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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.

have been labouring for their own interests in the efforts just made by them? Is it not evident that the reward is sure and near at hand?

But we have now arrived at Elder D.'s. We will call in for him, and take this opportunity to suspend our report until next week.

(To be continued.)

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES,

CORROBORATIVE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

(Continued from page 579.)

(From J. R. Bartlett's "Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua," published in 1854.)

"Towards evening, when the sun began to lose its force, I took my sketch-book and went to the base of the bluff [river Gila] where I had noticed, as we passed, a number of inscribed rocks. I found hundreds of these boulders covered with rude figures of men, animals, and other objects of grotesque forms, all pecked in with a sharp instrument. Many of them, however, were so much defaced by long exposure to the weather and by subsequent markings, that it was impossible to make them out. Among these rocks I found several which contained sculptures on the lower side, in such a position that it would be impossible to cut them where they then lay. Some of them weighed many tons, and would have required immense labour to place them there, and that too without an apparent object. The natural inference was that they had fallen down from the summit of the mountain after the sculptures were made on them. A few only seemed recent; the others bore the marks of great antiquity. . . . In order to examine some sculptured rocks of which I had heard, I left camp at five o'clock, p.m., accompanied by Doctor Webb, in advance of the train. After crossing a plain for about five miles, we reached the object of our search, which consisted of a pile of large boulders, heaped up some forty or fifty feet above the plain, and standing entirely alone. Such of these rocks as present smooth sides are covered with sculptures, rudely pecked in, of animals and men, as well as of various figures, apparently without meaning. There are hundreds of them so ornamented, showing that the place has long been the resort of the Indians for this purpose; for there seems to be nothing else to attract them here. Many of the inscriptions, like those before described, bear the stamp of great age, others having been made over them repeatedly, rendering it impossible to trace out either the early or the later markings. I selected thirteen, of which I made copies,

By this time the shades of night were falling about us; and the train having already passed, it was necessary to hasten on to overtake it. I regretted that I could not spend the day in this interesting locality, in order to copy more of the sculptures, as well as to make a closer examination of the many recesses among the rocks. I do not attempt any explanation of these rude figures, but must leave the reader to exercise his own ingenuity in finding out their meaning, if any. . . . We continued our course due east up the river, towards some singular piles of rocks with fantastic tops, appearing like works of art. For some time we all imagined these rocks to be the ruined buildings of which we were in search—the 'houses of Montezuma,' as our Indian friends called them. . . . On our way we saw many traces of ancient irrigating canals, which were the first evidences that the country had been settled and cultivated. But on reaching the plateau, we found remains of buildings,—all, however, in shapeless heaps. Not an erect wall could be seen. A little mound, conical or oblong, designated the character of the building. In many places I traced long lines of fallen walls, and in others depressions, from which the soil had been removed to make the adobe. On the plain, in every direction, we found an immense quantity of broken pottery, metate stones for grinding corn, and an occasional stone axe or hoe. The ground was strewn with broken pottery for miles. It was generally painted in a variety of geometric figures. The predominant colours were red, black, and white. The quality of the ware was very fine, more so than that made by the Pimos. I noticed, too, that much of it was painted on the inside, while at the present time all the pottery of the Indians and Mexicans is painted on the outside. . . . A ride of a mile brought us to the table-land, when we made for a large mound or heap which arose from the plain. In crossing the bottom, we passed many irrigating canals; and along the base of the plateau was one from 20 to 25 feet wide, and from four to five feet deep,

formed by cutting down the bank—a very easy mode of construction, and which produced a canal much more substantial than if carried across the bottom. It must have extended many miles. The whole of this broad valley appeared to have been cultivated, though now overgrown with mezquit shrubbery. On reaching the great pile, I found it to be the remains of an adobe edifice from 200 to 225 feet in length, by from 60 to 80 feet wide, its sides facing the cardinal points. Portions of the wall were visible only in two places; one near the summit at the south end, where, from the height of the pile, it must have originally been three or four stories high; and the other at the northern extremity on the western side. These remains just projected above the mass of rubbish and crumbled walls. The rest formed rounded heaps of various heights and dimensions, worn into deep gullies by the rain; the whole presenting a striking resemblance to the mounds which mark the site of ancient Babylon. The higher walls seen in the sketch probably belonged to an inner portion of the building. Near this is a conical hill, formed, doubtless, by the crumbling away of the higher portion or tower. Near the wall, which projects from the lower portion at the northern end, are some large masses of this wall which have fallen. The adobe is still very hard—so much so, that I could not break it with the heel of my boot. Several broken metates, or corn-grinders lie about the pile. I picked up a stone pestle and some small sea-shells. Along the eastern side are the remains of a long wall, extending beyond the building, now but a rounded heap, which seemed to have formed an inclosure. On the western side is an excavation about four feet deep, and extending from sixty to eighty feet from the main heap, and along its entire length; from which I suppose the mud and gravel to have been taken to make the adobe. To the north-east, at a distance of two or three hundred feet, are the ruins of a circular inclosure. This was not large enough for a corral; nor could it have been a well, as it is too near the margin of the plateau where the canal ran, which would always furnish a supply of water. At the south, 200 yards distant, are the remains of a small building, with a portion of the wall still standing. From the summit of the principal heap, which is elevated from 20 to 25 feet above the plain, there may be seen in all directions similar heaps; and about a mile to the east, I noticed a long range of them running north and south, which the Indians said were of a similar character to that on which we stood. In every direction, the plain was strewn with broken pottery,

