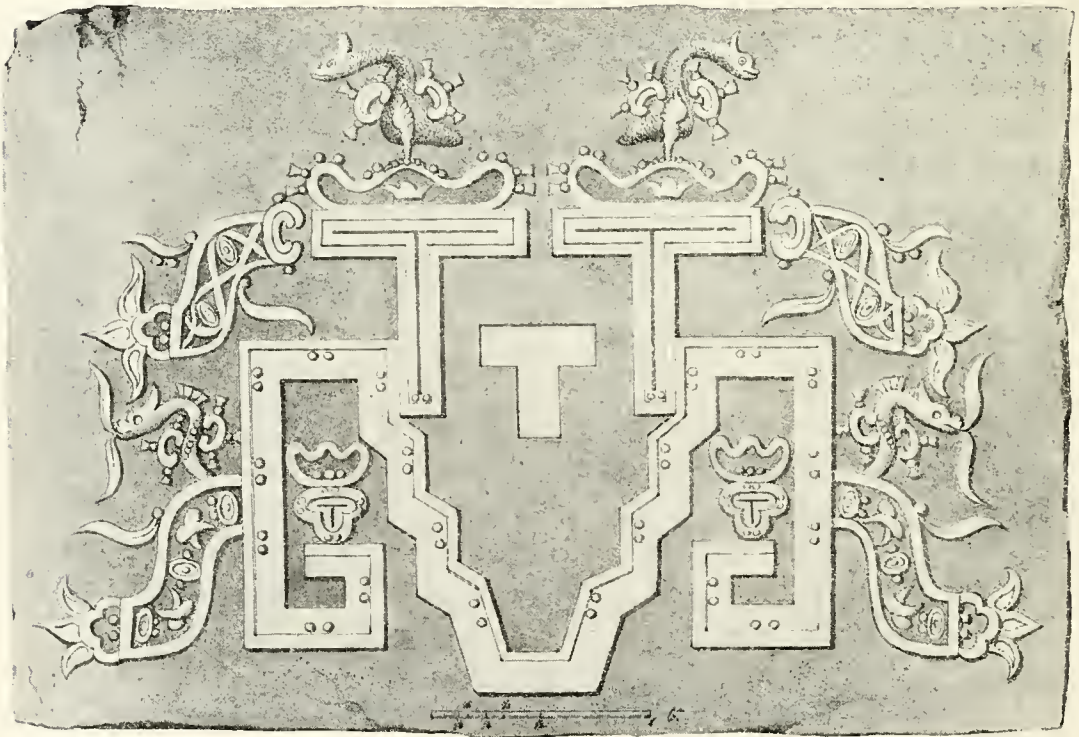


THE CROSS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE religious use of the cross (i. e., the figure of two intersecting lines) was discovered among the Indians of Central America to the great astonishment of the Roman priests who ac-



T-CROSSES ON AN ALTAR TABLET OF A TEMPLE IN CENTRAL AMERICA.²

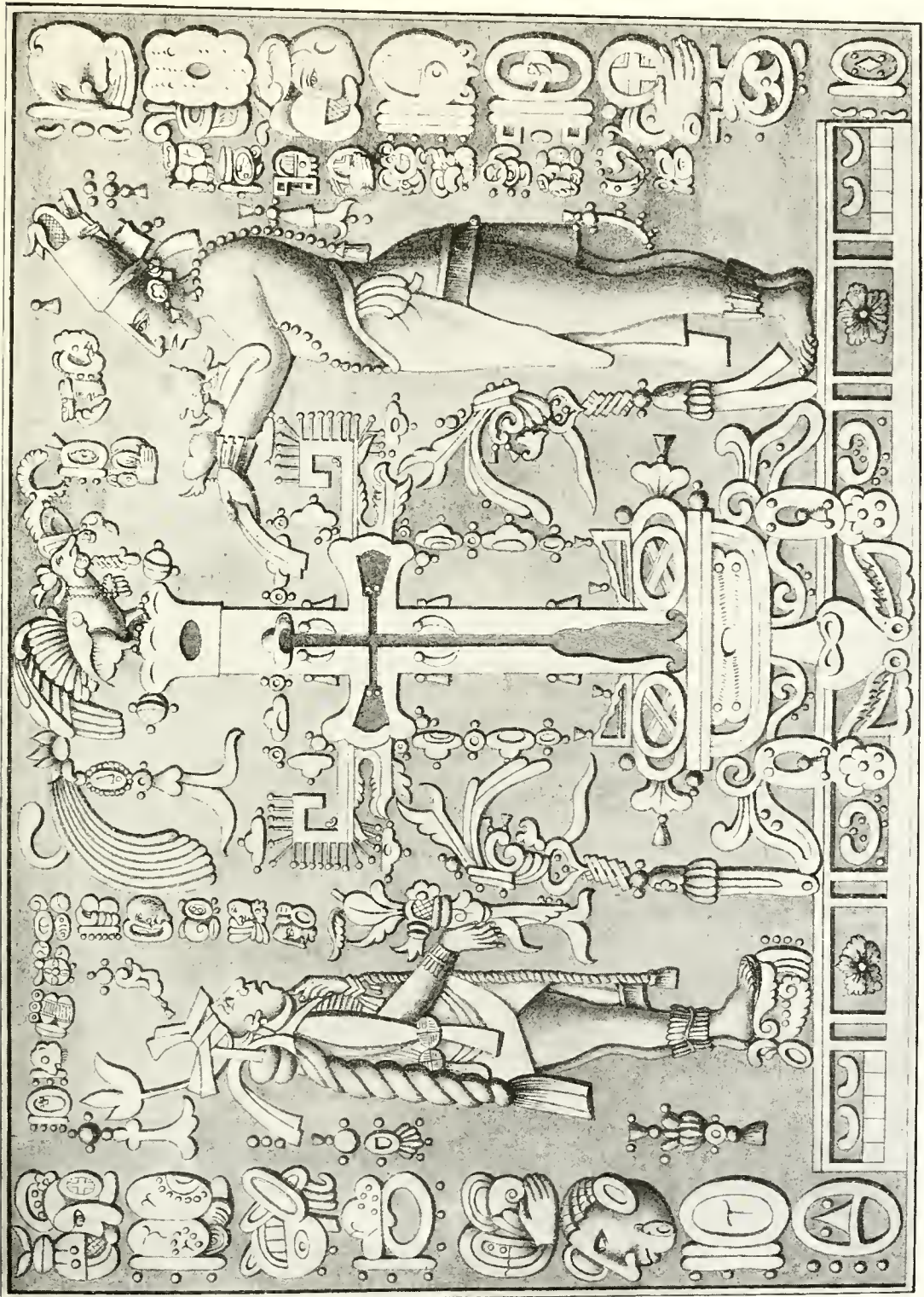
companied the Spanish conquerors; and the deep significance the cross must have had among them appears from the two splendid "Temples of the Cross" among the ruins of Chiapas, Yucatan.³

¹ The author expresses his deep obligation to the Bureau of American Ethnology, the Chicago Public Library, and the Field Columbian Museum, for the kind assistance rendered him in his investigations, especially in procuring illustrations.

² From Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, Part III.

³ See W. H. Holmes, *Archæological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico*, Field Columbian Museum. Publication No. 16. (Antbr. Ser. I., i.)

The inhabitants of that country were sun worshippers, and the cross may with them (as it still does with many of the Indians of



THE ALTAR TABLET OF THE TEMPLE OF THE CROSS NEAR PALANQUE.¹ (See p. 236 ff.)

he U. S.) have meant the world, or, properly speaking, the earth, with its four directions—North, South, East, and West; or the sun

¹ From Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, Part, III.

with its rays; or a tree as the symbol of vegetation; or the fecundating rain penetrating the earth; or the combination of two principles positive and negative, male and female, etc., into one.

Prescott, in his *History of Mexico*, on mentioning the crosses frequently found in Yucatan, says: "It is a curious fact that the cross was consecrated as the object of religious worship, both in the New World and in religions of the Old, where the light of Christianity had never come."

