

F. Catherwood.

20. IDOL—Back View.





F. Catherwood.

21. IDOL—Front View.



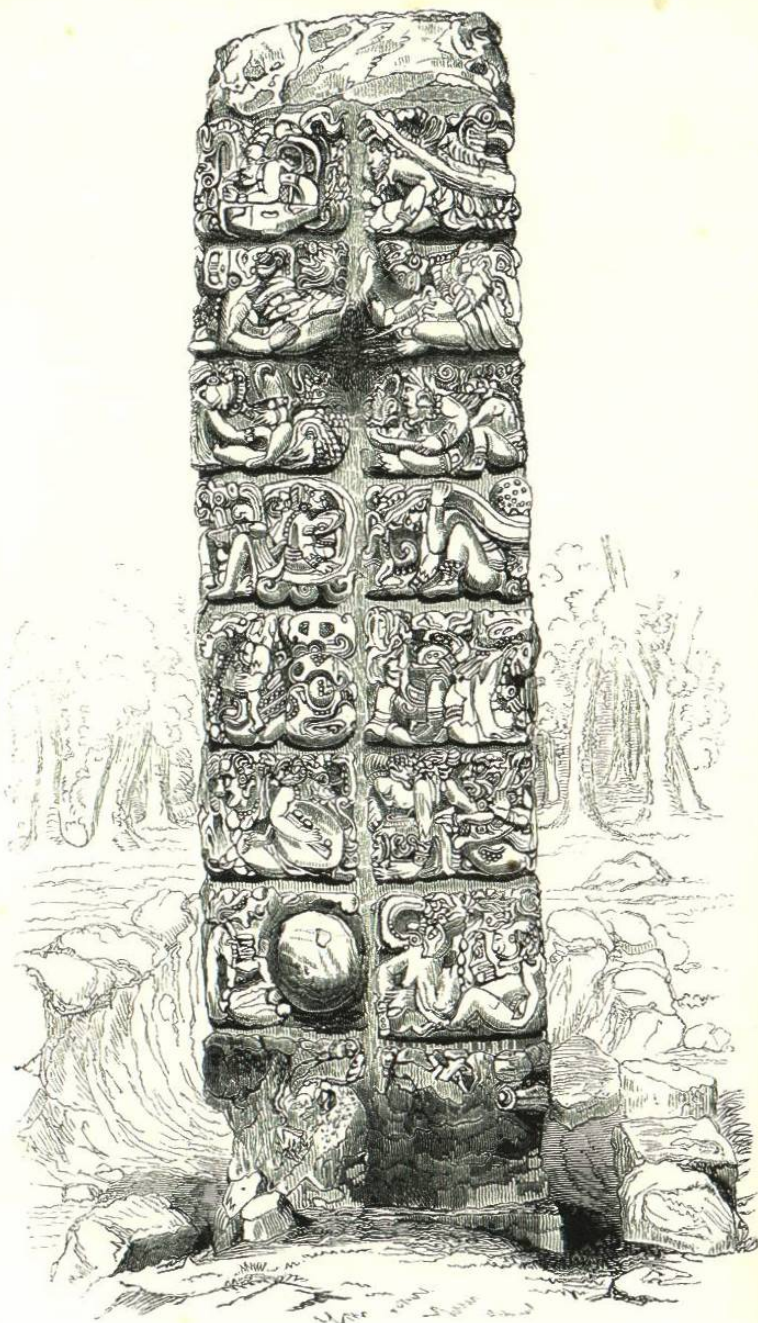
injuring the sculpture, we preferred to let it remain, to be excavated by ourselves at some future time, or by some future traveller. Whoever he may be, I almost envy him the satisfaction of doing it. The outline of the trees growing around it is given in the engraving.

Toward the south, at a distance of fifty feet, is a mass of fallen sculpture, with an altar, marked R on the map; and at ninety feet distance is the statue marked Q, No. 19, standing with its front to the east, twelve feet high and three feet square, on an oblong pedestal seven feet in front and six feet two inches on the sides. Before it, at a distance of eight feet three inches, is an altar five feet eight inches long, three feet eight inches broad, and four feet high.

