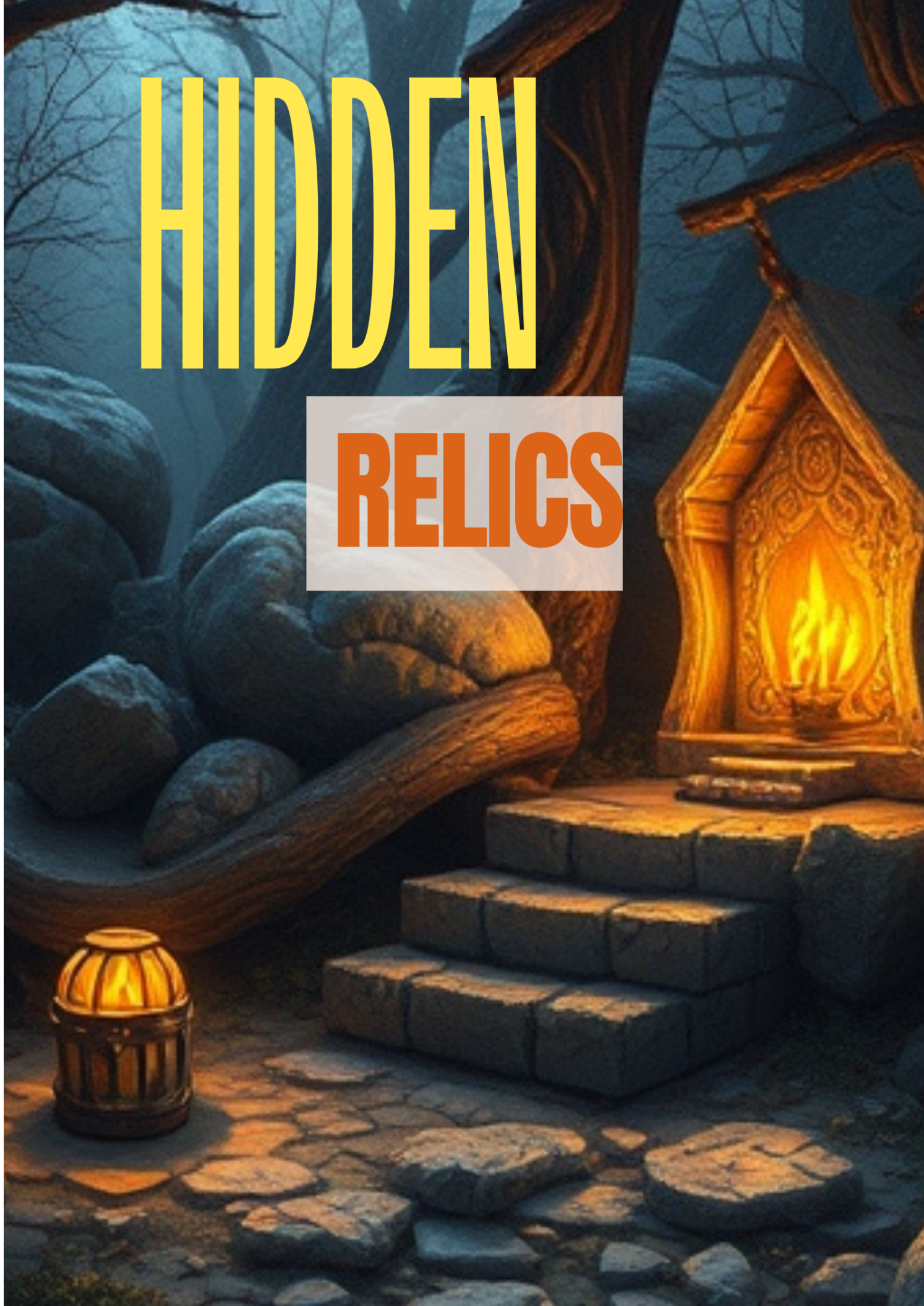


# HIDDEN

# RELICS



Sculptured monuments have been found buried in the soil of the second terrace. The opening of a small, low mound situated on it brought to view the double-headed figure shown in. shows part of the sculptured decoration over the centre doorway of Casa del Gobernador. Another important edifice at Uxmal has been named "Casa de las Monjas," House of the Nuns. It stands on a terraced foundation, and is arranged around a quadrangular court-yard one way and the other. The front structure is long, and has a gateway in the centre wide leading into the court, and four doors on each side of it. The outer face of the wall, above the cornice, is ornamented with sculptures. The terrace without and within the inclosure was found covered with a very dense growth of vegetation, which it was necessary to clear away before the walls could be carefully examined. All the doorways, save those in front, open on the court. found the four great façades fronting the court-yard "ornamented from one end to the other with the richest and most intricate carving known to the builders of Uxmal, presenting a scene of strange magnificence which surpasses any other now seen among its ruins." The long outer structure, on the side facing the entrance, had high turretlike elevations over each of its thirteen doorways, all covered with sculptured ornaments. This building appears to have inclosed another of older date. shows the ground plan of "Las Monjas." Plan of the Nunnery Group, Uxmal. Ground Plan of Las Monjas, Uxmal. Other less important edifices in the ruins of Uxmal have been described by explorers, some of which stand on high pyramidal mounds; and inscriptions are found here, but they are not so abundant as at Palenque and Copan. KABAHA. The ruins known as Kabah are on the site of what must have been one of the most imposing and important of the more ancient cities. Here the most conspicuous object is a stone-faced mound square at the base, with a range of ruined apartments at the bottom. Three or four hundred yards from this mound is a terraced foundation high and by its extent, on which stand the remains of a great edifice. At the right of the esplanade before it is a "high range of ruined structures overgrown with trees, with an immense back wall on the outer line of the esplanade perpendicular to the bottom of the terrace." On the left is another range of ruined buildings, and in the centre a stone inclosure square and high, with sculptures and inscriptions around the base. Some of the ornamentation of this building has been described in the strongest terms of admiration. said of it, "The cornice running over the doorways, tried by the severest rules of art recognized among us, would embellish the architecture of any known era." At Uxmal the walls were smooth below the cornice; here they are covered with decorations from top to bottom. This field of ruins is extensive, and only a portion of it has been examined. It is so overgrown that exploration is very difficult. The buildings and mounds are much decayed, and they seem to be very old. It is believed that ruined edifices of which nothing is known are hidden among the trees in places which no explorer has approached. gave the first account of Kabah, and described three other important edifices besides that already named. One of these he thought was, when entire, the most imposing structure at Kabah. It was long by, and had three distinct stories, each successive story being smaller than that below it. Another, standing on the upper terrace of an elevated foundation long by broad, was in length, and comparatively narrow. It is mentioned as a peculiarity of this edifice that it had pillars in its doorways, used as supports. The other, found standing on a terrace, is also long and narrow, and has a comparatively plain front. Remains of other buildings are visible, but in all cases they are so completely in ruins as to be little more than heaps of débris. Some of the ruins in the woods beyond that part of the field which is most accessible, are visible from the great mound described. A resolute attempt to penetrate the forest brought the explorers in view of great edifices standing on an elevated terrace estimated to be long by wide. The decorations seemed to have been abundant and very rich, but the structures were in a sad state of dilapidation. One remarkable monument found at Kabah resembles a triumphal arch. It stands by itself on a ruined mound apart from the other structures. It is described as a "lonely arch, having a span of," rising on the field of ruins "in solitary grandeur." gives a view of it. View of the Arch at Kabah. Ruined Arch at Kabah. Kabah was an ancient city. The ruins are old, and the city may have belonged to the first age of the Maya period. CHICHEN-ITZA. The ruins of Chichen-Itza are situated east of Mayapan, about half way between the eastern and western coasts of the peninsula of Yucatan.

