

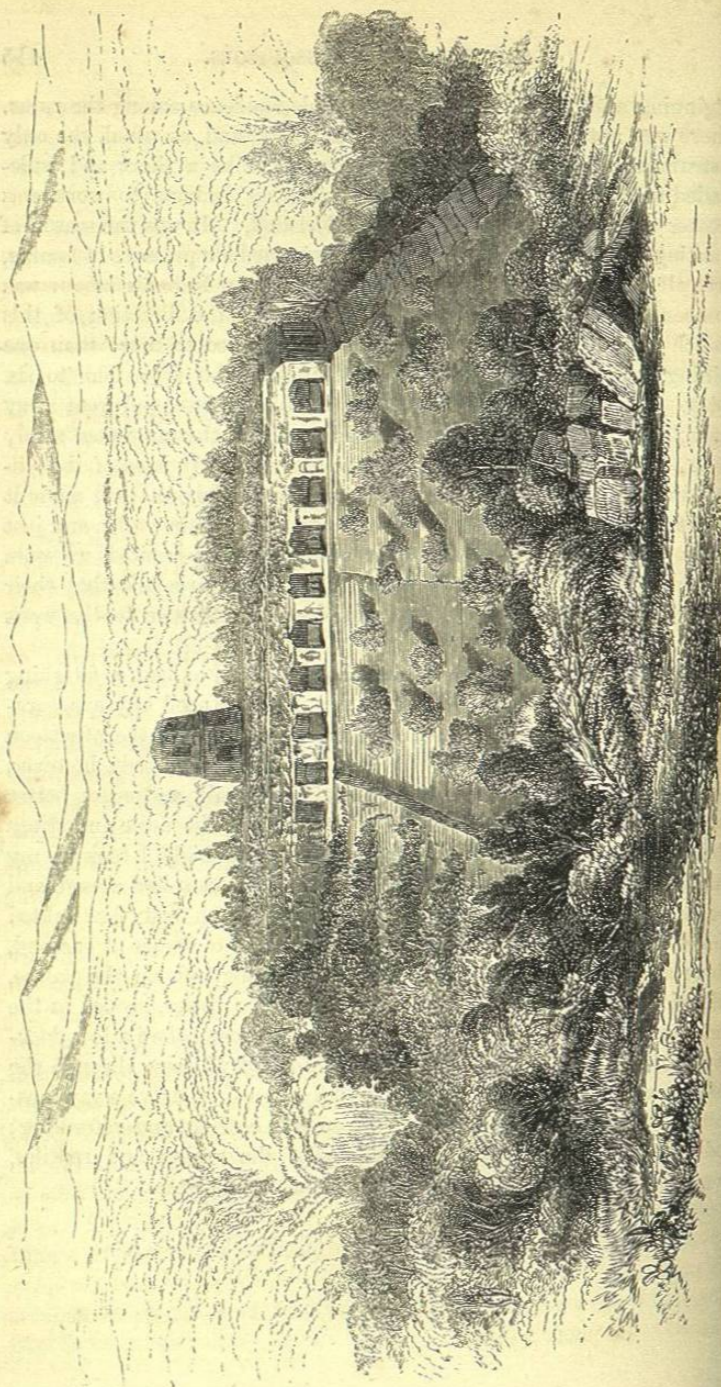
CHAPTER XXXIV.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THE ATTACKS OF MOSQUITOES—MODE OF LIFE AT PALENQUE—DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE—PIERS—HIEROGLYPHICS—FIGURES—DOORWAYS—CORRIDORS—COURTYARDS—A WOODEN RELIC—STONE STEPS—TOWERS—TABLETS—STUCCO ORNAMENTS, ETC. ETC.—THE ROYAL CHAPEL—EXPLORATIONS—AN ALARM—INSECTS—EFFECT OF INSECT STINGS—RETURN TO THE VILLAGE OF PALENQUE.

At daylight I returned, and found Mr. C. and Pawling sitting on the stones, half dressed, in rueful conclave. They had passed the night worse than I, and our condition and prospects were dismal. Rains, hard work, bad fare, seemed nothing; but we could no more exist without sleep than the "foolish fellow" of *Æsop*, who, at the moment when he had learned to live without eating, died. In all his travels through the country Pawling had never encountered such hard work as since he met us.

