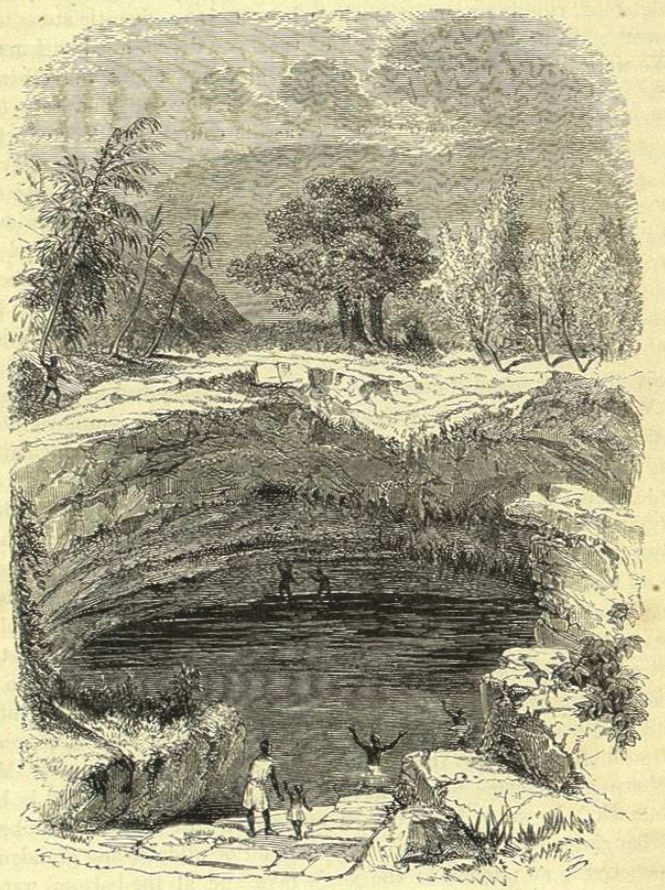
rock. It was the very creation of romance; a bathing-place for Diana and her nymphs. Grecian poet never imagined so beautiful a scene. It was almost a profanation, but in a few minutes we were swimming around the rocky basin with feelings of boyish exultation, only regretting that such a freak of nature was played where so few could enjoy its beauties. On a nobleman's estate in England it would be above all price. The bath reinvigorated our frames. It was after dark when we returned; hammocks were waiting for us, and very soon we were in a profound sleep.



F. Catherwood 77.—CENOTE.

CHAPTER XL.

JOURNEY RESUMED—ARRIVAL AT UXMAL—HACIENDA OF UXMAL—MAJOR-DOMOS—ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG SPANIARD—VISIT TO THE RUINS OF UXMAL—FIRST SIGHT OF THE RUINS—CHARACTER OF THE INDIANS—DETAILS OF HACIENDA LIFE—A DELICATE CASE—ILLNESS OF MR. CATHERWOOD—BREAKING UP.

At daybreak the next morning, with new Indians and a guide on horseback from the hacienda, we resumed our journey. The surface of the country was the same, limestone with scrub-trees. There was not soil enough to absorb the water, which rested in puddles in the hollows of the stones. At nine o'clock we reached another hacienda, smaller than the last, but still having a lordly appearance, where, as before, the women were drawing water by a wheel. The major-domo expressed his sense of the honour conferred upon him by our visit, and his anxiety to serve us, gave us a breakfast of milk, tortillas and wild honey, and furnished us with other Indians and a guide. We mounted again; very soon the sun became intensely hot; there were no trees to shade us, and we suffered excessively. At half-past twelve we passed some mounds of ruins a little off the road, but the sun was so scorching that we could not stop to examine them, and at two o'clock we reached Uxmal. Little did I think, when I made the acquaintance of my unpretending friend in New York, that I should ride upwards of fifty miles on his family estates, carried by his Indians, and breakfasting, dining, and sleeping at his lordly haciendas, while the route marked out for our return would bring us to others, one of which was larger than any we had seen. The family of Peon, under the Spanish dominion, had given governors to the province of Yucatan. On the establishment of independence, its present head, a staunch Royalist, retired in disgust from all kinds of employment, and the whole of the large family estates were managed by the Señora Doña Joaquina. Unfortunately, Don Simon had left for Merida, and we had missed him on the way. Moreover, owing to the heat of the sun and our awkward saddles, we arrived at the end of this triumphal march in a dreadfully jaded and forlorn condition, and perhaps we never dismounted more utterly worn out and uncomfortable.