A public road runs through the space of ground over which they are spread. The area covered by them is something less than a mile in diameter. The general character of the ruined structures found here is in every respect like that shown by ruins already described. One of the great buildings at this place has a rude, unornamental exterior, and does not stand on an artificial terrace, although the ground before it was excavated so as to give the appearance of an elevated foundation. It is one hundred and forty-nine feet long by forty-eight deep. Its special peculiarity consists of a stone lintel, in a very dark inner room, which has an inscription and a sculptured figure on the under side. The writing closely resembles that seen at Palenque and Copan. Was this sculptured stone made originally for the place it now occupies, or was it taken from the ruins of some older city which flourished and went to decay before Chichen-Itza was built? Another structure seen here closely resembles Las Monjas at Uxmal, and bears the same name, but it differs somewhat from the Uxmal Monjas in arrangement. In the descriptions, special mention is made of "the richness and beauty" of its ornaments. A noticeable edifice connected with the Monjas, called the "Church," is long, deep, high, and has three cornices, the spaces between them being covered with carved ornaments. There is but one room in it. One of the most picturesque ruins at Chichen-Itza is circular in form, and stands on the upper level of a double-terraced platform. It is in diameter, and has four doors, which face the cardinal points. Above the cornice it slopes gradually almost to a point, and the top is about above the ground. The grand staircase of steps, leading up to this building, is wide, and has a sort of balustrade formed of the entwined bodies of huge serpents. At some distance from this is the ruined structure known as the "Casa Colorada," or Red House. This is shown in. View of the Casa Colorada. Casa Colorada. It is long by deep, and stands on a platform long by wide. It was ornamented above the cornice, but the decorations are much defaced by decay. A stone tablet extending the whole length of the back wall, inside, is covered by an inscription. A remarkable structure is found at this place, which called the "Gymnasium, or Tennis Court." It consists of two immense parallel walls long, thick, and apart. On elevations facing the two ends of the open space between them, from the ends of the walls, stand two edifices much ruined, but showing, in their remains, that they were richly ornamented. Midway in the length of the walls, facing each other, and above the ground, are two massive stone rings or circles in diameter, each having in the centre a hole in diameter. On the borders around these holes two entwined serpents are sculptured, as seen in. There was a similar structure in the old city of Mexico, and remains of one like it are found at Mayapan. They were, probably, used for games of some kind. Among the other ruins at Chichen-Itza are the remains of a lofty edifice which has two high ranges or stories. On the outside the ornamentation is simple and tasteful, but the walls of its chambers are very elaborately decorated, mostly with sculptured designs, which seem to have been painted. In one of the upper rooms found a beam of sapote wood used as a lintel, which was covered with very elegantly carved decorations. The walls of this room were covered, from the bottom to the top of the arched ceiling, with painted designs similar to those seen in the Mexican "picture writing." Decay had mutilated these "pictures," but the colors were still bright. There are indications that painting was generally used by the aboriginal builders, even on their sculptures. The colors seen in this room were green, red, yellow, blue, and reddish-brown. Another edifice, standing on a high mound, is reached by means of the usual great stairway, which begins at the bottom, with a sort of balustrade on each side, the ends of which are stone figures of heads of immense serpents. Ball-court ring, Chichen Itza Great Stone Ring. Not far from this is a singular ruin, consisting of groups of small columns standing in rows five abreast, the tallest being not more than six feet high. Many of them have fallen. It is impossible to determine how they were used, or what they mean. OTHER RUINS IN YUCATAN. Izamal, Labna, Zayi, and some of the other ruins are sufficiently important for special notice; but they present every where the same characteristics, differing a little in the style or method of ornamentation. At Labna there is among the ruins an ancient gateway, beautiful in design and construction, a view of which is given in the Frontispiece. The best account of some of the other ruins on this peninsula can be found in the volumes of entitled "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan." At Zayi there is a singular building.

Which, as seen at a distance by, "had the appearance of a New England factory." But what seemed to be a "factory" is, in fact, nothing more than a massive wall with oblong openings, which runs along the middle of the roof, and rises thirty feet above it. The building was below this wall, but the front part of it had fallen. Among the remains at Xcoch is the great mound represented in. There is a remarkable ruin at Ake, at the south, which deserves mention. Here, on the summit of a great mound, very level, and feet by in extent, stand shafts or columns, in three parallel rows. The columns are about high and square. The ruins of Ake, which cover a great space, are ruder and more massive than most of the others. The island of Cozumel and the adjacent coast of Yucatan were populous when the Spaniards first went there, but the great towns then inhabited are now in ruins. View of unexcavated structure Great Mound at Xcoch. Water is scarce on this peninsula, and a sufficient supply is not obtained without considerable difficulty. The ancient inhabitants provided for this lack of water by constructing aguadas or artificial ponds. These, or many of them, doubtless, are as old as the oldest of the ruined cities. Intelligence, much skill in masonry, and much labor were required to construct them. They were paved with several courses of stone laid in cement, and in their bottoms wells or cavities were constructed. More than forty such wells were found in the bottom of one of these aguadas at Galal, which has been repaired and restored to use. A section of the bottom of this aguada is shown in. In some places long subterranean passages lead down to pools of water, which are used in the dry season. One of these subterranean reservoirs, and the cavernous passage leading to it, are shown in. The reservoir is below the surface of the ground, and the passage leading to it is about long. Branching passages, not shown, lead to two or three other basins of water. Section showing wells and chultuns below an aguada Bottom of an Aguada. Section of X'tacumbil Xunaam cave Subterranean Reservoir. The wooden lintels, which are common in Yucatan, do not appear in the other ruins, and there is a difference in the style of ornamentation between those at Palenque or Copan, for instance, and those at Uxmal, but every where the architecture is regulated by the same idea, the differences indicating nothing more than different periods and different phases of development in the history of the same people. Plan of Tulum, showing wall surrounding structures in the center of the site Plan of the Walls at Tuloom. Some of the great edifices in these old ruins, such as the "Palace" at Palenque, and the "Casa del Gobernador" at Uxmal, remind us of the "communal buildings" of the Pueblos, and yet there is a wide difference between them. They are not alike either in character or purpose, although such great buildings as the "Palace" may have been designed for the occupation of several families. There is no indication that "communal" residences were ever common in this part of the country. At the time of the Conquest the houses of the people were ordinary family dwellings, made of wood, and we may reasonably suppose this fashion of building was handed down from the earlier ages. Herrera, who supposed, mistakenly, that all the great stone edifices were temples, said, in his account of Yucatan, "There were so many and such stately stone buildings that it was amazing; and the greatest wonder was that, having no use of any metal, they were able to raise such structures, which seem to have been temples; for their houses were all of timber, and thatched." But they had the use of metals, and they had the art of making some of them admirable for use in cutting stone and carving wood. View of structure at Tulum Watch-tower at Tuloom. Among the buildings of later date are some of those on the western coast, which were still inhabited three hundred and fifty years ago. The city of Tuloom was inhabited then. shows a ground plan of the walls of this city, with the position of some of the ruined monuments. Within the walls are remains of finely constructed buildings on elevated foundations, none of them, however, very large. One of them had a wooden roof, and timber seems to have been considerably used here. The walls still standing were made of hewn stone. Remains of stone edifices exist all along this coast, but the whole region is now covered by a dense growth of trees and other vegetation. Tuloom was seen in by Grijalva, who sailed along the coast. At that time the island of Cozumel, where noteworthy ruins are found, was inhabited by many people. Figure 48 shows one of the watch-towers on the walls of Tuloom. ANTIQUITY OF THE RUINS. THE Mexican and Central American ruins make it certain that in ancient times an important civilization existed in that part of the continent.

