

CHICHEN ITZA, THE HOLY CITY OF THE ITZAS

By SYLVANUS G. MORLEY

LONG before the discovery of America there flourished in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and parts of Honduras a great civilization, which has been called the Maya. It may be said at the outset without exaggeration that this civilization had reached a height equalled by no other people of the western hemisphere prior to the coming of the white man. In architecture in sculpture, and in printing the Mayas excelled. Their priests were astronomers of no mean ability, having observed and recorded without the aid of instruments of precision such as are known to us the lengths of the Solar and Venus years, and probably the lengths of the Mercury and Mars years. In addition to this they had developed a calendar system and perfected a chronology which in some of its characteristics was superior to our own.

The ancient glory of this people had long since departed when Hernando Cortez first came in contact with them on the coast of Yucatan in 1519. Their star had set. Their greatest cities had been abandoned and lay in ruins, and their country was prostrated by the quarrels of a score or more of petty independent chieftains, each of whom was waging war on the other. Even the memory of the older cities, of their culture, such as Palenque, Copan and Quetzalcoatl, for example, seems to have passed from the mind of men, their former existence forgotten. Famine, pestilence and internecine strife are all said to have been contributory causes to the decay and eclipse which overtook this brilliant aboriginal civilization several centuries before the Spanish first set foot in the new world.

Probably the largest, and certainly the most magnificent, of the ruined cities which the Spanish conquerors found on their arrival in Yucatan was Chichen Itza, around which even in its desolation there still cluster a thousand traditions of former sanctity and splendor. The name Chichen Itza is Maya, and means Chich-moat, Chen-wells and Itza, the name of the Maya tribe who lived in the neighborhood of the place. "The Mouth of the Wells of the Itzas" therefore is the meaning of the name; nor could a more appropriate one have been applied to the place by any people. The whole peninsula of Yucatan is a vast limestone formation with little or no surface water. One may travel for miles and never cross river or brook, or even witness open a modest spring. Indeed, in the northern part, where most of the great ruined cities are located, water is fully 70 feet below the surface of the ground. The modern inhabitants overcome this difficulty by means of wells and windmills, which afford the only source of water supply during the dry season (December to June) excepting what little rain water may have been caught during the rainy months and stored in cisterns.

But of wells and windmills the ancient Mayas knew nothing, and, generally speaking, had it not been for the great natural reservoirs which nature had scattered here and there over the country Yucatan never could have been colonized.

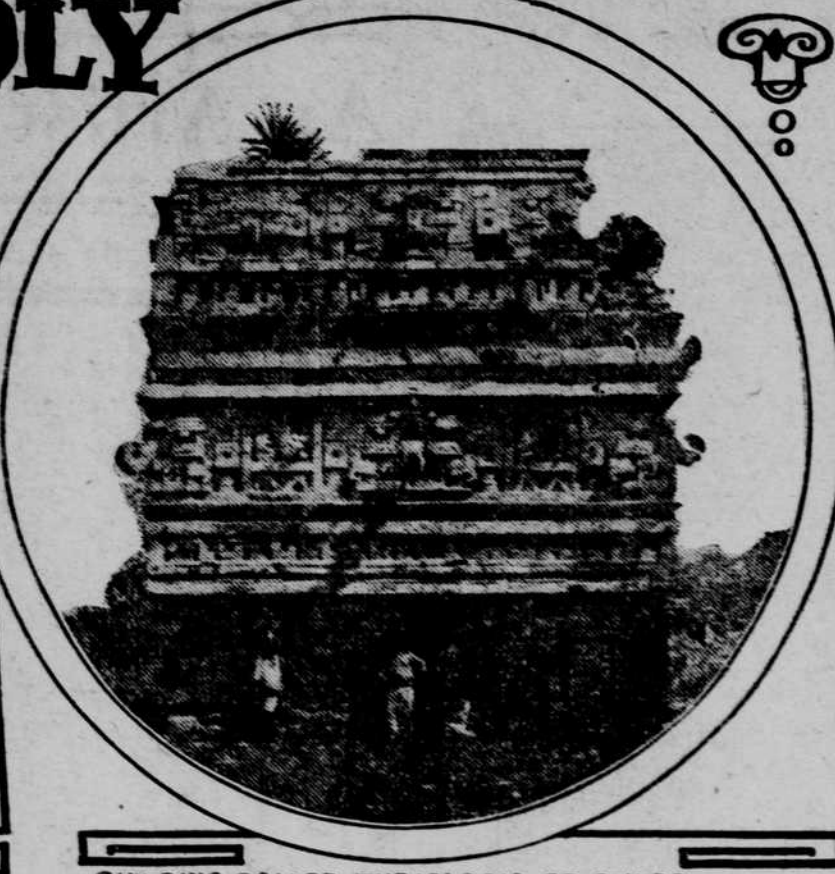
These great natural wells, or, as the Mayas call them, cenotes, are found all over Yucatan. They are usually about 150 feet in diameter, or sometimes more, and about 70 feet in depth to the level of the water. Geologists say that these cenotes are places where the limestone crust, which everywhere covers the surface of Yucatan, has become weakened by the seeping of subterranean waters and has collapsed of its own weight, forming great sink holes or natural wells on a large scale. And now it is clear why the ancient inhabitants of Chichen Itza so named their city. In the course of their wanderings, the general trend of which was northward, the Itzas, entering Yucatan from the south, finally reached the two cenotes, around which Chichen Itza later was built, but which then was probably nothing but wilderness. Here the striking contrast afforded by such an abundance of water in a country so generally parched could not fail to have attracted their attention. The place must have seemed to the thirsty wanderers a God-given site for the location of their new home. By right of discovery they claimed the place, and to the city which grew up around the cenotes they gave the name of Chichen Itza, "The Mouth of the Wells of the Itzas."

