CHAPTER XXIV.

TUMBALA. S. CRISTOBAL. MITLA.


There is positively nothing new to say about the long, wearisome journey from Copan to Tenosique; it is the usual road through forest, with no incidents to mark it from former journeys, which besides we performed in Stephens' and Maudslay's company from whom we borrow both descriptions and monuments. We will therefore start from Tenosique, where our personal explorations begin.
In order to avoid going by Frontera, which I had visited several times, I returned to Palenque, crossed the Sierra of Chiapas, that I might see S. Cristobal, Tehuantepec, and the various Indian villages which are found along that road new to us.

As it was a long distance, offering many difficulties over almost impassable mountain paths, which at times are almost perpendicular, I dismissed my men and sent Lucian and one of my two servants to wait for us at Mexico, whilst Julian and I, with our arms and photograph apparatus, set out for S. Domingo del Palenque, where I engaged six men to convey our baggage over the Sierra to S. Cristobal.

I had been duly instructed upon the route I was to follow by the alcalde, so that leaving our men to come after us, which we were assured would be done immediately, Julian and I mounted our horses, and we were soon galloping in the direction of the rancho, which we reached towards ten o'clock; here our guide wished to return to Palenque, but I required him to await the arrival of the tamenes, who were not yet in sight, and with whom I could not communicate without his help. But the whole day passed in fruitless expectations, all the more disagreeable that they had all the supplies, and we were reduced to a large ball of *posole,* not much for empty stomachs, so towards evening the guide went along the river’s banks in search of snails, and we had to content ourselves with them for our supper.

The following day I sauntered in the wood to do something, and found a tortoise of 8 or 10 inches long, having its lower shell furnished at both ends with two appendices, which enabled the fellow to shut himself up and defy all enemies, a true snuff-box tortoise. I thought at first of keeping it; but, alas for human

* *Posole* is like cooked hominy; it is mixed in water and forms a cool and nutritious drink.
resolve! by noon it was in the pot fast turning into delicious soup.

Two men who were returning from Palenque, brought us news at last of our porters; they had got drunk on the money which, according to custom, they had received in advance from us, an affray had followed, they had been handed over to the police and shut up in jail; they were, however, to be released on that very day, and a few hours would bring them to us.

The guide, who was anxious to go home, exchanged a few words with the men which I could not understand, then informed me that they were willing to carry my luggage to S. Pedro, where we should find ample accommodation, plenty of supplies, and that it would be a better place to wait for our tamenes. I agreed, and we were soon winding up the sierra, which, at first gradual, soon became precipitous, obliging us to throw off our clothes and to retain only our nether garments, and even these we cut above the knee to facilitate our movements. The men carried everything, but far from feeling the weight put upon them, they seemed to have wings to their feet, and left us far behind to toil up as best we might.
At last we halted by the side of a stream, where our much reduced *posole* was entirely consumed amongst us all. Somewhat refreshed with the rest and food, we resumed our ascent, but towards evening the cravings of the stomach were again felt, and our sluggish legs refused to carry us much further. The porters had indeed drawn our attention to some *hacos* hovering among the branches, but I had missed one at a few yards' distance, and the scarcity of ammunition, the bulk of which was with the missing *tamenes*, made me unwilling to venture on another shot unless I was sure of it.

Poor Julian was fast losing heart; fortunately just then we heard cries of monkeys quite near, and deviating to one side we came upon a whole tribe of them perched in the queerest attitudes, which our approach did not seem to scare in the least, giving me ample time to take aim at a fine powerful fellow some fifty or sixty feet overhead, which I brought down with one single shot.

We had now reached a broad expanse of several thousand feet above the level of the ocean, and were only a few yards from the rancho Nopa, built for the use of travellers; the night was drawing near, and we were glad to get some kind of shelter. Meanwhile the female monkey had followed us with her two young ones, uttering the most lamentable cries; they had perched on a tree quite close, and the mother was now watching with mournful eyes her late lord being cut up.

But, alas for human sympathy! far from being touched at this mark of conjugal devotion, I only thought of the substantial meal we should make after our long fast, and that the animal was large enough to last over the next day for our breakfast, when with renewed strength we set out again, and after hours of wearisome toiling, we came upon a large river not marked on the map, which we crossed in a pirogue, and two hours more brought us in view of S. Pedro, an Indian village consisting of
about a hundred huts, scattered over some of the hillocks with which the plain is dotted. No admixture of white blood is seen here, and nothing but Indian is spoken.

I directed my steps towards the centre of the village, hoping to find a hut in which to rest our weary limbs; but the first I ventured into was occupied by women, who shrieked with terror on perceiving me and rushed out, whether at the arms I carried, or because I was white, must remain a mystery to the end of time. Their cries brought the whole female population into the street (the men were at the milpa), glaring at me and scampering away the moment I tried to get near.

My repeated inquiries for "el Gobernador" (the alcalde is so styled here), at last induced the boldest in the crowd to point to a large building to our right; I went in and found some young girls, clad from the waist in a cotton garment, engaged in breaking Indian corn on metates, whilst an elderly woman similarly attired was stirring a kind of Scotch broth, boiling on the hearth, the smell of which was so appetising that I immediately pantomimied to the old dame to give me some, showing at the same time a shining real in my open palm to help my eloquence. But the virago, brandishing her spoon in my direction, advanced to prevent my further ingress, pouring out a volley of questions and vituperations the while, which, of course, I could not understand, but which plainly meant that she was not to be persuaded by such means, and that the sooner I vacated the place the better for me.

