

• Massey's Illustrated •

(PUBLISHED MONTHLY.)

A Journal of News and Literature for Royal Homes

New Series.]

TORONTO, CANADA, NOVEMBER, 1890.

[Vol. 2, No. 11.]

Cliff and Cave Dwellers.

AN EXPLORER'S WANDERINGS THROUGH THE FASTNESSES OF THE MOTHER MOUNTAINS OF MEXICO.

By Frederick Schwatka.

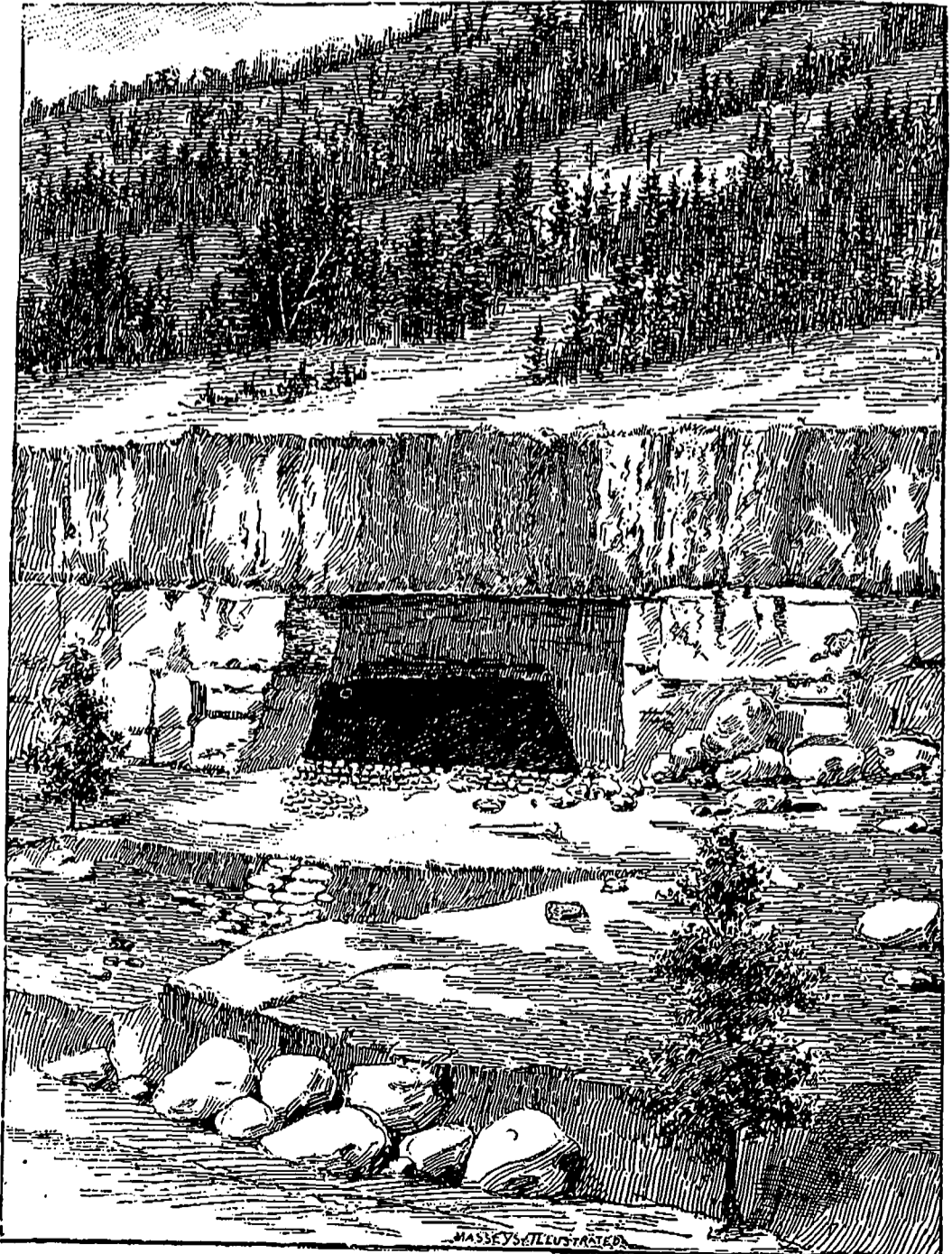
THE expedition to secure a number of living cliff and cave dwellers from the Sierra Madre of Mexico left Chicago in the latter part of last year over the Santa Fé and Mexican Central railroads for the city of Chihuahua, where it may be said its labors began. From here a Mexican diligence is taken to the village of Carichic. The first day's run is seventy miles, which brings us to the Mexican town of Cusiuhiriachic, a place of about seven thousand people. This portion of the route is uninteresting, being timberless, but many fine streams are crossed, in the valleys of which the Mexicans raise much produce for the mining markets.

At Cusiuhiriachic we first begin to see traces of the Tarahumari natives, the wild portion of which tribe, still deeper in the Sierra Madre, we are in search of. These are called the civilized Tarahumaris, and are that portion of the tribe converted by the Jesuits between two and three hundred years ago. While called civilized, they wear but little more than the wild natives of the mountain, and with their bare legs and breasts and a rough serape thrown over their shoulders they have all the appearance of the savages we see on the plains around agency buildings or gathered at railroad stations nearest their reservation. Probably in Cusiuhiriachic a dozen may be found, but they become more numerous as we proceed westward. The Mexicans use these so-called civilized Tarahumaris somewhat after the manner that peons or slaves used to be used, rarely giving them over one-half, or even only one-third, what Mexicans are given for the same work. It is said that when Mexico was under Spanish rule the people called "gente de razon"—that is, intelligent people of the upper classes—were even more severe upon these poor natives, and forced them to run as couriers, for which their swiftness of foot well adapted them, and perform other services without any compensation whatever, the only incentive for the service being the fear of punishment if they did not perform it promptly and successfully. It is said that this is the reason that there exists to-day so many of the Tarahumaris who have not been converted, and who are called gentiles by the catholic Indians. It is among these gentiles and among their lowest classes that we find the cliff and cave dwellers, the rest of the gentiles living in brush houses and wandering from place to place like nomads.

The next stage made by diligence is about forty miles to the village of Carichic. Timber is now seen in plentiful quantities, although hardly serviceable for lumber, and the country passes from an agricultural to one where grazing only can be had,

but of the very finest quality. Here the Tarahumaris people—for I do not care to call them Indians, so radically different are their habits and appearances from those I have been used to all my life in the western states and territories—begin to be more numerous. In fact, Carichic can almost be called a Tarahumari town, although the predominating influence and power are Mexican. Of course these are the civilized Tarahumaris, so-called. Not over five miles from Carichic can be found cave and cliff dwellings, although they are now abandoned or used only as store-houses for the storage of corn and such material as the civilized Tarahumaris raise in the very limited valleys of the Carichic and Bachochic rivers, which come together near here.

We can now say that we are on the borders of Tarahumari land and our labors become more interesting. We are also on the foothills of the Madre Mountains and the diligence is left behind and pack and riding mules are taken. From Carichic a number of trails radiate toward the west leading to the various Tarahumari towns and to the great mining camps still further west on the Pacific slope of the mountains. All of them are picturesque in the extreme. It is the one toward Guajocho, one day's march from here, that we take after our pack train arrangements are made. Within an hour after leaving we cross the Bachochic River, a beautiful stream coming from the north. It was on its banks near the Urique trail from Carichic that,



CAVE DWELLING IN ARROYO DE LOS IGLESIAS.