

HE ruins of Copan are situated in the valley of the Copan river in the vestern part of the Republic of Honduras only a few miles from the boundary of Gustemala. Mountains, the foothills of the Cordillera, reaching an altitude of some 2,500 feet. surround it on every side, their lower slopes overgrown with a wellnigh impenetrable thicket of low trees and bushes, and their summits sparsely covered with pine. The valley at this point is about a mile

and a half wide, and it is upon this rich river plain that the ancient Maya metropolis was built. The river here flows east and west, now skirting the northern foothills, and again having crossed the plain, rushing along the base of the southern slopes, a modest stream, easily forded in the dry season, but a raging, swollen torrent frequently overflowing its banks after the mins have set in. This pleasant valley surrounded on all side by

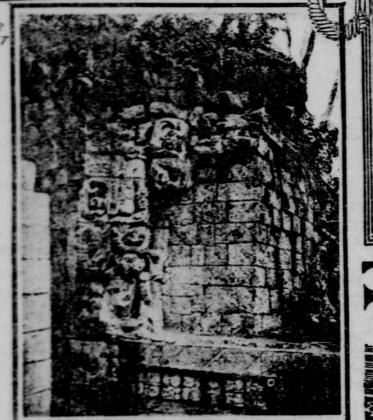


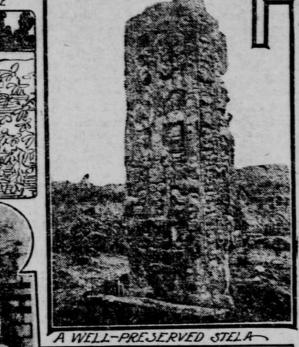




RESTORATION OF DOORWAY TO INNER CHAMBER OF CREAT TEMPLE

mountains of considerable height, supplied with an abundance of never failing streams. and renowned for its tertility, offers a striking contrast to the unrehed waterless plains of northern Yumatan, which form the ceneral environment of northern Mayn sites. With the former the water supply was never a question of mo-







STONE AND IDOL 23



## SEATED FIGLIRE (PARTIALLY RESTORED) IN CENTER OF STAIRWAY CO

The sides and backs of these monuments are usually covered with hieroglyphics, though this latter is not a constant feature. Near each one of them, usually just in front, there is a smaller block of stone, sometimes round and sometimes square. These, because of their close connection with the larger monuments, have been called altars, and it is not unlikely that they may have served some such a purpose. They are elaborately sculptured with grotesque figures and in some cases with hieroglyphics also. Leaving the Great Plaza and its interesting

monuments behind, and proceeding southward about 100 yards, we enter a narrow court 290 feet in length by 135 feet in width. This inclosure has been named "The Court of the Hieroglyphic Stairway," because of its most remarkable feature-an imposing flight of stairs ascending the pyramid at its southern end. This stairway, including the elaborately sculptured balustrades on each side, measures 33 feet in width. Its steps, which average a foot in height, have their vertical faces covered with hieroglyphics.

This monumental stairway, rising steeply for 90 feet, its steps and balustrades elaborately sculptured, and full-size human figures occupying its center at regular intervals clear to the summit, must have presented in former times a striking appearance and offered an effect but little short of stupendous.

Ascending the steep slope which forms the southeastern side of the court of the Hieroglyphic Stairway, we find ourselves on the sum mit of a broad terrace overlooking the Eastern Court. This inclosure, though somewhat small (about 125 feet square), originally must have been one of the most beautiful parts of the city, judging from the elaborate sculptures now strewing it in great profusion. On its south side rises the highest pyramid at Copan, the summit 112 feet above the level of the river. Across the greater part of the western side extends a broad. rather low stairway, flanked by two life-sized rampant jaguars sculptured in high relief. This flight of steps leads to a broad terrace overlooking another court. The remaining sides of the Eastern Court are occupied by high terraces, which support a number of ruined structures. One of these on the northern terrace was excavated by Mr. Maudslay, who found there a beautiful interior doorway nine feet wide, over which there is an elaborate frieze supported at its ends by crouching human figures of heroic size, the whole being carved in high relief almost amounting to sculpture in the round.

The structures on the eastern and remaining terrace have for the most part disappeared, their



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## ANOTHER SIMILAR CASE.

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Cornwallville, N. Y.—"I have been taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for some time for Change of Life, nervousness, and a fibroid growth.

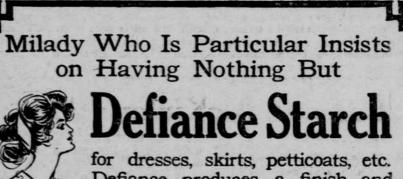
"Two doctors advised me to go to the hospital, but one day while I was away visiting, I met a woman who told me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I did so and I know it helped me wonderfully. I am very thankful that I was told to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."-Mrs. Wm. Boughton, Cornwallville, N. Y., Greene Co.

