TRAVELLERS' TALES.

What Men Have Seen and Heard in All Parts of the World.

IN PICTURESQUE MEXICO.

The Hidden Silver City of Yucatan.

Wonerful City that All Travellers in Central America Believe in.

A Boston Indian Sees the Wonderful Silver Dome of the Great Town that Stephens and Charnay Think Really Exists—The Mandan Indians—Are They the Descendants of Prince Madoc of Wales?—Facts Thought They Were—Traps for Young Britons—"Pupil Farmers," and the Way They are Brought Here—Interesting Jamaica—Making an American Settlement in a British Colony.

CUAUTLA DE MORELOS, March 10.—"Cuauta—*un lugar donde hay arboles* (a place where the are trees)," is the definition of the name of this little tropical city, as given in a certain Mexican dictionary of aboriginal words. Probably the designation was more distinctive in the pre-Columbian times, when it was first referred, than it is to-day; for in this dry air, under the meridianal sun, it is not with any great frequency that trees are to be found even in the systematic culture which the conquering civilization introduced in all possible localities.

An arboreseent island, in the midst of a light green lake of sugar cane, with contesting uplands for its shores, sloping down from the grand rim of mountains that incloses one of the most glorious landscapes in North America; such is Cuautla when seen from a distance, with its buildings invisible for the abundant leafage, except three towers that tell of the existence of that number of churches.

Cuautla is one of the favorite health resorts of Mexico, and as such it well merits a reputation beyond the borders of this republic. Mexican health resorts are peculiar. You must not fancy crowds of fashionables, with glitter and elegance to correspond. There may be something similar in the health resorts of Britain; I should at least infer as much from the description of the springs of Marmollio contained in a charming novel by Valdes, the Spanish realist. But health resorts are of very recent development in Mexico, unless we class nearly every Mexican city under that category. In this volcanic land I have as yet found but few cities that do not possess at least one excellent hot, warm, or mineral spring within 10 limits, or close by, where people go to rid themselves of their ailments, and often, indeed, achieve that desired result.

But Mexicans, like other people, occasionally find themselves in need of a change of air and scene, and the creation of numerous railway lines has enabled them easily to meet that need in their own land. Various beautiful and pleasant towns, favored with particularly fine climate and perhaps with healing springs—and the climate must be exceptionally fine in this country, where an atmospheric connoisseur might revel in an infinite variety of respiratory delights—have of late achieved a deserved rank beyond their borders. Foremost among them I may mention, beside Cuautla, Ojas Calientes, where the hot springs have given name to both the city and the little state, the Delaware of Mexico. I would reserve the title of Rhode Island for the still smaller Tlascala—of which that city is the capital; Morelia, and Patzcuaro on its beautiful lake, but a few leagues away from that lovely capital of Michoacan; Tehuacan, in the State of Puebla, which I reached by a night's ride, an hour after leaving the train at Esperanza, the railway between Mexico and Vera Cruz, with hot springs said to be identical with those of Carlsbad, while even Vera Cruz, of yellow fever renown, is a health resort of no mean importance during the winter months, since Texan physicians have grown in more and more to the habit of ordering their patients thither for the benefits of dense warm air and sea bathing. Vera Cruz, by the way, has been entirely free from yellow fever for the past three four years, and its inhabitants are beginning to be confident, like those of New Orleans, that the plague has gone never to return. A city, now that the venerable seaport is sanitarily on its good behavior as never before, and its harbor is so rapidly shoaling up with sand in consequence of its recent costly improvements, as to make it probable that the entire maritime business of the province will shortly be transferred to the better part of Alvarado, about twelve miles to the southward.

There is no other country with facilities of modern travel where the tourist may frequently find his altitude and climate with it, or change climate with greater ease and celerity. And in a certain altitude may offer the very best conditions for the cure of one malady and a certain other altitude be the best for a trouble of a different kind, about every demand in the way of a climate cure may be met in Mexico in the course of a few hours' change. I fancy that the time may come when men of means will build their villas on the verge of the great Mexican mountain precipices, with mansion dwellings directly below and connected by elevators. Then, when it becomes too cold for them among the pines or oaks on the brow of the cliff, and they can touch an electric bell, send at a moment's notice for a drop down in their orchards of bananas and oranges one or four thousand feet beneath. Or, when by find the day growing too hot for them in their situation, they may mount instantly to spend the hours while the sun is high, in the invigorating upland air, and return at evening to enjoy cooling drinks and dreamy siestas in hammocks in the soft climate which permits him to sleep without any blankets. There are places on the verge of this grand valley where soothing of the kind might be practicable, indeed, the relation of Cuautla to the capital is approach to that ideal.