The face of this idol is decidedly that of a man. The beard is of a curious fashion, and joined to the mustache and hair. The ears are large, though not resembling nature; the expression is grand, the mouth partly open, and the eyeballs seem starting from the sockets; the intention of the sculptor seems to have been to excite terror. The feet are ornamented with sandals, probably of the skins of some wild animals, in the fashion of that day.

The back of this monument, No. 20, contrasts remarkably with the horrible portrait in front. It has nothing grotesque or pertaining to the rude conceits of Indians, but is noticeable for its extreme grace and beauty. In our daily walks we often stopped to gaze at it, and the more we gazed the more it grew upon us. Others seemed intended to inspire terror, and with their altars before them, sometimes suggested the idea of a blind, bigoted, and superstitious people, and sacrifices of human victims. This always left a pleasing impression; and there was a higher interest, for we considered that in its medallion tablets, the people who reared it had published a record of themselves, through which we might one day hold conference with a perished race, and unveil the mystery that hung over the city.

At a distance of 142 feet in a south-easterly direction is the idol marked P. It stands at the foot of a wall rising in steps to the height of thirty or forty feet; originally much higher, but the rest fallen and in ruins. Its face is to the north; its height eleven feet nine inches, the breadth of its sides three feet, and the pedestal is seven feet square. Before it, at a distance of twelve feet, is a colossal altar. It is of good workmanship, and has been painted red, though scarcely any vestige of the paint remains, and the surface is time-worn. The two engravings, Nos. 21 and 22, represent the front and back view. The former appears to represent the portrait of a king or hero, perhaps erected into a deity. It is judged to be a portrait, from certain marks of individuality in the features, also observable in most of the others, and its



F. Catherwood.

22.—IDOL.—Back View.



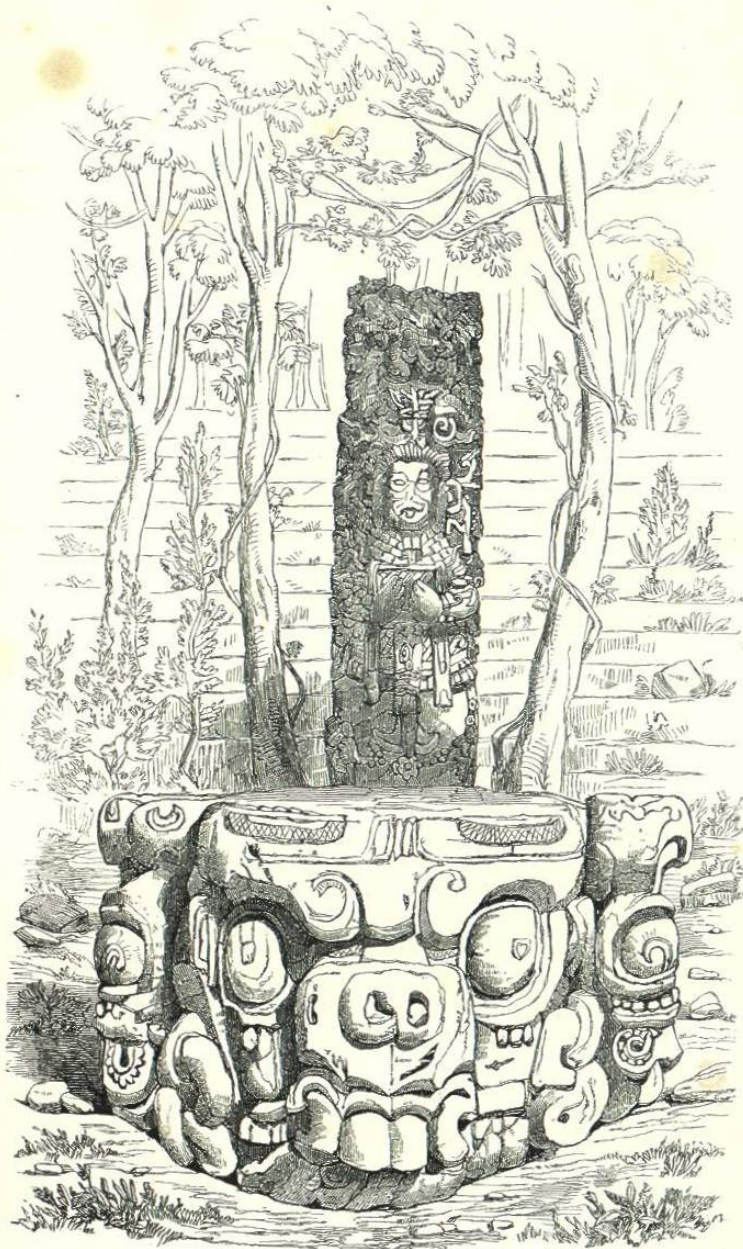
sex is ascertained by the beard, as in the Egyptian monuments, though this has a mustache, which is not found in Egyptian portraits.

