

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,
October, 1901.

SUBSCRIBERS

TO THE FUND FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CENTRAL AMERICAN RESEARCH.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| STEPHEN SALISBURY, Worcester | EDWARD S. GREW, Boston |
| CHARLES P. BOWDITCH, Boston | MRS. G. G. LOWELL, Boston |
| AUGUSTUS HEMENWAY, Boston | GEORGE A. NICKERSON, Boston |
| JUDGE FRANCIS C. LOWELL, Boston | NATHANIEL THAYER, Boston |
| MR. & MRS. HENRY PICKERING, Boston | ELIOT C. LEE, Boston |
| MISS ELLEN F. MASON, Boston | MISS MARY L. WARE, Boston |
| | MISS CAROLINE P. STOKES, New York |

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.

Southward from the cluster of buildings of La Reforma, a small mountain range is visible, the crest of which forms an extensive plateau, on which the ruins of a little ancient city lie hidden among the high forest trees. Although the monteros had found nothing of importance there, as the ruins lay within easy reach I deemed it advisable to explore them. Following the road to Tzendales for two kilometres, and then turning to the right where the road is crossed by a small stream and a giant ceiba lifts its top to the sky, we entered the forest. Ascending the slopes, we soon reached the ruins, which were quite numerous and often quite imposing, — foundation walls, levelled areas, heaps of ruins, etc. Finally, we also discovered the principal temple, which crowned the platform of a massive, well-preserved substructure about six metres in height. It was still possible to determine the position of the various apartments of this edifice. I thoroughly explored these ruins and their neighborhood for sculptured stones, but in vain. All I found was a large, thick stone slab (sacrificial table?) on which, however, there was no drawing of any kind.

I called these ruins "Las Ruinas de La Reforma."

II.

CHINIKIHÁ.

THE name Chinikihá (Tsinikihá), or Chinikilhá, admits of a twofold interpretation: *chi-nikil-há* (*tši-nikil-há*) = "mouth or opening of the disappearing water," in allusion to the river passing through a rocky tunnel not far from the ruins. Or it may also be that there is in this region a tree named *chinikil* (*nic, nicté*, in names of plants always signify "flower"). Hence the name — without putting too much emphasis on the second *i* — can also signify "water where the chinikil tree grows."

I had long known that there was a large ruined city on the Chinikihá River, but it was not until the middle of January, 1898, after making my headquarters in La Reforma, that I was able to undertake the thorough exploration of these ruins. To reach them we first took the *camino de Tzendales*, and after travelling for about two leagues (or for two hours), we turned off to the left, following the path of an abandoned *montería*, El Clavo, and by turning still farther to the left, we soon crossed the Chinikihá and reached the *camino viejo de Tenosique*, a road which passes straight through the ruined city. Here on this path, which is now seldom used, we built a small palm-leaf hut, *champa*, at a spot convenient for bathing in the river and for providing ourselves with water.

We first explored all the remains on the right of the road, but found nothing but remnants of walls and terraces, with the exception that in one

building we found small rear rooms in a half-preserved condition; everything else was completely in ruins. Then we followed the road to Tenosique for nearly two kilometres, to the end of the mountain pass, where the path running between high cliffs begins to descend into the valley of the Usumatsintla. Though it was a difficult task, we climbed these cliffs and enjoyed a magnificent view of the endless, wooded lowlands through which the Usumatsintla rolls. From these lofty heights our view extended as far as Balancan and beyond. But finding no structures on these cliffs, we returned wearied to our camp.

On the following day we undertook the exploration of that portion of the town which lies on the left of the road. Here we found the main mass of the buildings, which, it is true, are mostly in ruins. Two groups of buildings of noble proportions especially attracted our attention. In one the outlines of a large court were recognizable, intersected by a high and massive structure. The rooms which formerly bordered this court were in ruins, but from out the *débris* projected great lintels. These I examined in the hope of finding sculptures on the under side, but, alas, in vain!

The other larger group of buildings, which in past years had more particularly fallen a prey to the depredations of the woodcutters exploiting these woods, was especially difficult to rediscover, since, when the woodcutters abandoned this region, the forest had been set on fire and everything was now concealed by the dense vegetation.

Mr. Molina himself came to our assistance from La Reforma, bringing with him some of the most experienced of the elder monteros. And it was only with this help that we were successful in finding the ruins.

A great pyramid, rising in several terraces, once formed the substructure of the principal temple, which now like the adjacent apartments has fallen to ruin. From among the *débris* the woodcutters — who, I regret to say, seem to busy themselves, incidentally and in a manner quite uncalled for, with archaeology, but naturally only after the style of woodcutters — had taken out a slab bearing inscriptions, intending to carry it away with them, but finding it too heavy, they left it lying on the side of the pyramid and contented themselves with knocking off a corner to take with them as a "specimen"!

I succeeded in finding this slab, and at once perceived that it was part of a stone table, which had rested against a wall, and whose three exposed (naturally narrow) faces were ornamented with very delicately executed hieroglyphs in bas-relief, while the top (at least of the portion which I found) also had an inscription, which, however, was incised.

Here was another instance of the mischief arising from the meddling of ignorant people. If the men had simply left the slab on the spot where they found it, it would have been an easy matter for me to have dug a little further and the missing portion would undoubtedly have come to