

rock one hundred feet in height, piling up such vast masses of spray that it was well-nigh impossible to take a photograph. I finally succeeded, however, with great difficulty in taking one.

According to a statement of the men, "the petrification of a large antediluvian animal" is visible on a boulder when the water is low in the basin at the foot of the falls. An American told me, however, that this petrification was only about thirty centimetres long, and was a very distinct and pretty representation of a fish. While I was encamped near the waterfall all these rocks were under the water, and therefore I could not inspect the fossil.

The Mistolhá flows into the Baxcan, which in its turn is a tributary of the Rio de San Pedro Savana.

Having retraced our steps to the montería of Mr. McQueen, we rested there for a day, enjoying the agreeable society of that gentleman, and then we turned towards Sulusúm and Palenque.

V.

PETHÁ.

AFTER exploring the route from Chinikihá to Palenque, I found it necessary to return to my headquarters in Tenosique to organize a second expedition, — this time for the exclusive purpose of rediscovering the long since forgotten Lake of Pethá. Having engaged new men and procured fresh provisions, in the middle of August, 1898, I went for the second time to the montería La Reforma, where I had left my luggage. The rainy season in the mean time had set in in full force, the forest paths were soaked, and all the rivers and brooks were swollen. Nevertheless, very fine weather might be expected even at this season.

The first part of the road, which has been built by the firm of Romano from La Reforma to Tzendales, running directly through the wilderness, is excessively bad, because the workmen found no firm, stony soil, but only black forest loam. This ground is so boggy throughout the entire year that not even those who laid out the road ventured to use it with their horses or mules. Each traveller, therefore, at the beginning of this road endeavors to take certain circuitous paths leading from abandoned lumber camps, and only strikes into the actual *camino de los Tzendales* at the Choccolhá. We too followed the general practice, and when on the 27th of August I was able to start from La Reforma with my men and mules, after crossing the Chinikihá we took the narrow forest trail to the abandoned montería of El Clavo, about three leagues from La Reforma, where the forsaken huts afforded us sufficient shelter from the rain during the night.

On the second day of our journey, in spite of the wretched, miry, and, at times, also mountainous paths, we reached the Choccolhá, where the neighboring monterías have a ferryman who carries the traveller over in a cayuco. This ferry is called La Culebra and is about five leagues from El Clavo. But about three kilometres before we reached the Choccolhá, we were obliged with much difficulty to ford the greatly swollen Chancalá, for there was no cayuco here. At La Culebra we found protection from the rain at night in an open hut, *un galeron*, on the left bank. The ferryman's hut was on the opposite bank.

On the morning of the 29th of August we crossed the Choccolhá with the help of a large cayuco, loaded our pack animals, and from this point took the road to Tzendales, which was in a wretched state besides being very mountainous. Finally we took a forest trail on the right, and late in the afternoon we reached the montería of Las Tinieblas, which had been recently established on the right bank of the upper Choccolhá and — as I had learned — was at that time the most advanced post for those who wished to reach the Lake of Pethá. The distance from Culebra to Tinieblas I estimated at five leagues.

Las Tinieblas is a branch of the great lumber enterprise of Troncoso Cilveti y Ca., who had recently begun the exploitation of the forests along the Choccolhá and whose privileges extend to the vicinity of the Lake of Pethá. After I had explained the object of my coming to the encargado of the montería, we agreed to send a messenger on the following day to the administrator of the concession, Mr. Cayetano Irigoyen, who was fortunately just then staying at the neighboring montería La Ilusion, and whom I had informed of my intention when I was in Tzendales. In due time I received the following courteous reply from Mr. Irigoyen:

Troncoso Cilveti y Ca.
Corte de Maderas preciosas.
Chiapas.

La Ilusion, Agosto 30 de 1898.

Señor Don Teoberto Maler,
Montería Las Tinieblas.

MUY SEÑOR MIO, — Correspondo con gusto á su atenta de hoy en lá que me pide un práctico para su excursión á la laguna Pethá.

Obsequiando sus deseos, irá mañana nuestro dependiente Francisco Guillen para acompañarlo, aunque sus conocimientos prácticos en esos lugares no son muy precisos, pero sí creo suficientes para llegar bien al punto deseado: pues las mensuras de los terrenos de esta casa, en cuya apertura estuvo él, se aproximan á unos pocos kilómetros de la laguna.

Deseando le sea satisfactoria su visita á estos desiertos me repito su afectísimo amigo y servidor

CAYETANO IRIGOYEN.

Tinieblas is occasionally visited by neighboring Lacantuns, who sell to the employees beautiful bows and arrows, rare birds and other articles; and yet none of the people here had the least idea where the Lake of Pethá was situated or how the Indian settlements could be reached.

