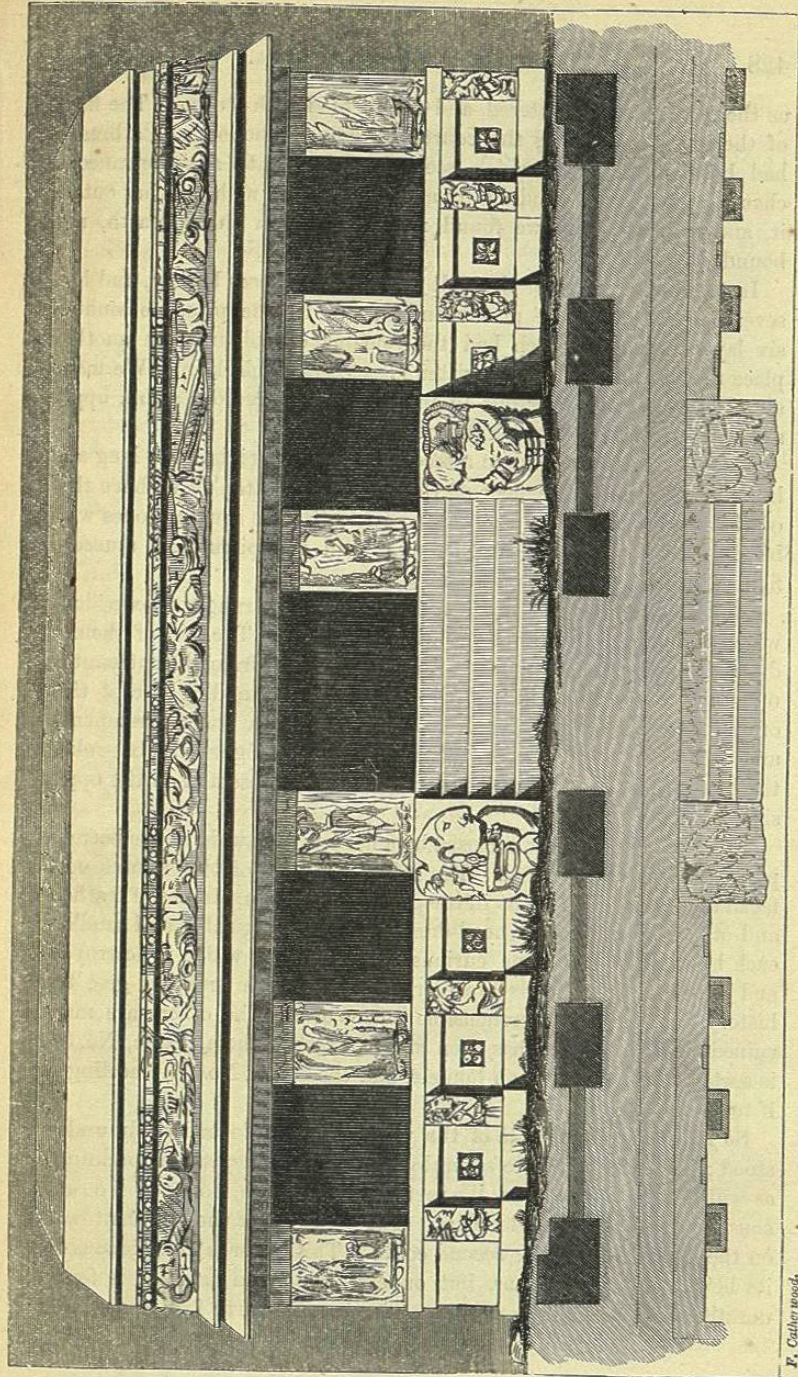


50. COLOSSAL BAS-RELIEFS IN STONE

On the East Side of principal Court of the Palace at Palenque.



