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EARLY DISCOVERIES

BY

SPANIARDS IN NEW MEXICO:

CONTAINING AN

ACCOUNT OF THE CASTLES OF CIBOLA,

AND THE

PRESENT APPEARANCE OF THEIR RUINS.

BY

H. M. BRACKENRIDGE,

MEMBER OF THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETIES OF COPENHAGEN AND BOSTON, AND OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETIES OF NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA.

PITTSBURGH:

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W. S. HAVEN,
BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,
PITTSBURGH, PA.



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May 1913

P R E F A C E .

I had read, with considerable interest, the notice of ruins on the Gila and Rio Grande, of a different character from any discovered in Mexico, Yucatan, or Guatimala. I was convinced that the received notion, that these were the original seats of the successive swarms of Olmecs, Toltecs, and Aztecs, who peopled Anahuac before the Mexicans, was without probability. The early Mexican historians, who have preserved the traditions of that people, speak of these migrations coming from the North and North-West, and even some of them from the East; but this is extremely vague, and would apply to Texas and the Valley of the Mississippi, with more propriety than to the limited tract of county on the heads of the Rio Grande, and the Colorado of California, possessing small valleys, fertile, it is true, but surrounded by mountains and deserts. It is, at the same time, entirely at variance with the idea of different stoppages, or resting places, of these migrations, and the centuries occupied in completing them. The assigning to the *Casas Grandes* of *Montezuma*, the honor of being their great stopping places, is a comparatively new idea, never hinted until at least a century after their discovery.

I regard these ruins as the evidence of the existence of a peculiar people, having no connection with the Aztecs or Mexicans, separated from them by impassable deserts, and having no communication with them or knowledge of their existence. Their habits and character were entirely the reverse of a migratory people. These habits fixed them permanently to the spots which they occupied. There never was a people less fitted for migration than the occupants of the *castles* of Cibola. They have perished from causes which I have endeavored to explain, with the exception of the remnant who still linger near the ruins, giving evidence of a decayed civilization, and at

present known as the *Pueblo Indians*—a most interesting race, who are more entitled to the care and kindness of our government than any aborigines on this continent.

With the feelings which I have just described, and having devoted much attention to the antiquities of my country, I felt a great desire to pursue the investigation, but had no opportunity of doing so until the winter of 1850, which I spent at Washington. Here, I found in the invaluable collection of Col. Peter Force, the means of gratifying my wish. Mr. Albert Gallatin, and some others, had entered the field before me, but left it still unexplored. In the collection of Col. Force, I found almost every thing I could wish, especially in ancient maps or charts, all of which, that noble-hearted man and enthusiast in all that relates to national history, freely placed at my disposal, besides giving me his personal aid in my researches.

One of my first difficulties was to disentangle the mixed-up narratives I found in Gomara and Hackluyt—of the latter especially. This cost me infinitely more trouble than any one could imagine. What struck me as most extraordinary, was, that after the expeditions of Coronado and of Espejo, between 1540 and 1583, a country so interesting, filled with large towns and *singularly constructed castles*, should have been lost sight of for nearly a hundred years! The castles, when seen by Coronado and Espejo, were occupied, and the towns inhabited by a numerous population in a civilized state; and what is strange, the next glimpse we have of them, a hundred years afterwards, they were in ruins, and their occupants had disappeared! Father Kino, who saw them in 1696, describes them as in a state of ruin; yet, far from being in their present state of dilapidation. And what is perhaps still more curious, the origin of these edifices was *unknown to him*, for it must be inferred from his silence, that he had never heard of the expeditions of Coronado or Espejo! Another century elapsed, when the ruins on the Gila, in a still greater state of decay, were visited by Padre Fonte, on his way to establish the missions of Upper California, in 1774. He appears to have been equally ignorant of their origin, contenting himself with some childish traditions of the neighboring Indians, and the fables which by that time had taken possession of the minds of the Spaniards, that these were the ancient dwelling places of the ancestors of the Montezumas.

Can it be possible, that in a nation so enlightened as the Spanish, tradition should be so short lived, or the *written* record of historical events so soon for-

gotten? And yet, we have a case in point still more extraordinary. Alarcon, a Spanish naval officer of great merit, sailed up the Gulf of California, at the same time that Coronado crossed the deserts and mountains between Mexico and Cibola. Alarcon discovered the mouth of the Colorado, and ascertained that California was a peninsula, and not an island, as had been supposed. And yet, this fact, in the course of the next century, was entirely forgotten! It was regarded as an island until some time between the years 1698 and 1701. "This re-discovery," says Mr. Bartlett, "was made by Fathers Kino and Sedlemayer, two of the earliest and most distinguished of the Jesuit missionaries, who were in consequence enabled to open a communication with the missions of Lower California, which had already been established."

I have freely used the work of Mr. Bartlett, the Commissioner of the United States for running the boundary line. Although but an incidental subject of observation, and apart from the important duties assigned him, he has given the most satisfactory account of the ruins, as they are to be seen at this time. His work is full of profound observations, on all important subjects connected with that country, but which still remains to be fully explored. Mr. Bartlett agrees with me with respect to the supposed migrations from the Gila to the valley of Anahuac. When he wrote, however, he did not appear to be aware of the existence of the work of Castaneda, who accompanied Coronado, and described the castles of Cibola as then occupied, which Mr. Bartlett has so well delineated in their ruined state.

It will strike most readers as a singular fact, that there should be found in America *a land of castles*, built on successive platforms like that of Babylon, as restored by Major Rawlinson, and rising to seven stories, in some instances, in the manner of the Chinese pagoda. These castles, it is true, were constructed of perishable materials—of sun-dried earth, mixed with gravel, and the terraces formed of layers of pine or cedar, and covered with clay hardened by the sun. How interesting would have been the minute description of these edifices and their inhabitants, in the time of Coronado! But these castles were not permanent works, like those of the Rhine or the Danube; nor were they the abodes of feudal chiefs, often robbers of the unprotected and defenceless. These, on the contrary, were places of defence, occupied by an industrious agricultural population, under *republican governments*, ruled by councils of elders, and exposed to the depredations and attacks of the warlike nomadic tribes of Cibola, who lived

on the buffalo which swarmed in the vast regions further north. I hope some future Humboldt may arise, to pursue the subject of American antiquities, with the wide range of philosophical inquiry which has distinguished the writings of that great man. He has, it must be admitted, done more than any other, to lay the foundation; but there is much yet to be done in rearing the superstructure. There is a moral sublimity in such studies, which can be felt, but not described. The first few pages of "Volney's Ruins" contain some of the noblest thoughts ever expressed—it is so far superior to the rest of his book, that I could never follow his tedious vision to the close, much of which is stale, and much of it pernicious.

EARLY DISCOVERIES

BY

SPANIARDS IN NEW MEXICO.

PART I.

THE accounts of early explorations by the Spaniards in the northern part of their new conquests, or in what is since called New Mexico, are very imperfect. We are also surprised at the length of time which elapsed before the conquerors ventured into those regions as explorers; it was a full century before they knew anything of the Rio Grande of the Gulf, and still longer before they became acquainted with the Mississippi. Cortez himself was one of the earliest adventurers in the North, as well as in the South of Mexico; but he seems to have done little more in the North than sail up the Gulf of California. In the oldest maps, the Colorado of California is called *Rio Grande del Norte*, and is represented as taking its rise in a great lake to the north-east. The *Rio Grande of the North Sea*, (as it was called,) our present Rio Grande, was not delineated on any map until after the explorations of Espejo, nearly a century after the conquest. There was, however, some vague idea of the great Mississippi, derived from stragglers of the unfortunate party of De Soto.

The first explorer was MARCO DE NICIA, a friar, about the year 1539, about fifteen years after the conquest.

The next, was that of Vasques de Coronado, a year or two later. At the same time, a naval expedition, under Fernando de ALARCON, was sent up the Gulf, who ascended the Colorado some distance, and first ascertained that lower California was merely a peninsula. The next expedition was that of Espejo, about the year 1583, from San BORTOLEMEO (I presume CHIHUAHUA,) to the Rio Grande of the Gulf of Mexico, or of the North Sea.