Count Goblet d'Alviella sums up the situation in these words:

"When the Spaniards took possession of Central America, they found in the native temples real crosses, which were regarded as the symbol, sometimes of a



NECKLACES WITH PENDANTS, FOUND IN THE SCULPTURES OF MEXICO AND YUCATAN.²

divinity at once terrible and beneficent—Tlaloc, sometimes of a civilising hero, white and bearded—Quetzacoalt, stated by tradition to have come from the East. They concluded from this that the cross had reached the Toltecs through Christian missions of which all trace was lost; and, as legend must always fix upon a name, they gave the honor to St. Thomas, the legendary apostle of all the Indies. Although this proposition has again found defenders in recent congresses of Americanists, it may be regarded as irrevocably condemned. It has been ascertained beyond all possibility of future doubt that the cross of pre-Columbian America is a kind of compass card, that it represents the four quarters whence comes the rain, or rather the four main winds which bring rain, and that it thus became the symbol of the god Tlaloc, the dispenser of the celestial waters, and, lastly, of the mythical personage known by the name of Quetzacoalt."

J. G. Müller, in his *History of the Religions of the American Aborigines* (on page 496) informs us that on the Island of Cozumel,

¹ *Migration of Symbols*, pp. 12-13.

² A .R., 80-81, plate XLV, facing p. 256.

the god of rain was worshipped under the symbol of a cross. He says: ¹

“One is accustomed to looking upon the cross as an exclusively Christian symbol, and wherever the cross is found the suspicion arises that there must have been some later Christian influence. This was the general opinion of the older Spanish historians, who regarded the crosses found in America as so many witnesses which prove that the Apostle St. Thomas had here preached the Gospel. . . . On account of the simplicity of the shape of the cross, we must not be surprised that it is found also among the ancient peoples of the Western Hemisphere as a symbol of nature. The Indians, Egyptians, Assyrians, and Phenicians used it. It appears on the head of the Ephesian goddess.² An explanation of the meaning of this natural symbol is, on account of its very simplicity, difficult, because it admits many possibilities. The attempts heretofore made to regard the cross as the key of the Nile, as a Phallus, as the sign of the four seasons, may be combined in the one idea of the fertilising power of nature. It is for this reason that the cross appears in combination with the solar gods and the Ephesian goddess; and thus the symbol would also be appropriate for the rain god of the tropical countries, whom it represents, according to the testimony of the natives.

“Among the Chinese, too, rain denotes fertilisation, and the Greek myth of the golden rain of Zeus, which coming from the clouds falls into the lap of Danaë, can have no other significance. It appears, therefore, that wherever we meet an aboriginal worship of the cross in Central America, we are probably confronted with the idea of the fertilising rain which crosses the soil of the motherly earth.”

“Stone crosses are not only worshipped in Cozumel and Chiapa, but also over the whole of Yucatan.³

“Siguenza speaks of an Indian cross which was discovered in the cave Mixteca Baja. In addition, ancient crosses were discovered under the ruins of the Island of Zaputero, in Lake Nicaragua, but they were of a different form, representing a kind of head-dress.⁴ Further, old crosses of white marble were discovered on the Island of St. Ulloa⁵ in the Pacific, and wooden crosses were worshipped in the State of Oaxaca,⁶ and near Guatulco, or Aguatolco,⁷ and in the country of the Zapatecas. In North America, we can trace the existence of the cross as far as Florida.⁸ In South America, too, crosses are not infrequently mentioned.⁹ Also, in the eastern parts of Asia, and on the islands of the Pacific, cross-worship prevails; further, in eastern India, on the Nadak Islands, and on the islands of the Mulgrave-Archipelago, etc.”

¹ For the sake of making the passage more readable, we relegate the ponderous quotations to footnotes.

² See Lipsius, *De cruce* I., 8. Baumgarten, *Gesch.*, v. A. (1752) I., p. 203. Creuzer, *Symbolik*, I., p. 332 ff. II. p. 176. Augusti Chr. Arch. III., p. 599.

³ Cf. Cogolludo, II., ch. 12. Gomara, *Hist. gen.* (1554) p. 68, 70. Picard, 165. Clavigo, I., 353, Prescott, I., 180. Squier, *Nicar.*, 493. The same is true of Mixtecas and Querétaro in Northern Mexico, according to Clavigo (I., 353) and Boturini.

⁴ See Squier, *Nicaragua*, pp. 492 and 309.

⁵ Juan Diaz in Ternaux Comp. X., 45.

⁶ Mühlentpfordt, I., 254.

⁷ Hazart, 285.

⁸ Irving, *Conq. Florida*, II., 206 and 219. Also, Cibola, Castaneda in Ternaux Comp. IX., 165

⁹ Gomara, III., 32. Antonio Ruiz, *Conquista Espirituel del Paraguay*, §§ 23, 25. Lafiteau, I., 425-450. Hazart, 284. Baumgarten, II., 219. I., 197. Müller, *Gesch. d. a. Urr.*, §§ 85, 75. Garcilasso, II., 3.

Prof. J. G. Müller goes too far in explaining all these crosses as symbols of the rain god. The probability is that many of them are symbols of the sun, and others of the earth. Some slanting crosses signify death.

Among the ruins of Copán a strangely ornamented cross has been discovered which is here reproduced after the drawing of Heinrich Meye. Dr. Julius Schmidt describes it as follows:¹



A MAYA CROSS OR VOTIVE TABLET AT COPÁN.²

“It is undoubtedly a votive tablet, representing the worshipper making his offering to the Cross, the Maya divinity of the rain which awakens vegetation to new life. The form of the cross is a very curious one, not, however, destitute of a certain symmetry. The corresponding portions are not arranged in the way customary with us, either in horizontal or vertical correspondence, but diagonally, as is indicated by the letters inserted in the drawing. But there is no identity of the corresponding parts; it is merely a general similarity. The inner edges of the

¹ Schmidt and Meye's, *Stone Sculptures of Copán and Quiriguá*. London: Asher & Co.

² The tablet stands in a court of the ruins at the foot of the eastern pyramid.

rims are trimmed with beads (could they be rain-drops?), the outer edges with tooth-shaped projections. The figure sits with its legs crossed beneath it, and holds out in the palm of its right hand an object of uncertain nature placed on a shallow vessel, whose indefinite form escapes identification. The face turned in profile shows a large, almost square eye, a large ear adorned with a ring; the rest of the face suggests a crab as the model. Upon the breast is hung from the neck by a string of beads a medallion in the shape of a face, which has the features merely indicated, and is set in beads and a halo of rays. It is probably of the same sort as an object found by Colonel Galindo in the vault H, carved in a green-colored stone, intended to be strung on a cord as shown by two perforations. From the sleeve-cuffs on the figure's wrists we judge that the body is to be understood as clad. The ornamental free end of the girdle hangs down over the feet.

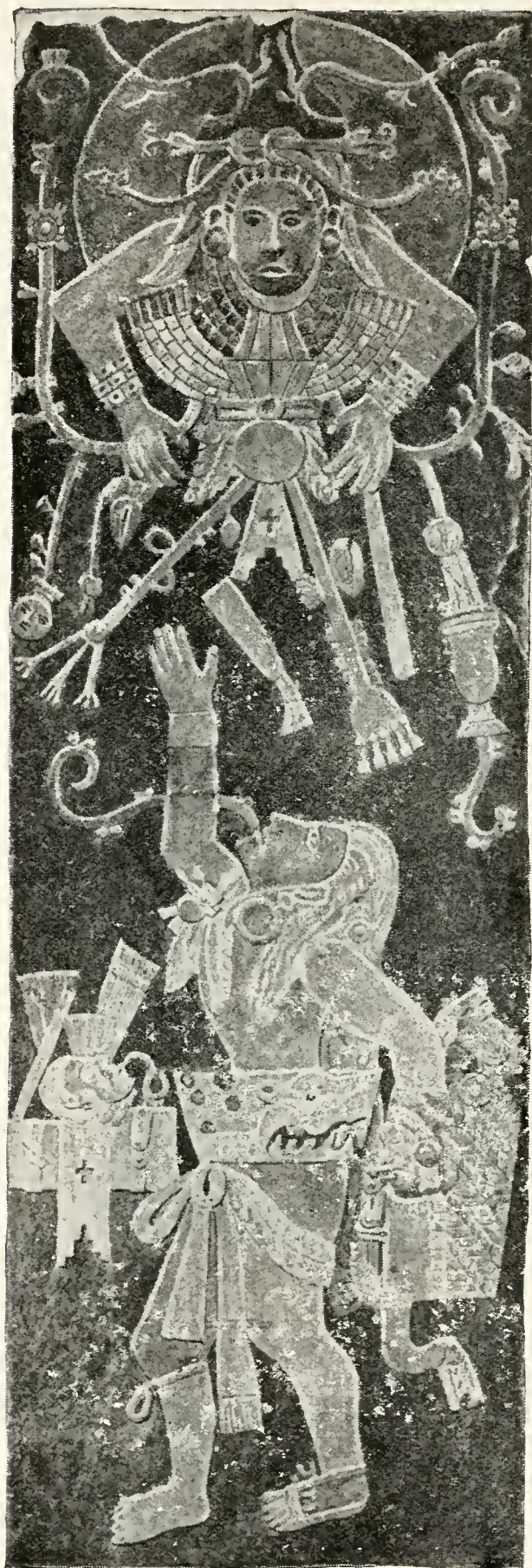
Dr. Julius Smith is a good authority on the significance of Central American monuments and his interpretation of this cross as the Rain-god who awakens vegetation to new life may be accepted as probable; yet I can find no suggestion of a crab in the figure, and am inclined to regard its head as that of a cock. The face at any rate has a bird's bill, and is crowned with a cock's comb.

