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Old America - The Phoenicians

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Abstract: Series of articles dealing with archaeological, anthropological, geographical, societal, religious, and historical aspects of ancient America and their connections to the Book of Mormon, which is the key to understanding “old American” studies.

to be "snaked" into the Five Acre Lots to poison the atmosphere. "I guess I shan't bother about it," was the reply. It would have taken, say an hour, to have preserved that "pelt," or horse-hide, from waste, and three dollars would have been saved to the community.

As to the use of rosin in soap, when it can be obtained without sending money to foreign lands to buy it, it is well enough to use it. Not that it forms a true soap, such as fatty or oily matter does. In practice, rosin can be saponified without using caustic alkali; at the boiling temperature it combines with the carbonates of the alkalies. This is an advantage here, where the caustic lye is very expensive. The rosin soap is thus made separately from the tallow soap, and properly combined by mixing together during the boiling process. Probably there is no chemical process in the entire range of manufacture that requires practical knowledge so much as that of soap boiling; the eye, the ear, the thinking faculties, attention—almost unremitting attention, as well as labor, patience and chemical skill are all necessary to produce an excellent and marketable soap.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

THE PHOENICIANS.

BUT little secular evidence remains, and the history of the nations who once enlivened our western plains, and the land now covered by the impenetrable forests of southern America, is meagre and fragmentary, so far as relates to the country previous to the time of Columbus. And, therefore, to be intelligible, it is necessary to go backward, step by step, from his time, gleaning what we can from the few fragments left us, undestroyed by time and man.

That the Phœnicians had communication with America long before Tyre or Sidon was built, it is not difficult to believe; and from them the ancients learned of a great continent beyond the Atlantic, including what Solon heard in Egypt of Atlantis. But, although fragments of their monuments have been found, and a similarity exists between the Punic or Phœnician characters used in writing and letters found in America, in one or two instances, we have no other evidence of their occupation as colonists.

The ancient Americans' language, their style of architecture, their written characters, and the appearance of the people physically, judging from their painted manuscripts or sculptured monuments, are entirely different from the Phœnicians'. Very justly has it been said by one explorer of the American ruins: "The American monuments are different from those of any other known people, of a new order, and entirely and absolutely anomalous; they stand alone."

Greek writers inform us that the Phœnicians and Carthaginians knew the way to a country beyond the Atlantic. One fact mentioned by several ancient writers, and preserved in the records of Tyrian commerce, is related by Diodorus Siculus, as a matter of authentic history. Diodorus was a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, and the author of a universal history, over which he spent thirty years. He makes the following statement: "Over against Africa lies a very great island, in the vast ocean, many days' sail from Libya westward. The soil there is very fruitful, a great part whereof is mountainous, but much

likewise champaign, which is the most sweet and pleasant part, for it is watered by several navigable streams and beautified with many gardens of pleasure, planted with divers sorts of trees, and an abundance of orchards. The towns are adorned with stately buildings, and banqueting houses pleasantly situated in their gardens and orchards. . . . The Phœnicians (Tyrians), having found out the coasts beyond the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar), sailed along the coast of Africa. One of their ships, on a sudden, was driven by a furious storm far off into the main ocean. After they had lain under this violent tempest many days, they at length arrived at this island."

This is similar to the constrained voyage of the Northman, Biarni, from Iceland to the coast of New England, in the year A. D. 985. The storm-driven ship of the Tyrians must have sighted the coast of Central America, from the description, and returned to their home with precisely the same story and description of their discovery as the Spaniards returned with after sailing along the coast of Yucatan twenty-five hundred years afterwards. The Phœnicians were very secret in regard to their courses of navigation and commercial trading. This undesigned voyage, made more than eleven hundred years previous to the Christian era, was undoubtedly followed by others. The enterprising people who are said to have invented letters or writing, arithmetic, astronomy, navigation, glass and the coining of money, would not be likely to neglect to establish commercial relations with so extensive and populous a country.

Professor Baldwin says: "If the old Central American books may be trusted, the voyage was not long previous to the beginning of the Toltec domination." The extensive ruins of cities in Mexico, Yucatan and Central America bear witness that anciently there was such a country as described by Diodorus, and the reader should bear in mind that the crew of the Tyrian ship found a country already densely populated and covered with large cities, and the land cultivated like a garden, and this three thousand years ago. How long previously had the country been a region of cities and civilization? There is no secular history that can answer.

Punic characters, so supposed, were found engraven on the rocks near the sea at Dighton, Massachusetts, but they proved to be Runic. In a cave explored by Humboldt, between the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, South America, on a block of granite, glyphs were found, supposed also to be Punic letters. Professor Raffinesque, in his *Atlantic Journal* for 1832, has presented the public with engravings and their meaning, both Phœnician and American, which bear a striking similarity.

A remarkable historical discovery has been achieved within the last two years in Brazil. It is a Phœnician inscription, commemorating a visit to Brazil some five centuries before the birth of Christ. Some slaves, during their agricultural labors, on a farm in the parish of Parahyba, discovered a stone, the engraved characters on which Senor Ladislao Netto, director of the Rio Janeiro museum, has pronounced pure Phœnician, I quote from the letter of this gentleman the translation of the inscription:

"The inscription is a commemorative stone, erected by some Sidonians, exiles or refugees from their native land, between the ninth and tenth years of the reign of a king named Hiram. These unfortunate or rash Cavaanites (so they denominate themselves) left the port of Azionguba (Akaba), a port upon the Red Sea, and sailed for twelve lunar months along the land of Egypt—that is Africa. The number of vessels, and the number of males and females comprising the

expedition are all set forth, these particulars being placed intermediate between the invocation—one at the beginning and the other at the end of the inscription of the names of their protecting god and goddess. It is written in eight lines of most beautiful Phœnician characters, but without separation of the words, without the vowel points and without quiescent letters."