The accounts of these expeditions are found in *Gomara*, although very unsatisfactory. The abridgment in Hackluyt, is a singular and confused mixture of the different expeditions, of dates and of parties. Coronado, in his report to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, gives very little of interest; and not much better is the separate account of Jarramillo, one of his officers. A much more satisfactory narrative, in manuscript, was brought to light a few years ago, and translated into French, the author of which, Castaneda, accompanied Coronado. It is possible that a further search in the archives brought from the palace of Mexico, and now in the department of State at Washington, might lead to further discoveries. I looked into five thick volumes of secret correspondence, in Latin, but had no time to examine; I have no doubt they contain many curious things.

MARCO DE NICIA set out in 1539, accompanied by a small party, from PITATLAN, on the Gulf of California, in latitude 24° , then the last Spanish settlement in that quarter. After some days travel in a northerly direction, "through a country well peopled," he came to VACUPA, where he first heard of populous countries still farther north, also of the province of Cibola, and the *seven cities*. Such, at least, is the story related by him. After reaching, as he supposed, about lat. 26° , he found Indians who had no knowledge of Christians, that is, as I presume, had not heard of the Spaniards. His course having been East of North, he conjectures that he was about fifty leagues from the Gulf. He was told by the Indians of a great

plain about thirty days' further travel, inhabited by people *living in large towns built of stone and lime*, who wore cotton garments, and possessed abundance of gold and *turquoises*, or *emeralds*.

Advancing *still further*, he sent a negro and some Indians to see and report to him on their return, while he followed them slowly. Some of the Indians came back, and declared that they had reached Cibola, where they had been badly treated and the negro killed. NICIA on this returned, and wrote an account of his journey, in many respects evidently highly exaggerated, and which has been deemed fabulous. It gave rise, however, to the more important expedition of Coronado, the year following.

Coronado, with a formidable party, well equipped, followed the course indicated by Nicia, and at length reached the famed Cibola, which, according to my conjecture, was on the Gila, near the Pimo villages, where the ruins seen by Major Emory and Mr. Bartlett, are described by them. He was much disappointed and indignant at the deception practiced by Nicia. Instead of large cities, he found only five small towns, each numbering about five hundred warriors. Mr. Bartlett expresses doubts as to this being the place visited by Coronado; but there is no other that can be indicated as the spot. The estimate of the number of warriors would give a population of about ten thousand, but the appearance of the remains described by Mr. Bartlett would indicate a much greater population, if not in the time of Coronado, at least at some more remote period. There is soil enough to sustain, and indications sufficient to show, a population at some period, of a hundred thousand souls. Coronado seems to have occupied himself so exclusively with his own movements, and his thirst for plunder, as to have paid little attention to the curious appearances around him. But for the relation of Castaneda, we should scarcely have anything worth noting respecting these interesting people, and this is only such

as to cause regret that there should be so little. Advancing from the towns of Cibola, (or of the buffaloes,) during two years he explored the country between the Gila and the Colorado, and also on the heads of the RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE; but did not descend that river, neither did he follow the Gila and the Colorado to their mouths. Within the region explored on the heads of the three rivers just mentioned, they found about *seventy-two* towns like those of Cibola, and heard of many others, which they did not see; some of those they saw, were much larger than those of CIBOLA. One of the towns, or *castles*, as they are called, had been destroyed at a recent period by the *Teyas*, the enemies of these more civilized people, who were all of the same race, and entirely different from the nomadic Indians, who subsisted on buffaloes. Castanedo calls these the *crooked-backed oxen*; he says, the *herdsmen* lived among them and followed their migrations, having only portable tents made of skins. The Spaniards were, no doubt, deceived by this circumstance, and the tameness of the vast herds of these animals; the great Humboldt himself, has been led into error by them. In his *Cosmos*, he makes the remark, that these were the only natives of America who appear to have reached the second stage of human life, that of the herdsman! The country of Cibola was probably the limit of the buffalo range at the South; and even between the Gila and Colorado, they were not numerous.

In describing the houses, or *castles* of Cibola, (which name was given to the whole country,) he says, there were no divisions of squares or streets. The houses were raised one above another, in stories or stages, the roofs projecting over those below, forming sheltered galleries, with doors entering into the separate apartments. The castles rose to the height of from three to seven stories, on a solid basement of ten feet high, to which there was no entrance, the ascent to the different stages being by wooden ladders, which could be drawn up. This was for

defence against their enemies, who occasionally succeeded in their attacks, notwithstanding these precautions. A fertile valley, capable of being irrigated, was chosen for the site of the castle, where they cultivated maize, squashes, and beans; also, a little cotton for their domestic fabrics. Their canals for irrigation and supply of water, were of great extent. No domestic animals are mentioned, and, what is worthy of remark, neither Coronado nor Castaneda speaks of any extensive ruins, such as described by those who visited this country a century later. The evidence is conclusive, that the castles were then occupied by the people who constructed them, or at least, by their descendants; although it is probable they were more numerous at a more remote period. Castaneda does not speak of *ruins*, but of places actually inhabited. This reminds us of the opinion of the lamented Stevens, with respect to the remains now seen in Yucatan.

It does not appear that these towns were dependent on any one government, or were in any way connected by leagues, although all of the same race. The government was uniformly republican, consisting of a council of elders. We are not informed that they had ever heard of the Spaniards, or knew anything of the Mexicans, or Montezuma. I agree with Mr. Bartlett, that there is no evidence of this being the seat of the Aztecs, or of the migration hence to the South. The idea is an invention by the Spaniards, long after the time of Coronado; and the fancy name of Casas Grandes de Montezuma, was given to them within the last century.

The following extract from the excellent work of Mr. Bartlett, the United States Commissioner for running the line, under the Mexican treaty, will give some idea of the extent of the ruins of the castles near the Pimo Villages, visited by Coronado when inhabited, and may enable the reader to judge of others scattered over the unexplored space between the Gila and Colorado:—

“In every direction, as far as the eye can reach, are

seen heaps of ruined edifices, with no portions of their walls standing. For miles around these, in all directions, the plain is strewn with broken pottery and metates, or corn-grinders. The pottery is red, white, lead color, and black. The figures are usually geometrical, and formed with taste, and in character are similar to the ornaments found on the pottery on the Salinas, and much further north.

“One thing is evident, that at some former period, the valley of the Gila, from this ruin to the western extremity of the rich bottom lands, now occupied by the Pimos and Maricopas, as well as the broad valley of the Salinas, for upwards of forty miles, was densely populated. The ruined buildings, the irrigating canals, (some of them twenty feet wide,) and the vast quantities of pottery of a superior quality, show, that while they were an agricultural people, they were much superior to the present semi-civilized people of the Gila. But this civilization extended far beyond the district named. From information given me by Mr. Laroux, it appears that ruins of the same sort exist on the San Francisco or Verde river; and Captain Johnston and Major Emory both saw similar evidences of wide spread population, far above the district in question.”

To this, we may add the evidence of Patty, a Kentucky hunter, who passed two years between the Colorado and the Gila, and who constantly fell in with ruins of this description.*

Castaneda gives the following description of one of the castles named Cicuye, the exact position of which I am unable to determine:

“The houses of Cicuye are of four stories, with terrace roofs, receding one above another, all of the same height, and on which one may make the circuit of the village, without any street to bar the passage. These were shel-

* See Patty's Narrative, written by Flint.

tered by a roof or awning, from the story above, and supported by posts on the out edge of the terrace. The houses have no doors in the lower story, but they ascend to the balcony within the village by means of ladders, which can be raised up. The doors all open on these balconies, which serve as streets, and it is through these doors that these houses are entered. Those which face the country have their backs opposite those that open into the yard, which is very important in time of war. The village is also surrounded by a low stone wall. There is also a fountain, which might be cut off. This nation pretends that no other has been able to conquer it, although possessing only five hundred warriors. They are of the same race with all others living in similar towns."

