

to me. I had never heard it advanced until it was made the basis of censure upon me in several newspapers. I will not refer to the numerous instances of reputable men and women who have committed this sin without loss of character in past and present times. I will simply leave it to the common sense of readers to say whether there is anything flagitious in withholding one's name from an entirely impersonal work of fiction. It was hard for me to understand why there should be such a feeling about so trifling a matter, until I saw an elaborate article on the subject in "The Critic." One phrase I will quote, showing with what gentle persuasion the writer, in the words of the nursery song, woos anonymous authors who write poor books "to come and be killed." "The whole world," he says, "calls upon you for your name, that it may avoid, condemn, mistrust, destroy you." Even this appeal, I think, will not be sufficient to tempt me out of my incognito.

My motive in withholding my name is simple enough. I am engaged in business in which my standing would be seriously compromised if it were known that I had written a novel. I am sure that my practical efficiency is not lessened by this act; but I am equally sure that I could never recover from the injury it would occasion me if known among my own colleagues. For that positive reason, and for the negative one that I do not care for publicity, I resolved to keep the knowledge of my little venture in authorship restricted to as small a circle as possible. Only two persons besides myself know who wrote "The Bread-Winners." One of these is an eminent man of letters, who had the kindness to read my manuscript, and whose approval encouraged me to print it. I am absolutely sure of the discretion of both these gentlemen, and, I hope I may add, of my own. I offered to give my name to Messrs. Harper & Brothers, who have published the story in book-form, if they should require it, but they had the kindness and consideration to decline. I am aware that this assertion is not in accordance with current rumors. I have met several persons who tell me they have talked with the author about the book, and two who gave me to understand, in the strictest confidence, that they wrote it themselves. But the unimportant truth is as I have stated it. I am ashamed to say so much about a matter of such infinite insignificance, but I would like, if possible, to put a stop to a discussion which has become ridiculous.

In conclusion, I beg to offer my sincere apologies to two or three distinguished writers who have been compelled to defend themselves against the accusation of having written "The Bread-Winners." Perhaps it may please them, hereafter, when suffering under undeserved strictures, to reflect upon the absurdity of *this* charge and the worthlessness of criticism which could ever have ascribed such a book to such names.

The Author of "The Bread-Winners."

NEW YORK, February 1, 1884.

The Lorillard-Charnay Collection of Central American Antiquities.

M. DÉSIRÉ CHARNAY'S words, written in the "North American Review" in 1882, have come true. Speaking of his labors in Central America, particularly

at Lorillard City, and the impressions of inscriptions and mural ornaments which he made there, he says: "We have taken casts of some superb bas-reliefs, and when they are put on exhibition in Washington and Paris they will excite no little astonishment." The collection which has recently arrived at the National Museum arouses not only the astonishment but the enthusiasm of the archaeologists of Washington, as it will of all intelligent beholders when the hall shall be thrown open to the public.

M. Charnay first visited Central America in 1857, under authority of the French Government, and, in 1863, published the results of his investigations, in his work upon the "Cités et Ruines Américaines," together with a large series of photographs. In 1880 he was made chief of a much more elaborate expedition, undertaken at the instance of Mr. Pierre Lorillard, and sustained by the munificence of that gentleman and of the governments of France and the United States. He has visited in succession the antique cities of Mexico, Guatemala, and Yucatan, everywhere taking casts of inscriptions and carvings, photographing temples and statues, making measurements and notes, and submitting all things to the closest scientific scrutiny. With the aid of a force of twenty or thirty hired laborers, supplemented by others liberally furnished at various times by the Mexican Government, temples and palaces were exhumed, tombs explored, fallen columns reërected, inscriptions cleansed, and all the details of a rigorous survey carefully attended to.

The collection which is now being installed in the National Museum represents the first-fruits of his endeavors. It consists of a series of casts of some of the most interesting stone carvings which adorn the ruined antique palaces and temples of the Toltecs. They are from Palenque and Mexico, from Chichen-Itza and Merida and Lorillard City, and from other noted localities. There are in all eighty-two pieces of various shapes and sizes, the majority being in the form of rectangular tablets of inscriptions. The remainder are walls and altars, columns and capitals, door-ways and steps, and other similar objects. To describe them all would be impossible in this communication, but the reader may not weary if the salient features of a few are pointed out. Perhaps the richest part of the collection is from Palenque. Among the casts from this locality we find the altar of the famous Temple of the Cross, regarding the significance of the central emblem of which so much discussion has been aroused. This altar, which is now being restored in the Museum to conform as nearly as possible to the original, is not easily described. For those who have glanced at the figures in Waldeck or Rau or Bancroft it is unnecessary. In the center is a cross of almost Latin proportions, surrounded by a variety of irregular and fantastic ornaments, and surmounted by a large bird, whose head is also wrapped in an unintelligible mass of plumes and pendants. This bird is believed to be the royal trogon, or "quetzal," although I have heard it facetiously termed the "old rooster." On the right of and facing the cross is the figure of a priest, in scant clothing and ponderous head-dress, who holds in his outstretched arms a curious, elongate, bird-like object. On the opposite side of the cross is a shorter person of self-possessed mien, who stands on a small, square block, and holds loosely