51. EAST SIDE OF COURTYARD OF PALACE AT PALENQUE.

F. Cullen wood.

as the front, paved, plastered, and ornamented with stucco. The floor of the corridor fronting the courtyard sounded hollow, and a breach had been made in it which seemed to lead into a subterranean chamber; but in descending, by means of a tree with notches cut in it, and with a candle, we found merely a hollow in the earth, not bounded by any wall.

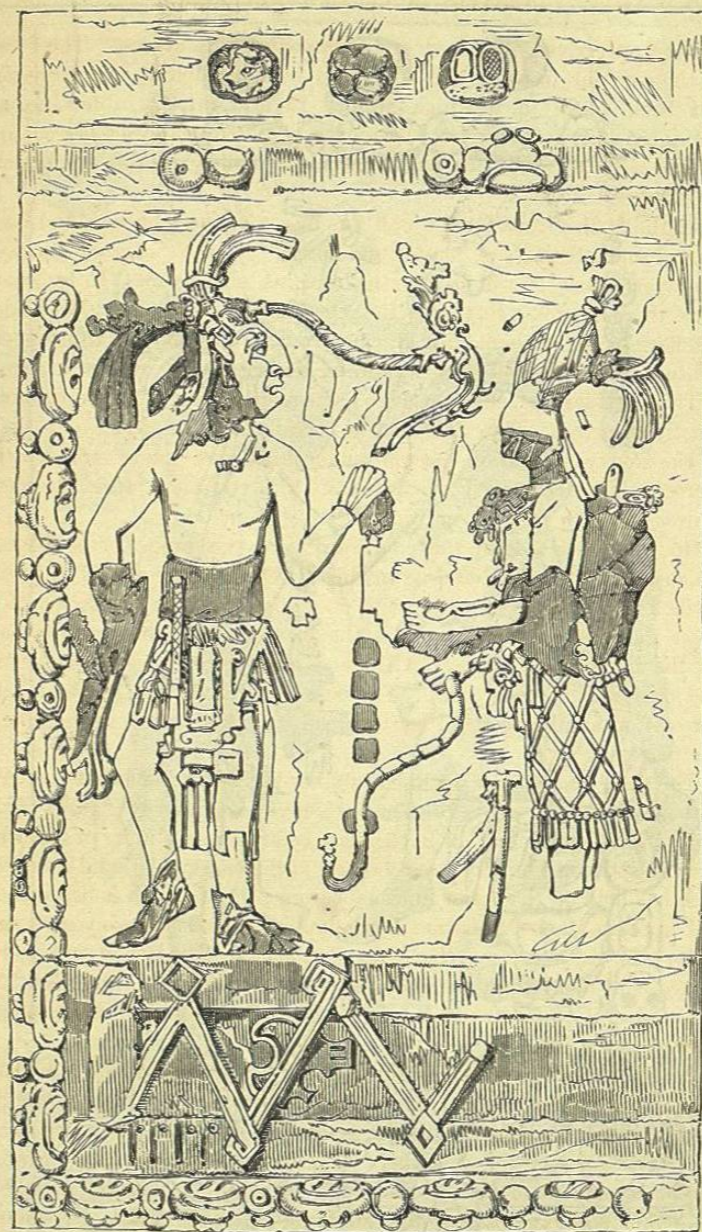
In the farther corridor the wall was in some places broken, and had several separate coats of plaster and paint. In one place we counted six layers, each of which had the remains of colours. In another place there seemed a line of written characters in black ink. We made an effort to get at them; but, in endeavouring to remove a thin upper stratum, they came off with it, and we desisted.

This corridor opened upon a second courtyard, eighty feet long and but thirty across. The floor of the corridor was ten feet above that of the courtyard, and on the wall underneath were square stones with hieroglyphics sculptured upon them. On the piers were stuccoed figures, but in a ruined condition.