As was my custom, I closely questioned the men here whether in their search for trees or in hunting, they had ever found ruins. They declared unanimously that they had never seen a trace of ruins in the neighboring forests.

Mr. Guillen arrived on the 31st of August, and all the details of our projected expedition were discussed most thoroughly with him. As I was fully prepared, we were able to leave Tinieblas on the next day (September 1st). Our saddle and pack animals were, of course, left behind. There were six of us in all. We took with us only a small camera (9 x 12 cm.) and the most necessary provisions. In addition we were all armed.

Following a forest path, we came once more to the camino de los Tzendales and to the halting-place San Antonio, where a large galeron invited repose; but as this San Antonio is barely two leagues from Tinieblas, we continued our march and pitched our tent near a small brook about a league from El Espejito. On the road we met some men with a train of mules coming from Tzendales. They were also carrying with them some bound mozos, who had committed a horrible double murder at Tzendales.

At an early hour on September 2nd we reached the halting-place El Espejito, about four leagues from San Antonio. Here we decided to abandon the road to Tzendales, and turning to the right, we pushed forward into the forest in a southerly or southeasterly direction. Soon we had to ford a not insignificant tributary of the Chocolhá, and in doing so we took advantage of the lime-rock formations of the river bed at this spot. A few steps beyond we found to our great joy an Indian trail which led in exactly the same direction which we had intended to take. Convinced that this trail must lead somewhere, we followed it for two leagues over hills and ravines, coming finally to a pass on the upper Chocolhá (right bank), where, from all appearances, the Lacantuns were accustomed to cross the river.

At this spot the river, flowing over a great bed of lime rock, forms a small waterfall only about one and one-half metres high. In the dry season the Indians probably cross the river by walking on this ledge, but at present the river was so high that such a proceeding was out of the question. In the mean time we encamped on a terrace on the hither side, erecting a small palmleaf hut for the night. Then we felled several small trees of light wood, which we cut into six long pieces and fastened them firmly together by means of tough vines, *bejuco*s (climbing plants). Having finished our small raft, we decided to attempt a crossing a little below the waterfall, at a place where the river forms large, deep pools.

One of my most skilful men, provided with a long pole and a large roll of bejuco, boldly leaped on to the raft and safely reached the other bank. The improvised bejuco rope was now firmly fastened to either shore.

I had bidden the man search carefully on the opposite bank to see whether the Indians had not concealed a small boat somewhere among the trees projecting into the water. Hardly had he touched the opposite bank when his joyful shout announced that he had found a fine new cayuco. He unfastened the boat, got into it, and brought it to our bank, abandoning the now useless raft to float down the river.

The cayuco had very recently been made from a *caoba* tree. We tied it firmly to a tree, lest it should be torn away during the night by the chance swelling of the stream. The finding of this cayuco was the second piece of good fortune that befell us on our expedition to Pethá.

There was now nothing further to do, and we cooked a fine *Crax rubra*, which we had killed on the way. It invariably rained at night.

On the morning of September 3d, after crossing and recrossing the river three times, the passage over the Chocolhá was completed. The little Indian boat was now fastened as securely as possible to the left bank, so that it might serve us on our return. At a distance of only two hundred paces from our crossing-place, we saw a well-built open champa, and a smaller one near by for cooking. Several pottery cooking-utensils lay around, and at a short distance we saw the clearing where the *caoba* had been felled and the cayuco had been made. Numerous hunter's trails ran in all directions from the hut, which was very confusing to us, but, true to our purpose to move always in a southerly or southeasterly direction, we chose the path which seemed to correspond best to that direction. The sequel proved that we had made a wise choice. We marched on uninterruptedly, crossing numerous brooks and also on the left a large tributary of the Chocolhá. The region became wilder and more mountainous, but we followed the path closely uphill and downhill, though it was often hardly discernible, convinced that it must lead somewhere. Towards noon, as we were already very tired, we made a short halt for rest and food. Then we pushed on again in spite of heavy showers of rain which drenched us to the skin. Finally we came to a small milpa established in the midst of the forest. This was the first sign that we were near an Indian settlement. The rain ceased. We proceeded cautiously. Descending the last declivity, suddenly a silvery expanse of water gleamed between the dark branches of the trees. A few steps further down, the path ended at the waters of the Lake of Pethá. Where the path ended three cayucos were fastened to the trees, and the oars belonging to them were found hidden in the branches. This was the third piece of good luck that had befallen us on our romantic expedition to Pethá. Indeed, of what advantage would it have been to us to have reached the lake without boats