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American Antiquities: Corroborative of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This 47-part series provides evidence to confirm the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It describes the contents of the Book of Mormon and archaeological findings and discoveries, such as ancient cities, temples, altars, tools, and wells. Each part contains several excerpts from other publications that support the Book of Mormon.

mination can accomplish wonders.' Some short time afterwards, he invited me to dinner—stewed rabbit, potatoes, pudding, &c. 'I'm afraid,' said I, 'you will be a long time saving means to emigrate on this system of living.' He quietly took me to an outhouse and showed me some fat rabbits in store of his own raising. Still I was not satisfied; but, as every week something handsome was credited to his name in the Emigration Book, and as I knew his labour was far from lucrative—not near so much as yours—I determined to see a little further into the matter. A few days afterwards, I quietly dropped in about dinner-time, and the mystery was solved. Dinner was almost ready, and he was hard at work; so I calmly seated myself. His wife apologised for their humble fare, but invited me to dine. The invitation was accepted, when bowls and spoons, scrupulously clean, were placed for all, and the fragrant steam of a nice broth greeted my nostrils. A rather coarse piece of meat served for making the broth, which, with plenty of good bread, on which it was poured, served us for dinner, and an excellent one too. The meat was saved to hash up again for another meal. We reckoned the cost, for the adults and

children, at about 1½d. per head; and before the calculation was well finished, brother K. was at work again. 'Thus you intend to emigrate,' I said. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I'm determined to go to that land where I can work for myself and the kingdom of God, instead of for grasping, tyrannical taskmasters here; and in order to do that, I must work hard and practise strict economy. Six o'clock finds me at work in the morning, and ten rarely sees me quit at night.' 'You'll do it,' said I; and I left with full faith that next spring would find him making tracks for Zion; and his name will be there before him, with as honest a Tithing attached to it as ever was paid in Britain."

"I'll try it!"

"Do so! Try it with a will, and you'll find your chest packed and corded before you would have made a start under your feelings an hour ago."

"I'll do it!"

"That's it! Shake yourself, go out into the big world, proclaim yourself a man, and prove that you are one by your actions, and God will bless you. But I must away; so good morning. I'll drop in and see you again some time soon."

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES,

CORROBORATIVE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

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. . . We are now in a district of country that must for years to come be the great centre of attraction to the antiquarian. And, though the first to unfold to my countrymen a knowledge of the existence and locations of these records of the lore of the antediluvian centuries, I am far from being able to do justice to the subject, with the limited means at my command. I shall therefore only give you, in these papers, an outline history of our progress in unfolding the archives, in tracing back the genealogy of a line of Pharaohs or kings not only contemporary with the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, but showing conclusively their undisputed claim to an era long prior to those. But before doing this, however, I shall continue my description of the principal monuments, pyramids, columns, and tablets of stone, on which are inscribed or engraven

thousands of characters, many entirely obliterated, but yet enough remaining that are perfectly legible to employ a life-time in deciphering and fill volumes with delineations. . . . On the north shore is a strip of alluvium or bottom land extending a large distance up and down the river, before reaching the first of a series of elevations that gradually rise higher and higher as they recede from the river. Upon this low bottom land, covered with a rank, luxuriant grass and a few cottonwoods, that seem, from their uncommon size, to have stood for a century at least, is the first of a series of ruins so wonderful as almost to exceed belief. Twenty-five rods inland from the north bank of the stream is a wall of stones of great size, and which were once square-edged, many of them eight feet long by three and four wide, and 16 inches thick.

At the south end of the wall, which is 25 wide, the stones rise one above the other, and each layer receding about ten inches, until it reaches the height of seven feet, and may be called the north face of the wall, from the top of which it gradually descends towards the river, until at the distance of 40 feet it reaches the surface of the ground, and is unquestionably the abutment of an ancient bridge; and if any further proof was wanting, we have it in the fact that 15 rods to the north of this, and jutting out of the bank, is another wall, the exact counterpart of the one just described. It is clear, therefore, that the river once ran between these abutments, but has gradually changed its bed from the north to the south side of the valley, giving to these old walls at the present time a most unmeaning position. . . . We reached a point where our streamlet guide issued from a deep damp gorge, between what appears once to have been walls of massive masonry, 40 feet or more apart, but now fallen and crumbled in ruins, that nearly block up the passage of the stream. Following along the deep ravine or chasm, a distance of nearly a quarter-of-a-mile, in which the banks on either side were of a uniform height and not less than 60 feet above the level of the stream, its steep sloping sides thickly mantled with trees, whose foliage completely shut out the rays of the vertical sun, we at length emerged from this dell of broken rocks and deepest shade upon the borders of the loveliest little lake that ever reflected back the twinkling of a star, while all beyond seemed one dense impenetrable forest. Ascending the elevation on either side of the ravine and looking over this tiny sheet of water at our feet, every idea that I had ever conceived of a primeval forest was more than realized. Here, in the form of an eclipse, is an immense basin, extending towards the north, as we have since ascertained, the distance of three miles—its longest diameter, while from east to west it is hardly two miles, and so perfect in its form, one can hardly believe that its banks were not cut and carved to a geometrical line. The elevation that surrounds this vast amphitheatre is but thinly timbered, and its green and shining banks are plainly discernible throughout its whole circumference, except where the view is obstructed by a number of conical hills, visible at a point 100 rods either to the right or left of the ravine, five of them covered with verdure to their summits, the other two appearing like barren rocks. And the fact that the five first-named lie in a direct line, and varying but little from the true meridian, led us to

conjecture that possibly they might be artificial structures. Our suspicion was fully confirmed on finding that the two barren ones, with the centre one of the line of five, were also in line, and crossing the other at right angles. As we neared the point that brought us in range, our curiosity was turned to amazement at finding the nearest of these barren hills, though a fourth-of-a-mile distant, to be a pyramid of stone, and the first ever seen in America, bearing in every respect the outline and general appearance of the Egyptian pyramids. . . . This forest valley is hemmed in on all sides by a nearly level plain that barely overlooks the waving foliage beneath, and stretching far and wide towards the north and east (having traversed it for miles in different directions,) is dotted here and there with the traces of edifices in every conceivable shape and state of preservation, from the massive front of solid stone, some of them 15 feet high, and pierced with openings that were undoubtedly either windows or doors, or both, down to the same unmeaning ridges of loose stones that characterize the plain already described on the island of Ignacio. Our first attempt to penetrate the forest was opposite one of the barren pyramids. Descending into the valley with axe in hand, we cut our way through tangled underbrush and fallen trees and the tortuous trunks of massive grape vines, which having reared themselves aloft and overtopped the trees that gave them their support, had fallen with them only to rear themselves again upon their progeny, in this way forming a network of vine and verdure that nothing but the edge of steel could penetrate; so that for yards together we barely made an opening sufficient to admit the passage of a person in a stooping position. At length we reached the base of this, not Egyptian, but truly American pyramid. . . . Before attempting any examination of the interior of these pyramids, we determined on penetrating to the hill or mountain in the centre of the forest, for the nearer we approached the more like a mountain it appeared. Two days of incessant toil brought us to the foot of a mighty temple, called by the Indians of every tribe in the vicinity, 'Na-ha-go,' though it seems to be applied by them to the whole valley alike, with every structure in it; the meaning of which in our language is best conveyed by the word 'Mystery,'—or, if more words than one be used, and applied to the whole valley, then 'Valley of Mystery.' But when the Indian is called upon to explain its meaning, with great vehemence he invariably answers, 'Na-ha-go!' or 'The place we know nothing about.'

(To be continued.)