



SEMI-CIVILIZED TARAHUMARI DWELLING, WITH CAVE DWELLINGS ON EITHER SIDE.

in 1888 I saw my first half-cave, half-cliff dwelling in Mexico. Here at its mouth are also found some deserted cliff and cave dwellings, but that on the Urique trail was occupied. At the time I thought it was only some ancient dwelling taken up by a thriftless Indian too lazy to construct a log cabin of his own, and that it was an isolated case not unlike those we see sometimes on the suburbs of some of our big cities, where worthless hermits have been known to live in caves if they could be found. I was yet to learn the fact that these cave and cliff dwellers were to be numbered by the thousands when I penetrated deeper into the mountains. The owner of this subterranean building was at the bottom of the cliff, stark naked except an animal skin around his loins, a pair of rawhide sandals on his feet, bow and arrow in hand, skulking around the nearest bend of the river to get out of sight of my little pack train.

After crossing the Bachochic a steep mountain side is ascended by the usual method adopted by the Mexicans under such circumstances. This is a series of windings backward and forward until the top is reached. In this manner they will ascend a mountain of thirty degrees greater inclination than the steepest wagon road in existence. The turns are seldom over twenty to thirty yards in length, and at a distance the trail looks like a huge spiral drawn on the face of the steep mountain. So steep a grade will they ascend in this way that, when at the top, if the mountain is high, the novice to mule-back riding will invariably be dizzy if he looks toward the bottom. In passing over these corkscrew trails the Tarahumari courier invariably cuts off from ten to twenty feet of each end by placing his hand on the ground and jumping to the trail below, instead of running around the corner which the mule has to follow. In fact, it is by these cut-offs and also by many on the main trail that the Tarahumari courier, probably now the best mountain courier in the world, makes such phenomenal time as that with which he is often credited, for a speed of seventy-five or even 100 miles a day is not unusual with him, a distance that will require a pack train four or five days to make.

Once on top of the mountain the trail leads through beautiful groves of mountain oak and madrona trees, with an underbrush of manzanita or wild apple brush. In the spring of the year this madrona, or strawberry tree, as some people call it, is one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, trees on the North American continent. It is seldom over fifteen to twenty feet high, but has a very large trunk. This trunk is a vivid crimson, not unlike a polished wood, or one carefully varnished, while the leaves are an intense green, and the blossoms, which are quite as numerous as the leaves, are a beautiful pure white like the strawberry blossom, from which the tree gets its name.

Could one be transferred to one of our cities' parks it would attract more attention than all the flowers and forestry planted there. During the remainder of the day the trail leads up steep mountains by winding trails and across pretty mesas or table lands until Guajochic is reached, some thirty miles from Carichic. Crossing La Chalaca River, between the two points, we get our first idea of some of the sculptured rock of which we are to see so much, and which in many a canon makes it seem like an enchanted place, so beautiful is the sculpture and so weird and fantastic are the designs which nature has thus cut out. At Guajochic we find a rude log cabin and camp for the night. The scenery along this mountain stream is most beautiful. The hillsides are from three to four thousand feet high, and cut and sculptured both up and down the river as far as the eye can reach. Near here is a Tarahumari town of much importance, the Naquereochic Pueblo. In this town lives the fastest runner of the Tarahumari nation, so it is said. At Carichic last year, at their great festival of games, he made one hundred Spanish miles in eleven hours and twenty minutes. To anticipate our story somewhat, now that we are back in civilization with a



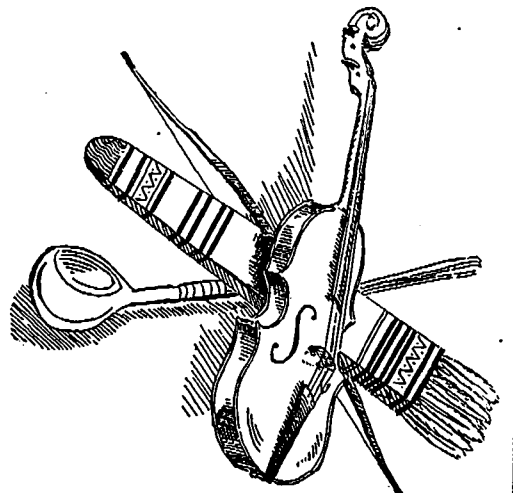
CAVE AND CLIFF DWELLINGS IN TARAHUMARI LAND.

party of these people, it might be remarked that he was a member of one of the parties that I secured, and which awaited me on the Guajochic, but which "stampeded" when they heard that I was coming to take them to the distant and somewhat mysterious United States of America.

About this distance inland from the foothills of the mountains, that is from twenty to forty miles, I think the greater number of Tarahumari towns exist, and if a person travelled about this distance and parallel with the foothills there would hardly be a night that they could not stop in a Tarahumari town. North of here but a short distance is the important town of Sisiguichic, probably the largest in the nation. It is most beautifully situated in a deep canon, and probably contains six hundred souls, all of them Tarahumaris, no Mexican official living in the village. Numerous as the Tarahumaris are in this part of the mountains, very few of them are ever seen, as they generally disappear from sight upon the approach of a stranger. This they are able to do easily, owing to the great noise made by the average Mexican pack train when it is en route. The only way to see them is to travel far ahead on one's mule, and then the person is liable to get lost on the many divergent trails with which the Sierras abound. I have had one or two unpleasant experiences of this nature, and have since

preferred to remain with the pack train. Some of the great trails are, however, so well marked that only a "tender-foot" would ever get lost on them. But along those great trails nearly all the natives, except those grouped in villages, have long since disappeared and made their homes farther away in the deep recesses of the mountains. The so-called civilized Tarahumaris are, of course, the easiest to encounter, while it is among the cliff and cave dwellers that we find it almost impossible to get a sight of their persons; in fact, along the great trails deserted cliff and cave dwellings are very numerous. This is particularly true of the cave dwellings on a level with the trail, but if the cliff dwellers high up on the canon side are nearer the top than the bottom, and they have an outlet by that way, they will continue to occupy them despite the abandonment of the lower buildings.

The second day's journey takes us to a point called Pilarcitas, or the little pillars—referring to sculptured rock in the vicinity. Here springs from the ground water cold as ice the year round. Between the two camps we pass through a canon called the Arroyo de las Iglesias, or the "Canon of the Churches." It is so called on account of the sculptured rock which here abounds, and in the many spires, columns, flying buttresses, and every form of architecture which the imagination can conceive and which often resemble the sides and fronts of so many of our leading churches and cathedrals we get a reason for the name. This extends for fourteen miles between the two camps and is probably one of the best examples of sculptured rock in the known world. Not only are churches well represented in the carved stone, but nearly everything that has any form at all. Perched high upon a column of rock, probably one hundred and fifty feet from where it springs from the side of the canon, is a well-defined bust of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, the bust being fully three times the diameter of the column on which it rests, thus giving it unusual prominence. On another column is a spread eagle, and on another such a good representation of a turkey that even the natives recognized it when I called their attention to it. Just as the "Canon of the Churches" is entered, or at least within a mile of the entrance, cliff dwellers are found on the right hand or northern side. I think the highest cliff dwelling can be safely put at three hundred feet above the level of the stream, although the occupants do not have to descend this far to reach comparatively level ground, as by an inclined trail to the east they can reach a gentle slope on a canon which enters here. These cliff dwellings of the Arroyo de las Iglesias are not built in caves as many of them are, but upon ledges of rocks not unlike those near Flagstaff in Arizona



CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM.