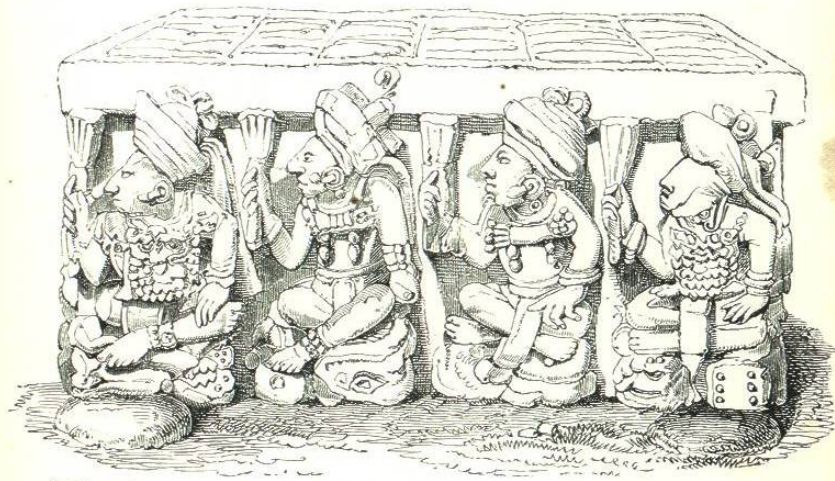


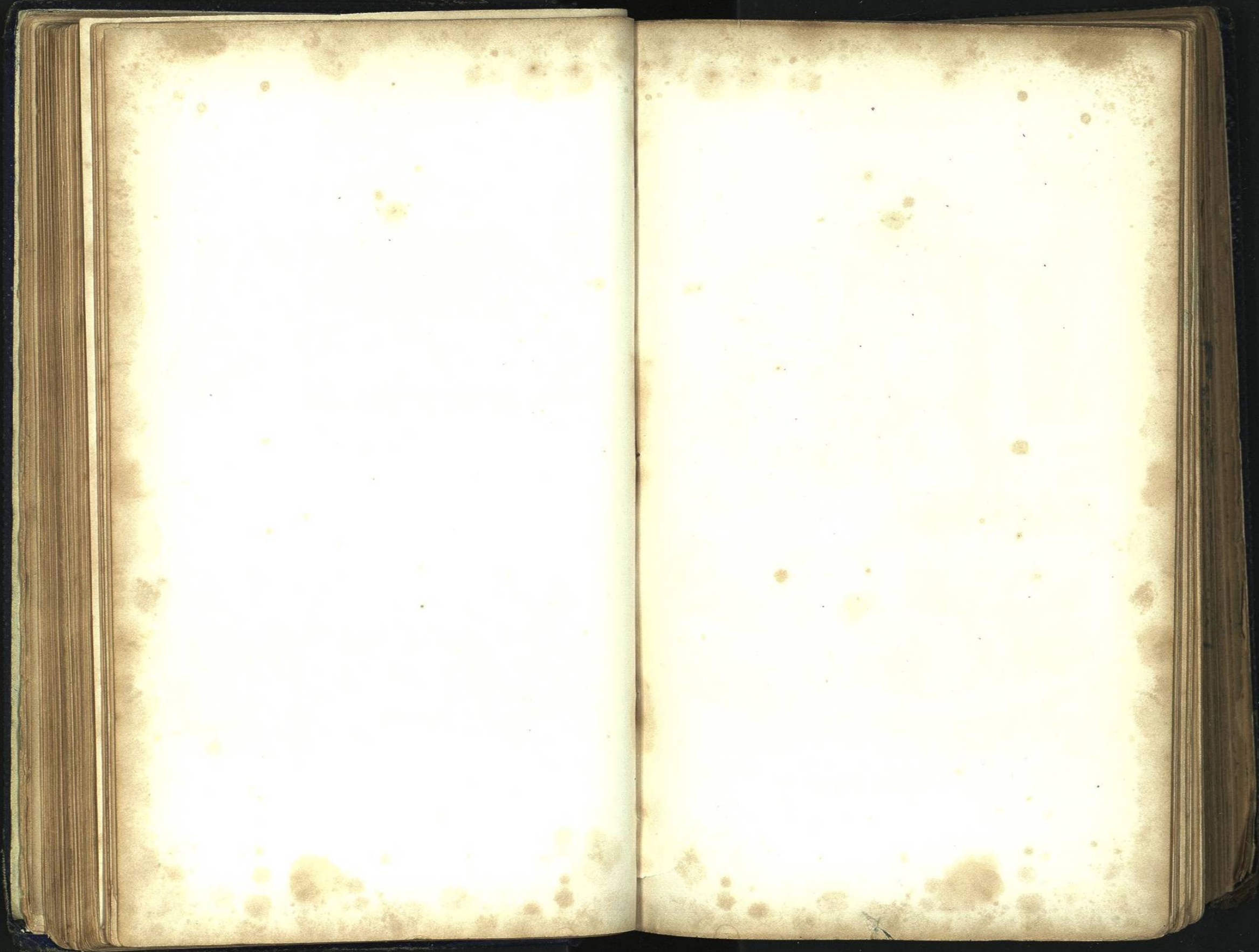
South Side.

