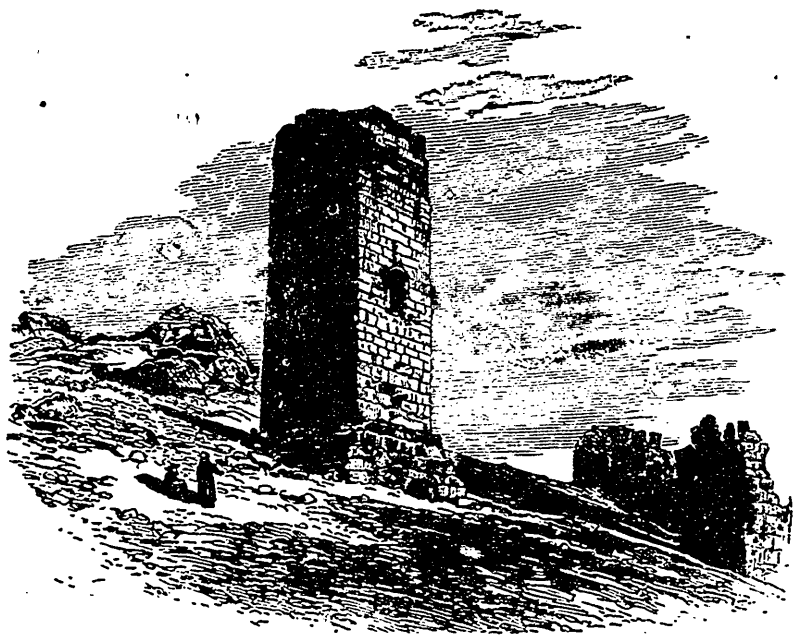


3,000,000 pounds. It is about four times as large as the obelisks of London and New York. "Some sudden war, pestilence or revolution," says Dr. Jessop, "must have interrupted the plans of those ancient builders, or they would not have expended the labour of months, and³ possib'y years, upon this mighty block, and then abandon it, still undetached from the quarry."

But little is known of the history of these great temples. It is supposed that the allusion in Amos i. 5, "I will cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven," refers to this seat of ancient idolatry.¹ Baalbec has been identified also as the Baalath of 1 Kings ix. 17-18, built by Solomon in the wilderness. Universal



BURIAL TOWER, PALMYRA.

Arab tradition affirms that these cyclopean walls were erected by the wise king of Israel, assisted by the genii who were under his control. In ancient times, on every high hill, on Hermon and Lebanon, were groves and temples erected to the sun god, and here was, doubtless, one of the most sacred.

In the second and third Christian centuries Baalbec was a Roman colony, and in the coinage of the period are seen effigies of these temples. The lesser one was probably built by Antoninus Pius. Under Constantine Christianity was here established, but heathen customs were again revived by the Apostate Julian. It fell under the rule of the Moslems, and was by them converted