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OL-II.



A FRAGMENT

IN A SKELETON CASE, AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY; SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY ONE OF THE ARTISTS, AND DEPOSITED THERE BY HIM.

Behold this Ruin! 'twas a skull,
Once of ethereal spirit full.
This narrow cell was life's retreat,
This space was thought's mysterious seat.
What beautiful pictures filled this spot!
What dreams of pleasure long forgot:
Nor love, nor joy, nor hope, nor fear,
Has left one trace or record here.

Beneath this mouldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye;
But start not at the dismal void,
If social love that eye employed;
If with no lawless fire it pleased,
But through the dew of kindness beamed;
That eye shall be forever bright,
When stars and suns have lost their light.

Here in this silent cavern hung
The rosy swift and tuneful tongue,
If falsehood's honey it disdained,
And where it could not praise was chain'd;
If bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle counsel never broke:
That tuneful tongue shall plead for thee,
When death travels eternity.

Asks it whether bare or shod,
These feet the path of duty trod I
If from the bowers of joy they fled
To seek affection's humble bed,
If grandeur's gait they spurn'd
And home to virtue's hope return'd,
These feet with angel wings shall fly,
And tread the palace of the sky.

THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT.

The famous pyramids of Egypt stand upon a plain that extends from Cairo about fifty miles along the coast. Forty, or more, of different sizes, and of various shapes, are irregularly scattered over this plain, the

three largest, the pyramids of Cheops, of Cephrenes, and of Mycerines, are in the neighbourhood of Djza.

The great pyramid of Cheops is the largest structure in the world, or in other words, it is the greatest mass of materials which men have ever placed together to form a single building, and one of our distinguished countrymen says, "The oldest pyramid is yet the most perfect work of art." It has stood through the moral and physical convulsions of more than forty centuries, and may stand until—

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all that it inherits, shall dissolve."

This pyramid is five hundred feet in height, and seven hundred and twenty feet on each side of the base; thus covering 518,400 square feet. It is ascended by steps to the summit, which is a platform of nine large stones, each of which would weigh a ton. Some of the stones in other parts of the pyramid are still larger. They are of hewn granite and limestone on the outside, cemented together with fine mortar. In the interior, the stones are so nicely smoothed and fitted together as not to need cement of any kind. Machinery of immense power, of which all knowledge is lost, must have been employed in raising these stones to such an amazing height. The pyramid is ascended by steps. The following description of the manner of ascending the pyramid is from Letters from the Old World, by a lady of New York—

"The north side of the largest pyramid is so steep as to be dangerous of approach. A short time since, a young Englishman was precipitated from the top to the bottom, and of course dashed to atoms. Near the bottom the layers of stone are four feet thick, and the mode of my ascent was as follows. First an Arab got down on his hands and knees, thus forming a sort of extra step, while two others mounted on the edge above, and gave me their hands. I was enabled, by making two good long *Taghlimisms*, to reach the place where they stood, a fourth Arab remained always behind and below me, to be ready in case I made a false step. This went on very well for a short time, while each step or step was of sufficient width to permit the placing of my four-footed stool, but frequently the steps were not more than six inches wide, while yet they were four feet high, thus rendering the footing very insecure, and the position sufficiently alarming to weak nerves. In such cases an-

other mode of proceeding became necessary. An Arab would kneel with one knee, and present the other as a step, the one below holding him against the rock, that he might not topple over. At about half way from the ground, the layers of stone are not over three feet thick, and from thence to the top they diminish gradually.

"Difficult as the ascent is, it is as nothing when compared to the descent. In the first operation, the face being turned to the wall, neither the giddy height is observed, nor the tapering point for which one is aiming, the whole attention being taken up with the matter on hand, and the climber being hurried on without time to turn around, so that a fearful height is reached before he is aware of it. Curiosity satisfied and the constant excitement over, the descent becomes a regular matter of business. On looking down, the first few tiers of steps are quite perceptible, and their lines are distinctly marked, but all lines soon become confused, and nothing but a smooth surface is visible from fifty feet in advance down to the very ground. At first the stoutest hearts recoil at this optical delusion, but gradually gaining assurance as they descend, they get through it tolerably well."

The second pyramid, that of Cephrenes, is about four hundred feet high, and six hundred and sixty-five feet on each side of the base. The enterprising traveller Belzoni discovered the entrance to this pyramid in 1818. When he forced his way to the interior, he found inscriptions in Arabic, showing that the pyramids had been entered by a Saracene conqueror some centuries before. Nothing of great value has been discovered in them in modern times. We are told that under one of the canopies an order went forth for the destruction of these edifices, and that the work was committed to one of the most skilful engineers of the age. He wrought at it for a long time, expending much labor and treasure, and finally gave it up. Of course he had no gunpowder. The engineer began at the top, but how he got there, up the smooth plane of five hundred feet, is beyond comprehension, unless by cutting a flight of steps from the bottom. "Nothing can be farther from the truth than the idea that there was a regular series of steps for the ascent in the original plan of either of these pyramids."

All the pyramids are finished in the interior with much labor. They contain many long and intricate passages, the walls of which are sculptured and painted, the colors remaining as fresh as if recently executed. For what