

ports on the coast from Valparaiso to Panama, better security would be afforded to British merchants against the revolutions, to which the property of all persons resident on those shores is so often exposed, from the feebleness of the Governments, and the successive changes which are the consequence of that weakness.

The establishment of steamboats would render the return of correspondence, against the prevailing southerly winds, of equal rapidity. The trade-winds are not violent in that sea, and men-of-war, in particular, have generally made the passage down the coast with great dispatch. However, the introduction of Steam Navigation in the West Indies, having already shown that merchant sailing vessels are disposed to carry sufficient coal in ballast, for the supply of fuel; it is equally obvious that the same facilities might be afforded to carry out coal to the Pacific coast, until such time as, from its raised value and the increased demand for it, the inhabitants of those regions may think it worth their while to work the veins of coal, which are well known to exist at various places on the western coast.*

London, Sept. 6, 1835.

* South America and Pacific. Lond, 1838. Vol. II. p. 281.

No. 2.

Since my return to the United States, I have seen the following interesting letters in the National Intelligencer, on American Antiquities, from Mr. Colcraft.

It is to be hoped that he will shortly favor the public with an accurate drawing of the characters on the tablet.

GRAVE CREEK FLATS, (Va.) August 23, 1843.

I have devoted several days to the examination of the antiquities of this place and its vicinity, and find them to be of even more interest than was anticipated. The most prominent object of curiosity is the great tumulus, of which notices have appeared in western papers; but this heavy structure of earth is not isolated. It is but one of a series of mounds, and other evidences of ancient occupation at this point, of more than ordinary interest. I have visited and examined seven mounds, situated within a short distance of each other. They occupy the summit level of a rich alluvial plain, stretching on the left or Virginia bank of the Ohio, between the junction of Big and Little Green Creeks with that stream. They appear to have been connected by low earthen intrenchments, of which plain traces are still visible on some parts of the commons. They included a well, stoned up in the usual manner, which is now filled with rubbish.

The summit of this plain is probably seventy-five feet above the present summer level of the Ohio. It constitutes the second bench or rise of land above the water. It is on this summit, and on one of the most elevated parts of it, that the great tumulus stands. It is in the shape of a broad cone, cut off at the apex, where it is some fifty feet across. This area is quite level, and commands a view of the entire plain, and of the river above and below, and the west shore of the Ohio in front. Any public transaction on this area would be visible to multitudes around it, and it has, in this respect, all the advantages of the Mexican and Yucatanese teocalli. The circumference of the base has been stated at a little under nine hundred feet; its height is sixty-nine feet.

The most interesting object of antiquarian inquiry is a small flat stone, inscribed with antique alphabetic characters, which was disclosed on the opening of the large mound. These characters are in the ancient rock alphabet of sixteen right and acute angled single strokes, used by the Pelasgi and other early Mediterranean nations, and which is the parent of the modern Runic as well as the Bardic. It is now some four or five years since the completion of the excavations, so far as they have been made, and the discovery of this relic. Several copies of it soon got abroad, which differed from each other, and, it was supposed, from the original. This conjecture is true: neither the print published in the Cincinnati Gazette in 1839, nor that in the American Pioneer in 1843, is correct. I have terminated this uncertainty by taking copies by a scientific process, which does not leave the lines and figures to the uncertainty of man's pencil.

The existence of this ancient art here could not be admitted, otherwise than as an insulated fact, without some corroborative evidence in habits and customs, which it would be reasonable to look for in the existing ruins of ancient occupancy. It is thought some such testimony has been found. I rode out yesterday three miles, back to the range of high hills which encompass this sub-valley, to see a rude tower of stone standing on an elevated point, called Parr's point, which commands a view of the whole plain, and which appears to have been constructed as a watch-tower, or look-out, from which to descry an approaching enemy. It is

much dilapidated. About six or seven feet of the work is still entire. It is circular, and composed of rough stones, without mortar, or the mark of a hammer. A heavy mass of fallen wall lies around, covering an area of some forty feet in diameter. Two similar points of observation, occupied by dilapidated towers, are represented to exist, one at the prominent summit of the Ohio and Grave Creek hills, and another on the promontory on the opposite side of the Ohio, in Belmont county, Ohio.