Which must have begun at a remote period in the past. If they have any significance, this must be accepted as an ascertained fact. A large proportion of them had been forgotten in the forests, or become mythical and mysterious, long before the arrival of the Spaniards. In three hundred and fifty years ago, the forest which so largely covers Yucatan, Guatemala, and Chiapa was growing as it grows now; yes, four hundred and fifty years ago, for it was there a century previous to this date, when, the Maya kingdom being broken up, one of its princes fled into this forest with a portion of his people, the Itzas, and settled at Lake Peten. It was the same then as now. How many additional centuries it had existed no one can tell. If its age could be told, it would still be necessary to consider that the ruins hidden in it are much older than the forest, and that the period of civilization they represent closed long before it was established. In the ages previous to the beginning of this immense forest, the region it covers was the seat of a civilization which grew up to a high degree of development, flourished a long time, and finally declined, until its cities were deserted, and its cultivated fields left to the wild influences of nature. It may be safely assumed that both the forest-covered ruins and the forest itself are far older than the Aztec period; but who can tell how much older? Copan, first discovered and described three hundred years ago, was then as strange to the natives dwelling near it as the old Chaldean ruins are to the Arabs who wander over the wasted plains of Lower Mesopotamia. Native tradition had forgotten its history and become silent in regard to it. How long had ruined Copan been in this condition? No one can tell. Manifestly it was forgotten, left buried in the forest without recollection of its history, long before Montezuma's people, the Aztecs, rose to power; and it is easily understood that this old city had an important history previous to that unknown time in the past when war, revolution, or some other agency of destruction put an end to its career and left it to become what it is now. Moreover, these old ruins, in all cases, show us only the cities last occupied in the periods to which they belong. Doubtless others still older preceded them; and, besides, it can be seen that some of the ruined cities which can now be traced were several times renewed by reconstructions. We must consider, also, that building magnificent cities is not the first work of an original civilization. The development was necessarily gradual. Its first period was more or less rude. The art of building and ornamenting such edifices arose slowly. Many ages must have been required to develop such admirable skill in masonry and ornamentation. Therefore the period between the beginning of this mysterious development of civilized life and the first builders who used cut stone laid in mortar and cement, and covered their work with beautifully sculptured ornaments and inscriptions, must have been very long. We have no measure of the time, no clew to the old dates, nothing whatever, beyond such considerations as I have stated, to warrant even a vague hypothesis. It can be seen clearly that the beginning of this old civilization was much older than the earliest great cities, and, also, that these were much more ancient than the time when any of the later built or reconstructed cities whose relics still exist, were left to decay. If we suppose Palenque to have been deserted some six hundred years previous to the Spanish Conquest, this date will carry us back only to the last days of its history as an inhabited city. Beyond it, in the distant past, is a vast period, in which the civilization represented by Palenque was developed, made capable of building such cities, and then carried on through the many ages during which cities became numerous, flourished, grew old, and gave place to others, until the long history of Palenque itself began. Those who have sought to discredit what is told of the Aztec civilization and the empire of Montezuma have never failed to admit fully the significance of Copan, Palenque, and Mitla. One or two writers, pursuing the assumption that the barbarous tribes at the north and the old Mexicans were of the same race, and substantially the same people, have undertaken to give us the history of Montezuma's empire "entirely rewritten," and show that his people were "Mexican savages." In their hands Montezuma is transformed into a barbarous Indian chief, and the city of Mexico becomes a rude Indian village, situated among the islands and lagoons of an everglade which afforded unusual facilities "for fishing and snaring birds." One goes so far as to maintain this with considerable vehemence and amusing unconsciousness of absurdity. He is sure that Montezuma was nothing more than the principal chief of a parcel of wild Indian tribes, and that the Pueblos are wild Indians changed to their present condition by Spanish influence.

There is something in this akin to lunacy. But this topic will receive more attention in another place. I bring it to view here because those who maintain so strangely that the Aztecs were Indian savages, admit all that is claimed for the wonderful ruins at the south, and give them a very great antiquity. They maintain, however, that the civilization represented by these ruins was brought to this continent in remote pre-historic times by the people known as Phœnicians, and their method of finding the Phœnicians at Palenque, Copan, and every where else, is similar in character and value to that by which they transform the Aztec empire into a rude confederacy of wild Indians. DISTINCT ERAS TRACED. It is a point of no little interest that these old constructions belong to different periods in the past, and represent somewhat different phases of civilization. Uxmal, which is supposed to have been partly inhabited when the Spaniards arrived in the country, is plainly much more modern than Copan or Palenque. This is easily traced in the ruins. Its edifices were finished in a different style, and show fewer inscriptions. Round pillars, somewhat in the Doric style, are found at Uxmal, but none like the square, richly-carved pillars, bearing inscriptions, discovered in some of the other ruins. Copan and Palenque, and even Kabah, in Yucatan, may have been very old cities, if not already old ruins, when Uxmal was built. Accepting the reports of explorers as correct, there is evidence in the ruins that Quirigua is older than Copan, and that Copan is older than Palenque. The old monuments in Yucatan represent several distinct epochs in the ancient history of that peninsula. Some of them are kindred to those hidden in the great forest, and remind us more of Palenque than of Uxmal. Among those described, the most modern, or most of these, are in Yucatan; they belong to the time when the kingdom of the Mayas flourished. Many of the others belong to ages previous to the rise of this kingdom; and in ages still earlier, ages older than the great forest, there were other cities, doubtless, whose remains have perished utterly, or were long ago removed for use in the later constructions. The evidence of repeated reconstructions in some of the cities before they were deserted has been pointed out by explorers. I have quoted what Charnay says of it in his description of Mitla. At Palenque, as at Mitla, the oldest work is the most artistic and admirable. Over this feature of the monuments, and the manifest signs of their difference in age, the attention of investigators has lingered in speculation. They find in them a significance which is stated as follows by Brasseur de Bourbourg: "Among the edifices forgotten by time in the forests of Mexico and Central America, we find architectural characteristics so different from each other, that it is as impossible to attribute them all to the same people as to believe they were all built at the same epoch." In his view, "the substructions at Mayapan, some of those at Tulha, and a great part of those at Palenque," are among the older remains. These are not the oldest cities whose remains are still visible, but they may have been built, in part, upon the foundations of cities much more ancient. NOTHING PERISHABLE LEFT. No well considered theory of these ruins can avoid the conclusion that most of them are very ancient, and that, to find the origin of the civilization they represent, we must go far back into the "depths of antiquity." On all the fields of desolation where they exist, every thing perishable has disappeared. Wooden lintels are mentioned, but these can hardly be regarded as constituting an exception when the character of the wood, and the circumstances that contributed to their preservation, are considered. Moreover, wooden lintels seem to have been peculiar to Yucatan, where many of the great edifices were constructed in the later times, and some of them of perishable materials. Every where in the older ruins, nothing remains but the artificial mounds and foundations of earth, the stone, the cement, the stucco hard as marble, and other imperishable materials used by the builders. If the edifices had all been made of wood, there would now be nothing to show us that the older cities had ever existed. Every trace of them would have been obliterated long before our time, and most of them would have disappeared entirely long before the country was seen by the Spaniards. The places where they stood, with no relics save the mounds and pyramidal platforms, would resemble the works of our Mound-Builders, and not a few "sound historical critics" would consider it in the highest degree absurd to suggest that cities with such structures have ever existed there. Under the circumstances supposed, how wisely skepticism could talk against a suggestion of this kind at Copan, Mitla, or Palenque! and how difficult it would be to find a satisfactory answer to its reasonings! Nevertheless, those mysterious structures have not wholly disappeared, and we can easily understand that.



