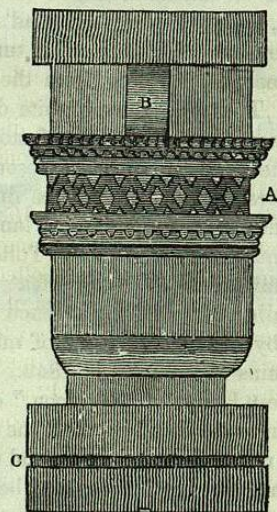


two walled chambers, or sinks, like wells;—one of which has a depth of about fifteen feet, and the other rather less. The walls of the entrance and of the sinks are of the common adobe, and there are no remains either of sculpture, painting, or human bodies, to reward the groper through the dark and dusty adit. I could perceive no sign of an entrance in the "House of the Sun."

It is useless to inquire into the antiquity of these pyramids. There is no authentic tradition of their builders, although they are usually referred to the Toltecs. Clavigero* is very brief in his remarks in regard to them, but says that in the temples dedicated to the Sun and Moon, there were two idols of huge bulk carved of stone and covered with gold. The breast of the idol of the Sun was grooved out, and a massive image of the planet, in solid gold, was fixed in the hollow. Of this the conquerors immediately possessed themselves, while the idol was destroyed by order of the Bishop of Mexico, and the fragments remained in the neighborhood until the end of the seventeenth century. A huge globular mass of granite at the spot indicated on the *plan* by the letter B—measuring nineteen feet and eight inches in circumference—may probably be either part of its ruins, or the sacrificial stone upon whose convex surface thousands have been offered to the gods.

A short distance west of this ball, at the place marked with the letter C, in the middle of the small semicircular elevation of ground and stones, (on the top of which are three tumuli with five more on its eastern base,) is the curious stone of which the following is an exact design.



* Vol i, p. 228 and 229

It lies due east and west, and is ten feet six inches in length by five feet in breadth. The material is granite, and though the sculpture on the northern and upper sides is very faint, yet, on the side facing the south, it is quite as distinct as represented in the drawing. The dark shade B is a hollow, three inches deep at the sides, and six at the top and bottom. In looking at this stone one might imagine that it had been a pillar, thrown down accidentally on its side; but the *exact east and west position—precisely in the centre of the group of tumuli*—would seem to forbid such an idea. It is said, that all who sit or recline on this singular fragment are immediately seized with a fainting fit; and, although we had heard of this remarkable property of the relic, we forgot to test the truth of it.

Clavigero tells us, that in the principal temple of Teotihuacan there dwelt constantly four priests, who were remarkable for the virtue and austerity of their lives. Their dress was of the most ordinary stuffs, and their food was confined to a loaf of maize, weighing two ounces, and a cup of *atollé* or gruel of the same grain.

Every night two of these devotees kept watch—offering incense, singing hymns to the gods, and shedding their blood on the stones of the temple. Their fastings and vigils continued for four years, except during a monthly festival, when they were permitted to indulge in as much food as they desired; but, while preparing for this enjoyment, they were obliged to undergo additional mortifications. At the end of four years they retired from the temple, and an equal number supplied their places, to go through the same rites and sufferings—and, in honor thereof, to receive the same homage and respect both from the people and their sovereign.

But high as was the recompense of their virtues, the punishment of vice, or of a violation of chastity, was proportionably severe. If the crime was proved after strict investigation, the culprit was beaten to death—his body burned—and his ashes scattered to the winds.

TRADITION.

There is a singular tradition in regard to the reappearance of the Sun and Moon after the regeneration and multiplication of the human race, which I will here recount to you.

Omecihuatl—the wife of the god Ometeuctli—after having borne many children in heaven, happened once to bring forth a *knife of flint*, which her enraged offspring flung to earth—when lo! from its fragments, sprang sixteen hundred *heroes*! Immediately they petitioned their mother to grant them power to create men for their servants. But she disdained to aid her children, and sent them to the god of Hell, who, she declared, would furnish them with a *bone of one of the men* who had perished in the general destruction of the races. This fragment she ordered them to

sprinkle with their blood, and a human pair should spring from it to regenerate the species.

