



\$300,000,000 of Pure Gold Hidden in Mountain Caves

Professor Farabee, of the University of Pennsylvania, Comes Back from South America with Dazzling Samples of Treasures Buried Centuries Ago to Keep Them from Spanish Plunderers

DR. WILLIAM CURTIS FARABEE, the distinguished ethnologist and explorer, returning from an expedition in Colombia, has just made a report to the University of Pennsylvania, revealing the existence in South and Central America, of hidden treasure to an amount that almost staggers the imagination. It has been known, of course, that for hundreds of years gold was cast by Indians during their religious festivals into the sacred lake of Guatavita in Colombia, and efforts on a considerable scale have been made to recover it.

The surprising discovery made by Professor Farabee is that in many other lakes and in mountain caves of South and Central America pure gold is buried to a value of what he conservatively estimates to be \$300,000,000, and perhaps much more.

Part of this treasure he brought back with him, and the occasion for his report was the announcement by the Museum of the receipt of this collection and also a second one purchased in Europe. The two collections make together the largest in the world and their combined value is set at five million dollars.

In one of these sacred lakes there is a huge chain of solid gold, as thick as a ship's anchor chain. Professor Farabee's report recites. It was once strung from posts around the Palace of the Inca, at Cuzco, Peru, and it was so heavy that two hundred Indians were required to carry it. They were on their way with this chain from Cuzco to Catamarca in 1532 to deliver it to Pizarro, when they learned their King had been strangled to death, and they threw the chain into a lake.

Four hundred other Indians in charge of as many packloads of gold were trooping over the mountains to pay the ransom of the Inca, and they, too, threw their treasure into lakes or hid it in mountain caves. And although three centuries have passed and millions of dollars' worth of gold has been found in the ancient Inca cemeteries, not more than a negligible part of the hidden treasure has been discovered.

The European collection was obtained the Museum in Paris. It contains examples of all the ancient American gold-working civilizations from Mexico to Peru, and is of particular interest because it is part of the gold that was sent back by the Spanish conquerors of these countries five hundred years ago. Since then it has been handed down through various families until it finally found its way into the possession of a wealthy Frenchman, who was forced to sell it because of war conditions. The second collection consists of a group of objects recently excavated in the mountains near Ayapel, Antioquia, Colombia, where they had been buried by the Indians in some remote time. It is described by Dr. Farabee as "the greatest discovery of buried treasure that has taken place in South America since the days of the Conquest."

A native farmer found the objects while digging fence posts. He came to a small mound with which he was quite familiar, but which he had never taken the trouble to excavate. It was necessary for him to dig a hole at the edge of this mound, and in so doing his spade struck a small pottery jar. This excited his curiosity. He dug further into the mound and came to the edge of a huge, oblong pottery urn shaped something like a trunk. And this is what he found—at least the following list represents that part of his find finally sold to the museum:

Three breastplates of thin beaten gold twenty-two inches across.



A Mummy and Its Golden Mask, from the Tableland of Bogota, the Home of the "Gilded Man." The Bodies of Priests and Chieftains Were Covered With Thin Plates of Gold. A Rude Death Mask, Also of Gold, Was Made of Their Features.



6,500 feet in elevation, with 300 men and sixty horses. It is a matter of history that he landed in 1535 at Santa Marta, on the Magdalena River, and the hardships he suffered before reaching the "Valley of Palaces" also is of record. At Chia the bandit found the palace of the Zips, as the ruler was called, forsaken and the treasure gone. But at Tunja he got \$600,000 worth of gold and silver and 1,815 emeralds. "It is estimated that one ancient cemetery in Costa Rica has yielded \$50,000 worth of gold objects in the forms of birds, frogs, fish, alligators and numerous anthropomorphic forms with human and animal elements combined," says Dr. Farabee, "the most common being the human body with the head of an alligator, jaguar or parrot."

According to the same authority Cortes seized gold worth \$7,500,000 from the palace of Montezuma in Mexico. Pizarro got even more in his conquest of Peru.

"Learning of Pizarro's love for gold," says Dr. Farabee, "the Inca, Atahualpa, offered to fill the room in which he was confined with pure gold as a ransom for his freedom. The offer was accepted and the gold soon began to pour in from all directions. When the room had been filled to the height a man could stand the strain no longer. The gold, valued at ten or fifteen million dollars, was seized and divided among the leaders and the men in proportion to their stations. The royal fifth was sent to Spain under the care of Pizarro's brother. But Atahualpa, his ransom paid, was not released. He was tied to a stake, baptized and suddenly strangled with a bow string. In the meantime Pizarro had sent a brother to Pachacamac, where he stripped the temple of twenty-seven loads of gold, but he was unable to find the four hundred loads which the chief had previously sent away for safety. When the news of the Inca's murder reached the pack trains bearing additional gold for his ransom, the men turned aside with their treasures and hid them in mountain caves away from the Spaniards."