The back of this idol, again, presents an entirely different subject, consisting of tablets, each containing two figures oddly grouped together, ill-formed, in some cases with hideous heads, while in others the natural countenance is preserved. The ornaments, diadems, and dresses are interesting, but what these personages are doing or suffering it is impossible to make out. This statue had suffered so much from the action of time and weather, that it was not always easy to make out the characters, the light being in all cases very bad, and coming through irregular openings among the branches of trees.

The stone of which all these altars and statues are made is a soft grit-stone from the quarries before referred to. At the quarries we observed many blocks with hard flint-stones distributed through them, which had been rejected by the workmen after they were quarried out. The back of this monument had contained two. Between the second and third tablets the flint has been picked out, and the sculpture is blurred; the other, in the last row but one from the bottom, remains untouched. An inference from this is, that the sculptor had no instruments with which he could cut so hard a stone, and, consequently that iron was unknown. We had, of course, directed our searches and inquiries particularly to this point, but did not find any pieces of iron or other metal, nor could we hear of any having ever been found there. Don Miguel had a collection of chay or flint stones, cut in the shape of arrow-heads, which *he* thought—and Don Miguel was no fool—were the instruments employed. They were sufficiently hard to scratch into the stone. Perhaps by men accustomed to the use of them, the whole of these deep relief ornaments might have been scratched, but the chay stones themselves looked as if they had been cut by metal.

The engraving No. 23, represents the altar as it stands before the last monument. It is seven feet square and four feet high, richly sculptured all around. The front represents a death's head. The top is sculptured, and contains grooves, perhaps for the passage of the blood of victims, animal or human, offered in sacrifice. The trees in the engraving give an idea of the forest in which these monuments are buried.

At the distance of 120 feet north is the monument marked O, No. 24, which, unhappily, is fallen and broken. In sculpture it is the same with the beautiful half-buried monument before given, and, I repeat it, in workmanship equal to the best remains of Egyptian art. The fallen part was completely bound to the earth by vines and creepers, and before it could be drawn it was necessary to unlace them,