In this description, we see a very strong resemblance to the ruins of Yucatan, at least in the ground plan and arrangement. But the materials were very different; the latter were splendid and permanent structures of stone; those of Cibola of sun-dried brick, or rather of *tapia*, or tabby, as it is called in Florida. The roofs consisting of layers of unhewn pines placed horizontally, with other layers across, and covered with a thick coating of clay, so as to form terraces. The inside walls were perfectly smooth; and this may be traced even at this day. In the distance of a thousand miles in the direction of Mexico, no other remains of this kind have been discovered, except those within about two hundred miles of that distance, on the Casas Grandes river. If the original builders were Aztecs, and occupying centuries in their migrations to Anahuac, they certainly would have left some traces of their progress. I was struck in reading the Layard explorations of Nineveh, to find so many points of resemblance in the plans and arrangements in those mighty structures, to the comparatively rude castles of Cibola. But we must look for differences, not resemblances, where beings of

the same race, in similar circumstances, have fallen, by a kind of instinct, upon similar modes of action and contrivance. Some years ago, I read the narrative of an English traveler, who traversed the desert from Egypt to the Oasis of Amon, and who saw there a structure, as described by him, exactly like the castles of Cibola. But there was no approach to hieroglyphics in Cibola as in Yucatan—no sculpture, although they had reached the third stage of civilization, that of agriculture, while surrounded by savages of entirely different races, as the remnant who still linger on the soil are to this day.

To return to Coronado, he was disappointed in his expectations, like De Soto in Florida, in not finding some great and wealthy cities, abounding in the precious metals, like those conquered by Cortez and Pizarro, and therefore despised the discoveries he had made. It seems, however, that he had heard of great cities near, and a great lake to the north-west, perhaps the Pacific, where people came with ships, with their prows covered with gold, perhaps Japanese. He fell in with an Indian, who gave an extravagant account of a great city to the north-east of Cibola, called Quivera, which promised something more magnificent than he had encountered. His starting point was from TIGUEX, a castle situated between the Sierra Madre and the Rio Grande, which he crossed near its head, and probably above TAOS. In crossing the immense tract of country towards the Arkansas, Kansas, and perhaps Missouri rivers, he saw nothing but countless herds of crooked-backed oxen. He at length reached what he was told was Quivera, which consisted of miserable villages of mere huts, probably the Arkansas, or Panis, who cultivated a little maize, but depended chiefly on the buffalo. He speaks of them as entirely unlike the people of Cibola, who lived in "terrace covered houses." Here he obtained information of a great river towards the East, probably the Mississippi, inhabited by numerous nations,

who navigated its waters in canoes. He then returned to Tiguex, with the intention of renewing his search for Quivera and the great river, but having got back to New Spain, after an absence of two years, circumstances prevented him from undertaking a second expedition.

There is one fact, which I regard as of some importance in forming any conjecture as to the origin of the people of Cibola: this is, the cultivation of the cotton plant, and the use of cotton in their domestic fabrics. The plant was unknown to the Indians north and east of them, and is nowhere indigenous beyond the tropics. The use of this invaluable production, and its cultivation, is a strong Asiatic indication. Whence did they obtain it? Was it from Mexico or Peru? There was no intercourse between them and Mexico, or between the latter and Peru. This has very much the appearance of pointing to a common Asiatic origin. Yet, I am far from attempting to found or sustain any theory on this circumstance, but consider it possible that it may have an American origin. The case, however, of Cibola, is more difficult to account for than that of Mexico or Peru, where the cotton plant is indigenous, while it is not in the more northern latitudes.

Whether the inhabitants of the castles had any superstitions or idols, is not mentioned. During the two years that Coronado remained in the country, he had ample time for observations, but he seems to have thought that there could be nothing of any interest except the details of his own movements. We only catch a glimpse, now and then, incidentally, of the people and of the country which they occupied.

The strongest argument, in my mind, in favor of the Asiatic origin, is, that the civilized races of America have uniformly been found on the western side of the continent and fronting Asia, and not on the Atlantic side. But I have sometimes thought that the northern races had their origin in the north-east, and then spread westward until

they met those derived from the Asiatic or other stock. But this is merely a subject of curious speculation, and no better than the thousand others in which writers have indulged; for a general resemblance has been remarked in all the original people of America, from Labrador to Cape Horn, and something peculiar and different from the races of Asia and Europe.

EARLY DISCOVERIES

BY

SPANIARDS IN NEW MEXICO.

PART II.

A LONG interval elapsed after the expedition of Coronado, without any attempt to explore the country on the heads of the Gila, Colorado and Rio Grande. At least, I have not met with any account of such explorations. The next we read of is that of ESPEJO, about the year 1583, nearly forty years after that of Coronada.

The earliest settlement made by the Spaniards, probably at first a Jesuit Mission, was at San Bortolemeo, or Chihuahua, extended from Guadalahara. From this place, about the period just mentioned, a well prepared exploring expedition, at least as respects its military character, for it had no other object, was set on foot by ANTONIO DE ESPEJO. It took a northern direction along the Conchas river, a southern tributary of the Rio Grande of the Gulf, or North Sea. He passed through the CONCHAS and PASAGUETAS, numerous tribes, who are represented as having no previous knowledge of Christians. The party followed the Conchas to the TOBOSOS and JUMANOS, where they found large towns, with flat roofs, the houses built of stone and lime, and the towns laid out *in regular streets*. They reached the Rio Grande of the Gulf, near the mouth of the Conchas. Thence they proceeded up the

river, about twelve miles, to another great nation; the inhabitants wore mantles of cotton, with blue stripes and of handsome fabric. After leaving this, they traveled fifteen days up the river, through a region not admitting of population, until they reached what I conjecture to be the valley of EL PASO. Here they found houses four or five stories high, with ladders to ascend from one story to another, which corresponds with the castles of Cibola, as described by Castaneda. They proceeded thence to Tiguasi, where they found sixteen towns. Here they learned that this country bordered on that visited by Coronado, who does not appear to have descended the Rio Grande. Thus far, there is nothing extraordinary in the discoveries of Espejo, but what follows seems to be difficult to reconcile with probability. He speaks of eleven other towns containing forty thousand inhabitants, whether families, (*vicinos*,) or individuals was meant, it is difficult to say, for there is in his account the same want of observation as in the narrative of Coronado. They followed thence the course of the Rio Grande, to ZIA, the largest town they had yet seen, containing twenty thousand inhabitants, and *eight market houses!* The houses were plastered and handsomely painted, and the people *civilized*. At this place—hearing of a great province to the north-west, they took that direction. They heard of seven large towns, but did not visit them. Fifteen leagues further, they came to a great town called ACOMA, situated on a high rock, and accessible only by a way cut in it. The inhabitants were supplied with water by cisterns. Twenty-four leagues further, they came to the province of ZUNI, called by the Spaniards, Cibola, where the inhabitants gave them information of the expedition of Coronado, but it is not said whether he actually visited this place. They were here told that at the distance of eighty leagues, there was a great lake, many large towns, and a plenty of gold. This I take to have been greatly exaggerated, or perhaps not well understood by the explorers. It cannot

but strike us, at this day, that the narratives of these early explorers should be so utterly barren of description, when there existed so much of interest. It is also probable that they were often deceived in consequence of not understanding the Indian language.

The main party now returned to the Rio Grande, while Espejo and nine of his followers proceeded further West. After traveling twenty-eight leagues, they found a great province, containing fifty thousand inhabitants, called ZAGNATO. They heard much of the cities of the GREAT SALT LAKE to the West, their wealth in gold, &c. This probably referred to the Pacific, of which they had exaggerated and fabulous reports. Espejo made an excursion of forty-five leagues to the North-West, where he was told there were silver mines, and which he found very rich. This was probably on the Colorado, near the mouth of the Jaguisita, as the place is described as near the junction of two rivers of *reasonable* size. I think it probable he did not cross the Colorado, and that the field of his explorations lay between the Gila and that river.

On his return to the Rio Grande, the main party resolved to go back to Chihuahua, while Espejo resolved to ascend the river towards its source. He proceeded about sixty leagues to QUIRES; thence taking an easterly direction, he came to HUBITES, containing twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and heard of TAMES, containing forty thousand! All the places visited had gold, and turquoises, and fine cotton cloths. The myriads of *crooked-backed oxen*, which covered the whole face of the country, furnished them with an inexhaustible supply of food. From the abundance of this animal, no country in the world was so well supplied with the means of subsistence as the vast region where they fed. Numerous oasis, in the midst of vast uninhabited regions, might be thickly populated, while the buffalo or bison roamed over the rest in countless herds. It appears that the natives dressed the skins of these animals in an elegant manner.

and made great use of them, as well as of the skins of the mountain sheep, or goat, or chamois, as it was called by the Spaniards.