The next night the mosquitoes were beyond all endurance; the slightest part of the body, the tip end of a finger, exposed, was bitten. With the heads covered the heat was suffocating, and in the morning our faces were all in blotches. Without some remedy we were undone. It is on occasions like this that the creative power of genius displays itself. Our beds, it will be remembered, were made of sticks lying side by side, and set on four piles of stones for legs. Over these we laid our pellons and *armas de agua*, or leathern armour against rain, and over these our straw matting. This prevented our enemies invading us from between the sticks. Our sheets were already sewed up into sacks. We ripped one side, cut sticks, and bent them in three bows about two feet high over the frame of the beds. Over these the sheets were stretched, and sewed down all around, with a small space open at the head, had much the appearance of biers. At night, after a hard day's work, we crawled in. Hosts were waiting for us inside. We secured the open places, when each, with the stump of a lighted candle, hunted and slew, and with a lordly feeling of defiance we lay down to sleep. We had but one pair of sheets apiece, and this was a new way of sleeping under them; but, besides the victory it afforded us over the mosquitoes, it had another advantage; the heat was so great that we could not sleep with our clothes on; it was impossible to place the beds entirely out of the reach of the spray, and the covering, held up a foot or two above us and kept damp, cooled the heated atmosphere within.

E E



PALACE AT PALENQUE.

F. C. G. H. WOOD.

In this way we lived: the Indians came out in the morning with provisions, and as the tortillas were made in the alcalde's own kitchen, not to disturb his household arrangements, they seldom arrived till after breakfast.

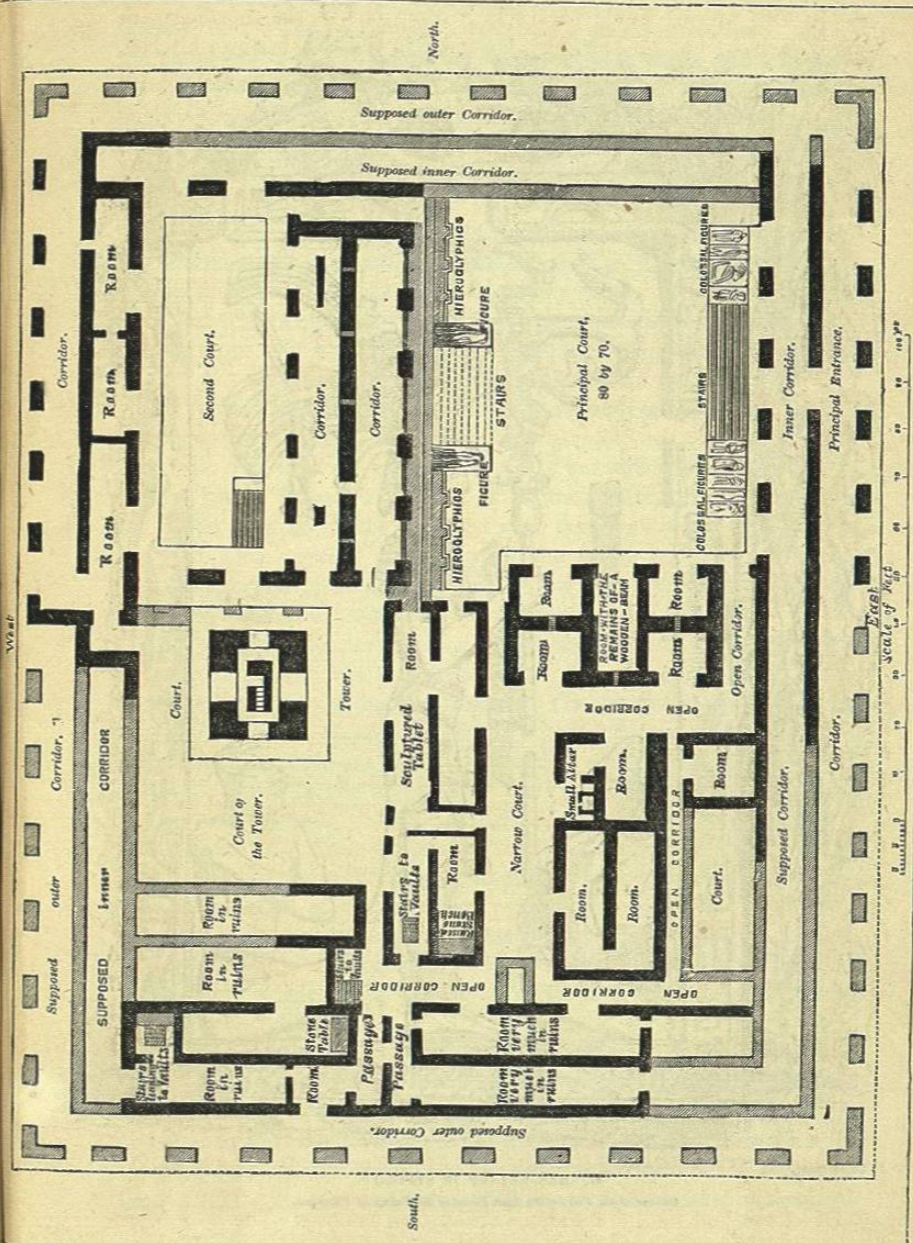
In the meantime work went on. As at Copan, it was my business to prepare the different objects for Mr. Catherwood to draw. Many of the stones had to be scrubbed and cleaned; and as it was our object to have the utmost possible accuracy in the drawings, in many places scaffolds were to be erected on which to set up the camera lucida. Pawling relieved me from a great part of this labour. That the reader may know the character of the objects we had to interest us, I proceed to give a description of the building in which we lived, called the palace.

