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Old America - Araucanians, Brazilians, Etc.

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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.

The greatest height of the mountains on the North Island is 6,000 feet, but in the Middle Island they reach as high as 14,000, this being the height of Mount Cook, the highest peak on the islands. The mountains on the South Island are crossed at intervals by low passes, which are of great value, affording easy means of communication between the east and west coasts.

To be Continued.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

ARAUCANIANS, BRAZILIANS, ETC.

THE aborigines of South America like those of North America have the same characteristic, tending to establish the fact that they did not originate on this continent. Those numerous tribes inhabiting South America are usually divided into three physical types. The Andians, Mediterranean, and Brasilio-guarani. The nations classed under the Andian group are the Aymara, Chango, Quichua and Atacama, considered in the Peruvian group and already described; Yuracacs, Mocetenes, Tocana, Moropa, Apolista and Araucanian branch consisting of three tribes. The Mediterranean group comprise the Pampean branch consisting of seven tribes, the Chiquitian branch, of ten tribes, and the Moxean branch which consists of eight tribes or nations. The Brasilio-guarani group consists of the Caribs, Guarani, Tupi and Botocudo nations. The Andian group are the nations which formerly occupied the department of the Cordilleros from Quito to Chili. The Mediterranean group occupied the central portion of the country, including the people of the Pampas and the Patagonians, the inhabitants of the valleys of the Chiquitos, and the lowlands of the los Moxos provinces. The Brasilio-guarani group occupy the country from the foot of the Peruvian Andes to the Atlantic, dwelling principally in the plains and valleys bordering on the Orinoco, Marañon, Amazon and their tributaries. "The nations generally of South America have been noted for their fixed habitations and local character, except the Quichuas, Guarani and Araucanos, who have been celebrated for their migratory disposition." (Natural History of the Human Races, 297)

The introduction of Christianity following the conquest of the country has brought a more salutary influence upon the savage nations of South America, in proportion to the numbers employed, than in North America. "More than a million and a half of the pure aboriginal race have embraced Christianity." (Natural History of Man, II, 592)

The general appearance of the South Americans does not differ much from that of the natives of North America. Their complexions are of two different shades, yellow and olive brown. The Peruvians, owing to their elevated location upon the Andes, where they breathe the thin air, have a remarkable development of the chest, much out of proportion to the rest of the body, except the head, which is generally well proportioned. The feet and hands are always small, the hair is soft, thick and flowing, but they are almost destitute of beards. They have a prominent aquiline nose, large mouth, short chin, large nostrils, retreating forehead, oblong and well developed skull, have an olive brown complexion, and features much resembling the Aztecs. The Aymaras, who seem to be the descendants of

the ancient people who constructed the vast and singular monuments and buildings now in ruins in the vicinity of Lake Titicaca, and described in a former chapter, much resemble the Peruvians, physically and mentally. The Incas admitted that their arts and civilization were derived from the Aymaras. The Changos and Alacoamas resemble the Peruvians in physical aspect; although the Changos are of a darker hue. The Antisian nation are generally fair in complexion, but slightly tawny mixed with yellow; in stature they are much greater than the Peruvians, their forms being more vigorous and robust. The Araucanians are similar in type, their heads are large, faces round, high cheek bones, large mouth, thick lips, short nose, wide nostrils, short broad chin, complexion somewhat lighter than the Peruvians. Some of the tribes are almost white; among which are the Boroanos, who have large eyes, oblong face, narrow and well arched eye brows, and in general appearance resemble the Caucasians. The Patagonians are darker than the other native Indians and in stature above the usual height; their average in this respect being about six feet six inches. "The Guarani (Brazilian) are the most interesting people of South America; they surpass all others in the adoption of the Christian religion and European civilization." (Natural History of Human Races, 302)

The Botocudos are considered the most savage nation of the continent. The color of the skin is of a yellowish tinge, hair black and coarse, but with features regular, really more Caucasian than Indian. The Vaupes, are tall, stout and well formed with a reddish brown complexion. This nation cultivates the soil, manufactures many useful articles and resides in permanent houses which are built to contain several families. "One of these dwellings, upon actual measurement was found to be 115 feet long by 75 broad, and 30 feet high."

More than forty nations occupied the country west of Paraguay when first visited by the Spaniards, many of which are now extinct; one of these nations still exist in Chaco. Azard describes them as being well formed, with handsome faces much like Europeans. They have aquiline noses, thick black glossy hair, scanty beards, their color fair, even whiter than the Spaniards. The natives of Parit according to Ferdinand Columbus, were better made and whiter than the other people he had met with in South America. Other writers state them to be nearly white with long flowing yellowish or auburn hair. The Araucanians are in physical aspect very much like Caucasians. They have the aquiline nose, well formed lips, and their whole features generally less Indian. They are kind in nature, liberal and earnest in hospitality, and very formal in manners; originally they inhabited Chili and part of the territory now occupied by the Argentine Republic; formerly they were a great people or nation. Their general title was, originally, A'apuche or people of the land. They have a religion which recognizes a future state of existence. The too great divisions of the nation is subdivided into provinces and these again into smaller districts, each of which is presided over by a chief, exercising a kind of patriarchal authority over his clan. He is the judge and arbiter and there is no appeal from his decision. The chiefs of districts appoint a chief called the Toqui, as head of the province. These Toquis forming the supreme council of the nation; one of them is selected as president and is called the grand Toqui. The supreme council treat only of the internal management of the nation and is called the council of peace. As soon as war is declared the council of peace is dissolved, and its place is taken by the council of war. This council is headed by the Toqui of war who has unlimited power except over life, as long as the war lasts. As soon as peace is concluded, he and all his council retire, and the council of

