

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

THE questions relating to the origin of the remains in the Uloa valley and the manner of their occurrence are rather perplexing. While the region under consideration properly includes the entire plain watered by the two converging streams and having an area of less than one thousand square miles, our discussion is practically restricted to a strip comparatively narrow, though of indefinite width, extending along both sides of the Uloa. The specimens that have been described are from the immediate banks of this stream; and while, as has been said, similar objects occur in other parts, this occurrence is, so far as numbers go, not to be compared with the conditions experienced in the more restricted territory; nor does it seem that the more artistic objects of pottery have been found except in the terraces of the Uloa, although jadeite beads and carved pendants, whistles and pottery of the less ornate varieties, have been found in the most remote parts of the region.*

* There are some historical references among the early writers from which one would infer that at the time of the earliest colonization this region was thickly inhabited by Indians, whose chief town, called Naco, was destroyed as early as 1524. The Bishop Las Casas says that between the years 1524-35 there perished in the realm of Naco and Honduras more than two million Indians through the cruelty of the Spaniards, and there did not remain more than two thousand natives in a territory of one hundred square leagues.† It is probable that Las Casas did not have a very definite notion of the extension or character of the country which he vaguely describes as the realm of Naco and Honduras. Bernal Diaz, whose testimony as an eyewitness is of greater value, is unfortunately not explicit in his descriptions.

† In 1523 Cortez, having heard false reports of the native wealth of the Honduras or Hibueras, as that part of the Central American mainland is vaguely called in the earliest writings, sent out an expedition from Mexico under command of Cristobal de Oli to found a colony there. Sailing from Vera Cruz, Oli arrived on the north coast and founded a town which he called Triunfo de la Cruz, somewhere near the mouth of the Uloa River. He also conducted an expedition into the interior, against an Indian stronghold called Naco, "a large township," says Bernal Diaz, "which lay in a populous district. It was at this time that Naco was completely destroyed and the whole of the surrounding country laid waste." About the same time reports reached Cortez that Oli had conceived a plan for proclaiming his independence and making himself governor of the new territory; he accordingly sent Francisco de Las Casas to bring back his rebellious officer. Arriving off the site of the new town just founded by Oli, Las Casas lost his ships with all his equipment in a storm, and, being driven ashore in boats, he was taken prisoner, and all his men taken into service by Oli. A short time before this an expedition from Hispaniola, commanded by Gil Gonzales de Avila, had landed on the coast near the mouth of the Rio Dulce and founded a town called San Gil de Buena Vista. Oli, jealous of Avila's influence so near the sphere of his own, sent an expedition against him and made him a prisoner. Thus Oli had two enemies in his power, who, regaining their liberty, plotted his overthrow and forced him to take refuge in the woods, where he was soon caught, and executed in the market-place at Naco. Las Casas and Avila then started back to Mexico by sea.

† "Il est constant que depuis l'année 1524 jusqu'en 1535 il a péri plus de deux millions d'Indiens dans le royaume de Naco y Honduras, et qu'il n'y est resté que deux mille habitants sur une étendue de territoire de cent lieues carrés." *Œuvres de Las Casas, Tome Premier.* Edited by J. A. Llorente, Paris, 1822.

Again, no investigations have been made to show whether the remains lie as deep in the parts more remote from the river, or whether they are confined

