eral drunkenness, the latter, according to the early Catholic fathers, being the inevitable conclusion of every Maya ceremony.

HUMAN SACRIFICE

Human sacrifice was performed in several ways; the most common and perhaps the most ancient was by removing the heart. The intended victim, after being stripped, painted blue (the sacrificial color), and having a special peaked headdress set on his head, was led to the place of sacrifice. This was usually either the temple courtyard or the summit of the pyramid supporting the temple. The evil spirits were first expelled and the altar, usually a convex stone that curved the victim's breast upward, was smeared with the sacred blue paint. The four *chacs*, also painted blue, next grasped the victim by his arms and legs and stretched him on his back over the altar. The *nacom* advanced with the sacrificial flint knife and plunged it into the victim's ribs just below the left breast. Thrusting his hand into the opening, he pulled out the still beating heart and handed it to the *chilan* or officiating priest, who smeared blood on the idol to whom the sacrifice was being made. If the victim had been sacrificed on the summit of a pyramid, the chacs threw the corpse to the court below, where priests of lower rank skinned the body, except for the hands and feet. The chilan, having removed his sacrificial vestments, arrayed himself in the skin of the victim and solemnly danced with the spectators. If the sacrificial victim had been a valiant and brave soldier, his body was sometimes divided and eaten by the nobles and other spectators. The hands and feet were reserved for the chilan, and, if the victim was a prisoner of war, his captor wore certain of his bones as a mark of prowess. Women and children were as frequently sacrificed as men.

Archaeological corroboration of this ceremony is found several times in the wall paintings at Chichen Itza (Plate 28, *e* and *f*). One such scene (Plate 28*f*) portrays a human sacrifice to Kukulcan, the Feathered Serpent, patron deity of this city. A lower coil of the serpent-god's body forms the sacrificial altar, while the upper coils and the head rise in front of the doorway of his temple. Only

two chacs are shown, perhaps because of difficulties in handling the perspective involved in drawing one figure directly behind another. The chilan stands between the altar and the god, his upraised hand holding the sacrificial knife. Several of these knives have been recovered from the Well of Sacrifice. One has a blade of finely chipped flint and a handle of wood, carved in the likeness of two intertwined serpents, their bodies overlaid with gold (Fig. 14).

FIG. 14.—Sacrificial knife from the Well of Sacrifice, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico.

In other representations of human sacrifice (Plate 28, *a-d*) the victim's breast is shown as already opened. Rising out of it is a portrayal of the dead man's soul, conceived in one case as a tree ascending toward the heavens, with a bird perched on its branches (Plate 28*c*).

Another form of human sacrifice was by bow and arrow:

> If he [the victim] was to be sacrificed by arrows they stripped him naked and anointed his body with a blue color, and put a pointed cap on his head. When they had reached the victim, all of them, armed with bows and arrows, made a solemn dance with him around the stake, and while dancing they put him up on it and bound him to it, all of them keeping on dancing and looking at him. The foul priest in vestments went up and wounded the victim with an arrow in the parts of shame, whether it were a man or woman, and drew blood and came down and anointed the face of the idol with it. And making a certain sign to the dancers, as they passed rapidly before him [the prisoner] still dancing, they began one after another to shoot at his heart, which had been marked beforehand with a white sign. And in this manner they made his whole chest one point like a hedgehog of arrows.

This type of sacrifice is depicted in an incised drawing from the walls of Temple II at Tikal (Fig. 15), probably scratched there

long after the city had been abandoned. The same ceremony is also shown in the Mexican codices, and was probably an importation from central Mexico in late Postclassic times.