On the other side of the courtyard were two ranges of corridors, which terminated the building in this direction. The first of them is divided into three apartments, with doors opening from the extremities upon the western corridor. All the piers are standing except that on the north-west corner. All are covered with stucco ornaments, and one with hieroglyphics. The rest contain figures in bas-relief, three of which, being those least ruined, are represented in the opposite plates.

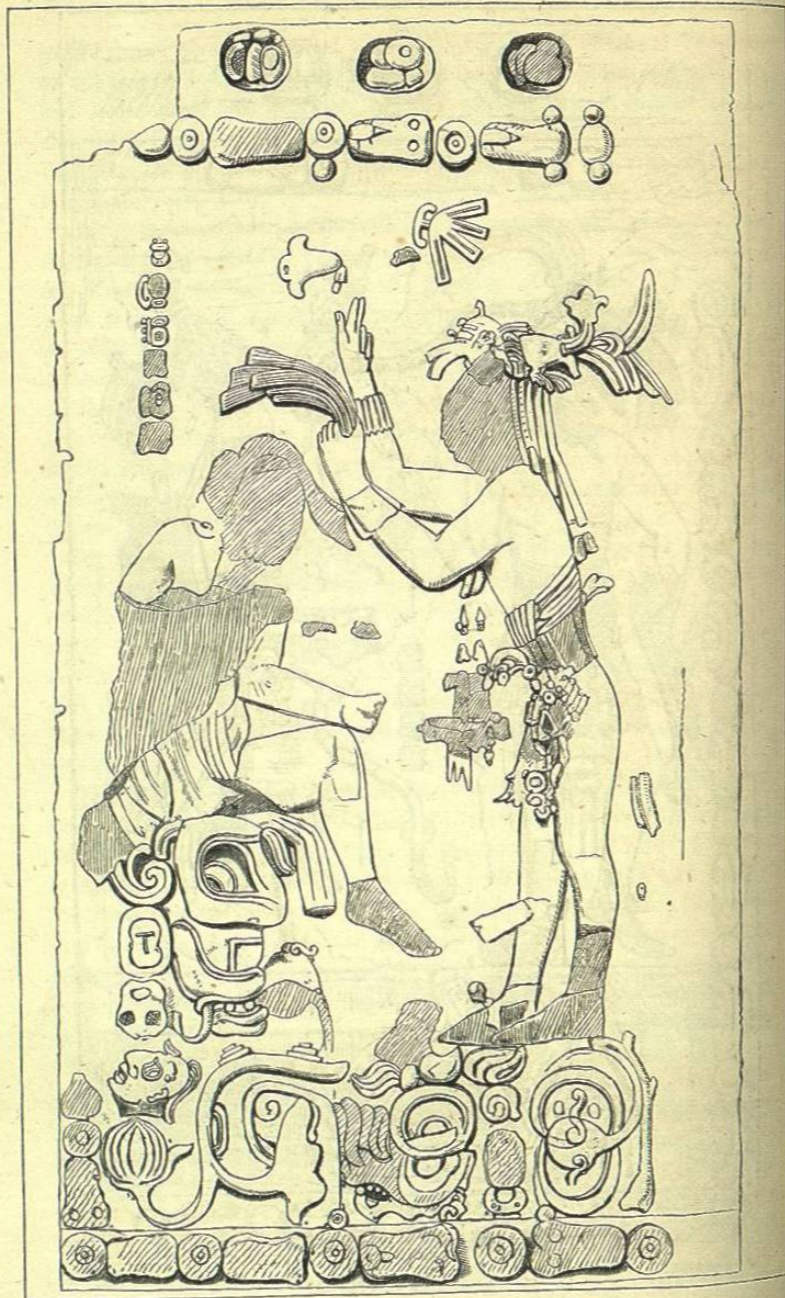
The first, No. 52, was enclosed by a border, very wide at the bottom, part of which is destroyed. The subject consists of two figures with facial angles similar to that in the plate before given, plumes of feathers and other decorations for head-dresses, necklaces, girdles, and sandals; each has hold of the same curious baton, part of which is destroyed, and opposite their hands are hieroglyphics, which probably give the history of these incomprehensible personages. The others are more ruined, and no attempt has been made to restore them. One, No. 53, is seated as if to receive an honour, and the other, No. 54, kneeling as if to receive a blow.