ESPEJO having resolved to return by a different route, was conducted by the Indians down the *Rio de las Vacas*, which he followed one hundred and twenty leagues, meeting with no inhabitants, but passing through vast herds of *crooked-backed oxen*, apparently roaming without any owner! He now struck across to the Rio Grande, and reached somewhere near the Conchas, following it to NEW BISCAI or CHIHUAHUA. The *Rio de las Vacas* was probably the *Pecos*.

Making every possible allowance for exaggeration, there is sufficient evidence in the two accounts of CORONADO and ESPEJO, of the existence of a numerous people in the extensive country known under the general name of Cibola, although seen by the latter after an interval of forty years from the former. These highly interesting and civilized people, inhabited towns and castles, and had hitherto held no intercourse with the Spaniards or other white men. It seems that forty years were suffered to elapse after the visit of Coronado, without any attempt on the part of the Spanish conquerors to extend their conquests in this quarter! The gradual progress of the Spanish settlements from Guadalaxara to New Biscay, preceded the exploring expedition of ESPEJO. But what followed this expedition? Here we are left entirely in the dark. I have met with no writings, much less publications, which could throw light on the further progress of the Spaniards, of conquest, no doubt, over the then populous countries, called New Mexico. From the year 1583 to 1696, more than a hundred years, this history is a blank. Yet how much may have happened during that interval! Perhaps the archives of Mexico, or some unpublished manuscript may yet furnish material to fill the void. One thing is certain, that the cities and castles of this once populous and civilized country, on the heads

of the Colorado, the Gila, and the Rio Grande, have entirely disappeared, with the exception of some scattered ruins, regarded by Americans of the present day, as well as by the Spaniards of the last century, as the mysterious seats of the Aztecs. And yet, we have seen through Coronado, Castaneda, and Espejo, that these very places, now in ruins, were occupied by the very people by whom they were constructed. Can it be possible, that in so short a time as a century, whole tribes and nations should have thus vanished, leaving no traditions or written history, after the Spanish conquest, although some miserable remnants of the ancient people still linger near the seats of their ancestors, like the Copts of Egypt? Much may have transpired and much may be forgotten, in the course of a single century, when there was no written or printed record.

After having given the story of the first discovery, and first appearance of the people of Cibola, we will skip over the first hundred years, and come down to the earliest account of the *ruins*, although less dilapidated than at the present day. I will here extract from Mr. Bartlett, the passage from Father *Kino*, which I have not an opportunity of reading in the original—

“The earliest account of this building (that near the Pimo village,) is that of Mangi, who, in company with Father Kino, visited it in the year 1694, on which occasion he *said mass in it*. His relation also only exists in manuscript. “There was one great edifice,” says he, “with the principal room in the middle, of four stories, and the adjoining rooms on its four sides of three stories, with the walls two yards in thickness, of strong mortar and clay, so smooth and shining within, that they appeared like burnished tables, and so polished that they shone like the polished earthenware of Puebla.

“At the distance of an arquebus shot, twelve other towns are to be seen, also half fallen, having thick walls. all the ceilings burnt, excepting in the lower rooms of one

house, which is of round timbers, smooth and not thick, which appeared to be of cedar or savin, and over them of sticks of very equal size, and a cake of mortar and hard clay, making a roof or ceiling of great ingenuity. In the environs are to be seen many other ruins and heaps of broken earth, which circumscribes it two leagues, with much broken earthenware, and which resemble the jars of of Guadalaxara, in Spain. It may be inferred that the population or city of this body politic was very large; and that it was of one government is shown by a main canal, which comes from the river by the plain, running around for the distance of three leagues, and inclosing its inhabitants in its area, being in breadth ten varas (about thirty feet,) and about four in depth, through which, perhaps, was directed one-half of the volume of the river, in such a manner that it might serve for a defensive moat as well as to supply the wards with water, and irrigate the plantations in the adjacencies."

From the foregoing, it will be seen that these ruins were in a much more perfect state than when visited by Pedro Fonte, eighty years afterwards, and still more so than when described by Mr. Bartlett, after the lapse of another eighty years. Between the time of the first visit of Coronado, and that when Padre Kino said mass in the principal building, more than a hundred years had elapsed, and it is during this period, from 1583 (taking the date from the expedition of Espejo, when these castles of Cibola were still standing and occupied,) to 1694, that the destruction, from whatever cause, occurred. The appearance of the effect of fire, in one of the buildings, show that one of the causes was the work of an enemy, perhaps the nomadic tribes, or probably by the Spaniard, and of which there is no account during that century—a century that as far as I have been able to ascertain, remains almost a blank in the Spanish Colonial History. It is the same dark veil which covers the destruction of the cities of Yucatau and Guatimala. There was a cause at work,

amply sufficient to produce the most tremendous effects, and which in its destructive course, during this period, swept over the whole continent. This was that terrible scourge the SMALL POX, the fatal gift of the discoverers to the inhabitants of the New World. It was during this period, that the red man everywhere became its victim. In the history of New England we have accounts of whole tribes being carried off, the infection being brought there from Old England. We have at the same time accounts of its ravages in New Spain, the disease imported direct from Spain. Las Casas sets down the destruction of life among the red men, from this cause alone, in *Chiapas*, *Tabasco* and *Guatemala*, at eight millions! I have no doubt it was the main cause of the sudden depopulation of *Cuba*, *St. Domingo*, and the other *West India* Islands. I have seen in the course of my inquiries, a notice of a great mortality among the Indians, from small pox, in *New Biscay* or *Chihuahua*, and which must necessarily have spread to the regions conquered by *Espejo* and his followers. It probably did not stop there, but traversed all the tribes and nations to the *Mississippi* and beyond it. There was no one at this period to record the progress of the destroying angel. We have, however, at a subsequent period, nearly a century later, a most terrific description by *McKenzie*, of its destructive fury among the Indian nations along the lakes—a description which in point of force, and power of language, may be compared to that of the description of the *Plague of Athens*, by the great historian of *Greece*. This terrible scourge made its visits at different times, but it is probably that its first visit was the most destructive; yet, at a recent period. *Catlin* relates the entire destruction of the *Mandan* and *Aricara* villages. When I visited the latter, about forty years ago, they still preserved some traditions of its destructive effects eighty years before. The two *Aricara* villages, then numbering about three thousand souls, were but the remnants of seventeen large towns, whose

situation they indicated lower down the Missouri. These I traced seven miles along the rich lands of the river. They appeared to have been abandoned within a hundred years, and from the extent of the remains, I estimated the population at thirty thousand at least. In my voyage up the Missouri, I have given a more minute account of them.

This destruction probably extended to the Mississippi and the Ohio, which must have been comparatively very populous. Even in the time of Charlevoix, the Illinois are said to muster twenty thousand warriors. That writer speaks of a Mascoutin town containing a thousand families. I defended the *last* of this tribe, on a trial for murder, at St. Louis, in 1811.

After this digression, I will proceed to notice the visit paid to the ruins of Cibola, by Pedro Fonte, nearly eighty years after that of Padre Kino, that is in 1775. It does not appear that he had any knowledge of the previous visits of Coronado or Kino, and in the meantime the remaining descendants of the former race had forgotten all traditions of their ancestors, and had substituted the fables they had learned from the Spaniards, about Montezuma. When asked who was Montezuma, their reply was *Quen Sabe?* Who knows!

