

to make amends for the loss of stolen goods, in this wise. A devout father, who had founded a convent in the neighbourhood of the city in 1519, was anxiously seeking for an image of the Virgin, to whom he had dedicated his retreat, when a neighbouring shepherd supplied him with one of considerable beauty, which he kept carefully treasured within his house. But the shepherd concealed the fact that he had stolen it from a hermitage at Villaviciosa, in the mountains near Cordoba: a wily theft; for, having heard that it had been originally carried away from a village in Portugal by another shepherd, who had benefitted greatly in his worldly affairs so long as the image remained in his possession, he wisely argued, a second edition of such a theft might benefit him likewise. Moved, however, by the bribes and entreaties of the good Father Martin, he made it over to him, and it proved the joy and delight of the worthy friar's heart for two years, until, on one unlucky day, a Cordobese happened to stray into his church, and recognised the image whose disappearance had caused so much woe in Villaviciosa. Proofs of its identity were produced; it was given up, and restored to its rightful owners. Great was the sorrow of the holy father; but his grief was of short duration, for one fine morning a loud knocking was heard at the convent door, and on opening it, a knight appeared, clothed in white, upon a fiery charger, clasping an image to his heart, which he delivered into the hands of the enraptured friar, saying: "Behold your remedy, and that of Antequera." The present was received with gratitude, but the knight immediately vanished; and it was forthwith concluded that Santiago himself must have been the donor of so celestial a gift. The image was placed upon the altar, and some years afterwards removed to the convent, where it still excites the admiration of the pious under the name of N^{ra} Señora de los Remedios.

Our curiosity had been excited by the description we had heard of what was called a Druidic temple, a chambered mound, which existed somewhere in the neighbourhood, and which, from the account given of it, would seem to resemble in its construction the same mysterious remains of antiquity so common in our own island. But, alas! there were not any guides in Antequera to lead the traveller at once to the object of his search; and as we had forgotten the name by which the cave was generally known, we had a pleasant prospect of leaving the town without attaining the principal object of our visit. We made no end of inquiries; we were told of numerous caves, but they were not fashioned by the hand of man, and did not suit our purpose. We might as well have sought the wondrous cave of the Albarizas, that subterranean gallery which, leading from the Castle to the Vega, enabled the Moslems, during the siege of Antequera, to hold communication with their brethren of Granada, their messengers being thus enabled to emerge into the Vega beyond the Christian camp:

“De Antequera sale el Moro,
Por la cueva de las Albarizas.”

But Moorish antiquities were things of yesterday, compared to what we were seeking. We wished to penetrate still further into the lapse of ages. At length, a civil note was written to the Alcalde—a true Spanish production, telling him how we had come to visit this land of Maria Santissima, how at every step we had become more and more lost in admiration of its beauties, and the charms of its inhabitants, until we had reached the culminating point of our enchantment in “la muy noble ciudad de Antequera;” and now we were anxiously seeking a monument which proved that Antequera was older than any other city of the known world; and we told him how

some of our party, who were deep in such ancient lore, had come from the shores of a distant island to study her antiquities.

How could such a note fail to provoke an answer? Spanish pride had been flattered, and Spanish kindness and civility are ever ready to return thanks for the homage paid them. The Alcalde called; the cave and everything else was at our disposal—only, he did not know anything about it, or where to find it. He knew a pamphlet had been written on the subject; he would send it to us, and send us a guide who would probably know something about it. Nothing could exceed his courtesy; but his visit did not leave us much the wiser. Our guide arrived; the grand mystery was solved, and after all our inquiries we were on our way to the “Cueva del Mengal,” the name by which it is known among the people.

This singular monument is, I believe, the only one of its kind as yet discovered in the Peninsula. Its striking similarity in dimensions and design to those covered mounds which exist in Ireland, and which of late years have attracted so much attention, together with the fact that no mention of it has hitherto been made in any English work—at least, as far as I am aware—induces me to give here a detailed description of its size and proportions, and which I am enabled to do from accurate measurements made on the spot by one of the gentlemen of our party.

Although its existence would seem to have been known from time immemorial to the people in this neighbourhood, by the name of the Cave of Mengal, yet no reference or allusion to it is found in any Spanish book upon the topography or antiquities of the country, until a small pamphlet was published upon the subject, in the year 1847, by a Senor Mitjana of Malaga. In this little tract the author begins by giving a brief history of the primi-

tive inhabitants of the country. According to him, and the authorities he cites, the Celtiberians, or Celts, after crossing the Pyrenees, occupied Navarre, Aragon, Galicia, Portugal, Old and New Castile, La Mancha, Estramadura, the greater part of Andalusia, and the Serrania of Ronda, from Gibraltar to Antequera. Here they bordered on another tribe, called the Turduli, who stretched over the districts of Antequera, Archidona, Granada, Cordoba, and Jaen, and by them the city of Antequera was founded two thousand years before the Christian era. The former were devoted to pastoral pursuits; they gloried in war; they formed the nerve and sinew of the nation; by them, long subsequently, was the victory of Cannæ decided; and Scipio more than once defeated.