F. Catheywood.

23. IDOL AND ALTAR.

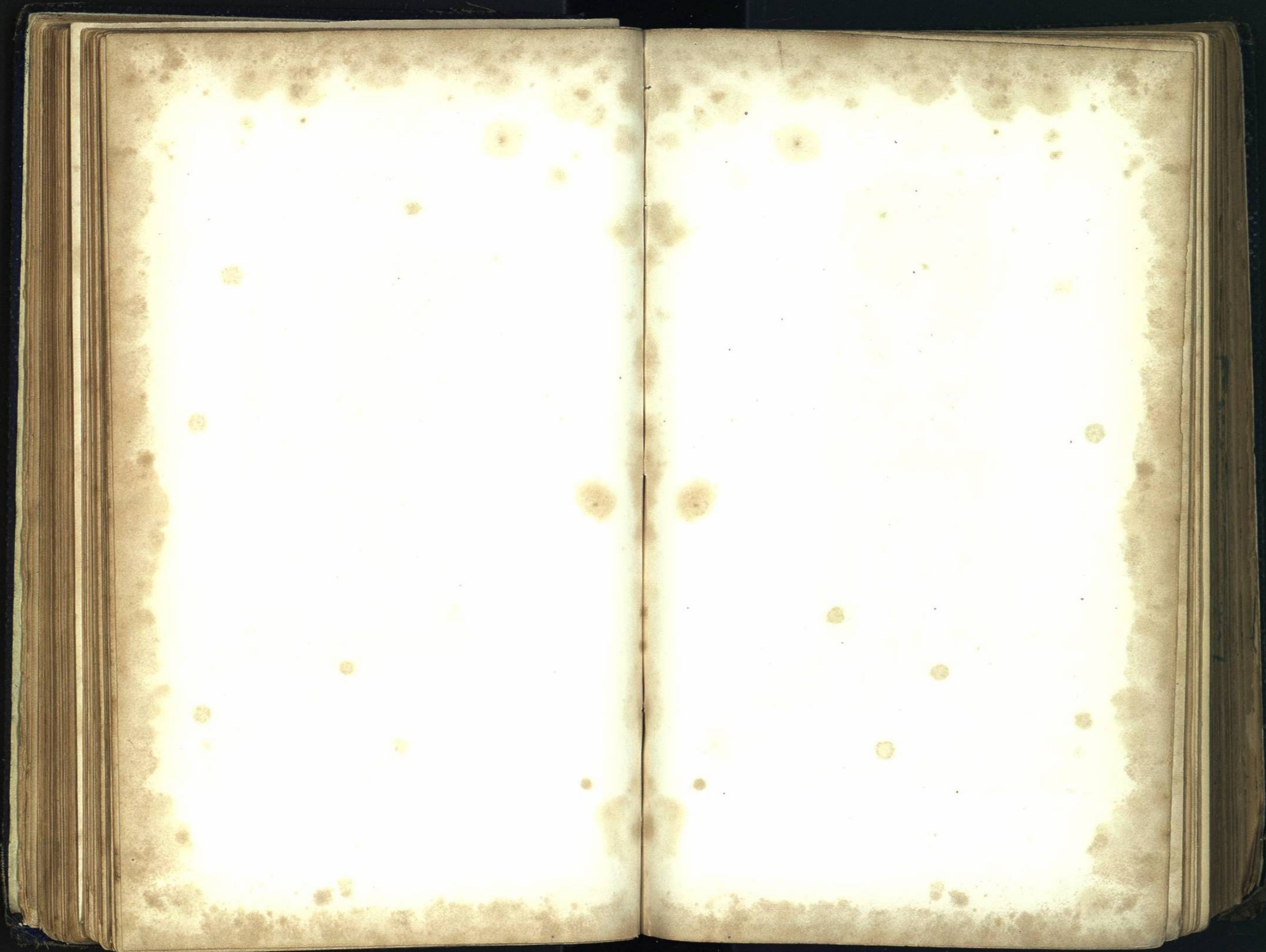