It is known to all acquainted with the warlike habits of our Indians, that they never evinced the foresight to post a regular sentry, and these rude towers may be regarded as of contemporaneous age with the interment of the inscription.

Several polished tubes of stone have been found in one of the lesser mounds, the use of which is not very apparent. One of these, now on my table, is twelve inches long, one and a quarter wide at one end, and one and a half at the other. It is made of a fine, compact, lead-blue steatite, mottled, and has been constructed by boring, in the manner of a gun-barrel. This boring has been continued to within about three-eighths of an inch of the larger end, through which but a small aperture is left. If this small aperture be looked through, objects at a distance are more clearly seen. Whether it had this telescopic use or others, the degree of art evinced in its construction is far from rude. By inserting a wooden rod and valve, this tube would be converted into a powerful syphon or syringe.

I have not space to notice one or two additional traits, which serve to awaken new interest at this ancient point of aboriginal and apparently mixed settlement, and must omit them till my next.

Yours, truly,

HENRY R. COLCRAFT.

GRAVE CREEK FLATS, August 24.

The great mound, at these flats, was opened as a place of public resort about four years ago. For this purpose a horizontal gallery to its centre was dug and bricked up, and provided with a door. The centre was walled round as a rotunda, of about twenty-five feet diameter, and a shaft was sunk from the top to intersect it; it was in these two excavations that the skeletons and accompanying relics and ornaments were found. All those articles are arranged for exhibition in this rotunda, which is lighted up with candles. The lowermost skeleton is almost entire, and in a good state of preservation, and is put up by means of wires, on the walls. It has been overstretched in the process, so as to measure six feet; it should be about five feet eight inches. It exhibits a noble frame of the human species, bearing a skull with craniological developments of a highly favorable character. The face bones are elongated, with a long chin and symmetrical jaw, in which a full and fine set of teeth, above and below, are present. The skeletons in the upper vault, where the inscription stone was found, are nearly all destroyed.

It is a damp and gloomy repository, and exhibits in the roof and walls of the rotunda one of the most extraordinary sepulchral displays which the world affords. On casting the eye up to the ceiling, and the heads of the pillars supporting it, it is found to be incrustated, or rather festooned, with a white, soft, flaky mass of matter, which had exuded from the mound above. This, apparently, animal exudation is as white as snow. It hangs in pendent masses and globular drops; the surface is covered with large globules of clear water, which in the reflected light have all the brilliancy of diamonds. These drops of water trickle to the floor, and occasionally the exuded white matter falls. The wooden pillars are furnished

with the appearance of capitals, by this substance. That it is the result of a soil highly charged with particles of matter, arising from the decay or incineration of human bodies, is the only theory by which we may account for the phenomenon. Curious and unique it certainly is, and with the faint light of a few candles, it would not require much imagination to invest the entire rotunda with sylph-like forms of the sheeted dead.

An old Cherokee chief, who visited this scene recently, with his companions, on his way to the West, was so excited and indignant at the desecration of the tumulus, by this display of bones and relics to the gaze of the white race, that he became furious and unmanageable; his friends and interpreters had to force him out, to prevent his assassinating the guide; and soon after he drowned his senses in alcohol.

That this spot was a very ancient point of settlement by the hunter race in the Ohio valley, and that it was inhabited by the present red race of North American Indians, on the arrival of whites west of the Alleghanies, are both admitted facts; nor would the historian and antiquary ever have busied themselves further in the matter had not the inscribed stone come to light, in the year 1839. I was informed, yesterday, that another inscription stone had been found, in one of the smaller mounds on these flats, about five years ago, and have obtained data sufficient as to its present location to put the Ethnological Society on its trace. If, indeed, these inscriptions shall lead us to admit that the Continent was visited by Europeans prior to the era of Columbus, it is a question of very high antiquarian interest to determine who the visitors were, and what they have actually left on record in these antique tablets.

