

sites of the ancient habitations, fronting upon four parallel highways. In some of the houses the walls are still three or four feet high, but of most of them there is nothing but an outline tracery of the mere foundations. On the south, there are the remains of a long and narrow wall, which defended the city in that quarter.

North of the town there is a tongue of land, occupied in the centre by a mound, or cemetery. On the left slope of the hill by which the ruins are reached, there are, also, twelve circular sepulchres, two yards and a half in diameter, and as many high; the walls are all of neatly cut stone, but the cement with which they were once joined has almost entirely disappeared. In these sepulchres several bodies were found, parts of which were in tolerable preservation.

Two stones—a foot and a half long, by half a foot wide—were discovered, bearing hieroglyphics, which are described, in general terms, as “resembling the usual hieroglyphics of the Indians.” Another figure was found representing a man standing; and another, cut out of a firm but porous stone, which was intended to portray a person sitting cross-legged, with the arms also crossed, resting on his knees. This, however, was executed in a very inferior style. Near it, were discovered many domestic utensils, which were carried to Vera Cruz, whence they have been dispersed, perhaps, to the four quarters of the globe.

It is thus, in the neglect of all antiquities in Mexico, in the midst of her political distractions and bloody revolutions, that every vestige of her former history will gradually pass to foreign countries, instead of enriching the Cabinets of her University, and stimulating the inquisitiveness of her scientific students.

#### MITLA.

I will close this notice of Mexican Architectural Remains, with an account of the ruins of MITLA, as described by Mr. Glennie, and Baron Humboldt, from whose great work the sketch of one of the mural fragments opposite the next page, has been taken.

In the Department of Oaxaca, ten leagues distant from the city of that name, on the road to Tehuantepec, in the midst of a granitic country, surrounded by sombre and gloomy scenery, lie the remains of what have been called, by the general consent of antiquarians, the *Sepulchral Palaces of Mitla*. According to tradition, they were built by the Zapotecs, and intended as the places of sepulture for their Princes. At the death of members of the royal family, their bodies were entombed in the vaults beneath; and the sovereign and his relatives retired to mourn over the loss of the departed scion, in the chambers above these solemn abodes, screened by dark and silent groves from the public eye. Another tradition devotes the edifices to a sect of priests, whose duty it was to live



in perfect seclusion, and offer expiatory sacrifices for the royal dead who reposed in the vaults beneath.

The village of Mitla was formerly called Miguitlan, signifying, in the Mexican tongue, "a place of sadness;" and, by the Zapotecs, Léoba, or "The tomb."

These palace-tombs formed three edifices, symmetrically placed on a romantic site. The principal building (which is still in the best preservation,) has a length of near one hundred and fifty feet. A stairway leads to a subterranean apartment of about one hundred feet by thirty in width, the walls of which are covered with ornaments, *à la grèque*, similar to those that adorn the exterior walls represented in the drawing. These ornaments are inlaid in a mosaic of porphyritic stones, and resemble the figures found on Etruscan vases, and on the frieze of the temple of the god Redicolus, near the Egerian grotto at Rome.

The engraved fragment represents a corner of one of the edifices, and you cannot fail to remark a similarity to some of the designs presented to the public by Mr. Catherwood, in his researches farther south.

The ruins of Mitla are distinguished, I believe, from all the remains of ancient architecture in Mexico, by six columns of porphyry, placed in the midst of a large saloon, and supporting the ceiling. They have neither bases nor capitals, and are cut, in a gradually tapering shape, from a solid stone rather more than fifteen feet in length. The dimensions of the stones that cover the entrances of the principal halls, are stated by Mr. Glennie to be as follows:

