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Discoveries in Yucatan

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Abstract: This reprint from the *Deseret News* tells of an archaeologist, Dr. Augustus le Plongeon, who deciphered several inscriptions found in Central America. He found that the hieratic (sacred) alphabet of the Mayas was almost identical to that of the Egyptians, as well as similar grammar and characters with identical meanings. Two cities in the peninsula of Yucatan were “visited by learned men from all parts of the world.” Creation stories were found recorded that resemble Old World legends. Dr. Plongeon directly links Egyptian identity with the Mayan people.

of great price."

Next day in company with President A. W. Judd and Elder F. Pieper I went to Annheim, the Eden of Holland, where we were met by Elders Spencer and Koldewyn who labor there, and Elder Bingham whose field of labor is in Groeningen. All these brethren except Elder Koldewyn intend accompanying me as far as Mannheim on the Rhine. We visited a few families of the Saints and others came up to our hall to see us.

Annheim is a pretty place. The country here loses the monotonous flatness which has given the Netherlands (low-lands) its name. Finding that no steamers left here on Monday we had more time to remain in the city. From a hill near it we had a beautiful view of the River Rhine or rather one of its branches, the many boats floating on its surface, and the fine country stretching out before us. A thunder shower came up and part of it passed over us while we were enjoying the scenery before us, but instead of marring our pleasure it rather heightened it by the peculiar cloud-effect produced in the light and shadow which checkered the landscape. In the evening we went to Emmerich where we took a steamer for Cologne.

My letter is getting lengthy but before closing I wish to say that a good work is being done in this Mission; good openings for the preaching of the Gospel present themselves in various places; a number of baptisms is reported in the different branches, and many more Elders could be profitably employed.

Yours in the Gospel,

ANTHON H. LUND.

DISCOVERIES IN YUCATAN.

Highly interesting and important discoveries have been made, according to recent reports, in Central America, indicating, if we mistake not, that science at last is on the road to solve the mysteries connected with the aborigines of this continent. Dr. Augustus le Plongeon, the eminent archæologist, has devoted twelve years to the study of the monuments of the ancient race of that country and has at last succeeded in deciphering many of the inscriptions found in the ruins.

According to the account in the July number of the *Review of Reviews*, Dr. Plongeon surmised that the language still spoken by the aborigines of Yucatan would bear some resemblance to that of the first inhabitants, and acting on this supposition he soon found that by giving to the mysterious characters on the ruins the same phonetic value they possess in the language of the Quiches, they formed intelligible words and phrases. Then he discovered that the modern language of the natives was not materially different from that of the inscriptions. The archæologist by this means obtained a key to the formerly incomprehensible hieroglyphics.

What may be regarded as a still more startling discovery is the fact that the hieratic, or sacred, alphabet of the Mayas, on comparison, was found to be practically identical with that of the Egyptians, and that the grammatical structure of the two tongues is strikingly similar, many words and characters having the same meaning in both. The initial letters of

the Maya names for the objects which constitute the Egyptian alphabet are the very characters so represented. The conclusion from this is that both these people acquired the art of writing from a common source, or one of them taught it to the other.

Dr. Plongeon, we are informed, has succeeded in translating the Troano manuscript in the British Museum, a record dealing with geology and history. According to this the peninsula of Yucatan was called "Mayax," which is said to mean the first or primitive land. It comprised the whole of Central America. The two chief cities were Uxmal and Chichin-Itza, the latter of which was the center of civilization. This place was visited by learned men from all parts of the world, and the illustrations in the manuscript show travelers with unmistakably Assyrian features. As a further proof of the communication that must have existed between the different parts of the globe, is this, that the word "maya" is found in Asia, Africa, and Europe, and always meaning "power" or "wisdom."

The following is an account of a terrible cataclysm recorded in the Troano manuscript and translated by Dr. Plongeon :

In the year 6 Kan, on the 11th of Nuluc, in the month Zac, there occurred terrible earthquakes, which continued without interruption until the 13th Chuen. The country of the hills of mud, the land of Mu, was sacrificed ; being twice upheaved, it suddenly disappeared during the night, the basin being continually shaken by volcanic forces. Being confined, these caused the land to sink and to rise several times and in various places. At last the surface gave way, and ten countries were torn asunder and scattered. Unable to withstand the force of the convulsions, they sank with their 64,000,000 of inhabitants, 8,060 years before the writing of this book.

