

EDITORIAL NOTE.

THIS report by Mr. Teobert Maler covers his explorations of several groups of ancient ruins in the valley of the Usumatsintla and his visit to the Lacantuns of Lake Pethá. It is the first of a series which will make known the results of the researches which Mr. Maler is conducting under the auspices of the Museum.

In his graphic and entertaining style, Mr. Maler gives us vivid pictures of the wild beauty and tropical luxuriousness of the country through which he journeys; and in the relation of his dealings with the Lacantuns he gives us glimpses of the life and customs of these little-known denizens of the jungle about Lake Pethá.

Mr. Maler has spent many years in Mexico and Central America, and has examined and photographed many of the prehistoric ruins and sculptures of that region. The beautiful photographs which he has so skilfully taken — notwithstanding the difficulties to be overcome — have made his name familiar to all students of American archaeology; and it will be gratifying to all Americanists to read this account of Mr. Maler's explorations and to examine the interesting series of photographs here published.

Mr. Maler's map of the Central Usumatsintla Valley and his plan of the ruins of Piedras Negras, here reproduced, will awaken a new interest in the great cities of the past, which are still hidden in the jungles of Central America.

This report was written in German by Mr. Maler, and has been translated into English by Miss Selma Wesselhoeft, assisted by Miss A. M. Parker. Every effort has been made to secure an accurate translation and to keep the decisive style of the author; while the Editor has respected the fact that the author could not revise the proofs. Mr. Maler is therefore responsible for the opinions expressed and the statements made, as well as for the spelling of proper names, in which he sometimes differs from the generally accepted orthography.

The reproduction of the photographs has been admirably accomplished by the heliotype process, special care having been taken by the Heliotype

Company to accurately reproduce the original prints. This part of the work has been carefully supervised by Mr. C. C. Willoughby.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge, in behalf of the Museum, our indebtedness to Mr. Charles P. Bowditch of the Museum Faculty for his continued interest and co-operation in the work pertaining to Central America. Our thanks are also tendered to all the subscribers whose generous aid has made it possible to continue our researches in Central America and to publish the results.

F. W. PUTNAM,
Curator of the Museum.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE,
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TO THE FUND FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CENTRAL AMERICAN RESEARCH.

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RESEARCHES IN THE USUMATSINTLA VALLEY.

I.

LA REFORMA.

IN the middle of January, 1898, after I had engaged four men in Tenosique and had finished other preparations for my journey, I left this starting-point of my expeditions, intending to explore the route from Chini-kihá to Xupá, and to go to Palenque if circumstances allowed, and then to push on to the great Lake of Pethá and the settlements of the Lacantuns.

Accompanied by two of my men and our luggage, I travelled in a cayuco up to Pomoná, a small settlement two leagues above Tenosique (see map, Plate I), while the other two men brought the pack animals by land to the crossing-place at Pomoná, where they safely crossed the Usumatsintla, with the help of the cayucos and the men which I sent to their assistance after my arrival. Pomoná comprises only a few huts, inhabited by people belonging to the sugar rancho of San Antonio on the opposite shore.

We spent the night at Pomoná; on the next day we took the road through the forests to La Reforma, where we arrived after a two days' journey. La Reforma is a large settlement belonging to the firm of Romano, and lies close to the right shore of the Chacamax, perhaps ten leagues from Pomoná and Tenosique.

Not being acquainted with the managers who were in charge of this montería, I naturally had some difficulty in making them understand the object of my coming, and in obtaining their permission to unload my luggage and to shelter my men in some corner of one of their buildings. By degrees, however, friendly relations were established with these gentlemen. Gradually they began to take an interest in my not uninteresting expeditions, and also to render me some assistance. One of the managers was a Spaniard, Isidoro Mucha by name; the other was an engineer, Felipe Molina, from the city of Mexico. Both were agreeable and cultivated men.

A road — which is in a frightful condition during the greater part of the year — leads from La Reforma to the distant settlement, on the Lacantun River, belonging to the same firm of Romano, and called *Los Tzendates*. This forest road runs directly through the vast wilderness in which the scattered remnants of the Maya-Lacantuns live.