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Old America - The Mound Builders (Continued) (4)

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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.

come very expert in the manufacture of mats, brushes and baskets.

Speaking about basket-making, this might be made a great industry in this Territory if it were carried on systematically. We can produce the finest of willows here, and we have skillful basket makers who could teach boys and girls this art, and be able not only to supply this Territory but to export to the surrounding Territories and States. It is by following such business as this, and acquiring skill therein, that we can compete with other producers, that our Territory will become independent and we become a self-sustaining people.

There are ~~some~~ few blind people among us, but not many. The children of this Territory are generally blessed with good, keen eyesight, and it is a gift for which they should feel very thankful.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

THE MOUND BUILDERS.

(Continued.)

THE most complete account of the manners, appearance and history of the Indians of Virginia, particularly those inhabiting the sea coast, has been given by Captain John Smith, but unfortunately this bold pioneer relates only his own strange adventures, and the appearance of the country and its adaptability to colonization at that time. His intercourse with the natives was friendly; and he reported that "a more kind, loving people could not be." From other historians we glean but little relating to their manners and customs. The Indians of Virginia had their temples, which were simply huts or cabins of a larger size than their ordinary habitations, and there was nothing singular about their construction. They were sometimes decorated with rude carvings and paintings, which possibly had some signification understood by them (McCulloch's Researches, p. 111). The Virginians believed there were tutelary deities to every town, besides the Great Spirit and other gods which are confounded with him.

Our knowledge of the tribes inhabiting New England previous to the landing of the Pilgrims is as meagre and indefinite as the history of the Virginians. The Naragansetts, under their venerable sachem, Canonicut, were perhaps the most powerful, and in many respects superior to the other tribes in that section of America. They had a temple, in which was kindled a fire, and the people at stated times cast into it, through the hands of their priests, whatever articles they esteemed valuable (Purchas' Pilg. iv). This temple was said to have been spacious. A few years previous to the arrival of the Europeans the country had been greatly depopulated by a disease which had previously been unknown to them. From their traditions it appears they had emigrated from the west not many years previous.

The most important Indian nation of the United States was the renowned confederacy known as the Iroquois, or "six nations." They were originally divided into five tribes: Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Senecas. The Tuscaroras from the south were afterwards united with them. Various New England tribes were subjugated by them, and the great Powhatan of Virginia stood in awe of this powerful league. No American tribe ever produced such an array of

renowned warriors and orators. The address of Garatigula, the speeches of Logan, Red-Jacket and others have been long considered master-pieces of declamation. The great centre of this confederacy occupied the country between the Oneida and Cayuga lakes in the State of New York. The Delawares and Shawnees, to the south, occupying the greater portion of Pennsylvania, and situated between the great northern and southern tribes, were in turn attacked and engaged in wars with either party almost continually. The "Lenni Lenapi," or Delawares, according to tradition, re-ided many hundred years ago in a very distant part of the American continent. For some reason not stated they emigrated eastward in a body. After a very long journey and frequent halts, (seven years at a time) they finally reached the Mississippi River, where they fell in with the Mingoos (Iroquois) who had likewise emigrated from a distant country and had struck the river somewhat higher up. Their object was the same as that of the Delawares. Their spies discovered the country eastward of the river to be inhabited by a very powerful nation, who had many large towns with intrenchments and strong fortifications. They are said to have been remarkably tall and stout, and there is a tradition that there were giants among them. They were called Talligewi, or Alligewi. Many wonderful things are told of this people. The Delawares sent a messenger to the Alligewi to request permission to settle themselves in their neighborhood. This was refused, but they obtained leave to pass through the country and seek a settlement farther to the east. Accordingly they began to cross the river, when the Alligewi, seeing their great numbers, in fact there were many thousands of them, made a furious attack on those who had crossed, and threatened destruction to them all if they persisted in crossing the river. The Delawares in revenge for the great loss of men, prepared for a conflict, and made a league with the Iroquois, and they both attacked the Alligewi, when great and bloody battles ensued, in which many were killed on both sides, no quarter being given. The Alligewi, driven from their towns and fortifications, determined to abandon the country to escape inevitable destruction. Leaving the conquerors in possession of the country they fled down the Mississippi and never returned. This war lasted many years. The tradition of the Iroquois is precisely similar in respect to this war. The Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Catawbas, Chickasaws, etc., inhabiting the Southern States, were warlike and at enmity with the surrounding nations. Like all the other nations of America they were driven to perfect desperation by the ravages of the small-pox, which made such havoc previous to the discovery. Their traditions and religion were similar to those of the Natchez. James Adair, a trader and resident among them for over forty years, published in 1775 the most complete account of these tribes to be found in the early writers. The principal portion of his work is devoted to a disquisition on the origin of the Indians and arguments to prove their descent from the Jews.

The various tribes west of the Mississippi vary but slightly in their shades of distinction from the other nations and tribes of America. Mr. Catlin has given us a most interesting account of these Indians, but has thrown no light on their origin. The Mandans are described by Mr. C. as being peculiar from the other tribes, having for the most part very fine and soft hair, and many being quite fair in complexion with blue eyes. Their religious belief was in the main not unlike that of most of the North American tribes. One peculiarity, however was the grand three days' ceremony of thanksgiving for the escape of their ancestors from the flood, of which they had a distant tradition strikingly conformable to scriptural history. Although there is also an endless variety in the tradi-

tions relate concerning their origin, there is one peculiar incident universal with the Indians of North and South America—they all speak of a deluge of water that once overflowed the land, destroying all mankind but a few individuals, whom each tribe claims as its own particular progenitors.