The two cenotes at Chichen Itza have been known by the Mayas from time immemorial as the Cenote Grande and the Cenote Sacra, or the large Cenote and the Sacred Cenote, respectively. The first of these only in former times was used for the water supply of the city, the Sacred Cenote being reserved for religious use exclusively. It is the latter, however, and the religious observances held in connection with it, which gave the city its holy character. From far and near all over Yucatan, and probably even from points more distant, pilgrimages were made to the Sacred Cenote. It seems to have been the most holy shrine of the Maya people, comparable only in importance to the Mohammedan Mecca and the Christian Jerusalem. In time of drought offerings of all kinds were thrown into it—treasures, and in cases of extremity even living human sacrifices.

Chichen Itza today is somewhat changed in appearance from the time when pilgrims came from far and near to appease with human sacrifices the wrath of offended deities. Now the city lies buried in a thick jungle, which has steadily won its way into the very heart of the holy place. Colonnades have been overthrown and pyramids covered with trees to their summits; courts have been lost in a tangle of thorn and creepers; and palaces stripped of their sculptured embellishment. Desolation has spread everywhere in the wake of the encroaching vegetation.



END VIEW OF THE MONJAS OR MONASTERY



BUILDING CALLED THE IGLESIA, OR CHURCH



VIEW OF TEMPLE CALLED CHICHANCOB



THE CASTILLO OR CASTLE



PANORAMA OF THE RUINS OF CHICHEN ITZA

To visit the ancient city now, one jolts for 15 long and weary miles in a two-wheeled covered cart drawn by three mules over the roughest kind of a highway imaginable. This present inconvenience fortunately is not to be one of long standing. A new and straight road is about to be built and an automobile service to the ruins probably established, which will shorten the present length of the trip from four hours to about half an hour. Now, however, this ride from Citas, the nearest railroad point, seems interminable. The road, so called by courtesy only, winds through the impenetrable bush, which everywhere in the natural state covers northern Yucatan. Through this the creaking cart finds a dubious way mile after mile until every muscle in one's body groans an agonized protest. Finally, when it seems that the limit of physical endurance has been reached, the cart suddenly lurches around a sharp turn in the road and as if by magic the lofty Castillo flashes into view, towering high above the plain and the rest of the city in its lonely magnificence.

This imposing structure, the highest in Yucatan, rises 78 feet above the plain. The pyramid on which the temple stands is 195 feet long on each side at the base and covers about an acre of ground.

The Castillo would seem to have been the center of the ancient city, and probably its chief sanctuary. To the north lies the Sacred Cenote and the causeway, just mentioned, leading to it. On the east is a vast group of buildings, colonnades, courts and pyramids. "The City of a Thousand Columns," as some one has picturesquely described it. Due west is the group of structures known as the Ball Court. To the south for half a mile or more, scattered through the jungle, are pyramids, courts, temples and palaces. The central location of the Castillo with reference to all of these, as well as its great size and commanding height, argue strongly that it was the chief sanctuary of the Holy City.