Along the verge of the great central tableland of Mexico there are pockets and fissures that lead up into the interior from the seaboard, sloping in depth so gradually as to bring a tropical climate near enough to the cities perched on the adjacent heights to keep their markets well supplied with the delicious fruits and vegetables perpetually growing in the orchards and kitchen gardens of the warm lands. The valley of this kind that comes nearest the city of Mexico is that in which Cuautla lies. The majestic volcano of Popocatepetl, that towers so grandly above the valley of Mexico, has Cuautla almost at its feet on the other side, where more than half a mile is added to its height. The narrow gauge Interoceanic Railway runs out of the higher valley across the flank of the volcano, and in descending the opposite shelving slope by the crooked-est line it was ever my fortune to traverse. By the mixed train of passenger and freight cars that, as yet, furnishes the only means of transportation, we reach Cuautla in six and half hours, leaving the capital at 8 in the morning and arriving here at 2:30 in the afternoon. Therefore, this is the nearest and most easy and quickly reached point in the warm country, and the low rates of fare prevailing this line make the place the most popular resort for the people of the great city.

When trains exclusively for passengers are put on, as they soon will be, the running time either will be shortened to at least four hours. This division of the Interoceanic Railway was originally intended for the main line to the Pacific coast, but the plans have been changed and the line now running from Puebla to Atlixco will be extended southward to Acapulco, making the shortest route between Vera Cruz and the Pacific. A connection will be made by a branch from Cuautla by way of Jonacatepec to Chietla on the line from Puebla, giving the capital a short route to the Pacific, and the present division, which for several years has terminated at the picturesquely of Yantepec, just beyond Cuautla, will, as the extensions now under way, form the sin railway system for this agriculturally and minerally rich little tropical State of Morelos. This division has lately been extended to the still more tropical town of Tlaltizapan, and in a few days more will be opened to the city of Jojutla, the largest in the State, and commercially the most important; the centre of an extensive rice-producing district. There will be pushed on to Amacuzac, at a southwestern boundary of the State, where for the present at least, this division will terminate. The descent of the Interoceanic to the Pacific coast will be through such scenery.

When I first knew Cuautla six years ago, its conditions were more primitive than to-day. I made its acquaintance in the pleasant company of a distinguished compatriot, Mr. Frederic E. Church, the eminent landscape painter, who was here with his wife, and the late Gen. William E. Strother, celebrated as the "Porte Crayon" of *Harper's Monthly*, and the pioneer author of modern illustrated magazine articles. Gen. Strother was at that time our Consul General in the Mexican capital. As we whiled away the midday hours in the shady corridor of the Hotel de San Diego I remember with what enthusiasm both artists dwelt on the picturesque charms of Mexico and the richness of its country in its attractions for the tourist. Mr. Church has given good earnest of his artistic faith by this year making his sixth visit to this country, of whose beauty he never tires. At that time the great interior court of the San Diego Hotel, enclosed by a one-story structure with cell-like rooms opening upon the corridors, was rather bare, its principal object, aside the central fountain, being a tall and graceful date palm. The rapidity of arboreal growth in this climate is illustrated by the beautiful grove of well-developed young trees that now fills the place.

Notwithstanding the perpetual spring enjoyed by the Mexican capital, its people are not without a capacity to appreciate at times a more ardent temperature than may be found there any time of the year, and with the increase of wealth among the citizens, together with the means for comfortable travel now provided, there has developed a general disposition to gratify their desires. Therefore in the months between November and March, when the vending *pringreers* resembles more nearly our Northern early April at its best than our late May, there is an active migration into the warm lands. A large proportion of this is directed toward Cuautla, where a July temperature reigns in January. The development of this winter health and pleasure resort business in Mexico has great potentialities, especially when the rapidly growing tourist travel from the United States is taken into account. Here in Cuautla considerable has been done to meet the demand, but great improvement for its accommodation are possible, and will be profitably appreciated. In response to this need a pleasant new hotel has been added to the attractions of the place, the Hotel Morelos one of the few two-story buildings in the city. A third and smaller hotel, the Esperanza, has been entirely occupied through the winter by the charming family of an English gentleman, who has a large cotton factory and print works near the capital.

All through the winter the hotels have been crowded. Cuatlla has never before seen a season so prosperous, and had the hotels possessed many times their present accommodations they would still have been filled, for almost every day people were turned away, and many who desired to come were discouraged by news of the lack of accommodations. The ravages of the influenza caused something like a panic in the capital, and among those who could get away there was a general disposition to do so. But it was in vain to seek to flee from the epidemic, for the most favored climate has proved no safeguard against its attacks, and it has raged as extensively in Mexico as in the United States, and in the warm valleys here as on the cool table lands. It is said, however, that the milder climates have made the disease less severe, and certainly the conditions for recovery from the pneumonia that has so frequently ensued are most favorable in this soft, warm air. One delicate American lady, whose influenza developed into pneumonia after her arrival here, undoubtedly owes her life to the gentle climatic influences of this place. But for the inhabitants in general the benefits of climate have probably been largely offset by the more careless habits of the multitude. In the city of Mexico the death rate for a while was something fearful, and even here the apothecary shops were all day long besieged by anxious crowds, mostly Indians, who constitute the bulk of the population, awaiting their turn to consult the doctor, who, in the Mexican minor towns, just as in the old-time New England villages, usually runs a drug store for himself.