The hacienda of Uxmal was built of dark grey stone, ruder in appearance and finish than any of the others, with a greater appearance of antiquity, and at a distance looked like an old baronial castle. A year before it had been given to Don Simon by his father, and he was

making large repairs and additions to the building, though, as his family never visited it, and he only for a few days at a time, for what purpose I could not conceive. It had its cattle-yard in front, with tanks of water around, some with green vegetation on the top, and there was an unwholesome sensation of dampness. It had, too, its church, which contained a figure of Nuestro Señor, "Our Lord," revered by the Indians of all the haciendas around, the fame of which had reached the household servants at Merida, and which was the first object that attracted the attention of our guide. The whole hacienda was immediately at our disposal; but, worn down with heat and fatigue, we took at once to our hammocks.

The hacienda had two major-domos, one a Mestitzo, who understood the language and business, and in the other we found an acquaintance, or, at least, what seemed so, for about the time that we left New York he was a waiter at Delmonico's Hotel. It was a strange encounter at this out-of-the-way place, to be brought into close connexion with this well-known restaurant, which in that country seemed the seat of art and fountain of happiness. He was a young Spaniard from Catalonia, who, with a friend, having taken part in some defeated insurrection, fled to Cuba, whence, on the point of being discovered, they escaped to New York, penniless. Ignorant of the language, with no means of getting a livelihood, both were received by Delmonico as waiters at his restaurant, where the friend rose to be head chocolate-maker; but he was languishing as simple waiter, when Don Simon proposed to him to go to Uxmal. Without knowing where he was going, except that it was to some part of Spanish America, or what was to be his business, he found himself in a retired place, surrounded by Indians whose language he could not understand, and having no one near him with whom he could exchange a word except the major-domo. These major-domos form a class in Yucatan who need sharp looking after. Like the Scotch servant applying for a place, they are not particular about wages, and are satisfied with what they can pick up about the house. This is the character of most of the major-domos; and the position of the young man, being white, intelligent, and honest, had advantages in that country, as Don Simon intended to give him, as soon as he understood the business, a superintendence over the major-domos of three or four haciendas; but, unfortunately, he wanted energy, felt the want of society and the loneliness of his situation, remembered scenes of enjoyment with his friend and other waiters, and at Uxmal talked of the opera; and when at dinner-time he drew a feeling picture of Delmonico's saloon, we sympathised with him cordially.

In the afternoon, rested and refreshed, we set out for a walk to the ruins. The path led through some noble woods, in which there were many tracks, and our Indian guide lost his way. Mr. C., being unwell, returned to the hacienda. We took another road, and, emerging suddenly from the woods, to my astonishment came at once upon a large open field strewed with mounds of ruins, and vast buildings on terraces, and pyramidal structures, grand and in good preservation, richly ornamented, without a bush to obstruct the view, and in picturesque effect almost equal to the ruins of Thebes; for these, standing on the flat valley of the Nile, and extending on both sides of the river, nowhere burst in one view upon the sight. Such was the report I made to Mr. Catherwood on my return, who, lying in his hammock unwell and out of spirits, told me I was romancing; but early the next morning we were on the ground, and his comment was that the reality exceeded my description.

The place of which I am now speaking was beyond all doubt once a large, populous and highly civilized city, and the reader can nowhere find one word of it on any page of history. Who built it, why that spot was chosen away from water or any of those natural advantages which have determined the sites of cities whose histories are known, what led to its abandonment and destruction, no man can tell. The only name by which it is known is that of the hacienda on which it stands. In the oldest deed belonging to the Peon family, which goes back 140 years, the buildings are referred to, in the boundaries of the estate, as Las Casas de Piedra. This is the only ancient document or record in existence in which the place is mentioned at all, and there are no traditions except the wild superstitions of Indians in regard to particular buildings. The ruins were all exhumed; within the last year the trees had been cut down and burned, and the whole field of ruins was in view, enclosed by the woods and planted with corn.

We passed a most interesting and laborious day, and at evening returned to the hacienda to mature our plans for a thorough exploration; but, unfortunately, during the night Mr. Catherwood, I believe affected by the immensity of the work, had a violent attack of fever, which continued upon him in the morning, with a prospect of serious illness.

It was Monday, and very early all the Indians of the hacienda, according to their obligation to the master, presented themselves to receive directions from the major-domo for the day's work. In remaining about the house I had an opportunity of learning somewhat of hacienda discipline and the character of the Indians.