A front view of this building is given in the engraving, No. 45. It does not, however, purport to be given with the same accuracy as the other drawings, the front being in a more ruined condition. It stands on an artificial elevation of an oblong form, 40 feet high, 310 feet in front and rear, and 260 feet on each side. This elevation was formerly faced with stone, which has been thrown down by the growth of trees, and its form is hardly distinguishable.

The building stands with its face to the east, and measures 228 feet front by 180 feet deep. Its height is not more than 25 feet, and all around it had a broad projecting cornice of stone. The front contained 14 doorways, about 9 feet wide each, and the intervening piers are between 6 and 7 feet wide. On the left (in approaching the palace) 8 of the piers have fallen down, as has also the corner on the right, and the terrace underneath is cumbered with the ruins. But 6 piers remain entire, and the rest of the front is open.

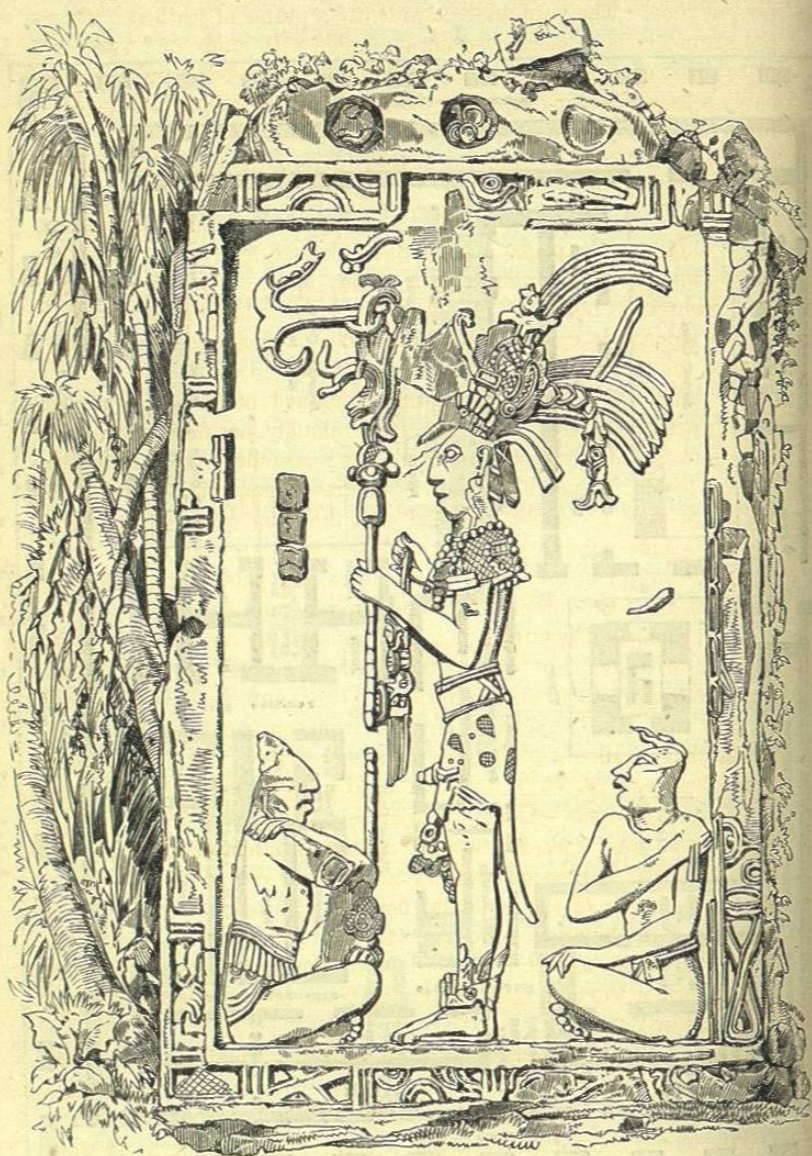
The engraving, No. 46, represents the ground-plan of the whole. The black lines represent walls still standing; the faint lines indicate remains only, but, in general, so clearly marked that there was no difficulty in connecting them together.

The building was constructed of stone, with a mortar of lime and sand, and the whole front was covered with stucco and painted. The piers were ornamented with spirited figures in bas-relief, one of which is represented in the engraving No. 47. On the top are three hieroglyphics sunk in the stucco. It is enclosed by a richly ornamented border, about 10 feet high and 6 wide, of which only a part now remains. The principal personage stands in an upright position and in profile, exhibiting an extraordinary facial angle of about 45 degrees. The upper part of the head seems to have been compressed and lengthened, perhaps by the same process employed upon the heads of the Chocktaw and Flathead Indians of our own country. The head repre-



The parts lined black are those which are perfect, and those lined light are restored.