The American element here has been considerable in number, and has included some charming people. Among them is a young Boston painter, Mr. Curtis Perry, who for the past three years has had his winter studio in Cuautla, and has devoted himself to the study of the picturesque places so abundant in tropical life. This year he has his mother with him, and her experience shows that a refined New England lady can pass the winter very pleasantly in a Mexican health resort. There is, of course, nothing of fashion or elegant display in a watering place like this. The ladies, American as well as Mexican, dress with extreme simplicity. Time is passed in a *dolce far niente* way in the open air corridors, with books, or quietly chatting, or, very rarely, with embroidery or knitting in hand. In the pátio below, a clear fountain ceaselessly tinkles, and there are orange and lemon trees, both laden with fruit and filling the air with the exquisite scent of their blossoms. The corridors are thickly bordered with potted plants in flower, and above hang many large cages filled with a variety of song birds, besides a wonderfully talented parrot with a green body and yellow head. As the shadows lengthen we seldom fail to resort to the *azotea*, the flat roof of the hotel, covered with a pavement of large, square, unglazed red tiles, like a well-laid sidewalk, and cemented water tight. Here we promenade and watch the changing lights in the sky and on the magnificent barrie of the mountains round about—Popocatepetl dominating all, with Alpine-like Ixtaccihuatl, the Woman in White, close at hand; the broad, snowy summit of the Nevado de Toluca distant in the west, and Ajusco to the northwestward, while there are ranges to the southward which, though much lower, must still look very imposing on their thither sides as they descend step by step to the coast. Possibly from the most distant peaks in sight the Pacific Ocean is visible. About us is an expanse of flat roofs, over which we have glimpses down into neighboring patios and of fascinating combinations of house walls in the exquisite variety of colors such as, it seems, they cannot help applying in Mexico, so that even if they deliberately go to work to make an imitation of ugly brick work with white stripes the rains of a summer or two will obliterate the stripes and leave a beautiful suffusion of warm, ruddy tones.

Close at hand rises the dome and towers of the large parochial church, with an attractive garden in front, and opposite is the broad façade of the Palacio Municipal, or City Hall, facing the pretty plaza that is found in almost every Mexican town to-day, and the like of which, in the way of a carefully tended public garden, would rarely be found in an American city many times the size of this. Surely in this phase of civilization—the adornment of their towns with public grounds—the Mexicans excel us as a people. In this little plaza we have a tasteful music stand, two fountains, numerous shade and ornamental trees—including date palms, royal palms, and oleanders—and well-kept flower beds.

In our survey from the *azotea* we see the more compact mass of houses closed in on every side by a magnificent variety of tree growths rising from the *huertas*, or orchards, that surround us with the density of a forest. Among them there is nothing grander than the full rounded masses of deep green foliage in which the shapes of the Mexican ash rise all around like the domes of a city modelled in leafage. The Mexican ash seems to thrive equally in tropical heat or on the cool table-lands. Other notable trees are the pecan, the sturdy zapote in several varieties, including the mammee, the graceful mango, that seems like a peach tree successful in emulating the maple, some full of their thick sprays of bloom and others with their delicious fruit well advanced in heavy clusters with now and then some already ripened, as we discover, to our great delight, in the nearest aguacates, chirimoyas, guamuchiles, and various other species with indigenous names difficult to hold in the mind, besides oranges and lemons in abundance. Palm trees rise gracefully on all sides, and in the cemetery there is a tall cocoanut palm full of fruit; the only one I have ever hard of as far inland. Even the castor bean rises to the dignity of a goodly tree here. A characteristic growth is the papaya, or melon tree, which shoots up rapidly and bears an abundance of its peculiar fruit, closely resembling a muskmelon, but filled with seeds that look like caviare. I must not forget one of the most imposing of trees, the amate, which grows in three varieties, the negro, blanco, and prieto, or black, white, and brown, as they are called, according to the color of their enormous trunks. They are like the banyan, a variety of the fig. Few passengers on the rail way have failed to notice the enormous wide-spreading crowns of the amate prieto, as they stand isolated in the fields shortly before reaching this place, their lower branches trimmed off in an exact horizontal line by the browsing cattle that seek their shade.

In the cool morning hours, or shortly before sunset, it is delightful to stroll through the shady lanes where the bulk of the population live in thatched huts with walls of matted reed in the sylvan-like shade of tall bananas; an environment that seems hardly city-like. Clear water runs sparkling across and along these lanes everywhere, irrigating the gardens and the *cafetals*, or coffee plantations, where the fragrant-flowered coffee shrub grows in the deep shade of bananas or of tall trees.

