

give it the appearance of having been formed of human skulls, and is divided from the rest by a projecting cornice. The whole is different from any thing I have ever seen. At the extremity of the town is the bed of a river, now dry, and forming a deep ravine, over which is a remarkable bridge, with a pointed arch, nearly forty feet high, said to have been built by the Indians before the conquest. It is supported on one side by a mass of masonry in a pyramidal shape, and forms a very picturesque object when seen from below. On our return, our Indian friends pointed out to us a large area in front of the church, entirely stuccoed in the ancient manner, in which grew the finest olive trees I ever saw. Those of Tuscany are not half the size;—they must many of them be nearly thirty feet in circumference. At the end of the town,

beyond the walls, on the road leading to Tezcuco, is a kind of broad covered way between two huge walls which terminate near a river. This has probably been one of the entrances into the town. There are many things well worth examining in this place, and we left it, regretting that our time did not allow us to see more of it. We returned to Tezcuco across some fine fields of corn, and having put up our horses again, commenced our rambles over this very interesting city and its suburbs, every part of which exhibits remains of its ancient grandeur;—the raised mounds of brick are seen on all sides, mixed with aqueducts, ruins of buildings of enormous strength, and many large square structures nearly entire, (which I believe to be of Mexican architecture): fragments of sculptured stones constantly occur near the church, the market-place, and palace, a visit to which



cannot fail to awaken the most interesting recollections in the mind of a person at all versed in the history of this portion of America. It was in this palace that Cortez, with his whole army, was lodged and entertained as described in the simple narrative of Bernal Dias, whose accounts I had many opportunities of corroborating. It was in the market-place here, too, that the zeal of the first bishop collected the documents of Mexican history, knowledge, and literature—all the Aztec paintings, manuscripts, and hieroglyphical writings;—when, forming them into an immense pyramid, he committed them to the flames amid the unavailing prayers of the people for their preservation.

The history of Tezcuco is so little known to the English reader, that I make no apology for introducing the following short abstract from the works of Gama, whose

labours have added much to our slender stock of knowledge of the history and customs of the ancient inhabitants of New Spain.

“THE kingdom of Acolhuacan, whose capital was Tezcuco, though small, was, 350 years before the arrival of the Spaniards, one of the most populous and most ancient of Anahuac or Mexico. Its greatest length from north to south was seventy, and its breadth only twenty, leagues; besides Tezcuco and Otumba, it contained many other large cities, where to this day are to be seen specimens of rare and astonishing antiquities, particularly at the two places mentioned.

“Its boundaries were, on the east the republic of Tlascalla, on the south the province of Chalco, on the north the land of Huastecas, and on the west the Lake of



Tezcuco: but this small kingdom was afterwards still more reduced by the encroachments made by the Mexicans, with whose kingdom it was at last incorporated, preserving, however, its laws and form of government, its king having the privilege of being one of the electors of the Mexican emperors.

“Tezcuco, its capital, now reduced to insignificance, seems to have occupied a large space of ground, on which are yet to be seen fragments of considerable stone walls, &c.

“It is situated on the eastern side of the large lake of the same name in the valley of Mexico, and five leagues distant from that city.

“Among the thirteen kings, whose names history has recorded to have reigned over this kingdom from 1170 to 1520, one was named Nezahualcoyolt, who ascended the

throne in 1426, and who has highly distinguished himself by his courage, wisdom, and virtues, and may justly be called the Solon of Anahuac: under him the arts flourished so highly, that Tezcuco has been compared to Athens, as it abounded in poets, orators, historians, and excellent workmen, and at the same time was the place where the purest Mexican language was spoken. Great disturbances arose in Acolhuacan under the reign of Nezahualcoyolt, by the rebellion of a man named Maxatlon, who over-ruled that kingdom for the space of thirteen years, after which time he was overthrown and killed by the Mexicans under the command of the Emperor Montezuma the First, who also was a man of great talents. Nezahualcoyolt made eighty laws, which have been recorded, and exist in manuscript; he ordered that lawsuits and trials for crimes should only last