There was a time when large areas connected with them were covered with buildings of a less durable character. I have referred to a writer who maintains, with more vehemence than candor, that the Aztecs, and all the other people found in the country, were "savages" not greatly different from the wild Indians farther north, while he admits the significance and great antiquity of these ruins. His conception of their antiquity is somewhat extreme, for he says they must have existed "for thousands of years" when the Spaniards arrived. If he had maintained that civilized communities were there "thousands of years" previous to that time, developing the skill in architecture, decoration, and writing, to which the monuments bear witness, it might be possible to agree with him. Some of us, however, would probably stipulate that he should not count too many "thousands," nor claim a similar antiquity for the ruins now visible. It is not easy to suppose that any of these old monuments, with their well-preserved sculptures and inscriptions, represent the first period of the ancient history they suggest, nor that they have existed as ruins many "thousands of years," for the climate of Mexico and Central America does not preserve such remains like that of Egypt. Nevertheless, some of them must be very old. The forest established since the ruin began, the entire disappearance of every thing more perishable than stone, the utter oblivion which veiled their history in the time of Montezuma, and probably long previous to his time, all these facts bear witness to their great antiquity. In many of them, as at Quirigua and Kabah, the stone structures have become masses of débris; and even at Copan, Palenque, and Mitla, only a few of them are sufficiently well preserved to show us what they were in the great days of their history. Meanwhile, keep in mind that the ruined cities did not begin their present condition until the civilization that created them had declined; and, also, that if we could determine exactly the date when they were deserted and left to decay, we should only reach that point in the past where their history as inhabited cities was brought to a close. Take Copan, for instance. This city may have become a ruin during the time of the Toltecs, which began long before the Christian era, and ended some five or six centuries probably before the country was invaded by Cortez. It was built before their time, for the style of writing, and many features of the architecture and ornamentation, show the workmanship of their predecessors, judging by the historical intimations found in the old books and traditions. We may suppose it to have been an old city at the time of the Toltec invasion, although not one of the first cities built by that more ancient and more cultivated people by whom this old American civilization was originated. The present condition of the monuments at Quirigua is still more suggestive of great age. "THE OLDEST OF CIVILIZATIONS." Some investigators, who have given much study to the antiquities, traditions, old books, and probable geological history of Mexico and Central America, believe that the first civilization the world ever saw appeared in this part of Ancient America, or was immediately connected with it. They hold that the human race first rose to civilized life in America, which is, geologically, the oldest of the continents; and that, ages ago, the portion of this continent on which the first civilizers appeared was sunk beneath the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Usually the engulfing of this portion of the land is supposed to have been effected by some tremendous convulsion of nature; and there is appeal to recollections of such a catastrophe, said to have been preserved in the old books of Central America, and also in those of Egypt, from which Solon received an account of the lost Atlantis. According to this hypothesis, the American continent formerly extended from Mexico, Central America, and New Granada far into the Atlantic Ocean toward Europe and Africa, covering all the space now occupied by the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the West India islands, and going far beyond them toward the east and northeast. This lost portion of the continent was the Atlantis of which the old annals of Egypt told so much in the time of Solon, as we learn from Plato; and it was the original seat of the first human civilization, which, after the great cataclysm, was renewed and perpetuated in the region where we now trace the mysterious remains of ancient cities. Those desiring to know what can be said in support of this view of Ancient America must read the later volumes of Brasseur de Bourbourg, especially his "Quatre Lettres sur le Mexique," and his "Sources de l'Histoire Primitive du Mexique," etc. He is not a perspicuous writer; he uses but little system in treating the subject, and he introduces many fanciful speculations which do more to embarrass than to help the discussion; but those who read the books patiently can find and bring together all that relates to the point in question, and consider it in their own way.

They can also find it set forth and defended in a small volume by George Catlin, entitled "The Lifted and Subsided Rocks of America," published in London, not long since, by Trübner and Company. I shall give more attention to this theory in the next chapter. I refer to it here on account of the very great antiquity it claims for the ancient American civilization. It represents that the advanced human development whose crumbling monuments are studied at Copan, Mitla, and Palenque antedates every thing else in the human period of our globe, excepting, perhaps, an earlier time of barbarism and pastoral simplicity; that its history goes back through all the misty ages of pre-historic time to an unknown date previous to the beginning of such civilization in any part of the Old World. It is hardly possible to make it more ancient. AMERICAN CITIES SEEN BY TYRIANS. The view just stated touches the imagination and stirs the feelings like a genuine "wonder story;" but this should not be allowed to deny it a fair hearing. Those who reject it should disprove it before they hasten to pronounce it "absurd" and "impossible," else it may be suspected that their accustomed views of antiquity are due more to education, and to the habit of following a given fashion of thinking, than to actual reflection. It needs demonstration; and we may reasonably suggest that, in the present state of our knowledge of the past, demonstration is impossible. Meanwhile, a clear historical record appears to make it certain that flourishing towns and cities were seen and visited in America three thousand years ago, by persons who went to them across the Atlantic. It is said, more or less clearly, by more than one Greek writer, that the Phœnicians and Carthaginians knew the way to a continent beyond the Atlantic. One fact preserved in the annals of Tyrian commerce, and mentioned by several ancient writers, is related by Diodorus Siculus very particularly as a matter of authentic history. His narration begins with the following statement: "Over against Africa lies a very great island, in the vast ocean, many days' sail from Libya westward. The soil there is very fruitful, a great part whereof is mountainous, but much likewise champaign, which is the most sweet and pleasant part, for it is watered by several navigable streams, and beautified with many gardens of pleasure planted with divers sorts of trees and an abundance of orchards. The towns are adorned with stately buildings and banqueting houses pleasantly situated in their gardens and orchards." The great ruins in Yucatan, and elsewhere in Mexico and Central America, bear witness that there was, anciently, such a country as this, across the ocean, "many days' sail from Libya westward;" but Diodorus Siculus lived before the Christian era, and how was this known to him and others more than fifteen hundred years before America was discovered by Columbus? He tells us as follows: "The Phœnicians (Tyrians) having found out the coasts beyond the Pillars of Hercules, sailed along by the coast of Africa. One of their ships, on a sudden, was driven by a furious storm far off into the main ocean. After they had lain under this violent tempest many days, they at length arrived at this island." This reminds us of the constrained voyage of Biarni, the Northman, from Iceland to the coast of Massachusetts, in the year 985 A.D.<sup>163</sup>\* He, too, was storm-driven "many days," and in this way forced to the discovery of New England. He started for Greenland, and finally reached it by way of Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod. The tempest-driven ship of the Tyrians must have been carried to the West Indies, and to the coast of Honduras or Yucatan, where the Tyrians saw the gardens, cities, and stately edifices. The description of what they saw brings to mind similar accounts of what was seen in Yucatan by the Spaniards, when they began to sail along the coast of that peninsula in the beginning of the sixteenth century; Juan Diaz de Solis and Vincente Yañez Pinçon in 1506, and Hernandez de Cordova in. They, too, saw handsome towns and stately buildings. This undesigned voyage of the Tyrian ship seems to have been made previous to the building of Gadir, or Gades. Perhaps they made other voyages to that region, but it was a custom of the Phœnicians to be very secret in regard to the methods and paths of their commerce. A complete history of their commerce and navigation from the earliest times would unquestionably give us views of the past quite as startling to the prevalent assuming, unreasoning habits of belief, or rather disbelief, concerning antiquity, as that hypothesis of Atlantis and the earliest civilization. What is told by Diodorus authorizes us to suppose that the Tyrians who went across the Atlantic as described beheld some of the ancient American cities which are now found in ruins, for it is certain that nothing of the kind existed any where else "many days' sail from Libya [Northern Africa] westward." Their voyage was made more than eleven hundred years previous to the Christian era.