One of the principal features of Cuautla as a health resort is the Agua de Honda, the thermal springs, about a mile and a half out of town across the river, where a large stream of warm mineral water gushes from the rock and dashes down in romantic ravine, bordered with trees and a tangle of bushes and vines among which a luxuriance of bloom is always to be found. The water, which carries certain alkalies, iron, and sulphuric acid, besides being strongly impregnated with sulphureted hydrogen that fills the neighboring city with a not particularly agreeable odor, is highly recommended for bathing, as a remedy for various maladies. Don Felipe Robertson, the English gentleman whom I mentioned as spending the winters here with his family, has beneficently built at the *salto del agua*, a most convenient bathing pool enclosed by a massive wall of stone. This spot is chiefly used by the women, while the men resort to a natural pool some little distance down stream where a second spring of the same kind largely increases the volume of the waters.

All day long the lumbering carriage of the Hotel Morelos, the only wheeled vehicle permanently in the city, piles back and forth, and cannot begin to carry those who wish to go, so that the others who are not fortunate enough to own or hire saddle horses are obliged to walk, if they are strong enough.

It would be a most remunerative enterprise to establish a fine hotel on the high, dry ground near the Agua de Honda, with the best of modern comforts and conveniences and a medical staff for guests. An electric tramway to the city could be operated at little expense from the excellent power from the stream, which would also light the hotel. The views of mountains and valley are superb from that point. There is nothing to impair the purity of the air, and it is away from the noise and dust of the town.

Such an enterprise ought to recommend itself particularly to experienced Swiss, who are the model pleasure hotel keepers of the world, and, with their skill in catering to all sorts of tastes, they ought to be just the men to develop the possibilities of Mexican health resorts, which are naturally among the most attractive in the world. On the other hand, it might be something of an experiment for American hotel men to undertake anything of the kind, for, while successful at home, their lack of cosmopolitan experience might render them incapable of meeting the conditions arising here. But the Mexicans would certainly appreciate with substantial recognition an adequate development of their health resorts, as they have recognized the marked improvements already made in this place; and the assurance of the comforts they are used to is all that is needed to bring Americans to Mexico in multitudes, just as the people of northern Europe flock to Italy. SYLVESTER BAXTER.

THE HIDDEN SILVER CITY.

Pancho's Story of a Scar and a Discovery in Yucatan.

From the Kansas City Times.

The moment the traveller puts his foot in Merida, the capital city of the State of Yucatan, he finds himself on ground that teems with the associations of many centuries. Merida lies in the very centre of the district now famous for its vast production of henequin, and as a city it can easily be classed in the same category with Mexico's capital. With a population of 80,000 souls it is 30 miles from the Gulf coast, and is connected with the port of Progreso by a line of railroad which runs a daily train between the two cities. Very little overland traffic is engaged in between Merida and the city of Mexico, owing to the wild nature of the country.

My object is not to describe the city of Merida, but to give a truthful version of one of the strangest stories that it has ever been my fortune to hear in this strange country—a story that I have every reason to believe to be true; one that by the merest chance came to my ears, and as it was only yesterday that I sat in the cosey sitting room of the fine old house on the hacienda of my old friend, Don Pepe Garcia, the words and facial movements of the narrator are as vivid in my mind as if it had been my death sentence that I had listened to instead of a story straight from the lips of a gray-haired, age-stricken Maya Indian servant attached to the hacienda. That it sounds more like an romantic romance than a nineteenth century relation I will admit, but the location of the swamp mentioned later on is almost as well known to me as the *Times* building in Kansas City, and if the expression of a man's features can serve as an indication of veracity he was sincerely telling the truth, then I would side with Don Pepe in accepting as the truth the story which he, his wife, and your correspondent listened to last evening.

Señor Garcia is a well-known Yucatan hacendado, one of the wealthiest men on the peninsula. We were sitting on the piazza of his magnificent home, enjoying the cool breeze that blew across the broad henequin fields. Our conversation turned from the wonders of the country that lies north of Mexico to his own native State of Yucatan, and thinking of the strange ruined cities that lie within this Mexican State I asked him for some information regarding them. Hardly had the question left my tongue when he called to his wife, who was sitting inside the house, and ordered some coffee. Turning to me he said: "You ask of ruined cities and ancient civilization. Wait till you have heard Pancho's story and then we will talk."

Hardly had he ceased speaking when Pancho appeared, bearing a tray laden with coffee cups and a steaming pot of the aromatic berrie. As he placed the tray on the table and stepped aside with respectful deference I noted that he was an intelligent-looking Maya Indian some 60 years of age, tall, well formed, as are all the Mayas, and with an eye that sparkled and glistened in spite of its half-veiled years. The thing that most attracted attention to his face was a long, hideous scar which extended clear across his forehead, and which seemed to have been made with a red hot iron, for the flesh appeared seared and scorched, and the central portion of this frightful wound seemed to have slaughed away and left the very thinnest kind of a skin to protect the skull. All of this I took in in a moment, and ere I had time to speak my host turned to the old man and said: "Pancho, tell us the story of that scar on your forehead for the benefit of our guest, who wishes to hear it."

The eyes of the old mozo glistened as he complied with the request, and as we sipped our coffee and sat there in the soft southern twilight, I heard this strange story told in liquid, eloquent Spanish and with an earnest manner that made a deep impression on me. Here is the translation in my own words:

"Señors, that scar on my forehead was made by a poisoned arrow shot from the bow of a Chan-Santa-Cruz Indian, just eighteen months ago, and to tell you the story of it I must commence by telling you of the swamp which hides from view the silver city.

