

The fountain which we have already mentioned is a single female figure in an indecent squatting attitude, *nineteen feet high*, and cut from the solid rock. The remains of a pipe which conveyed the water to it, are still visible behind the head, and the liquid passed through the body of the gigantic image until it was discharged beneath into the basin or canal, by which it was carried to the neighboring town. The Indian tradition, as recounted by Nebel, states, that the ancient inhabitants of this spot, abandoned it, in consequence of the unfertility of the soil and the failure of the streams, and that they took refuge in, or united themselves with the occupants of Papantla.

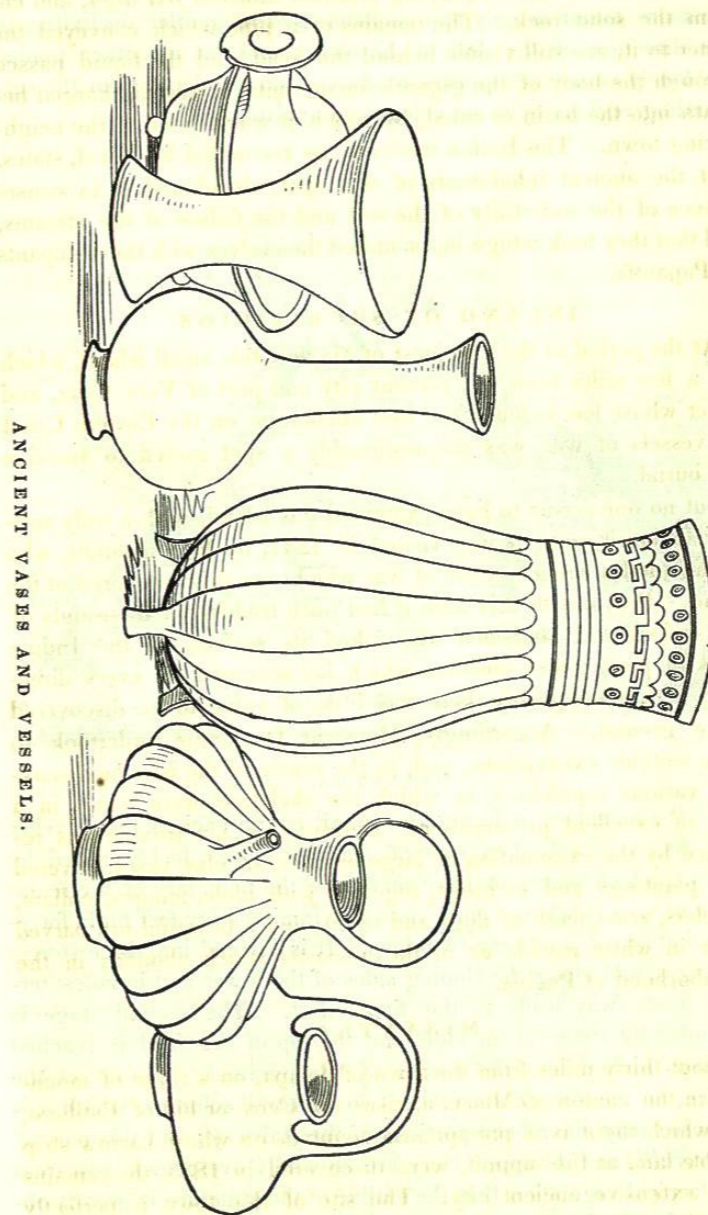
ISLAND OF SACRIFICIOS.

At the period of the Conquest of Mexico, this small island, which lies a few miles from the present city and port of Vera Cruz, and under whose lee is found the best anchorage on the Eastern Coast for vessels of war, was unquestionably a spot sacred to sacrifice and burial.