If the old Central American books may be trusted, this was not very long previous to the beginning of the Toltec domination. Beyond this date, the history of the "Colhuas," who are described as the original civilizers, must have covered a very long period; how long we may imagine, but can not know. Gadir, now Cadiz, founded eleven hundred years previous to the Christian era, is still an inhabited city; it has been several times reconstructed, but never deserted. When it was built, Tartessus, then a very old city, still existed, although it was in ruins long before Christ appeared. How long had Palenque been in existence when that Tyrian ship was driven across the Atlantic? And how long had that region been a region of cities and civilization? There is no history which can answer these questions. WHENCE CAME THAT OLD CIVILIZATION? VARIOUS theories, some of them very wild and irrational, have been advanced to explain the origin of what is seen in these relics of Ancient America. If it had been the fashion to explore and study them as their importance deserves, as Egypt and Nineveh have been explored and studied, our knowledge of them would now be much more extensive and valuable, and it might be possible to go farther toward a solution of the problem they present. But not many persons have sought to explore and understand these remains, and not more than two or three have really sought in earnest to examine the old traditions and books of the country. The abundant inscriptions at Palenque fade in their forest solitude while waiting for the Champollion who shall interpret their mysteries. Something is known, but we have no history of these old cities, no authentic historical record of the people who built them. Therefore theorizing has very naturally been stimulated to great activity, and most of this theorizing has been regulated by the old, unreasoning assumption that civilization found in any place, especially in the olden times, must have been brought and established there as a foreign production. Generally the hypotheses used in this case have presumed as a matter of course that the original civilizers came to this continent from Europe or Asia. THE "LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL." One of these theories is (or was), that the original civilizers of Mexico and Central America were the "lost ten tribes of Israel." This extremely remarkable explanation of the mystery was devised very early, and it has been persistently defended by some persons, although nothing can be more unwarranted or more absurd. It was put forward by the Spanish monks who first established missions in the country, a class of men to whom the world is indebted for a great variety of amazing contributions to the literature of hagiology; and the same men, in a way equally conclusive, explained the sculptured crosses found in the old ruins by assuming that the Gospel was preached in America by. Lord Kingsborough adopted their views, and gave up nearly the whole of one of his immense volumes on Mexican Antiquities to an elaborate digest of all that had been written to explain and support these absurdities. Others have maintained this Israelitish hypothesis without deeming it necessary to estimate in a reasonable way what was possible to those Israelites. According to this truly monkish theory, the "lost ten tribes of Israel" left Palestine, Syria, Assyria, or whatever country they dwelt in at the time, traversed the whole extent of Asia, crossed over into America at Behring's Strait, went down the Pacific coast, and established a wonderful civilization in that part of the continent where the great ruins are found. The kingdom of the ten tribes was destroyed not long previous to the year. How many years are allowed, after their escape from captivity, for this unparalleled journey, has not yet been ascertained. But, if such a journey had been possible, it would have resulted in utter barbarism rather than any notable phase of civilized life. Even the Jews who remained faithful to Moses, although important on account of their scriptures and their religion, were not remarkable for civilization. They were incapable of building their own Temple without aid from the Tyrians. Moreover, there is not any where either a fact, a suggestion, or a circumstance of any kind to show that the "lost ten tribes" ever left the countries of Southwestern Asia, where they dwelt after the destruction of their kingdom. They were "lost" to the Jewish nation because they rebelled, apostatized, and, after their subjugation by the Assyrians in, were to a great extent absorbed by other peoples in that part of Asia. Some of them probably were still in Palestine when Christ appeared. This wild notion, called a theory, scarcely deserves so much attention. It is a lunatic fancy, possible only to men of a certain class, which in our time does not multiply. THE "MALAY" THEORY. Another hypothesis, much less improbable, though not satisfactory, is that civilization was brought to America in ancient times by the Malays. There was a great island empire of the Malays, whose history extended far back into prehistoric times.

How far back can not now be known. It was still in existence when the Portuguese first went to India around the Cape of Good Hope; and we have several accounts of this empire written by travelers who saw and described it six hundred years before this first Indian voyage of the Portuguese was undertaken. El Mas'údí, who was one of these travelers, used very strong terms to describe its extent, intelligence, and power. Speaking of its sovereign, he said, "The islands under his sceptre are so numerous that the fastest sailing vessel is not able to go round them in two years," implying that his sway was acknowledged by the island world over a large portion of the Pacific. This Malayan empire was maritime and commercial; it had fleets of great ships; and there is evidence that its influence reached most of the Pacific islands. This is shown by the fact that dialects of the Malay language have been found in most of these islands as far in this direction as Easter Island. The language of the Sandwich Islanders, for instance, is Malayan, and has a close relationship to that now spoken in the Malay islands. The metropolis of this great empire was in the island of Java, where old ruins still bear witness to the former "civilization, wealth, and splendor" celebrated by El Mas'údí. In his work on the Malay Archipelago, says, "Few Englishmen are aware of the number and beauty of the architectural remains in Java. They have never been popularly illustrated or described, and it will therefore take most persons by surprise to learn that they far surpass those of Central America, perhaps even those of India." The purpose of his visit to the island did not allow him to explore ruins, but he describes some of them. He saw what still remains of an ancient city called "Modjo-pahit," and says, "There were two lofty brick masses, apparently the sides of a gateway. The extreme perfection and beauty of the brick-work astonished me. The bricks are exceedingly fine and hard, with sharp angles and true surfaces. They were laid with great exactness, without visible mortar or cement, yet somehow fastened together so that the joints are hardly perceptible, and sometimes the two surfaces coalesce in a most incomprehensible manner. Such admirable brick-work I have never seen before or since. There was no sculpture here, but abundance of bold projections and finely-worked mouldings. Traces of buildings exist for many miles in every direction, and almost every road and pathway shows a foundation of brick-work beneath it, the paved roads of the old city." In other places he saw sculptures and beautifully carved figures in high relief. The Malays still read and write, have some literature, and retain many of the arts and usages of civilization, but they are now very far below the condition indicated by these ruins, and described by El Mas'údí, who traveled among them a thousand years ago. It is by no means improbable that their ships visited the western coast of America, and traded with the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians in the days of their greatest power and activity. It is not easy to believe they could fail to do so after taking such control of Easter Island as to leave their language there; and, according to the old traditions of both Mexico and Peru, the Pacific coast in both countries was anciently visited by a foreign people who came in ships. But they did not come to America as civilizers; there is nothing Malayan in either the antiquities or the ancient speech of these countries. What is known of the former great condition and power of the Malays furnishes important suggestions relative to the ancient history of the islands of Eastern Asia and the Pacific Ocean, as well as those of the Indian Ocean. The people who inhabit the eastern side of Formosa, it is said, use a Malay dialect, and have no resemblance whatever to the Mongols. Who can fully explain the little known Ainos, who formerly occupied the whole, or nearly the whole of Japan? The unmistakable traces of Malay influence every where in the islands of the Pacific can have but one meaning. The Malays formerly sailed on that ocean, occupied its islands, and doubtless visited America. That there was communication between Eastern Asia and America in very ancient times, through the Malays or otherwise, is in a high degree probable. This continent was known to the Japanese and Chinese long before the time of Columbus. Accounts of it were recorded in their books previous to his time. They called it "Fusang," and evidently, at some period, had been accustomed to make voyages to some part of the American coast. But neither the Malays, the Chinese, nor the Japanese came here as civilizers, for there is no trace of either of these peoples in the old ruins, in the ancient language of the country, or in any thing we know of the people whom these American ruins represent. THE PHœNICIAN THEORY. Some of the more intelligent investigators have maintained, with no little confidence.

