

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

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

LETTER XXV.
It is a fallacy to think that the true mind of the savage was but the precursor of the stone pavement of the civilized southern states.

WHENCE CAME THE ANCIENT POPULATION? WHO BUILT THE ANCIENT CITIES?

WHO WORSHIPPED THE IDOLS?
Men trace who worshipped the idols, and possessed, at least, a partial taste for the refinements of life. At all events, it is not probable that the remains so

AFTER this somewhat extended inspection of the Monuments of Mexican antiquity, the question naturally proposes itself to our minds:—Who were the builders of these temples, the worshippers of the idols, and whence did they come? Separated now by wide and lonely seas from the Continents of the Old World, was there once a period when the lands were united, and the same race spread over both? Or, are we to doubt the traditional and written histories of ages, and believe that an *original* race peopled the American wilds, and built and worshipped after the promptings of their own spirits?

These are questions that have puzzled and must continue to puzzle the antiquarians of both hemispheres. They cannot be solved. The traditions—the habits—the languages—the edifices—of all tribes, races, and nations, have been studied and contrasted without result. Separate theories have been earnestly and ingeniously advanced. First, that the inhabitants came by the north and through Behring's Straits. Second, that they came by the islands of the Pacific, or that in times long past, the Pacific was not all sea, but partly filled, perhaps, with a vast Continent—and Third, that they may have arrived from the Old World by the Atlantic. There are long periods of unwritten and even untraditional history of the world, and learned and pious geologists seem now to be agreed in believing that when it is declared: "In the *beginning* God created the heaven and the earth," it is not affirmed that God created the heaven and the earth on the first *day*, but that "this '*beginning*' may have been an epoch, at an unmeasured distance, followed by periods of undefined duration, during which all the *physical* operations disclosed by geology were going on."*

This is certainly satisfactory as to the formation of the earth—a mere fulcrum for the development and powers of a *future* human race. But, must not the Bible be considered a full historical account of "all the operations of the Creator in times and places with which that *human*

* Buckland, vol. i, p. 26.

race is concerned?" Is it *daring* to question this? How small is the geographical space covered by the history of the Old Testament! It is an established fact, that the whole of the *animal races* are not common to both Continents. A great variety of quadrupeds have been found in America that were unknown in Europe, and the same is true in regard to birds and fish.

It is difficult to touch this question, without interfering with the authority of the Pentateuch; but if we were at liberty to discuss such matters, there are few who would not hold the doctrine, that it is perfectly reconcilable with rational science to believe, that the two Continents existed contemporaneously from the oldest periods, filled with distinct races, of separate customs, manners, habits and languages; who, by the simple and natural impulses of humanity arrived at similar results, in religion, science, architecture and government. *Animals* found in both hemispheres arrive at the same results—why may not *man*? It is replied, that they are guided alone by *instincts*? Is it not by his *instincts*, improved by his *reason*, that man, too, is led to every operation of his varied life? By the ruins which are left, of what those instincts and reason once produced on this Continent, we are alone enabled to judge of our ancestors. Defence—protection from the weather—religion—the calculation of time—the necessity of food;—these are the chief instinctive wants and promptings of man's nature. Men suffer from the seasons, from sun and shower,—hence dwellings. Men have a natural feeling of adoration, gratitude, dependence,—hence religion, groves, altars, mounds, and even *pyramids*, as they advance in civilization. Men behold the natural changes of day and night; the motion of the sun, moon and stars; they note that there is an equality of time and season, and that these are comparatively of longer or shorter duration at different periods of the year,—and hence a calendar. Men are social, and congregate into societies, and in the process of time their natural passions beget discontent and wars,—hence fortifications and weapons of defence. Men hunger,—and hence the invention of instruments by which they succeed in the sports of the field, or control the chase. And, at length, with all the elements of civilized society around them, in shrines, bulwarks, domestic retreats, arsenals, social love, and national glory—they come to have a *history*; and, with the laudable desire of perpetuating the memory of themselves and of their epoch, you find at Palenque, as well as in Egypt and on the Ganges, those figured monuments which tell the tale of the departed great, by symbols, letters, paintings or hieroglyphics.

Now, separated by thousands of leagues of sea from the Eastern hemisphere, and with men who had no means, but the frail canoe, of transporting themselves over it, you suddenly alight on these shores, in the midst of the sixteenth century;—and find temples, idols, the remains of dwellings, fortifications, weapons of defence and chase, astronomical calendars, and people, worshipping, living and governing in the midst of every external evidence of *ancient* civilization. The whole of North America, we have

seen, and a large portion of South America, is strewn with these or similar remains, from Canada to far below the equator. Here, in the north, it is supposed that there were *three races*, succeeding each other, two of which have vanished even from tradition.