So far the arrangements of the palace are simple and easily understood; but on the left are several distinct and independent buildings, as will be seen by the plan, the particulars of which, however, I do not consider it necessary to describe. The principal of these is the tower, on the south side of the second court. This tower is conspicuous by its height and proportions, but on examination in detail it is found unsatisfactory and uninteresting. The base is thirty feet square, and



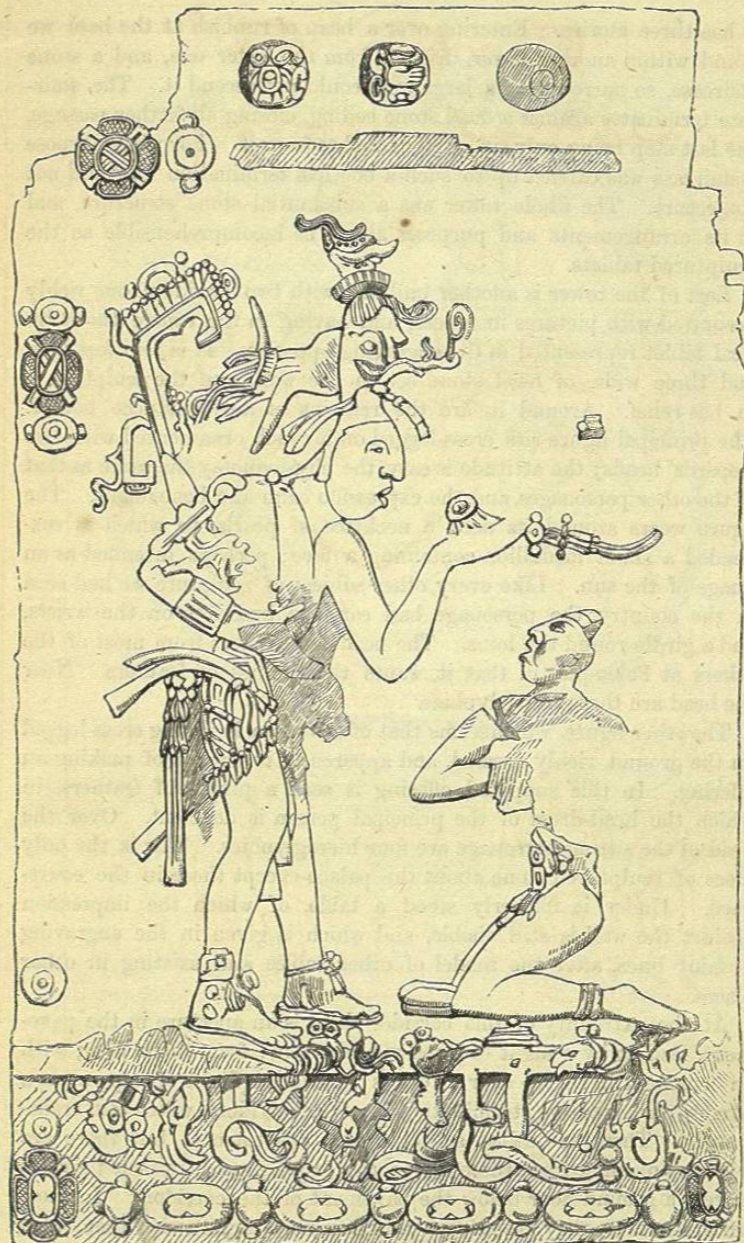
F. Catherwood.

52. BAS-RELIEF IN STUCCO
On one of the Piers of the West Front of the Palace at Palenque.



F. Catherwood.

53. BAS-RELIEF IN STUCCO
On the West Side of the Palace at Palenque.



F. Catherwood.

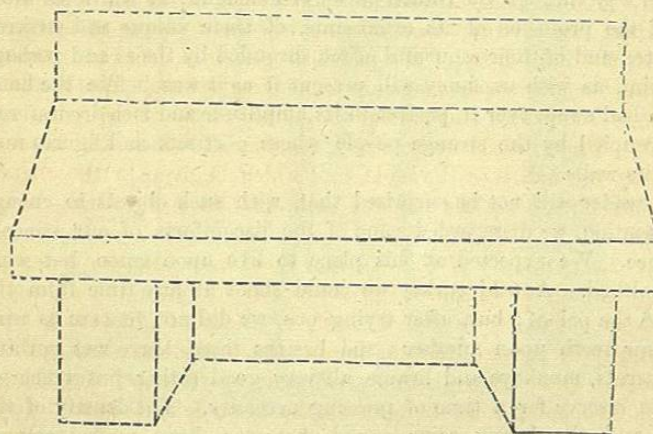
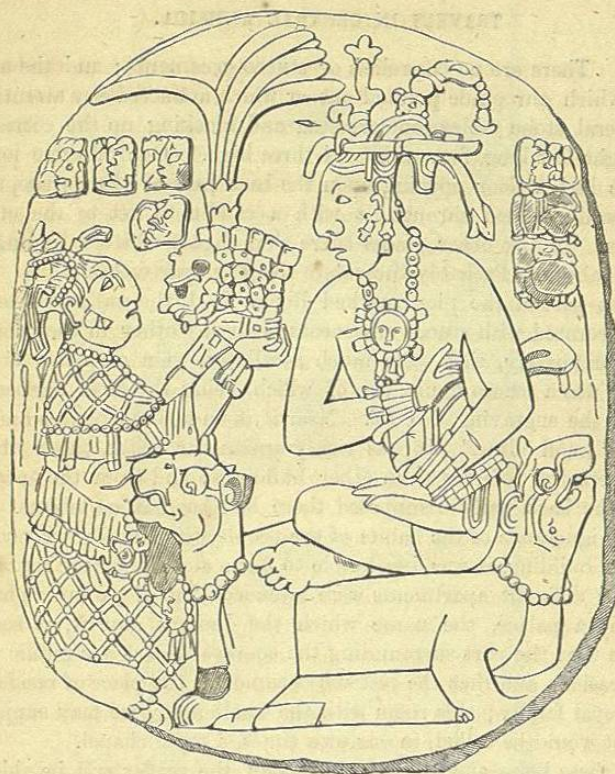
54. BAS-RELIEF IN STUCCO
On the West Side of the Palace at Palenque.

it has three stories. Entering over a heap of rubbish at the base, we found within another tower, distinct from the outer one, and a stone staircase, so narrow that a large man could not ascend it. The staircase terminates against a dead stone ceiling, closing all farther passage, the last step being only six or eight inches from it. For what purpose a staircase was carried up to such a bootless termination we could not conjecture. The whole tower was a substantial stone structure, and in its arrangements and purposes about as incomprehensible as the sculptured tablets.

East of the tower is another building with two corridors, one richly decorated with pictures in stucco, and having in the centre the elliptical tablet represented in the engraving opposite. It is four feet long and three wide, of hard stone set in the wall, and the sculpture is in bas-relief. Around it are the remains of a rich stucco border. The principal figure sits cross-legged on a couch ornamented with two leopards' heads; the attitude is easy, the physiognomy the same as that of the other personages, and the expression calm and benevolent. The figure wears around its neck a necklace of pearls, to which is suspended a small medallion containing a face; perhaps intended as an image of the sun. Like every other subject of sculpture we had seen in the country, the personage had earrings, bracelets on the wrists, and a girdle round the loins. The head-dress differs from most of the others at Palenque, in that it wants the plumes of feathers. Near the head are three hieroglyphics.

