

given us the measure of these pyramids, makes the base of the largest six hundred and forty-five feet in length, and one hundred and seventy-one in perpendicular height. I should certainly consider that the latter measurement is considerably too little, and that the altitude is about half the breadth. As to the age of the pyramids, and the people by whom they were erected, all must be a matter of mere conjecture; no one whom I could meet with in Mexico knew or cared any thing about them. None of the inhabitants had even been to see them, though, from the cathedral, both of them, as well as Tescosingo, containing the bath of Montezuma, are distinctly visible.

Yet no person in that neighbourhood could give me the least information respecting these wonderful structures:—on asking an old Indian woman we met near the

pyramids if she could tell who made them, she replied, “Si Signior, St Francisco.”

We proceeded to the village of St. Juan de Teotihuacan, and with some difficulty procured refreshment for ourselves and provender for our horses; and in the evening reached St. Christoval, again soaked with the rain, having passed, at the head of the lake of that name, the large dam or causeway, about a league in length, built by the government to prevent the flowing of the waters of the lake of St. Christoval into that of Tezcucó. During our ride near the lake we saw several aquatic birds and waders quite new to us, and which would well repay the trouble of any ornithologist, and afford a day's good sport with the gun. We rested here a few hours on the bare floor, and departing before day, passed along the side of the lake through Guadaloupe, where we were detained a



short time by the centinels, and arrived at the gates of Mexico in sufficient time to have to wait half an hour for their being opened.

The result of this little excursion of three days has thoroughly convinced me of the veracity of the Spanish writers, whose account of the cities, their immense population, their riches, and progress of the arts among the Mexicans, are doubted by those who have never seen the country. I firmly believe all that the intelligent and indefatigable Abbe Clavigero has related of his countrymen. Had Monsieur de Pauw, or our better informed countryman Robertson, passed one hour in Tezcuco, Tezcosingo, or Huexotla, they would never have supposed for a moment that the palace of Montezuma in Mexico was a clay cottage, or that the account of the immense population was a fiction.

It is not in the present capital of New Spain that we are to look for the remains of Mexican greatness, as every vestige of its former splendour was annihilated by the conqueror. He was compelled to demolish and level with the ground every house as he took it, and 50,000 Indian workmen followed close to his soldiers, to complete the work of destruction and fill up the canals in every street with the remains; and the foundations of the present city are raised and stand on the ruins of the old. It was the wish of the Spaniards not to leave a trace of former greatness, or a recollection of the people they had destroyed; and they completely succeeded in their object. Where are there the slightest traces of their ancient magnificent city but in the accounts of the early writers? It was well known that a map of it was made for Cortez, by order



of Montezuma. The Baron de Humboldt says he sought in vain for it, it was believed to have perished above a hundred years since in a fire in the Casa de Estada (the house of Cortez). Chance, however, brought it to light: it was purchased and brought to England in his Majesty's ship Phaeton, by myself, and is now published in this work: it is only a fragment, but the world will learn from it, that Ancient Mexico was double the size of the present city, and that it equalled it in regularity, and excelled it in the number and size of its palaces and temples; and the account given of it by Cortez to his sovereign, as well as that of Bernal Dias, will now no longer be doubted. From the number of our countrymen who have lately embarked for New Spain, many of them men of science and education, we may hope for much farther information, espe-

cially as the enlightened minister of state, Don Lucas Alaman, will, I am sure, have great pleasure in assisting them in their researches: to his kindness the public are principally indebted for the antiquities now at the Egyptian Hall, which are nearly the only ones, if we except a few Aztec MSS., that have reached Europe.