But no one seems to have examined this island, with a truly antiquarian spirit, until it was visited in 1841, by M. Dumanoir, who commanded a French vessel of war which was then anchored at the island. Previous to this time it had been trodden by thousands of idle sailors and landsmen who raked its surface for the Indian relics of pottery and obsidian which lay scattered in every direction; and, consequently there was little of value to be discovered above ground. Accordingly, Monsieur Dumanoir undertook to make suitable excavations, and, in the centre of the islet he discovered various sepulchres, in which the skeletons were found in a state of excellent preservation. Besides this, his trouble was rewarded by the exhumation of large numbers of clay vases, covered with paintings and etchings, together with idols, images, collars, bracelets, arms, teeth of dogs and tigers, and a beautiful urn carved either in white marble or in the alabaster which abounds in the neighborhood of Puebla.

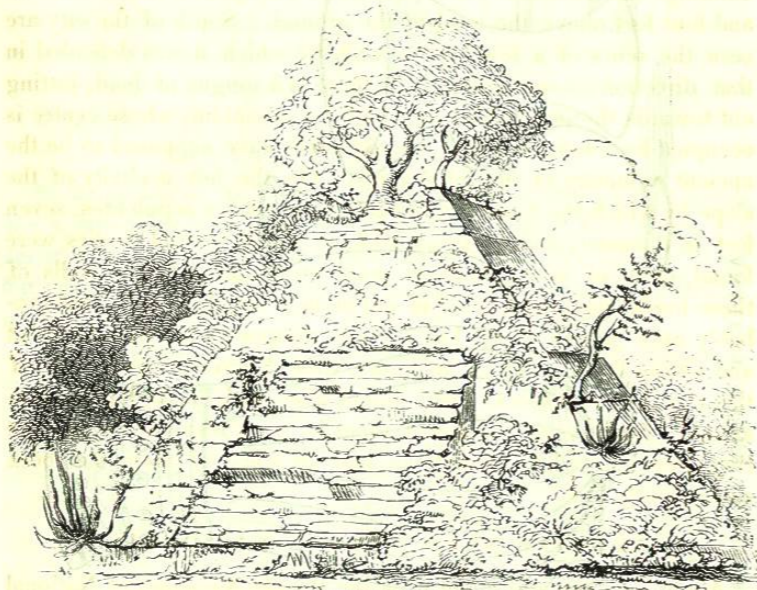
MISANTLA.

About thirty miles from the town of Jalapa, on a ridge of mountains in the canton of Misantla, rises the Cerro or hill of Estillero, near which there is a precipitous mountain on whose narrow strip of table land at the summit, were discovered in 1835, the remains of an extensive ancient city. The site of this town is perfectly isolated. Steep rocks and deep ravines surround the mountain upon which it was built, and beyond these dells and precipices there is a



ANCIENT VASES AND VESSELS.

lofty wall of hills from whose summit the sea in the neighborhood of Nautla is distinctly visible. The table lands upon which the ruins are found is only approachable by the gentler declivities in the direction of the hill of Estillero; and, at all other points, the lonely eminence appears to have been sundered from the surrounding regions by some volcanic convulsion.



MISANTLA.

As the mountain plain on the summit is approached, the traveller first discovers a broken wall of massive stones, feebly united by cement, which seems to have served for the boundary of a circular *plaza* or area in whose centre rises a pyramid eighty feet high, forty-nine feet broad, and forty-two deep. It is divided into three stories or stages, and along the sloping sides of the lower and broadest terrace, a stairway leads to the first offset. The second stage is ascended by a stair at the side, and the top of the third is reached by steps niched into the corner of the pyramid. In front of the edifice, on the second story, are two pilastral columns, which it is supposed may have been portions of the stairway; but this part of the *teocalli*, and its upper story are so wildly overgrown with trees and tropical vegetation that the outline of the structure is greatly obliterated. On the summit, a gigantic tree, has sent its roots deep into the spot which was doubtless once the shrine of the Indian temple.