I hesitated what I should do; but, reflecting that I was in the stronghold, with no better chance of a welcome anywhere, I determined to stand my ground, and going into the yard I seized the first fowl within my reach, wrung its neck, and holding it up to the woman, signed to her to cook it, presenting her with three reals.
The fowl had been eaten, and I was fast asleep under the veranda, when I was aroused out of my slumbers by the owners of the hut, who had just returned from the fields, and were now standing before me with hatred in their looks and demeanour. They were soon joined by others, and all signed to me to leave the place immediately; I thought it no disgrace to yield before such numbers and to go to the cabildo, "common room," filled already with natives from various parts of the sierra on their way to or from "las playas." Here fortunately I found a mezitzo who spoke Spanish and was civil enough to arrange with an old couple to provide me with some food twice a day, and who promised besides to hurry on my tamenes as soon as he met them.

Shall I ever forget the first night I spent in this horrible cabildo, where all the abominations which are inseparable from barbarians seemed to have concentrated in it: the atmosphere was such as could be expected in a room overflowing with unwashed, unkempt, uncared-for humanity, alive with dirt! Sleep was of course out of the question; whilst a tropical rain precluded our sleeping in the open air.

We had three days of this nameless, indescribable horror; on the fourth the tamenes arrived looking rather foolish, displaying their bruises to account in some way for their delay. I was too thankful to have some clean clothes and a hammock in which to sleep, away from the filth of the last days, to think of remonstrating them, and I was so worn out with the unrest of the preceding nights, that I slept on until broad daylight.

When I opened my eyes, I saw indeed my packages arranged as they were the evening before, but no tamene was standing by them. A horrible suspicion crossed my mind. I rushed out followed by Julian to look for them, but ere long I had to convince myself that they had made off in the night to save themselves another toilsome journey.
Armed with gun and revolver, I went round the village to find other porters, but my offers were met everywhere with jeers and defiant looks, until at last, disheartened and hardly knowing what to do, I bethought me of the old Indian couple that had cooked my dinner and had betrayed some signs of sympathy at our mishaps, and begged them to take care of my luggage until I should send for it from S. Cristobal. Then provided with only what I thought strictly necessary for three days' march (rugs, water-proofs, shot, a *posole* cake, and some ham), which I made into two bundles, one for Julian and the other for myself, we took the road to Tumbala, fervently hoping never to set foot in S. Pedro again.

I cannot say much for our first attempts at turning tamenes: the straps supporting our burdens cut into our flesh, we advanced slowly and with great difficulty, and although it was comparatively cool in the forest, I felt hot to suffocation; we stopped every five minutes to take breath and ease ourselves of our burdens, but after a while we got used to our new mode of life, which was not so bad after all, for we found plenty of water on the road, and towards noon we sat down by the side of a running stream to eat our ham and *posole*, when Julian felt so exhilarated by his present comfort, as to indulge in small jokes about our late sad experiences.

Still holding our course up the sierra, at night we encamped at a considerable height, not far from a spring, round which we cleared a kind of green tent, lighted a good fire, which we took in turns to keep alive, as a protection against moisture and wild beasts. As day broke I heard a cock crow, showing that we were close to some habitation, but according to my calculations we should reach Tumbala in a few hours, and having enough for our immediate wants, we only thought of pressing on to the end of our journey, where I knew we were expected, when everything would be made right.
And now the forest was truly grand, glowing in all the splendour of a tropical vegetation; some of the arborescent ferns rising to a height of 40 feet, with far-spreading leaves, whilst the branches of the stately trees were gaily festooned with the entire family of orchids and other flowering parasites of the most brilliant hues. Long processions of *arrieras* (ants), laden with bits of foliage which they tilted up like a sail, gave them the appearance of a green moving belt.

Towards evening we met an Indian on his way home from "las playas," of whom we bought some maize-bread, and at night we encamped like the evening before in the forest. But a heavy storm arose; the driving rain and hail penetrated our waterproofs, drenched our garments, and threatened to put out the fire as well; the trees were cracking and falling about us like hail. By-and-by the rain ceased, and we could hear the hard breathing of a jaguar quite close to us; but the wood, thoroughly saturated with the rain, smouldered on without burning up; so that, in darkness which could be felt, I discharged at random the contents of my revolver, but the brute kept his ground until the first morning light, thus preventing our having any rest.

We rose with the lark, and, resuming our march, came in sight of Tumbala towards ten o'clock, having employed three days over forty-two miles! The cura was out, and our clothes soiled with mud, rain, and adhering brambles, gave us such a sorry appearance, that the housekeeper at first refused us admittance. After a while the cura returned; he was a man of about thirty years of age, with a benevolent countenance, full of kindness and sympathy over our hardships.

"Leave the tamenes to me to be dealt with as they deserve for their breach of contract; although the rogues are likely to keep away until they know you are out of the district."

Meanwhile the dinner, to my deep satisfaction, was placed
on the table; I did ample justice to the viands, which were well cooked and neatly served, the wine generous and the Comitan brandy excellent, but my late harassing life had so weakened me that when I tried to get up I could not steady myself, so I went to lie down, and slept on until noon of the following day, when I felt completely restored and myself again. The priest lent me some clothes till mine came, which, by his care, had been sent for; and thus accoutred, I went about with him fully enjoying my return to civilised life.

Tumbala has nothing to distinguish it from other Indian towns; it stands on one of the highest levels of the Sierra Madre, girt with a dark belt of pines and long lines of shadowy hills, stretching away in the far distance. The population numbers about 12,000 inhabitants, who live in the forest rather than in their mud cabins, so that the pastor is sometimes three months without seeing the male portion of his congregation.