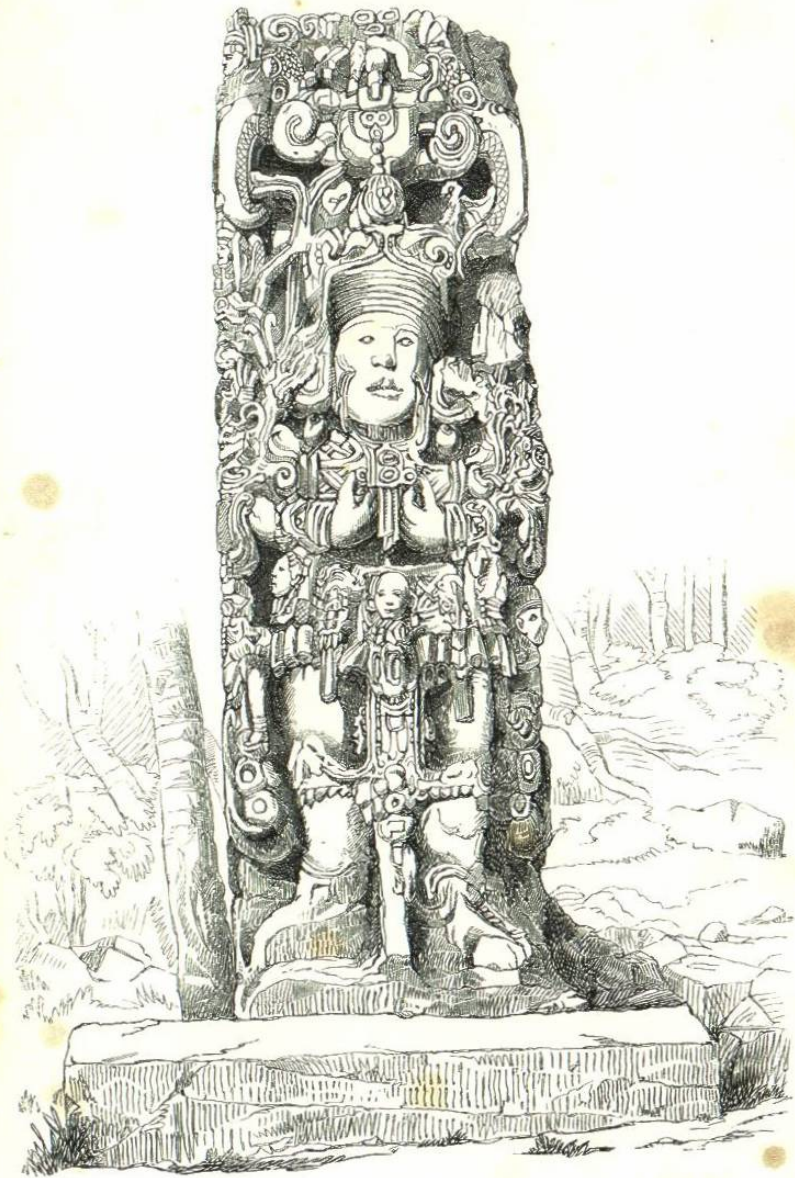
24. FALLEN IDOL.