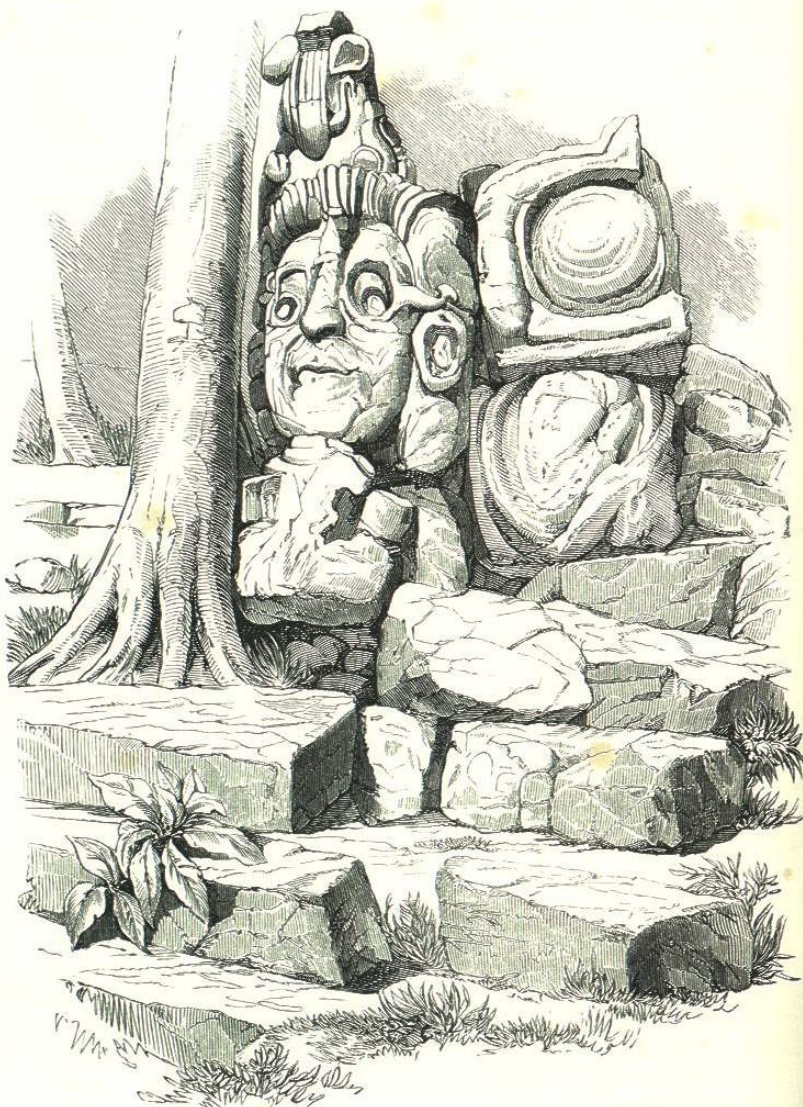


F. Catherwood.

East Side.

14. ALTAR.





F. Catherwood.

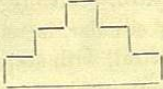
15. GIGANTIC HEAD.

name and office, or character; and on three of which the serpent forms part. Between the two principal personages is a remarkable cartouche, containing two hieroglyphics, well preserved, which reminded us strongly of the Egyptian method of giving the names of the kings or heroes in whose honour monuments were erected. The head-dresses are remarkable for their curious and complicated form: the figures have all breastplates, and one of the two principal characters holds in his hand an instrument, which may, perhaps, be considered a sceptre; each of the others holds an object which can be only a subject for speculation and conjecture. It may be a weapon of war; and, if so, it is the only thing of the kind found represented at Copan. In other countries, battle-scenes, warriors, and weapons of war are among the most prominent subjects of sculpture; and from the entire absence of them here, there is reason to believe that the people were not warlike, but peaceable, and easily subdued.