A taxation of six shillings per head a year is the only act of submission to the State exacted from this semi-barbarous but almost independent people. The Governor, generally a native, collects the taxes, but in all other matters he is the humble servant of the padre, in whom are vested all powers both civil and spiritual; on the whole he makes very good use of his immense influence, in curbing and directing these childish, untutored, ignorant people.

Crimes are punished by jail or the bastinado; if the treatment is primitive, it suffices in all cases, which may well be, for the number of strokes varies from twelve to one hundred and fifty.

Whilst I was here, I witnessed a curious incident: one day a woman came to the cura demanding justice against her son, who had been wanting in respect to her. The son, a big, tall fellow of five-and-twenty, was with her; both were the worse for drink. The priest remonstrated with the mother, but she was
obdurate; the law allowed her twelve strokes, and twelve strokes she would have. "Never mind, Señor Padre, I know I don't deserve them, but she is my mother, and since it pleases her, I may well consent to it." He got his twelve strokes "pro forma," after which they fell into each other's arms perfectly happy. On another occasion two brothers preferred receiving twelve strokes rather than make friends.

They own no money except what they earn as tamenes for the whites of the districts round about S. Cristobal. They still retain the character of the old tamenes, who followed armies and merchants in their distant expeditions; they begin their apprenticeship at eight years of age, when they accompany their elders, carrying, like Æsop, the supplies of the company; their load is increased from year to year until it sometimes reaches two hundred pounds. Their avocation is so ingrained in their habits, that they fancy they cannot walk unless they carry some weight, so that on their return journey they generally have a few stones at their back.

But the larger proportion of their earnings finds its way to the padre; for marriages, christenings, confessions, burials, masses, etc., have all to be paid for, so that the priest of Tumbala is not badly off, but he shares with his bishop, who must have a well-feathered nest. Besides this, the simple natives give in kind of all they have; they are proud when they are required to repair their pastor's house, to run his errands, or carry him over the sierra when he travels; they consult him in all things, fully believing that the cura is able to help and see them out of all their troubles.

My luggage arrived at last, and as there was nothing to keep me any longer at Tumbala, I took leave of the hospitable priest, amply provided with food and letters of introduction to all the curas along the road, and set out for Jajalun, only a few hours
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distant, on foot, for the simple reason that no horses or mules could be obtained.

Jajalun stands on the declivities of the Cordillera, sloping down towards the Pacific; the hills are clad with dark forests of pines, whilst fields show signs of careful cultivation, where black beans intervene with golden harvests of maize. The population has a good sprinkling of half-castes or meztizos, who speak Spanish and live like the ancient aborigines, in houses built with mud coated over with plaster; their manners are those of the villages of the Mexican plateaux, rather than of the settlements we have just visited. Anteburros, "tapirs," people the forests and the streams.

We were received in the same kind manner by the cura as we had been at Tumbala, and having thoroughly rested mind and body, we did not much mind having again to perform our next journey on foot. The road was good, and lay across level ground, we were well provided with all the necessaries of life, so that there was little to complain of; indeed, Julian was so set up with the good cheer and the kind attentions of the women during the last few weeks that, in his desire to entertain me, he sang nearly all the way what was meant to be a comic song.

At Chilon we found horses which carried us comfortably to Citala, where a Dominican friar, for the time being cura of the place, received us in his house and entertained us most hospitably. I found him a remarkably agreeable, well-bred man, of far greater culture than is generally the case with his brethren. Some years before he had published his views upon religious reform, and this had brought him in bad odour with his superiors. He was by nature of a sensitive, proud disposition, and he felt keenly the slur cast upon him by his banishment in which the best years of his life were frittered away, and his health undermined by the unhealthy climate and the absence of all social
intercourse. The days I spent in the society of this genial, superior man, seemed to flit by unheeded; whilst I was given opportunities of noting down new traits in the character of the natives.

One day I happened to be in the church, whilst the friar was in his confessional, and, to my surprise, I saw him confess two persons at the same time, each speaking loud enough to be heard at some distance. Naturally enough I expressed my surprise to the padre. "Oh! it is the custom here; they do not think anything of it, and it not infrequently happens that I confess husband and wife at the same time. You are aware that the seventh commandment is utterly disregarded by these people; so that when they happen to confess together, they of course hear of each other's delinquencies, and the two culprits look daggers at each other across the grating. They are imposed a penance, which is always observed, are both absolved on their promise to go and sin no more, and the couple return peacefully to their home. It was a confession made in the presence of God, who has forgiven, therefore the husband has nothing to complain of; but if he found out the backslidings of his wife through any other means, it would go hard with her. Do not hurry away," said the padre, "to-morrow I join twenty couples in holy matrimony; it is a saving of time and drunkenness, for one entertainment will do for all."

I was much interested in a pretty patriarchal custom here, which consists in the female population coming up every evening to kiss their pastor's hand and ask for his blessing. I came in for my share, and had then the opportunity to notice that they are not remarkable for good looks; and, as the priest said, there is small merit in resisting the devil.

We wished the friar farewell, and continued our course to Cankuk; where the kindly "padre" procured some men to carry
us some twenty-seven miles of such bad road, that even the Indians do not trust their animals on it. It is the usual mode of travelling in this part of the sierra, but an uncomfortable feeling of the unfitness of things is experienced, in subjecting a fellow creature to become a beast of burden on your account. However, the feeling soon wears off, for they do not seem to mind it themselves, and they handle you about as they would a bale of cotton, and have a disagreeable way of flourishing you over fathomless abysses, which I found so trying that I deemed it prudent to perform the precipitous descent on foot.