An unusual ceremony of human sacrifice was practiced in the Well of Sacrifice at Chichen Itza. In times of famine, epidemic, or prolonged drought, victims were hurled into this great pocket

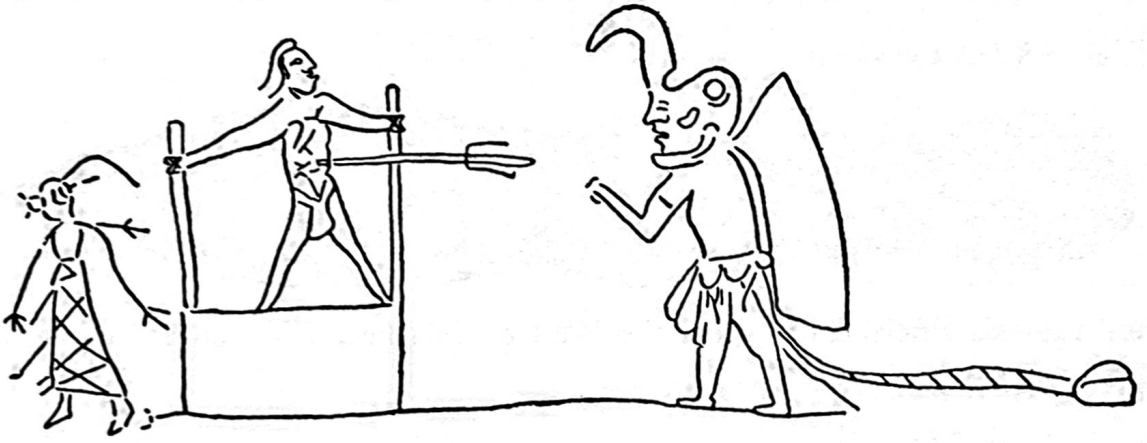

FIG. 15.—Graffitti from Temple II at Tikal, Peten, Guatemala, showing arrow-shooting ceremony.

in the limestone. The Well of Sacrifice (Plate 42*b*) is roughly oval; it varies in width from 150 to 190 feet and is 65 feet deep from the ground level to the surface of the water. The depth of the water is another 65 or 70 feet, and the sides of the well are either vertical or undercut. Pilgrimages were made from great distances to attend these sacrifices and valuables were hurled into the well with the living victims in order to appease the angry rain gods. The cenote is connected with the Castillo, the principal temple dedicated to Kukulcan, by a stone causeway 1,000 feet long and 20 feet wide, varying in height from 3 to 15 feet above the ground level. Says Landa:

> Into this well they have had, and then [middle-sixteenth century] had, the custom of throwing men alive, as a sacrifice to the gods in times of drought, and they believed they did not die though they never saw them again. They also threw into it many other things, like precious stones and things that they prized. And so if this country had had gold, it would be this well that would have the greater part of it, so great was the devotion which the Indians showed for it.

This prediction has been confirmed by modern archaeology. In 1905–8 the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of Harvard University carried on dredging operations in the Well of Sacrifice, bringing to the surface a treasure of sacrificial offerings. These articles include gold and copper repoussé plates, masks, cups, saucers, and gold jewelry. Many copper sacrificial bells of different sizes were found, and small ceremonial axes. There were numbers of polished jade beads as well as carved jade ornaments, sacrificial knives, and several throwing sticks. Fragments of cotton textiles were found, and ornaments of carved bone and shell. There were also about fifty human crania, and human long bones. Some of the latter were carved, perhaps for use as trophies of war. Most numerous of all were the cakes of pom incense, usually found in the bottoms of crude pottery vessels and painted a bright turquoise blue.

Study of the gold and copper objects found in the Well of Sacrifice indicates that they were brought to Chichen Itza from points as far distant as Colombia and Panama to the south and from as far north as the state of Oaxaca and the Valley of Mexico.

In addition to its use as a place where offerings and human sacrifice were made, there was also a prognosticative element in these ceremonies. The victims, especially children, their hands and feet unbound, were thrown into the well by their masters at daybreak. If any survived the plunge, a rope was lowered at midday to haul them out and they were asked by the lords what manner of year the gods had in store for them. If a child did not survive the ordeal, "all that lord's people [that is, the master of the child and his retainers] as well as the lord himself threw large stones into the water and with great hue and cry took flight from there."

THE THIRTEEN KATUN ENDINGS

An old and important ceremony, going back to the beginnings of the Classic stage, was the erection of the katun stone or monument at the end of each katun or 7,200-day period. Each of the thirteen differently named katuns had its own patron deity and its special rites. Although this ceremony started as a katun-ending