"At Cuzco the temple occupied one whole side of the great court. The cornice of the walls, a yard wide, outside and in was plated with gold, as were the inner walls also. At the eastern end a great plate of gold, representing the sun, spread from one wall to the other. This great image was not taken for the ransom, but when the Spaniards afterward returned to Cuzco it had disappeared and was never found."

Sebastian de Belalcazar found the territory of the Quimbaya, the race of goldsmiths, adjoining that of the Chibchas, in Colombia. It is here, in the myriad lakes and mountain caves, that Dr. Farabee and other explorers believe will be found the great bulk of the huge treasure which was thrown into the water, not only to prevent the Spaniards from getting it, but also as part of regular religious ceremonies.

"Among those of high rank, the chiefs, priests and war leaders, were allowed to wear objects of gold. They wore cotton garments ornamented with gold plates. The doors of the palisades were hung with plates of gold which gleamed in the sun and clashed melodiously in the wind.



Objects of Pure Gold Among Those Brought to the University of Pennsylvania Museum by Professor Farabee. The Idol at the Right is Nine Inches High and Is of Quimbaya Workmanship; the Breastplate is 22 Inches Wide and Is One of the Three Found Among the Treasure of Antioquia, Colombia; the Sitting Figure Is a Representation of the "Gilded Man" from Near Lake Guatavita.



The gold plates from the door of Sogamoso palace were valued at \$80,000."

The same authority declares that it is possible to locate all the lakes that were considered sacred in ancient days by means of Indian legends which have been handed down to the present day.

"The Colombian treasure," says Dr. Farabee, "was unearthed a few months ago in the department of Antioquia, not far from the famous sacred lake of Guatavita, into which enormous quantities of precious objects were cast as offerings to the gods at the annual festival of the people."

"Priests with treasures of gold and emeralds proceeded on a raft to the centre of the lake, burned incense and sacrificed the offerings. The high priest, who had been sprinkled with gold dust until he appeared a gilded man, the 'El Dorado' of the Spaniards, cast himself into the sacred waters bearing the treasures of all the people, deposited them at the bottom and returned to land. When the ruler of this region was compelled to submit to the Spanish conquerors he is said to have sacrificed to the lake two tons of gold and precious stones. The collection at the museum may well have been a temple accumulation which was hidden away to prevent its falling into the hands of Quesada, who began the conquest of Bogota in 1536."

In the later days of the Spanish treasure hunting various clumsy efforts were made to drain some of these lakes. In some sections it would be relatively a simple mat-

ter. In the larger lakes, which are very deep, the method would be to drag them, making frequent lifts. Since the gold thrown into the lakes to prevent the Spaniards from getting it was nearly always thrown in one place, or in large quantities, as soon as one piece was discovered the rest would be simple.

Most of this gold came originally from the streams and was obtained by a system of placer mining. There are now two American companies working in the Andes, but by far the majority of the streams which would still yield heavily are unworked. Many ancient quartz lodes, the workings of which are still visible, have not been touched for five hundred years, yet there is still gold in them. The estimate of \$83,000,000 worth obtained by the various Spanish conquerors is based on the official record of the "Royal Fifth," sent back to Spain. But in many cases this was not sent, so that all told, the Spaniards may possibly have taken two hundred million dollars' worth. That they missed a much greater portion is shown from their own records.

There has been found in Lake Siecha, near Lake Guatavita, a gold piece consisting of a small group of figures representing El Dorado, the gold man, on a rush balsa surrounded by his guests as he proceeded to the centre of Lake Guatavita to offer sacrifice to the gods. Some of the territory about the headwaters of the Amazon scoured by the

Atahualpa, the Inca Whom Pizarro Murdered, Presiding at the Execution of His Own Son, Huascar, and His Followers Following a Rebellion by Them a Few Years Before the Spaniards Overran the Inca Empire. From an Old Print.



Spanish conquerors has not been visited since by white man. Dr. Farabee, however, has crossed many of the routes and has been to sections where even the Spaniards did not penetrate.

Dr. Farabee's scientific reputation is world wide. He is one of the men called on by the Allies at the end of the World War because of his deep knowledge of ethnological problems to redraw the map of Europe, and he has but recently returned to the University Museum after two years spent in that task. He will be kept busy for another year or two arranging his collections at the museum and writing the history of his three-year exploration in South America.

The work of the English syndicate at Lake Guatavita has resulted in the recovery of perhaps a million dollars in gold and emeralds.

The first attempt of the syndicate to drain the lake was unsuccessful, because the tunnel they blasted to carry off the water was above the water level. The second attempt drained it all right, but the hot sun baked the mud so hard that the only way to get at what it held was to blast it.

This proved unsatisfactory. Now the work is being carried on with great success through the expedient of softening the mud with water. Temporary dams are placed about the section to be excavated and the water, carried by sluices, is played upon this spot until the hard upper crust has been softened. The water is then diverted by cutting the dams and the digging begins. It is important that the softening process cease when the upper crust only has been softened, for otherwise, if the water penetrated through the lower strata, a quagmire might be formed and the precious treasure of the centuries might sink still farther from the white man's grasp.