This gave me the opportunity of stopping at my leisure to admire the grand prospect which from time to time opened out before us; the valley with its gay confusion of cultivated fields, and the houses of S. Cristobal shining in the sun. The ancient capital of Chiapas rises on a narrow plateau more than 7,000 feet above the level of the ocean, with a population of some 12,000 inhabitants; its climate is colder and damper than that of Mexico, and if we except the church of S. Domingo, possesses no edifice of interest. The houses are all built on the same pattern, and few are more than one story high, with no outer ornamentation of any kind. It looks what it really is, a poor, miserable place.

The market of S. Cristobal is the only one in Mexico where bags of cocoa are still used as currency, as in the time of Montezuma. The clergy of Chiapas, formerly so wealthy, has been deprived, like that of Mexico, of its emoluments and glebe lands, and the religious orders have also been suppressed.

We next follow the circuitous road to Chiapas, through a wild and dreary country, intersected by torrents, barrancas, and precipices of two or three thousand feet. We passed Ystapa, where the priest wished to know if France was a sea-port like Vera Cruz; and pressing on we reached the broad level of Chiapas, covered with sombre forests, bounded to the rear by the
hills of Tuxtla, whilst to the right and left the eye travels over a boundless distance. Along the river which traverses the plain, specks of white show where the town lies.

We only stopped at Chiapas the time necessary to change horses, and pushed on to Tuxtla, twenty miles beyond, now the capital of the province, where no mules could be hired, and we were obliged to buy horses to take us on to Oaxaca. No danger was to be apprehended, for the country was quiet; we were, moreover, fully armed and provided with a good map.

Osocantla, our first stage, exhibits abundant traces of volcanic action. We hold our course across great rolling plains, dotted with forests and patches of cultivation, intersected by broad rivers, and pass Santa Lucia, the finest hacienda in these parts, surrounded by huts occupied by the labourers employed on the property; it possesses a sugar-mill, and a granary for corn and maize, whilst the woods are peopled with wild turkeys, pheasants, numerous red aras, green parrots, and clouds of gaudy butterflies, rivalling the beauty of the vegetable creation nowhere so brilliant as here, where the river, with its interminable windings, casts across this privileged land a perpetual green and variegated mantle.

Life here is primitive and patriarchal: In the evening after prayers, the servants come round to take their orders for the next day, kiss the master's hand and wish him good night; then they all collect in the yard to enjoy, what they are pleased to call, an hour's rest, which consists in games, singing and dancing, some accompanying the singers on the marimba, a kind of piano which is played with small sticks topped by india-rubber paddings, an instrument found also in South Africa, where it bears the same name, whence in all probability it was imported to America by negroes at the time of the Conquest.

We resume our march, and pass successively Llano Grande, Casa Blanca, S. Pedro, and La Gineta; the latter is one of the
highest peaks of the sierra, clad with forests on the eastern side, but is only carpeted with grass towards the Pacific. We toil up its long winding ascent, but when we reach its summit, one of the grandest panoramas unfolds before our enraptured gaze. Looking back to the north, which we have just left, is the Cordillera, gradually sloping down from the high plateaux of Chiapas, to its deep, sombre valleys; whilst beyond are vast plains, and in the far distance the glimmering light of the Mexican Gulf; before us, to the south, is the verdant Gineta; lower down, the rich plain of Tehuantepec, bound on the horizon by the broad sheet of the Pacific. The pass of the Gineta is very dangerous in winter, owing to the violent winds which then prevail, carrying off both man and beast.

As we advance haciendas disappear, and we find the sides of the roads dotted with villages as in Mexico. The population seems indolent and inert, content to pinch or starve rather than exert themselves beyond what they have been accustomed. Villages are usually built near running streams, in which women are seen the whole day bathing; but, unlike Diana, they do not mind being looked upon, contenting themselves with turning their backs upon the intruder.

We steered our course safely through Zanatepec, Miltepec, but at Yaltepec we lost our way, and wandered about some time in the woods before we could find the main road, approaching Tehuantepec about nightfall, celebrated for its fair women, the handsomest in the State. They are cast in noble proportions, and have a dignified, erect carriage. Their dress consists of a short petticoat reaching the ankles, a jacket which leaves neck and arms bare; a uipil embroidered with gold and silver covers their head, whilst their small feet are incased in dainty little shoes. Their dresses sometimes cost a hundred pounds, a large sum in this part of the world.
el hombre sabe siempre tomar el partido mejor y más prudente para afianzar su felicidad y su reposo?

Colombia puede considerarse como dividida naturalmente en dos grandes regiones: la montañosa al Oeste, la de los llanos al Este. La primera tiene una superficie de cuatrocientos veinte mil kilómetros cuadrados. Su población aunque poco densa se halla distribuida con bastante igualdad, pudiendo subdividirse geográficamente en siete regiones principales, a saber:

1.° El valle del Magdalena que ocupa la parte central, comprendiendo también el del Cauca, afluente principal de aquel;

2.° El valle del Patía, al Sud de la república;

3.° El valle del Atrato sumamente húmedo y cubierto de selvas, formado por la bifurcación de la Cordillera occidental;

4.° El litoral del Oeste, cuyas aguas son tributarias del golfo de Panamá;

5.° El litoral de Darién a ambos lados del golfo de este mismo nombre;

6.° El valle del Río-Hacha comprendido entre la Sierra Nevada y el ramal de los Andes que corre hacia la Goajira;

7.° y última. La región del istmo de Panamá, cuyas aguas correspondientes a la vertiente norte desembocan en el Atlántico y las de la vertiente sud en el Pacífico.