*F. Catherwood.*





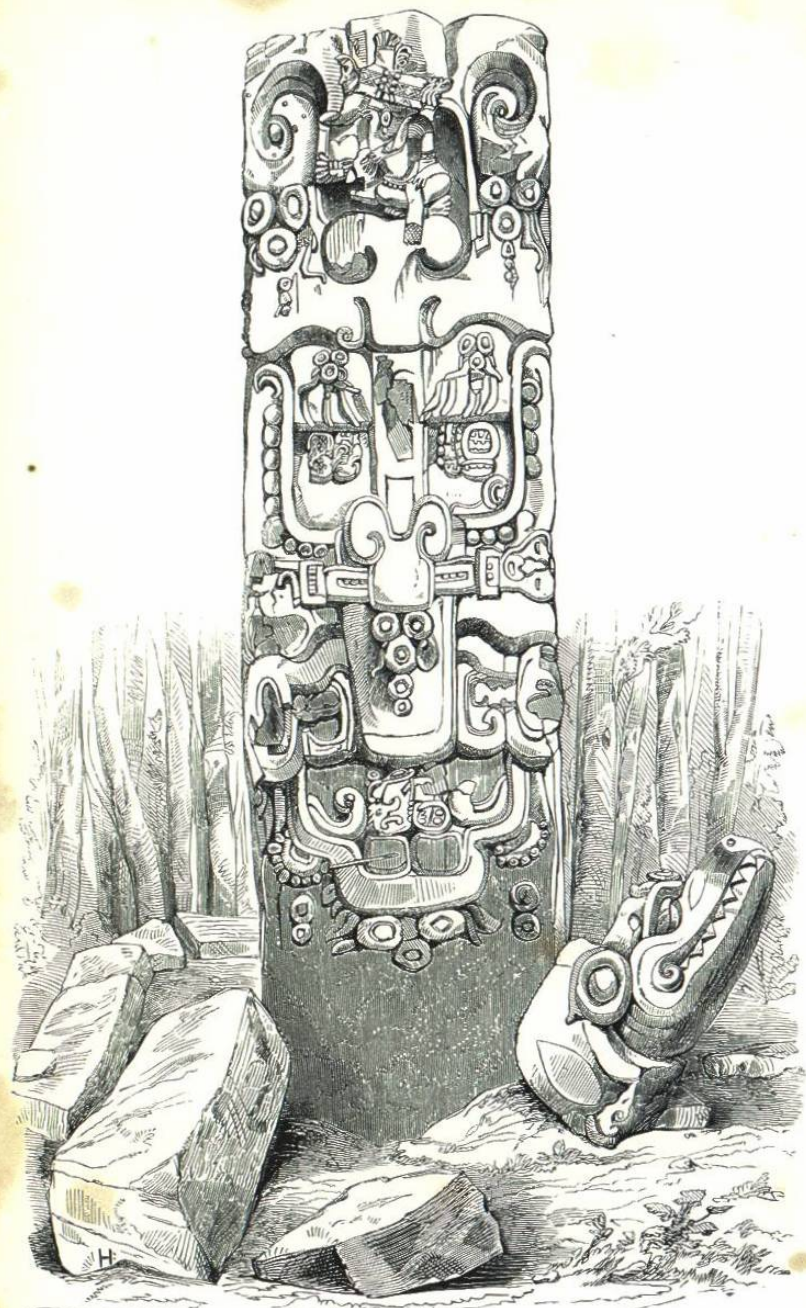




F. Catherwood.

25. FRONT OF IDOL.





F. Catherwood,

26. BACK OF IDOL.



and tear the fibres out of the crevices. The paint is very perfect, and has preserved the stone, which makes it more to be regretted that it is broken. The altar is buried with the top barely visible, which, by excavating, we made out to represent the back of a tortoise.

The next engravings, Nos. 25, 26, 27, exhibit the front, back, and one of the sides of the monument N, distant twenty feet from the last. It is twelve feet high, four feet on one side, three feet four inches on the other, and stands on a pedestal seven feet square, with its front to the west. There is no altar visible; probably it is broken and buried. The front view seems a portrait, probably, of some deified king or hero. The two ornaments at the top look like the trunks of elephants, an animal unknown in that country. The crocodile's head is seven feet from it, but appears to have no connexion with it. This is four feet out of the ground, and is given in the plate as one of the many fragments found among the ruins.