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ment, but with the lat ter his satisfactory solution in a few places only, absolutely de termined the distribution of the aboriginal population. And yet. unlike as these two regions are, the Maya civilization, which oversprend both of them. was of sufficient homogenelty, as we shall see, to follow in each one much the same lines of cultural devel-

of Copan we find ourselves confronted with a grave difficulty, namely, the entire absence of aboriginal tradition concerning the place, which consequently renders a reconstruction of the historical background impossible. In Yncatan we were able to piece together somewhat of the early history of the principal cities, such as Chichen Itza, and Uxmal, from the account of mative as well as Spanish writers, many of whom derived their information from those well acquainted with the former history of the country. And while this information is often quite fragmentary, nevertheless it sheds a very considerable light on the pre-Columbian history of these two northern sites, and in a mensure, at least, dispels that darkness and obscurity which so completely enshrouds almost all the other great centers of the Maya culture.

Concerning the former history of Copen, however, we know absolutely nothing, excepting the tradition of very doubtful value given below. In 1567, or thereabout, Diego Garcia de Palacia, an official of the Audencia of Guaternala, visited these ruins and later described them in a letter to Philip II., the then king of Spain. In this communication, after a description of the different buildings, he says he endeavored to ascertain who the former inhabitants of the city were:

"I endeavored with all possible care to ascertain from the indians, through the traditions derived from the ancients, what people lived here, or what they knew or had heard from their ancestors concerning them. But they had no books relating to their antiquities, mir do I believe that in all this district there is more than one, which I possess. They say that in ancient times there came from Yucatan a great lord, who built these edifices, but that at the end of some years he returned to his native country, leaving them entirely deserted."

Unfortunately, the reliability of this tradition is disproved by too many different lines of evidence to permit our accepting it. In the first place, the structures of Copan are far too numerous and massive to have been built within the span of a single life; and its elaborately sculptured monuments are far too intricate to have been carved in one generation with the tools available. Had that "Great lord from Yucatan" lived twice the allotted three score years and ten, his life, eyen then, could

WEST SIDE OF DOORWAY LEADING TO THE

opment. At the very beginning of our study not have embraced one-fourth of the period of building activity at Copan.

Again, as we shall see, the hieroglyphic inscriptions at Copan indicate that it was far older than any of the Yucatan sites, and that it probably had been abandoned many years before the rise of the great northern cities. Still another reason for doubting that Copan was colonized from Yucatan arise when we examine the historical data bearing on each. All the early writers, native as well as Spanish. with the exception of Palacio, above quoted, pass over the great southern metropolis in absolute silence; but when they come to describe Yucatan nearly all of them mention the two largest of the ancient cities there, Chichen ltza and Uxmal, and in some instances even give brief outlines of their history.

The striking absence of tradition relating to such an extensive site as Copan can only . indicate one thing-that its fall and subsequent desolation had outlived the memory of man even at the time of the Spanish Conquest in 1530; and a generation later, when Palacio visited the place, it had been forgotten so long that he was unable to find out anything about its former history except the very dubious tradition given above.

The ruins are more easily reached today from Gautemala than from Honduras, in which latter Republic they are located. One leaves the Guatemala Northern railroad at Zacapa, and either by horseback or cart, journeys eastward for two days, stopping overnight at Jaco-The actual distance traveled cannot be tan. more than 35 or 40 miles at the outside, but the road is so rough and winds through country so mountainous that it takes two days to reach the ruins after leaving the railroad. The modern village of Copan, where one can secure accommodations of a sort, is about three-quarters of a mile from the main group of ruins. It is built over a part of the site of the ancient city, and has two beautifully sculptured altars standing in the plaza under a large tree. Several other sculptural monuments are to be found in various pigsties and chicken yards throughout the village, and there is another group of two or three, a short distance to the northwest in the "campo sants" or burying groun

Taking the path leading to the east from the village, a fiftern minutes' walk brings one to the entrance on the west side of the Great Plaza, the largest and doubtless the most important court in the city. This imposing area,

some 300 feet long by 250 wide, is surrounded on three sides by a terrace 10 to 15 feet high. The interior sides of this are stepped so that standing in the center of the plaza the effect is that of a sunken court surrounded on all sides but one, with tiers of stone seats or benches. The southern or open side is occupied by a small pyramid about 20 feet high, which, standing midway between the ends of the terrace, appears to inclose the area. This pyramid, because of its central position with reference to the Great Plaza, must have been a much more important structure than its size would now seem to indicate. Standing on its summit and looking northward, a great openair auditorium lies at one's feet. Tier upon tier of stone benches rising around its sides. and five great monumental states, posted like gigantic sentinels guarding its sacred precints. This mound, so conspicuously located on the

open side of the Great Plaza, attracted the attention of the English traveler and archaelologist, Mr. A. P. Maudslay, who visited Copan in 1885, spending several months there in photograhping and making molds of the sculptures and in studying the ruins. He cleared its sides and excavated it. The summit, he says, is very small, and shows no signs of any building ever having stood there. Digging through the floor he sank a shaft into the interior of the pyramid and found at a depth of six feet from the top an earthen pot which contained several jade beads, a few pearls, a jade spindle whorl, perforated disk, and some roughly carved pieces of pearl shell. The bottom of the pot was covered with some finely ground cinnabar and several ounces of quick silver. Fragments of human bones were taken out during the course of these excavations and, finally, at a depth of nine feet below the level of the plain, a skeleton of a jaguar was uncovered.

