

possible for animals to keep their footing. As there were no villages whence food could be obtained in this little known district, it was necessary to take a three weeks' supply from Coban and also to engage a number of Indians to act as porters. It was somewhat difficult to estimate the amount of food required per person, and for this purpose we decided to make a preliminary or trial trip extending over three days. We found that an Indian consumed daily about half his straw hat full of 'topopoxti' or baked Indian corn cake, and this with a few onions and 'frijoles' or black beans supplied the necessities of life. Having arrived at the quantity required, we made up a sufficient number of loads and these were carried by the porters on their backs.

*En route* we occasionally discovered a small Indian settlement, where our "mozos" found shelter in a hut formed of poles and thatched on the top and on two sides. These were resting places used by the natives on their way to Salinas in search of salt. Salvin and I preferred, however, sleeping in our hammocks slung to the trees in the adjoining forest, and as we were each provided with a waterproof sheet, we slept in dry beds notwithstanding the constant wet nights.

The days were usually fine and were mostly spent in exploring the forest and collecting birds, insects, and plants. We remained a little over three weeks, till our supplies were exhausted, and then returned with our spoils to Coban.

Owing to my having contracted an attack of fever and ague in the low ground at Salinas I was unable to accompany Salvin on his journey to Peten and Belize. On his second expedition to Guatemala, Salvin had already visited Lanquin and Cahabon, about three or four days' journey from Coban. He describes ('Ibis,' 1861, pp. 138-149) the country as very wet and covered with forest, the roads—or rather tracks—impassable for animals, and all baggage had to be carried by Indians. The forests on the slopes of the limestone mountains were the home of the Quezal, the royal bird of the Aztecs, as well as of many other birds not found on the Pacific side, such as members of the families Cracidæ, Tinamidæ, etc. Salvin says: "These forests are perhaps more worth seeing than anything in Guatemala, quite different to those on the West Coast, where the heat is excessive and mosquitoes and other insects abound and destroy one's comfort. In these forests it is otherwise; no 'garrapatas,' no mosquitoes, and a climate in the dry season which might challenge any in the world. Most parts are free from brushwood, and one may ramble where one pleases without being stopped by dense thicket. What strikes the eye most is the number of ferns, not only of plants, but of species; every tree is clasped, every stone clothed with them, besides many of terrestrial habit."

As soon as I had recovered from the effects of fever, I left Coban for Buenaventura on the Motagua River in order to collect fish, and the methods employed have already been described on a preceding page.