judgment has been passed on the monuments, and from documents like the Perez manuscript that a chronology has been deduced. The monuments are imposing, no doubt, to judge from the few that remain; but we should err if, following Landa and others, we pronounced them “colossal, gigantic, magnificent, to which nothing in the world can be compared.”

The whole extent of the Yucatec monuments would not represent in cubic metres the works achieved in Paris during the last twenty-five years; consequently they should be viewed as the unpretending outcome of a semi-civilised people, and this estimate need not lessen their interest, while the mysterious silence which surrounds them forms a void in the history of the human race.

The great mound to the north is called Kinich-Kakmō, “The Sun’s face with fiery rays,” from an idol which stood in the temple crowning its summit. The monument consists of two parts: the basement, nearly 650 feet, surmounted by an immense platform, and the small pyramid to the north. “Great veneration was felt for the idol or deity of Kinich-Kakmō, and in times of public calamity, the entire population flocked to this shrine with peace-offerings, when at mid-day a fire descended and consumed the sacrifice, in the presence of the assembled multitude. Then the officiating priest notified the will of the deity whether for good or for evil, and prophesied more or less the secret longings of their hearts: but as they could not always guess aright, it
not unfrequently happened that their expectations were not fulfilled.” *

Facing this to the south was another great mound, known as Phap-Hol-Chac, "the House of Heads and Lightning," the priest’s

house, presumably similar to those still standing in various towns of Yucatan. The upper portion of this pyramid was levelled down, and on its lower platform was erected the Franciscan church and convent.

The third pyramid to the east supported a temple dedicated to *Izamal-Ul, Izamna, or Zamna*, the great founder of the ancient Maya empire. "To him were brought," says Lizana, "the sick, the halt, and the dead, and he healed and restored them all to life by the touch of his hand;" hence the appellation *Kab-Ul*, the Miraculous Hand, applied to him.* He is often represented by a hand only, which recalled him to the memory of his worshippers. His other names are the Strong, the Mighty Hand, the Long-handed Chief, who wrote the code of the Toltecs, and as such has been identified with Quetzalcoatl, with whom he shared the government; he conducting the civil power, whilst Quetzalcoatl, the virgin-born deity, looked after the spiritual.†

"The temple in which these miracles were performed, was much frequented; for this reason four good roads had been constructed, leading to Guatemala, Chiapas, and Tabasco. Traces of them can even now be seen in various places." ‡ We also have found marks of a cemented road, from Izamal to the sea facing the island of Cozumel.

Lastly the fourth pyramid to the west, which is shown in our cut of the market-place, had on its summit the palace of *Hunpictok,* "the commander-in-chief of eight thousand flints." On its side near the basement, consisting of stones laid without

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* Extract from P. Lizana's "Hist. de Nuestra Señora de Izamal," published by the Abbé Brasseur.
† Diego Landa, chap. ix. p. 57.
‡ Lizana, "Hist. de Nuestra Señora de Izamal," published by the Abbé Brasseur.
mortar, and rounded off at the corners like those of the Aké pyramid, stood the gigantic face reproduced by Stephens, but which has since disappeared. This head is so interesting that I cannot deprive the reader of the description given by the American traveller: "It is 7 feet 8 inches high. The features were first rudely formed by small rough stones, fixed in the side of the mound by means of mortar, and afterwards perfected with stucco so hard that it has successfully resisted the action..."
of air and water for centuries."* The stone forming the chin alone measures 1 foot 6 inches; the figure has enormous moustachios, and a resemblance may be traced to the gigantic faces in stone at Copan, where the plaster has crumbled away and left the stone bare. The resemblance to the Aké pyramids is remarkable and leads us to conclude that the latter were decorated in the same manner. Here also on the east side is found the figure shown in our cut, from which may be traced the builder's mode of working.

This colossal head is 13 feet high; the eyes, nose, and under-lip were first formed by rough stones coated over with mortar; the ornaments to the right and left were obtained by the same means; the latter are the best preserved, while double spirals, symbols of wind or speech, may be seen, similar to those in Mexico, at Palenque and Chichen-Itza. On the western side of this pyramid, which has been cleared towards the basement, we discovered one of the finest bas-reliefs it has been our fortune to see in Yucatan. Its principal subject is a crouching tiger with a human head and retreating forehead, less exaggerated than those at Palenque, beautifully moulded, and reminding us of the orders of knighthood in which the tiger had the pre-eminence; nor could a better device be imagined for the house of the commander-in-chief at Izamal. To conclude, these documents, which would be a dead letter to one who had not followed the various migrations from north to south, enable us to reconstruct here also a Toltec centre. It may be noted that if numerous monuments are still found in Yucatan, their existence is due to the small number of Spaniards settled in these regions at the time of the Conquest, and more especially to their being at a distance from the centres occupied by the conquerors.