The beads (with one exception where the artist's copy may be at fault) are here as well as the beads of the necklace of the solar face which is nodding over the head of the Mexican High Priest (reproduced further down on page 242) always five in number.

The figure that appears on the cross cannot, in our opinion, be "the worshipper making his offering," but is the deity worshipped.

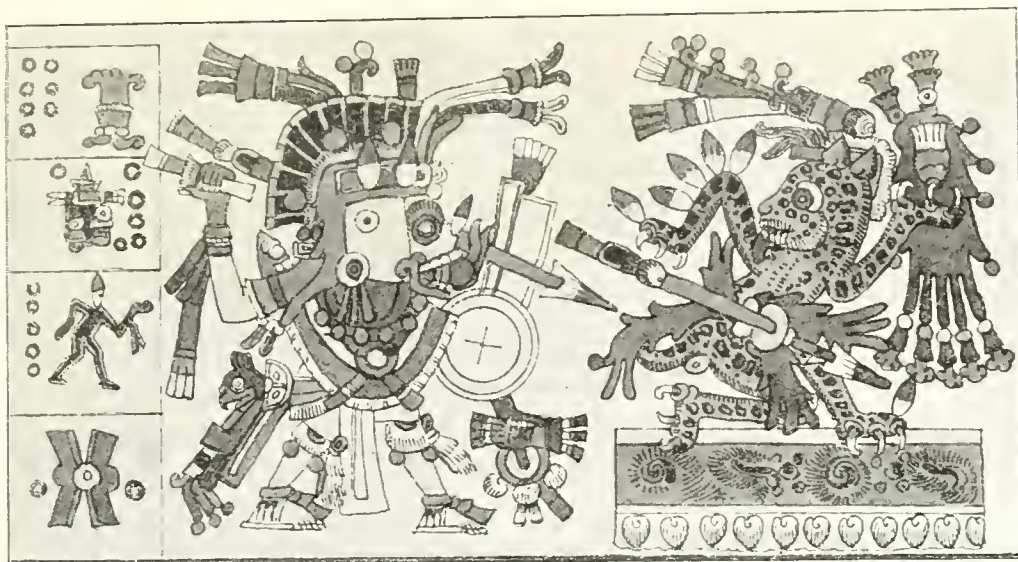
The indigenous races of America are deeply religious; they are misguided and superstitious but devout to a fault, for they do not shrink from the ultimate consequences that result from the faith that is in them. We reproduce from the monuments of Guatemala two slabs representing scenes of worship that express a great intensity of religious devotion. The attitude of the priests is very expressive; the prayer rises up in the shape of a graceful curve, and the gifts of the deity are made visible in symbols the significance of which is still a secret. (See p. 230.)

Judging from the halo-like disc of the tablet on the left hand, which is twelve feet long and three feet high, the deity represents some celestial body. According to Dr. Habel it is the goddess of the moon. The worshipping priest has a skull in his right hand, and on the altar before him lies a decapitated human head. An equilateral cross appears both on a pendant hanging from a disc on the breast of the deity and on the altar cover. (See *A. R.*, 88-89, pp. 614-615.)



GUATEMALA MONUMENTS. (R. A., 88-89, pp. 614 and 647.)

The monument on the right-hand side shows a man imploring an unknown deity, probably (as suggested by branches and flowers)



THE FIGHT OF THE SOLAR DEITY WITH THE TIGER DEVIL.¹ (See p. 232.)



FIGHT BETWEEN BEL MERODACH AND TIAMAT.

From an ancient Assyrian bas-relief, now in the British Museum. After Budge.

the god of resurrected vegetation. The Latin cross above the head of the deity, as well as the little cross hanging down under

¹From an ancient Mexican manuscript-painting, preserved in the Library of the Institute at Bologna. Reproduced from the colored fac-simile of Kingsborough's Mexican Antiquities, Vol. II, plate ii.

the right hand of the god, may not be without significance. The priest holds a skull in his left hand, indicating the human sacrifices with which the god's favor had to be procured. (See *A. R.*, 88-89, p. 647.)

Kingsborough, in his *Mexican Antiquities*, publishes a number of ancient documents which show the religious importance of the cross among the tribes of Central America. An interesting picture of an ancient manuscript, the original of which is preserved in the library of the Institute at Bologna,¹ shows a deity, apparently a sun god, whose emblem or coat of arms is an equilateral cross on a round shield, driving away an evil demon with claws and tail. The god and the monster have the same attitude that can be observed in the Assyrian bas-relief of the fight between the god Merodach



ZEUS CONQUERING TYPHOEUS.

Picture of an antique water pitcher. (Baumeister, *Denkm. d. class. Alt.*, p. 2135)

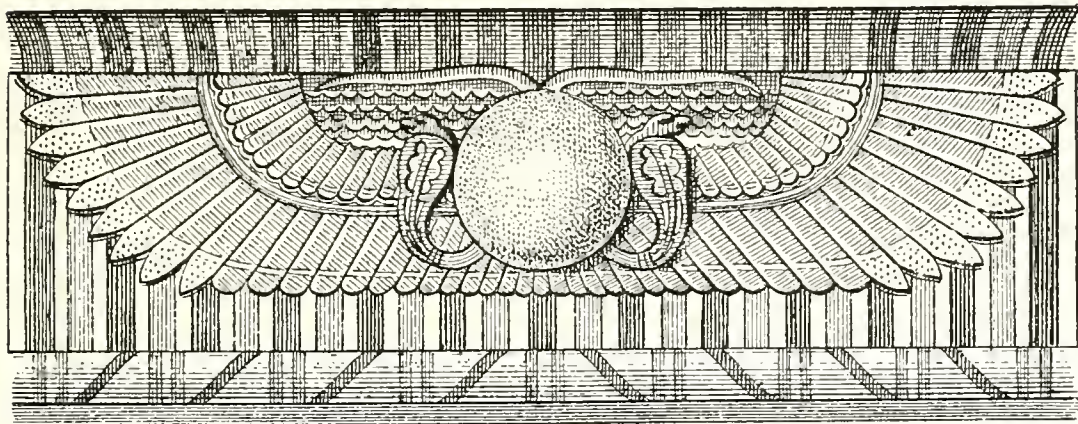
and Tiamat. The Devil, in the Mexican manuscript a tiger demon, in the Assyrian bas-relief a lion-shaped beast, has claws and a tail, and retires at the threatening approach of the god, who boldly attacks him with a thunderbolt; and mark that in both cases the attitudes of the combatants are similar, and that also the fingers of the right hand are wrongly placed in their relation to the thumb in the same way as they ought to appear on the left hand!

The idea that the sun-god struggles with the demon of darkness is almost universal. Thus Ahura Mazda smites Ahriman the fiend, and Zeus conquers Typhoeus.

