

A LITTLE PEOPLE OF A PAST AGE.

AFTER some delay we obtained a canoe to take us to the eastern coast of Yucatan, only six miles distant. Our object was to examine some ancient structures at a place called Mecco, where pilgrims used to worship every year when on their way to Mugerés and Cozumel, whither they went as Mahometans journey to Mecca.

After the bush was cut down we succeeded in measuring a temple : it was ten feet in height, built on the summit of an artificial mound forty feet high, with stone steps on the east side. In the base of the mound there were very small rooms, in which we were just able to stand upright.

Surrounding the courtyard, where the temple was, there were other apartments of the same size, that may have served as lodgings for pilgrims; only people under three feet high could be comfortable in them. As we stooped to crawl in and out, we conjured up visions of diminutive individuals going back and forth, and up and down the almost perpendicular stairs, in quaint and scanty attire, bearing offerings to propitiate the dear gods of the sea. All the other buildings at Mecco were equally small; and the natives affirm, as a matter of course, that they were built and inhabited by dwarfs. There is another of these strange cities further down the coast, called Nizucte; and though exposed to a visit from hostile Indians, we found there three men, one accompanied by his wife and a pretty daughter of eighteen summers. They were from the village of Dolores, and having put up a thatched roof intended to remain at Nizucte a few days, working hard at scraping a woolly substance from the trunk of a fan-palm called in Spanish "guano." We asked how much they could earn at that work, and were informed that one *aroba* (twenty-five pounds) is worth \$2.50; three people working together obtained that amount in two days. The stuff is used to make cushions and pillows, being as soft as feathers, but firmer. The leaf of the guano is baked underground, and made into very long ropes that serve the fishermen in their boats; the canoe we engaged had no other rope in it. The fresh leaves make excellent fans, that retain a bright green color for eight or ten days. They were put into our hands to keep off mosquitos when we were invited to be seated under the thatched roof. The pretty girl offered us cigarettes; she was astonished when we declined. Not smoke! It was such a consolation! Would we not try just a very little one? She seemed to regard me as an object of pity because I had never used tobacco, and my husband as a very peculiar being for having given up the use of the weed.

These people informed us that "the queer old houses" were close by. The largest building proved to be a diminutive temple, at the entrance of which were two enormous snake heads made of concrete; they were embraced and encircled by gnarled roots that looked like dark-skinned serpents entwining the mineral representations of the same reptiles. Near