The hacienda of Uxmal is ten leagues or thirty miles square, but only

a small portion is cultivated, and the rest is a mere roaming-ground for cattle. The Indians are of two classes: vaceros, or tenders of cattle and horses, who receive two pounds ten shillings per year, with five almudas of maize per week; and labradores or labourers, who are also called Luneros, from their obligation, in consideration of their drinking the water of the hacienda, to work for the master without pay on Lunes or Monday. These last constitute the great body of the Indians; and, besides their obligation to work on Monday, when they marry and have families, and, of course, need more water, they are obliged to clear, sow, and gather twenty micates of maize for the master, each micate being twenty-four square yards. When the bell of the church is struck five times, every Indian is obliged to go forthwith to the hacienda, and, for sixpence a day and a ration of three halfpence-worth of maize, do whatever work the master or his delegate, the major-domo, may direct. The authority of the master or his delegate over these is absolute. He settles all disputes between the Indians themselves, and punishes for offences, acting both as judge and executioner. If the major-domo punish an Indian unreasonably, the latter may complain to his master; and if the master refuse to give him redress, or himself punishes an Indian unreasonably, the latter may apply for his discharge. There is no obligation upon him to remain on the hacienda unless he is in debt to the master, but, practically, this binds him hand and foot. The Indians are all improvident, anticipate their earnings, never have two days' provisions in store, and never keep any accounts. A dishonest master may always bring them in debt, and generally they are really so. If able to pay off the debt, the Indian is entitled to his immediate discharge; but if not, the master is obliged to give him a writing to the effect following: "Whatever señor wishes to receive the Indian named ———, can take him, provided he pays me the debt he owes me." If the master refuses him this paper, the Indian may complain to the juez. When he has obtained it, he goes round to the different haciendas until he finds a proprietor who is willing to purchase the debt, with a mortgage upon him until it is paid. The account is settled, and the master gives the Indian a writing of this purport: "The account of my former servant ——— being adjusted, which is twenty dollars, and having paid me the said debt, I, his present master, give him this receipt;" and with this he enters into the service of a new master. There is but little chance of his ever paying off the smallest debt. He will never work merely to clear off the incumbrance, considers all he can get on his body clear gain, and virtually from the time he receives his first dollar, goes through life in bondage, varied only by an occasional change of masters. In general they are mild,

amiable and very docile; bear no malice; and when one of them is whipped and smarting under stripes, with tears in his eyes he makes a bow to the major-domo, and says, "Buenos tarde, señor;" "good evening, sir." But they require to be dealt with sternly, and kept at a distance; are uncertain, and completely the creatures of impulse; and one bad Indian or a bad Mestitzo may ruin a whole hacienda. They inherit all the indolence of their ancestors, are wedded to old usages, and unwilling to be taught anything new. Don Simon has attempted to introduce improvements in agriculture, but in vain; they cannot work except in their own old way. Don Simon brought out the common churn from the United States, and attempted to introduce the making of butter and cheese; but the Indians could not be taught the use of them, the churns were thrown aside, and hundreds of cows wander in the woods unmilked. The master is not obliged to maintain the Indian when sick; though, as he derives a profit from his labour, it is his interest to do so; and, on broad grounds, as it is an object always to increase his labradores, it is his interest to treat them in such a manner as to acquire among the Indians a reputation as a good master.

In the course of the morning I visited many of the huts of the Indians. They were built in an oblong form, of round poles set upright in the ground and thatched, and some appeared clean and comfortable. The men were all away at work, and all day there was a procession of women in white cotton dresses moving from the gate to the well and drawing water. It was pleasant to find that marriage was considered proper and expedient, conducing to good order and thrift certainly, and probably to individual happiness. Don Simon encouraged it; he did not like to have any single men on the estate, and made every young Indian of the right age take unto himself a wife. When, as often happened, the Indian, in a deprecating tone, said, "No tengo muger," "I have no wife," Don Simon looked through the hacienda, and found one for him. On his last visit he made four matches, and the day before our arrival the Delmonico major-domo had been to the nearest village to escort the couples and pay the padre for marrying them, the price being six shillings each. He was afraid to trust them with the money, for fear they would spend it and not get married.

