

only are capable of producing. Then there was a movement at the ladder, and up near the ceiling, at the trap-door entrance, could be seen legs—bare legs. Then in a few moments more we were almost dazed. Within a foot of us—almost touching us—was a string of naked savages, their heads thrown back, their arms swinging, their rattles rattling, their feet stamping the floor, and the most unearthly and blood-curdling sounds proceeding, without intermission, from their twenty throats. For my part I felt thankful that I was not the victim of weak nerves, or subject to fits, otherwise I fear I could scarcely have stood such an ordeal. And there was no escaping it when once it had commenced. No sane mortal would think of breaking through that long compact line of swinging, swaying, rattling, stamping, shouting savages. Now they are facing up the room, stamping their feet to the music, swinging their arms up and down, and shouting their Heck ! ha ya ya ya ya ; now, at an understood signal, they have all turned and are facing down the room ; and we expect every moment, as they turn about, that they are going to kick us or hit us, and we involuntarily crouch back into the solid whitewashed wall behind us and give the dancers all the room possible. The dance seems interminable ; it seems to be the established rule that there must be no cessation of the dance until they are all streaming with perspiration, and just ready to drop ; then, a peculiar low rattle is given by the leader, and the dance comes to a sudden end ; but only temporarily so. These twenty dancers ascend the ladder, go out, streaming with perspiration, into the cold frosty air, to the danger, I should think, of their lives, and wend their way through the tall chimney-pots and bake-ovens to another of the seven new houses which requires their stamping and shouting to consecrate it. All that we have to do is to sit still and await the next performance. There is another set of dancers ready to come in, and we do not have to wait long. This time the ‘get up’ is a little different ; some of the dancers are arrayed in fantastic-looking skirts, but to our untrained ears the music sounds to be just the same as that which we heard before. This set goes away and another set comes. Among these is a fearful-looking creature in a black mask, with white eyes and white teeth, and a great grey beard down to his knees. We see five of these dances ; and then we have seen enough and rise to leave. It is past midnight, and we seek our beds for the night.

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CHAPTER XX.—ANCIENT RUINS.

The Hemenway archæological expedition will doubtless effect a great work, and bring to light many matters of interest which are at present hidden in oblivion. This is probably the first effort that has been made in this part of the country to unearth, in a systematic and scientific manner, the hidden records of the past. Ruins of ancient cities, which have