That this ancient American civilization came originally from the Phœnicians. Among those who use reason in their inquiries sufficiently to be incapable of accepting the absurdities of monkish fancy, this hypothesis has found more favor than any other. Wherever inquiry begins by assuming that the original civilizers came from some other part of the world, it seems more reasonable than any other, for more can be said to give it the appearance of probability. The people known to us as Phœnicians were pre-eminent as the colonizing navigators of antiquity. They were an enlightened and enterprising maritime people, whose commerce traversed every known sea, and extended its operations beyond the "Pillars of Hercules" into the "great exterior ocean." The early Greeks called them Ethiopians (not meaning either black men or Africans), and said they went every where, establishing their colonies and their commerce in all the coast regions, "from the extreme east to the extreme west." But the great ages of this people are in the distant past, far beyond the beginning of what we call history. History has knowledge only of a few of their later communities, the Sabeans of Southern Arabia, the Phœnicians (meaning chiefly the Tyrians), and the Carthaginians. What a change there would be in the prevalent conceptions of the past if we could have a complete record of this race from the beginning of its development! It is not difficult to believe that communities of the Phœnician or Ethiopian race were established all around the Mediterranean, and even beyond the Strait of Gibraltar, in ages quite as old as Egypt or Chaldea, and that they had communication with America before Tyre or Sidon was built. Why did the ancients say so much of a "great Saturnian continent" beyond the Atlantic if nobody in the pre-historic ages had ever seen that continent? It was there, as they said and as we know; but whence came their knowledge of it, and such knowledge as led them to describe it as "larger than Asia (meaning Asia Minor), Europe, and Libya together?" This ancient belief must have been due to Phœnician or Ethiopian communication with America in earlier times, which was imperfectly recollected, or perhaps never completely revealed to other nations; and this must have taken place at a very remote period, for imperfect recollection of the great continent across the Atlantic, including what Solon heard in Egypt of Atlantis, was more ancient than the constrained voyage of that Tyrian ship of which Diodorus Siculus gives an account; and it can be seen that the early Greeks had a better knowledge even of Western Europe than those of later times. A dark age, so far as relates to geographical knowledge, set in upon the countries around the Ægean Sea and on the coast of Asia Minor after the independence and enterprise of Tyre and the other Phœnician cities were destroyed by the Assyrians, toward the close of the ninth century before Christ, which was disturbed some four hundred and fifty or five hundred years later by the conquests of Alexander the Great. The known enterprise of the Phœnician race, and this ancient knowledge of America, so variously expressed, strongly encourage the hypothesis that the people called Phœnicians came to this continent, established colonies in the region where ruined cities are found, and filled it with civilized life. It is argued that they made voyages on the "great exterior ocean," and that such navigators must have crossed the Atlantic; and it is added that symbolic devices similar to those of the Phœnicians are found in the American ruins, and that an old tradition of the native Mexicans and Central Americans described the first civilizers as "bearded white men," who "came from the East in ships." Therefore, it is urged, the people described in the native books and traditions as "Colhuas" must have been Phœnicians. But if it were true that the civilization found in Mexico and Central America came from people of the Phœnician race, it would be true also that they built in America as they never built any where else, that they established a language here radically unlike their own, and that they used a style of writing totally different from that which they carried into every other region occupied by their colonies. All the forms of alphabetical writing used at present in Europe and Southwestern Asia came directly or indirectly from that anciently invented by the race to which the Phœnicians belonged, and they have traces of a common relationship which can easily be detected. Now the writing of the inscriptions at Palenque, Copan, and elsewhere in the ruins has no more relatedness to the Phœnician than to the Chinese writing. It has not a single characteristic that can be called Phœnician any more than the language of the inscriptions or the style of architecture with which it is associated; therefore we can not reasonably suppose this American civilization was originated by people of the Phœnician race, whatever may be thought relative to the supposed ancient communication between the two continents and its probable influence on civilized communities already existing here. THE "ATLANTIC" THEORY.

I have already stated in general terms the hypothesis advanced by Brasseur de Bourbourg and some other writers. This may be called the "Atlantic" theory, for it attributes the civilization of Ancient America to the Atlantides or Atlantic race, who occupied the lost "island of Atlantis." Brasseur de Bourbourg has studied the monuments, writings, and traditions left by this civilization more carefully and thoroughly than any other man living. He has fancies which may be safely rejected, and he has theories which, doubtless, will always lack confirmation; but he has much, also, which demands respectful consideration. There is a great deal in his books to provoke criticism; those well acquainted with the antiquities and ancient speech of Egypt may reasonably give way to a smile of incredulity while reading what he says in support of the notion that the great civilization of Egypt also came originally from this Atlantic race. Nevertheless, his volumes are important, because they furnish materials which others can use more carefully, and because he has learned to decipher some of the Central American writings and brought to view certain paths of inquiry which others may pursue with a more rigid method. As already stated, his Atlantic theory of the old American civilization is, that it was originated on this continent, but on a portion of the continent which is now below the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. It supposes the continent extended, anciently, from New Granada, Central America, and Mexico in a long, irregular peninsula, so far across the Atlantic that the Canary, Madeira, and Azores or Western Islands may be remains of this portion of it. High mountains stood where we now find the West India islands. Beyond these, toward Africa and Europe, was a great extent of fertile and beautiful land, and here arose the first civilization of mankind, which flourished many ages, until at length this extended portion of the continent was engulfed by a tremendous convulsion of nature, or by a succession of such convulsions which made the ruin complete. After the cataclysm, a part of the Atlantic people who escaped destruction settled in Central America, where perhaps their civilization had been previously introduced. The reasons urged in support of this hypothesis make it seem plausible, if not probable, to imaginative minds. In the first place, Brasseur de Bourbourg claims that there is in the old Central American books a constant tradition of an immense catastrophe of the character supposed; that this tradition existed every where among the people when they first became known to Europeans; and that recollections of the catastrophe were preserved in some of their festivals, especially in one celebrated in the month of Izcalli, which was instituted to commemorate this frightful destruction of land and people, and in which "princes and people humbled themselves before the divinity, and besought Him to withhold a return of such terrible calamities." This tradition affirms that a part of the continent extending into the Atlantic was destroyed in the manner supposed, and appears to indicate that the destruction was accomplished by a succession of frightful convulsions. Three are constantly mentioned, and sometimes there is mention of one or two others. "The land was shaken by frightful earthquakes, and the waves of the sea combined with volcanic fires to overwhelm and engulf it." Each convulsion swept away portions of the land, until the whole disappeared, leaving the line of the coast as it is now. Most of the inhabitants, overtaken amid their regular employments, were destroyed; but some escaped in ships, and some fled for safety to the summits of high mountains, or to portions of the land which, for the time, escaped immediate destruction. Quotations are made from the old books in which this tradition is recorded which appear to verify his report of what is found in them. To criticise intelligently his interpretation of their significance, one needs to have a knowledge of those books and traditions equal at least to his own. In the second place, he appeals to the story of Atlantis, preserved in the annals of Egypt, and related to Solon by the priests of Sais. It is stated in Plutarch's life of Solon that while in Egypt "he conferred with the priests of Psenophis, Sonchis, Heliopolis, and Sais, and learned from them the story of Atlantis." Brasseur de Bourbourg cites Cousin's translation of Plato's record of this story as follows: "Among the great deeds of Athens, of which recollection is preserved in our books, there is one which should be placed above all others. Our books tell that the Athenians destroyed an army which came across the Atlantic Sea, and insolently invaded Europe and Asia; for this sea was then navigable, and beyond the strait where you place the Pillars of Hercules there was an island larger than Asia [Minor] and Libya combined. From this island one could pass easily to the other islands, and from these to the continent which lies around the interior sea. The sea on this side of the strait (the Mediterranean) of which we speak resembles a harbor with a narrow entrance; but there is a genuine sea, and the land which surrounds it is a veritable continent.