It is supposed that this terrible cataclysm is the same as that referred to by Plato in his Atlantis, and that the letters of the Greek alphabet are a record of the event.

The story of the creation the Mayas carved over the doorway of the east facade of the palace at Chichin-Itza. The beliefs held by the Mayas concerning the creation, as therein recorded, are identical, it is claimed, with the ideas concerning the first origin of things arrived at by the inhabitants of India and of Egypt, and are expressed in nearly the same words. This identity of ideas expressed in identical language cannot be attributed, it is justly argued, to mere coincidence, neither is it conceivable that the people of these different countries arrived at the same conclusions independently of one another. The idea and its explanation must undoubtedly have originated among one people, and by them have been taught to the others.

Dr. Plongeon overthrows the generally accepted views on this subject and argues for the opinions advocated by the believers in the Book of Mormon. He contends that the cosmogony originated on this continent and was transferred to the eastern hemisphere. He shows that the legends connected with the images of several Egyptian deities, when interpreted by means of the Maya language, point directly to Mayax as their birth-place ; he cites the identity of the Egyptian with the Mayan alphabet, and he reminds us that the Egyptians themselves looked upon "the lands of the west" as being the mother-land of their gods and their ancestors, and

the fountain head from which they had originally derived their knowledge. From these and other premises he deducts the conclusion that the Egyptians and other eastern nations acquired their cosmogonical conceptions from Mayax.

From all this it is evident that the study of the Maya inscriptions has thrown a new light upon the traditions of the past, handed down by the historians of Egypt, India, Babylonia, and Palestine.—*Deseret News*.

UTAH NEWS.

(Summarized from Territorial papers.)

The discovery of gold in Morgan County is reported as having caused the usual excitement incident to such an event. An assay made of a sample of the ore showed \$71 to the ton.

The weather in many places during the latter part of July was extremely hot, and was felt more perhaps owing to the fact that up to that time the summer had not been so warm as is usual at such a season.

A washout in Logan Canyon on July 23 destroyed the road so as to prevent any vehicles from passing over it until repaired. It prevented a number of proposed excursionists from going up the canyon to celebrate next day.

What is called the "Home University League" has been started by the *Deseret News*. It advances the idea that education in the higher branches of learning may, under proper conditions, be obtained at home. The details of the new movement are not yet announced.

The question of uniting the irrigation interests along Provo River both in Wasatch County and Utah County is being discussed. The object is if possible, to make one irrigation district which it is thought would tend to lessen the chances for disagreements and perhaps law suits between farmers owning the lands irrigated from the river mentioned.

A cloud burst at Hunter Precinct, Salt Lake County, on July 28, did considerable damage. The rain came in torrents and so suddenly that it was a surprise to every one. A flash of lightning was seen and the next moment the storm commenced. A large canal was burst in two places, and all along where the rain fell it partially filled the canal. The peculiarity connected with the incident was that the rain fell on a strip only about three-fourths of a mile wide, beyond which there was scarcely a drop.

The Utah Commissioners have decided upon the different forms of oath that voters must subscribe before voting at the next general election. There are three separate affirmations required—one being a modified form of the Edmunds-Tucker oath, which those must sign who vote for territorial officers; one as a qualification for voting for state officers whose term will commence as soon as Utah becomes a state; and one necessary to entitle the person to vote for or against the Constitution. The two last named make no reference to the Edmunds-Tucker law.

A rather novel way of getting up an evening's entertainment was practiced in Holden, Millard County, not long since. There happened to be three visitors in the town, Elder Ben Goddard who had recently returned from a mission to Australasia, his wife, and W. D. Owen, of Salt Lake City. Some one, without consulting the parties, put up a notice that Elder Goddard would deliver a lecture in the evening, on his missionary experiences, and that Mrs. Goddard and Elder Owen would be present and entertain the audience with songs and recitations. There seemed to be nothing for the visitors to do but fulfil the announcement when they found out it had been received as authentic by the people, and a crowded house greeted the impromptu entertainers. The lecture, the recitations,