Xolotl, one of the heroes, departed on the dangerous errand, and having obtained the gift from the infernal deity, hastened off precipitately in fear that he might repent the present. So rapidly did he return to earth, that in his speed he accidentally fell and *broke the bone!* Nevertheless, he returned to his brothers with the fragments, and, placing them in a vessel, sprinkled the precious relics with blood drawn from their bodies. On the fourth day there appeared a boy; and, after a lapse of three days more—during which the bloody sprinklings were continued—a girl was formed. They were reared by their guardian Xolotl with the milk of thistles—and thus commenced the regeneration of the world!

But there was no Sun nor Moon! The luminaries that existed in former days had been extinguished in the general ruin. The heroic brothers, therefore, assembled on the plain of Teotihuacan. They built a huge pile, and, kindling it, declared that the first who threw himself into the flames should have the glory to be transformed into a Sun. Nanahuatzin, the boldest of the multitude, immediately leaped into the blaze and descended to hell. After a short period, the Sun rose in the east!

But scarcely had he appeared above the horizon when he stopped in his course. They sent a message to the Orb desiring him to continue his travels, but he politely declined doing so until he should *see them all put to death!*

This, as may well be imagined, was anything but agreeable to the band of sixteen hundred, and not a few undertook to manifest their displeasure very openly. One seized his bow and shot an arrow, which the Sun safely avoided by *dodging!* Another made an equally passionate and fruitless demonstration; and, so on with several, until the luminary, tired of the sport, and somewhat annoyed, flung back one of the arrows, and fixed it in the forehead of the first hero who had rashly aimed at his blazing disc.

The heroic brothers, intimidated by the fate of their companion, and unable to cope with the Orb, resolved to yield to his behests and to die by the hands of the daring Xolotl; who, after slaying all his relatives, committed suicide. Before the heroes perished, they bequeathed their clothes to their servants; and, even at the period of the conquest, many "*ancient garments*" were preserved by the Mexicans with singular veneration, under the belief that they were the dying gifts of the valiant heroes, who had restored the lost Sun for the comfort of their race.

A similar fable is told of the origin of the Moon. Before the final sacrifice of the 1600, another person of the same assemblage followed the example of his brother Nanahuatzin, and threw himself into the flames. But the strength of the fire had declined, and as the voluntary victim burned with a paler flame, he was glorified only by the humbler dignity of a *Moonship!*

On the plain which had been the scene of this wonderful incantation and miraculous result, the descendants of the race consecrated two temples to the Sun and Moon, and the pyramids I have just described were, doubtless, the bases of their shrines and altars.*

It was late when we turned our horses' heads homeward, from the pyramids. At the base of that of the Moon, I met several old Indians who brought me a number of obsidian sacrificial knives, and small heads of a finely tempered clay, of which the opposite figures are specimens. They have evidently never been attached to bodies, and their purposes are entirely unknown by the Mexican antiquarians, although they have hitherto been discovered in great quantities at the foot of these Teocallis.

As we were just departing, an old woman lugged from beneath her petticoat a singular box of mottled marble, divided into four compartments, and covered on its exterior with very elaborate carving. The figures appeared to be those of Spaniards, and, in one place, there was a symbol resembling the cross. She said it had been dug up in an old field by her husband, when planting his last year's crop. Having purchased it for a dollar, it was forthwith deposited in the folds of a serape on my pillion, with the sonorous title of "*Montezuma's inkstand!*"

We rode merrily home, and reached Tezcoco by a brilliant moonlight, meeting troops of Indians returning from their Sunday's frolic in the town. As we passed through the numerous corn-fields with which the road-side is bordered, we heard the loud crack of the *milperos'* whip, as, seated on his high perch in the midst of the acres, he waved it, during the whole night, *in terrorem*, over the flocks of robber black-birds that infest the neighborhood as the grain is ripening.

VIATICUM AND FUNERAL RITES.

10th October.—Monday. An idle day, as Tio Ignacio, (as he is familiarly called,) was unable to accompany us to Tezcosingo.