Pedro Fonte, in his letter written in the year 1775, says, "the great houses, Casas Grandes, of Montezuma, were probably constructed five hundred years ago, according to the accounts of the historians derived from the Indians, for they appear to have been built by the Mexicans, at the epoch of their emigration, *when the devil conducted them* through different countries to the promised land of Mexico. During their stoppages, which were of long continuance, they built cities and constructed edifices. The site of the house is level on all sides, and about three miles from the Gila. The ruins of the houses which formed the town, extend more than a league to the East, and in every direction the ground is covered with pieces

of pottery; some of them are common, and others painted of different colors, red, blue and white, which proves that the city was large, and differed from the Pimos, as the latter were unacquainted with the manufacture of such articles. We made an exact measurement of the edifice, which we found as follows: being a paralellogram standing exactly North and South, East and West. All around there is a wall, which shows that this edifice and others, especially in the rear, bear the appearance of having been a construction resembling a castle or redoubt. Towards the South-East, there is a structure with one story still standing, which is divided into several parts. The interior inclosure is four hundred and twenty feet in length, from North to South, by two hundred and sixty-four East to West. The interior of the building consists of five halls, three of equal size, in the middle, and two at the extremities, and which are the largest. The three centre halls are each twenty-six feet from North to South, by ten from East to West. The two halls at the extremities are twelve feet from North to South, and thirty-eight from East to West. They are all eleven feet in height; the doors of communication are five feet high, by two wide, and are all alike, excepting the four first of the entrances, which appear to have been double the size of the others. The interior walls are four feet thick, and are well constructed. The exterior walls are six feet thick. The house on the outside, from North to South, is seventy feet, and fifty from East to West. The walls slope upwards on the outside. Before the Eastern door, and which is separated from the house, there is another building of twenty-six feet North to South, and eighteen from East to West, without including the thickness of the walls. It appears that the wood-work was of pine, the nearest forest being composed of that tree. The whole edifice is built of earth, and walls of sun-dried bricks, in blocks of different sizes, and a canal is brought from the river at a great distance, and served for the use of the town, but at pre-

sent is nearly dry. The edifice appears to have consisted of three stories; that which the Indian related is true; judging from appearances there were originally four, containing a subterranean, probably a basement story. The halls were lighted, judging by what remains, only by the doors and by round holes made in the Eastern and Western ends. The Indians told us that it was through those apertures, quite large, that the sovereign, called the angry-looking man (*hombre amargo*), looked at the sun at his rising and setting, in order to salute him. We found no traces of stairs; we conjecture they had been of wood, and that they had been burnt when the Apaches burnt the edifice."

The description of the good Padre is minute and interesting, notwithstanding his childish and ignorant conjectures—ignorant because a man of his intelligence ought to have known something of the discoveries of CORONADO and Espejo, or, at least, of the visit of Padre Kino. We are thus enabled to trace the history of the Casas Grandes, from the time they were seen by Castaneda and actually occupied to their imperfect state, a hundred years later, after having been destroyed—their still further dilapidation when visited by Fonte, and lastly, their present ruined and crumbling condition as described by Mr. Bartlett. Perhaps in another century they will be nothing more than mere heaps of earth, their perishable materials mouldering down under the washing rains, and the gnawing tooth of time.

EARLY DISCOVERIES

BY

SPANIARDS IN NEW MEXICO.

PART III.

IN indulging in conjecture with respect to the origin of the civilized or half civilized people of Cibola, it is very natural to look to Asia, especially Japan, or the peninsula of Corea, in the north of China. Among the learned, and the celebrated Humboldt leading the way, it seems almost to be taken for granted, that these people are of Asiatic or Mongol origin. There are certainly strong reasons in favor of this hypothesis. There can be no doubt of the communication between Japan and the western coasts of America bordering on the Pacific, especially California; for even within our own times, Japanese vessels have been drifted on that coast; and we know from history, that before the present non-intercourse policy of the Japanese, that the vessels of that nation actually visited the American shores of the Pacific. If we must assume that the civilized nations on the western coasts of America necessarily sprang from Asia, and belong to the Mongol race, there is no difficulty in their introduction by sea, without coming round by Behring's Straits. But is it absolutely impossible for the American nations to have originated within themselves that advanced state of civilization in which some of them

were found? Whence did the dwellers in Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, derive their civilization? I do not hesitate to answer, from the development, under favorable circumstances, of those germs of improvement which are innate in man, wherever he may be placed.

One of the most striking facts in the case of the Cibolians, is, their advancement in agriculture, especially their extensive canals for irrigation, reminding us of Babylonia and Egypt. Yet, a moment's reflection will show, that this is easily accounted for. It might be asked, whence did the dwellers in Mesopotamia derive the system of irrigation practiced by them from the remotest antiquity? The great plain between the Euphrates and the Tigris possessed a soil of amazing fertility, but the climate was remarkably dry, and the want of water to support vegetation would at once suggest itself, as also the remedy. In the mountain valleys the summer rains furnished a sufficiency; and in the tropics, the periodical rains rendered irrigation unnecessary. We meet with artificial irrigation only where it is needed; the Ohio and Mississippi required none; it was therefore not resorted to. In the southern part of Mexico, within the influence of the tropics, artificial irrigation, such as we find in Cibola, was unknown. The great peninsula of Yucatan was densely peopled, and yet there were no rivers of any importance to feed canals, and the supply of water by means of cisterns and tanks, where there were no springs, was required only for ordinary use. The Cibolians cultivated (with the exception of cotton) the same vegetable productions as were cultivated by the aborigines all over the continent; that is, maize, beans, squashes, and a few other things; but differed from the Mexicans in having no domestic animals kept for food. But I cannot find that the great article of Asiatic culture, rice, was any where in use among the civilized people of this continent. Chocolate, the favorite

beverage of the Mexicans, was not known to the people of Cibola; and, I believe, of any other part of the world, because the chocolate nut (not the cocoa) was unknown except in America.*

If the ancient Cibolians had come by sea, they must have ascended the Gulf of California, and then followed the courses of, the Yaqui, or of the Sonora, which rise in the direction of the Gila; but they left no traces of their abode in the valleys of these rivers, or on the sea coast; at least, I have heard of none. The nearest ruins, or Casas Grandes, of Chihuahua, are far in the interior, at least two hundred miles from the coast, on a river which has no outlet to the sea, but loses itself in a lake. And yet, these ruins, in a most fertile oasis, are surrounded by almost impassable deserts and mountains. They are a thousand miles from Mexico; and we have heard of none of the same kind between it and that city. They are the most interesting, in my opinion, of any yet described, and for this we are indebted to Mr. Bartlett, from whose work I will take the liberty of making a copious extract:

“The ruins of Casas Grandes, or great houses, face the cardinal points, and consist of fallen and erect walls, the latter varying in height from five to thirty feet, and often projecting above the heaps of others which have fallen and crumbled away. If their height were estimated from their foundations, it would be much greater, particularly of those in the central parts of the building, where the fallen walls and rubbish form a mound twenty feet above the ground. If, therefore, the highest walls now standing have their foundations on the lowest level, they have a height of from forty to fifty feet: and as these ruins have stood exposed to the elements for more than three centuries, they must originally have been much higher.

* The *cacao* and the *cocoi* are often confounded: the first is the chocolate nut, and not larger than an almond.

Indeed, the thickness of the walls, some of which are five feet at their base, would indicate that they must have been much higher than they are at present.

“From a close examination of what remains of the building or buildings, I came to the conclusion that the outer portions were the lowest, and not above one story in height, while the central ones were from three to six stories. Hence, the large heaps of ruined walls and rubbish in the centre, and in consequence, the better preservation and support of that portion of the edifice. By far the larger portions which have fallen are the exterior walls. This arises from the moisture of the earth and the greater exposure to rains. The central parts are in a measure protected by the accumulation of rubbish, and by the greater thickness of their walls.

“I should observe that every portion of this edifice is built of adobe, or mud, and that nowhere, as far as I could trace the foundations, could I discover any walls of stone. The point in which it differs from the work of the Spaniards or modern Mexicans, is in the mode of constructing the walls. The latter employ regularly made brick, from fourteen to sixteen inches in length, about twelve in width, and three or four in thickness, often mixed with chopped straw and gravel, and baked in the sun—a mode adopted ages ago by the primitive inhabitants of Egypt, Assyria, and other oriental countries, and practiced by them at the present day. But the buildings of which I now speak are built with large blocks of mud, or, what the Mexicans call *tapia*, about twenty-two inches in thickness and three feet or more in length. In fact, the length of these blocks seemed to vary, and their precise dimensions could not be traced; which induced me to believe, that some kind of a case or box was used, into which the mud was placed, and as it dried, these cases were moved along. It is true, they may have been first made in moulds or cases, and after being dried, placed on the walls; but the irregularity and want of

uniformity in these layers, as to their length, leads me to believe they were made on the walls themselves. The mud is filled with coarse gravel from the plateau, which gives greater hardness to the material. In this respect, I consider it superior to the modern adobe, which is oftener made without any gravel or straw, although in the better class of buildings I have seen both used.