I have only time to add a single additional fact. Among the articles found in this cluster of mounds, the greater part are commonplace, in our Western mounds and town-ruins. I have noticed but one which bears the character of that unique type of architecture, found by Mr. Stephens and Mr. Catherwood, in Central America and Yucatan. With the valuable monumental standards of comparison furnished by these gentlemen before me, it is impossible not to recognize, in an ornamental stone, found in one of the lesser mounds here, a specimen of similar workmanship. It is in the style of the heavy feather-sculptured ornament of Yucatan—the material being a wax yellow sand-stone, darkened by time. I have taken such notes and drawings of the objects above referred to, as will enable me, I trust, in due time, to give a connected account of them to our incipient society.

Yours truly,

HENRY R. COLCRAFT.

I have been favored with a fac-simile of this stone, by Mr. Bartlett, the learned and indefatigable Secretary of our Ethnological Society, who, in his letter communicating the drawings, observes:

"I must state a curious fact in regard to the characters on this Tablet. I have compared them with the old alphabets of Europe, and find they assimilate strongly with the letters of the old Phœnician and Anglo-Saxon. Many of the characters may be found in the ancient Greek, Etruscan, Phœnician, Cimbric or Welsh, Celt-Iberic, Anglo-Saxon, &c. In the Celt-Iberic they predominate, as almost every character is to be found in that ancient alphabet. I have racked my brain not a little in trying to decipher them, and, though their value is easily ascertained, they cannot be combined so as to be rendered into anything intelligible. It is probable that we have not a correct fac-simile; but this will now be remedied, as Mr. Colcraft will take an impression in wax of the whole tablet."

No. 3.

SINCE this volume went to press, I have been favored with the following very instructive letter, from HORATIO HALE, Esq., the learned philologist who accompanied the Exploring Expedition, under the command of Captain Wilkes.

It is pleasant, when groping backward through the labyrinth of time, to have, now and then, some tangled threads of the lost clue thrown into our hands; and I have no doubt that, when the result of this eminent scholar's labors are placed before the public, they will obtain for him a reputation commensurate with his genius and industry.

"PHILADELPHIA, October, 1843.

"MY DEAR SIR:

"It gives me pleasure to learn, that you are still occupied with your work on Mexico, which has been long expected with great interest. There are few countries, so far as I could judge, which contain more that is worthy of being described; and fewer still, of which so little is accurately known.

"As to the inquiries contained in your letter, I am happy to find that we have arrived, by different roads, at the same conclusion, with regard to the origin of the Mexican Tribes, and the direction in which their migration took place. The results of such researches as I have been able to make into the languages of the western coast of America, though not of a positive nature, seem to me strongly to favor the views which you seem to entertain, of the progress of the emigrant tribes from their probable crossing-place at Behring's Straits, along the coast—or rather, between the coast and the Rocky Mountains—to the Mexican plateau.

"Very soon after commencing my investigations in Oregon, I was struck by two facts of considerable importance. *First*; that the numbers of distinct families of languages, or independent races, was greater than was to be found, in so small a space, in any part of the known world; and, *secondly*; that, in several cases, the different tribes, or subdivisions of a family, were dispersed at great distances from each other, and surrounded by several tribes speaking distinct languages. I observed, that these scattered bands were generally disposed in a line from north to south. It seemed, therefore, not an unreasonable supposition, that if the numerous hordes which have, at different periods, overrun the Mexican plains, proceeded in this direction, they may have left along their track, from time to time, detached parties, which, from some motive of discontent, would separate from the main body, and allow it to proceed without them. This would account, both for the number of small tribes speaking distinct languages, and for the manner in which those speaking the same language, are dispersed through the region.