Last night a young woman died in the house next to us, and her body is exposed to-day on a bier, surrounded with flowers and candles, in the entrance of the dwelling, so that it may be seen by every passer.

Approaching death, and the funeral services, are matters of considerable pomp in Mexico with almost all classes—and, especially, with the rich.

* Vide McCulloch, 223, 230, 231.

In April last, Madame Santa Anna, the wife of the President, was dangerously ill, and on the 19th of the month her life was in imminent peril. Early in the morning it was rumored that she was to receive the last sacrament, and, in all probability, would not survive the service. About noon, notes of invitation were sent from the Foreign Office to all the members of the Diplomatic Corps, requesting their presence at the ceremony of the *Viaticum*; and at seven o'clock we repaired, in uniform, to the Palace, where we were provided with massive wax torches, and ranged round the walls of the audience-chamber with the invited citizens, strangers, and friends of the suffering lady.

It was already quite dark. Presently the large bell of the Cathedral began to toll mournfully; and, being near a window overlooking the great square, I could perceive a solemn procession, with torches, issue from the door of the sacred edifice, preceded by a military band performing appropriate music. Slowly it advanced to the Palace gates—the jewelled robes of the Archbishop and attendant priests, flashing in the blaze of a thousand lights, as they approached the portals. They mounted the steps; entered the apartment; and, as the prelate passed through, chanting a hymn, the crowd knelt to the sacred elements. The Cabinet Ministers and Chiefs of the army then accompanied the priests into the chamber of the lady, where the required functions were performed. Returning again, through our saloon, they issued into the square, and, after making a tour around it, entered the Cathedral. The effect of this procession—with its torches blazing in the night like so many diamonds—its solemn military music, and its melancholy hymn—was solemn and picturesque.

There was a similar display (though not with so much magnificence,) at the death of General Moran, ex-Marquis of Vivanco. His dwelling was directly opposite my hotel, and I saw the whole of the preparations for his funeral from the windows.

Having been a patriotic soldier in his day, the Government undertook the arrangement of the last rites in his honor, and he was escorted by the flower of the troops.

His body was embalmed by the process of Ganal. It was laid on an open bier, dressed in the full uniform of a Major-general, with boots, spurs, plumed hat, sword, and even the cane by his side, as is usual with Spanish officers. So perfectly had the operation been performed on the body, that it presented in these equipments, a horrid and unnatural mockery of sleep; nor shall I ever forget the stony gaze of the *glass eyes*, as the dead body of the General issued from his gate-way.

To the sound of solemn music the procession moved along the streets of Espiritu Santo and San Francisco, toward the great church near the Alameda. The bier was placed on a lofty catafalque before the altar, hung with black velvet and lighted with tapers. A solemn service was performed with every aid of ecclesiastical splendor—and a multitude of

priests, in the different chapels, immediately commenced their masses for the repose of the hero's soul. At dark, his body was left with watchers around the pile on which it reposed, and, in a few days, it was deposited in an oaken sarcophagus and carried to a favorite hacienda for interment.

TEZCOSINGO.

11th October. Another fine day. After breakfast we started on our promised expedition to the hill of Tezcocingo—which rises in a tall cone at the end of the eastern plain, jutting out for a mile or two from the wall of mountains.

Tio Ignacio accompanied us on this occasion, and proved an excellent guide over the country. By his free, bold, dashing manners, and consummate courage, he has managed to obtain a remarkable control over all the neighboring Indians, and appears to be a person likely to make himself obeyed. He took an active part in the Revolution, and, as we rode from the town, pointed out to me the spot where, during a sudden night-attack of a guerilla party, he had been chased by a band of troopers from whom he was alone saved by the swiftness of his horse. It seems, however, that one of the cavalry, more daring than the rest, continued the pursuit after his companions had retreated;—but he paid dearly for his rashness in the end.

When Ignacio had cleared the streets and the suburbs of Tezcoco, he suddenly turned on his follower, and striking off at right-angles, dexterously threw his lasso over the trooper. In a moment he had dismounted his pursuer;—and putting his animal into full gallop, dragged the wretch for more than a mile over the plain, and cast his mangled body into a barranca!



THROWING THE LASSO.