

at the rain water dripping from the edge of the tent into a bucket. This he enjoyed because if the bucket would fill he need not go down to the river for water. The bucket finally *did* fill. The rain started in real tropical fashion, coming down in streams. Everything was now wet, and our breakfast was perforce limited to some cold rice left over from the previous evening and a few slices of sausage.

About half past nine our scouts returned bringing not only a local Indian guide, but also dry weather, so at once we packed up our belongings and started off for some Indian huts reported to be nearby.

Before leaving our camp a photograph was made of a small stone idol which some of the former inhabitants had found in the bush and brought to this place. This idol has a human face, but is so crudely done and has so little character to it, that it is hard to place it in any particular culture.

We had not gone very far before we reached some very well-kept corn fields with a trail leading through them, flanked by rows of pineapples. Here and there were clusters of bananas and in another place was a patch of sweet potatoes and calabash. It was apparent that the owner was a hard-working man.

José Albino, an old Indian who spoke Popoluca, was the proud possessor of these corn fields, a score of pigs, eight sons, two daughters, one son-in-law, and a kind, hard-working old Indian wife. He lodged us in a small corn barn with a good, solid palm-leaf roof to shelter us against the rain, and after a while we went over to his house to enjoy a good meal he had prepared for us.

Some small low huts were clustered together in the centre of the cornfield. In front of them was a palm roof under which the women were preparing the food (see fig. 49), and behind them was a pig sty where the prides of the family were kept.

The old lady of the house served us with eggs, coffee, and hot tortillas. The corn for the latter we had seen her grind on an old metate, or Indian grinding stone, which had been found in the forest near the ruins we were in search of. This grinding stone was quite elaborate with the high leg at its upper end carved as shown in the accompanying drawing (fig. 37).

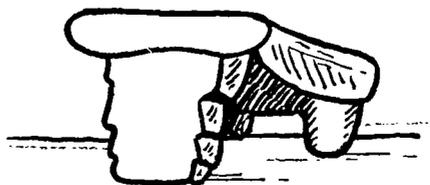


FIG. 37—Piedra Labrada, Ver. Ancient Metate.