

the body was placed, and in another the utensils and ornaments. Sometimes gold in its natural state was left in an earthenware vessel, mixed with pounded charcoal. When the chief or governor was interred, an imitation of the sun or the moon was placed in the tomb. The sun was represented by a flat, round plate of gold, or alloy of copper, about an eighth of an inch thick, and sometimes more than twenty inches in diameter. The moon was made of a silver plate, showing the half moon. A neck ring and bracelets, a waist band and ankle rings, made of gold, sometimes alloyed with copper, were also left with the body of a chief. These rings are from one and a quarter to two inches in width, and opened and closed as a spring. They are thin and perfectly equal in width and thickness throughout. In fact, they are so perfect that it is difficult to imagine how such laminated rings were produced, considering the deficiency of suitable implements for such delicate and exact work. There are several of these tombs above ground still to be seen.

The excavated tombs, as found in our times, are all alike throughout South America. The Spanish conquerors having entered the territory of "la Capitana de la Nueva Granada," and collected all the gold they could among the Indians, turned their attention to the natural sources of gold, and also to the burial places, which soon became objects of much interest to the gold seekers. These tombs are always found on some isolated range with sharp outlines, so situated as not to admit of any water accumulating, and no apparent probability of water being led to it. In hills so situated the excavations are discovered by observing certain concavities on the surface; but where a thick forest exists, with a dense undergrowth, often of several feet, it is necessary to clear the ground by fire. It is generally allowed that a long period has elapsed since these tombs were closed, as by the accounts of the Mexicans and Peruvians, given at the time of the conquest, their calculations amounted to about two thousand years. The excavation is circular and perpendicular, and three or four feet in diameter, dug out of the decomposed syenitic rock. At the depth of nine to eleven feet charcoal is found among the soil, under which a flat stone (some kind of slate) covers the pit, on removing which the edge of a perpendicular slab is observed. At about four feet deeper the bottom of the tomb is reached, and on the perpendicular slab being removed, a horizontal excavation is seen towards the east. This is about four feet in height and the same in width but somewhat more in length. Here the bones of the defunct are