Beyond the wall of the circular area in which this edifice is placed, are found the remains of the city or town, extending nearly three miles north in a straight line. The foundations of all the houses are still distinctly traceable. They were built of large square stones, and are separated by streets at the distance of about three hundred yards from each other. In some of the blocks of buildings the walls are yet standing, at a height of between three and four feet above the level of the ground. South of the city are seen the relics of a low narrow wall, by which it was defended in that direction;—and north of it there is a tongue of land, jutting out towards the precipitous edges of the mountain, whose centre is occupied by a mound which the explorers have supposed to be the ancient cemetery of the inhabitants. On the left acclivity of the slope by which the town is approached are twelve sepulchres, seven feet in diameter, and as many high, in which several bodies were found, parts of which were in good preservation. The walls of these tombs are constructed of cut stone; but the mortar that probably once joined them, has entirely disappeared. Several erect and sitting figures, carved in stone, were discovered on the site of this city, and two blocks were found, filled with hieroglyphic characters. Numbers of vases and utensils, were also unearthed; but they were carried to Vera Cruz, and all trace of them has been subsequently lost.¹

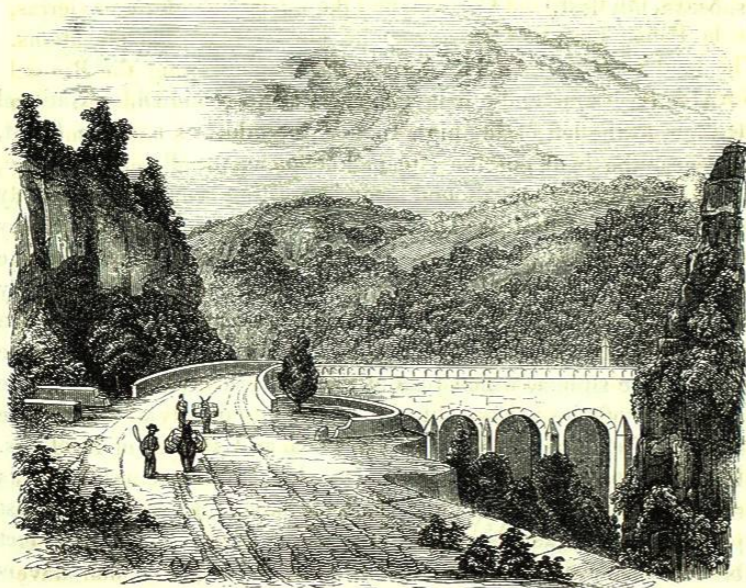
REMAINS NEAR PUENTE NACIONAL.

About a league and a half from the Puente Nacional, or National Bridge, to the left of the high road in the midst of a dense forest, and near the banks of the stream known as the Rio del Puente, Don José Maria Esteva found some interesting remains of antiquity in November of 1843. They had been visited in 1819 or '20, by a priest, named Cabeza de Vaca, who was then curate at Puente Nacional, but from that period until 1843, they had been entirely lost sight of. The temple or *teocalli*, is situated on the top of a small mount, elevated about one hundred and fifty feet above the level of the stream, which runs at its feet. In consequence of the inequality of the surface of the soil, the edifice is thirty-three Spanish feet high, on some of its sides, and forty-two on others. It fronts towards the east, and its platform, or upper level, is reached by a stairway of thirty-four steps, so steep as to be almost perpendicular to its base. The platform is forty-eight Spanish feet broad, and seventy long. The semi-circumference of the base is

¹ See Mosaico Mejicano.