Another interesting group of structures at Chichen Itza, perhaps slightly less sacred in character than the Castillo, is the so-called "Ball Court," mentioned above as lying just west of the Castillo. This group is composed of two parallel masses of solid masonry, each 272 feet long, 27 feet high and 16 feet wide, placed 119 feet apart from each other. These two great walls, for such they really are, form a court nearly 300 feet long by 119 feet wide. High on the side of each at the middle point from end to end there is attached a stone ring four feet in diameter with a hole through it. These rings are fastened to their respective walls by tenons of stone, and are so placed that the surface of each is perpendicular to the vertical face of the wall. The arrangement is very similar to the baskets in our modern game of basketball, except that at Chichen Itza the "baskets" have their openings perpendicular to the ground, while in our game the openings in the baskets are parallel with the ground. To make a basket at the Chichen Itza court a somewhat horizontal throw, as in baseball, was necessary, while nowadays it is a toss that wins the goal.

At the open ends of the court formed by these two walls stand temples, which in effect define the area, definitely marking its boundaries. On top of the east wall, at its southern end, there is a beautiful temple, which affords a commanding view of the entire court. This has been called "The House of the Tigers," because of a frieze of stalking tigers, which is sculptured in alto-relievo around the

outside of the building. This temple contains also on the walls of an interior room, an elaborate mural painting representing an attack by some enemy upon a city, perhaps Chichen Itza itself, and its defense by the inhabitants. Some of the poses taken by the combatants in the conflict are extremely realistic; such as in the throwing of javelins, the swinging of war clubs, and the like. This bit of mural decoration in The House of the Tigers at Chichen Itza probably marks the high-water mark of aboriginal painting in the Western Hemisphere; at least it is superior to everything else that has survived.

The identification of these two great walls and the temples associated with them, as a ball court, rests on firm historic foundation. When the Spanish first came to Mexico they found the natives playing a game of ball, which was of sufficient importance to have a special court or ground set apart for its exclusive use. Several of the early Spanish writers have described the game in some detail, and all agree as to its having played an important part in the life of the people. One chronicler has it that the object of the game was to strike the ball so that it would pass through the opening in the stone ring above mentioned as an important feature of the Chichen Itza court. He adds that the feat was one of considerable dexterity, since the ball could not be hit with the hands, but that the hips or other parts of the body had to be used instead. This rule of the game very materially increased the difficulty in making a "Maya basket;" so much so, in fact, we are told, that the lucky player making this winning stroke had forfeit to him as a reward for his skill all the clothing and ornaments of the spectators. At such times, the chronicler concludes, the spectators were wont to scatter in all directions without loss of time, hoping thus to escape paying the penalty, but that the friends of the lucky player immediately gave chase and endeavored to exact the full forfeit.

Although the name Ball Court has been given to this group of temples at Chichen Itza, it should not be supposed on that account, that this great court was built primarily for sport. Such an explanation of its fundamental purpose is incompatible with any conception which the American aborigine ever seems to have entertained. To the Itza people the chief function of their Ball Court was doubtless a religious one. Games played there, if not actually held in connection with religious festivals, were at least sufficiently religious in their meaning as to completely overshadow the element of sport as we understand the term. That a game was played in which competition and skill entered in cannot be doubted in the face of contemporaneous evidence, and to this extent perhaps the Mexican Ball Courts were athletic fields; but it must not be forgotten for a moment that its true significance was religious, and that the games which were played there probably were held only in connection with religious festivals. It is not improbable, however, that the Aztecs were breaking away from the religious feature of sport at the time of the Spanish Conquest, but that "The Holy Men of the Itzas," as the people of Chichen Itza are sometimes called in the early manuscripts, had taken any such a radical step is little short of inconceivable, so religious in character was the whole Maya civilization.

To the east of the Castillo lie a great group of courts, pyramids and colonnades. "The City of a Thousand Columns," already mentioned,

Here desolation is widespread. It seems as though an earthquake must have shaken the Itza capital at some time. Row after row of columns have been overturned and now lie prostrate within a foot of their original positions. Perhaps a capital or a drum here and there is broken, but for the most part the stones lie just where they fell. In its entirety this section of the city must have presented an imposing appearance, being literally a forest of columns surrounding and connecting the various courts. As to the use of these great colonnades, tradition and history are equally silent. Some think that they were the law courts of the ancient city, where justice was administered and punishment meted out. Others say that they were the market places, where the produce of the surrounding country was bought and sold. This latter explanation has one strong recommendation in its favor in that the descendants of the builders of the ancient city of Yucatan, the present Maya Indians, still hold their markets under the portals surrounding the plazas in the towns and villages throughout the country today.