“The outer walls of the Casas Grandes are only to be traced by long lines of rounded heaps, parallel to or at right angles with the walls now standing; while here and there, a corner of the original wall may be seen, or where it was intersected by a transverse wall, which tended to support the other and bind them together. These corners often retain their erect positions long after the other portions have fallen. So with the higher and more massive walls of the interior, which are five feet in thickness at their base, the sides or longer walls have fallen, while the corners, with a few feet on either side, still tower far above the other parts, resembling at a distance the isolated columns of a ruined temple. In so ruinous a state are these buildings, that it is extremely difficult to trace their original form. In approaching them, one first meets with the low walls or embankment, which any where else would be taken for a work of nature; but the walls at once show them to have been similar, but of less height. A closer inspection brings to view a portion of a corner which has not fallen. As the visitor approaches the interior, where the edifice is in a better state of preservation, he becomes confused among the erect and fallen portions; for the longer sides are mostly prostrated, while the shorter ones, and those forming angles, are standing. In this dilemma, I found it best to take a stand upon the highest point, which is a mound in the very center of the erect walls, as well as the center of the edifice. From this point, after having examined and traced the exterior portion, one may form a tolerably correct idea as to the arrangement of the edifice. It was

not until I had walked several times round it and traced its inner apartments, that I could satisfy myself of its actual outline.

“At first I believed that there were three separate buildings, even when I took my sketch, as there were three large heaps apparently unconnected, each having portions of erect walls. But on closer examination, I found that they had been connected by a low range of buildings, which may have been merely courts, as they were of but one story. On the supposition, therefore, that all were connected either by low buildings or corridors, the entire edifice must have extended from north to south at least eight hundred feet, and from east to west about two hundred and fifty. On the south side, a regular and continuous wall can be traced, while the eastern and western fronts are extremely irregular, with projecting walls. There appears to have been several courts within the inclosure of greater or less dimensions.

“The general character of this extensive range of buildings is the same as that of the Casas Grandes, near the Pimo villages on the Gila, and they are unquestionably the work of the same people. The material, too, is the same as that of the ruins on the Salinas. Like the edifice on the Gila, it is built with huge blocks of mud, laid up in the same manner, though, from some cause, probably the less tenacity of the adobe, the walls are in a greater state of decay. In no other way can this decay be accounted for, unless a greater antiquity is allowed for these, than for the Gila edifice, which would be contrary to all preconceived opinions of them.* The ruinous state of these buildings may also be attributed to the more frequent rains to which they are exposed, than on the Gila.†

* This is supposed to be a later stage in the progress of the Aztecs, to the Valley of Mexico.

† Much the most probable.

“The walls of the present buildings are much decayed; in fact one-half of their thickness is washed away, and it is only by digging below the surface that their original thickness can be seen. In the Gila edifice the surface of the walls is as perfect as though the mason had but yesterday passed his trowel over them, and the exterior ones are but little injured. In these ruins, on the contrary, but little of the inner surface is visible. I sought for this in order to ascertain if they had been plastered inside or out, but it could not be decided but by digging to the foundation, which I had not time to do. Several portions of the walls within the area, and in particular one midway between the most southwardly building and the one to the north, had fronts precisely like that on the Gila, their doors were similarly placed, and receded towards the top, and the same circular openings were seen in the upper partition walls. So much of the walls had washed away that I could not trace the cavities where the beams were inserted, and hence was unable, as in the Gila edifice, to ascertain the number of stories, or how the beams were laid. Not a fragment of the wood forming the beams or lintels could be discerned. Many doorways remained; but the lintels being gone, the tops had crumbled away or fallen.

“Although these ruins are alluded to by many of the earlier as well as the recent writers on Mexico, I have been unable to find in any, either an account or description of them. I have been particularly desirous to see some early account, that I might know their appearance when first seen by the Spanish colonists, who traversed this country anterior to the year 1600. Rivas, one of the earliest writers on the aboriginal tribes, who has given the most minute details of the labors of the first missionaries, and the conversion of the several tribes of central and northern Mexico, says nothing of these remains, although he describes the nations that occupied the country, where they are found, their manners, customs, religion, &c. I

find, however, in Clavigero a brief account which that laborious investigator doubtless had authority for.* He repeats the old story that this edifice 'agreeably to the universal tradition of these people, was built by the Mexicans in their perigrinations.' That it consisted of three floors with terrace above them, and without any entrance to the under floor. The door for entrance to the building is on the second floor, so that a scaling ladder is necessary.' This would show that at some period of the settlement of the country its floors remained.

"Garcia Conde also states, that this edifice is known to have had 'three stories, and a roof with stairs outside, probably of wood,' and that the same kind of structures are found at the present time among the Pueblos of the independent Moquis, north of the Gila. He also repeats the story of the Aztec emigration, and that this was the *third* stopping place of that people.†

"Garcia Conde mentions a second class of ruins which are very numerous along the margin of the Casas Grandes and Ianos rivers, for a length of twenty leagues, and a breadth of ten. At a short distance, he says, they uniformly have the appearance of small hills or mounds, and in all that have been excavated there have been found jars, (cantaros) pitchers, ollas, &c. of pottery, painted with white, blue and scarlet colors; corn grinders (metates) and stone axes, but no instruments of iron.

"The builders of this edifice and the occupants of the rich valley in the vicinity, showed much sagacity in their choice of so fine a region for agricultural purposes. There is none equal to it from the low lands of Texas, near St. Antonio, to the fertile valleys of California, near *Los Angelos*; and with the exception of the Rio Grande, there is no river of equal size between those of Eastern Texas

* Clavigero wrote in the last century, and is consequently a modern writer. Yet even he only speaks vaguely of the northern migrations.

† Where were the *first* and second?

and the Colorado of California. The water, too, is clear and sweet, unlike the muddy waters of the Rio Grande, the Pecos, and the Colorado, which are charged with vegetable matter and earth.

“The Casas Grandes river rises about a hundred miles N. W. from the city of Chihuahua, whence it flows in a course nearly north, by the towns and ruins of the same name, the towns of Baranca, Colorado, Correlitos and Ianos, and after a course of sixty leagues, is discharged into Lake Gusman. It receives a tributary nine miles north of Ianos; a second one, at that town, which bears its name; and a third about ten miles below the ruins, called Timeivaca. Yet, notwithstanding these tributaries and the large volume of water, it often dries up, and remains only in pools barely sufficient for the population and for the herds of cattle which graze on its banks. The valley here is about two miles in width, covered with luxuriant fields of grass, wheat and corn. The river passing through its centre is marked by a line of gigantic cotton woods, while in various detached spots are groups of the same. The acequias (irrigating canals) which intersect the valley in every direction, are, like the river, lined with a thick growth of shrubbery.”

It is a melancholy circumstance to see so many beautiful and fertile valleys, once highly peopled by the Spaniards, thus laid waste and ruined by the savage Apaches! Although a large proportion of Sonora is composed of barren mountains, some of them covered with pine or cedar, the greater part naked rocks, and also extensive deserts unfit for the abode of man, yet there is also a large proportion fit for tillage, and still larger adapted to raising horned cattle, horses and sheep. Ruined haciendas were continually seen by Mr. Bartlett, and numerous herds, and even horses now running wild. He found the abandoned gardens full of delicious fruits, peaches, quinces and pomegranates: the climate being

equally propitious to the production of some of the tropical, as well as nearly all the northern fruits. The very devastations and destruction by the savages must in the end deprive them of the means of subsistence, by leaving nothing more to plunder; they will perish with the entire destruction of the Spaniards, as the nomadic tribes will disappear with the buffalo.