of which I gathered up some specimens to show the quality as well as the style of ornamentation. I also found several of the green stones, resembling amethysts, which the Indians, after heavy rains, come here in search of. They are highly prized by them. . . . Mr. Leroux informed me that on the banks of the San Francisco are similar heaps to these, and other ruins, the walls still standing. . . . There is no doubt that this valley, as well as that of the Verde and Gila Rivers were once filled with a dense population, far enough advanced in civilization to build houses of several stories in height, surrounded with regular outworks, and to irrigate their lands by canals extending miles in length; but they seem to have left no trace or tradition by which we can tell who they were or what was their fate. I made frequent inquiries of the Pimos and Coco-Maricopas as to the builders of these and the ruins on the Gila, but could obtain no other than the ever-ready *Quien sabe*. These, as well as the ruins above the Pimo villages, are known among the Indians as the "houses of Montezuma," an idea doubtless derived from the Mexicans rather than from any tradition of their own. We asked our Indian guide who Montezuma was. He answered, 'Nobody knows who the devil he was. All we know is that he built these houses.' . . . Another mile brought us to the building of which we are in search, rising above a forest of mezquit. For two or three miles before reaching it, I had noticed quantities of broken pottery, as well as the traces of ancient acequias, or irrigating canals, along the bottom land, portions of which we occasionally crossed on our left. . . . The 'Casas Grandes,' or Great Houses, consist of three buildings, all included within a space of 150 yards. The principal and larger one is in the best state of preservation, its four exterior walls and most of the inner ones remaining. A considerable portion of the upper part of the walls has crumbled away and fallen inwards, as appears from the great quantity of rubbish and disintegrated adobe which fills the first story of the building. Three stories now stand, and can plainly be made out by the ends of the beams remaining in the walls, or by the cavities which they occupied; but I think there must have been another story above, in order to account for the crumbling walls and rubbish within. The central portion or tower rising from the foundation is some eight or ten feet higher than the outer walls, and may have been several feet, probably one story, higher when the building was complete. The walls at the base are between four and five feet in thickness: their precise dimensions could not be ascertained, so much having

crumbled away. . . . From the charred ends of the beams which remain in the walls, it is evident that the building was destroyed by fire. . . . The southern front has fallen in in several places, and is much injured by large fissures, yearly becoming larger, so that the whole of it must fall ere long. The other three fronts are quite perfect. The walls at the base, and particularly at the corners, have crumbled away to the extent of twelve or fifteen inches, and are only held together by their great thickness. The moisture here causes disintegration to take place more rapidly than in any other part of the building; and in a few years, when the walls have become more undermined,

the whole structure must fall and become a mere rounded heap, like many other shapeless mounds which are seen on the plain. A couple of day's labour spent in restoring the walls at the base with mud and gravel would render this interesting monument as durable as brick, and enable it to last for centuries. How long it has been in this ruined state is not known. We only know that, when visited by the missionaries a century ago, it was in the same condition as at present. . . . On the south-west of the principal building is a second one in a state of ruin, with hardly enough of the walls remaining to trace its original form.

(To be continued.)

PASSING EVENTS.

GENERAL.—An earthquake has taken place at Sorcia, in Italy: 200 persons were killed, and a great number injured. Cholera is said to be spreading all along the shores of the Pacific. The high price of corn in Naples has given rise to great excitement and agitation among the people, and the Government has ordered 100,000,000 ducats' worth to be purchased abroad. Fresh arrests were made at Naples on the 30th ult. Popular riots have occurred at Falmouth, in Jamaica, which resulted in the calling out of the troops: some persons were shot dead; others were seriously wounded.

AMERICAN.—An extensive silver mine has been discovered and opened in California. A new gold digging has also been found at Fraser River. The Mexican cabinet has been dissolved by Miramon, General Wood defeated, and General Maguire reinstated. A meeting of the "Secret Association" has been held at White Sulphur Springs, Va.; the propositions discussed being "The conquest of Mexico and the establishment of negro slavery there, the dissolution of the Union, &c.

VARIETIES.

THE COQUETTE.—A coquette is a rose from which every lover plucks a leaf. The thorns are reserved for her husband.

NATIONALITY.—"Parentage, not the place of birth, decides the nationality. A person born in England of Irish parents is Irish. A man born of English parents in Scotland, or Ireland, or anywhere else, is an Englishman. As a matter of course, families may lose, in process of time, their peculiar nationality, by sojourning in foreign lands and intermarrying with the denizens thereof; so that a family, originally English, may become American, or French, or Spanish."—*Reynolds's Miscellany*.

"Opposition is seldom injurious; yea, it commonly befriends a cause, and does this in four ways. First, as it calls forth sympathy; for there is generally a disposition in men to take part with those who seem to be assailed and opposed. The depreciations and the misrepresentations also that have been circulated by journalists have drawn forth attestations and commendations which would otherwise have been unknown. Secondly, by producing vigilance and circumspection in our means and modes of proceeding, lest we should inadvertently do anything exceptionable, and cause our good to be evil spoken of. Thirdly, by affording proof that something considerable has been done; for this opposition principally arises from success. While you are doing nothing, or doing very little, the enemy sleeps. It is your exertion that rouses him; it is your energy that awakes him: it is when there is a great and an effectual door opened, that there are, as the Apostle Paul says, many adversaries. Lastly, it inflames zeal and increases diligence; and thus, as it is a proof of good, so it is a pledge for good. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." You have not had too much opposition, generally speaking, in this country; you have only enough to enliven you, and awaken you, and improve you,—enough to show that you have not hitherto laboured in vain, and to apprise you that, as you have done much, your enemies fear you will yet do more."—*Jay*.