46. Ruins of a Building called the PALACE PALENQUE.



F. Calderwood.

47. BAS-RELIEF IN STUCCO

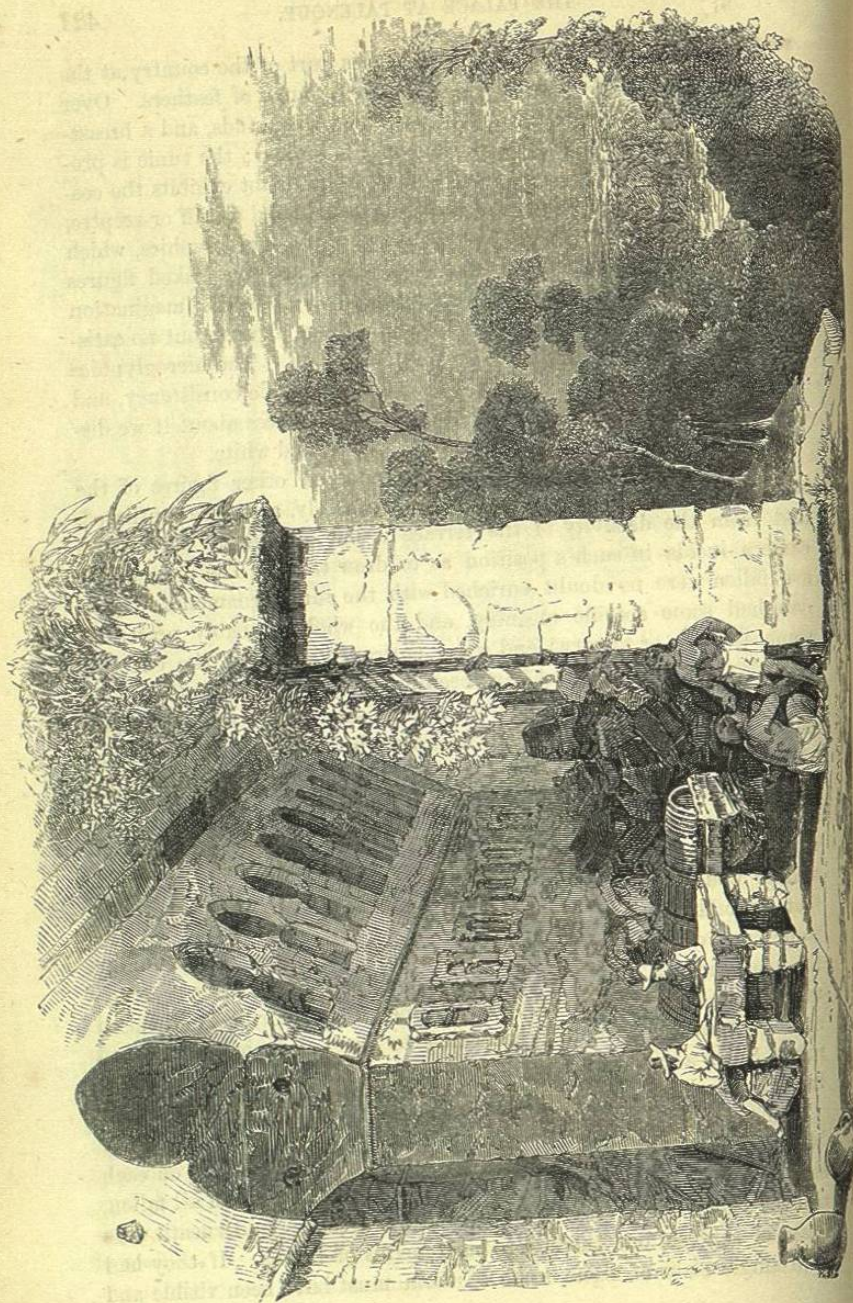
On one of the Piers of the East Front of the Palace at Palenque.

sents a species of which few are seen in this part of the country at the present time. The head-dress is evidently a plume of feathers. Over the shoulders is a short covering decorated with studs, and a breast-plate; part of the ornament of the girdle is broken; the tunic is probably a leopard's skin; and the whole dress no doubt exhibits the costume of this unknown people. He holds in his hand a staff or sceptre, and opposite his hands are the marks of three hieroglyphics, which have decayed or been broken off. At his feet are two naked figures seated cross-legged, and apparently suppliants. A fertile imagination might find many explanations for these strange figures, but no satisfactory interpretation presents itself to my mind. The hieroglyphics doubtless tell its history. The stucco is of admirable consistency, and hard as stone. It was painted, and in different places about it we discovered the remains of red, blue, yellow, black, and white.

The piers which are still standing contained other figures of the same general character, but which, unfortunately, are more mutilated, and from the declivity of the terrace it was difficult to set up the camera lucida in such a position as to draw them. The piers which are fallen were no doubt enriched with the same ornaments. Each one had some specific meaning, and the whole probably presented some allegory or history; and when entire and painted, the effect in ascending the terrace must have been imposing and beautiful.

The principal doorway is not distinguished by its size or by any superior ornament, but is only indicated by a range of broad stone steps leading up to it on the terrace. The doorways have no doors, nor are there the remains of any. Within, on each side, are three niches in the wall, about eight or ten inches square, with a cylindrical stone about two inches in diameter fixed upright, by which, perhaps, a door was secured. Along the cornice outside, projecting about a foot beyond the front, holes were drilled at intervals through the stone; and our impression was, that an immense cotton cloth, running the whole length of the building, perhaps painted in a style corresponding with the ornaments, was attached to this cornice, and raised and lowered like a curtain, according to the exigencies of sun and rain. Such a curtain is used now in front of the piazzas of some haciendas in Yucatan.