"South of the city of Merida, as you know, lies a vast tract of marshy land known as the Black Swamp. Into this swamp the feet of a white man have never trod, or if they have, the world has never known of it, for the winds that blow from its fetid depths allow no one to reach the borders of it alive.

"It cannot be reached from the south on account of the extremely dangerous rocks that line the seashore, and as I have never heard of any one who has passed through the experience I am about to relate, I believe that I am the only Indian of a pure distinct tribe whose eyes have beheld the sacred city of the Chan-Santa-Cruz Indians.

"You are aware, as is every one, that these Indians have never been conquered by the Mexican troops, and that the bleached bones of many a brave Mexican soldier are whitening along the border of this dismal swamp, which is the home of these Indians.

"They have successfully resisted every effort at capture, and they are no more under control at the present moment than they were fifty years ago, and I think they never will be. The troops have waged several campaigns against them, but it is of no avail. The skirmishes invariably result in a heavy loss for the troops, for the poisoned arrows used by the Indians are more deadly than the modern bullet, as to a certain extent I am aware.

"It is well known in Merida that the Chan-Santa-Cruz Indians have access to gold somewhere, for at any store you can buy the yellow dust and strange golden ornaments that are brought in by Indians who are on peaceful terms with these fierce warriors. But no one has ever been able to follow one of these Indians in order to find the location of what must be an immense gold deposit. They have been followed into the borders of the dismal swamp, but there they disappear as silently as if the earth had opened and swallowed them.

"My curiosity had been aroused by these strange stories and I determined to follow the first Chan-Santa-Cruz squaw that showed her face in Merida. One bright morning, just eighteen months ago, I was standing in the plaza in Merida waiting for an order from my master to take a load of henequin down to the coast to be shipped by steamer to America, when I noticed an Indian woman pass me, and the strange, startled look in her eyes immediately attracted my attention. She passed and repassed me and I my eyes never left her. She was alert and watching, and more from her movements than from her face I knew that she was a Chan-Santa-Cruz. I dogged her footsteps all the day long, and as night came on and she started out toward the Kanpuhul road I was not far in her rear. She passed swiftly out through the southern gate of the city at a sharp pace, at every step turning to see if she was being followed. I kept well in the rear, but never lost sight of the dim figure trudging ahead of me. The night being dark I was not discovered, for hours we glided along the silent country road.

"During the early part of the night we passed Sotuta and Toholoo, and at midnight we skirted the village of Noyaxche. She had the endurance of a lioness, for never for a moment did she stop even for a slight rest, but sped along in a manner that would have wearied a younger man than myself. Toward morning we passed Konot and Kampolkoche, and my heart beat with excitement when, after passing the last named place, she started across country in the direction of Chan-Santa-Cruz, the town that lies close to the border of the swamp.

"Hardly had we left the silent houses of Kampolkoche behind us when to my surprise I found that I was following two figures instead of one. The newcomer was a man, and evidently the husband of the women, for they continued on together without any ceremony, in order to be more secure. I fell a little behind.

"I was now in a quandary, for we were rapidly approaching the dreaded swamp, and I could smell the damp rank breeze that blew from its mysterious depths.

"I had no time to lose in speculation, so after a moment's thought I determined to go on. Streaks of dawn began to appear in the sky just as the two figures plunged into the dark depths of the swamp, and, so as not to lose sight of them, I increased my pace. In doing so I must have lost my caution, for, turning a sharp bend formed by the trees, I saw within ten paces of me a stalwart Chan-Santa-Cruz Indian.

"His bow was drawn taut and the arrow was pointed straight at me. I stopped and turned, and as I did so I felt the most agonizing pains across my eyes, and the last I remembered before losing consciousness was a feeling that all the fires of hell were in my veins.

"How long I lay in this condition I know not. When I regained my senses I found my clothing torn and bloodstained, my feet were covered with mud and slime, and my face felt hot and caked with blood and dirt. I must have wandered astray during my delirium, for when my mind became clear I found myself in a place that was entirely new to me, a spot that I could not remember ever having seen before.

"My head ached terribly and my throat was parched with thirst. After climbing a tall cocoa palm and drinking the milk of several nuts, the pain in my throat subsided a little, and as my brain became clearer the idea suddenly dawned upon me that I was lost in the dismal swamp. The thought was one calculated to inspire in me extreme terror, for I knew full well that no man, with the exception of a Chan-Santa-Cruz, had ever been known to leave the place alive. While meditating on my position, a strange imagination occurred to me. Could it be that I had been wounded by a poisoned arrow and had the poison so permeated my system as to render it inocuous to the deadly miasmas of the swamp? I placed my hand to my head and my fingers came in contact with the terrible open wound made by the arrow. Tearing away a piece of my cotton shirt I bandaged as best I could the wound, and then I looked about me for a means of escape by this time all desire had left me to discover the hidden supply of the gold dust, and the thought uppermost in my clouded mind was to devise some means of escape from my perilous position.