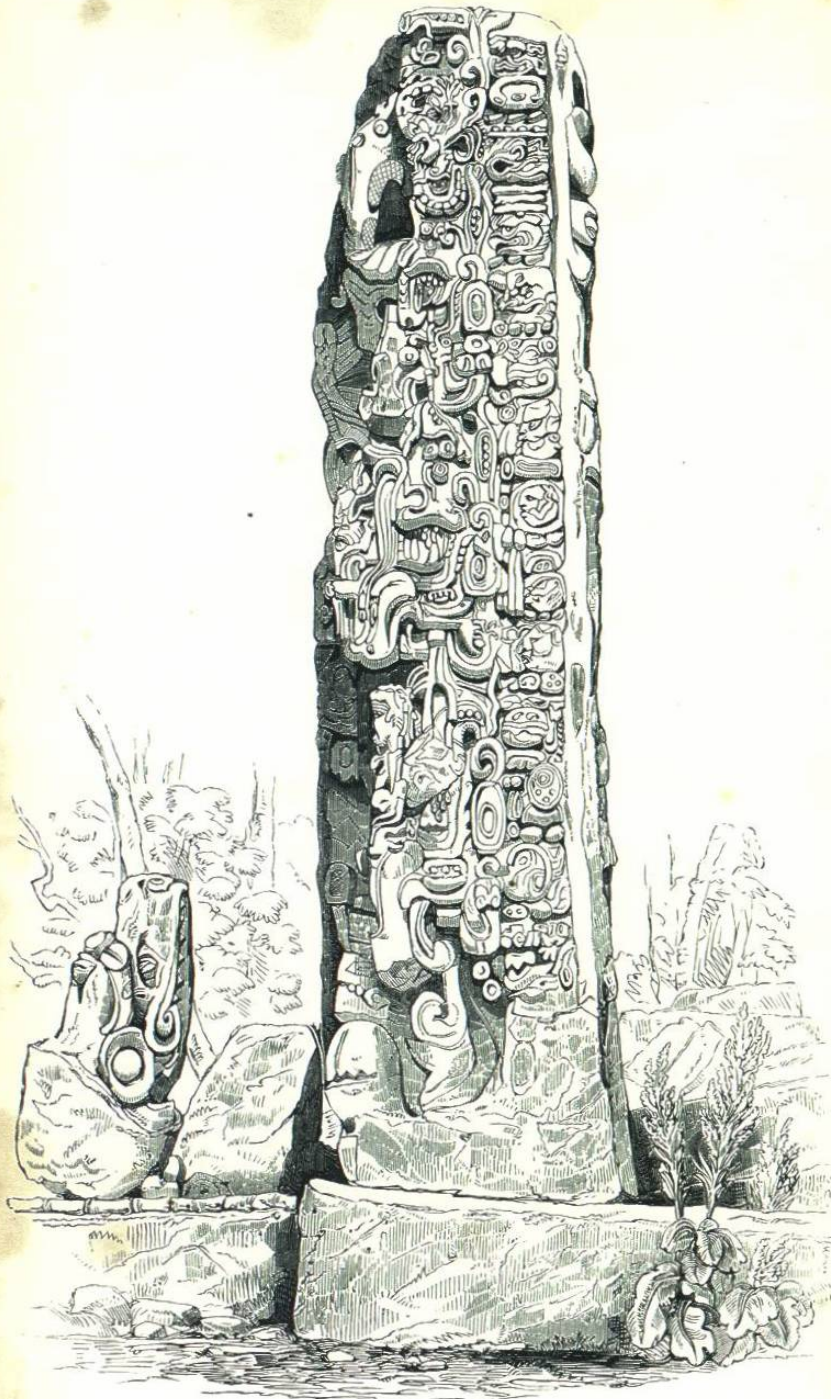
The back presents an entirely different subject from the front. At the top is a figure sitting cross-legged, almost buried under an enormous head-dress, and three of the compartments contain tablets of hieroglyphics.

Not to multiply engravings, we have omitted side views, as they are, in general, less interesting. This is particularly beautiful. The tablets of hieroglyphics are very distinct.

At a distance of twenty-eight feet in the same direction is the statue



marked M, which is fallen, and lies on its back, with a tree across it nearly lengthwise, leaving visible only the outline, feet, and sandals,



F. Catherwood.

27. SIDE OF IDOL.



both of which are well sculptured. The preceding engraving is a representation of it.

Opposite is a circular altar with two grooves on the top, three feet high, and five feet six inches in diameter; an engraving of which is here given.



The next three engravings, Nos. 30, 31, and 32, are the front, back, and side view of the monument marked L, distant seventy-two feet north from the last, with its front toward the west, twelve feet high, three feet in front, two feet eight inches on the side, and the pedestal is six feet square. Before it, at a distance of eleven feet, is an altar very much defaced, and buried in the earth.

The front view is a portrait. The back is entirely made up of hieroglyphics, and each tablet has two hieroglyphics joined together, an arrangement which afterwards we observed occasionally at Palenque. The side presents a single row of hieroglyphics, joined in the same manner. The tablets probably contain the history of the king or hero delineated, and the particular circumstances or actions which constituted his greatness.

We have now given engravings of all the most interesting monuments of Copan, and they may be relied on as accurate and faithful representations. We have purposely abstained from all comment. If the reader can derive from them but a small portion of the interest that we did, he will be repaid for whatever he may find unprofitable in these pages.

Of the moral effect of the monuments themselves, standing as they





F. Catherwood.

30. STONE IDOL.—Front View.