in his hand, in a vertical position, a short, irregularly shaped rod. Behind each figure is a tablet covered with elaborate inscriptions in large hieroglyphics. These, as well as all the other inscriptions in the collection, are undecipherable at the present time, although several archæologists in Washington and Paris believe themselves far on the road toward the discovery of their true meaning.* It is probably well known that the original right-hand tablet of this celebrated altar has been in the National Museum for many years. On the front face of the two side walls, which stand out at right angles from the back of the altar, are two additional nearly life-size figures, known as the "old man" and the "young man"—names which are significant of their attitudes and bearing.

A second altar, having a remarkable resemblance to the preceding, but in which the positions of the large and small human figures and of the bird are reversed, was described by a traveler in 1879 as having been discovered by him in a small building at a stone's throw from the well-known temple. His story found little credence among archæologists; but to-day there stands in the National Museum a cast which is undoubtedly that of the group which he described and the truthfulness of his narrative is confirmed.

Another very similar altar with inscriptions is that of the so-called "Temple of the Sun." The sun takes the place of the cross of the preceding shrines, and is represented by a rotund face, hung like a shield at the intersection of two spears which cross.

The carvings from the circumference of the "sun stone" of Mexico City, which so narrowly escaped being pounded into paving-stones not many years ago, form an interesting object. Fifteen men of about half natural size hold fifteen others of equal proportions by the hair. Gama would have us believe that they represent religious dancers; but the mind at once recognizes in the attitudes of the figures the probable correctness of Berra's view, that they depict the conquerors and the conquered. "The central cavity in the center of this stone (at the top)," says Charnay, "which formerly received the hearts of the victims offered to the sun god, is now used as a bath by the doves which frequent the court-yard of the Museum (of Mexico)."

Another procession of warriors is from the walls of one of the great chambers of the "Tennis-court" at Chichen-Itza in Yucatan. The wall is sixteen feet in

height and more in length. There are five rows of warriors, one above another, many carrying in the one hand three or more arrows or rods, and in the other a curiously formed object, believed by M. Charnay to be a sacrificial knife.

The columns and capitals of Chichen-Itza look heavy and unskillfully formed, when we remember the fair proportions of those of Greece, but we must not be too ungracious in our comparisons.

A curious small bas-relief from Lorillard City represents two persons approaching each other, each bearing in his outstretched hand a large cross of peculiar shape. The arms of the crosses end in round knobs, and from the summit of each extends a long curved feather. The significance of the group is unknown.

A vein of resemblance runs through all the sculptures. There are warriors and priests, conquerors and slaves, spears and arrows and feathers. The profiles of all the faces show much similarity, the features having a strong Semitic cast.

But the interest of the observer centers at last in the odd hieroglyphics of the inscriptions. Their very inscrutability arouses in the mind an ardent desire to know their meaning. The mysterious dots and bars, the rudely carved faces and circles, provoke profound meditation.

Who shall say what new light may be thrown upon the history of American civilization when the inscribed tablets, now mute, shall be made to speak? Perhaps we shall learn only of names of gods and of seasons and feast days; but we hope for more. If the conjectures of M. Charnay should be established as facts, we must bring the period of the rise and downfall of the Toltec civilization in Central America within seven centuries. It may be childish to desire a thought-confounding antiquity. The tendency to-day, among the leading students of India and Egypt and China, and even among geologists, is in the opposite direction. The doctrine of the slow development of a people is no dogma; but to ascribe to works of human art an antiquity, in comparison with which the hills are young, would seem to be a manifest absurdity.

The hall in which the casts are now being arranged is scarcely suited for exhibiting them properly, and it is probable that in course of the winter they will be transferred to another room.

Frederick W. True.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

*The reader who is interested in this subject is referred to a paper by Prof. Edward S. Holden, in this magazine for December, 1881, entitled "The Hieroglyphs of Central America," in which the writer lays down principles for the study of these inscriptions. The illustrations of that paper include cuts of several of the pieces now in the National Museum. It should be borne in mind, however, that, although the majority of them are from the drawings of a no less skillful artist than Catherwood, they do not represent the originals with photographic accuracy. A number of important errors occur in the delineations of the glyphs of the inscriptions.

BRIC-À-BRAC.

A Seville Love-Song.

(BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DANUBE RIVER.")

I.

LOOK down from your window, dearest:
The mists of night are fled,
Venus, of stars the clearest,
Burns just above your head.
I am not at your sweet eyes' level,
Nor above, where the jasmines blow
Round the golden towers of Seville,—
I am here, at your feet, below!

II.

Send me a flower, dearest,
A word from that common speech,
To all mankind the clearest,
Which peasant, like king, may reach.
I am here, as it were, in December,
And you are in May, up above—
Oh! send me a bud to remember
The spring's first promise of love!

Hamilton Aidé.