"Huge, hissing, wriggling serpents glided past my feet as I made my way through the dense undergrowth, and the woods seemed fairly alive with grinning, chattering monkeys. Beautiful birds of brilliant plumage flitted from tree to tree, and had it not been for the shiny black pools that at every step yawned grim and terrible at my feets, I could have imagined myself in paradise. As the sun's rays glinted from the topmost branches of a tall palm, the idea occurred to me to climb a tree and find, if possible, what direction to take to get out of the swamp. Suiting the action to the thought I climbed a huge cypress tree; and, now, señores, I only ask as a recompense that you believe what I tell you.

"As I reached the topmost branch and climbed out on a huge projecting limb I found that what I had taken to be the direct rays of the sun was only the reflection from some brilliantly dazzling object, which at first I could not make out, so blinded were my eyes. I gazed long and steadily at the mysterious thing, and when my eyes became somewhat accustomed to the glare I saw a sight that has never for a moment faded from my memory since that memorable morning. Glistening and shining in the morning sun, flashing a thousand rays of glorious light into my wondering eyes, was what I can only term a "silver city" spread out before my gaze; not over a quarter of a mile away was the most superb panorama my eyes had ever rested upon. Lying snugly ensconced between a large group of mountains, completely covering the broad green bosom of a picturesque valley, rested a city so ravishingly beautiful that at first I thought it must be the city of the gods. No praise could be too sweepingly extravagant in describing this enchanting spot. The city did not appear to cover a vast tract of ground, but as far as I could judge it must have been the home of some ten thousands of people. The streets appeared to be regularly laid out and graded, but a curious thing which attracted my attention was that every square contained only one house, and this house seemed to be constructed of marble and looked more like a strange temple than a dwelling house. Immense pillars supported strangely shaped roofs, and apparently endless flights of stone steps led down from each house to the street, while huge statues adorned the entrance on both sides of the same material at the foot of each flight of steps. The whole city seemed a collection of massive towers and ancient-looking castles, parapeted walls, ornamented cylindrical columns, and a maze of helices, arches, and strange-looking corridors.

"That which most claimed my attention was a dazzling blaze of light reflected from the conical tower of what appeared to be a huge place of worship. At first I thought it must be a market place, for the lower portion of the edifice was open on all sides and an infinite number of tables were ranged under neath the steeple, which formed a perfect cone as it rose in the air. It was some time before my eyes could accustom themselves to the intense light reflected from this tall cone and permit me to make out the details of this wonderful palace. When I did make out what it was I was for the moment struck dumb with astonishment, for I saw that the roof of this grand building was covered with a glistening white metal, and this metal appeared to be solid silver. The wave of light that was reflected from its symmetrical sides was something grand, sublime, awful. A multitude of persons were moving around among the tall pillars, and from one side of the huge building poured a dense volume of black smoke.

"This architecture was something from a sacrificial altar. The people were dressed in white, the flowing toga worn by the women much resembling that worn by the Maya Indians. The faint notes of an exquisitely toned bell stole faintly on my strained ear and filled the dark, dank depths of the swamp with a strange melody. In view of the dilapidated state of the ancient Spanish architecture of Mexico, it would be taxing your credulity if I should tell you of the symmetrical proportions and noble architecture that characterizes the edifices of this silver city. With my limited vocabulary it would be utterly impossible for me to describe to you the marvels that my eyes beheld.

"The city rested, as I have said, on a level plain between two chains of very low mountains. Not a sheep browsed on the green sides of these hills, and not even a dog polluted the white streets of this Canaan-like place. The people appeared to be busy, for outside of the temple they thronged to and fro like on the streets of our own Merida, offering sacrifice to a strange deity.

"As is always the case in Indian villages, this sumptuous temple stood on the summit of a small, symmetrically shaped mound, and from the clouds of smoke issuing from its sides I inferred that a sacrifice was at the time being offered to the mystic deity of this strange people.

"Nothing could be more grand than the view which stretched away beyond this majestic pile. Toward the north as far as the eye could reach rested a bold barrier of rugged hills, seemingly reared expressly by nature to protect from sacrilegious eyes the fair proportions of this enchanted region. Far away to the south the blue waves of the ocean plunged and rolled in their mad rush to kiss the pebbly beach of the distant southern islands, and to the west was the low range of mountains, their green sides ribbed and torn by yawning chasms, their peaks tinged with a delicate turquoise blue that made them appear like jewelled emeralds in the hands of the god of air, Quetzalcuati, ever ready to smile to the earth the intruder of this his last and most sacred domain.

"The architecture of this city differed from the prevailing styles in Merida, and appeared more like that of Uxmal, Chichen-Itza, Nochticulco, and Palenque.

"A fact that appeared strange to me was that not an animal was in sight, and look as I might I could not discover one.

"The streets were filled with Indians, but the main attraction seemed to be the temple.