South of the Cenote Grande there are a number of well-preserved structures, most of them presenting beautifully sculptured facades. To these fanciful names have been given, which probably have little or nothing to do with the original uses of the buildings. One large structure, for example, has been called "The Akabtzib." The name is Maya and means "The House of the Dark Writing." This building was so called, because of the fact that over one of its interior doorways there is a lintel inscribed with hieroglyphs. This lintel is so placed that the hieroglyphs can only be seen by artificial light, hence the name, "The House of the Dark Writing." Nearby is a round tower, with but one exception the only structure of its kind in the Maya area. This is called "The Caracol." Caracol is the Spanish word for snail, and since the interior circular corridor and spiral stairway of this structure bear some remote resemblance to the convolutions of a snail shell, the name was applied to the building. The Manjós (Spanish for monastery) is perhaps the most beautiful building at Chichen Itza. It is composite, showing three different periods of construction.

The above are only a few of the many structures at Chichen Itza. But in all directions for several miles the brush is strewn with ruins. Crumbling walls and jungle-ridden courts are to be encountered on every side; disintegration so far advanced that these once splendid palaces and temples are now but little more than shapeless mounds of fallen masonry. The total area covered by ruins which may be assigned to this center of primitive population has been estimated by some as high as ten square miles. That larger Maya cities yet remain to be discovered now seems highly improbable so thoroughly has the general exploration of the area been done. Consequently we may affirm with but little hesitation that "The Holy City of the Itzas" was the largest and most important of the Maya civilization and probably of aboriginal America as well.

THE SIGH FOR LEISURE.
Lives there the man who has not sighed for leisure? And lives there the man who in his more sober moments, has not been honestly glad that he must work? Human nature, which sweetens under toil, sours in leisure. And it is by no means sure that the fall from innocence which first brought work into the world "and all our woe" was not bringing salvation disguised as labor. Faithfulness will dignify and beautify even drudgery; no matter what the work is, provided it is honest, if it is done well it commands our instinctive respect. Besides, if we did not all have to work so hard to keep alive the jails would have standing room only.

Stevy, not when you are tired or depressed but when you are fit and strong, and pride and habit will make you live up to them."

His Trade-Mark.
"I wish you didn't have such a flat and plebeian nose, papa," said the aristocratic young daughter of the plain old merchant.
"That's the mark of the grindstone, my dear," replied the plodding old man.

WHO'S WHO AND WHY

TO RULE A YOUNG REPUBLIC



From a hungry newsboy on the streets of Washington to the presidency of the youngest republic in the world is the remarkable record of Dick Ferris of Los Angeles. Coincidentally with the revolution in Mexico headed by Madero there broke out a revolt against Mexican authority in Lower California and one of those who encouraged it and helped to finance it was Ferris. A filibustering expedition fitted out by Ferris left San Francisco for Lower California and without much of a struggle the weakened authority of Mexico was overthrown and the republic of Lower California created. Of this new republic Ferris has been elected president.

Ferris was a "newsy" on the streets of Washington twenty years ago and found the battle of life a hard one. One cold night after he had sold a paper or two on a street car he was injured while stepping off and one of his arms was broken. One of those who took an interest in the lad was the late Frank Hutton, a passenger on the car and then the publisher of a Washington paper. He had the boy removed to a hospital and later took such an interest in him that he provided means for his education. Ferris was a quick and ambitious youth and turned out a credit to his benefactor.

After leaving school he turned his attention to the stage. He formed a stock company in Minneapolis which proved the foundation of his fortune. Later he went to Los Angeles, where his theatrical ventures proved successful. He then turned his attention to other ventures, investing heavily in oil and fruit orchards, and rapidly accumulated wealth.

Last fall he entered the arena of politics and was a candidate for lieutenant governor on an independent ticket. Now he finds himself the president of a full-fledged republic, which may not prove ephemeral.

COOKE DECLARED NOT GUILTY

Edgar S. Cooke, who was found not guilty of embezzling \$24,000 from the Big Four railway, was formerly local treasurer of the road in Cincinnati and was well known in railroad circles. The belief is that the judge's charge helped to free Cooke, Judge Hunt declaring the testimony of Mrs. Ford and of Warriner only made them equally guilty if Cooke were guilty. Cooke was the last of those indicted in connection with the \$642,000 shortage of Charles L. Warriner, Cincinnati treasurer of the road, to be tried. First Warriner, indicted on numerous charges, pleaded guilty to one charging the embezzlement of \$5,000. He was sentenced to six years in prison.



Then Mrs. Jeannette Stewart-Ford, accused of blackmailing Warriner, was tried in February, 1910. The jury in her case disagreed. Finally, after many delays, Cooke succeeded in having his case brought into court and the most sensational trial of the series ensued. Cooke sat impassive as the formal verdict was read, but Mrs. Cooke, who had been at his side for days, buried her face in her hands and then approached the jurors and shook each one by the hand. Later Cooke's face brightened and, with tears of joy in his eyes, he clasped the hand of his attorney, Charles W. Baker, and approached the attaches of the court.