stated to be one hundred and six feet. The edifice is surrounded by six stairways, one foot broad, and the distance between each step or stage of the body of the teocalli, is about seven feet high nearest the base, their height diminishing, however, as you ascend to those nearest the platform. The whole structure is built of lime, sand and large stones taken from the bed of the river, and although shrubs have grown both on the platform and on the stairways, this interesting relic of antiquity has been so completely protected, that its form is still perfectly preserved. At first sight the edifice would seem to be perfectly solid, yet upon examination it has been found to be hollow, and that its ancient entrance was from the west. This entrance, however, is so small that notwithstanding the efforts of laborers who were employed by the explorer to clear the fallen rubbish and open a path, they were unable to penetrate the whole of the interior chambers. The short time they were enabled to devote to this work, and the fear of the Indians to encounter wild beasts and serpents in the interior of the temple, deterred Señor Esteva from further efforts, and thus, perhaps, one of the most perfect remains of antiquity on the east coast of Mexico is still very inadequately described.¹

¹ See Museo Mejicano, vol. 2, p. 465, for a plate of this temple.



PUENTE NACIONAL.

THE STATE OF TAMAULIPAS.

This State was known, previous to the revolution, as the Intendencia de San Luis Potosi, and included the colony of Nuevo Santander. It is now bounded on the north by the North American State of Texas; on the north-west by the Mexican State of Coahuila; on the west by the States of New Leon and San Luis Potosi; on the south by San Luis Potosi and Vera Cruz; and, on the east, by the Gulf of Mexico. The breadth of the State varies from twelve to fifty-five leagues.

The coast of Tamaulipas is more than three hundred and fifty miles in length, and is fringed with lagunes, varying from four to eighteen miles in width, which are divided from the gulf by barriers and banks of sand. The shallowness of the shores along the whole of this coast, and the dangerous bars which choke the mouths of the rivers, render the navigation difficult and dangerous for vessels of almost all classes. In the northern part of the State, in the neighborhood of the Rio Grande, the country is comparatively level. South of these high plains, however, and some distance in the interior, the land is varied by a succession of mountains, hills and vallies, which gradually slope eastwardly until they are lost in the flats and sands of the sea coast. The Cerro de Martinez, the Cerro de Xeres, the Cerro del Coronel, and the mountain ridges, or sierras, de la Palma and del Carico, are the most remarkable elevations. The land is well watered. Fine vallies extend along the Rio del Norte or Rio Grande, the Tigre, Borbon, Panuco and Dolores. On the coast are found the lagunes of La Madre, Morales and Tampico.

The climate of the interior of Tamaulipas is mild and healthy; but on the coast an intense heat prevails during the greater part of the year, and, combined with the rank vegetation and moisture, produces diseases similar to those which scourge the adjacent shores of Vera Cruz. As soon as the northers begin to blow, all nature — animal and vegetable — is refreshed by the grateful change; but the hot season generally recommences in March, and soon spreads miasma and death throughout the whole of the low lands.

The population of Tamaulipas, — consisting chiefly of Meztizos and Indians, — was estimated by the Mexican Calendar of 1833, at 166,824, who were divided among three departments and eleven districts or cantons. In 1842 the population, as stated in the estimate for a congress, was 100,068; and if to this we add ten per cent. for the estimated increase in seven years, we shall have 110,074 in 1850.

The chief productions and the indigenous plants are similar to those found in the State of Vera Cruz; and considerable trade is carried on with the interior—especially with the States of San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas, and Queretaro,—in mules, oxen, horses, honey and wax. The coasting and foreign commerce is conducted principally in the ports of Tampico de Tamaulipas and Matamoros. From these places, large quantities of European and North American manufactures, enter the middle and northern States of the republic. Queretaro, San Luis, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Durango, Chihuahua and Sonora are all benefitted by this trade in a greater or less degree; and the Panuco, Rio Grande and other streams are all availed of partially for this interior trade as far as they are navigable. At Soto la Marina an important smuggling business was long and vigorously carried on.

The capital of this State is VICTORIA, formerly SANTANDER, a town of 12,000 inhabitants. TAMPICO DE TAMAULIPAS, on the northern bank of the Panuco, which enters the Mexican Gulf five miles below the town, is the principal commercial port of the State. Its bar is dangerous and its harbor considered unsafe. Large vessels cannot approach the town, which is situated among extensive marshes. It is visited almost every year by the yellow fever; yet its foreign commerce is extensive and appears to be increasing.