The ancient history of the aborigines or of their migrations is as confused as what they relate of their origin; and it is impossible to go back beyond a few years anterior to the arrival of the Europeans. Mr. Bradford in his researches into the origin of the red race, adopts the following conclusions in regard to the ancient occupants of North America:

1. That they were all of the same origin, branches of the same race, and possessed of similar customs and institutions.
2. That they were populous and occupied a great extent of territory.
3. That they had arrived at a considerable degree of civilization, were associated in large communities, and lived in extensive cities.
4. That they possessed the use of many of the metals such as lead, copper, gold, and silver, and probably the art of working in them.
5. That they sculptured in stone and sometimes used that material in the construction of their edifices.
6. That they had the knowledge of the arch of receding steps, of the art of pottery, producing urns and utensils formed with taste, and constructed upon the principles of chemical composition; and the art of brick-making.
7. That they worked the salt springs, and manufactured salt.
8. That they were an agricultural people, living under the influence and protection of regular forms of governments.
9. That they possessed a decided system of religion, and a mythology connected with astronomy, which, with its sister science, geometry, was in the hands of the priesthood.
10. That they were skilled in the art of fortification.
11. That the epoch of their original settlement in the United States is of great antiquity; and

Lastly, that the only indications of their origin to be gathered from the locality of their ruined monuments, point toward Mexico.

Mr. Lewis H. Morgan finds evidence that the American aborigines had a common origin in what he calls "their system of consanguinity and affinity." He says, "The Indian nations from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains and from the Arctic sea to the Gulf of Mexico, with the exception of the Esquimaux, have the same system. It is elaborate and complicated in its general form and details; and while deviations from uniformity occur in the systems of different stocks, the radical features are in the main constant. This identity in the essential characteristics of a system so remarkable tends to show that it must have been transmitted with the blood to each stock from a common original source. It affords the strongest evidence yet obtained of unity in origin of the Indian nations within the region defined" (Baldwin's Ancient America, page 66).

That the mound builders and the Toltecs were the same people there seems to be but little doubt: in fact from the similarity in their buildings and the traditions of one and the picture writings of the other it is very evident.

Mr. James C. Southall, an able English author, shows in three instances that the mammoth, or mastodon, has been delineated by races who have lived at no very remote date: 1st, on the monuments of Central America; 2nd, by the mound builders, whom he shows to have lived not more than fifteen hundred years ago (Recent Origin of Man). This, by the way,

coincides with the Book of Mormon, as it was about the third or fourth century, according to Mormon's account that the country was convulsed with war and the peaceful governments and inhabitants destroyed, the remnants drifting into that barbarism which still clings to them.

A PLEA FOR SMALL BIRDS.

SOME years ago a number of the learned men of France presented a petition to the French *Corps Legislatif*, calling attention to the great increase of destructive insects in that country. The cause of this terrible increase was the destruction of the birds themselves and their eggs. It was stated in this petition that the number of birds' eggs annually destroyed was between thirty and a hundred million. Besides this, the birds which in other countries are allowed to fly about unharmed, are killed in France for their morsels of flesh. "This course pursued for years," says the petition, "has so decreased the number of birds that the farming interests of the country are seriously endangered. Not only have the various kinds of grain suffered from the ravages of the insects which the birds kill, but the vines, the olive trees, and even forest trees tell the same tale of mischief." Indeed, against such enemies man is powerless. His eye is not sharp enough to see many of them, his hands are too slow to catch them. Even if he does succeed in killing a few millions, they apparently come in still greater numbers. Were it not for his faithful allies, the birds, man would have to give up to these destroying insects.

Out of all the granivorous birds (grain eaters) there is but one which eats grain alone. All the others eat grain and insects alternately, according to the season. Of these the sparrow probably has the worst character. It is said that the sparrow by persecution was driven from Hungary, but was afterwards imported, the people finding that this bird alone could successfully contend against the many destructive insects of the lowlands of that country. Frederick the Great also declared war against the sparrows because they ate some of his favorite fruit, the cherry. The sparrows left his dominions, but at the end of two years, he was very glad to get them back, even at the cost of a few cherries. Crows have been banished, but they have been re-established, as it was soon found that their ravages could not be compared with those they prevented. Night birds of prey, as bats, owls and others perform excellent service in their war upon rats, mice, moles, etc. According to observation a pair of barn-owls destroy daily at least 150 mice. A single hedge-sparrow will kill on an average 550 insects per day—weevils, cockroaches and many others. The weevil produces from seventy to ninety eggs, which laid in so many grains of wheat, become larvae and eat them all up. Thus one single weevil destroys a whole ear of wheat. The cockroach deposits from seventy to one hundred eggs at a time, which are soon transformed into white worms, and these for two or three years live upon the roots of the most valuable vegetables.

For the reason of ridding ourselves of these insect pests, if for no other, we should be careful not to destroy the eggs, young or old birds, for to these, as you see, we must look for protection.

NEVER attempt to do anything that is not right. Just so surely as you do, you will get into trouble. Sin always brings sorrow sooner or later. If you even suspect that anything is wicked, do it not until you are sure that your suspicions are groundless.