



AMPHITHEATRE AT PETRA.

pears to have covered more than a mile in length, nearly from north to south, by a variable breadth of about half a mile. The rocky walls rise almost perpendicularly to the height of six or seven hundred feet.

The chief public edifices occupied the banks of the river, on the south side of which an edifice is still standing, called "Pharaoh's Treasure," which seems to have been a palace. The excavations in the solid rock, however, are by far the most deserving of notice. Whether formed for temples, tombs, or the dwellings of living men, they surprise the visitor by their incredible number and extent. They are seen in precipitous rocks along the approaches to the place. If instead of following the sinuosities of the mountain and its numerous gorges, they were ranged

in regular order, like the houses of a well-built city, they would form a street not less than five or six miles in length. They are often seen rising one above another in the face of the cliff; convenient steps, now much worn, lead in all directions through the fissures, and along the sides of the mountains, to the various tombs that occupy these lofty positions. Some of them are not less than from two to three or four hundred feet above the level of the valley.

Besides the unadorned habitations of the humble dead, there is a vast number of excavations enriched with various architectural designs. To these unique and sumptuous monuments of the most ancient races of men, Petra is indebted for its great and peculiar attractions. The front of the mountain is wrought into