The Turduli were versed in agriculture and the first rudiments of the arts; they dwelt in houses built of kneaded clay, and thatched with straw and reeds, for he states, on the authority of Pliny, that the ancient Spaniards knew nothing of working with stone and mortar, until taught it by the Carthaginians. They had letters, too, and a literature of their own, and so also had the Celts; and he says that Strabo states that they had very ancient books and poems, and laws written in verse, handed down from the remotest antiquity. They worshipped the moon and sacred stones, and various other idols, and erected for their worship temples of huge rough stones placed on end without cement, sometimes covered in, and often in large open circles. He finishes his introduction by giving an account of the religion of the Druids, according to the opinions generally received, and so common in other countries, but the relation of which would seem to have, in Spain, all the charm of novelty. He then proceeds to say, that in the month of April 1842, his attention having been drawn to this place, he was at once struck by its appearance; although it

was then choked up with clay and rubbish, he was able in the course of numerous visits to ascertain its real character, and at last succeeded, though with difficulty, in convincing the owner of the soil, and the neighbouring peasants, that it was not "the work of chance," and so got their assistance in clearing out the place, and disclosing to the world what he designates a Druidic temple.

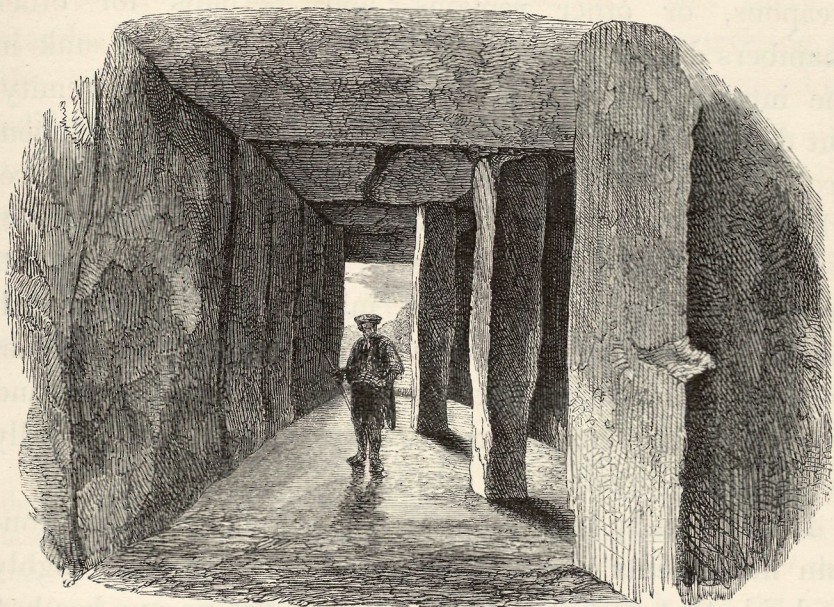
However superficial and inaccurate Signor Mitjana's views and conclusions, in some respects, may be (though I do not venture to give any opinion on the subject), still very much is due to that gentleman for what he has done; and for having been the first of his countrymen to draw attention to this most curious relic of far-distant ages. Whether it was erected for a temple or a tumulus, or for both, I leave to the learned to decide, and shall content myself with describing the place itself, as we found it on the 3rd of June, 1852.

About a quarter of a mile to the eastward of the town, on the road to Archidona, are three small conical hills, from sixty to eighty feet in height, remarkable for the regularity of their outline, and covered with olive-trees. On ascending the one nearest the town, and close to its summit, you find yourself opposite to the entrance of the cave. It presents a perfect porch, symmetrical in shape, but composed of rough stones of gigantic magnitude. This porch is an oblong square, seventeen feet in depth, nine wide, and eight high. Its roof is composed of a single stone, nearly fifteen feet square, and over four feet high, and calculated by Signor Mitjana (who was an architect) to weigh four thousand six hundred and eight arrobas, or above fifty-one tons of our measurement. This roof is supported by six stones—three on each side, standing on end, sunk from three to four feet in the earth, and having an average breadth of four and a half feet. At

the end of the porch, two jutting stones approach within seven feet of each other; and here an inner chamber lies before you, but of a different form. It is oval, and of considerably larger dimensions, being fifty-four feet in length. Its sides, also composed of upright stones, seven upon each side, gradually expand from the entrance to a width of seventeen feet in the centre, and then gradually narrow again to a width of twelve feet, where one huge stone blocks up the extremity, and gives it the form of an oval, flattened at the ends.

