

XXXV.—*Explanation of some of the South American Figures described by Mr. EMPSON, in a Letter from the Rev. G. S. FABER, to JOHN ADAMSON, Esq. Sec.*

COPIES of the extract from Mr. Empson's letter having been sent to several gentlemen by Mr. Adamson, the letter, of which the following is copy, was received from Mr. Faber, and it is hoped that when the Society's Transaction's shall be circulated, other details respecting these interesting antiquities, may be obtained.


*Long Newton, Jan. 1, 1829.*

SIR,

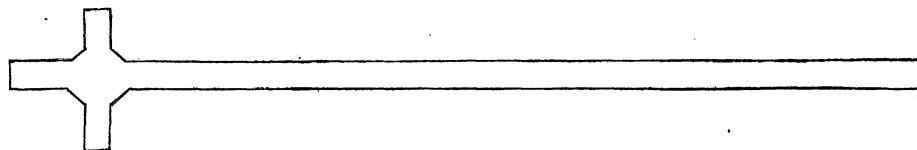
THE relics, of which you sent me the representations, are extremely curious : and from what little knowledge I possess of ancient mythology, I feel no doubt of their being genuine remains of the aboriginal Americans, wholly unconnected with their Spanish conquerors.

I. The veneration of the cross is no way peculiar to Christianity. Doubtless its veneration among the Pagans originated from *causes altogether different* from that which has produced its veneration among Christians ; but still, in regard to *the mere naked fact*, its veneration has been common to both.

Among the Egyptians, both the complete cross + was revered, and likewise the imperfect cross, or the Tautic T. The complete cross seems to have referred to the four quarters of the heavens, so far as the theology of materialism was concerned ; but, in another great branch of their theology, it had apparently yet another reference. It was, in fact, the Tautic T with a handle attached to it ; whence, I believe, antiquaries style it the *crux ansata* †. This modification shews, that the real position of the Tautic cross is not the T in its proper literal position, but the J

inverted. Taking the J inverted, the Egyptians added a handle, or fourth arm, and thus produced the perfect *crux ansata*. I much incline to think, on the principles of comparative mythology, that the J represented the sacred ship Argo or Argha, with Osiris or Siva standing upright in it, and supplying the place of a mast. When the handle was added , it served partly for the mere purpose of carriage after the manner of an ensign, and partly on the material system, to produce a four-armed cross, which should designate the four quarters of the universe.

Exactly the same figure was equally revered among the ancient Celts. This appears from the very curious interior of the artificial two-forked earth pyramid at New-Grange, in Ireland. When opened, it was found to contain, with an arrangement similar to that of the great Egyptian Pyramid, a narrow passage of considerable length, which led to a central chamber, containing a stone table and some stone pateræ. From this chamber branched out rectangularly three shorter arms; so that the whole exhibited the form of a cross, strikingly similar to the American cross, from the circumstance of the central chamber being octagonal.



A print and a description of it are given in Ledwich's *Antiq. of Ireland*, p. 316. No bones were found, so as to give any ground for imagining that the tumulus might have been reared over some *Christian* Irish chieftain. Indeed the form of the tumulus, with its two peaks, constructed on the strict principles of old mythologic paganism, which is substantially and ideally the same in every quarter of the globe forbids any such supposition.

II. The throwing of the consecrated images into a holy lake, perfectly accords with the mythology of the old world.

There was a sacred lake of the Moon in the south of France, into which the old Celts were accustomed to throw their votive offerings. I mention it somewhere in my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*; but I cannot find the place, so as give you a precise reference for my authority.

A custom of yet closer affinity to that of the Americans prevailed among our old Teutonic ancestors. You will find it detailed in *Tacit. de Mor. German.*, sec. 40.

In every part of the Pagan world, and no where more than in America, lakes were reckoned sacred: and there were frequently in them floating islands, most probably artificial; rafts, I suppose, covered with earth and turfed over. I have collected some information on this point in my *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*; particularly in vol. iii. p. 221—228. I subjoin some notices of American lakes, which more immediately connect themselves with your antiquities.

The sacred lake of the Peruvians was the great lake Titiaca; and they had a tradition, that, when all men were drowned by the deluge, Virachoca emerged from this holy pool, and became the father of a new race of mortals. They likewise shewed a small island in the lake, where they believed the sun to have once hid himself, and to have thus been preserved from a great danger which awaited him.—*Purch. Pilgrim.* book ix. c. 9. 874. Precisely the same idea was attached to the Egyptian island Chemmis, in the lake near Buto, and to the sacred island Delos, in the Archipelago. The Americans had a temple to the endangered sun in their sacred island, just as the Greeks and Egyptians had in Delos and Chemmis. I need scarcely say, that the island, whether floating or fixed, represented the ship of the sun, or of that great hero-god, who was astronomically venerated as the genius of the sun.

I give you yet another American lake legend. A spirit, called *Otkon* by the Iroquois, and *Atahauta* by the other barbarians at the mouth of the river St. Laurence, is thought to be the creator of the world; and they assign its reparation after the deluge to this same Otkon, under the new appellation of *Messou*. They say, that Messou, or Otkon, being a-hunting one day, his dogs lost themselves in a great lake; which

thereupon overflowing, covered the whole earth in a short time, and swallowed up the world. They add, that Messou, or Otkon, gathered a little earth together by the help of some animals, and used this earth to repair the world again.—*Hennepin's Discov. of North America*, p. 54.



The sacredness of some of the British lakes is sufficiently shewn by the very name. Thus, *Loch Leven*, denotes *the Lake of the Moon*. I have little doubt, according to what has come down to us of Celtic mythology, that the mysteries of Ceridwen, sidereally the Moon, terrestrially a ship swelling out, and bearing in her womb the great father Hu, or Beli, were anciently there celebrated.


I myself apply all these matters to the history of the deluge, engrafted upon mythologic astronomy, which I believe to be the foundation of Paganism all the world over. But, whether I am right or wrong in my *opinion*, the *facts*, upon which it is founded, remain, of course, unaltered.

I have the honour to be, SIR,

Your obedient humble servant,

G. S. FABER.

Sometimes the T appears in the hands of the Egyptian gods in its simple form. The floating moon was the lunette , our modern life-boat. Place Siva, or Osiris in it : and you have the Taautic J.

The Egyptians give the floating moon of Osiris thus:  J.

Mount it on the handle and you have

