

PREFACE

In March, 1924, an anonymous friend of Tulane University created an endowment, the income from which would be used for the study of the Middle American countries. It was then decided to conduct an archaeological and ethnological investigation through library research and expeditions to be sent into the lands inhabited by the most notable of the ancient populations of the Maya Indians.

Mr. Frans P. was selected to be in charge of the expedition, assisted by Mr. Oliver La Farge. They started on the 19th of February, 1925. The object of the expedition was to study ancient Maya ruins as well as the customs of the Indians. At the same time notes were taken on subjects

It is noted that Mr. Blom is an expert in the field of archaeology and he also has a knowledge of the geology and the material relations of the Maya Indians. The language of the Maya Indians is also a subject of interest.

In the following pages will be found the report of this, the First Tulane Expedition to Middle America. It is based on the journal which was kept day throughout the expedition. The sections on archaeology and geology were written by Mr. Blom and those parts relating to the present day Indians, by Mr. La Farge. An attempt has been made to present the material in such a form that the general reader, unacquainted with the history of the ancient inhabitants of Central America, will find it interesting, and at the same time to uphold a standard satisfactory to the scientist. For this reason paragraphs describing the mythology, calendar, and customs of the pre-Columbian Maya have been woven into the text, forming a background to the discoveries made by the expedition.

The style used by the writers is distinct, as is also the material they present, but as many things of interest would be lost in splitting it into separate publications, it was decided to make this report in the form of a book of travel.

For the convenience of those searching for special information, a detailed index will be found at the end of the second volume.