"I told you I would not be around here long after the jury went out," he said with a broad smile.

An indictment against Cooke for having received \$100 of stolen money still remains, but it is not probable that any action will be taken by the prosecutor.

According to one of the jurors a verdict could have been returned a considerable time before it was reported, but the jurymen were interested in reading the letters from Cooke to Mrs. Ford which were offered in evidence.

It is understood that the jury was unable to find any actual evidence of Cooke's having embezzled money and that the destruction of the cash books which he kept had great weight with the jurors.

GOULD OUT AS ROAD'S HEAD



The recent abdication of George Gould from the presidency of the Missouri Pacific the keynote of the family's great system of roads, was a confession that the fight of nineteen years with himself on one side and Harriman, the New York Central, Pennsylvania, Baltimore & Ohio and other big railroads on the other, had ended in defeat. In the language of Wall street, "they've got" George Gould.

The fight against George Gould was waged ever since his father died in December, 1892, with intermission. His first heavy battle was when he met Edward H. Harriman and Edwin Hawley in a fight for control of the Colorado Fuel and Iron company in 1902. Without much difficulty he won that fight, but that fight was to have great influence on his future career, for it was then that he began the feud with Harriman that with rare intervals of truce lasted until the latter's death and even afterward, through the survival of the Harriman tradition.

The next time Gould and Harriman joined battle was in 1903. Gould planned, as his father had planned, to be the owner of the first transcontinental system and in 1903 he made the boast that within 18 months he would have his system from ocean to ocean complete. But the interests opposed to him were too powerful and his moves were checkmated. The panic of 1907 sent four of his roads into the hands of receivers—the Western Maryland, the Wabash-Pittsburg Terminal, the Wheeling & Lake Erie and the International & Great Northern. Still he did not give up. But after this the fight on his side was a losing one and for more than a year it was the belief in Wall street that the end of his control of the Missouri Pacific was in sight.

PROMINENT WESTERN SENATOR

It is said that the Pacific Coast Democrats may offer Francis G. Newlands, United States from Nevada, as a candidate for the presidential nomination. Mr. Newlands, who is now serving his second term in the senate, is a Mississippian and was born in the old city of Natchez in the summer of 1848. He entered Yale college in 1867, during the civil war, and remained until the middle of his junior year in 1866; later he studied law at what is now the George Washington university, was admitted to the bar in Washington and went to San Francisco to practice. He removed his office to Reno, Nevada, in 1882, and since has been recognized as one of the ablest and most influential leaders in his state.



He served ten years in the house of representatives and was a member of the Democratic minority of the committees on irrigation, foreign affairs, banking and currency and ways and means, where he was able to participate actively in the most important legislation of the period and did his share in framing two tariff laws and a currency law, and was the author of the existing reclamation act, which he introduced in the house of representatives March 14, 1898, entitled, "A bill for the construction of reservoirs in the arid regions." Mr. Newlands is a protectionist Democrat and has been a long and persistent advocate of the free coinage of silver.

Uncle Hiram to His Nephew

He Gives the Youngster a Little Advice as to When to Make Decisions.

"Don't," said Uncle Hiram to his hopeful young nephew, "make any momentous decision when you're tired. When we're tired we want to get the question settled and we're ready to make concessions, to give way, and the other man is sure to get the better of us."

"We often hear it said that it's a good thing when in doubt about anything to sleep on it, and this is sound advice. The general theory of the benefits to be derived from sleeping on a question is that sleep clarifies the mind, but in coming to a settlement about a thing the most important advantage that we find in sleeping on it lies in the renewed strength that sleep gives us. It renews our cour-

age, makes us ready not to give way but to stand up and fight and fit and able to fight.

"Don't be in a terrible hurry to settle things, Stevey, anyway. There are times when you must settle when the iron is hot, but as a general proposition don't be impatient to get things settled; it's the man able to keep cool and wait and let the other fellow do the worrying that generally gets the biggest piece of the cake.

"We may meet occasionally a man of high and unbroken continuous

courage, but not often; the biggest of men have heart sag at times, though they may not show it; we are all human and much alike under the skin, if that's any comfort to you; we all have our moods; times when we are buoyant and happy and times when we are low in spirits and depressed.

"Don't, Stevey, settle things when you are feeling low and dispirited. You'll take a different view when you come back, as you inevitably will, to the summit.

"Let your decisions be made.

Stevy, not when you are tired or depressed but when you are fit and strong, and pride and habit will make you live up to them."

questions? I tell you I didn't do it." man's body. The supreme test was [Weekly.