The tops of the doorways were all broken. They had evidently been square, and over every one were large niches in the wall on each side, in which the lintels had been laid. These lintels had all fallen, and the stones above formed broken natural arches. Underneath were heaps of rubbish, but there were no remains of lintels. If they had been single slabs of stone, some of them must have been visible and



prominent; and we made up our minds that these lintels were of *wood*. We had no authority for this. It is not suggested either by Del Rio or Captain Dupaix, and perhaps we should not have ventured the conclusion but for the wooden lintel which we had seen over the doorway at Ocosingo; and by what we saw afterward in Yucatan, we were confirmed, beyond all doubt, in our opinion. I do not conceive, however, that this gives any conclusive data in regard to the age of the buildings. The wood, if such as we saw in the other places, would be very lasting; its decay must have been extremely slow, and centuries may have elapsed since it perished altogether.

The building has two parallel corridors running lengthwise on all four of its sides. In front these corridors are about nine feet wide, (Plate 48,) and extend the whole length of the building upward of 200 feet. In the long wall that divides them there is but one door, which is opposite the principal door of entrance, and has a corresponding one on the other side, leading to a courtyard in the rear. The floors are of cement, as hard as the best seen in the remains of Roman baths and cisterns. The walls are about ten feet high, plastered, and on each side of the principal entrance ornamented with medallions, of which the borders only remain; these, perhaps, contained the busts of the royal family. The separating-wall had apertures of about a foot, probably intended for purposes of ventilation. Some were of this form \oplus , and some of this \top , which have been called the Greek Cross and the Egyptian Tau, and made the subject of much learned speculation.

The ceiling of each corridor was in this form \square . The builders were evidently ignorant of the principles of the arch, and the support was made by stones lapping over as they rose, as at Ocosingo, and among the Cyclopean remains in Greece and Italy. Along the top was a layer of flat stone, and the sides, being plastered, presented a flat surface. The long unbroken corridors in front of the palace were probably intended for lords and gentlemen in waiting; or, perhaps, in that beautiful position, which, before the forest grew up, must have commanded an extended view of a cultivated and inhabited plain, the king himself sat in it to receive the reports of his officers, and to administer justice. Under our dominion Juan occupied the front corridor as a kitchen, and the other was our sleeping apartment.

From the centre door of this corridor a range of stone steps, thirty feet long, leads to a rectangular courtyard, eighty feet long by seventy broad. On each side of the steps are grim and gigantic figures, carved on stone in basso-relievo, nine or ten feet high, and in a position slightly inclined backward from the end of the steps to the floor of the corridor. The engraving, No. 49, represents this side of the court-