The roof of this inner chamber, which is ten feet from the floor, is composed of only four stones, stretching from side to side, and each of larger dimensions than that which covers the porch. The one farthest from the entrance is the largest, being a square of twenty-three feet, and four feet thick, and estimated to weigh the enormous amount of one hundred and twenty tons—the five stones, forming the entire roof, amounting to above three hundred and seventy-five tons in all. In addition to the sides and the single stone at the extremity, the roof of the inner chamber is supported also by three pillar-stones, standing along the centre; and which, as they are not quite perpendicular, would seem to have been subsequently introduced as additional supports to the roof. They are placed in such a manner under the points of junction of the stones above, so that each contributes support to two of them. These pillar-stones are rude and rough on their surface, of an irregular, quadrilateral shape, and not of equal dimensions; the one nearest the entrance being only eight feet in circumference, while the innermost measures fourteen feet. In the roof of the inner chamber the second stone from the entrance appears to have been cracked in two, or else, perhaps, from inability to procure all of such gigantic dimensions, the builders fitted two smaller ones to serve their purpose. The accompanying

sketch represents the cave as viewed from the inner extremity.



INTERIOR OF THE CAVE.

All these stones on the outside, wherever they are visible, are misshaped and irregular; but, on the inside, they are flat and even, without being smooth. They do not appear to have been punched or chiselled in any way, but present that rough, yet flat surface, which can frequently be seen in stones in their natural state. There are no traces upon them of chisel marks, nor any lines whatever; nor are there around the base of the hill, as is generally the case in Ireland, any remains of a stone circle. The structure is just under the surface of the summit, the conical shape of which is still preserved.

In length the cave measures seventy-one feet, and lies due east and west: the entrance faces eastward, and looks towards the other two similar hills; and beyond them again, at almost the distance of a league, rises

abruptly from the plain the Peña de los Enamorados, which, from here, presents its most picturesque appearance. Signor Mitjana, in searching for bones, weapons, or other remains, and perhaps for other chambers deeper in the hill, caused a shaft to be sunk in the interior, between the third pillar and the extremity, but discovered nothing; and, to give light to his workmen, broke out at the end a large hole, four or five feet square, which considerably impairs the effect and uniformity of the place. Fortunately, however, it does admit the light, or else a visit to the cave might be attended with dangerous results, for as the shaft is still open, five feet wide and forty-three feet deep, and the earth loose and sloping at the mouth, an unwary visitor could hardly escape being precipitated into it.

It is generally believed that the adjoining mounds contain monuments of a similar description, and it is highly probable that such is the case; but as yet no one has had enterprise enough to undertake such a research. These hills are not entirely artificial, like those on the banks of the Boyne; but for the most part consist of dark sandstone in its natural condition, and which probably was cut and pared away till it assumed the shape required. Among the many other points of resemblance, however, it is ascertained, that all these enormous stones were brought from a distance, none of the kind being found in the immediate locality, and the remains of a quarry of the same kind still existing about half a mile off, on the hill of the Calvario. How were these stupendous masses quarried, and moved, and lifted, and arranged with order and precision four thousand years ago? Who were those people? For what did they rear this singular structure? Strange remnant of the past! Alone in this mountain land, speaking of generations of men of might and skill, who lived and passed away before the legions of Carthage

or of Rome were heard of in the world. Enveloped in the haze of antiquity, its uses still undecided and unascertained, baffling the most patient research—an object from age to age for learning to theorize on! But there it stands, in its rude but Titanic workmanship, surviving all the splendid triumphs of architecture: the stupendous edifices of Rome, the fairy tracery of Moorish halls, the temples of Christian art have crumbled into ruin, the ploughshare has passed over their foundations, or the wild vine twines around their mouldering walls, but the Druids' cave still stands, as doubtless it stood, a thousand years before Rome was founded.*

* As I have already remarked, the similarity between this monument and those existing in Ireland, is too striking not to invest them with a peculiar and mutual interest. On this account, it appeared to me, that it might not be unacceptable to the reader, who may have never seen or read anything of those I referred to, to give some description of them, and show in what the resemblance consists. This can best be done by giving a few extracts from an interesting book, which was published not long since, on the picturesque scenery of the Boyne.(a)

Dr. Wilde devotes the eighth chapter of his book to a description of those mounds on the banks of the Boyne, which have as yet been explored, and also to tracing, from the records of the country, their true history, and the uses for which they were constructed. From this chapter I select the following:

“About a mile and a half below Slane, and extending along the northern bank of the river, we meet the great Irish cemetery to which we have just alluded. This consists chiefly of a number of sepulchral mounds, or barrows, varying in magnitude, and occupying a space of about a mile in breadth, northward of the river's banks, and stretching from Knowth to the confines of Netterville demesne, over a distance of nearly three miles. In this space we find no less than seventeen sepulchral barrows, some of these—the smaller ones—situated in the green pasture lands, which form the immediate valley of the Boyne, while the three of greatest magnitude are placed on the summit of the ridge which bounds this valley upon the left bank, and a few others are

(a) “The Beauties of the Boyne and Blackwater,” by William R. Wilde. McGlashan, Dublin: Orr and Co., London.

