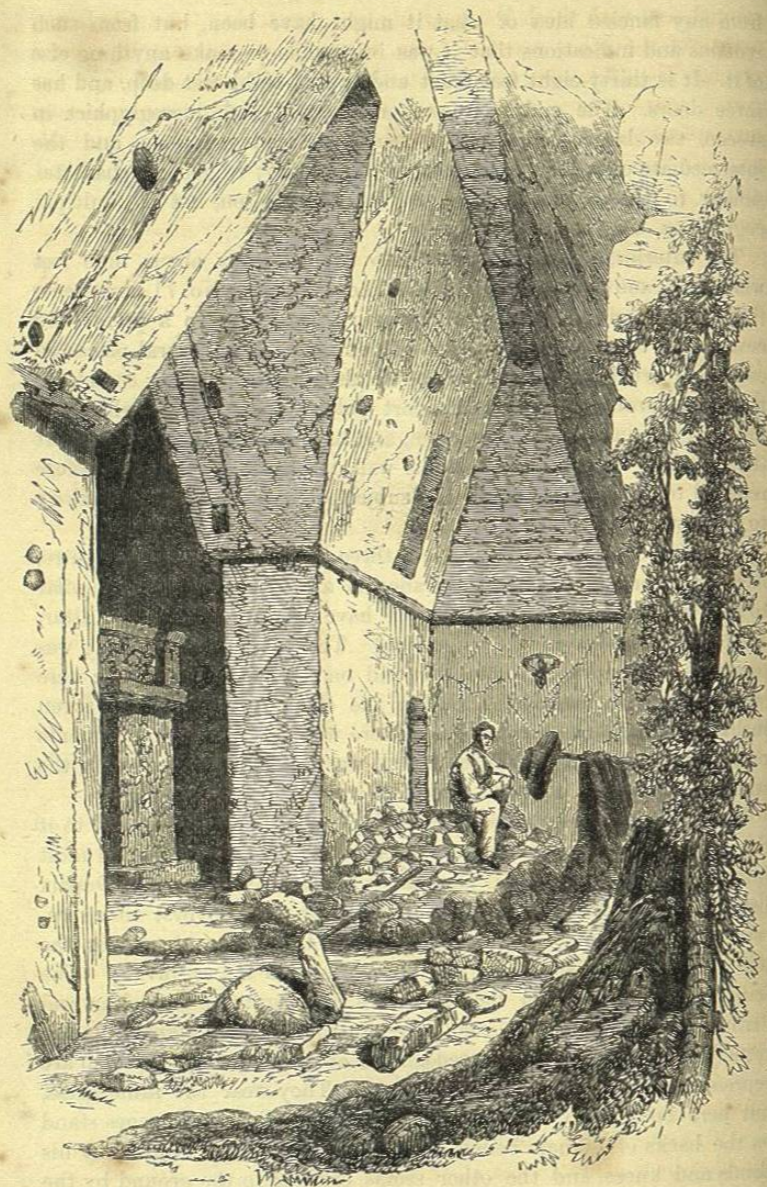


from any fancied idea of what it might have been, but from such remains and indications that it was impossible to make anything else of it. It is thirty-eight feet front and twenty-eight feet deep, and has three doors. The end piers are ornamented with hieroglyphics in stucco, two large medallions in handsome compartments, and the intermediate ones with bas-reliefs, also in stucco; in general character similar to those before given, and for that reason, not to multiply engravings, they are omitted.

The interior, again, is divided into two corridors, about nine feet wide each, and paved with stone. The engraving, No. 71, represents the front corridor, with the ceiling rising nearly to a point, and covered at the top with a layer of flat stones. In several places on each side are holes, which are found also in all the other corridors; they were probably used to support poles for scaffolding while the building was in process of erection, and had never been filled up. At the extreme end, cut through the wall, is one of the windows before referred to, which have been the subject of speculation from analogy to the letter Tau.

The back corridor is divided into three apartments. In the centre, facing the principal door of entrance, is an enclosed chamber similar to that which in the last building we have called an oratory or altar. Its outline is seen in the engraving. The top of the doorway was gorgeous with stuccoed ornaments, and on the piers at each side were stone tablets in bas-relief. Within, the chamber was four feet seven inches deep and nine feet wide. There were no stuccoed ornaments or paintings, but set in the back wall was a stone tablet covering the whole width of the chamber, nine feet wide and eight feet high.