Cortez in the meantime having heard nothing from Las Casas for eight months after the latter's departure from Mexico, and fearing that some mishap had befallen him, set out with a band of his veteran conquistadores and an army of Mexicans to march by land to the country which he knew as the Honduras. After suffering great hardships he reached the coast at Golfo Dulce, where, after crossing the river which flows into that arm of the sea, he came upon the remnant of Avila's colony of San Gil de Buena Vista, of which the Indians had informed him. Here he learned of the execution of Oli. After making a voyage in a brigantine belonging to the little colony, up the Rio Dulce, during which he discovered Lake Yzabal or Lago Dulce and explored the river Polochic, where he fought a battle with the inhabitants of an Indian township, he set sail to explore the coast to the eastward. Choosing the best harbor that is afforded on all the coast, he named it Puerto Caballos, the same that is now called Puerto Cortez, and founded a town which he named Natividad. At the same time Sandoval, his second in command, marched from Rio Dulce to Naco. Bernal Diaz was among those of the veterans who marched with Sandoval, and he thus alludes to their arrival: "We came to Quinistan and on the following day in the forenoon we arrived at Naco, which at that time was a township of considerable magnitude, but there was not a single inhabitant to be seen, and we quartered ourselves in a large courtyard where Cristobal de Oli was beheaded. In some houses we were fortunate enough to find a good supply of maize, beans, and even some salt, of which latter we stood in great want. In this place we quartered ourselves as comfortably as if we never meant to leave the spot again."

He goes on to say that they lived on friendly terms with the Indians in the neighborhood of Naco. Sandoval had a conference with several of the Caziques, in which they agreed to supply him regularly with provisions. Afterwards he visited several other townships, all of which submitted without resistance, and in time the people of Naco regained confidence and returned to their houses.

At a few leagues from San Pedro Sula there are to be seen to-day the ruins of an Indian township, and on the same site are traces of Spanish occupation in the outlines of the foundations of houses. This place is still called Naco: it corresponds very well with the place of that name mentioned by Diaz as quoted above, and there is every reason to believe that the two are the same. The site contains one of the most extensive groups of earthworks in the whole region. They are completely buried in the jungle and are much disfigured, but they appear to have been of the same character as those discovered east of the Uloa River, which have been described.

Cortez, after founding Truxillo farther along the coast, returned to Mexico by sea, while those of his companions who did not embark with him, under command of Luis Marin, marched from Naco towards the town of Guatemala, then recently founded by Alvarado. On the way thither, they met Alvarado, coming towards the coast in the hope of finding Cortez, and all returned to Mexico by way of Guatemala. In this journey, Luis Marin, in whose company was Bernal Diaz, who recounts their adventures, must have passed near the ruins of Copan.

After the departure of Cortez and his companions from Honduras, the colonies which he had founded were soon strengthened by fresh arrivals from Cuba and from Spain. The interior of the country was explored, rich gold mines were discovered, and soon one of the chief lines of communication between Central America and the outside world lay through the Gulf of Honduras and the country bordering on it. Over this route the product of some of the richest gold mines in New Spain was transported to the north coast, from which the treasure ships put out to sea. Consequently these waters and this part of the mainland early became a favorite hunting-ground for the buccaneers and gentlemen in the service of Elizabeth; for the protection of the coast, the fortress of Omoa, for a long time the strongest in the New World, was built.

The condition of the native population during these times was of course one of abject slavery. They were driven in swarms to the mines, where they perished by thousands under the cruel treatment of their masters, so that the statement of wholesale depopulation reported by Las Casas is not incredible.

From the account given by Bernal Diaz one would infer that the country watered by the Uloa and Chemilican rivers and their tributaries was at the time of its discovery supporting a large industrial population. The adventurers found extensive maize plantations, and they were supplied with provisions in abundance. The people were assembled in towns, some of which would seem to have been of considerable extent. Of these Naco was without doubt the most important, and was large