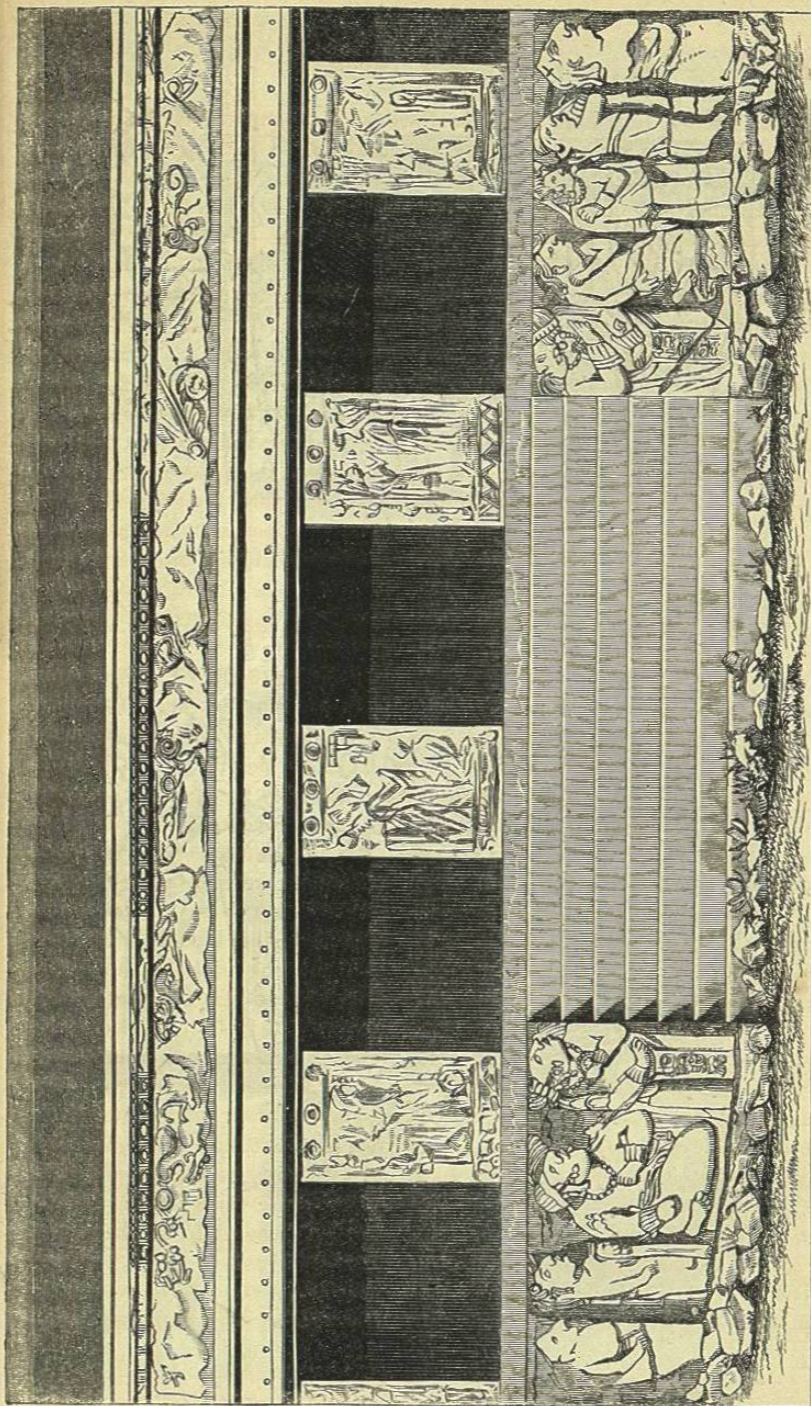
yard, and the one next following, No. 50, shows the figures alone, on a larger scale. They are adorned with rich head-dresses and necklaces, but their attitude is that of pain and trouble. The design and anatomical proportions of the figures are faulty, but there is a force of expression about them which shows the skill and conceptive power of the artist. When we first took possession of the palace this courtyard was encumbered with trees, so that we could hardly see across it, and it was so filled up with rubbish that we were obliged to make excavations of several feet before these figures could be drawn.

On each side of the courtyard the palace was divided into apartments, probably for sleeping. On the right the piers have all fallen down. On the left they are still standing, and ornamented with stucco figures. In the centre apartment, in one of the holes before referred to of the arch, are the remains of a wooden pole about a foot long, which once stretched across, but the rest had decayed. It was the only piece of wood we found at Palenque, and we did not discover this until some time after we had made up our minds in regard to the wooden lintels over the doors. It was much worm-eaten, and probably, in a few years, not a vestige of it will be left.

At the farther side of the courtyard was another flight of stone steps, corresponding with those in front, on each side of which are carved figures, and on the flat surface between are single cartouches of hieroglyphics. The plate, No. 51, represents this side.

The whole courtyard was overgrown with trees, and it was encumbered with ruins several feet high, so that the exact architectural arrangements could not be seen. Having our beds in the corridor adjoining, when we awoke in the morning, and when we had finished the work of the day, we had it under our eyes. Every time we descended the steps, the grim and mysterious figures stared us in the face, and it became to us one of the most interesting parts of the ruins. We were exceedingly anxious to make excavations, clear out the mass of rubbish, and lay the whole platform bare; but this was impossible. It is probably paved with stone or cement; and from the profusion of ornament in other parts, there is reason to believe that many curious and interesting specimens may be brought to light. This agreeable work is left for the future traveller, who may go there better provided with men and materials, and with more knowledge of what he has to encounter; and, in my opinion, if he finds nothing new, the mere spectacle of the courtyard entire will repay him for the labour and expense of clearing it.

The part of the building which forms the rear of the courtyard, communicating with it by the steps, consists of two corridors, the same



49. EAST SIDE OF COURTYARD OF PALACE AT PALENQUE.