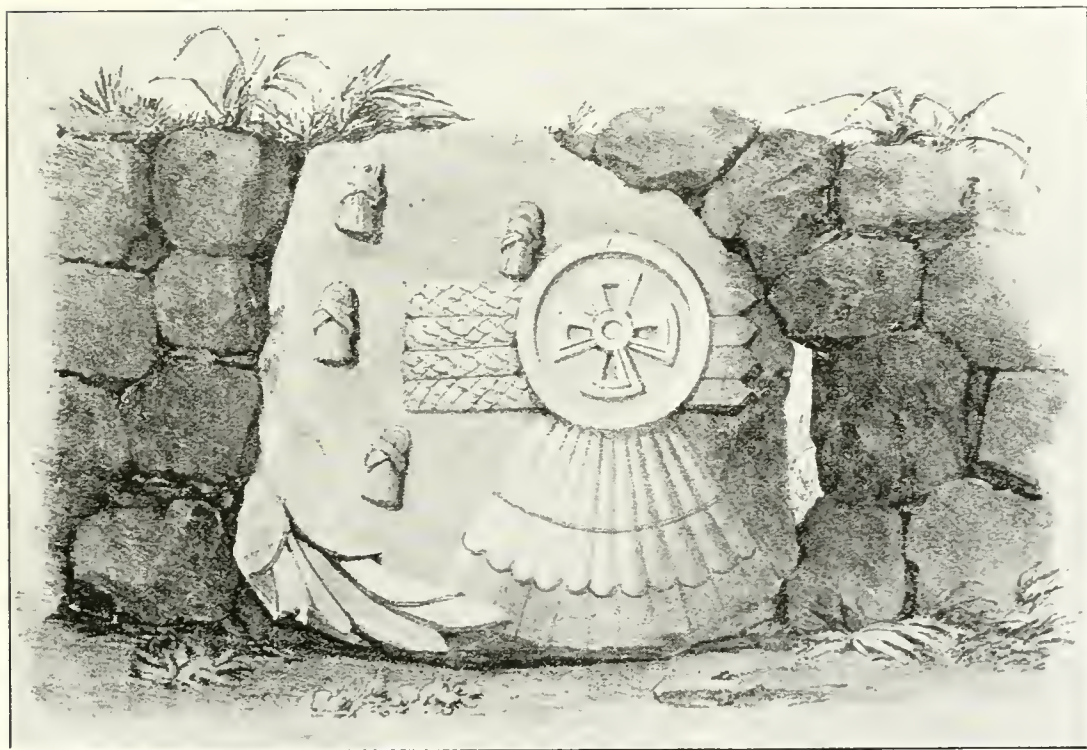
Judging from the style of architecture and sculpture, we may say that the tribes who built these temples had reached a civilisa-

¹ Kingsborough. *M. A.* Vol. II., plate 11.

tion resembling in many respects that of the early Carthaginians who offered human sacrifices on crosses to the sun. There is a striking similarity between the architectural styles of ancient Mex-



THE SOLAR DISC OF THE EGYPTIANS.



THE CROSS IN THE SOLAR DISC ON AN ANCIENT MONUMENT OF CENTRAL AMERICA.¹

ico and of Egypt and Assyria ; and we cannot doubt that the winged discs with tail feathers represent the sun on the monuments of the Old World as well as of the New.

We reproduce winged solar discs from the monuments of

¹*Monuments of New Spain*, by M. Dupaix. From original drawings executed by order of the King of Spain. Part II., Vol. IV.

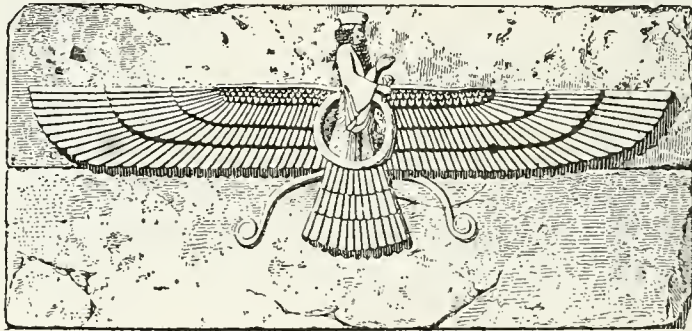
Egypt, of Assyria, and of Persia, in addition to the winged disc of Mexico. The cross that appears in the last one mentioned is an exact counterpart to an Assyrian cross which we reproduced from the Layard's *Monuments* in the last number of *The Open Court* (p. 155). If the Hebrews had been artists we might easily have enriched our collection by a winged solar disc of Jerusalem, for the



THE SOLAR DISC OF THE ASSYRIANS.

Jews shared with their neighbors the same conception of Zebaoth, the Lord of the starry host, as being "the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings."¹

While the Egyptian and the Assyrian civilisation exhibits bold strength and tenacity, the Mexican is distinguished by artistic

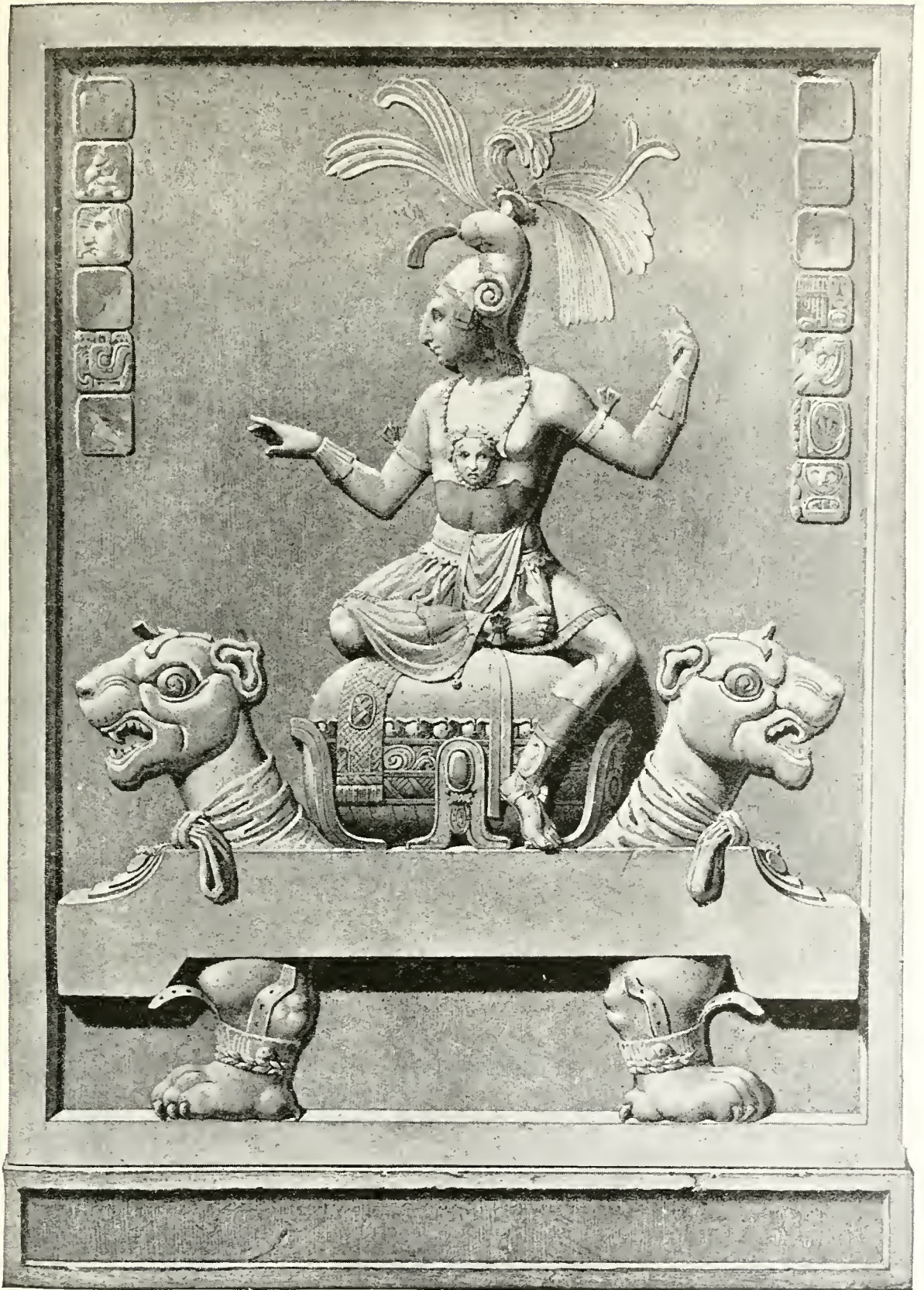


AHURA MAZDA, THE LORD OMNISCIENT.

