

the island itself being covered with low hills, with soil excellent for growing all kinds of plants. The land is divided into lots, each lot belonging to one Indian family.

As we neared La Venta we met several Indians on their way to their corn fields or going hunting. We stopped them and persuaded them to help us as guides, and to clear the thick growth which we were sure would cover the monuments.

After an hour's brisk walking from Blasillo, we at last turned off from the trail and stood in front of the first idol. This was a huge stone block, 2.25 meters high, 86 c.m. broad, and 72 c.m. thick. It had fallen on its back and showed us a human figure carved crudely in deep relief, the deepest carving being 14 c.m. (fig. 67).



FIG. 66—Rio Blasillo, Tab. View of the River.

Our jack was not strong enough to swing this huge block, so we could not see if it had carving or inscriptions on its back. There is no distinct style to this figure, though its general appearance may be said to give an impression of a slight Maya contact.

Close by, in a northwest direction, we saw a long row of stones like small pillars, averaging 80 c.m. high with tops broken off, set in the ground in a row and close together, forming something like a fence (fig. 68), and in the center of these to the east, a huge block, probably an

altar (Altar 1), rough on the under side and with figures engraved on the smooth upper surface. This altar is approximately circular, between 1.5 and 2.0 meters in diameter, and has rolled over so that it stands at an angle where it is impossible to get a good photograph of it. Moreover, the Indians have had corn fields here, and after cutting the bush they burned it off, thereby badly damaging the stone by heat. There was no hope of turning it without a large gang of workmen and some ropes, so we had to content ourselves with making some drawings of the best preserved of the figures engraved on the surface.