eighty days, or four of their months; after which time, he himself used to settle all differences, and tried criminals, who were instantly punished according to their crimes: robbery, murder, adultery, drunkenness, and treason, were very severely punished; and, if we are to believe historians, he ordered to be put to death four of his sons, who were convicted of the horrible crime of incest: at the same time his clemency was great: he made it death to steal any thing of the productions of the open fields, which was executed even for the small quantity of seven ears of Indian corn; but, in order to avoid as much as possible the infliction of it, he commanded that fields should be sown at the sides of the highways, to procure food for the distressed. He was very charitable to the destitute, to old people, and to widows. To prevent bribery,

he ordered that the judges should be maintained and clothed at the expense of government, according to their rank; and for these motives, the expenses of his household and ministry were astonishing, as it is reported by Don Antonio Pimental, who was one of the three grandsons of that king, who received baptism, and who relates, that it was seen in the pictures of that time, that these expenses amounted annually to four millions ninety thousand three hundred fanegas, of one hundred pounds each, of Indian corn; to two millions seven hundred and forty-four thousand of cocoa; to three thousand two hundred of chile, or red pepper, and tomata; to two hundred and forty of chiltecpin, or small red pepper; to one thousand three hundred cakes of salt, and eight thousand turkeys; besides a large quantity of vegetables, deer, rabbits, and birds of different



descriptions. Cocoa was brought from the warm climates, as it was not produced in the kingdom. Fourteen cities were obliged to furnish these provisions during six months, while fifteen others furnished them the rest of the year: young men were obliged to carry all the wood for the use of the palace.

“ The progress which this king made in the arts and sciences was indeed extraordinary, considering that he had neither books nor masters who could instruct him. He was an eminent poet himself, and many of his productions were highly esteemed. He composed sixty hymns, in praise of the Creator of heaven, which were very much thought of by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, and his two odes or songs which were translated into Spanish by his descendent Don Fernando Alva Ixtlilxochilt, have been preserved to our days.

He also had some knowledge of astronomy by examining frequently the luminous bodies of the heavens, and equally applied himself to the knowledge of plants and animals, and all those that he could not possess on account of the difference of climate, he had them depicted, as it has been ascertained by the celebrated Doctor Hernandez, who saw them and copied some of them. This king also investigated the cause of many effects which existed in nature, and made him detest idolatry, exhorting privately his children to have it in abhorrence, though publicly they might pretend to adhere to it. He abolished for awhile human sacrifices; but, out of respect for the ancient religious system, he was obliged to have them re-established, but ordered, on pain of death, that they should only be executed on prisoners of war. He erected, in honour of the Creator



of heaven, a high tower of nine stories, in the uppermost of which was an apartment painted in blue, with gilt moulds, in which were men purposely intrusted with the care of striking at certain hours on sheets of fine metal, to create a sound, and the king, on his hearing it, used to fall upon his knees and address his prayers to the great Creator, in honour of whom he fasted on a certain day of the year.

“After a reign of thirty-four years, this celebrated king died in 1470, much regretted by his own people and by all the Mexicans. He was succeeded by Nezahualpilli, his youngest son, to whom he gave the preference on account of his talents and virtues.”