The tablet is given in the engraving, No. 72, and I beg to call to it the particular attention of the reader, as the most perfect and most interesting monument in Palenque. Neither Del Rio nor Dupaix has given any drawing of it, and it is now for the first time presented to the public. It is composed of three separate stones, the joints in which are shown by the blurred lines in the engraving. The sculpture is perfect, and the characters and figures stand clear and distinct on the stone. On each side are rows of hieroglyphics. The principal personages will be recognised at once as the same who are represented in the tablet of the cross. They wear the same dress, but here both seem to be making offerings. Both personages stand on the backs of human beings, one of whom supports himself by his hands and knees, and the other seems crushed to the ground by the weight. Between them, at the foot of the tablet, are two figures, sitting cross-legged, one bracing himself with his right hand on the



F. Catherwood.

71. CASA No. 3, FRONT CORRIDOR.

ground, and with the left supporting a square table; the attitude and action of the other are the same, except that they are in reverse order. The table also rests upon their bended necks, and their distorted countenances may, perhaps, be considered expressions of pain and suffering. They both are clothed in leopard-skins. Upon this table rest two batons crossed, their upper extremities richly ornamented, and supporting what seems a hideous mask, the eyes widely expanded, and the tongue hanging out. This seems to be the object to which the principal personages are making offerings.

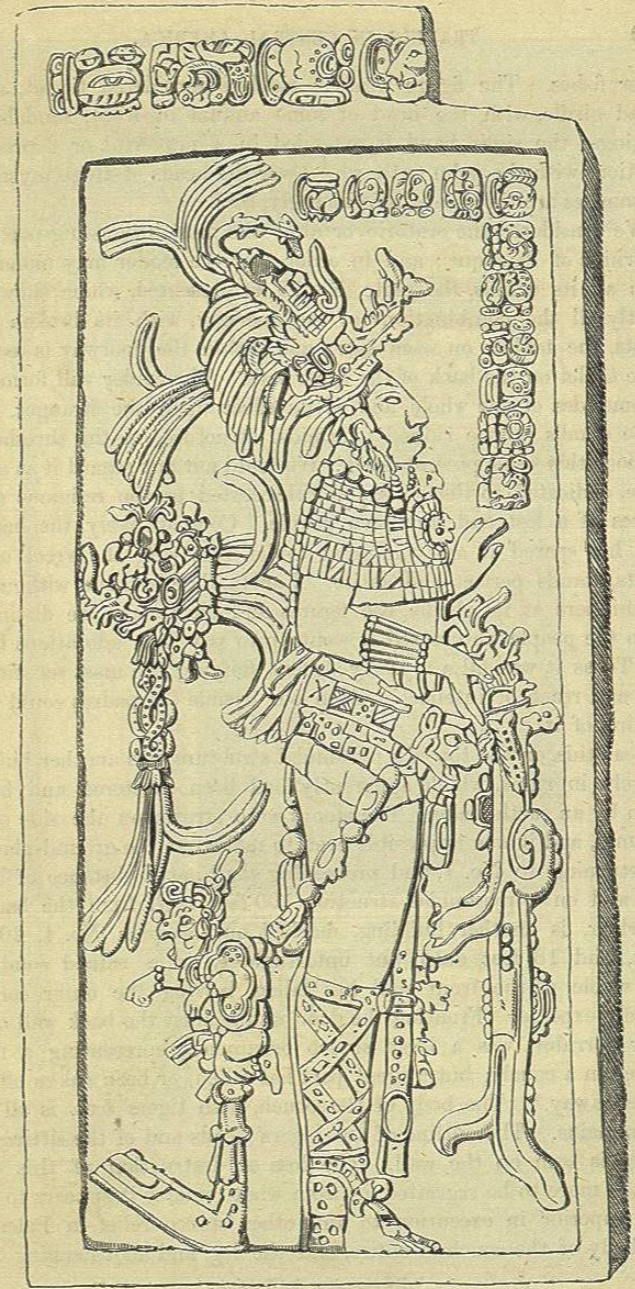
The pier on each side of the doorway contained a stone tablet, with figures carved in bas-relief, which are represented in the two following engravings, Nos. 73, 74. These tablets, however, have been removed from their place to the village, and set up in the wall of a house as ornaments. They were the first objects which we saw, and the last which Mr. Catherwood drew. The house belonged to two sisters, who have an exaggerated idea of the value of these tablets; and, though always pleased with our coming to see them, made objections to having them copied. We obtained permission only by promising a copy for them also, which, however, Mr. Catherwood, worn out with constant labour, was entirely unable to make. I cut out of Del Rio's book the drawings of the same subjects, which I thought, being printed, would please them better; but they had examined Mr. Catherwood's drawing in its progress, and were not at all satisfied with the substitute. The moment I saw these tablets I formed the idea of purchasing them, and carrying them home as a sample of Palenque, but it was some time before I ventured to broach the subject. They could not be purchased without the house; but that was no impediment, for I liked the house also. It was afterward included among the subjects of other negotiations which were undetermined when I left Palenque.