"The monuments of the *first*, or primitive race," said the late William Wirt, "are regular stone walls, wells stoned up, brick hearths, found in digging the Louisville canal, medals of copper, silver swords, and other implements of iron. Mr. Flint assures us that he has seen these strange ancient swords. He has also examined a small iron shoe, like a horse-shoe, incrustated with the rust of ages, and found far below the soil, and a copper axe, weighing about two pounds, singularly tempered and of peculiar construction.

"These relics, he thinks, belonged to a race of *civilized* men, who must have disappeared many centuries ago. To this race he attributes the hieroglyphic characters found on the limestone bluffs; the remains of cities and fortifications in Florida; the regular banks of ancient live-oaks near them; and the bricks found at Louisville, *nineteen feet below the surface, in regular hearths, with the coals of the last domestic fire upon them*;—these bricks were hard and regular, and longer in proportion to their width than those of the present day.

"To the *second* race of beings are attributed the vast mounds of earth, found throughout the whole western region, from Lake Erie and western Pennsylvania to Florida and the Rocky mountains. Some of them contain skeletons of human beings, and display immense labor. Many of them are regular mathematical figures, parallelograms and sections of circles, showing the remains of gateways and subterranean passages. *Some are eighty feet high, and have trees growing on them, apparently of the age of five hundred years.* They are generally of a soil differing from that which surrounds them, and they are most common in situations where it since has been found convenient to build towns and cities.

"One of these mounds was levelled in the centre of Chillicothe, and cart-loads of human bones removed from it. Another may be seen in Cincinnati, in which a thin circular piece of gold, alloyed with copper, was found last year. Another in St. Louis, named the "Falling Garden," is pointed out to strangers as a great curiosity.

"Many fragments of earthenware, some of curious workmanship, have been dug up throughout this vast region; some represented *drinking vessels*, some *human heads*, and some *idols*;—they all appear to have been moulded by the hand, and hardened in the sun. These mounds and earthen implements indicate a race inferior to the *first*, which was acquainted with the use of iron.

"The *third* race are the Indians now existing on the Western Territories. In the profound silence and solitude of these regions, and above the bones of a buried world, how must a philosophic traveller meditate upon the transitory state of human existence, *when the only traces of the beings of two races of men are these strange memorials!* On this very spot

generation after generation has stood, lived, warred, grown old and passed away; and not only their names, but their nation, their language has perished, and utter oblivion has closed over their once populous abodes! We call this the *New World*. It is old! Age after age, and one physical revolution after another has passed over it—but *who shall tell its history?*"

Who? We have seen the memorials of three distinct races—but who can tell the origin of the first two—or even of the last? And, yet, these are only part of the inhabitants of North America.

I have attempted to describe to you the prominent remains that still exist farther south, in the Valley of Mexico, and in other portions of the Republic. Following the links of the chain still farther south, Messieurs Stephens and Catherwood have given an account of *forty* cities visited by them in their second tour; and they describe the ruins of others and their monuments, still more southerly, in their former volumes.

In South America, we have only the most distinct accounts of Peru; and although the Government of the Incas possessed no regular city but Cuzco, many interesting specimens have been exhumed from the "Guacas," or mounds, with which they covered the bodies of the dead. "Among these," says Dr. Rees, are "mirrors of various dimensions, of *hard shining stones, highly polished*; vessels of earthenware, of different forms; hatchets and other instruments, some destined for war, and others for labor. Some were of flint, some of *copper*, hardened by an unknown process, to such a degree as to supply the place of iron." To these may be added a variety of curious drinking vessels, made of pottery baked and painted; many specimens of which embellish the public and private Museums of our country, and are not unlike some that have been found in the Island of Sacrificios.



PERUVIAN WATER VESSELS.

The public roads of the Peruvians were also worthy of all praise; especially those two magnificent highways traversing the country from Quito to Cuzco for fifteen hundred miles;—the one passing through the in-

terior over mountain and valley, and the other by the plains of the sea-coast. But, in the construction of their Temples this remarkable people exhibited their greatest ingenuity, as well as in their edifices designed for the comfort and occupation of their sovereigns. "The Temple of Pachacamac, together with the Palace of the Inca, and Fortress, were so connected together, as to form one great structure above half a league in circuit. Though they had not discovered the use of mortar, or of any other cement in building, the bricks and stones are joined with such nicety that the seams can hardly be discerned. Notwithstanding the inconvenient arrangement of the apartments, and the want of windows, the architectural works of the Peruvians, which still remain, must be considered as stupendous efforts of a people unacquainted with the use of iron and the mode of applying the mechanical powers. Among the ancient edifices of this people, we may mention the Obelisk and Statues of Tiahuanaca, and Mausoleums of Chachapoyas, which are conical buildings of stone, supporting rude busts of huge and massive dimensions."*

Yet all that these remains from north to south, through such a varied extent of latitude and climate, can effect, is to strike us with wonder, and stimulate, though they puzzle our most eager curiosity. The monuments, themselves, disclose nothing of the origin of the races. Is there, then, a written record? Are there any volumes or scattered leaves remaining to tell the story?