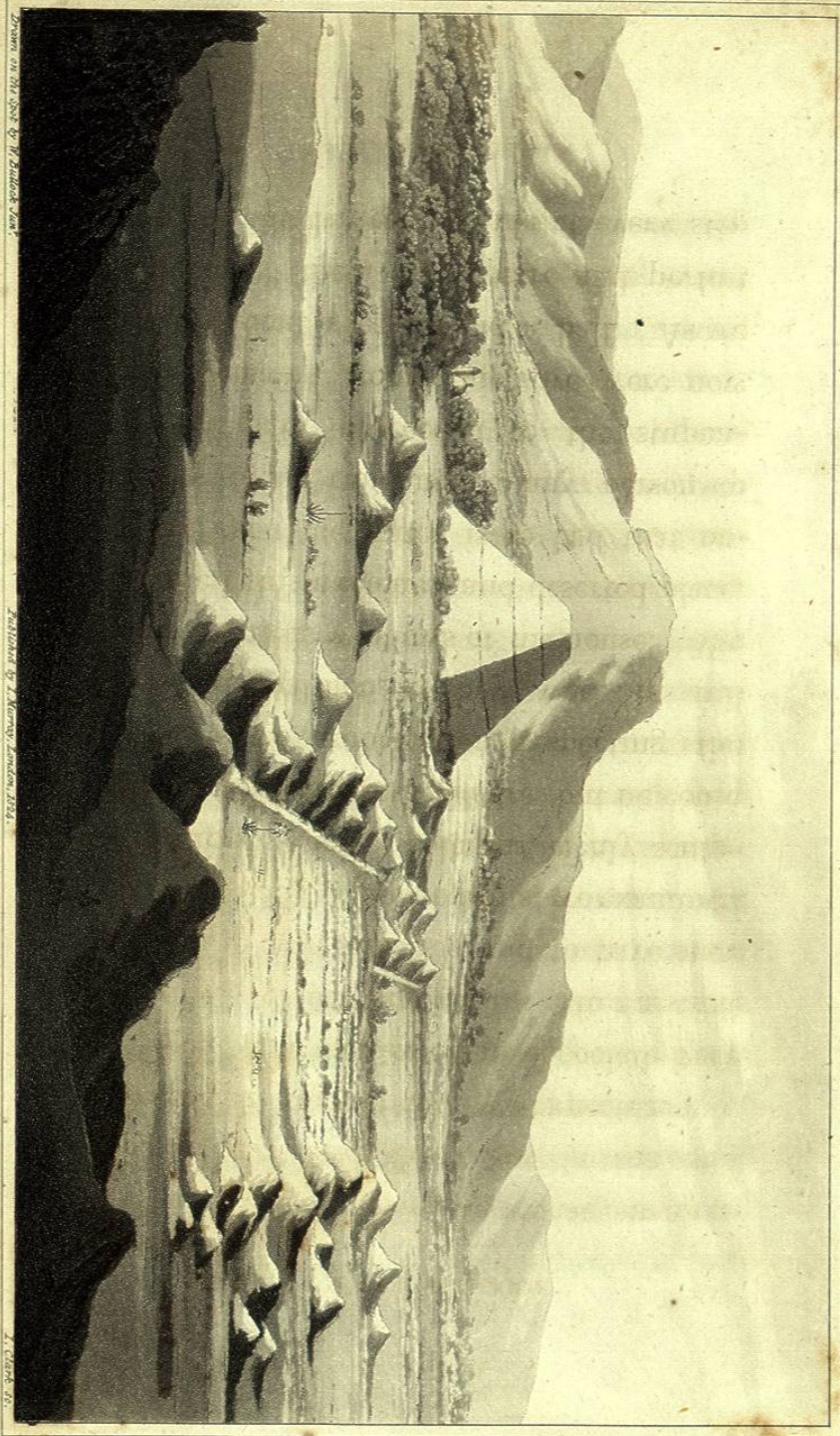
After a vain inquiry for the celebrated pyramids of the Sun and Moon, or of St. Juan de Teotihuacan, we set off for Otumba,

in the expectation of finding them near that place,—a ride of two hours over a fine country, on which the number of handsome Spanish churches and haciendas exceeds that of any part of Mexico through which I had yet travelled. We arrived at the commencement of the mountains, on which there was not a vestige of vegetable soil or vegetation, the whole being a soft iron-coloured stone, in which the continual passing of horses had worn deep tracks up to the animals' knees, and not more than fourteen inches wide, in which tracks it is very requisite to keep in order to save the traveller from a worse road. We had thunder all the afternoon, and towards evening it rained in torrents, so that the dry beds of the rivers were in an hour filled, and poured their muddy waters in floods to the Mexican Lake, where depositing the earthy parts, it must in a short



time be filled up. Upon descending the mountain we first caught a view of the two pyramids on a plain in front of us, at about five or six miles distant, and another hour brought us, drenched with rain, just before dark, into Otumba, the first place reached by Cortez after his defeat. At this place, after being refused admittance at several houses, we with some difficulty procured shelter in an empty carpenter's shop, where, in our wet clothes, having no fire, upon a bare floor of mud, without food but not without appetite, we had a prospect of passing the night; but observing a fire in a cottage near, I ventured to enter, and finding only an old woman and some children, I seated myself. The old lady was not at all pleased at my intrusion, but a few medias given to the children, and a dollar to herself, soon produced us bread and eggs;—we dried our clothes, and hav-





ing procured dry boards to repose ourselves upon, we passed the night in the carpenter's shop better than we expected.