peace re-assumes its sway. The eagle called "Namen" is greatly venerated by the Araucanians, who think it is a sort of heavenly messenger in direct communication with the Supreme Being. Sacrifices are made at their great councils; an animal is killed, its blood is poured on the ground, the heart is laid on a green branch, and is borne around the assembly with songs and dances. When Chili was invaded by the Spaniards they found it impossible to subdue the Araucanians, so great was their skill and bravery. Their great chief Caupolican displayed a courage and military prowess creditable to civilized commanders. In the skillful display of his forces upon the field of battle, he astonished and won the admiration of the Spanish commanders. He defeated the great Spanish general Valdiva, who was captured and put to death by the native soldiers. In fact the Araucanians have never been conquered, and as late as the present century they have only formed a treaty with the Chilean government that still acknowledges their independence. But little is known of the South American tribes, other than the Peruvians, as they have no written histories, and writers have recorded but few of their traditions. The whole country presents a blank field for future exploration and antiquarian research.

Biography.

JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET.

(Continued.)

WE described the conversation of the messenger to Joseph in the last number. Before that conversation was ended, and while the messenger was yet talking about the plates, Joseph saw in vision the place where they were buried. It was shown to him so clearly that he knew the place again when he afterwards went there.

When the messenger had done speaking, the light in the room began to gather around him. At the moment when the room was left dark, except around him, Joseph saw a channel or passage open right up into heaven, and the messenger ascended up until he entirely disappeared. The room was then left as it was before the heavenly light filled it.

This heavenly messenger visited Joseph twice more during the night, and repeated each time that which he told him during his first visit to him. Besides, he told him about great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with famine, war and sickness, and that these grievous things would come on the earth in this generation.

Joseph himself and his father's family were poor, and the messenger warned him that Satan would try and tempt him to get the plates with a view to become rich, through them. He said to Joseph that he must have no other object in view in getting the plates than to glorify God, and no other motive but to build up God's kingdom, or he could not get the plates.

It was nearly daylight when the messenger left him the third time. His conversations with Joseph had lasted through the whole night. We see by this, how necessary it was that Joseph should be fully taught by the Lord before he commenced the great work the Lord had for him to do.

When Joseph went to his labor the next day as usual, he

found that he could not work as he did at other times. His strength had left him. His father, who was with him, saw that he was weak, and told him to go home. In trying to cross a fence, on his way to the house, his strength entirely left him, and he fell helpless to the ground, and for a time was unconscious of anything. The first thing he recollected, when he came to himself, was a voice calling him by name. He looked up, and saw the same heavenly messenger standing over his head surrounded by light as before. Once more he related to Joseph all that he had told him the previous night, and he told him to go to his father and tell him of the vision and commandments he had received.

Joseph obeyed the messenger and returned to his father in the field, and told him all. His father did not feel as others had about his vision. He did not mock him and tell him that the things which he had heard were of the devil; but he told Joseph that that which had been shown unto him was of God, and to go and do as the messenger had commanded. Joseph then went to the place where he had been told the plates were buried. He knew the place the moment he saw it, as it had been shown to him in vision. The plates were buried in a hill close to the village of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, where Joseph then lived. This hill was called Cumorah by the Nephites, and Ramah by the Jaredites, so the Book of Mormon informs us. The plates were in a stone box, the top of which, being rounded, could be seen above the ground in the centre. When Joseph had removed the earth from around the stone which covered the box, he raised it up with a lever, and looked in the box and there beheld the plates and Urim and Thummim and the Breastplate.

What a glorious privilege was this for Joseph to enjoy! For fourteen hundred years these precious things had remained concealed from the sight or knowledge of man. By the command of the Lord they had been buried, and by his power they had been kept until now they were shown to Joseph. How thankful this boy must have felt to the Lord for listening to his prayers and accepting his faith and granting unto him such great favors as he had received!

Upon seeing the plates and other things, Joseph stretched out his hand to take them out; but the messenger forbade him, and told him that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived. He told Joseph that four years must pass away before they could be obtained, and that he would have to come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and he would meet him there; and that he should do this every year until the four years should be ended.

On the 22d of September of each year Joseph went there as he had been directed, and always found the same messenger there to meet him. At those meetings Joseph received much instruction about the things the Lord was going to do, and also the manner in which His kingdom was to be conducted. On the morning of the 22d of September, 1827, the messenger delivered the plates into his hands.

We wish our little readers to understand that the plates, which the heavenly messenger gave unto Joseph, were of gold, and were covered with writing, engraved or cut upon them. They were buried in the ground about 420 years after the birth of Jesus, by a prophet whose name was Moroni. He hid them there to keep them from the wicked. That book which you now call the Book of Mormon, was translated from those plates. It was arranged and written by the hand of Mormon. Mormon was a prophet of God, and the father of Moroni. Before his death he committed the plates to Moroni.

(To be Continued.)