The other figure, which seems that of a woman, is sitting cross-legged on the ground, richly dressed, and apparently in the act of making an offering. In this supposed offering is seen a plume of feathers, in which the head-dress of the principal person is deficient. Over the head of the sitting personage are four hieroglyphics. This is the only piece of sculptured stone about the palace except those in the courtyard. Under it formerly stood a table, of which the impression against the wall is still visible, and which is given in the engraving in faint lines, after the model of other tables still existing in other places.

At the extremity of this corridor there is an aperture in the pavement, leading by a flight of steps to a platform; from this a door, with an ornament in stucco over it, opens by another flight of steps upon a narrow dark passage, terminating in other corridors, which run transversely. These are called subterranean apartments; but there are windows opening from them above the ground, and, in fact, they are merely a ground-floor below the pavement of the corridors. In most parts, however, they are so dark that it is necessary to visit them with



F. Catherwood.

55. OVAL BAS-RELIEF IN STONE.

In the Wall of one of the Apartments of the Palace at Palenque.

FF

candles. There are no bas-reliefs or stucco ornaments; and the only objects which our guide pointed out or which attracted our attention, were several stone tables, one crossing and blocking up the corridor, about eight feet long, four wide and three high. One of these lower corridors had a door opening upon the back part of the terrace, and we generally passed through it with a candle to get to the other buildings. In two other places there were flights of steps leading to corridors above. Probably these were sleeping apartments.

In that part of the plan marked Room No. 1, the walls were more richly decorated with stucco ornaments than any other in the palace; but, unfortunately, they were much mutilated. On each side of the doorway was a stucco figure, one of which, being the most perfect, is given in the engraving, No. 56. Near it is an apartment in which is marked "small altar." It was richly ornamented, like those which will be hereafter referred to in other buildings; and from the appearance of the back wall we supposed there had been stone tablets. In our utter ignorance of the habits of the people who had formerly occupied this building, it was impossible to form any conjecture for what uses these different apartments were intended; but if we are right in calling it a palace, the name which the Indians give it, it seems probable that the part surrounding the courtyards was for public and state occasions, and that the rest was occupied as the place of residence of the royal family; this room with the small altar, we may suppose, was what would be called, in our own times, a royal chapel.

With these helps and the aid of the plan, the reader will be able to find his way through the ruined palace of Palenque; he will form some idea of the profusion of its ornaments, of their unique and striking character, and of their mournful effect, shrouded by trees; and perhaps with him, as with us, fancy will present it as it was before the hand of ruin had swept over it, perfect in its amplitude and rich decorations, and occupied by the strange people whose portraits and figures now adorn its walls.

The reader will not be surprised that, with such objects to engage our attention, we disregarded some of the discomforts of our princely residence. We expected at this place to live upon game, but were disappointed. A wild turkey we could shoot at any time from the door of the palace; but, after trying one, we did not venture to trifle with our teeth upon another; and besides these, there was nothing but parrots, monkeys and lizards, all very good eating, but which we kept in reserve for a time of pressing necessity. The density of the forest and the heavy rains would, however, have made sporting impracticable.



F. Catherwood.

56. BAS-RELIEF IN STUCCO
On the side of a Doorway at the Palace of Palenque.

F F 2

Once only I attempted an exploration. From the door of the palace, almost on a line with the front, rose a high steep mountain, which we thought must command a view of the city in its whole extent, and perhaps itself contain ruins. (See Frontispiece.) I took the bearing, and, with a compass in my hand and an Indian before me with his machete, from the rear of the last-mentioned building cut a straight line up E. N. E. to the top. The ascent was so steep that I was obliged to haul myself up by the branches. On the top was a high mound of stones, with a foundation-wall still remaining. Back toward the mountain was nothing but forest; in front, through an opening in the trees, we saw a great wooded plain extending to Tobasco and the Gulf of Mexico; and the Indian at the foot of the tree, peering through the branches, turned his face up to me with a beaming expression, and pointing to a little spot on the plain, which was to him the world, cried out, "Alli esta el pueblo," "there is the village." This was the only occasion (with the exception of an aqueduct) on which I attempted to explore, for it was the only time I had any mark to aim at.