IZAMAL EN ROUTE FOR CHICHEN.

Through the whole length and breadth of Anahuac both monuments and cities have entirely disappeared; for the Spaniards were not satisfied with destroying all that reminded them of a former polity; they were also careful to infuse into their young disciples a profound horror for their former religion, while they trained children to report any word or deed they observed in their parents or priests which savoured of their ancient customs. Thanks to these measures, every-
thing that could recall the past to the rising generation was
soon blotted out from the Indian mind. But however dilapi-
dated the monuments we observe at Izamal, they prove that
there was here a great population at the time of the Con-
quest; and this being admitted, it follows that their destruction
is comparatively recent, due mainly to civil wars, dating a
few years before the arrival of the Spaniards.

As for the Perez manuscript, which was written by a
native from memory long after the Conquest, purporting to
be the faithful rendering of legends handed down from mouth
to mouth, in a particular family, it adds nothing to our
knowledge, throws no light on the question which perplexes
us. The narrative begins from 144 A.D., and goes on to
1560 A.D.; but is it possible to admit seriously the authority
of an account so obtained, extending over so many centuries?
At the time of its publication all the natives had preserved
was a dubious legend; and traditions fared hardly better with
the caciques and nobles fallen from their high estate, than
they did with the common people, for "the former were often
reduced," says Cogolludo, "to the extreme of poverty; and forty-
years after the Conquest (1582) the royal descendants of
Tutulxiu, and the princely house of Mayapan, were obliged to
work for their living like the humblest amongst their ancient
subjects." *

This picture, sad as it is, became even worse a few years
later, when the conquerors had reduced the whole population
to a state of hard bondage. The only difference of any
importance between the Perez manuscript and the narratives
of Clavigero, Veytia, and Ixtililxochitl, is in the chronology,
which is far too absurd for any serious consideration, for

* Cogolludo, tome i. lib. iv. cap. iii.
Desde el Norte, en cuya dirección navegábamos, giramos al Oeste y entramos en las grandes lagunas que hay al largo de la costa. Estas lagunas comunican entre sí por angostos canalizos que forman calles de árboles umbrosas y de belleza salvaje: la sombra se convierte en oscuridad, tan densa es, y esas aguas negras, esa selva silenciosa nos traen a la memoria la Estigia o algún rinconcillo ignorado del Purgatorio donde las almas en pena deben vagar por soledades infinitas. Grandes mariposas, de alas azules orladas de terciopelo negro, atraviesan el espacio en busca de alguna flor difícil de hallar, mientras que una multitud de cangrejos encarnados y peludos, de patas de color amarillo claro, encaramados en las altas raíces de los palétuvios, parecen echarnos miradas feroz. Procuro coger uno, pero el muy tunante me salta osadamente a la cara, y al ver semejante audacia en él tan débil, renuncio á mi empresa.

De vez en cuando las ramas bajas de los árboles nos azotan el rostro y se enredan en los soportes del toldo, viéndonos al fin obligados á quitáros. A las dos horas de esta marcha misteriosa llegamos á la laguna de Meacoan, la cual atravesamos para llegar á las islas del Bellote, en donde encontramos pirámides, restos de edificios derruidos, construidos enteramente con argamasa de cal procedente de conchas machacadas y de ladrillos cocidos. A las cuatro horas de investigaciones, volvemos á meternos en la canoa para ir á buscar enfrente el brazo del Torno largo, por el cual debemos ir á la Ceiba. Es un grupo de casas en el cual estaremos dentro de una hora.

El paisaje es maravilloso, la vegetación gigantesca. El camino de la Ceiba á Paraíso es una serie no interrumpida de puntos de vista sin igual y de bellezas de las cuales no podrían dar una idea la pluma, ni el pincel, ni la fotografía. Entre anchas calles de cocoteros que se destacan en sus orillas, el río Seco, por el cual navegamos á todo remo, nos ofrece á cada paso nuevas perspectivas, asuntos deliciosos y grandes cuadros capaces de causar pasmo á un artista. La corriente rápida arrastra bonitas plantas redondeadas parecidas á lechugas de un color amarillo ó verde claro; navegan solas ó en grandes grupos formando pequeñas y lindas balsas que recuerdan las chinanpas de los lagos de México.