La región llana, en el día desierta o habitada sólo por tribus salvajes y errabundas ocupa una superficie aproximada de setecientos ochenta mil kilómetros cuadrados, hallándose comprendida por un lado entre la Cordillera oriental, el Orinoco y el Casiquiare; y por el otro entre el río de los Amazonas y los Andes de Venezuela que la protegen de los vientos del Norte. El río Guaviare la divide en dos grandes regiones: la meridional que se inclina hacia el sudoeste y la septentrional cuyas aguas corren hacia el Este. Lo mismo la una que la otra cuentan un buen número de corrientes caudalosas que nacen en las montañas y corren paralelamente desagüando las unas en el río de las Amazonas y las restantes en el Orinoco.

Sin embargo de que la altura de los llanos sobre el nivel del mar no es muy considerable, el calor que reina en ellos no es excesivo, merced a las brisas del Atlántico, a las corrientes de los ríos y a las lluvias que refrescan constantemente la atmósfera; y a pesar de su reputación de país de fiebres, sus condiciones higiénicas no son malas del todo. Si alguna vez se inundan las tierras más bajas, las aguas se retiran rápidamente: en el resto del país son corrientes siempre y las orillas de los ríos aparecen cubiertas de una vegetación espléndida.

Los habitantes de Nueva Granada son por lo general inteligentes, demuestran viveza de imaginación y alguna fogosidad en sus pasiones; en cuanto a las razas indígenas, de ordinario muy pacíficas en toda la América del Sud, han mostrado aquí más de una vez ardor y audacia. Hasta hace unos sesenta años el país estuvo sometido al dominio de los españoles; mas una grave crisis social y política lo libertó de sus dominadores, poniéndole en posesión de un sistema democrático representativo, al cual no es fácil que se acostumbre, sin pasar antes por las más profundas convulsiones siempre renacentes.

La historia de la Nueva Granada principia con el descubrimiento de América por Cristó-
In Tehuantepec are met the peculiar people known as pintos, "painted," no misnomer, for they are covered with sickly white patches extending sometimes over the whole body. The effect of these patches over their swarthy skin is most repulsive, and gives them the ghastly appearance of lepers.

There is little or nothing to be said upon our next journey, except that after S. Juan we enter once more the region of cactuses in all their variety, and arrive at Oaxaca dust-travelled and weary. This region enjoys a delicious climate, whilst its soil is most productive. Ancient ruins are numerous, but they are little known and still less studied, owing probably to the fact that they bear no resemblance to those that are known, and that no historians have mentioned them. Nevertheless, I should ascribe a Toltec origin to the very interesting ruins of Monte Alban, some miles distant from the town of Oaxaca, rising to a height of 4,930 feet, terminating by a partially artificial plateau, extending over one half square league, covered with masses of stones and mortar, forts, esplanades, narrow subterraneous passages, and immense sculptured blocks. The arches or vaults of these passages are formed by large inclined blocks of stone overlapping one another, and sculptured with human faces in profile, resembling the bas-reliefs and figures lately discovered at Santa Lucia Cosumalhuapa in Guatemala.

The grandest ruins are to the south end of the plateau, consisting mostly of truncated pyramids about 25 feet high, having steep sides. Enormous masses of masonry show where palaces and teocalli once stood. The plateau is covered with fragments of lime, very fine pottery, on which a brilliant red glazing is observable. An Italian explorer, some years ago, opened some of the mounds, and found necklaces of agate, fragments of worked obsidian, and golden ornaments of fine workmanship.

These monuments are different from other ruins in the valley
or at Mitla, both in their architecture and materials, which consist of stones laid in mortar, whereas at Mitla, clay was used with large pebbles, faced with irregular stones, varying in size in different parts of the walls. The walls of the temples were perpendicular, and the ceilings flat; whilst at Monte Alban, we have the boveda, or overlapping vault.

Our explorations take us next to Mitla, leaving to our left the fine cemetery called the Pantheon; we pass Santa Lucia, where cock-fighting still forms the chief amusement of its inhabitants, and six miles further we come in sight of the charming settlement of Santa Maria del Tule, peeping out from among groves of pomegranate, chermoias, and goyavias.

In the open space fronting the chapel, stands the old tree called Sabino, an object of great veneration on the part of the natives, who come from all parts of Central America to see it. Its greatest girth measures 14 paces or 33 feet, to the height of 20 feet, where it divides, carrying its vigorous branches 100 feet beyond. Some travellers have supposed that three stems had united to form its colossal trunk, but I was unable to discover more than one shoot, and its vigour is such, that several centuries more may safely be predicted for it.

We resume our march, steering towards the east where the valley becomes very narrow; we pass Tlacolula, following the spur of the hills, where open quarries still show half-hewn blocks left by the ancient builders of Mitla, and bearing to the right we reach S. Dionysio, the last place in the valley; and now Tatapala is fast disappearing in our rear, and bending to the left we approach an almost uncultivated valley with bare hills, where stand the funereal palaces of Mitla. Its sandy soil supports no vegetation, save a few pitahayas, yielding a delicious fruit the size of a swan's egg, having a strawberry flavour.

The ruins of Mitla, which at the time of the Conquest occupied
a wide space, are now reduced to six palaces and three ruined pyramids. In the square of the village stands an oblong edifice, 98 feet long by 13 feet wide, faced with unsculptured blocks of stone, with only one opening at the side.

The next, in our general view of Mitla, is the first edifice to the north on the slope of the hill, consisting of a confusion of courts, buildings, and mosaic work in relief of beautiful and graceful patterns. Below are found traces of very primitive paintings, representing rude figures of idols and lines forming meanders, the meaning of which is unknown. The same rude paintings are found throughout the palace in sheltered places which have escaped the ravages of time. That such immature drawings should be found in palaces of beautiful architecture, decorated with panels of exquisite mosaic work, are facts which, at first sight, make it difficult to ascribe them to the same people.