One would naturally expect to find traces of civilized people on the lower Rio Grande, and in the fine country between it, and the Sierra Madre, from Monterey to Tampico; but I have not heard of any such. There is, indeed, an account of appearances supposed to be ruins near Presidio de Rio Grande. This is in a pamphlet published by Bryant T. Tilden, who was engaged during the Mexican war in a steamboat exploring expedition up the river, in order to ascertain its capacity for steam navigation. He says, "about forty miles from Presidio de Rio Grande is a field for the lovers of the curious. At this place there is a basin of perhaps forty miles in circumference, exhibiting many appearances of ruins. In every direction on the hills are to be seen columns and walls in ruins, and on the desert these occur likewise in many places. Some of these columns appeared in sixes and threes, equidistant, forming sides to what may have been enclosures of some kind. Some are round and some square, and all have the appearance of having been the work of man. The stones composing these are both sandstone and limestone. Many are cemented together, leaving scarcely the trace of a joint, *if they be works of art*; others are disjointed and stand like boulders, appearing as though some water-course had, in ages past, swept everything around them away, leaving these monuments of its power to tell of its existence in ages to come. Be this as it may, there are a great many of these appearances of ruins; and in peaceful times when neither Indians nor Mexicans shall be prowling about, some antiquarian or

geologist may discover and reveal the secret of these walls and columns. The Mexicans believe them to be the vestiges of some ancient city, which was in ruins before the Spaniards first came to Mexico."

I have no doubt these appearances are well worth an examination, but I feel inclined to think that the task would rather fall to the geologist than to the antiquarian.

From the earliest authentic accounts, it is certain that the nations or tribes to the north of the Rio Grande, towards the Mississippi, were less advanced in civilization than those south of the former river, in New Spain and in South America. Perhaps the Indians of Florida or Appalache, as we learn from the expedition of De Soto, approached nearest to a state of civilization, judging from their numerous population and their progress in advance of the hunter state. But it is in the splendid valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi, that we might look for a great progress in civilization, from their mild climate and fertile soil. During the first century of the Spanish conquest, with the exception of the expedition of De Soto, which crossed the southern part of this vast region, we have not even a glimpse of the state of its population, and the century following is that period of darkness to which I have referred; the period of the destruction of the aborgines, from the great scourge of small pox, and when all exploring enterprise among the Spaniards, appears to have been suspended. These were not resumed until after the settlement of Canada, of New England and Virginia.

There are evidences, however, of the existence of a much greater population, at some former period, as is proved by the numerous traces of fortifications and mounds, &c. in all the situations most favorable for the occupancy of man. Mr. Squier, in the elegant quarto, with illustrations, published by the Smithsonian Institute, has brought nearly all these into one view, furnishing abundant matter

for speculation and further inquiry. Mr. Squier has done me the honor of placing me among the pioneers in the field of Western Antiquities, in my "Views of Louisiana," published in 1811, and my communication through Mr. Jefferson, to the "Philosophical Society" in 1813, which procured my admission to the Antiquarian Societies of Copenhagen and Boston. That gentleman does not notice the mounds at Cahokia, opposite St. Louis, which I regard as the most interesting yet discovered in the West, and he allows a much greater antiquity to the traces of the numerous earth fortifications, than he would have done if he had seen the work of De Bry, where they are represented in the illustrations as actually occupied on the Roanoke in Virginia, and enclosed with pickets. The work of De Bry is a compilation in Latin, in two large folio volumes, of all that had then been written on the subject of America, with numerous well executed illustrations, and published about the year 1640. This work I read with great interest many years ago, in the library of Congress. There is a copy in the possession of Col. Force in Washington, and I recently saw another in the Astor library in New York. In the library of New Orleans, I saw a small volume written by Father Lafiteau, a Jesuit, with some coarse engravings, in one of which one of the mounds of the Illinois is represented as occupied as a sort of fortress, and in a state of siege, the top being stockaded, and with beams extending downwards, while the besiegers are endeavoring to storm it from below; some shooting fire-arrows at the wood work. In this book there is the same want of detail, in matters which at the present day we should feel interested, that I have remarked in other early writers. The author has a theory to sustain, to wit: that the Indians are descended from the Greeks; while Adair takes up nearly all his quarto volume, in proving that they are the remnants of the lost tribes of Israel! They succeeded in convincing

me that the Indians belong to the human race, having many characteristics and physical appearances in common with the nations of the Old World, and are, at most, varieties of the same species with permanent differences.

Independently of those common appearances of fortifications, to which Mr. Squier, I think, assigns an antiquity too remote, there are other remains of a different character which he has described, and which are undoubtedly very ancient. The mounds, such as those at Grave Creek, and those on the Cahokia, are of this description. They are certainly much older than the discovery of America by Columbus, and I have been unable to form any satisfactory opinion respecting them. Similar ones are found in all parts of the habitable world; in Russia, according to Professor Pallas, many have been opened and found to contain human bones in their centres, and gold ornaments, from which it was concluded that they were the burial places of chiefs. This was the use of the mounds at Grave Creek and at Circleville, Ohio, where, in the centre, bones and charcoal, and pieces of decayed wood were found. How long these would remain in such situations before crumbling to dust, is difficult to say. The mounds of Babylon, as described by Layard, before being opened exhibited a similar appearance, although two thousand years old. Some described by Mr. Stevens in Yucatan, like the great mound of Cahokia, have never been opened. There is no doubt that these remains must be assigned to different era, and some of them, perhaps, as old as those of Babylon. There are still many of the inhabitants of Pittsburgh, who remember the beautiful mound on Grant's Hill, which stood on the ground now occupied by the Court House. I have never ascertained whether anything was found in it, when it was cut away. I have frequently made inquiries on this subject, but without success. Should any one who happens to read

this pamphlet, possess the information, he would confer a favor on the author, by communicating it to the public through the press.

It was very far from my intention to exhaust the subject of which I have treated in this unpretending essay. What I have written may be regarded as merely suggestive, to those who have taste, leisure and opportunity to engage in a pursuit *more curious than utilitarian*.

APPENDIX.

THE GREAT MOUND OF CAHOKIA.

While at St. Louis, (Missouri,) in November, 1811, I heard of the mounds of Cahokia, especially of one said to be unusually large. I could meet with no one that had the curiosity to visit them. Being resolved to see them, I set out on foot alone, not being able to find any one who felt a desire to accompany me. These mounds are situated across the river from St. Louis, in what is called the American Bottom. If we should look for a numerous population of the aborigines any where in America, it would be here. It is one of the most beautiful and fertile tracts I have ever seen. The bottom, or valley, extending from the Mississippi to the fertile uplands of Illinois, is about four miles in width, and eighty in length, partly prairie and partly woodland, interspersed with ponds or lakes, some of them the former beds of the river, and at this season, the resort of myriads of wild fowl. At this period, (1811,) nearly the whole of this splendid tract of land, was vacant and unoccupied. The Illinois nation, who had inhabited it a century before, had become extinct, with the exception of the family of the chief, Du Coin, who then lived at Kaskaskia. According to early writers, this nation could count twenty thousand warriors! They could not want

for subsistence; for, besides their cultivation of the soil, the fertile prairies and woods of Illinois were one immense game park, filled with myriads of buffaloes, elk and deer.

After crossing the river, I passed through a border of woods, about a quarter of a mile in width, before ascending the second bank or plateau, and entering the open prairie, which extended to the wooded hills, some five or six miles.

In the distance of half a mile, I came to the first group of mounds, and ascended the largest, where the level top had a sufficient area to contain several hundred men. Many others, of a smaller size, were scattered around, and a succession of others, stretched away across the prairie, looking like gigantic haystacks in a meadow. The ground was black and bare, the grass having been recently burnt, and as it had never been disturbed by the plough, I could easily distinguish any inequality of surface. The ground was everywhere strewed with fragments of Indian pottery, flints, or obsidian and pieces of stone, which had been brought from a distance. The pottery was in very small fragments, as if it had been undergoing the process of decay for a very long time.