Pero al remontar el río Seco, observamos que esta corriente, pequeña hoy, fué en otro tiempo un gran río, cuyo curso debieron cambiar la naturaleza ó el hombre en época indeterminada. Y en efecto, este riachuelo corre por el fondo de una ancha barranca de orillas muy altas, que representa el lecho de una poderosa corriente, y en virtud de la suposición que se me ha hecho, no vacilaré en asegurar que el Tabasco corría en otro tiempo más al Oeste y ocupaba ántes de la conquista el cauce del río Seco.

Llegamos á Paraíso, nombre que nos había hecho confiar en encontrar algo mucho mejor que la misera aldea en que desembarcamos; pero nos dicen que fué destruido hace siete años durante la guerra civil, y así lo atestiguan las ruinas lo propio que los troncos secos de los grandes árboles y palmeras que le daban sombra. Nos toman por una compañía de cómicos ambulantes, equivocación lisonjera que deshizo el ver que no llevábamos damas.

Permanecemos dos días en este pueblo de triste aspecto, aunque sus habitantes lo consideran como un compendio de las perfecciones terrestres: para ellos es un verdadero paraíso.
while the latter gives the seventh century as the date of the arrival of the Toltecs at Tula, and their subsequent migration in Central America at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century; with the former they leave Tula in 144 A.D., and arrive in Yucatan in 217 A.D., nearly five hundred years before the generally accepted date of their arrival at Tula. Moreover he calls Yucatan an island, although the new-comers had penetrated the country through Tabasco and the south without crossing the sea, clearly indicating that it was a peninsula.

The church of Izamal is very fine, but its chief attraction in the eyes of the natives is a statue of the Virgin. Its story runs thus:

A celebrated artist of Guatemala received an order from the towns of Izamal and Merida respectively, for two statues of the Virgin; in their transit, which took place in the rainy season, neither the case containing the images, nor the men conveying them, got a drop of rain. Valladolid, jealous that so small a place as Izamal should possess this fine statue, came in great force and carried it off, but the image proved stronger than all those men put together, for it became so heavy that it had to be abandoned at the outskirts of the little town. The miracle was followed by a great many more, so that the Izamal Virgin was soon the most celebrated in the peninsula, attracting as many pilgrims as did formerly Kab-Uil, of the Miraculous Hand.

We set off at five in the morning for Valladolid, to avoid the overpowering heat of the day; indeed, all traffic between May and September in these tropical regions is done by night, for the greater comfort of both man and beast. We watch the sun rise in the east, but far from enlivening the scene, it seems only to bring out in stronger relief the
desolateness of the landscape. A few carts with natives on their way home shivering with the night cold, a wretched tumble-down hamlet called Stilipech, is all we notice on our route; and indeed we have much to do with keeping our seats in these volan cochés, which rattle along at so furious a pace on these atrocious roads, as to make us wonder what power keeps them from being smashed to pieces.

I had had suspicion during my stay at Merida as to Yucatan having any postal or telegraphic administration, for a number of my telegrams were left unanswered, and my inquiries were met with the evasive reply that the line was not in good order. That such was the case I could now plainly see for myself. A wire which skirted the wood had indeed been laid, but having no poles or insulators it trusted to fate to get fixed now and again to a branch or a tree, which, bending with the breeze, allowed it to trail among the rocks or get entangled in the brambles. Wonderful to relate, a message sometimes reached its destination; a great step forward as compared to Tabasco, where no sooner is the wire laid than it is purloined by the inhabitants, who, it seems, find it useful. But our volan suddenly stops, and the driver draws our attention to an important cenote known as Xcolac, shaded by beautiful trees and full of fish. On its banks a number of Indians are filling their gourds to the brim; and with simple grace offer us a drink of its cool, fresh pure water. It argues strange apathy in the natives that in a country where water is so scarce, a hamlet or hacienda should not have been erected around it. We re-enter our cochés and reach Tumbras, formerly a flourishing place, about eleven o’clock; it was burnt down during the civil wars and has not been rebuilt. We alight before a decent-looking house, having a tienda stocked with salt, tobacco,