I have called the first ruin the cura’s house, because the venerable man, who has occupied it for the last fifty years, used the walls of the ancient edifice to build himself a spacious and comfortable house. The church adjoining it is also constructed with the material taken from the ancient palace.

Below, to the left, is a truncated pyramid, built with adobes, ascended by a stone staircase, having a Christian chapel on its summit. The Spaniards cleared it so completely of the ancient temple that no trace remains. The great palace, the walls of which are still entire, consists of a vast edifice in the shape of a Tau; the main façade faces south, and is the best preserved of all the monuments at Mitla, measuring 130 feet, with an apartment corresponding to it of the same dimensions, and six monolith columns which supported the roof now fallen in. Three large doorways gave access to the apartment, having a pavement covered with cement.
Both Torquemada and Clavigero, who wrote of these monuments from hearsay, erroneously ascribe 30 feet and 80 feet respectively to these columns.

The only entrance to the inner court on the right, which is also cemented, is through a dark narrow passage, having the walls and the main façade covered with mosaic work in panels, framed with stones. The court is square, and opens into four narrow long apartments covered from top to bottom with mosaic work in relief, arranged in varied parallel bands, extending to the roof. The lintels over the doorways were formed of huge
blocks of stone from 16 feet to 18 feet. We give a ground plan of the palace, and a cut of the great hall or apartment, together with a cut of the same hall restored by Viollet-le-Duc, who says of this monument:

"The three doorways, opening into the great apartment with columns, were partly walled up after the erection of the building, but are plainly visible. Over the doorways are four round holes, into which were probably fixed hooks supporting a portière. The monuments of Greece and Rome, in their best time, can alone compare with the splendour of this great edifice. The ornamentation is arranged with perfect symmetry, the joints are carefully cut, the beds and arris of the cornices faultless, showing
that the builders were masters of their art. The lintels in this monument consist, like those of Greece and Rome, of large blocks of stone; the ornamentation is a series of varied panels, set in elegant frames, composed of small stones beautifully cut, arranged in meanders, trellis-work, and diversified in their combinations.” The distinguished architect ascribes these monuments, as also those of Yucatan and lower Mexico, to a branch of the southern civilisation (Malays), separated from the parent stock, and crossed many times with whites.

It will be apparent to the reader, that the ruins at Mitla bear no resemblance with those of Mexico or Yucatan, either in their ornamentation or mode of building; the interiors have no longer the overlapping vault, but generally consist of perpendicular walls, supporting flat ceilings, so that it seems almost impossible to class these monuments with those of Central America. Nevertheless, there are details which recall Toltec influence, as we shall show later.

The second palace is the most dilapidated of those which are still standing. The door, the sculptured lintel, and two inner columns, are the only remains which serve to show that the same arrangement was observed here, as in the great hall already described. The fourth palace is occupied on its southern façade, which we reproduce, by much more oblong panels, having three human figures or caryatides. Four other palaces, to the south, are almost level with the ground, the walls only rising 3 or 4 feet above it; but the enormous blocks of stone forming the basement, give them a massive appearance which is not observable in the palaces that are still standing.

The natives make use of them as dwelling-places. Subterraneous passages, which were opened some years ago, extend under these ruins; but the hostile attitude of the Indians caused them to be closed up again before they could be properly
buitres urubús (Gallinazos), amén de un buen número de plantas á cual más interesante. Grandes mimosas, *Cereus* de unos siete á ocho metros de altura, la *Tillandsia uniflora* de hojas grises, menudas y como vermiculadas, un *Sophora* cuyas perfumadas flores blancas recuerdan las de nuestra *Robinia pseudo-acacia*, constituyen la vegetación predominante en esta localidad de escociente memoria.

Sambrano, Tetén y Tacamocho son las últimas estaciones que se encuentran antes de llegar al sitio donde el Magdalena se divide en dos brazos, apellidado el uno Brazo de Mompox y el otro de Magangué ó Brazo de Loba. Actualmente se pasa por el último que si bien alarga un tanto la ruta, en cambio tiene el lecho más profundo y por ende menos obstruido de tascas arenosas.

En las orillas se ven numerosas manadas de caimanes. Al tenerlos á una distancia suficiente les mandamos un saludo con algunas balas cónicas. A los más les marramos, hacemos blanco en otros y matamos pocos; y aún así, hay que contar con que á los que se sienten heridos mortalmente les queda tiempo y espacio bastantes de llegar rastreando al río y sumergirse para morir en el fondo. Solo después, al cabo de una semana, el cadáver hinchado de gases reaparece y flota en la superficie. Es de verle entonces á merced de la corriente, tended panza arriba y cubierto de voraces gallinazos que hunden con deleite sus horrendos picos en sus entrañas putrefactas. Espectáculo pintoresco al par que nauseabundo. El caimán aparece rodeado de plantas acuáticas y en su conjunto tiene un parecido muy grande con un gigantesco sollo circundado de perejil.

Al pasar por enfrente de un ribazo cortado á plomo por los derrumbamientos ví destarse uno enorme á diez pasos de nosotros sobre una pequeña depresión del terreno. Estaba con la boca abierta de par en par tragándose los mosquitos incautos atraídos por las fétidas emanaciones que por ella despiden. Hice una seña á Montbrun que era muy goloso de esta clase de *sport*, y un momento después el monstruo recibía un certero balazo en una de las patas delanteras que le atravesaba el corazón. Cerró las quijadas con estrépito, brotó de la herida un chorro de sangre en sentido horizontal y murió instantáneamente.