The other courtyard is near the river. By cutting down the trees, we discovered the entrance to be on the north side, by a passage thirty feet wide, and about three hundred feet long. On the right is a high range of steps rising to the terrace of the river wall. At the foot of this are six circular stones, from eighteen inches to three feet in diameter,—perhaps once the pedestals of columns or monuments now fallen and buried. On the left side of the passage is a high pyramidal structure, with steps six feet high and nine feet broad, like the side of one of the pyramids at Saccara, and one hundred and twenty-two feet high on the slope. The top is fallen, and has two immense Ceiba trees growing out of it, the roots of which have thrown down the stones, and now bind the top of the pyramid. At the end of the passage is the area or courtyard, probably the great circus of Fuentes; but which, instead of being circular, is rectangular, one hundred and forty feet long and ninety broad, with steps on all the sides. This was probably the most holy place in the temple. Beyond doubt it had been the theatre of great events, and of imposing religious ceremonies; but what those ceremonies were, or who were the actors in them, or what had brought them to such a fearful close, were mysteries which it was impossible to fathom. There was no idol or altar, nor were there any vestiges of them. On the left, standing alone, two-thirds of the way up the steps, is the gigantic head represented in Plate No. 15. It is moved a little from its place, and a portion of the ornament on one side has been thrown down some distance by the expansion of the trunk of a large tree, as shown by the drawing. The head is about six feet high, and the style good. Like many of the others, with the great expansion of the eyes it seems intended to inspire awe. On either side of it, distant about thirty or forty feet, and rather lower

down, are other fragments of sculpture of colossal dimensions and good design; and at the foot are two colossal heads, turned over and partly buried, well worthy the attention of future travellers and artists. The whole area is overgrown with trees and encumbered with decayed vegetable matter, with fragments of curious sculpture protruding above the surface, which, probably, with many others completely buried, would be brought to light by digging.

On the opposite side, parallel with the river, is a range of fifteen steps to a terrace twelve feet wide; and then fifteen steps more to another terrace twenty feet wide, extending to the river wall. On each side of the centre of the steps is a mound of ruins, apparently of a circular tower. About half way up the steps on this side is a pit five feet square and seventeen feet deep, cased with stone. At the bottom is an opening two feet four inches high, with a wall one foot nine inches thick, which leads into a chamber ten feet long, five feet eight inches wide, and four feet high. At each end is a niche one foot nine inches high, one foot eight inches deep, and two feet five inches long. Col. Galindo first broke into this sepulchral vault, and found the niches and the ground full of red earthenware dishes and pots, more than fifty of which, he says, were full of human bones packed in lime; also several sharp-edged and pointed knives of *chaya*, a small death's head, carved in a fine green stone, its eyes nearly closed, the lower features distorted, and the back symmetrically perforated by holes, the whole of exquisite workmanship. Immediately above the pit which leads to this vault is a passage leading through the terrace to the river wall, from which, as before mentioned, the ruins are sometimes called *Las Ventanas*, or the windows. It is one foot eleven inches at the bottom,

and one foot at the top, in  this form, and barely large

enough for a man to crawl through on his face.

There were no remains of buildings. In regard to the stone hammock mentioned by Fuentes, and which, in fact, was our great inducement to visit these ruins, we made special inquiry and search, but saw nothing of it. Colonel Galindo does not mention it. Still it may have existed, and may be there still, broken and buried. The padre of Gualan told us that he had seen it; and in our inquiries among the Indians, we met with one who told us that he had heard his father say that *his* father, two generations back, had spoken of such a monument.

