

of the owner of the hacienda, the deeper and consequently dangerous, excavations were refilled.

As the result of our work upon this chamber floor, we obtained potsherds of various patterns (Plate VII. and VIII.), also obsidian points, clay beads, flint implements, flakes, jade beads, carved stone, clay and shell neck pendants, fragments of carved pearl and conch shells, together with human bones; among the interesting objects are several bone needles, beautifully formed and polished (Fig. 15), some of which are double pointed. These various objects were not found in any particular spot, but were scattered here and there, and encountered, as the work progressed, at an average depth of nineteen inches beneath the present surface. Flint flakes and potsherds were also found at a much greater depth.

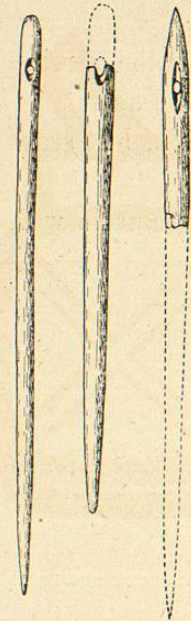


FIG. 15.—BONE NEEDLES.

Three very distinct and general layers of ashes were at depths, respectively, of six inches, sixteen inches, and thirty-one inches. Below these layers of ashes others were found at varying depths. These were local in character, containing diminishing quantities of flint flakes and potsherds, the latter being either plain or of the reed-marked pattern. Several fragments of human skulls were found. Among the fragments were human teeth filed into curious shapes (Fig. 16). The pieces were scattered over an area several yards square, and do not seem to be fragments of one skull. This dispersion of fragments does not seem to be due to later disturbance of the layer in which they were found, but rather to have taken place at a time preceding the natural deposition of the matter immediately above them. Almost all the articles, with the exception of the potsherds and animal bones, are of a character that, while they might be lost, they would hardly be thrown aside as useless.

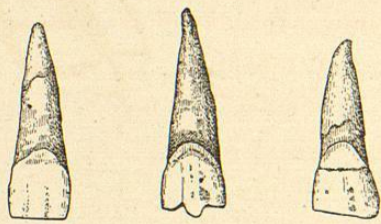


FIG. 16.—HUMAN TEETH, WITH FILED EDGES.

An object of special interest is a fragment of a whistling vessel, like those of Peru and Costa Rica; several fragments of the hard, black, thin ware were found, but the fragment mentioned contains the whistle intact (Fig. 19). The only other specimen in any way similar, that I have seen in Yucatan, is now in the Museum at Merida, and of this

through the kindness of the Director, I have been able to send to the Museum a facsimile in plaster. The ware is not of the kind made either in the past or present of Yucatan, so far as our present knowledge extends, and it would appear that these vessels were ancient importations from a distant nation.

From time to time, as the work went on, explorations were made into the distant passages of the cave, and new wonders were constantly revealed to us.

Upon the walls of a tunnel-like passage with a general trend to the north-west, we found curious symbols outlined in black pigment, showing remarkably clear and distinct against the yellow-white surface of the stone wall.

One distant chamber, approached after many turns in the inky darkness of the tunnel, had death's heads carved upon the wall surface, and the many projecting knobs of stone were so carved that grinning skulls confronted one at every turn. Thorough search in this grewsome chamber failed to reveal graves or any evidence that it had ever served as a burial-place for the dead.

In another chamber the projections were fashioned in the shape of tigers' heads instead of death's heads.

As we followed the long, winding passage, a faint gleam of light became visible in the distance. Following up the clew, we found ourselves at the mouth of a long tunnel, or passage, at the very bottom of a great well-like cavity in the earth. The hot sun poured down into it, and great trees, laden with vegetable parasites, shot upwards into the sunlight of the upper world.

Upon the left of this great black opening from which we had just emerged, and stood blinking and winking in the sunlight, a portion of the rocky wall that loomed up sheer around us for forty feet or more had been partially smoothed and upon its surface had been carved in low relief the richly clad figure of a warrior or priest of heroic size (Plate VI.). This majestic figure, with flowing plumes, jewelled penache, and long lance in hand, had guarded this hidden passage for who knows how many years or centuries, and as we stood before him and studied the stern, grim outlines of the face, we felt like removing our hats in



FIG. 17.—ROCK PAINTING, CAVE OF LOLTUN.

From sketch by M. H. Saville.



FIG. 18.—ROCK PAINTING, CAVE OF LOLTUN.

From tracing by M. H. Saville.

his presence. After which, we gave him a good bath,—for the passing centuries had left him very dirty,—and then took his photograph and a mould of him in paper.

Entire seasons could be spent in this cave work, and not a day pass without the discovery of some important fact or interesting specimen.

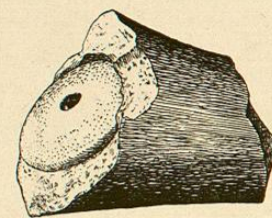


FIG. 19.—FRAGMENT OF WHISTLING VESSEL. †.

But we had accomplished the object of our researches in this, the typical cave of Yucatan. We had delved through the deposits of the present day, through the accumulations of unknown centuries, down to and into the crystalline surface of the ancient floor itself.

Our steel chisel points had probed into the ages when, in all probability, the Peninsula of Yucatan was newly risen from the depths and none save the strange creatures of the sea knew her secret chambers. This grotto, unlike those of Montmatre and Hohenfels, told no tales of the man beast. On the contrary, from the earliest period of its use as a human habitation, the people seem to have been of the same manners, religious customs, and household habits as those who built the great structures above them now in ruins.

It would be vastly interesting, no doubt, to be able to state that split human bones, charred by fire, were found, thus proving that cannibalism was indulged in, among other strange customs; but the sober truth compels us to say, that while we found a number of human bones, some in fragments, others whole,

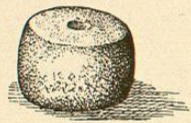


FIG. 20.—BEAD OF IRON PYRITES. †.

none showed any trace of being charred by fire or any other evidence of cannibalism. And I have no hesitation in expressing my firm conviction, based not only on the evidence obtained by this investigation, but upon studies personally carried on in other caves, that no people or race of so-called Cave People ever existed in Yucatan. And that, while these caves of the Loltun type were undoubtedly inhabited, it was by the same race and people that built the great stone structures now in ruins; and I furthermore believe that the caves were only temporary places of refuge, and not permanent habitations.

## EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

### PLATE I.

- FIG. 1. Principal Entrance to the Cave of Loltun.  
FIG. 2. Stalactites in the Inscription Chamber (third Chamber).

### PLATE II.

- FIG. 1. Inscription 1 in third Chamber.  
FIG. 2. Inscription 6 in third Chamber.

### PLATE III.

- FIG. 1. Inscription 2 in third Chamber.  
FIG. 2. Inscription 7 in third Chamber.

### PLATE IV.

- FIG. 1. Inscription 4 *a* in third Chamber.  
FIG. 2. Inscription 4 *b* on same Rock as 4 *a*.

### PLATE V.

Inscription 3 in third Chamber.

### PLATE VI.

Bas-relief on Wall near one of the Entrances to the Cave.