The God of the Persians whose visible symbol is the sun.

taste, which is still noticeable in their descendants even to-day. We need but look at the altar tablet called the *beau-relief* and compare the freedom of its treatment to works of Egyptian or Assyrian art, to recognise the artistic superiority of the Mexican in spite of his many other shortcomings. There are many Raphaels slum-

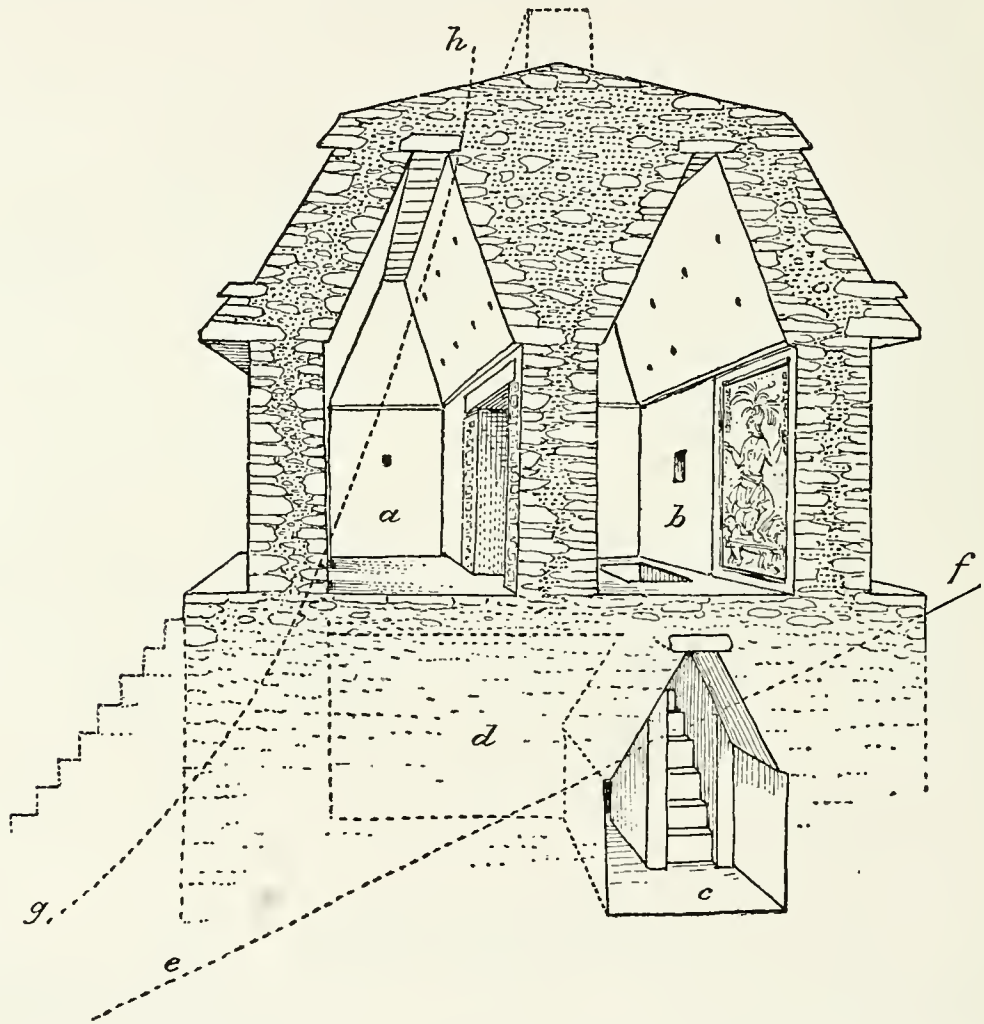
¹See Malachi IV, 2.

THE ALTAR TABLET OF THE BEAU RELIEF.¹

¹ Reproduced from W. H. Holmes, *ibid.*, plate XX, facing p. 190.

bering in the undeveloped potencies of these tribes, and we may expect great things of them in sculpture and painting, if the spread of Western civilisation will give them a good training and an acquaintance with the artistic ideals of our age.

The most interesting cross of the American Indians has been discovered in a temple near Palenque, called the Temple of the Cross No. 1. The site is covered with temples which exhibit unequivocal traces of an indigenous sun-worship. The Temple of the



THE TEMPLE OF THE BEAU RELIEF, NEAR PALENQUE.¹

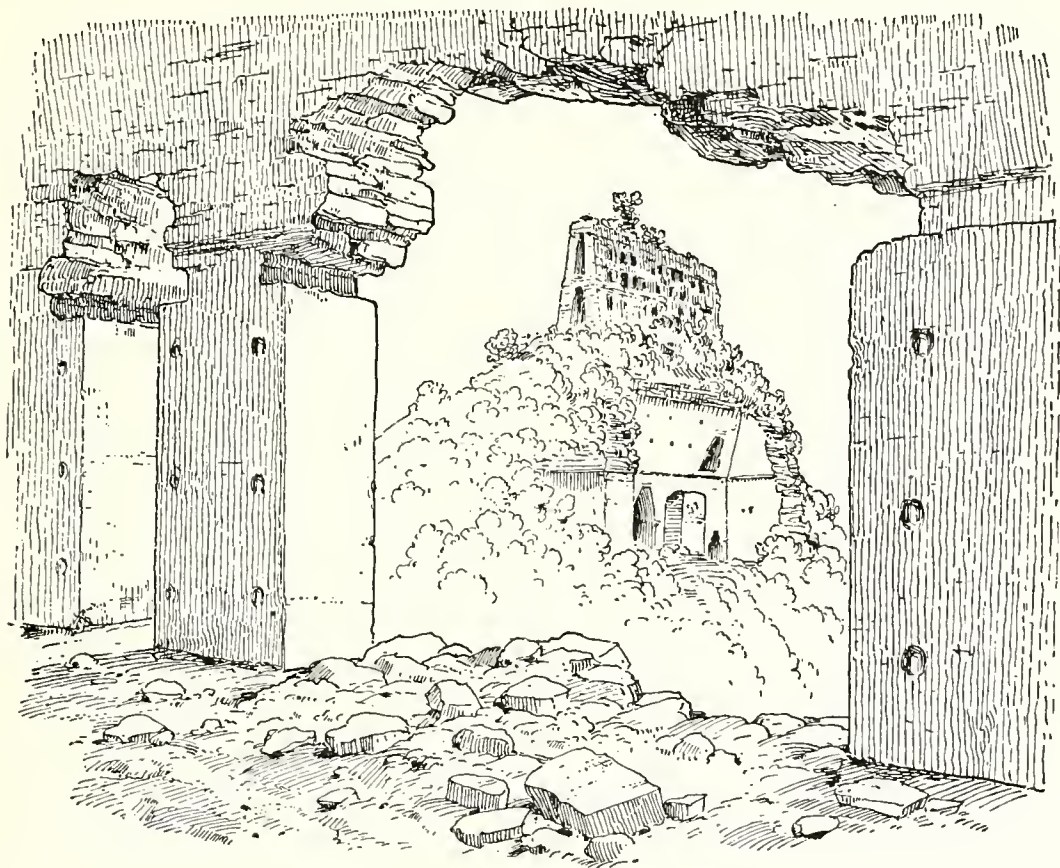
a, Vestibule showing entrance to sanctuary bordered by glyphic inscriptions. *b*, Sanctuary showing the Beau Relief and entrance to basement stair. *c*, Basement chamber at foot of stair north extension. *d*, East extension of basement chamber. *e-f*, Slope of mountain side. *g-h* Line indicating portion of front of building destroyed.

Beau Relief, so called by archæologists of to-day, contains the most beautiful piece of sculptural art of the aboriginal Indians, the so-called tablet of the Beau-Relief, representing a picture of a god. Two other temples are called "the Temples of the Cross." One of

¹ Reproduced from William H. Holmes. Field Col. Museum Publ. 16, p. 189.

them contained as an altar-piece the famous stone tablet of the cross, which shows on an elevated platform a much ornamented Latin cross on which a bird is perched. A priest on the right-hand side offers a child as a sacrifice; another person to the left may be the chief or a prominent official of some kind.¹ (See p. 225.)