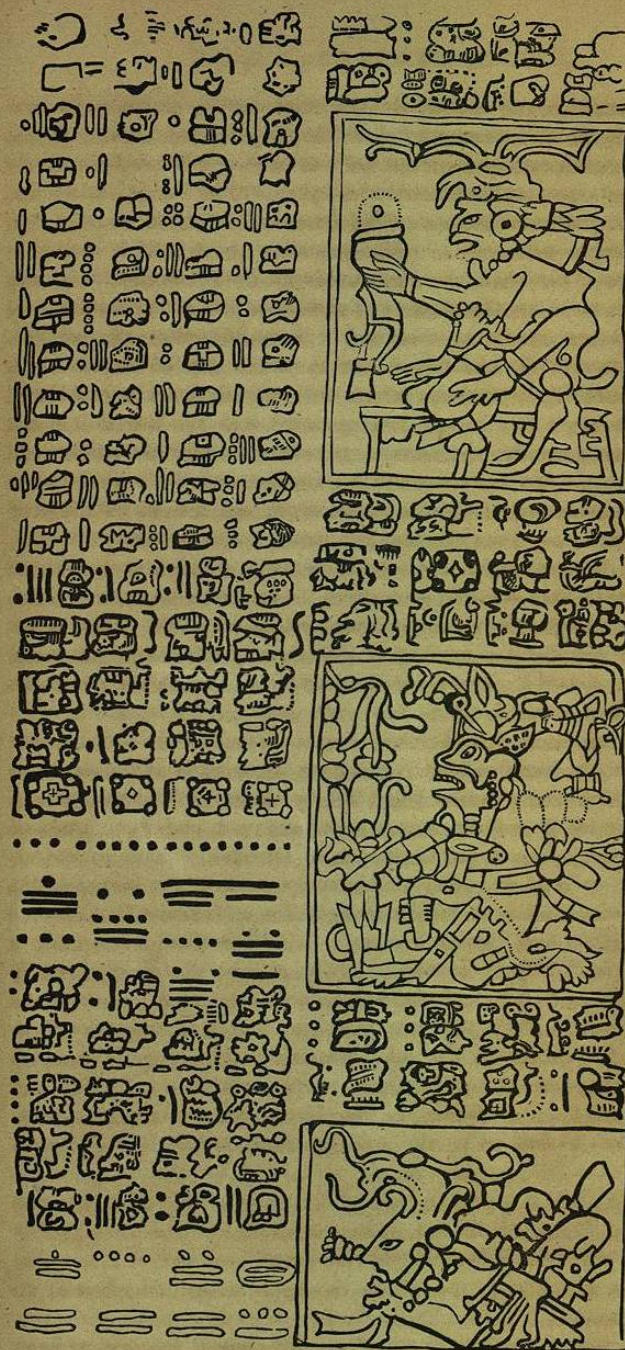
The only remnant of this character that I have been able to discover (and it is slightly referred to by Mr. Stephens,) is, what is called an Aztec manuscript, which was purchased in 1739 by Göetz, at Vienna, during a literary tour he made to Italy, and is now preserved, under the name of *Codex Mexicanus*, in the Royal Collection of Dresden.

It is written on *metl*, or paper undoubtedly made of the leaves of the *Agave Americana*, similar to others brought from Mexico and preserved at Veletri, Vienna, and in the Vatican. It is described as forming a *tabella plicalis*, or folding book, which may be shut up like a map; nearly eighty-one yards in length, and covered, on both sides, with paintings and written characters. Each page is about seven inches in length by three inches and a little more in breadth. One side of the page is occupied by painted figures, and the rest by signs or letters placed side by side, and by no means unlike the Chinese, or the hieroglyphic characters delineated by Mr. Catherwood, as partly covering the monuments at Palenque and Copan.

The opposite plate is a precise copy of one page of this manuscript as given by Baron Humboldt, in his Atlas, except that I have been unable to present you with the brilliant blue, red, green and yellow colors that tint the figures, and give to the whole the appearance and effect of an illuminated missal.

A writer in the sixteenth volume of the Edinburgh Review, at page 222 of the American edition, casts doubts on the genuineness of this man-

* Rees, vol. xxviii. article, Peru.



MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT.