

T I K Á L.

The ruins of Tikál lie on a limestone plain to the north-east of the Lake of Peten, in approximately lat. $17^{\circ}10'$ N. and long. $89^{\circ}47'$ W.

Bancroft* says: "The ruined structures of Tikál are reported to extend over a space of at least a league, and they were discovered, although their existence had been previously reported by natives, in 1848, by Governor Ambrosio Tut and Colonel Modesto Mendez."

The ruins were visited in the year 1877 by Dr. Bernoulli, who died on his way home, and whose notes have unfortunately not been preserved.

I visited Tikál in 1881 and 1882, setting out each time from Coban, in Vera Paz, and journeying northwards for ten days through the then almost uninhabited forest to the Paso Real, the ferry across the Rio de la Pasion, where the Government maintains a ferryman and serviceable canoes for the passage of the river. Fourteen miles north of the ferry stands the village of Sacluc, or La Libertad, the headquarters of the mahogany cutters. From Sacluc, a short day's ride across the savanna country brings one to the Lake of Petén Itzá and in sight of the island town of Florest or Tayasal, a few hundred yards from the south-east shore of the lake. From Flores we travelled by night in canoes to the north-east shore of the lake to a place called El Remate, marked by one dilapidated rancho, and thence on foot through the forest for about thirty miles to the ruins of Tikál.

The place is absolutely desolate, the nearest Indian villages being San Andrés and some other small hamlets on the borders of the lake.

On neither occasion did my stay at the ruins exceed a week. The site of the ancient town is so thickly covered with forest that during my first visit most of the time was occupied in discovering the position of the more important buildings; and although in 1882 I sent men in advance to clear away some of the trees, I was not able to make a satisfactory survey, and the Plan on Plate LXVII. is very imperfect and merely indicates roughly the shape and size of the principal group of stone buildings near the house in which I camped, and gives approximately the position of the five great Temple Mounds.

The Carved Lintels.

Both the outer and inner doorways of the Temples were covered with lintels formed of a number of beams of hard wood, probably the wood of the Chico Sapote tree. Some of these lintels

*"The Native Races of the Pacific States," Vol. IV, p. 135.