The temple of the cross No. 2 contains a similar altar-piece, the centre of which is filled out by a cross. It stands upon two crouching figures, and is surmounted by a terror-inspiring face



THE TEMPLE OF THE CROSS NO. 1, SEEN FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN.
NEAR PALENQUE.²

behind which two rods are placed crosswise. The sacrificing priests on either side of the cross bear a close resemblance to the corresponding figures of the altar-piece in the Temple of the Cross No. 1.

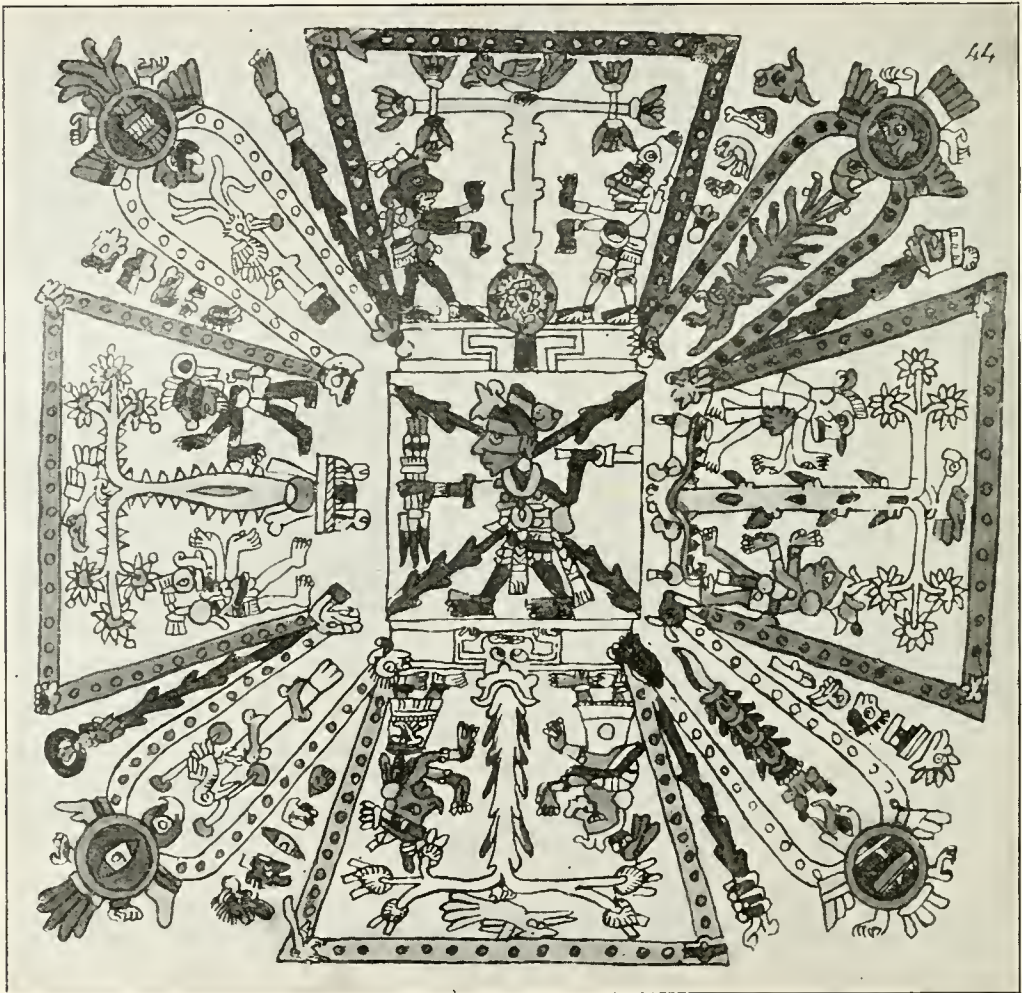
We have no tradition or definite information concerning the cross in the temples of the cross near Palenque, and can surmise its significance only by comparing it to similar productions of Central America.

¹ Most of the monuments have been destroyed or have suffered greatly. The tablet of the cross is broken, one piece being preserved in Washington, the other in Mexico.

² Reproduced from W. H. Holms, *ibid.*, p. 199.

Similar crosses have been discovered in various ancient monuments of Mexico, and we cannot doubt that every particular feature of it possesses a definite significance.

The Tejérváry Codex (Dresden) contains the illustration of a huge Maltese cross with broad fields and smaller beams inserted between them after the fashion of St. Andrew's cross. In the centre stands a blood-stained deity and every one of the four fields



THE CROSS OF THE TEJÉRVÁRY MANUSCRIPT.¹

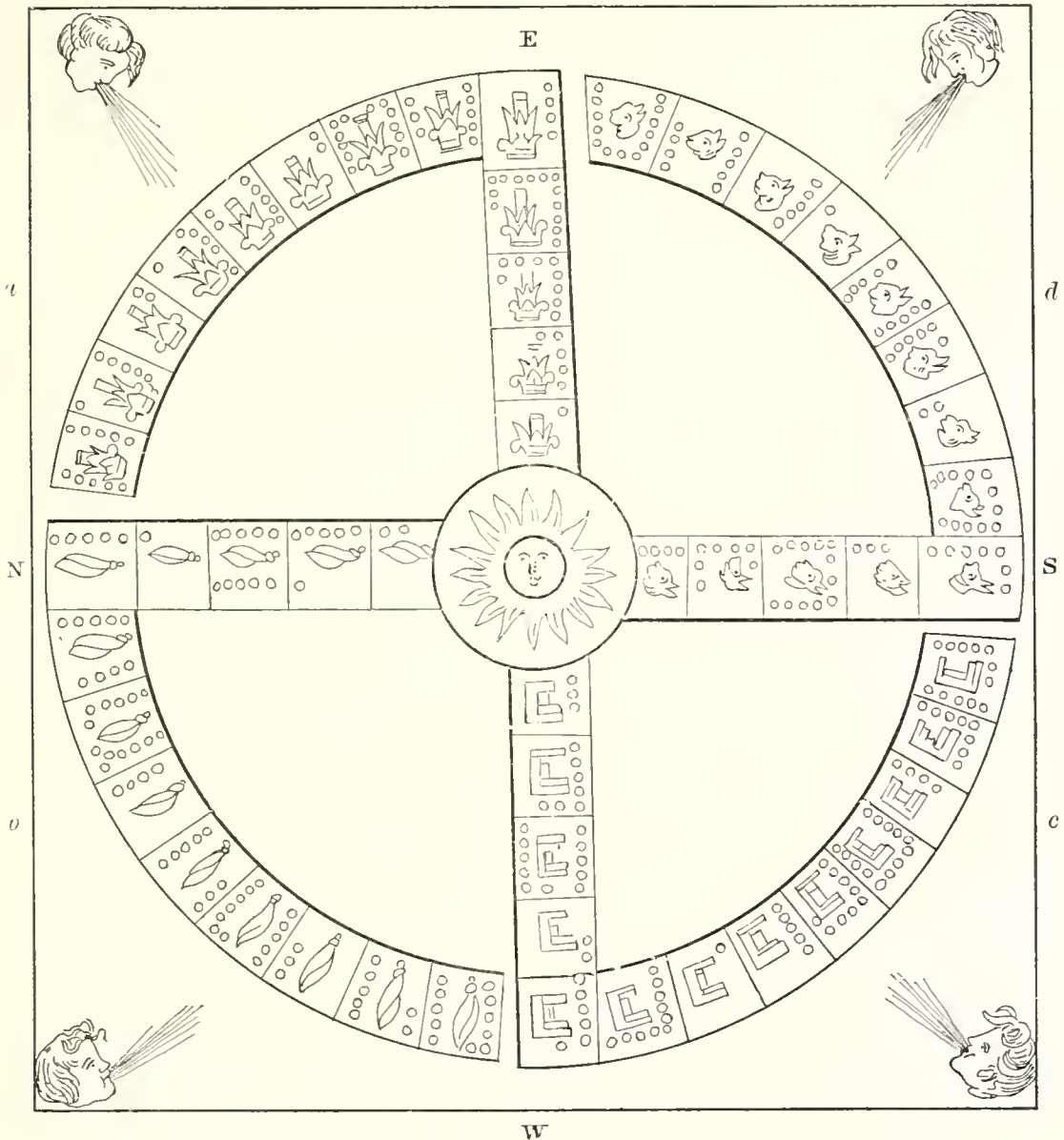
contains human figures standing on both sides of a T-formed cross, on the top of which a bird is perched.² Except for the T-form of the four tree-crosses in the fields of the Maltese cross, the scene is the same as on the altar tablet of Palenque. But then, T-crosses are almost as frequent as four-armed crosses on the old monu-

¹ The colors are on the top, red; on the right-hand side, green; at the bottom, blue; on the left-hand side, yellow. The illustration has been reproduced from Kingsborough's *Mexican Antiquities*, Vol. III, plate 44.