In the island of Atlantis reigned three kings with great and marvelous power. They had under their dominion the whole of Atlantis, several other islands, and some parts of the continent. At one time their power extended into Libya, and into Europe as far as Tyrrhenia; and, uniting their whole force, they sought to destroy our countries at a blow, but their defeat stopped the invasion and gave entire independence to all the countries on this side of the Pillars of Hercules. Afterward, in one day and one fatal night, there came mighty earthquakes and inundations, which engulfed that warlike people; Atlantis disappeared beneath the sea, and then that sea became inaccessible, so that navigation on it ceased on account of the quantity of mud which the engulfed island left in its place." This invasion took place many ages before Athens was known as a Greek city. It is referred to an extremely remote antiquity. The festival known as the "Lesser Panathenæa," which, as symbolic devices used in it show, commemorated this triumph over the Atlantes, is said to have been instituted by the mythical Erichthonius in the earliest times remembered by Athenian tradition. Solon had knowledge of the Atlantes before he went to Egypt, but he heard there, for the first time, this account of their "island" and of its disappearance in a frightful cataclysm. But Atlantis is mentioned by other ancient writers. An extract preserved in Proclus, taken from a work now lost, which is quoted by Boeckh in his commentary on Plato, mentions islands in the exterior sea beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and says it was known that in one of these islands "the inhabitants preserved from their ancestors a remembrance of Atlantis, an extremely large island, which for a long time held dominion over all the islands of the Atlantic Ocean." Brasseur de Bourbourg claims that these traditions, on both sides of the Atlantic, mean the same thing. The "island of Atlantis," larger than Libya and Asia Minor together, was the extended portion of the American continent. These concurring traditions can not be devoid of historical significance. The constant references by ancient Greek writers to the Atlantes, who are always placed at the extremity of Europe and Africa, on the ocean which bears their name, may reasonably be regarded as vague and faded recollections of such a history connected with that ocean as that implied by what was said of their island in the annals of Egypt. In support of his view of what is meant by the traditions, he adds this philological argument: "The words Atlas and Atlantic have no satisfactory etymology in any language known to Europe. They are not Greek, and can not be referred to any known language of the Old World. But in the Nahuatl language we find immediately the radical a, atl, which signifies water, war, and the top of the head. (Molina, Vocab. en lengua mexicana y castellana, etc.) From this comes a series of words, such as atlan, on the border of or amid the water, from which we have the adjective Atlantic. We have also atlaça, to combat or be in agony; it means likewise to hurl or dart from the water, and in the preterit makes atlaz. A city named Atlan existed when the continent was discovered by Columbus, at the entrance of the Gulf of Uraba, in Darien, with a good harbor; it is now reduced to an unimportant pueblo named Acla." In the third place, he quotes opinions expressed without any regard whatever to his theory to show that scientific men who have considered the question believe that there was formerly a great extension of the land into the Atlantic in the manner supposed. The first quotation is from Moreau de Saint-Mery's "Description topographique et politique de la Partie Espagnole a l'Isle de Saint- Domingue," published in, as follows: "There are those who, in examining the map of America, do not confine themselves to thinking with the French Pliny that the innumerable islands situated from the mouth of the Orinoco to the Bahama Channel (islands which include several Grenadins not always visible in very high tides or great agitations of the sea) should be considered as summits of vast mountains whose bases and sides are covered with water, but who go farther, and suppose these islands to be the tops of the most elevated of a chain of mountains which crowned a portion of the continent whose submersion has produced the Gulf of Mexico. But to sustain this opinion it must be added that another vast surface of land which united the islands of this archipelago to the continent, from Yucatan to the mouth of the Orinoco, was submerged in the same way, and also a third surface which connected them with the peninsula of Florida and with whatever land may have constituted the northern termination; for we can not imagine that these mountains whose summits appear above water stood on the terminating line of the continent." He quotes, also, another authority which "can not be suspected," namely, who said, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for March "Now, hydrography, geology, and botany agree in teaching us that the Azores, the Canaries, and Madeira are the remains of a great continent which formerly united Europe to North America."

He could have added other quotations in the same strain. Those geologists who believe that "our continents have long remained in nearly the same relative position" would probably give the supposed change a much greater antiquity than Brasseur de Bourbourg would be likely to accept; and the geological "Uniformitarians" would deny with emphasis that so great a change in the shape of a continent was ever effected by such means, or with such rapidity as he supposes. But the latest and most advanced school of geological speculation does not exclude "Catastrophism," and, therefore, will not deny the possibility of sudden and great changes by this method. Doubtless the antiquity of the human race is much greater than is usually assumed by those whose views of the past are still regulated by mediæval systems of chronology. Archæology and linguistic science, not to speak here of geology, make it certain that the period between the beginning of the human race and the birth of Christ would be more accurately stated if the centuries counted in the longest estimate of the rabbinical chronologies should be changed to millenniums. And they present also another fact, namely, that the antiquity of civilization is very great, and suggest that in remote ages it may have existed, with important developments, in regions of the earth now described as barbarous, and even, as Brasseur de Bourbourg supposes, on ancient continents or portions of continents now out of sight below the surface of the oceans. The representation of some speculators that the condition of the human race since its first appearance on earth has been a condition of universal and hopeless savagery down to a comparatively modern date, is an assumption merely, an unwarranted assumption used in support of an unproved and unprovable theory of man's origin. Its use in the name of science by advocates of this theory, like the theory itself, shows that the constructive power of fancy and imagination will sometimes supersede every thing else, and substitute its ingenious constructions for legitimate conclusions, even in scientific speculation. We may claim reasonably that Brasseur de Bourbourg's Atlantic theory is not proved, and on this ground refuse to accept it. So far as appears, it is a fanciful theory which can not be proved. No one is under obligation to attempt disproving it. It may, in some cases, win supporters by enlisting in its favor all the forces of imagination, to which it appeals with seductive plausibility. On the other hand, it will be rejected without much regard to what can be said in its favor, for it interferes with current unreasoning beliefs concerning antiquity and ancient history, and must encounter vehement contradiction from habits of thought fixed by these beliefs. True, some of the stock views of antiquity, by which it will be earnestly opposed, are themselves far more destitute of foundation in either fact or reason; but this will make no difference, as the habit of never allowing them to be subjected to the searching power of reason does not permit such persons either to believe or deny any thing connected with this topic in a reasonable manner. Some of the uses made of this theory can not endure criticism. For instance, when he makes it the basis of an assumption that all the civilization of the Old World went originally from America, and claims particularly that the supposed "Atlantic race" created Egypt, he goes quite beyond reach of the considerations used to give his hypothesis a certain air of probability. It may be, as he says, that for every pyramid in Egypt there are a thousand in Mexico and Central America, but the ruins in Egypt and those in America have nothing in common. The two countries were entirely different in their language, in their styles of architecture, in their written characters, and in the physical characteristics of their earliest people, as they are seen sculptured or painted on the monuments. An Egyptian pyramid is no more the same thing as a Mexican pyramid than a Chinese pagoda is the same thing as an English light-house. It was not made in the same way, nor for the same uses. The ruined monuments show, in generals and in particulars, that the original civilizers in America were profoundly different from the ancient Egyptians. The two peoples can not explain each other. This, however, does not require us to assert positively that the Central American "Colhuas" and the legendary Atlantes could not possibly have been the same people, or people of the same race. Room may be left for any amount of conjecture not inconsistent with known facts, without making it necessary to accept a theory of the origin of the old Mexican race which at present can neither be proved nor disproved. IT WAS AN ORIGINAL CIVILIZATION. It has been said, very justly, by one explorer of the Mexican and Central American ruins, that "the American monuments are different from those of any other known people, of a new order, and entirely and absolutely anomalous; they stand alone." The more we study them, the more we find it necessary to believe that the civilization they represent was originated in America, and probably in the region where they are found.

It did not come from the Old World; it was the work of some remarkably gifted branch of the race found on the southern part of this continent when it was discovered in. Undoubtedly it was very old. Its original beginning may have been as old as Egypt, or even farther back in the past than the ages to which Atlantis must be referred; and it may have been later than the beginning of Egypt. Who can certainly tell its age? Whether earlier or later, it was original. Its constructions seem to have been a refined and artistic development of a style of building different from that of any other people, which began with ruder forms, but in all the periods of its history preserved the same general conception. They show us the idea of the Mound-Builders wrought out in stone and embellished by art. The decorations, and the writing also, are wholly original. There is no imitation of the work of any people ever known in Asia, Africa, or Europe. It appears evident that the method of building seen in the great ruins began with the ruder forms of mound-work, and became what we find it by gradual development, as the advancing civilization supplied new ideas and gave higher skill. But the culture and the work were wholly original, wholly American. The civilized life of the ancient Mexicans and Central Americans may have had its original beginning somewhere in South America, for they seem more closely related to the ancient South Americans than to the wild Indians north of the Mexican border; but the peculiar development of it represented by the ruins must have begun in the region where they are found. I find myself more and more inclined to the opinion that the aboriginal South Americans are the oldest people on this continent; that they are distinct in race; and that the wild Indians of the North came originally from Asia, where the race to which they belong seems still represented by the Koraks and Chookchees found in that part of Asia which extends to Behring's Strait. If, as there is reason to believe, the countries on the Mediterranean had communication with America in very ancient times, they found here a civilization already developed, and contributed nothing to change its style of building and decorating cities. They may have influenced it in other respects; for, if such communication was opened across the Atlantic, it was probably continued for a long time, and its interruption may or may not be due, as Brasseur de Bourbourg supposes, to the cataclysm which engulfed Atlantis. Religious symbols are found in the American ruins which remind us of those of the Phœnicians, such as figures of the serpent, which appear constantly, and the cross, supposed by some to represent the mounting of the magnetic needle, which was among the emblems peculiar to the goddess Astarte. A figure appears occasionally in the sculptures, in which some have sought to recognize Astarte, one at Palenque being described as follows: "It is a female figure moulded in stucco, holding a child on her left arm and hand, just as Astarte appears on the Sidonian medals." I find it impossible to see that this figure has any resemblance whatever to the Phœnician goddess. They are not alike either in dress, posture, or expression. Dupaix describes it correctly in saying it represents a person apparently "absorbed in devotion"—a worshiper, and not a goddess. Moreover, Astarte usually appears on the medals standing on the forward deck of a vessel, holding a cross with one hand, and pointing forward with the other. And, finally, this figure seems to represent, not a woman, but a priest. There was sun-worship in America, and the phallic ceremonies existed in some places in the time of Cortez. In Asia these ceremonies and figures of the serpent were usually associated with sun-worship. Humboldt was sure that these symbols came to America from the Old World. A more careful study of the subject might have led him to modify this belief. But, whether we adopt his explanation or some other, the traditions on both sides of the Atlantic are without meaning unless it be admitted that there was communication between the two continents in times of which we have no history. If a consecutive history of the ancient people of Central America and Mexico were ever written, it has been lost. Probably nothing of the kind ever was written in the manner which we call history, although there must have been regular annals of some kind. The ruins show that they had the art of writing, and that, at the south, this art was more developed, more like a phonetic system of writing than that found in use among the Aztecs. The inscriptions of Palenque, and the characters used in some of the manuscript books that have been preserved, are not the same as the "Mexican Picture Writing." It is known that books or manuscript writings were abundant among them in the ages previous to the Aztec period. They had an accurate measure of the solar year and a system of chronology, and many of their writings were historical.



Among the Mayas, and in other communities of the same family, writing was largely used in the time of the Spaniards. It was common also among the Aztecs, but they used "picture writing." Las Casas wrote on this point as follows: "It should be known that in all the commonwealths of these countries, in the kingdoms of New Spain and elsewhere, among other professions duly filled by suitable persons was that of chronicler and historian. These chroniclers had knowledge of the origin of the kingdoms, and of whatever related to religion and the gods, as well as to the founders of towns and cities. They recorded the history of kings, and of the modes of their election and succession; of their labors, actions, wars, and memorable deeds, good and bad; of the virtuous men or heroes of former days, their great deeds, the wars they had waged, and how they had distinguished themselves; who had been the earliest settlers, what had been their ancient customs, their triumphs, and defeats. They knew, in fact, whatever pertained to history, and were able to give an account of all past events. These chroniclers had likewise to calculate the days, months, and years; and though they had no writing like ours, they had their symbols and characters through which they understood every thing; and they had great books, which were composed with such ingenuity and art that our characters were really of no great assistance to them. Our priests have seen those books, and I myself have seen them likewise, though many were burned at the instigation of the monks, who were afraid they might impede the work of conversion." Books such as those here described by Las Casas must have contained important historical information. The older books, belonging to the ages of Copan and Palenque, went to decay doubtless long previous to his time, in the wars and revolutions of the Toltec period, or by the wear of time. The later books, not otherwise lost, were destroyed by Aztec and Spanish vandalism. According to tradition, and the testimony of writings still in existence when the Spaniards went there, the Aztec or Mexican sovereign Ytzcoatl destroyed many of the old Toltec books. His aim was probably to exterminate among the people all memory of the previous times. Such things have been done with similar motives, as we know, in other countries, by successful usurpers and conquerors. We learn from Spanish writers that a still greater destruction of the old books was effected by the more ignorant and fanatical of the Spanish priests who were established in the country as missionaries after the Conquest. This is stated by Las Casas, himself one of the missionaries. Besides the many smaller bonfires of this fanaticism, there is record of a great conflagration, under the auspices of Bishop Zumarraga, in which a vast collection of these old writings was consumed. As the writing was all on paper (which had long been used in the country), the burning was easily accomplished. THE OLD BOOKS NOT ALL LOST. The Franciscan and Dominican fanatics, whose learning and religion consisted of ignorance and bigotry, hoped to exterminate among the people all recollection of their former history, ideas, and religious customs. A few of the books, however, escaped; none, indeed, that were very old, for it does not appear that any of the manuscripts rescued from destruction were written or copied earlier than the age which closed the Aztec domination. None of the great books of annals described by Las Casas are among them, but they relate to the ancient times, and most of them are copies or reproductions of much older books. Drawing of the inscription on the top of Altar Q, Copan Inscriptions carved on Stone. Among these destroying Spanish ecclesiastics, there was here and there one who quietly secured some of the manuscripts, or copies of them. These were kept from the flames. Others were secreted by the people; and subsequently, in years after the conquest was completed, some of the more intelligent churchmen wrote histories of the country, or portions of it, which were preserved in manuscript. Sahagun wrote such a history, which shows that he had studied the traditions and some of the old books; this work is printed in the great collection of Lord Kingsborough. Diego de Landa, first bishop of Yucatan, wrote a history of the Mayas and their country, which was preserved in manuscript at Madrid in the library of the Royal Academy of History. It is one of the most important works on the country written by a Spaniard, because it contains a description and explanation of the phonetic alphabet of the Mayas. Landa's manuscript seems to have lain neglected in the library, for little or nothing was heard of it until it was discovered and studied by Brasseur de Bourbourg, who, by means of it, has deciphered some of the old American writings. He says "the alphabet and signs explained by Landa have been to me a Rosetta stone." represents a specimen of the inscriptions as carved upon stone. gives them as they appear in manuscript.