The two figures stand facing each other, the first on the right hand, fronting the spectator. The nose and eyes are strongly marked, but altogether the development is not so strange as to indicate a race entirely different from those which are known. The head-dress is curious and complicated, consisting principally of leaves of plants with a large flower hanging down; and among the ornaments are distinguished the beak and eyes of a bird, and a tortoise. The cloak is a leopard's skin, and the figure has ruffles around the wrists and ankles.

The second figure, standing on the left of the spectator, has the same profile which characterises all the others at Palenque. Its head-dress is composed of a plume of feathers, in which is a bird holding a fish in its mouth; and in different parts of the head-dress there are three



F. Catherwood.
73. BAS-RELIEF ON SIDE OF DOORWAY LEADING TO ALTAR, PALENQUE.



F. Catherwood.
74. BAS-RELIEF ON SIDE OF DOORWAY LEADING TO ALTAR, PALENQUE.

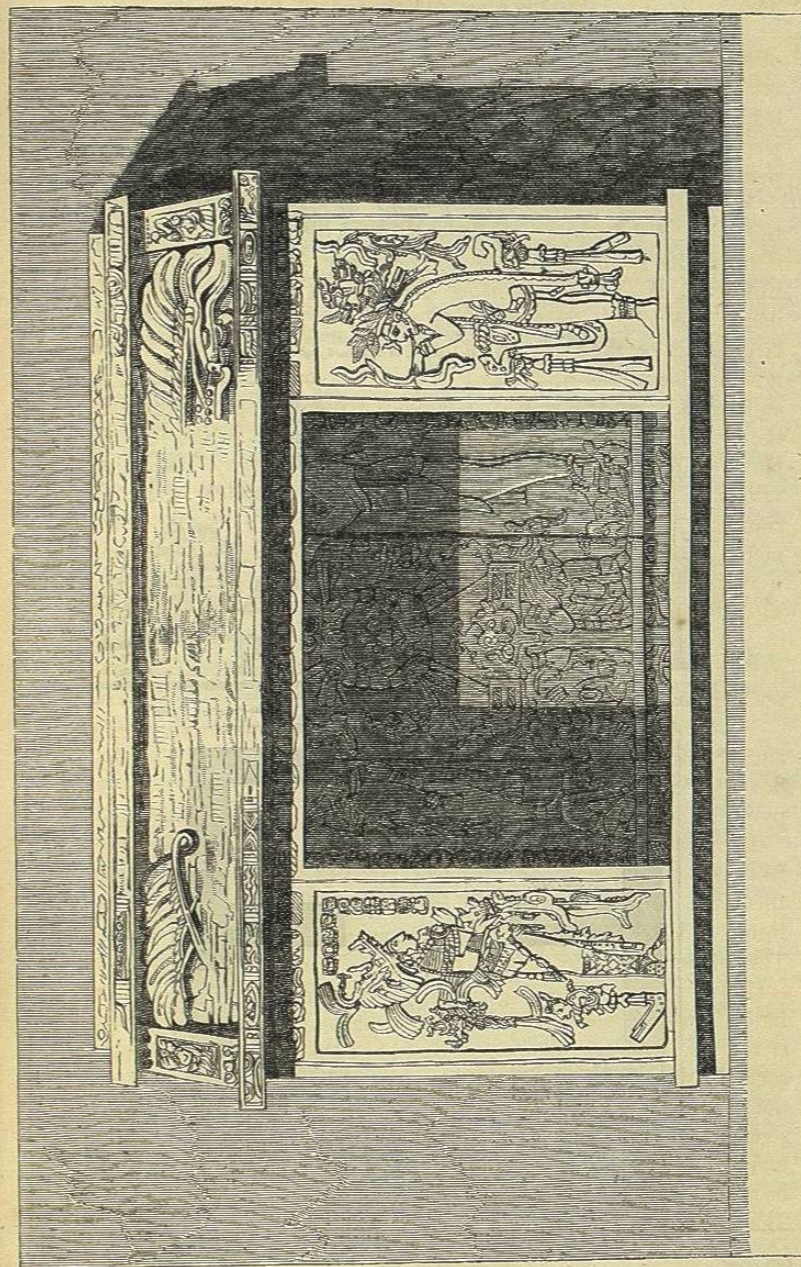
other fishes. The figure wears a richly-embroidered tippet, and a broad girdle, with the head of some animal in front, sandals, and leggings: the right hand is extended in a prayerful or deprecating position, with the palm outward. Over the heads of these mysterious personages are three cabalistic hieroglyphics.

We considered the oratorio or altar the most interesting portion of the ruins of Palenque; and in order that the reader may understand it in all its details, the plate, No. 75, is presented, which shows distinctly all the combinations of the doorway, with its broken ornaments, the tablets on each side; and within the doorway is seen the large tablet on the back of the inner wall. The reader will form from it some idea of the whole, and of its effect upon the stranger, when, as he climbs up the ruined pyramidal structure, on the threshold of the door this scene presents itself. We could not but regard it as a holy place, dedicated to the gods, and consecrated by the religious observances of a lost and unknown people. Comparatively, the hand of ruin has spared it, and the great tablet, surviving the wreck of elements, stands perfect and entire. Lonely, deserted, and without any worshippers at its shrine, the figures and characters are distinct as when the people who reared it went up to pay their adorations before it. To us it was all a mystery; silent, defying the most scrutinising gaze and reach of intellect. Even our friends the padres could make nothing of it.

Near this, on the top of a pyramidal structure, was another building entirely in ruins, which apparently had been shattered and hurled down by an earthquake. The stones were strewn on the side of the pyramid, and it was impossible even to make out the ground-plan.

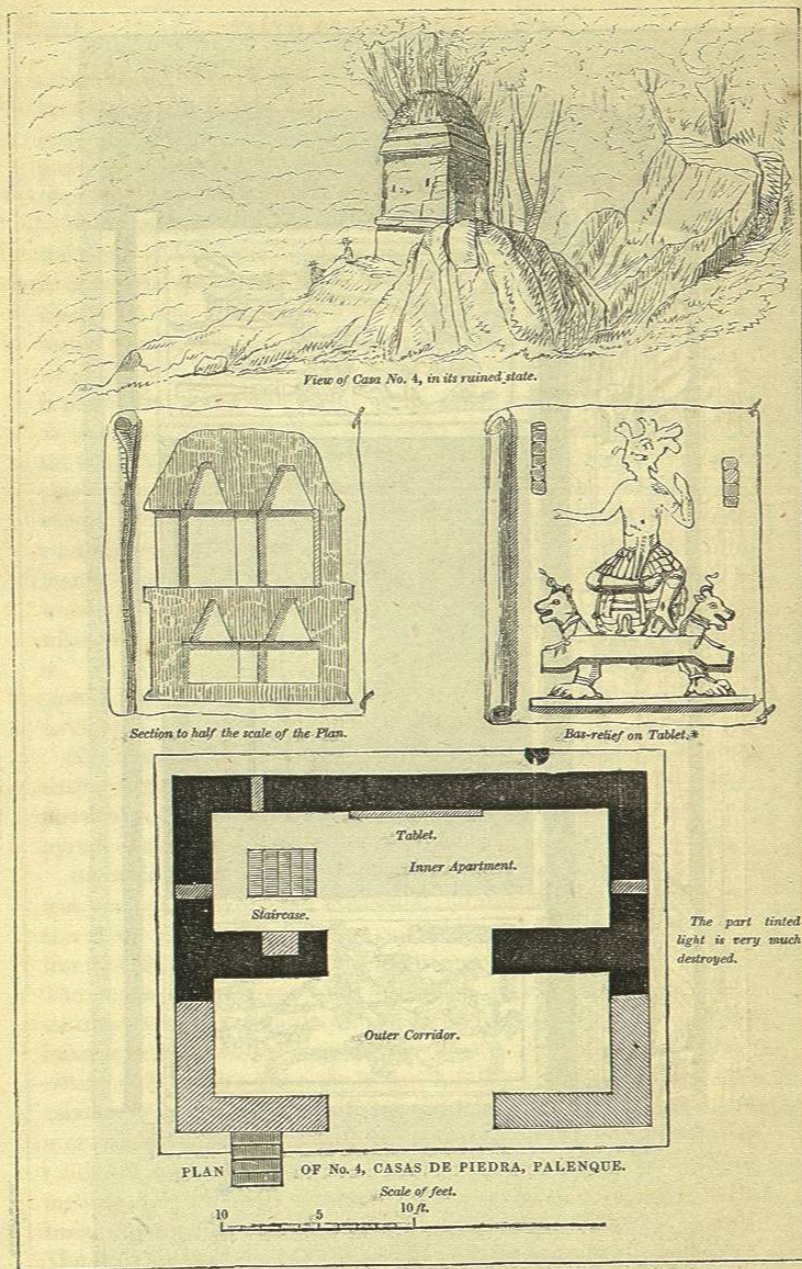
Returning to No. 1, and proceeding south, at a distance of 1,500 feet, and on a pyramidal structure 100 feet high from the bank of the river, is another building, marked on the plan No. 4, 20 feet front, and 18 feet deep, but unfortunately in a ruined condition. The whole of the front wall has fallen, leaving the outer corridor entirely exposed. Fronting the door, and against the back wall of the inner corridor, was a large stucco ornament, representing a figure sitting on a couch; but a great part has fallen, or been taken off and carried away.* The body of the couch, with tigers' feet, is all that now remains. The outline of two tigers' heads and of the sitting personage is seen on the wall. The loss or destruction of this ornament is more to be regretted, as from what remains it appears to have been superior in execution to any other stucco relief in Palenque. The body of the couch is entire, and the leg and foot hanging down

* By Monsieur de Waldeck.



ADORATORIO OR ALTAR, CASA No. 3, PALENQUE.

F. Catherwood.



F. Catherwood.

No. 76.

the side are elegant specimens of art and models for study. The plate, No. 76, represents this relief, and also a plan, section, and general view of the building.

