

called Tuxtla Statuette carried nothing less than the oldest date recorded in writing from the whole of the American Continents.\*

Since the finding of this statuette only a few scientific expeditions have entered the area. The German archaeologist, Dr. Eduard Seler, has worked at Matacanela, and the Geologist, Dr. Imanuel Friedlaender, has studied the volcanoes of the district. There was a good reason for not going into the country. Constant revolutions had made that wild mountain region a hiding place for all kinds of bandits, rebels, and political refugees. These people had imposed brutally on the Indian tribes, who considered the forests their property and, therefore, turned hostile to all strangers.

The great Maya cultural centers lay east of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. An outlying branch of Indians speaking a dialect of the Maya language is still found in the Huasteca, south of Tampico. Little is known about the link between these two, and it has long been desirable to investigate the region between the Maya proper and the Huasteca. The lack of information on the area between these two groups of the same language, and the existence of the Tuxtla Statuette was enough to warrant an expedition to the Tuxtla Mountains. To add to this, a photograph of a monolith had recently been received at Tulane University—a stone monument carved with figures that looked somewhat like Maya glyphs. This photograph was sent by a Mexican engineer, Sr. Rafael de la Cerda, of Mexico City, who had made some explorations in the region in question in search of petroleum. At a place called Piedra Labrada he had seen some other stone monuments.

Now we sat in the train speculating on what we would find in these fascinating mountains. Would we find Indians speaking a



FIG. 13—Cocuite, Ver. Totonac Clay Idol of the Laughing Face Type. (24 cm. high).

\*Throughout this report the correlation between Maya and Christian Chronology established by Dr. H. J. Spinden in his book, "Reduction of Mayan Dates," 1924, will be used.