I have omitted the particulars of our survey: the difficulty and labour of opening lines through the trees—climbing up the sides

of the ruined pyramids—measuring steps,—and the aggravation of all these, from our want of materials and help, and our imperfect knowledge of the language. The people of Copan could not comprehend what we were about, and thought we were practising some black art to discover hidden treasure. Bruno and Francisco, our principal coadjutors, were completely mystified, and even the monkeys seemed embarrassed and confused; these counterfeit presentments of ourselves aided not a little in keeping alive the strange interest that hung over the place. They had no “monkey-tricks,” but were grave and solemn, as if officiating as the guardians of consecrated ground. In the morning they were quiet, but in the afternoon they came out for a promenade on the tops of the trees; and sometimes, as they looked steadfastly at us, they seemed on the point of asking us why we disturbed the repose of the ruins. I have omitted, too, what aggravated our hardships and disturbed our sentiment: apprehensions from scorpions, and bites of mosquitos and garrapatas or ticks, the latter of which, in spite of precautions (pantaloons tied tight over our boots, and coats buttoned close in the throat), got under our clothes, and buried themselves in the flesh; at night, moreover, the hut of Don Miguel was alive with fleas, to protect ourselves against which, on the third night of our arrival, we sewed up the sides and one end of our sheets, and thrust ourselves into them as we would into a sack. And while in the way of mentioning our troubles I may add, that during this time the flour of the hacienda gave out, we were cut off from bread, and brought down to tortillas.

The day after our survey was finished, as a relief, we set out for a walk to the old stone quarries of Copan. Very soon we abandoned the path along the river, and turned off to the left. The ground was broken, the forest thick, and all the way we had an Indian before us with his machete, cutting down branches and saplings. The range lies about two miles north from the river, and runs east and west. At the foot of it we crossed a wild stream. The side of the mountain was overgrown with bushes and trees. The top was bare, and commanded a magnificent view of a dense forest, broken only by the winding of the Copan River, and the clearings for the haciendas of Don Gregorio and Don Miguel. The city was buried in forest, and entirely hidden from sight. Imagination peopled the quarry with workmen, and laid bare the city to their view. Here, as the sculptor worked, he turned to the theatre of his glory, as the Greek did to the Acropolis of Athens, and dreamed of immortal fame. Little did he imagine that the time would come when his works would perish, his race be extinct, his city a desolation and abode for reptiles,—for

strangers to gaze at, and wonder by what race it had once been inhabited.

The stone is of a soft grit. The range extended a long distance, seemingly unconscious that stone enough had been taken from its sides to build a city. How the huge masses were transported over the irregular and broken surface we had crossed, and particularly how one of them was set up on the top of a mountain 2,000 feet high, it was impossible to conjecture. In many places were blocks which had been quarried out, and rejected for some defect; and at one spot, midway in a ravine leading toward the river, was a gigantic block, much larger than any we saw in the city, which was probably on its way thither, to be carved and set up as an ornament, when the labours of the workmen were arrested. Like the unfinished blocks in the quarries at Assouan and on the Pentelican Mountain, it remains as a memorial of baffled human plans.

We remained all day on the top of the range. The close forest in which we had been labouring made us feel more sensibly the beauty of the extended view. On the top of the range was a quarried block. With the chay stone found among the ruins, and supposed to be the instrument of sculpture, we wrote our names upon it. They stand alone, and few will ever see them. Late in the afternoon we returned, and struck the river above the ruins, near a stone wall with a circular building and a pit, apparently for a reservoir.

As we approached our hut we saw two horses with side-saddles tied outside, and heard the cry of a child within. A party had arrived, consisting of an old woman and her daughter, son, and his wife and child, and their visit was to the medicos. We had had so many applications for remedios, our list of patients had increased so rapidly, and we had been so much annoyed every evening with weighing and measuring medicines, that, influenced also by the apprehensions before referred to, we had given out our intention to discontinue practice; but our fame had extended so far, that these people had actually come from beyond San Antonio, more than thirty miles distant, to be cured, and it was hard to send them away without doing something for them. As Mr. C. was the medico in whom the public had most confidence, I scarcely paid any attention to them, unless to observe that they were much more respectable in dress and appearance than any patients we had had, except the members of Don Gregorio's family; but during the evening I was attracted by the tone in which the mother spoke of the daughter, and for the first time noticed in the latter an extreme delicacy of figure and a pretty foot, with a neat shoe and clean stocking. She had a shawl drawn over her head, and on speaking to

her she removed the shawl, and turned up a pair of the most soft and dove-like eyes that mine ever met. She was the first of our patients in whom I took any interest, and I could not deny myself the physician's privilege of taking her hand in mine. While she thought we were consulting in regard to her malady, we were speaking of her interesting face; but the interest which we took in her was melancholy and painful, for we felt that she was a delicate flower, born to bloom but for a season, and, even at the moment of unfolding its beauties, doomed to die.

The reader is aware that our hut had no partition walls. Don Miguel and his wife gave up their bed to two of the women; she herself slept on a mat on the ground with the other. Mr. C. slept in his hammock, I on my bed of Indian corn, and Don Miguel and the young men under a shed out of doors.

I passed two or three days more in making the clearings and preparations, and then Mr. Catherwood had occupation for at least a month. When we turned off to visit these ruins, we did not expect to find employment for more than two or three days, and I did not consider myself at liberty to remain longer. I apprehended a desperate chase after a government; and fearing that among these ruins I might wreck my own political fortunes, and bring reproach upon my political friends, I thought it safer to set out in pursuit. A council was called at the base of an idol, at which Mr. C. and I were both present. It was resumed in Don Miguel's hut. The subject was discussed in all its bearings. All the excitement in the village had died away; we were alone and undisturbed; Mr. C. had under his dominion Bruno and Francisco, Don Miguel, his wife, and Bartolo. We were very reluctant to separate, but it was agreed, *nem. con.*, for me to go on to Guatemala, and for Mr. Catherwood to remain and finish his drawings. Mr. Catherwood did remain, and, after many privations and difficulties, was compelled to leave on account of illness. He returned a second time and completed them, and we now give the result of the whole.

At a short distance from the Temple, within terraced walls, probably once connected with the main building, are the "idols" which give the distinctive character to the ruins of Copan; and if the reader will look at the map, and follow the line marked "pathway to Don Miguel's house," toward the end on the right he will see the place where they stand. Near as they are, the forest was so dense that one could not be seen from the other. In order to ascertain their juxtaposition, we cut vistas through the trees, and took the bearings and distances, and I introduce them in the order in which they stand. The first is

on the left of the pathway, at the point marked K. This statue is fallen and the face destroyed. It is twelve feet high, three feet three inches on one side, and four feet on the other. The altar is sunk in the earth, and we give no drawing of either.

At a distance of 200 feet stands the one marked S. It is eleven feet eight inches high, three feet four inches on each side, and stands with its front to the east on a pedestal six feet square, the whole resting on a circular stone foundation sixteen feet in diameter. Before it, at a distance of eight feet ten inches, is an altar, partly buried, three feet three inches above the ground, seven feet square, and standing diagonally to the "idol." It is in high relief, boldly sculptured, and in a good state of preservation.

The engravings which follow, Nos. 16 and 17, represent the front and back view. The front, from the absence of a beard and from the dress, we supposed to be the figure of a woman, and the countenance presents traits of individuality, leading to the supposition that it is a portrait.

The back is a different subject. The head is in the centre, with complicated ornaments over it, the face broken, the border gracefully disposed, and at the foot are tablets of hieroglyphics. The altar is introduced on one side, and consists of four large heads strangely grouped together, so as not to be easily made out. It could not be introduced in its proper place without hiding the lower part of the "idol." In drawing the front, Mr. Catherwood always stood between the altar and the "idol."

A little behind this is the monument marked T, No. 18. It is one of the most beautiful in Copan, and in workmanship is equal to the finest Egyptian sculpture. Indeed, it would be impossible, with the best instruments of modern times, to cut stones more perfectly. It stands at the foot of a wall of steps, with only the head and part of the breast rising above the earth. The rest is buried, and probably as perfect as the portion which is now visible. When we first discovered it, it was buried up to the eyes. Arrested by the beauty of the sculpture, and by its solemn and mournful position, we commenced excavating. As the ground was level up to that mark, the excavation was made by loosening the earth with the machete, and scooping it out with the hands. As we proceeded, the earth formed a wall around and increased the labour. The Indians struck so carelessly with their machetes, that, afraid to let them work near the stone, we cleared it with our own hands. It was impossible, however, to continue; the earth was matted together by roots which entwined and bound the monument. It required a complete throwing out of the earth for ten or twelve feet around; and without proper tools, and afraid of



16. STONE IDOL—Front View.



F. Catherwood.

17. STONE IDOL - Back View.



*K. Catherwood.*

18. IDOL HALF BURIED.





F. Catherwood.

19. IDOL—Front View.