

La Union to join his expedition, left San Salvador to pay him a visit at Guatemala, and partake of the festivities of his triumph, and left Aguachapa because his trunks had gone on before. Ever since his arrival in the country he had been accustomed to hear Carrera spoken of as a robber and assassin, and the noblesse of Guatemala ridiculed, and all at once he found himself in a hornet's nest. He now heard Morazan denounced as a tyrant, his officers as a set of cut-throats, banded together to assassinate personal enemies, rob churches, and kill priests; they had met the fate they deserved, and the universal sentiment was,—So perish the enemies of Guatemala! The captain had received a timely caution. His story, that Morazan would have killed every man of Figoroa's if the horses had not been so tired, had circulated; it was considered very partial, and special inquiries were made as to who that captain was. He was compelled to listen and assent, or say nothing. On the road he was an excessively loud talker, spoke the language perfectly, with his admirable arms and horse equipments always made a dashing entrée into a village, and was called "muy valiente," "very brave;" but here he was a subdued man, attracting a great deal of attention, but without any of the éclat which had attended him on the road, and feeling that he was an object of suspicion and distrust. But he had one consolation that nothing could take away: he had not been in the battle, or, to use his own expression, he might now be lying on the ground with his face upward.

In the afternoon, unexpectedly, Mr. Catherwood arrived. He had passed a month at the Antigua, and had just returned from a second visit to Copan, and had also explored other ruins, of which mention will be made hereafter. In our joy at meeting we tumbled into each other's arms, and in the very first moment resolved not to separate again while in that distracted country.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RUINS OF QUIRIGUA—VISIT TO THEM—LOS AMATES—PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE—A COLOSSAL HEAD—AN ALTAR—A COLLECTION OF MONUMENTS—STATUES—CHARACTER OF THE RUINS—A LOST CITY—PURCHASING A RUINED CITY.

To recur to Mr. Catherwood's operations, who, during my absence, had not been idle. On reaching Guatemala the first time from Copan, I made it my business to inquire particularly for ruins. I did not meet a single person who had ever visited those of Copan, and but few who took any interest whatever in the antiquities of the country; but, fortunately, a few days after my arrival, Don Carlos Meany, an Englishman from Trinidad, long resident in the country, proprietor of a large hacienda, and extensively engaged in mining operations, made one of his regular business visits to the capital. Besides a thorough acquaintance with all that concerned his own immediate pursuits, this gentleman possessed much general information respecting the country, and a curiosity which circumstances had never permitted him to gratify in regard to antiquities; and he told me of the ruins of Quirigua, on the Motagua River, near Encuentros, the place at which we slept the second night after crossing the Mico Mountain. He had never seen them, and I hardly believed it possible they could exist, for at that place we had made special inquiries for the ruins of Copan, and were not informed of any others. I became satisfied, however, that Don Carlos was a man who did not speak at random. They were on the estate of Señor Payes, a gentleman of Guatemala lately deceased. He had heard of them from Señor Payes, and had taken such interest in the subject as to inquire for and obtain the details of particular monuments. Three sons of Señor Payes had succeeded to his estate, and at my request Don Carlos called with me upon them. Neither of the sons had ever seen the ruins, or even visited the estate. It was an immense tract of wild land, which had come into their father's hands many years before for a mere trifle. He had visited it once; and they too had heard him speak of these ruins. Lately the spirit of speculation had reached that country; and from its fertility and position on the bank of a navigable river contiguous to the ocean, the tract had been made the subject of a prospectus, to be sold on shares in England. The prospectus set forth the great natural advantages of the location, and the inducements held out to emigrants, in terms and phrases that might

have issued from a laboratory in New York before the crash. The Señores Payes were in the first stage of anticipated wealth, and talked in the familiar strains of city builders at home. They were roused by the prospect of any indirect addition to the value of their real estate; told me that two of them were then making arrangements to visit the tract, and immediately proposed that I should accompany them. Mr. Catherwood, on his road from Copan, had fallen in with a person at Chiquimula who told him of such ruins, with the addition that Colonel Galindo was then at work among them. Being in the neighbourhood, he had some idea of going to visit them; but being much worn with his labours at Copan, and knowing that the story was untrue as regarded Colonel Galindo, whom he knew to be in a different section of the country, he was incredulous as to the whole. We had some doubt whether they would repay the labour; but as there was no occasion for him to accompany me to San Salvador, it was agreed that during my absence he should, with the Señores Payes, go to Quirigua, which he accordingly did.