"As an example, I may mention the Athabaskan family or race, which occupies the northern part of our Continent, next to the Esquimaux, and which has been found on our northwest coast, within a hundred miles of Behring's Straits. The Carrier Indians, who live north of the Oregon Territory, in about 55° latitude, belong to this family. Five hundred miles south of these, not far to the north of the Columbia, I found a small tribe whose language showed them to have had the same origin with the Carriers. Still farther south, on the other bank of the Columbia, and separated from the last-mentioned by the Chinook tribe, was another

detached band of the same affinity; and a hundred miles north of these, on the Umqua river, was the tribe from which it derives its name, speaking also a cognate language. Here is a single chain, reaching from about latitude 65° to 43°, or more than half-way from Behring's Straits to the City of Mexico. It may, perhaps, hereafter, be carried still farther, as my researches did not extend much beyond the last-mentioned point.

"I may also observe, that the Shoshonees, or Snake Indians, are found, first, on the head waters of the Columbia—then near the head of the California Gulf; and, again—under the dreaded name of Cumanches, pushing their incursions into the heart of Texas.

"In the later history of this tribe—the Shoshonees proper—there is a fact worthy of notice. I was assured by trustworthy persons, long resident in that region, that the Snake Indians had formerly lived considerably north of the present position—occupying the territory now in the possession of the powerful Blackfeet confederacy—who have expelled them from their ancient hunting-grounds; and, it was asserted, that there were old men now living among the Shoshonees, who had a better knowledge of the country, at present occupied by the Blackfeet Indians, than any of the latter themselves. My informants, (old fur-traders,) gave it as their belief, that all the tribes in that region were gradually advancing toward the south. In this instance, the movement of the Blackfeet tribes is not wholly voluntary, as they are constantly harassed on the north by hostile bands of Crees and Sioux; while the Shoshonees, in their southward progress, press before them the Uchis and Apachés, with whose ravages on the northern borders of Mexico you are, of course, well acquainted.

"We are familiar with a similar movement on the old Continent, and understand how it originates in the hardy valor of northern regions, forcing its way toward a more genial climate and a more beautiful soil. We can also perceive how, among wandering tribes, like our Western Indians—by nature migratory, and bound by no ties of cultivation to the land which they occupy—this movement should be comparatively rapid; and we can thus see how a large body (like the Blackfeet nation, for instance,) might, within a few generations, be urged onward, step by step, from the northern sea to the Mexican plains. It has seemed to me that this fact might be of some importance, as serving to illustrate the history (given by Humboldt,) which the Aztecs had preserved of their migration, and with which you must be familiar. I refer more particularly to their gradual progress, (by stages, as it were,) making long halts from time to time, and again taking up their line of march toward the south. I have not this account before me now, but on reading it a few months ago, I thought I could trace in the epithets which they affixed to their different encampments, (if we may apply this term to their halting-places,) some of the features of the country west of the Rocky Mountains.

"It is evident that these deductions would be reduced to certainty, if we could discover some resemblance between any of the languages of Oregon and those of Mexico. Thus far, however, the comparison has not been attended with success. Of the twenty distinct languages, spoken within the limits of Ancient Mexico, which have been reduced to writing by the Catholic Missionaries, I have been able to obtain grammars of only five. The collection which you aided me in making in Mexico, is, indeed, the largest that I know of in this country. In Europe, however, all that has been published on these subjects, and many valuable manuscripts, are preserved; and, at some future day, an opportunity may offer of completing the comparison."

No. 4.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

IN THE CITY OF MEXICO,

FOR ONE YEAR—FROM MARCH 8TH, 1833, TO MARCH 4TH, 1834.