The use of this pyramid without a building of any kind surmounting it must forever remain a mystery. Perhaps here in full view of the assembled inhabitants of the ancient city were practiced the bloody rites of human sacrifiec; or perhaps the decrees of rules or the omens from above were handed down. Who can say now? One thing alone seems reasonably certain; the close proximity and commanding relation of this pyramid to such a vast openair auditorium as the Great Plaza indicates that it formerly played some very important part in the life of Copan.

The most interesting feature of the Great Plaza, however, is not this pyramid, but the great sculptured monuments, which are scattered here and there around the inclosure. Of these, five are now standing and three lie prostrate. They average not far from 12 feet in height and are about 31/2 feet in breadth. The general treatment of them all is much the same. The side facing the plaza is uniformly sculptured with the likeness of a human being sometimes of one sex and sometimes of the other, carved in very high relief, which, in places, amounts to sculpture in the round. The clothing and headdresses of these figures are exceedingly ornate.

destruction having been due to a change in the course of the Copan river, which now washes the exterior base of this terrace. This cutting away of the great substructure of the main group of buildings by the river is one of the most interesting and at the same time deplorable features at Copan, since ultimately, if not checked, it can mean nothing more nor less than the total destruction of the city.

But this wholesale demolition is not being accomplished without its accompanying lesson in archaeology. This great vertical wall, cut by the river all along the eastern side of the main group, is the largest cross-section of an archaeological site in the world. Here, like an open book, one may read the successive periods of the city's growth. At different levels from the hollows upward throughout the rubble hearting of the substructure there are horizontal strata of cut paving stones. These are the pavements of different plazas dating from successive epochs of the city's history, and they clearly demonstrate that the growth of Copan has been gradual. As time passed and the population increased, newer and larger structures and plazas were built to meet the needs of the growing city. These constructions, as we see from the cross-section of the substructure, were built directly above the older ones. When it became necessary to build a new plaza its rubble foundations were laid on the paving of the old plaza which it was to replace, and thus the highest of the substructure slowly increased. A careful study of the floors of these successive plazas would doubtless teach much as to the different epochs of the city's occupancy, and might even reveal important facts relative to its history

Before closing this description, it may not be out of place to explain here our reasons for having called Copan "The Mother City of the Mayas." Briefly stated, it is hecause of the greater antiquity of its hieroglyphic inscriptions as compared with those of every other Maya city now known. This greater age of Copan is indicated, not only by the actual dates recorded in its earliest inscriptions, but also by a cruder technique in their execution. Later, in the best period of the southern Maya civilization, sculpture is found to be in very high relief or even in the round, and is characterized by a great profusion and elaboration of detail. Nothing of this, however, appears in the earliest monuments at Copan, where the relief is so low that it amounts to little more than incised lines, the sculptor apparently not feeling sure enough of his technique to attempt anything more ambitia

Aside from this question of technique, however, the dates themselves recorded on these more crudely sculptured monuments are much earlier than those on the more elaborate ones. The earliest historic date at Copan preceded the earliest historic dates of all the other great Maya cities by intervals ranging from 20 to 300 years, or, expressed in terms of Maya chronology, from one to fifteen katuns, the Maya "katun" being approximately equal to 20 of our own

For these two reasons, then, the more primitive character of its earliest monuments and the actual priority of its earliest dates, we have called Copan "The Mother City of the Mayas."

**Picked Berries** 

Fred Vosen, fishing in the Lee res- | head out of the water and grabbing ervoir, heard on shore a noise that he the berries. He watched the carp reat first supposed was made by a musk- peat the operation half a dozen times. rat, but on investigation it proved to He then tried his bait and succeeded. be a big carp.

utes, and says that along the shore weighed 32 pounds. strawberries hung over the water a tance of from four to ten inches

m the surface, and he was sur- Beyond these boundaries there is an and to see the big fish bobbing its identical something.

in hooking the fish, but had to shoot Its watched the fish for some min- it before he could land it. The carp tocay.

Death and birth are two boundaries

Hope. "When I come home tonight," said Tommy's father, after Tommy had, while in a temper, upset the milk on the clean tablecloth, "I shall punish

500. "Gee," said Tommy along about noon, "I hope they'll give dad a raise

"Why do you want him to get raise?" the boy's mother asked.

"He always seems to be so kind and cLeerful for about a week after he gets a raise."

Cats to Be Taxed in Munich

Though the taxation of cats has | of singing birds. Whatever the cause been discussed for some time in Ber- puss is to be the object of the tax lin, the drastic step has been averted.

collectors' energies and must hence Munich, however, has decided to put forth wear the badge of authority or the threat into operation and a charge fall into the ruthless hands of the cat of five marks per cat per annum is to catchers, a corps to be formed to en-

be made in the Bavarian capital. It is force the new decree at its inception. not, in the first place, as a source of revenue that the tax is to be imposed,

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