The reader must go back to Encuentros, the place at which we slept the second night of our arrival in the country. From this place they embarked in a canoe about twenty-five feet long and four broad, dug out of the trunk of a mahogany-tree, and descending two hours, disembarked at Los Amates, near El Poso, on the main road from Yzabal to Guatemala, the place at which we breakfasted the second morning of our arrival in the country, and where the Señores Payes were obliged to wait two or three days. The place was a miserable collection of huts, scant of provisions, and the people drank a muddy water at their doors, rather than take the trouble of going to the river.

On a fine morning, after a heavy rain, they set off for the ruins. After a ride of about half an hour, over an execrable road, they again reached the Amates. The village was pleasantly situated on the bank of the river, and elevated about thirty feet. The river was here about 200 feet wide, and fordable in every part except a few deep holes. Generally it did not exceed three feet in depth, and in many places was not so deep; but below it was said to be navigable to the sea for boats not drawing more than three feet water. They embarked in two canoes dug out of cedar-trees, and proceeded down the river for a couple of miles, where they took on board a negro man named Juan Lima, and his two wives. This black scoundrel, as Mr. C. marks him down in his note-book, was to be their guide. They then proceeded two or three miles farther, and stopped at a rancho on the left side of the river, and passing through two corn-fields, entered a forest of large



33. IDOL AT QUIRIGUA

cedar and mahogany-trees. The path was exceedingly soft and wet, and covered with decayed leaves, and the heat very great. Continuing through the forest toward the north-east, in three quarters of an hour they reached the foot of a pyramidal structure like those at Copan with the steps in some places perfect. They ascended to the top about 25 feet, and descending by steps on the other side, at a short distance beyond came to a colossal head two yards in diameter, almost buried by an enormous tree, and covered with moss. Near it was a large altar, so covered with moss that it was impossible to make anything out of it. The two are within an enclosure.

Retracing their steps across the pyramidal structure, and proceeding to the north about 300 or 400 yards, they reached a collection of monuments of the same general character with those at Copan, but twice or three times as high.

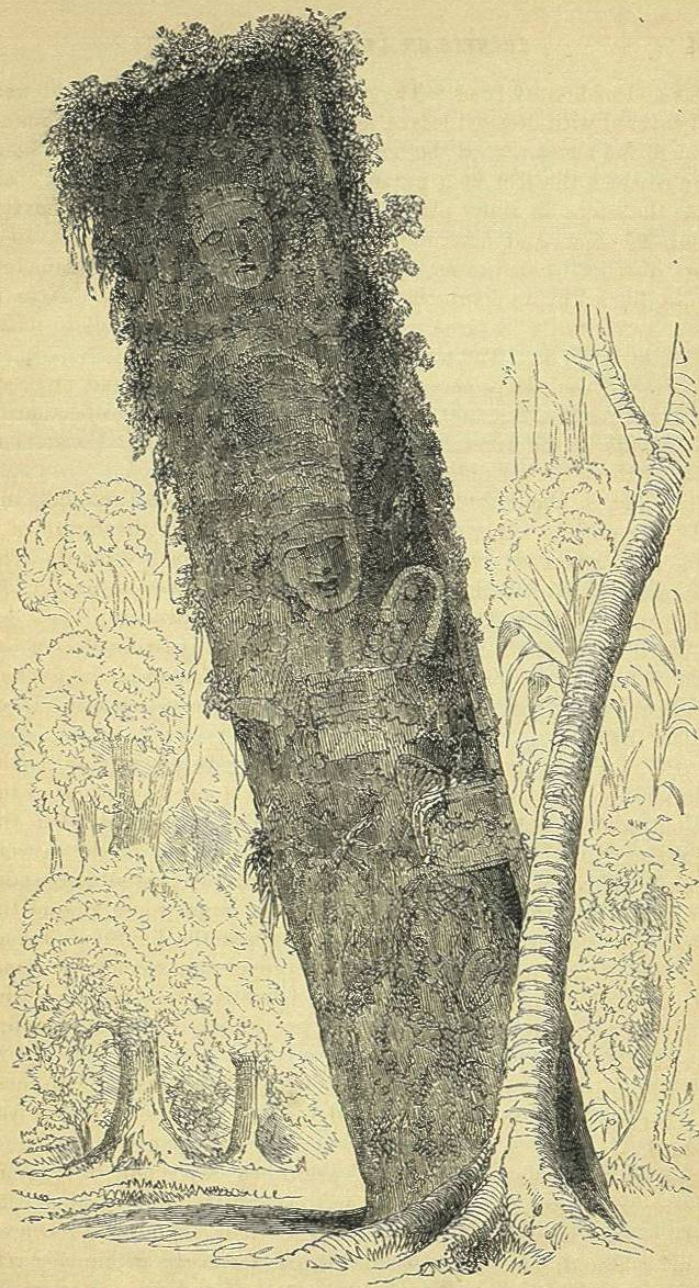
The first is about 20 feet high, 5 feet 6 inches on two sides, and 2 feet 8 on the other two. The front represents the figure of a man, well preserved; the back that of a woman, much defaced. The sides are covered with hieroglyphics in good preservation, but in low relief, and of exactly the same style as those at Copan.