² Müller, l. c., p. 498. Cf. Klemm, *Kulturgesch.*, V., 142-143.

ments of America. Professor Müller explains the bird perched on the cross as "a symbol of the sky, which is the home whence the rain god descends."

The cross of the Tejeváyry Codex remained a puzzle to archæologists until it was compared by Prof. Cyrus Thomas to a number of similar Mexican documents, especially the *Tableau des Bacab*



CALENDAR WHEEL FROM DURAN.¹

of the Codex Cortesianus and the Borgian Codex, as well as calendar tables of the Codex Peresianus and the calendar wheel of Duran. The Bacab tableau resembles the cross of the Tejeváyry Codex in its general arrangement, except that there is only one T cross which stands in the central field in the place of the blood-

¹A. R. 81-82, fig. 8, p. 45.

stained deity, and the bird is missing. The calendar wheel exhibits the cross formation and is like a swastika whose extremities are rounded off into the shape of a tire. A picture of the sun in the centre proves that the tau cross and the blood-stained deity of the tableau represent the sun god Herrera.¹ Mr. Cyrus Thomas explains the calendar wheel as follows :

"They divided the year into four signs, being four figures, the one of a house, another of a rabbit, the third of a cane, the fourth of a flint, and by them they reckoned the year as it passed on, saying, such a thing happened at so many houses or at so many flints of such a wheel or rotation, because their life being as it were an age, contained four periods of years consisting of thirteen, so that the whole made up fifty-two years. They painted a sun in the middle from which issued four lines or branches in a cross to the circumference of the wheel, and they turned so that they divided it into four parts, and the circumference and each of them moved with its branch of the same color, which were four, *Green, Blue, Red, and Yellow*; and each of these parts had thirteen subdivisions with the sign of a house, a rabbit, a cane, or a flint."²

According to Mr. W. H. Holmes all these crosses resembling the Palenque cross, which abound in the ancient Mexican pictographic manuscripts are tree-crosses. The branches of these cross-shaped trees terminate in clusters of symbolic fruit, and the arms of the cross are loaded down with symbols which, although highly conventionalised, have not yet entirely lost their vegetable character. The bird perched on its top seems to be the most important feature of the group, and to it, or the deity which it represents, the sacrifice is offered.

We are inclined to regard the bird as a humming bird and the altar of the cross as dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, the god of the sky and of war. Nor is the name of the god of any importance for our purpose; for the worship of almost all Mexican gods demanded human sacrifices of infants as well as adults.

Here are some characteristic instances :

The humming bird is called by the Aztecs "Huitzilin," which means "sun-hair, or sun-ray," and Huitzilopochtli means "humming bird to the left."³ The humming bird, being the most ethereal creature among the fowls of the air, is the symbol of the sun god and the national deity of the Aztecs, like the Hindu Shiva. He wears a collar of human faces, human hearts, and torn human bodies,⁴ and human sacrifices characterise his cult.

¹ *Hist. Amer. Dic.*, II., B. 10, ch. 3 Transl. Vol. III., pp. 221-222.

² A. R. 81-82, p. 44.

³ Torquemada Acosta, V., 9.

⁴ Diaz, II., 82. Clavig. I., 418. Müller, 597.

An ancient bas-relief preserved by Kingsborough in his *Antiquities of Mexico* shows the picture of a Mexican high priest in full pontifical robes, with medicine bag and staff, his girdle decorated with human faces. The rich ornaments on his head appear to be feathers decked with sunflowers or daisies. A mysterious head with a pipe in its mouth is attached to the priestly mitre on a projecting (probably forklike) stick. It must have nodded in a most theatrical manner with every motion of the priest, and we regard it as a representation of the face of the sun. On the top of the staff the head of a humming-bird emerges from other strange emblems. Further below the typical representation of the solar disc appears and the lower end is decorated with an X cross. We need not hesitate to say that the figure is a high priest of Huitzilopochtli.

The devout attitude of the two persons representing the congregation is quite in keeping with the religious spirit of the American races.¹

The explanation of the altar of the cross of Palenque as being dedicated to Huitzilopochtli has its difficulties, but they do not seem to be of weight. Tlaloc, the god of the water (or Tlaloc-teuctli), was associated with Huitzilopochtli as his ally and friend, and we know that he was worshipped in the City of Mexico in a temple that was situated by the side of the temple of Huitzilopochtli. He received human sacrifices in the form of little children that were bought for the purpose.² He is invoked whenever rain is needed and prisoners, dressed like the god, are offered him as a sacrifice.

The bloody sacrifices of ancient Mexico are of special interest because they preserve features of a past period in the history of religion embodying an idea which in a spiritualised form reappears in Christianity. The victim that is to be sacrificed is identified with the god himself to whom the sacrifice is made, and his body is afterwards eaten by the worshippers for the sake of partaking of his divinity. Professor Müller describes the rite of the annual sacrifice of the merchants of ancient Mexico to Quetzalcohuatl, the god of property, whose worship bears many important resemblances to the cult of Huitzilopochtli,³ as follows :

“Forty days before the festival, the merchants used to buy a slave that was without defect ; he was bathed in a lake called the Lake of the Gods, then attired as the god Quetzalcohuatl, whom he had to impersonate for forty days. Dur-

¹ The two persons, being a man and a woman, the bas-relief *may* represent the solemnisation of a marriage.

² Müller, l. c., p. 501.

³ Müller, l. c., p. 591.



A MEXICAN HIGH PRIEST OF THE SUN GOD,¹

From Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, Part III,

ing this season, he enjoyed the same reverence which was due to the god himself; he was placed upon an elevated seat, decorated with flowers, nourished with the most exquisite food. But, at the same time, especially during the night, he was carefully guarded to prevent his escape. When during processions through the city he sang and danced, the women and children came out from the houses to salute him and bring him gifts. In this way he lived until nine days before the festival; then two old priests approached him with reverent devotion and told him solemnly, 'Lord, know that in nine days thy dancing and thy singing will cease, for thou must die.' If he remained joyful, and continued dancing and singing, it was deemed a good omen; if not, a bad one. In the latter case, the priests decocted a potion of blood and cocoa for the purpose of taking from him the recollection of their words. When he had taken the potion, they hoped that he would regain his former joyfulness. On the day of the festival, he received even greater honors than ever before; music was played for him and incense burned. At last, at the hour of midnight, he was sacrificed. His heart was cut out from his body, lifted up to the moon, and thrown before the image of the god. Then the body was thrown down over the steps of the altar, and served to the merchants, especially the slave-traders, as a sacrificial meal. This festival and sacrifice took place annually; but in certain cycles in the divine year Teoxihuitl it was celebrated with an array of unusual festivity."