In the distance of three miles, I came to the group in which the large mound is situated, on the bank of the stream called Cahokia, which runs from the hills in a diagonal course across the plain. On approaching this stupendous mound, I could not help exclaiming, what an immense pile of earth, if this be the work of human hands! Of this, I could entertain no doubt, after a very short examination. It stands upon ground entirely alluvial, and in places washed by the rains, there is no appearance of stratification; and besides, the regularity or symmetry of its form, its position exactly North and South, together with the smaller mounds, leave no doubt of their being all artificial.

The form of the mound is that of a paralellogram, the short side fronting the South; and about half way down, there is a bench, or platform, about fifty feet wide; and from this, about the middle, there is a projection into the plain about fifteen feet wide, which has the appearance of being intended for ascending. The top is perfectly level, formed with mathematical regularity, and sufficiently spacious to draw up a battalion of soldiers. On the side next the stream, it is covered with woods, down to the water, some of the trees very old; everywhere else it is perfectly bare. I estimated the height between seventy and eighty feet, and the circumference, stepping around it from where it begins to rise above the adjacent ground, eight hundred paces, but allowance must be made for the washing of the rains. I saw no stone, or sign of any material but earth used in the construction.

Directly west of the large mound, there is a smaller mound, about half of the height of the larger one, and flat on the top. A year afterward, I visited these mounds, when occupied by the monks of La Trappe. The second was occupied by their dwellings, shops, &c., while the apron of the large mound, was used as a kitchen garden, and the top sown in wheat. Other mounds of various shapes and sizes were scattered around. Great quantities of pottery, and flint, small stones, &c., were scattered in every direction; and as the ground was perfectly bare, I could trace a number of inequalities in the surface, for a mile or two in the direction of East and West.

It is evident that a very large population once existed here. I published a description of these mounds in the newspaper in St. Louis, and afterward, in my "Views of Louisiana," but they are not noticed by Mr. Squier in his great work, nor by any other writer within my knowledge; and yet, I am convinced that they are by far the most extensive yet discovered in the whole extent of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. No attempt that I know of, has been made to open any of these mounds,

like that of Grave Creek or Marietta; which I think is much to be regretted. They are at this time, probably within the bounds of some improved farm, but it is not likely that they have undergone any material change, unless they have been selected as a town site, or a rail road has been cut through them. I have always been impressed with the idea, that they belong to a very remote antiquity, and were the work of people entirely different from any race of Indians existing on this continent at the time of its discovery, like the ruins of Yucatan, or the castles of Cibola. It is a remarkable fact that similar mounds, or tumuli, have been found in every part of the habitable world, at least as far as I have been informed. Their creation would therefore seem to be a natural suggestion in certain stages of human progress, and numerous population, or they prove that at one time the same race overspread the whole earth. It is a subject well deserving further investigation.

DESTRUCTION OF INDIANS BY SMALL-POX.

I could bring together numerous separate accounts of the fatal ravages of this disease among the aborigines, in different portions of the continent, especially during the seventeenth century,* that century which I have spoken of as one of darkness, as respects the history of those people. Bernal Dias *incidentally* mentions, that the small pox carried off *one million*, shortly after the conquest, but how many more, is left to conjecture. The disease no doubt appeared afterward at different intervals, and extended as the Spanish conquests were enlarged. A sermon of a New England divine, (in the collection of

* Also during the latter part of the Sixteenth.

Col. Force,) of 1621, mentions that not more than one in twenty then remained; the rest having been *carried off by small-pox*. The early historians state that before the arrival of the pilgrims, a desolating plague of some kind, had nearly depopulated the country. In a jesuit account, which I found in the collection of Col. Force, it appears that the small-pox appeared among the Indians of Chihuahua in 1617, and carried off whole tribes or nations. In all probability, this spread to the towns on the Rio Grande, and thence to the castles of Cibola, *and perhaps flew over the whole continent*. There was no escape from it; as long as two persons remained together, the contagion would remain with them. It was, therefore, more fatal than cholera or atmospheric epidemics, which might be eluded by change of place, or of the seasons. The Indians fled from their villages or towns, and, from superstitious fears of the agency of evil spirits, never re-occupied them. The deserted towns, even now, are rarely approached by the Indians, without a superstitious dread.

M'KENZIE gives the following account of the destruction of the Knisteneau and Chippewa tribes, in the year 1780:

“This was the small-pox, which spread its destructive and desolating power, as the fire consumes the dry grass of the field. The fatal infection spread round with a baneful rapidity which no flight could escape, and with a fatal effect that nothing could resist. It destroyed with its pestilential breath whole families and tribes; and the horrid scene presented to those who had the melancholy and afflicting opportunity of beholding it, a combination of the dead, the dying, and such as, to avoid the horrid fate their friends around them, prepared to disappoint the plague of its prey, by terminating their own existence.

“The habits and lives of those devoted people, which provided not to-day for the wants of to-morrow, must have heightened the pains of such an affliction, by leaving

them not only without remedy; but even without alleviation. Nought was left to those but to submit in agony and despair.

“To aggravate the picture, if aggravation were possible, may be added, the putrid carcasses which the wolves, with a furious voracity, dragged from the huts, or which were mangled within them by the dogs, whose hunger was satisfied with the disfigured remains of their masters. Nor was it uncommon for the father of a family whom the infection had not reached, to call them around him, to represent the cruel sufferings and horrid fate of their relations, from the influence of some evil spirit who was preparing to extirpate their race, and to invite them to baffle death with all its horrors, by their own poignards. At the same time, if their hearts failed them in this necessary act, he was himself ready to perform the deed of mercy with his own hand, as the last act of his affection; and instantly follow them to the common place of rest and repose from human evil.

“It was never satisfactorily ascertained by what means this malignant disorder was introduced, but it was generally supposed to be from Missouri by a war party.”

MOUNDS IN EUROPE AND ASIA.

Dupaix expresses the singular opinion that the ruins of Central America are antediluvial! If such a theory were at all probable, it would be much more applicable to the tumuli or earth mounds! I extract the following account of the mounds in the Old World, from the “Iconographic Encyclopedia,” vol. 4, p. 112.

“*Mounds.*—We have before mentioned that the simplest sepulchral monument was the upright stone (*Men-*

hir,) but distinguished persons received more important monuments. In the most ancient times no other than material greatness was recognized; immense mounds were, therefore, erected as sepulchral remembrances to great men, and the largest pyramids are perhaps nothing but mounds in the highest state of perfection. This custom of erecting mounds is traced to the earliest times. Herodotus and Homer often mention them, and the Germans of the present day are familiar with the giant's graves (*riesen grabe,*) which popular tradition designates as the graves of a Titanic race of men who lived thousands of years ago. The Etrurian graves also, the grottoes of Cornete, are nothing but such mounds, as we shall presently describe, but walled with stone. Pallas found the mounds in the North of Asia among the Tschawashi, Ostiacs, Baltyri and Samoydes. Baron Tott found them in Tartary: Volney in the Pashalic of Aleppo, as high as ninety feet; Bartram among the savages in Florida. In all parts of America, even among the Botocude, and in French Guyana, the dead are even buried in an upright position, with their arms, and huge mounds erected over the graves. The Celts called the mounds, if they were constructed of heaps of stones, Galgal (from gal,) and the Britons, Cairns. The mounds are of various dimensions, some of immense size, and others not more than a few feet in height. The round mounds have almost a semi-spherical form, and of this kind are most of the mounds in England, generally surrounded with a little ditch. The broad is similar to the round, but with the horizontal diameter much greater, for there are those mentioned not over eighteen feet high, whose diameters are ninety, one hundred and fifty, and two hundred feet. The oblong mound resembles the long in shape, and the long diameter is often three or five times greater than the short. There are rarely many of the oblong mounds in a line, but often an oblong one surrounded by several round ones. The broad and oblong mounds are often galgals, and contain

covered galleries leading to tomb-chambers. The little conical mounds were formerly very common in England, but have now mostly disappeared under the ploughshare, and they are therefore now only found in the uncultivated districts."

The mounds known as those of Achilles and Patroclus, according to Humboldt, are true tumuli. They stand on the supposed site of the famous Troy, where no other vestige of human existence remains! Truly may it be said—*Ilium fuit*.