We have now given, without speculation or comment, a full description of the ruins of Palenque. We repeat what was stated in the beginning, there may be more buildings, but, after a close examination of the vague reports current in the village, we are satisfied that no more have ever been discovered; and from repeated inquiries of Indians who had traversed the forest in every direction in the dry season, we are induced to believe that no more exist. The whole extent of ground covered by those as yet known, as appears by the plan, is not larger than twenty to thirty acres. In stating this fact I am very far from wishing to detract from the importance or interest of the subject. I give our opinion, with the grounds of it, and the reader will judge for himself how far these are entitled to consideration. It is proper to add, however, that considering the space now occupied by the ruins as the site of palaces, temples, and public buildings, and supposing the houses of the inhabitants to have been, like those of the Egyptians and the present race of Indians, of frail and perishable materials, and, as at Memphis and Thebes, to have disappeared altogether, the city may have covered an immense extent.

The reader is, perhaps, disappointed, but we were not. There was no necessity for assigning to the ruined city an immense extent, or an antiquity coeval with that of the Egyptians or of any other ancient and known people. What we had before our eyes was grand, curious, and remarkable enough. Here were the remains of a cultivated, polished, and peculiar people, who had passed through all the stages incident to the rise and fall of nations; reached their golden age, and perished, entirely unknown. The links which connected them with the human family were severed and lost, and these were the only memorials of their footsteps upon earth. We lived in the ruined palace of their kings; we went up to their desolate temples and fallen altars; and wherever we moved we saw the evidences of their taste, their skill in arts, their wealth and power. In the midst of desolation and ruin we looked back to the past, cleared away the gloomy forest, and fancied every building perfect, with its terraces and pyramids, its sculptured and painted ornaments, grand, lofty, and imposing, and overlooking an immense inhabited plain; we called back into life the strange people who gazed at us in sadness from the walls; pictured them, in fanciful costumes and adorned with plumes of feathers, ascending the terraces of the palace and the steps leading to the temples; and often we imagined a scene of unique and gorgeous beauty