The highest god of the Mexicans was Tezcatlipoca, the shining mirror, and (according to Wuttke) another personification of the sun. He was the national god of the Tlalotlacs, but his cult was introduced among the Aztecs, who worshipped him as the brother of Huitzilopochtli and of Tlaloc. The three gods resemble one another almost enough to make them indistinguishable. Tezcatlipoca's festivals fall in May, when the first rain dispels the annual drought, in October, the best season of Central America, and in December on the death day of his brother Huitzilopochtli. We meet here the same pious cannibalism as in the cult of the other great Mexican deities. Prof. T. G. Müller says:

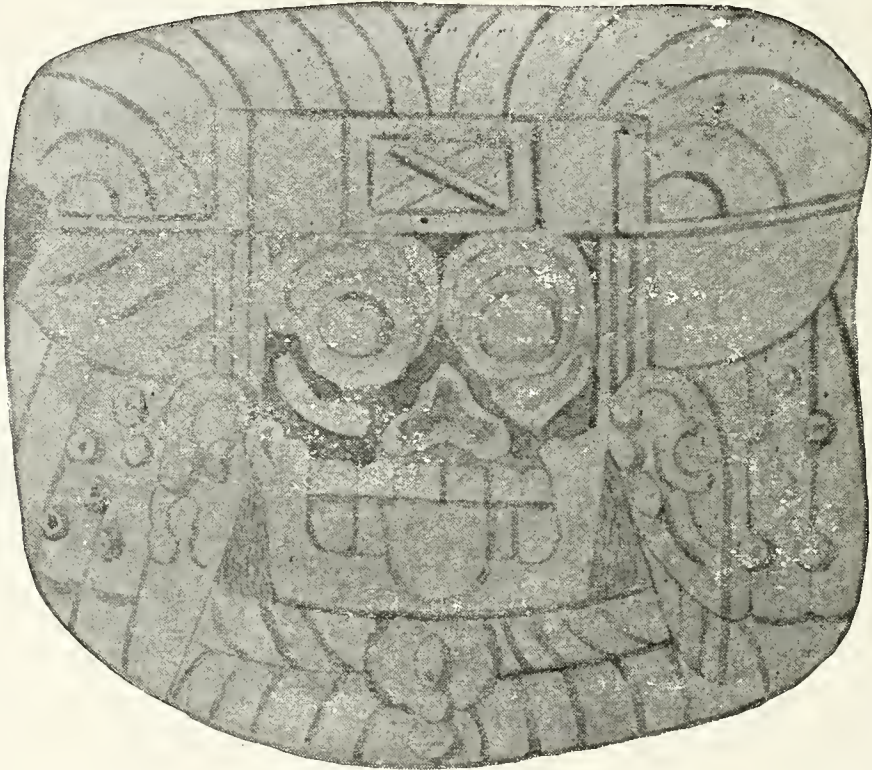
"The main sacrifice of Tezcatlipoca was the youngest and most beautiful prisoner of war or slave, whose duty it was to represent the god in his youthfulness. He was worshipped the whole year as a god. Twenty days before the festival he was married to four beautiful girls, and five days before the festival the most opulent feast was given him. On the day of the ceremony, he accompanied the image of the god which headed the procession, and was then sacrificed in a temple especially built for the purpose, with all due reverence, about a mile outside of the city, beyond the lake. The heart cut out from his breast was presented to the image, and then to the sun; but the body was not, as is the case with other sacrifices, thrown down over the steps of the temple, but carried down by the priests. Noblemen and priests received the arms and legs of the sacrifice as a sacrificial meal. The youths devoted to his worship performed a dance to the god, and the virgins offered honey cakes called 'holy flesh,' which was destined as a prize to the victors in the races which took place on the temple stairs."—p. 617.

This, as well as the human sacrifices of Huitzilopochtli, is ob-

viously an invocation to some life-spending deity to return after the drought of the hot season. As the vegetation dries under the parching influence of the sun, so the god must die, but is resurrected in his former vigor.

The fact is remarkable that the worship of the cross among the Mexicans is closely connected with human sacrifices, and this seems to connect the cross worship of Central America with the cult of the sun god in the old world.

Human sacrifice and religious cannibalism was by no means



A STONE TABLET FOUND IN THE VICINITY OF SANTA LUCIA, GUATEMALA.

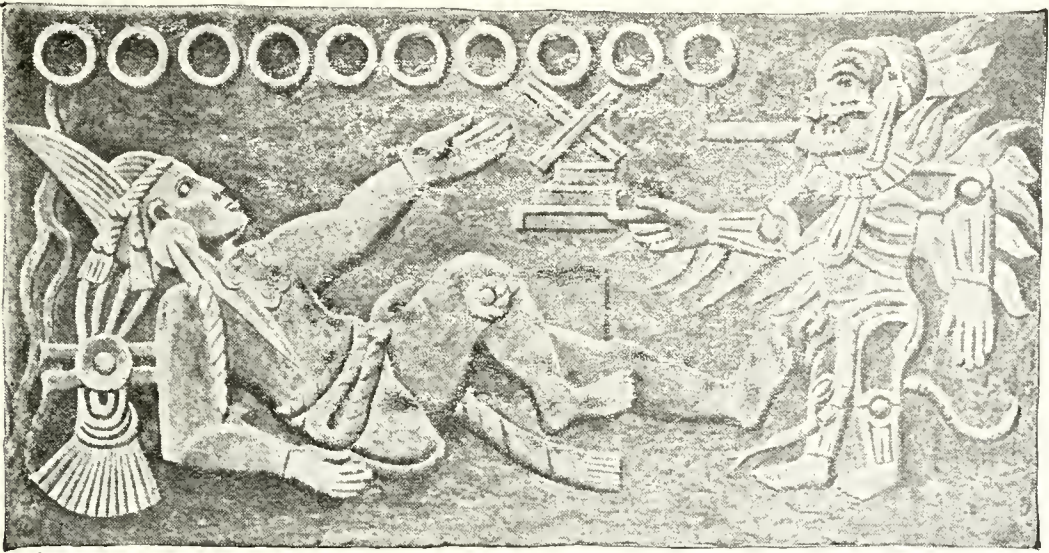
Representing a dead head with outstretched tongue and carrying the emblems of crossed bones on the forehead. We may assume that it served as a sepulchral monument. (See p. 246.)

limited to the Mexicans of America, but can be traced in the rituals of various people all over the world, a fact which is good evidence in favor of the antiquity of the underlying belief which leads to the slaughter of some god-incarnation. Mr. J. G. Frazer, in his curious book *The Golden Bough*, has collected rich material on the subject. The most important instance is a custom of the Babylonians, cited by Berosus, who tells that "during the five days of the festival called the *Sacæa*, a prisoner condemned to death was dressed in the king's robes, seated on the king's throne, allowed to eat, drink, and order whatever he chose, and even per-

mitted to sleep with the king's concubines. But at the end of five days he was stripped of his royal insignia, scourged and crucified."

This Babylonian rite is apparently, as Mr. Fraser suggests, a further evolution of a more ancient custom that is still practised among the savage tribes of Africa, according to which the king, who is believed to be the incarnation of the deity, usually of the sun or heaven, is sacrificed in his best years and before his physical powers can give out. Mr. Frazer says :

"We must not forget that the king is slain in his character of a god, his death and resurrection, as the only means of perpetuating the divine life unimpaired, being deemed necessary for the salvation of his people and the world."



THE X CROSS OF THE GOD OF DEATH.¹ (See p. 246.)

With the advance of civilisation the old custom was modified Mr. Frazer says :

"When the time drew near for the king to be put to death, he abdicated for a few days, during which a temporary king reigned and suffered in his stead. At first the temporary king may have been an innocent person, possibly a member of the king's own family ; but with the growth of civilisation, the sacrifice of an innocent person would be revolting to the public sentiment, and accordingly a condemned criminal would be invested with the brief and fatal sovereignty."

All these savage notions reappear in a purified form in Christianity, and incidental features, such as the previous recognition as god and king, the hosannas and flowers offered during a solemn procession, the buying of the victim that has to suffer death, add strength to the more essential similarities. We deem it specially significant, although the fact may be after all incidental,

¹ Reproduced from the Annual Reports of Bureau of Ethnology.

that the cross worship is almost always closely connected with human sacrifices offered to the god of the sun, be he Baal or Huitzilopochtli.

* * *

We conclude this sketch on the cross in Central America with a mention of an instance in which the *crux decussata*, or St. Andrew's cross (X), symbolises two dead bones, and is the attribute of the deity of death. Prof. J. G. Müller (l. c., p. 98) says :

“Pauguk, the god of death, is armed with a club or bow and arrows, and is pictured without flesh and blood, covered only with a thin skin. He is a hunter of men, and his appearance is a sure sign of the approach of death. Whenever any one dies suddenly or unexpectedly it is said that he met the eye of Pauguk. Warriors, reaching out for the prize of victory, frequently grasp his cold and bony hand.” (Conf. Schoolcraft, *Wigwam*, 215 ff. Alg. ver. II., 226-241.)