SOTO LA MARINA is a small village and haven at the mouth of the river Santander, on its left bank. It is composed chiefly of Indian huts, and contains about 3,000 inhabitants.

MATAMOROS lies on the right bank of the Rio Grande or Rio Bravo del Norte, at the distance of ten leagues from its mouth. It contains about 10,000 inhabitants, who have become well acquainted with the people of the United States during the recent war. The climate of Matamoros is hot and sickly, like that of Tampico or Vera Cruz; but as the river upon which it lies is perhaps the most important in Mexico, and has proved navigable by steamers for a considerable distance in the interior, it is probable that this place will become the depot of a large and valuable commerce destined for the supply of the northern States of the Mexican confederacy. By the treaty of 1848, the Rio Grande became the boundary between large portions of the two republics; and as the intervening country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande is not considered at present attractive for agricultural purposes, it is likely that it will long continue unoccupied and unsettled, thus leaving the whole of our commerce to be conveyed to Matamoros, or to our own neighboring settlements on the opposite shore, for distribution throughout the valley of the Rio Grande.



TAMPICO.

The other towns and villages in Tamaulipas worthy of note, are Altamira, Horcasitas, Coco, Escandon, Llera, Santillana, Padilla, Hoyos, Guadalupe, Reinosá, Camargo, Mier, Revilla, the most important of which lie on the margin of, or near, the Rio Grande.

ANCIENT REMAINS IN TAMAULIPAS.

The only remains of Indian architecture and civilization of whose existence we are aware, are those described in the small work published by Mr. B. M. Norman in 1845, to which we have already alluded, entitled "Rambles by Land and Water or Notes of Travel in Cuba and Mexico." This gentleman's notices of the antiquities in this region are exceedingly brief, sketchy and indefinite, nor are the illustrations with which his text is accompanied, calculated to convey more vivid pictures of the relics he visited or discovered in the course of his investigations along the margins of the Panuco.

Departing from Tampico, in March, 1844, he ascended that river in a canoe, paddled by an Indian, and before nightfall, on the second day of his primitive voyage, reached Topila creek, three miles from the mouth of which he landed at a *rancho* or cattle farm, belonging to Señor Coss, of Tampico. Five miles from this spot, lying to the eastward of another *rancho*, he found several considerable mounds, one of which was more than twenty-five feet high and of a circular form. At its sides, a number of layers of small flat well hewn stones were still to be seen; while scattered about were many others of larger size and various shapes. All were perfectly plain or unadorned, and had apparently been used for the door posts and lintels of edifices.

On the following day, the traveller visited the *rancho de las Piedras*, distant about two leagues and a half in a southerly direction from the bank of the Topila. Passing through a dense wilderness, he reached after much toil, an elevated table land or plateau, near a chain of hills running through this section of country and known as the Cerro de Topila. Here he found more scattered stones which had once formed parts of buildings; while, further on, he discovered several mounds, whose sides were constructed of loose layers of smooth and uniform blocks of concrete sandstone. Most of these layers, had, however, fallen from their places in the *tumuli*, and were heaped in masses near their base. About twenty of these mounds, lay contiguous to each other, varying in height from six to twenty-five feet, some being circular and others square. The principal elevation in this group of pyramids covers an area of about two acres, and at its base, Mr. Norman discovered a cylindrical

stone slab seven inches thick, four feet nine inches in diameter, and pierced through the centre, lying upon the top of a circular wall whose top was level with the ground. On removing this stone he found a well filled up with broken stones and fragments of pottery. The upper portion of the slab bore evidence of having been originally sculptured, but the tracings of the chisel were so much worn by time and seasons that they could not be drawn with accuracy. On the top of the tumulus, in front of which this well was discovered, grew a wild fig tree, whose gigantic height of more than an hundred feet, indicates the great age of the work and the long period of its abandonment.