and magnificence, realizing the creations of Oriental poets, the very spot which fancy would have selected for the "Happy Valley" of Rasselas. In the romance of the world's history nothing ever impressed me more forcibly than the spectacle of this once great and lovely city, overturned, desolate, and lost; discovered by accident, overgrown with trees for miles around, and without even a name to distinguish it. Apart from everything else, it was a mourning witness to the world's mutations.

" Nations melt
From Power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go."

As at Copan, we shall not at present offer any conjecture in regard to the antiquity of these buildings, merely remarking that at ten leagues' distance is a village called Las Tres Cruces, or the Three Crosses, from three crosses which, according to tradition, Cortez erected at that place when on his conquering march from Mexico to Honduras by the lake of Peten. Cortez, then, must have passed within twenty or thirty miles of the place now called Palenque. If it had been a living city, its fame must have reached his ears, and he would probably have turned aside from his road to subdue and plunder it. It seems, therefore, but reasonable to suppose that it was at that time desolate and in ruins, and even the memory of it lost.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DEPARTURE FROM THE RUINS—BAD ROAD—AN ACCIDENT—ARRIVAL AT THE VILLAGE—A FUNERAL PROCESSION—NEGOTIATIONS FOR PURCHASING PALENQUE—MAKING CASTS—FINAL DEPARTURE FROM PALENQUE—BEAUTIFUL PLAIN—HANGING BIRDS' NESTS—A SITIO—ADVENTURE WITH A MONSTROUS APE—HOSPITALITY OF PADRES—LAS PLAYAS—A TEMPEST—MOSQUITOES—A YOUTHFUL MERCHANT—ALLIGATORS—ANOTHER FUNERAL—DISGUSTING CEREMONIALS.

AMONG the Indians who came out to escort us to the village was one whom we had not seen before, and whose face bore a striking resemblance to those delineated on the walls of the buildings. In general the faces of the Indians were of an entirely different character, but he might have been taken for a lineal descendant of the perished race. The resemblance was perhaps purely accidental, but we were anxious to procure his portrait. He was, however, very shy, and unwilling to be drawn. Mr. Catherwood, too, was worn out, and in the confusion of removing, we postponed it upon his promising to come to us at the village, but we could not get hold of him again.*

We left behind our kitchen furniture, consisting of the three stones which Juan put together the first day of our residence, vessels of pottery and calabashes, and also our beds, for the benefit of the next comer. Everything susceptible of injury from damp was rusty or mouldy, and in a ruinous condition; we ourselves were not much better; and with the clothes on our backs far from dry, we bade farewell to the ruins. We were happy when we reached them, but our joy at leaving them burst the bounds of discretion, and broke out into

* There have lately been exhibited in the United States, and in England, two little Indian children, called by those who have the charge of them, *Aztec Lilliputians*, and said to have been brought from the mysterious city mentioned to Mr. Stephens and myself, by the Padre of Santa Cruz del Quiché, as related in the first part of this book. The story told of their capture, in the published account of them, is scarcely worth while to refute, and I will only say, that in my opinion, it has not even the semblance of truth. In the case of the children, however, (after many times examining their countenances with great attention,) I am strongly of opinion, that they are descendants of the race who built the Palace at Palenque, and erected the various extensive and costly buildings which I afterwards made drawings of in Yucatan. If they be not descendants of these ancient builders, the profiles of their faces bear the most extraordinary likeness to the sculptured figures, and to the Indian whose portrait I was so anxious to obtain on the last day of my stay at Palenque. I afterwards saw some others of the same race, both men and women, exceedingly well-proportioned, but different from the tribes usually met with, very shy and taciturn, and said to follow in secret the pagan rites of their ancestors.

I have every reason to believe that the mysterious city mentioned by the Padre is a reality, and that it lies buried in the recesses of the mountainous country inhabited by the Lacandones, or unbaptized Indians, but I have no reason for believing that any one has yet penetrated to it.—F.C.