Good bread and excellent chocolate were provided for our breakfast. After a stroll round the city, which is said to have once contained 50,000 inhabitants, we examined two curious ancient columns, richly sculptured; called upon the Padre, but he could give us no information respecting the pyramids, although they were in full view from the windows of his house. We then left this wretched and deserted place, where even the water is so bad that necessity alone can induce any person to use it; and proceeded to the stupendous remains, from which we were now distant about a league and a half. As we approached them the square and perfect form of the largest became at every step



more and more visibly distinct, and the terraces could now be counted. We rode first to the lesser, which is the most dilapidated of the two, and ascended to the top, over masses of falling stone and ruins of masonry, with less difficulty than we expected. On the summit are the remains of an ancient building, forty-seven feet long and fourteen wide; the walls are principally of unhewn stone, three feet thick and eight feet high; the entrance at the south end, with three windows on each side, and on the north end it appears to have been divided at about a third of its length. At the front of the building, with the great pyramid before us, and many smaller ones at our feet, we sat down to contemplate the scene of ancient wonders:—where the eye takes in the greater part of the vale of Mexico, its lake and city, and commands

an extensive view of the plains beneath and the mountains that bound the west of the valley.

It was at this place that Cortez fought and defeated the innumerable army of Indians: after the horrible night of desolation, he expressly says, that he arrived on the plains near Otumba; he ascended an eminence, and discovered the whole district covered with armies: despair filled every breast, except the intrepid leader's. The unnumbered host of Indians arrived, and closed round the small band of Spaniards, when the dauntless Cortez, with a few horsemen, charged furiously that part of the enemy where the royal banner was carried; the bearer was killed, the banner taken, and the whole of the immense multitude fled in consternation from the field, offering no further interruption to the retreat of Cor-



tez through Otumba to the territory of Tlascalla.

I think there can be little doubt that these immense structures, which vie with the pyramids of Egypt, were, at the period we are speaking of, in the same state in which they are now; and that it was on ascending one of them that Cortez beheld the approach of the great Indian army. There is no other eminence near which could have answered the purpose; and if these had been objects of veneration, as temples, or places of military strength, of the people, then in use, they would no doubt have been defended, and he would not have been permitted to have approached them. On descending we partook of some refreshment we had brought with us, and our Indian guide procured us some pulque, which was very acceptable. I went to a cottage close by, in which were several children

almost in a state of nature. I tried to entice them by presents, but could not prevail on them to come near me: they seemed much terrified at our white faces and odd dresses. We mounted, and rode to the several small barrows that are scattered in various directions round the base of the second, and on the road to the largest pyramid;—in some places they form regular streets running east and west.

Not far from the great pyramid, near a gate, lay an enormous stone, with a few sculptured ornaments. It is apparently of great antiquity. A boy who had followed us, observing that we viewed it with attention, took my son a little distance through a plantation, and showed him another of great dimensions, covered with sculpture, with a hole in the top—he supposed it a stone of sacrifice.

We soon arrived at the foot of the largest



pyramid, and began to ascend. It was less difficult than we expected, though, the whole way up, lime and cement are mixed with fallen stones. The terraces are perfectly visible, particularly the second, which is about thirty-eight feet wide, covered with a coat of red cement eight or ten inches thick, composed of small pebble-stones and lime. In many places, as you ascend, the nopal trees have destroyed the regularity of the steps, but nowhere injured the general figure of the square, which is as perfect in this respect as the great pyramid of Egypt. We everywhere observed broken pieces of instruments like knives, arrow and spear-heads, &c. of obsidian, the same as those found on the small hills of Chollula; and, on reaching the summit, we found a flat surface of considerable size, but which has been much broken and disturbed. On it was probably a temple or other building—

report says, a statue covered with gold. We rested some time on the summit, enjoying one of the finest prospects imaginable, in which the city of Mexico is included. Here I found fragments of small statues and earthenware, and, what surprised me more, oyster-shells, the first that I had seen in Mexico: they are a new species, and I have brought specimens home. In descending I also found some ornamental pieces of earthenware, the pattern one of which is in relief, much resembling those of China, the other has a grotesque human face. On the north-east side, at about half way down, at some remote period, an opening has been attempted. This should have been from the south to the north, and on a level with the ground, or only a few feet above it; as all the remains of similar buildings have been found to have their entrances in that direction. Dr. Oteyza, who has