Another, represented in the engraving, No. 36, is 23 feet out of the ground, with figures of men on the front and back, and hieroglyphics in low relief on the sides, and surrounded by a base projecting 15 or 16 feet from it.

At a short distance, standing in the same position as regards the points of the compass, is an obelisk or carved stone, 26 feet out of the ground, and probably 6 or 8 feet under, which is represented in the engraving No. 37. It is leaning 12 feet 2 inches out of the perpendicular, and seems ready to fall, which is probably prevented only by a tree that has grown up against it, and the large stones around the base. The side toward the ground represents the figure of a man very perfect and finely sculptured. The upper side seemed the same, but was so hidden by vegetation as to make it somewhat uncertain. The other two contain hieroglyphics in low relief. In size and sculpture this is the finest of the whole.

A statue 10 feet in length is lying on the ground, covered with moss and herbage, and another about the same size lies with its face upward.

There are four others erect, about 12 feet high, but not in a very good state of preservation, and several altars so covered with herbage that it was difficult to ascertain their exact form. One of them is round, and situated on a small elevation within a circle formed by a wall of stones. In the centre of the circle, reached by



F. Calhoun del.

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descending very narrow steps, is a large round stone, with the sides sculptured in hieroglyphics, covered with vegetation, and supported on what seemed to be two colossal heads.

These are all at the foot of a pyramidal wall, near each other, and in the vicinity of a creek which empties into the Motagua. Besides these they counted thirteen fragments, and doubtless many others may yet be discovered.

At some distance from them is another monument, 9 feet out of ground, and probably 2 or 3 under, with the figure of a woman on the front and back, and the two sides richly ornamented, but without hieroglyphics.

The next day the negro promised to show Mr. C. eleven square columns higher than any he had seen, standing in a row at the foot of a mountain; but after dragging him three hours through the mud, Mr. C. found by the compass that he was constantly changing his direction; and as the man was armed with pistols, notoriously a bad fellow, and indignant at the owners of the land for coming down to look after their squatters, Mr. C. became suspicious of him, and insisted upon returning. The Payes were engaged with their own affairs, and having no one to assist him, Mr. Catlerwood was unable to make any thorough exploration or any complete drawings.

The general character of these ruins is the same as at Copan. The monuments are much larger, but they are sculptured in lower relief, less rich in design, and more faded and worn, probably being of a much older date.

Of one thing there is no doubt: a large city once stood there; its name is lost, its history unknown; and, except for a notice taken from Mr. C.'s notes, and inserted by the Señores Payes in a Guatemala paper after the visit, which found its way to this country and Europe, no account of its existence has ever before been published. For centuries it has lain as completely buried as if covered with the lava of Vesuvius. Every traveller from Yzabal to Guatemala has passed within three hours of it; we ourselves had done the same; and yet there it lay, like the rock-built city of Edom, unvisited, unsought, and utterly unknown.

The morning after Mr. C. returned I called upon Señor Payes, the only one of the brothers then in Guatemala, and opened a negotiation for the purchase of these ruins. Besides their entire newness and immense interest as an unexplored field of antiquarian research, the monuments were but about a mile from the river, the ground was level to the bank, and the river from that place was navigable; the city might be transported bodily, and set up in New York. I expressly

stated (and my reason for doing so will be obvious) that I was acting in this matter on my own account, that it was entirely a personal affair; but Señor Payes would consider me as acting for my government, and said, what I am sure he meant, that if his family was as it had been once, they would be proud to present the whole to the United States; in that country they were not appreciated, and he would be happy to contribute to the cause of science in ours; but they were impoverished by the convulsions of the country; and, at all events, he could give me no answer till his brothers returned, who were expected in two or three days. Unfortunately, as I believe for both of us, Señor Payes consulted with the French consul-general, who put an exaggerated value upon the ruins, referring him to the expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars by the French government in transporting one of the obelisks of Luxor from Thebes to Paris. Probably, before the speculating scheme referred to, the owners would have been glad to sell the whole tract, consisting of more than 50,000 acres, with everything on it, known and unknown, for a few thousand dollars. I was anxious to visit them myself, and learn with more certainty the possibility of their removal, but was afraid of increasing the extravagance of his notions. His brothers did not arrive, and one of them unfortunately died on the road. I had not the government for paymaster; it might be necessary to throw up the purchase on account of the cost of removal; I left an offer with Mr. Savage, which was not accepted, and the monuments remain where first discovered.