Besides the claps of thunder and flashes of lightning, we had one alarm at night. It was from a noise that sounded like the cracking of a dry branch under a stealthy tread, which, as we all started up together, I thought was that of a wild beast, but which Mr. Catherwood, whose bed was nearer, imagined to be that of a man. We climbed up the mound of fallen stones at the end of this corridor, but beyond all was thick darkness. Pawling fired twice as an intimation that we were awake, and we arranged poles across the corridor as a trap, so that even an Indian could not enter from that quarter without being thrown down with some considerable noise and detriment to his person.

In addition to mosquitoes and garrapatas, or ticks, we suffered from another worse insect, called by the natives *niguas*, which, we are told, pestered the Spaniards on their first entry into the country, and which, says the historian, "ate their Way into the Flesh, under the Nails of the Toes, then laid their Nits there within, and multiplied in such manner that there was no ridding them but by Cauterics, so that some lost their Toes, and some their Feet, whereas they should at first have been picked out; but being as yet unacquainted with the Evil, they knew not how to apply the Remedy."

This description is true even to the last clause. We had escaped them until our arrival at Palenque, and being unacquainted with the evil, did not know how to apply the remedy. I carried one in my foot for several days, conscious that something was wrong, but not knowing what, until the nits had been laid and multiplied. Pawling

undertook to pick them out with a penknife, which left a large hole in the flesh; and, unluckily, from the bites of various insects my foot became so inflamed that I could not get on shoe or stocking. I was obliged to lie by, and, sitting an entire day with my foot in a horizontal position, uncovered, it was assaulted by small black flies, the bites of which I did not feel at the moment of infliction, but which left marks like the puncture of a hundred pins. The irritation was so great, and the swelling increased so much, that I became alarmed, and determined to return to the village. It was no easy matter to get there. The foot was too big to put in a stirrup, and, indeed, to keep it but for a few moments in a hanging position made it feel as if the blood would burst through the skin, and the idea of striking it against a bush makes me shudder even now. It was indispensable, however, to leave the place. I sent in to the village for a mule, and on the tenth day after my arrival at the ruins hopped down the terrace, mounted, and laid the unfortunate member on a pillow over the pommel of the saddle. This gave me, for that muddy road, a very uncertain seat. I had a man before me to cut the branches, yet my hat was knocked off three or four times, and twice I was obliged to dismount; but in due season, to my great relief, we cleared the woods. After the closeness and confinement of the forest, coming once more into an open country quickened every pulse.

As I ascended to the table-land on which the village stood, I observed an unusual degree of animation, and a crowd of people in the grass-grown street, probably some fifteen or twenty, who seemed roused at the sight of me, and presently three or four men on horseback rode toward me. I had borne many different characters in that country, and this time I was mistaken for three padres who were expected to arrive that morning from Tumbala. If the mistake had continued I should have had dinner enough for six at least; but unluckily it was soon discovered, and I rode on to the door of our old house. Presently the alcalde appeared, with his keys in his hands and in full dress, *i.e.* his shirt was inside of his pantaloons; and I was happy to find that he was in a worse humour at the coming of the padres than at our arrival; indeed, he seemed now rather to have a leaning toward me, as one who could sympathise in his vexation at the absurdity of making such a fuss about them. When he saw my foot, too, he really showed some commiseration, and endeavoured to make me as comfortable as possible. The swelling had increased very much. I was soon on my back, and, lying perfectly quiet, by the help of a medicine-chest, starvation, and absence of irritating causes, in two days and nights I reduced the inflammation very sensibly.