A partir de la embocadura del Brazo de Loba los bancos de arena son muy temibles: por eso en tales parajes la sonda funciona sin descanso. Un hombre colocado en lo que podría llamarse la proa del buque—que cala como un pie de agua más que la popa á fin de proteger la rueda trasera—va trasmitiendo al capitán que se asoma ansioso sobre el empalletado, el resultado de sus tanteos hechos por medio de un bichero.—Cinco pies, seis, siete pies, ó bien: una braza, una braza larga... tales son las palabras que repite sin cesar. Un fondo menor de cinco pies es peligroso: con sólo cuatro pies de fondo, el barco encallaría. No puede expresarse la inquietud que se apodera de todos los viajeros apáneas se nota que el fondo del río va elevándose. Entonces es necesario retroceder y buscar un nuevo canal para pasar á toda costa. A veces el buque que encalla permanece en este estado semanas enteras esperando una crecida que lo levante á flote y le franquee el paso. Sé de uno que hubo de estar cuarenta y dos días al paio totalmente incomunicado con la orilla. Calcúlese qué sufrimientos y desazones no pasarían los viajeros en esta estación forzada, medio devorados por los mos-
explored. The ruins are fast falling into decay, hastened by the natives who resort hither from all parts, and in their ignorance take away the small stones forming the mosaic work, with the idea that they will turn into gold. The local government could easily stop such Vandalism, but it does not seem to care.

We do not know the precise date of these monuments, except that they had long been in a state of ruin at the time of the Conquest, and Orozco y Berra* thinks that they were destroyed some time between 1490-1500, in the fierce contests between the Zapotecs and the invading Aztecs, a fact which would make them but little older than those we have described in the course of this work.

If there seems but little resemblance in the general outline between these monuments and those of the Toltecs or Mexicans, it must be evident to any one that some of the details, such as the masks and the small terra-cotta figures, are exactly like those at Teotihuacan; whilst the small crosses on the panels of the great palace, and those on the façade of the fourth, are facsimiles of those on the priest of Quetzalcoatl at Lorillard—assuredly a most important analogy.†

Torquemada ascribes a Toltec origin to these monuments, for he says: *After Quetzalcoatl had established himself at Cholula, in order to carry on there his work of civilisation, he built the celebrated palaces of Mitla.*

According to Burgoa,‡ Quetzalcoatl was worshipped at Achiultla; and in the great sanctuary of that town was an idol called the *Heart of the people.* It consisted of a large emerald the size of a Chili pepper, surmounted by a sculptured

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† Torquemada, "Monarquia Indiana," lib. iii. cap. iii.
‡ Burgoa, "Description Geographique," chaps. xxviii., xxxix., and liii.
bird of exquisite workmanship, wreathed by a serpent. It was a gem of great antiquity, and so transparent that it shone like a flame; but the origin of the cult which surrounded it was forgotten." Orozco y Berra thinks that the snake represented Quetzalcoatl, and was a Toltec reminiscence.

The Zapotecs and Miztecs believed themselves autochthones; they were ignorant of their origin, and had preserved no record of the time when they established themselves in the country of which Teozapotlan was the capital. The original name of Mitla seems to have been Liobaa or Yobaa, "the place of tombs," called by the Aztecs Mictlan, or Mitla, place of sadness, hell, dwelling of the dead, a holy place devoted to the burial of the kings of Teozapotlan.*

The edifices consisted of four upper apartments finely sculptured, corresponding to an equal number in the lower or ground story. The upper story was divided between the high priest, whose apartment was the best furnished of all, the king, who retired here on the death of a relation, his retinue, and the levites. In the lower story, the sanctuary formed the central apartment, having a large slab which served as an altar, on which were placed the images of the various deities; the side apartments were devoted one for the king’s burial, the other for the priests; the fourth, which is supposed to have been the largest, extended far out under ground, and was supported by columns like those of the main upper apartment or hall, having an entrance which was closed by a large slab. In this vast enclosure were thrown the bodies of the victims and the military chiefs who had died in battle. Besides these, there were those who consecrated themselves to the gods, when they were led to the mouth of this necropolis by a priest, the slab was raised,

* Burgoa, “Description Géographique,” chap. lviii.
Los mosquitos se muestran implacables. Llevamos ya diez largos días de vida uniforme, ociosa y sin un objeto inmediato que nos interese. Los pasajeros se han ido dividiendo en grupos, y ya no tenemos de común más que el aburrimiento. Tan sólo Juan y yo, propensos á observarlo todo y ocupados en preparar nuestras colecciones, en poner á secar nuestras plantas y en rellenar las aves que llevamos recogidas, lo pasamos ménos mal, y vemos trascurrir las horas y los días con suma rapidez.

De vez en cuando uno que otro incidente viene á turbar la monotonía de esta prision flotante. Una mañana, mientras me hallaba sobre el puente platicando con el general Rosas, á quien el gobierno había llamado para enviarle á reprimir no sé qué disturbios ocurridos en el alto Magdalená, de súbito, todos los marineros lanzaron un grito angustioso. Diése órden inmediatamente de stoppar (dar contra-vapor). Un hombre de la tripulacion acababa de caerse al rio.

—¡Animo, amigo! — gritabanle sus camaradas.
—¡Contra-vapor! mandaba el capitan.—Maldito será este paraje, nos dijo, pues en mi último viaje perdí precisamente aquí mismo á uno de mis mejores marineros, que fué devorado en presencia nuestra, por un caiman. Ya verán ustedes como á ese le va á pasar lo mismo. No obstante, haremos todo lo posible por salvarle.