TIME OF OBSERVATIONS.		MEAN OF DAILY HEIGHT OF THE QUICKSILVER.		MEAN TEMPERATURE.	
Month.	Day.	Highest.	Lowest.	Centesimal.	
		9 to 10, A. M.	3 to 5, P. M.	of the quicksilver.	of the atmosphere.
1833.					
March,	8	0.5887		20.58	16.62
"	29		0.5856	22.04	23.80
April,	20		0.5864	23.50	23.58
"	26	0.5889		22.50	19.54
May,	7	0.5896		22.41	20.91
"	15		0.5876	23.40	24.45
June,	6	0.5894		24.45	20.57
"	22		0.5871	24.64	23.87
July,	15	0.5909		22.14	20.10
"	30		0.5889	22.65	23.78
August,	3	0.5898		21.50	18.64
"	15		0.5875	22.04	22.78
September,	7	0.5891		20.24	18.50
"	21		0.5866	21.96	24.32
October,	10	0.5902		20.21	17.21
"	18		0.5872	21.55	22.16
November,	7	0.5899		18.37	14.62
"	21		0.5872	19.43	20.05
December,	8	0.5898		18.12	13.87
"	11		0.5867	19.34	19.94
1834.					
January,	2	0.5907		17.48	13.24
"	23		0.5875	19.32	20.62
February,	4	0.5906		18.37	15.08
"	15		0.5873	19.61	20.79
March,	1	0.5902		20.17	16.65
"	4		0.5878	21.62	22.75
MEAN		0.58983	0.58711	21.06	19.92

No. 5.

LIST OF PRICES,

OF RENTS, PROVISIONS, ETC., TO HOUSEKEEPERS IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.

MEATS.		Oranges,	6½ " six.
Beef,	12½ cents per 20 oz.	Plantains,	6½ " four.
Mutton	12½ " 18 "	Grapes,	25 " lb.
Hams,	50 " lb.	Walnuts,	6½ " forty.
Ducks,	37½ " pair.	Melons,	6½ to 12½ cents each.
Turkeys,	\$1 50 " each.	Avocates,	6½ cents for four.
Fowls,	50 " "	Apples,	12½ " dozen.
Pigeons,	25 " pair.	Tunas,	6½ " "
		Lemons,	6½ " "
		Guyavas,	6½ " eight.
		Granaditas,	6½ " four.
FISH.		DRINKS.	
Pescao-blanco, from the lake, 62½ cents per lb.		Milk,	6½ cents per quart.
		Pulqué,	6½ " three quarts
		Water,	6½ " barrel.
		Aguardiente,	18½ " quart.
		Mescal,	25 " "
		Chicha,	6½ " three pints.
		Orgeat,	6½ " quart.
		Agua de chia,	6½ " "
VEGETABLES, TEA, COFFEE, ETC.		FUEL.	
Onions,	12½ cents per dozen.	Charcoal,	
Artichokes,	25 " "	6½ cents for six lbs.	
Cauliflowers,	12½ " each (small)		
Cabbages,	12½ to 25 cents each.		
Peas,	25 cents per pint.		
Corn,	\$5 to \$6 per carga of 400 lbs.		
Barley,	\$3 " "		
Rice,	12½ cents per lb.		
Radishes,	6½ " 2½ dozen.		
Potatoes,	12½ " quart.		
Beans (frigoles)	12½ " "		
Chile peppers,	31½ " lb.		
Tomatoes,	12½ " dozen.		
Bread,	6½ cents for four small loaves, 16 ounces in all.		
Biscuits,	6½ cents per 16 oz.		
Chocolate,	50 " lb.		
Tea,	\$2 to \$3 per lb.		
Coffee,	25 to 37½ cents per lb.		
Sugar (refined)	18½ cents per lb.		
Sugar (white)	12½ " "		
FRUITS.		SERVANTS.	
Pines,	12½ cents each.	Cook,	\$4 to \$6 per month.
Chirimoyas,	6½ to 12½ cents each.	Coachman,	15 to 20 "
Peaches,	6½ cents for four.	Waiter,	15 "
	25	Housekeeper,	8 to 10 "
		Chambermaid,	3 to 4 "
		Scullion,	3 to 4 "
		RENTS.	
		They vary according to situation, but they are very high throughout the Capital; \$500—\$2500; and even higher rates are given for the very best.	