The inscription does not inform us which of the two Hiram is referred to, as the reigning monarch at the time, the ally of Solomon—980 to 947 B. C., or the Hiram who reigned in 558 to 552 B. C.

Here, again, the same happened to our Sidonians as did to Pedro Cabral, two thousand years later, when, knowing nothing of Brazil, he found himself unexpectedly on its coast. Like Cabral, fleeing from the storms usual to the African coast, from Senegambia to the cape, they steered into the high sea, where, seized by the famous equatorial current, which flows with extraordinary swiftness, they unexpectedly came upon the Brazilian shores.

M. de Bourbourg and other writers base their theories of the Phœnician origin of the inhabitants of America from the few records of their visits, and the vague and mysterious writings and traditions of the ancient Greeks, concerning the Island of "Atalantis."

If the inhabitants on the Mediterranean had communication with America in ancient times, they found it already inhabited by a civilized and prosperous people, with extensive cities, containing buildings, whose style and design could not be altered or improved or changed. When this communication was interrupted no one can say. The old American books speak of a great cataclysm. While the Greeks maintain that many ages before Athens was known as a city, the island of Atalantis existed; in one day and one fatal night there came mighty earthquakes and inundations, during which the island disappeared beneath the sea.

Do not these traditions on both sides of the Atlantic mean the same thing? And may not this catastrophe be the cause of the interruption that remained for so long a time unbroken? That the Phœnicians at one time held intercourse with Jared's people, is reasonable to suppose. But we have no definite proof that the first inhabitants were of Phœnician origin.

MANUFACTURE OF MATCHES.

ONE of the most perfect lucifer match manufactories in the world is supposed to be that at Frankfort, N. Y., noted for some extraordinary machinery, the invention of Mr. Gates. At this establishment 720,000 feet of pine, of the best quality, are used annually for the matches, and 400,000 feet of basswood for cases. The sulphur used annually for the matches is 400 barrels, and the phosphorus is 9,600 pounds. The machines run night and day, and 300 hands are employed at the works. It takes 500 pounds of paper per day to make the light small boxes for holding the matches, and four tons of pasteboard per week for the larger boxes; 66 pounds of flour per day is used for paste, and the one-cent stamp required by the Government on the boxes amounts to the snug little sum of \$1,440 per day. There are four machines in use for cutting, dipping, and delivering the matches. The two-inch pine plank is sawed up the length of the match, which is two and a quarter inches. These go into the machine for cutting, where, at every stroke, twelve matches are cut, and by the succeeding stroke pushed into floats arranged by a double

chain one hundred and fifty feet long, which carries them to a sulphur vat, and from thence to the phosphorus vat, and thus across the room and back, returning them at a point just in front of the cutting-machine, and where they are delivered in their natural order, and are gathered up by a boy into trays, and sent to the packing-room. Thus 1,000 gross, or 144,000 small boxes of matches, are made per day. The machines for making the small thin paper boxes and their covers are quite as wonderfully and ingeniously contrived as those that make the matches. A long coil of paper, as wide as the box is long, revolves on a wheel, one end being in the machine. It first passes through rollers, where the printing is done, from thence to the paste-boxes, where the sides and ends only are pasted, from thence to the folding apparatus, where the ends are nicely folded, and the whole box is pasted together and drops into a basket. A similar machine is at work at the covers, and thus 144,000 boxes per day are manufactured.

SUNDAY LESSONS FOR LITTLE LEARNERS.

ON THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET.—LESSON III.

Q.—Were there no preachers of religion in Palmyra?

A.—Yes, many.

Q.—What were some of them called?

A.—Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists.

Q.—Did Joseph's family belong to any of them?

A.—Yes; his mother, sister and three brothers.

Q.—What church did they belong to?

A.—The Presbyterian Church.

Q.—Did not the preachers of these churches believe in Jesus Christ, and the Bible?

A.—They said they did.

Q.—Did they all teach the same doctrine as Jesus did?

A.—No not one of them.

Q.—Did they not profess to teach the people the way of salvation?

A.—Yes; they all professed that.

Q.—Did they all teach the same way?

A.—No, they all taught different ways.

Q.—What do you mean by that?

A.—I mean the Baptists taught one doctrine, and the Methodists another.

Q.—Did they not teach the same doctrines as our Elders do?

A.—No.

Q.—What was the reason?

A.—Because they were not taught of God.

Q.—Who did teach them?

A.—The evil one.

A TEXT worthy of daily remembrance is, "He that contemneth small things shall fall little by little." Could not many unsuccessful persons look back and see that it has been the neglect of small things that has caused the want of success? Unwise words, thoughtlessly spoken and forgotten by a wife, may be working the ruin of her husband and family. "So-and-so is in bad trouble," was said the other day; and the reply was, "Yes, but it was the foolish gossiping of his wife that brought it on." She had forgotten the importance of these small things called words, and had wrought irreparable mischief. The same with unwise or not strictly correct actions: their importance may be for a time slurred over, but the continuance in them may some day prove them to be the littles and littles that have imperceptibly, but most effectually worked ruin.