"As my fever cooled and my brain grew clearer I began to comprehend the things more minutely, and I noticed that this city had an air of cleanliness and elegance in strange contrast to Merida. Every part of the place reflected a shimmering wave of white, and not a speck appeared to mar the perfect alabaster whiteness.

"How long I gazed on this glorious sight I know not, but the sun was setting in the west when I perceived an Indian leave the silver city behind him and follow a small beaten path that led from the former place into the swamp in which I was concealed.

"I was faint from the loss of blood and lack of food, and I remember dimly of making up my mind to follow this man, who I suspected was going to Merida.

"He came into the swamp and passed within 100 feet of where I was concealed, and as he passed mo I slipped down from my position and dogged his footsteps.

"I must have followed him with the cunning of an Indian man, for the next thing I remembered was five weeks later, when I found myself under the roof of my master, who sits by your side, and who nursed me through a severe attack of brain fever.

"I have never told this story to any one but my master, for fear of being ridiculed, but, señores," and here the voice of the old man vibrated with intense earnestness, "that is the story of the wound on my forehead, and I will stake the remaining years of my life that the silver city exists and that my eyes have beheld it."

TRAPS FOR YOUNG BRITONS.

A Queer Business that is Said to be Carried On Between Minnesota and London.

From the Chicago Tribune.

Four young English gentlemen and 1,200 pounds of baggage passed through Minneapolis yesterday afternoon on their way to the town of Nashua, about twenty miles from Breckinridge, on the western limit of the State. The young gentlemen are prospective farmers. They came here all the way from England with their 1,200 pounds of baggage to settle on a large farm, do chores for their board, and learn American farming.

Minneapolis is full of young English gentlemen who came here for the same purpose, and after a few months of menial labor, downright hard work, and rough fare, have wandered into the city and sought employment as clerks in offices, stores, and hotels. Some of the more conscientious and industrious, perhaps, have remained on their farms for something like a year, but in most cases a few months of this dreary life sufficed for them all they cared to know of the American methods of farming, and they have sought the city, willing to take any sort of employment, no matter how menial, rather than endure longer the unaccustomed hardships of farm life. These young men are sent out from England by regular business companies, and pay a handsome premium for the privilege of a place on these farms, where they work for little or nothing besides their board, do the work and stand in the positions of the ordinary farm hand who earns $25 a month, and learn nothing for the lesson of hard work. For the English companies in London and the farmers of Minnesota it is a pretty speculation, but for the young gentlemen who are ambitious to learn the American methods of farming it is simply hades.

The publication of the story of the great Woodstock murder in Canada makes the history of this peculiar enterprise just at this time an interesting story. The business of sending the sons of English gentlemen to America to learn the art and practice of farming has been carried on for years. These companies have agents all over the country—in Chicago, Memphis, and Minneapolis. They send "pupils," as they call them, to all parts of the country from Tennessee to California.

For the privilege of places on these farms these companies charge the young gentlemen anything they think they can get—all the way from $200 to $500. Then they sell them at high prices expensive "outfits," when all they need ordinarily for the sort of work they are set to do is one suspender and a pair of overalls.

The firm which is conducting the business in this city is Stryker & Campbell, attorneys in the Lumber Exchange. The young men are sent to them from London, and by them they are placed on farms in various parts of the State. They are agents for the firm of Scott & Jackson in London. Scott, the junior member of the firm, is a young Englishman about 25 years of age, and was here for a time a Minneapolitan. In the summer of 1886 he took care of the books at the St. Louis Hotel, Minnetonka. He was himself sent from England by a man by the name of Sherman. After he left the farm and came to the city he was for some time in a bad way financially. It was then he went to the firm of Caern & Drury, now Caern & Koon, tax title abstracters in Chicago. They promised him, so it is said, the foremanship of their farm, about nine miles from Tracy, if he would bring back a certain number of young Englishmen with him. This Scott did. He brought back with him young Chaldicott, who is now in the employ of William Peete in the Boston block in this city. But the farm at Tracy did not pay. Scott shook the dust of the States off his feet, declared he would never step a foot in this cursed country again, went back to England, joined hands with Jackson, and set up in the business of sending other young men to the cursed country he had deserted.