to more superficial strata than is the case along the Uloa. The immediate problem consists, first, in finding an explanation of the various phenomena attending the occurrence of relics in the ground covered by the explorations, and, second, in the interpretation of the historical significance of the relics themselves in their relations to remains from other parts of the country. The object sought in the first of these inquiries is a knowledge of the original location and former condition of the relics, the manner of their present distribution, and the agencies responsible for the changes they have undergone. It has been seen that these objects are found associated with the alluvial beds in a more or less stratified manner to a depth of thirty feet or more. The first explanation that is suggested by the manner of their distribution together with the facts which point to the shifting action of the river consequent upon sudden increase of volume, is that the objects were transported by the current together with the clay, sand, and gravel, and laid down simultaneously with these at successive periods. If this were the case, we should expect the objects to show water-wearing, which they do not. The deposits being laid down by the river at present on its shallow side (see Figs. 1 and 2), contain objects transported from the opposite side, and all these objects show extensive water-wearing; the corners are rounded off, and the colors of painted specimens are destroyed by the combined action of the sand and water in the same way that pebbles are rounded and worn smooth. Those taken from the excavations described in the first part of this report, on the contrary, show in no instance the least indication of the wearing action inseparable from alluvial transportation. The broken edges are sharp, having often the appearance of fresh breaks, and the colored and polished surfaces are unscratched. It follows therefore that the interring must have been accomplished without the agency of the river. In short, the objects must have been put underground in the customary way in connection with burials, but not to the depth at which they are found at present. These burials must have been made during successive periods of occupation, separated by a series of inundations each of which raised the general level of the

enough to be described by Bernal Diaz, who was accustomed to large Indian cities, as "a township of considerable magnitude." The historian mentions "houses," but says nothing of their construction. They must have been of some pretensions, however, since it was possible for Sandoval and his companions to quarter themselves "as comfortably as if we never intended to leave the spot again." The inhabitants were peaceable, and would doubtless have received Sandoval in a friendly manner had not the outrages of Oli already given them reason to look upon the Spaniards with fear and distrust.

Whatever the condition of these people may have been at the time of their first contact with Europeans, they quickly disappeared under Spanish oppression; and to-day the only pure-blooded Indians to be found on the banks of the Uloa River are wild Xicaques who have wandered down from the mountains of Yoro, where that tribe remained in comparative security and isolation through the period of Spanish rule. The people whom the Spaniards found in the valley of the Uloa and the adjoining region must have constructed the earthworks and other objects whose remains are found upon the surface to-day, and these earthworks mark the sites of their towns, all of which were destroyed by the earliest colonists.

ground several feet by the deposition of detritus from the mountains. Each of these catastrophes would be followed by a rapid growth of vegetation, and the population would return to the neighborhood of the river, that was their source of life, where they may have remained undisturbed for many generations. Sometimes the site of the later burying-place was directly over that of the old, either by design or accident, and thus we have in places a succession of layers, representing the burials that correspond to separate periods. More generally, however, the new site chosen was different from the old; and consequently in certain localities remains are found in one layer only, which may be at any depth, from the level of the water to within five or six feet from the surface. The excavations that have been described were made at points where the number of layers containing relics was greatest according to observations on the face of the bank. The burials were made without any form of tomb, the body together with the associated objects being simply deposited in the ground and covered with earth. The finding of different pieces of the same vessel separated by several feet, suggests that the vessels were sometimes broken before the interment was made, while most of those that were buried entire were subsequently crushed by the weight of the superimposed strata, which increased in thickness at every inundation. Perhaps the most puzzling circumstance is that so many of the objects are represented by portions only, isolated fragments of all sizes being continually encountered in the excavations. Moreover it was not possible to define individual burials or distinguish the corresponding sets of associated objects; there was a certain promiscuity in the manner of their distribution that seems to indicate that the same ground was utilized repeatedly, and that the earlier interments in any particular burying-place were disturbed and their arrangement broken up by those which came later. It is probable also that many of the isolated fragments which are found distributed through the strata were accidentally buried. The distribution of potsherds in the form of refuse through the surface soil is a necessary outcome of continued occupation by communities in which the product of the potter's art was extensively used. Again, if these communities were temporarily obliterated by flood, as has been argued, such objects of stone and pottery as were in use at the time of the catastrophe may have been covered up without the transportation of which they would have retained evidence. The combination of circumstances here detailed seems to furnish the only solution of the problem that is at all satisfactory.

The human remains, although of the most meagre description, when taken in connection with the pottery with which they were found associated, confirm the existence of burials. They consist of crumbling fragments of bone occurring in the same strata with the objects of pottery; and while they furnish reasonable evidence of burial-places, they are too minute to supply any information respecting the form of the burials or the relative