The old major-domo was energetic in carrying out the views of his master on this important subject, and that day a delicate case was brought before him. A young Indian girl brought a complaint against a married woman for slander. She said that she was engaged to be married to a young man whom she loved and who loved her, and the

married woman had injured her fair fame by reporting that she was already in "an interesting situation;" she had told the young man of it, said that all the women in the hacienda saw it, and taunted him with marrying such a girl; and now she said the young man would not have her. The married woman was supported by a crowd of witnesses, and it must be admitted that appearances were very much against the plaintiff; but the old major-domo, without going into the merits at all, decided in her favour on broad grounds. Indignant at a marriage being prevented, he turned to the married woman and asked, What was it to her? what right had she to meddle? what if it were true?—it was none of her business. Perhaps the young man knew it, and was party to it, and still intended to marry the girl, and they might have lived happily but for her busy tongue; and, without more ado, he brought out a leather whip cut into long lashes, and with great vigour began applying it to the back of the indiscreet communicator of unwelcome tidings. He wound up with an angry homily on busy-bodies, and then upon women generally, who, he said, made all the difficulties on the hacienda, and but for them the men would be quiet enough. The matrons of the hacienda stood aghast at this unexpected turn of things; and, when the case was dismissed, all crowded around the victim and went away with her, giving such comfort as they could. The young girl went away alone; the hearts of her sex were steeled against her: in savage as in civilized life,

> "Every wo a tear may claim,
> Except an erring sister's shame."

In the afternoon Mr. Catherwood's fever left him, but in a very low state. The hacienda was unhealthy at this season; the great troughs and tanks of water around the house were green, and, with the regular afternoon rains, induced fatal fevers. Mr. Catherwood's constitution was already severely shattered. Indeed, I became alarmed, and considered it indispensable for him to leave the hacienda, and, if possible, the country altogether. To carry out other plans, we intended at all events to return. We made a calculation that, by setting out the next morning we could reach the Spanish brig in time to embark for Havana, and in ten minutes' consultation we determined to break up and go home. Immediately we communicated our purpose to the major-domo, who ascended to the belfry of the church and called a coach, to be ready at two o'clock the next morning.

CHAPTER XLI.

RUINS OF UXMAL—A LOFTY BUILDING—MAGNIFICENT VIEW FROM ITS DOORWAY—PECULIAR SCULPTURED ORNAMENTS—ANOTHER BUILDING, CALLED BY THE INDIANS THE HOUSE OF THE DWARF—AN INDIAN LEGEND—THE HOUSE OF THE NUNS—THE HOUSE OF TURTLES—THE HOUSE OF PIGEONS—THE GUARD-HOUSE—ABSENCE OF WATER—THE HOUSE OF THE GOVERNOR—TERRACES—*Wooden* LINTELS—DETAILS OF THE HOUSE OF THE GOVERNOR—DOORWAYS—CORRIDORS—A BEAM OF WOOD, INSCRIBED WITH HIEROGLYPHICS—SCULPTURED STONES, &c.

In the meantime I returned for one more view of the ruins. Mr. Waldeck's work on these ruins had appeared before we left the United States. It was brought out in Paris in a large folio edition, with illustrations fancifully and beautifully coloured, and contains the result of a year's residence at Merida and eight days at Uxmal. At the time of his visit the ruins were overgrown with trees, which within the last year had been cleared away, and the whole was laid bare and exposed to view. In attempting a description of these ruins, so vast a work rises up before me that I am at a loss where to begin. Arrested on the very threshold of our labours, I am unable to give any general plan; but, fortunately, the whole field was level, clear of trees, and in full sight at once. The first view stamped it indelibly upon my mind, and Mr. Catherwood's single day was well employed.

The first object that arrests the eye on emerging from the forest is the building represented on the right hand of the engraving, No. 78, Drawn off by mounds of ruins and piles of gigantic buildings, the eye returns and again fastens upon this lofty structure. It was the first building I entered. From its front doorway I counted sixteen elevations, with broken walls and mounds of stones, and vast, magnificent edifices, which at that distance seemed untouched by time and defying ruin. I stood in the doorway when the sun went down, throwing from the buildings a prodigious breadth of shadow, darkening the terraces on which they stood, and presenting a scene strange enough for a work of enchantment.

This building is 68 feet long. The elevation on which it stands is built up solid from the plain, entirely artificial. Its form is not pyramidal, but oblong and rounding, being 240 feet long at the base, and 120 broad, and it is protected all around, to the very top, by a wall of square stones. Perhaps the high ruined structures at Palenque, which we have called pyramidal, and which were so ruined that we could not make them out exactly, were originally of the same shape. On the east side of the structure is a broad range of stone steps, between 8 and 9 inches high, and so steep that great care is necessary in ascending and descending; of these we counted 101 in their places. Nine were wanting at the top, and perhaps 20 were covered with