Scott & Jackson have elegant offices now opposite the Houses of Parliament, and are doing a lucrative business. Among the victims H. Wicks is one of the latest victims. He came to America a little more than a year ago. There were four of them in the party. Two of them were bound for Tennessee, and the other two were to come to Minneapolis and go to a farm at Hancock, Minn. These young men paid all the way from £35 to £100, and they were given an intermediate passage on the steamer, which cost them about £5. One young fellow, Hammon by name and son of a Colonel, paid $500, went to Tennessee, and wasjset to milking cows. The $500 was screwed out of him on the pretence that he was a "pupil." Of the four boys who were sent to Hancock, Robert Dunn, a Hampshire doctor's son, has taken up a claim at Park Rapids, Minn.; Seymour went to Kansas City and lost every cent he had; Hare left the farm at Hancock and paid Stryker & Campbell $5 to find him a new job on a farm at Sauk Centre; Purcell is on a farm at the same place. These young men were paid $1 a week for their labor. The farm on which they worked was a big bonanza farm that was owned by R. S. Bull of this city, who died a few weeks ago. Wicks says he took care of the book-keeping on the farm and did the work of an ordinary farm hand. Before he left England Wicks, on the advice of the London firm, purchased an equipment for which he paid $50. The list of necessaries for a young gentleman who wished to learn farming in Minnesota, as Wicks could remember, as follows: A ground sheeting, two corduroy suits, two pairs of riding breeches, two pairs of riding boots, jerseys and flannel shirts, three pairs of gloves, a pair of coarse shoes for work on the farm, a coarse felt hat, two excellent rugs, etc. He had the right to order it off and to go to eating when he pleased. Man, woman or child might enter any lodge and eat at will. At meal time the Mandan men sat cross-legged and ate from dishes resting on the ground in front of them. The women never ate with the men. They, too, sat upon the ground, but in taking their position did it gracefully by dropping down with both feet to one side.

Indian traders told Catlin that he would be charmed with the "polite and friendly Mandans." Gov. Clarke of Lewis & Clarke fame described the Mandans to the artist as strange people and half white. Catlin described them as rather below the average size of Indians, but finely formed and graceful in their movements. Among the women particularly were many whose skins were almost white, and who had hazel, gray, or blue eyes. There was every shade of hair except auburn. The men seemed ashamed of their light hair, and disguised it with glue and black earth. But the women wore it in long braids, and worn it spread out and down to their knees. Mr. Catlin noticed especially the attention which the Mandans gave to their personal appearance. They were cleanly and much given to personal adornment. Above the city, a half mile or more, the women and girls had a bathing place set apart for them. To this they went every morning at sunrise. On an elevation some distance back of the bathing place sentries with bows and arrows were stationed to prevent the approach of Peeping Toms. Below the city the men and boys bathed every day.

Although the Mandans were familiar to them with records for great personal bravery, the Mandans were not a warlike people. They avoided hostilities as long as possible. They cared more for sports and for ceremonies than for fighting. Their favorite game was one which Catlin found nowhere else among the Indians, which he called Tchunge. In front of the city was a prepared spot, like a croquet square, for this game, with a clay pavement as hard and smooth as a floor. Sides were chosen by the champions from the best players of the tribe. The instruments were a stone ring, two or three inches in diameter, and a stick six feet long, with four little projections of leather about a foot apart. Two players, one from each side, took the ring and the stick. The others looked on and kept tally. The chief held the stakes. The player with the ring gave it a roll along the ground. The other player threw the stick, gauging the speed and movement of the ring so as to have the stick drop where the ring would stop rolling and fall upon it. One, two, three, or four points were scored, according as the ring fell upon the projections of leather. If the tchunk-kee was not thrown so far as the ring, or beyond it, then the thrower lost his place and another from his side stepped forward. The failure also counted against the score of that side. Hour after hour the Mandans played and gambled at this game.

Six years after Mr. Catlin's visit among the Mandans, a small-pox was introduced in the city by a fur-trading boat. At that time the Sioux were making war upon the Mandans, and the afflicted people were shut up within their fortifications. The ravages of the disease were terrible. Intelligent beyond the average of Indians, the Mandans became panic-stricken. So virulent was the contagion that death occurred in a few hours. Many, on finding themselves attacked, committed suicide by leaping down the precipice. Others, when the fever came on, flung themselves into the river. Four Bears, the chief, was one of the few who escaped, but he saw his wives and children perish until he alone of his family lived. He walked through the city and wept as he gazed upon the unburied dead. He went into the lodge and covered the bodies there with robes. He went out upon the prairie, and wrapping himself up, sat down on a hill to wait for death by starvation. The traders reasoned with him. He would not live. On the sixth day he had barely strength left to crawl into the city. Returning to his lodge, he lay down beside his dead. On the ninth day his spirit joined theirs.

Of the 2,000 people in the Mandan city scarcely 100 survived the epidemic. Mr. Catlin was under the impression that the few survivors, after having been joined by the Indian paresses, sought death at the hands of the Sioux in battle, and that the Mandans became entirely extinct. Thomas Donaldson, through whom the Catlin collection of Indian paintings reached the National Museum, has corrected this error. He found that twenty-three warriors, forty women, and sixty young people escaped the small-pox and found a refuge with the Ricearees. The Mandans now number about 500. They live in a village near Fort Buford. The agent says of them: "I am sure that there is not nor could there be produced a band of so many whites among whom no little crime has been committed."

INTERESTING JAMAICA.

American Hotels—Riches of the Soil and Climate—The Coming Exhibition.

MILK RIVER, Jamaica, March 4.—If I mistake not, an imaginative writer in one of last year's monthlies, described, with the voice of prophecy, Jamaica as being a dependence of the American republic. Be the prophecy fulfilled or not, certain it is that the island is steadily incre