But we must say farewell to Antequera ; and leaving it by the Cueva del Mengal, which lies on the road to

to be found at Monk-Newtown, beyond the brow of the hill towards Louth, making upwards of twenty in all.

“The three great mounds of Knowth, New Grange, and Dowth, principally demand attention, not only on account of their magnitude, but because one of them has remained open for some years, and a third has been lately examined. Each of these is situated within view of the other, and at about a mile distant, and consists at first sight of a great natural hill, rising abruptly from the surrounding surface ; and this idea is rather strengthened by the circumstance of one of these having become covered with wood, and another having, until lately, borne on its summit a modern stone building. An eye practised to the forms of ancient structures at once recognises these vast pyramids as the work of man, and a closer inspection soon sets the point at rest. To follow in detail these magnificent pagan monuments—for such they are—as they present themselves in our course down the river, we first meet with Knowth, an abrupt, hemispherical mound, with rather a flattened top, rising out of the sloping hill of the townland, from which it takes its name. Some enormous masses of stone, arranged in a circular manner round its base, tell us, however, that it is evidently the work of design ; and some excavations made into one of its sides show that it consists of an enormous cairn of small stones, covered with rich greensward, occupying in extent of surface about an acre, and rising to a height of nearly eighty feet. As far as we can judge by external appearances, although history is against us, it appears to be as yet uninvestigated ; but as there are no means of access to its interior, we can only speculate as to its use, and the mode of its construction, from an examination of similar structures in this vicinity.

“ We therefore pass on to the next monument, that of New Grange. Like that just described, it consists of an enormous cairn or hill of small stones, calculated at one hundred and eighty thousand tons weight, occupying the summit of one of the natural undulating slopes, which enclose the valley of the Boyne upon the north. It is said to cover nearly two acres, and is four hundred paces in circumference, and now about eighty feet higher than the adjoining natural surface. A few yards from the outer circle of the mound, there appears to have stood originally a circle of enormous detached blocks of stone, placed at intervals of about ten yards from each other. Ten of these still exist on the south-eastern side. Such is the present appearance of this stupendous relic of ancient pagan times, probably one of the oldest Celtic monuments in the world, which has elicited the wonder, and called forth the admiration of all who have visited it, and has engaged the attention of nearly every distinguished

Archidona, take a farewell glance at its fortress-covered heights and rugged mountains, and pass on to rest for

antiquary, not only of the British Isles, but of Europe generally; which though little known to our countrymen, notwithstanding that it is within two hours' drive of Dublin, has attracted thither pilgrims from every land. It is said that a large pillar-stone, or *stèle*, originally stood upon its summit. Before we speculate upon the date or origin, or offer any conjectures as to the uses of this vast cairn, we shall conduct our readers into the interior, and point out the objects within most worthy of attention. This mound is hollow; it contains a large chamber, formed by stones of enormous magnitude, and is accessible through a narrow passage, also formed of stones of great size, placed together without mortar or cement; and considering the bulk and positions they occupy, exciting our astonishment how such Cyclopean masonry could have been erected by a people who were, in all probability, unacquainted with those mechanical powers so necessary in the erection of modern buildings. Moreover, although some of the stones, both within and without this tumulus, bear marks of being water-worn, and were probably lifted from the bed of the Boyne, others belong to a class of rock not found in the neighbourhood at all; some are basaltic, and others must have been transported here from the Mourne mountains.

“When we first visited New Grange, some twelve years ago, the entrance was greatly obscured by brambles, and a heap of loose stones which had ravelled out from the adjoining mound. This entrance, which is nearly square and formed of large flags, the continuation of the stone passage already alluded to, is now at a considerable distance from the outer circle of the mound, and consequently the passage is at present much shorter than it was originally, if, indeed, it ever extended so far as the outer circle. A few years ago a gentleman, then residing in the neighbourhood, cleared away the stones and rubbish which obscured the mouth of the cave, and brought to light a very remarkably carved stone, which now slopes outwards from the entrance. This stone, so beautifully carved in spirals and volutes, is slightly convex, from above downwards; it measures ten feet in length, and is about eighteen inches thick. What its original use was—where its original position in this mound—whether its carvings exhibit the same handiwork and design as those sculptured stones in the interior, and whether this beautiful slab did not belong to some other building of anterior date—are questions worthy of consideration, but which we have not space to discuss.

“We now enter the passage which faces the Boyne; it runs very nearly north and south, and measures sixty-three feet in length; it is formed of twenty-one upright stones upon the right side, and twenty-two on the left, and