The walls of the adjacent minor mounds had all fallen inward, from which the traveller concluded that they had been used for sepulture; but he does not seem to have taken the time or trouble to verify this conjecture by personal explorations. The ground, for several miles around, was strewn with loose hewn stones of various shapes, and broken fragments of pottery, which had unquestionably formed parts of domestic utensils. Fragments of *obsidian*, which had no doubt been the knives and weapons of the former inhabitants of this spot, were also plentifully scattered about, and every indication existed of a dense population in the by gone days. These ruins are placed by Mr. Norman in $98^{\circ} 31'$ west longitude and $22^{\circ} 9'$ north latitude.

But the remains of edifices, pyramids and tombs were not the only relics found by the traveller in these dense forests bordering the Atlantic coast. The Indians who once dwelt in this district, like the Aztecs, Zapotecs and Yucatec had evidently devoted themselves to sculpture; but whether for the purpose of simple adornment or for idolatry, there are no facts to apprise us with certainty. The most remarkable relic found by Norman, was a large head, beautifully cut in fine sandstone, of a dark reddish hue, which abounds in the neighborhood. The face stands out in bold relief from the rough block, as if it had been left unfinished, or as if it was originally designed to occupy a place among the ornamental portions of an edifice. The industrious traveller caused this object to be borne, with others, to Tampico, and has deposited it in the collection of the New York Historical Society. Other stones, of a somewhat similar character, attracted his attention, but the most extraordinary sculpture he has described in his work is that to which he assigns the name of the American Sphynx. It is the image of a gigantic turtle, with the head of a man protruding boldly from beneath its carved and curving case. The back was correctly and

artistically wrought, and all the lines of the scales were neatly cut in exact proportions. There were also in many parts fainter lines, shewing that the peculiar and graceful arabesques which are wrought by nature on the shell of this amphibious animal, had not been overlooked by the artist. This huge figure, raised on its four legs, was placed upon a large block of concrete sandstone. All its parts were equally true to nature. It was much mutilated, and the human head had been especially injured, but not sufficiently to obliterate the artistic workmanship with which it had been originally chiselled.

The place where Mr. Norman found these remains had evidently been the site of a large city; and, proceeding with his excavations among huge masses of earth or stones of every size and shape, he was, at length, rewarded by the discovery of another ancient figure. It was merely a human face, in full relief from the block, which was entirely cut away from the top and bottom, but left in two nearly circular projections at the sides. The ornaments on the head are peculiar, and are formed of three balls, with slight indentations, connected together by a band running across the top of the cerebrum and terminating at the sides just above the gigantic ears, which are nearly half the size of the face. The features and contour of the head are described as not resembling those of the American or Mexican Indian in any of their lines. This head is seventeen inches in length, twenty-one in width, including the ears, and ten in thickness. It was found on the side of a large pile of ruins the remains of dilapidated walls, of which it had unquestionably formed one of the ornaments. It is to be regretted that Mr. Norman was unable to devote more time to the exploration of this region. His antiquarian researches however formed only an episode in his travels through portions of Mexico, and besides this, his labor was exceedingly great in cutting his way through the dense shrubbery which covers the ground amid a wilderness of trees, matted and woven together with thousands of creepers or plants whose thorns pierced or obstructed him at every moment. He had, moreover, to contend with myriads of annoying insects, and he feared the bite of the poisonous alacranes or the spring of the tiger that sometimes started from the thickets. He received no assistance from the stupid Indians dwelling in the neighborhood. They could not conceive that curiosity alone would prompt any one to encounter the toil and danger which must be endured in explorations in the TIERRA CALIENTE of Mexico, and imagined that the search for gold and buried treasure, rather than antiquities, was his real motive for attempting to penetrate the recesses of their lonely wilderness.