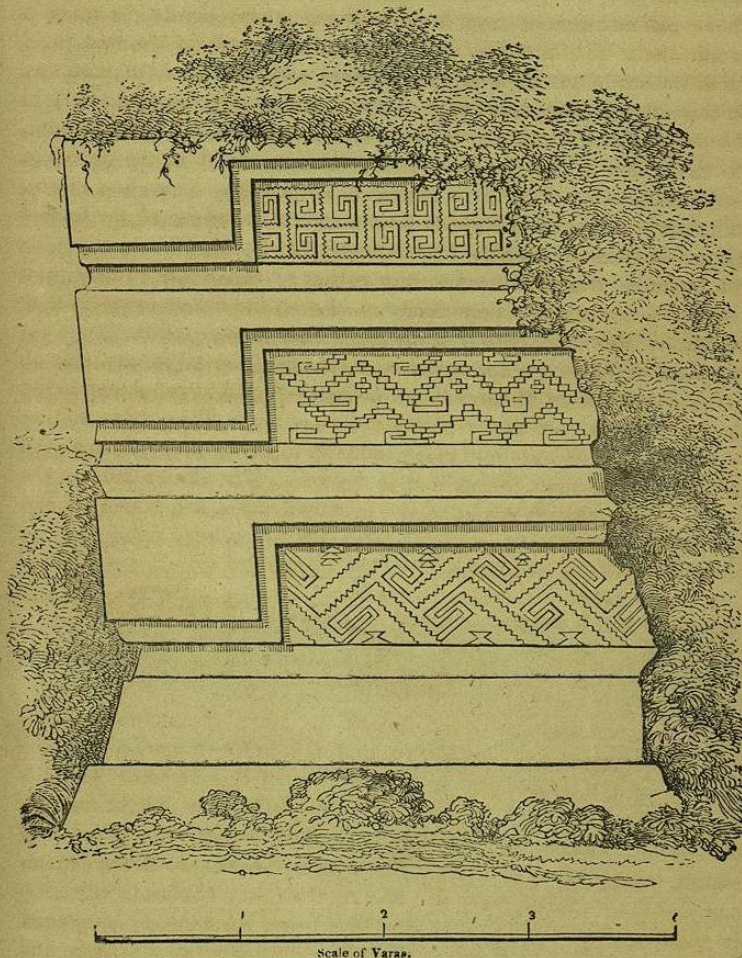
	Length.	Breadth.	Thickness.
1	19 feet 6 inches.	4 feet 10 inches.	3 feet 4 inches.
2	18 " 8 "	4 " 10 "	3 " 6 "
3	19 " 4 "	4 " 10½ "	3 " 9 "

Mr. De Laguna has discovered, among the ruins, some curious paintings of war trophies and sacrifices; and Humboldt remarks, that the distribution of the apartments in the interior of this building presents some striking similarities to the monuments of Upper Egypt, as described by Mr. Denon, and the *savans* of the Institute of Cairo. "In comparing the grandeur of these tombs with the meanness of the habitations of the former race," says the Baron, "we may exclaim, with Diodorus Siculus, that there are people who erect their most sumptuous monuments for their dead alone, regarding existence as too short and transitory to be worth the trouble of erections for the living!"†

It was the same in Egypt. The hereafter, and not the present, engaged the hearts of its ancient race. In Mexico, the temple to worship in, and the tomb for final repose, seem to have been the chief care of the

\*The reader will find a ground plan of these remains in Delafield's "Antiquities of America"—page 55, taken from Baron Humboldt's Atlas.

† Vide Humboldt, vol. ii, page 322. et seq. Paris edition, 1811.



RUINS AT MITLA.



people. It was a pious and philosophic devotion of time, worthy as well of Christian nations as of those believing in the necessary care of their worthless bodies, until the period of their ultimate reunion with the spirit.

I have thus hastily gathered together some sketches of the remains that cover our Continent from the remote north of our own possessions to near the region of Mr. Stephens's discoveries.

If they fail to identify the Southern nations with the Northern tribes, or to prove that the rude mound of the savage was but the precursor of the stone pyramid of the civilized southern, they will at least serve to show that at the north, as well as in more genial climates, there have been races who worshipped the Great Spirit, buried their dead, defended themselves from their foes, and possessed, at least, a partial taste for the refinements of life. At all events, it is not probable that the remains so plentifully sprinkled over the Mexican territory, from the Rio Gila to the limits of Oaxaca, were untenanted and unused at the period of the conquest, while it is known that the cities of Mexico and of Cholula contained within their limits magnificent edifices, devoted to the domestic comfort and public worship of a refined and numerous population.

#### HOME.

14th October. Returned to Mexico. The last person who bade us farewell in Tezcoco, was the worthy Tio Ignacio—of whose hunting-bull, deer-call, rough honesty, and wild adventures, I shall long retain a pleasing recollection.

"I am poor, Caballero," said he, with a grasp of his hard hand, "I am poor, and have led a dog's life of it from the age of five years—fighting, bull-catching, beef-selling, hunting and living with the Indians up in the mountains for weeks, with no covering but my blanket and a pine tree;—but I have managed, nevertheless, to raise a large family of boys, every one of whom can ride better than I can; catch a bull at full gallop; know how to read and write; tell the truth; obey their father without questioning, and hit the mark at eighty *varas*! I owe no man a *claco*. I love my horse, my gun, my *pulqué*,—and, better than all, I love my old wife, who, with all my wildness, passion, and temper, has never quarrelled with me in a *casamiento* of twenty years! Who says as much in Mexico? *Vaya!*

"Come to Tezcoco once more, Caballero, and we will go up to Tlaloc—together with my people, the Indians, and I'll make that old *demonio* give up some of the bones of his ancestors—*picaro!* *Adios!*"