Por espacio de un cuarto de hora seguimos con avidez los desesperados esfuerzos que hacía el infeliz temiendo á cada punto verle desaparecer entre las horribles quijadas de alguno de aquellos feroces animales. Mas por fortuna pudo ganar la orilla, sin más consecuencias que el susto consiguiente.

Poco antes de llegar á Naré fuimos testigos de una extraña ceremonia, parodia del antiguo y tradicional bautismo de la línea. Cierto que lo único que faltaba allí era la línea; pero á dos grados al Norte del Ecuador no hay que andarse con primores.

Eran las cuatro de la tarde y el sol empezaba á declinar. Un marinero se colgó unas hopalandas de clergyman, traídas de no sé dónde y un sombrero de copa, á la moda de Bolívar, apabullado y perdida la color, sin duda en vista del papel que iban á hacerle jugar. El hombre en cuestion tomó con una mano un libraco de comercio, simulando la Biblia, mientras con la otra empuñaba una tranca, se colgó en la nariz unos espejuelos enormes y se encaramó sobre un barril. —¡Aquí, muchacho!— gritó dirigiéndose á un negrito de la dotacion, el que se puso de hinojos, con las manos detrás del cuerpo. Todo el personal de á bordo formaba corro al rededor del negrito: cada marinero llevaba apercibida en la mano una cuba llena de agua. Cuanto á los pasajeros asomados á la galería de proa, dominábamos la escena perfectamente.

Empezó la ceremonia, demasiado burlesca, para ser descrita con todos sus detalles, y tras algunas preguntas zumbonas del bautizante, recitó éste una invocacion en ese tono gutural y nasal á un tiempo que suelen emplear los sacerdotes metodistas norte-americanos, acompañada de un sin fin de gestos é inflexiones estrambóticas. De súbito al grito de ¡Arriba! el neófito se levanta y al mismo tiempo que recibe á modo de admonicion suprema, un fuerte trancazo en las costillas, desaparece bajo la sábana de agua que forman treinta cubas vaciándose á un tiempo encima de él, entre una estentórea carcajada.
and the self-devoted victim suffered to pass out in the abode of the dead.

The high priest was called "Huiyatoo," the great sentinel, he who sees all; his power, which was absolute, was even greater than the king's. No person of low degree could see his face and live. He was the sole mediator between man and the gods; from him flowed all good gifts, both temporal and spiritual.*

It is probable that Burgoa never visited Mitla, for he only mentions one palace, whereas eight were still standing in his time. It seems strange that the Mexican Government should not undertake the exploration of these ruins, which, as they were

* Burgoa, "Description Géographique."
the burial place of kings and priests, must contain costly robes, jewels, arms, etc., perhaps even manuscripts that would be most valuable for a comparative history of the Zapotecs and Aztecs. This is all the more to be regretted, that there is a stir in the learned world respecting American ruins and American antiquities.

"In a word," says Orozco, "great divergence is found between the Zapotec and Toltec civilisation; they seem to spring from a common source, their calendar is the same, and their writing nearly so; both had made great progress in architecture and ceramic art. But these differences, seemingly slight, deepen with a maturer study: although based on the same principles, Zapotec writing has different characters, and objects assume other conventional forms; colours are more glaring, and at a first glance it is impossible to confound a Miztec with a Toltec, Acolhuan, or Mexican manuscript."*

To conclude, although we have visited the ruins of Mitla more than once, we have not made so careful a study of them, as of those in Yucatan and Central America; nevertheless it has been shown that both Torquemada and Orozco see a Toltec influence in these monuments.

NOTES.

Page 269.—**Henequen.**—Annual fires are run over the country to clear the ground for the labourers, who then dig holes in the rocky soil and set out the henequen plants. When of sufficient size, the leaves are cut and carried to the "scraping machine," which consists of a large fly-wheel, with strong, blunt knives carried around on the rapidly revolving wheel. The leaves are pressed by means of a curved lever, in such a way that the pulpy portion is scraped off, leaving the fibre. The men feed the machine with astonishing rapidity, pressing the leaf between the knives and lever with a motion of the leg.

Page 284.—**Indians.**—The great uprising of the Indians began in 1821, when Mexico separated from Spain. The large landed proprietors were everywhere opposed to separation from the mother country, whilst the bulk of the people, who owned no property, were in favour of it. Later the country was divided in two parties, in which one wished for an amalgamation with Mexico, whilst the other was against it. The aborigines cast in their lot with the latter, receiving arms and promises of independence. After the struggle was over and the Mexicans expelled, the Indians were dismissed to their homes, and the promises made to them were not kept.

In 1846 the Indians saw their opportunity; they swept the eastern coast with fire and sword, and ravaged the country throughout. At last Mexico, having concluded peace with the United States, sent an army, and the rebels were very slowly driven back. But it was years ere peace was restored, and even now annual risings take place, whilst thousands of square miles are desolate, and hundreds of towns lie in ruins.

By calling in the aid of Mexico, Yucatan lost her autonomy, and became one of the Confederate States of the Republic.
Page 296.—Stephens ("Incidents and Travels in Yucatan," vol. ii. p. 441) says of the third monument, known as the Palacio—palace—the ascent is on the south side by an immense staircase, 137 feet wide, forming an approach of rude grandeur, each step 4 feet 5 inches long, and 1 foot 5 inches in height.

Page 427.—It is urged that Yalchilan should be written either Xalchilan or Jalchilan, x and j being convertible letters having a strong aspirate; but as doctors are not agreed, the name is suffered to stand as in the text.
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