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Indirect External Evidences - American Antiquities, Continued

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CHAPTER XXVII.

INDIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES. Continued.

Antiquity of American Ruins.

We have now before us a subject on which the authorities on American Antiquities are most divided, and I shall not attempt in this writing to reconcile them or dispute the position of either class; but after a few quotations from these authorities shall leave the question of the antiquity of American ruins found in Central America and elsewhere as I find it, an open question. "There is nothing in the buildings to indicate the date of their erection—that they were or were not standing at the commencement of the Christian era," says H. H. Bancroft, in speaking of the cities and other monuments of Yucatan—and it is a remark which could with equal propriety be made of nearly all the ruined cities of America. "We may see now, abandoned and uncared for," he continues, "they may have resisted the ravages of the elements for three or four centuries. How many centuries they may have stood guarded and kept in repair by the builders and their descendants, we can only conjecture."^a Later, in the same work, our author discusses the question of the age of Palenque and other ruins in the following manner:

I confess my inability to judge from the degree of art displayed respectively in the peninsular ruins and those of Pal-

^aBancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. IV., p. 285.

enque, which are the older; I will go further, and while in a confessional mood, confess to a shade of skepticism the ability of other writers to form a well-founded judgment in the matter. Authors are, however, unanimous in the opinion that Palenque was founded before any of the cities of Yucatan, an opinion which is supported to a certain extent by traditional history, which represents Votan's empire in Chiapas and Tabasco as preceding chronologically the allied Maya empire in the peninsula. If the Yucatan cities flourished, as I have conjectured, between the third and tenth centuries, Palenque may be conjecturally referred to a period between the first and eighth centuries. I regard the theory that Palenque was built by the Toltecs after their expulsion from Anahuac in the tenth century as wholly without foundation; and I believe that it would be equally impossible to prove or disprove that the palace was standing at the birth of Christ.^b

Following this passage, Mr. Bancroft gives a valuable collection of opinions in his notes where he represents M. Violette-le-Duc as expressing the belief that Palenque was built probably some centuries before Christ by a people in which "yellow blood predominated, although with some Aryan intermixture; but that the Yucatan cities owe their foundation to the same people at a later epoch and under a much stronger influence of the white races." Dupaix he represents as believing that the buildings were reared by a flat-headed race that has become extinct, and who, after writing his narrative, made up his mind that Palenque was antediluvian or at least that a flood had covered it. Lenoir he represents as saying that, according to all voyagers and students, the ruins of Palenque are not less than three thousand years old; while Catlin, a French writer, in a French periodical for March, 1867, he represents as asserting that the ruined cities of Palenque and Uxmal have within them-

^bNative Races, Vol. IV., pp. 361-2.

selves the evidence that the ocean has been their bed for thousands of years, but the material is soft limestone and presents no water lines. Foster, the author of "Pre-Historic Races" (pp. 398-9), is represented as regarding the ruins of Palenque as the work of an extinct race, and then he proceeds with a number of citations for a more modern origin. The valuable notes will be found in Bancroft's "Native Races," Vol. IV., pp. 262-3.

Prescott, in his treatise on the origin of Mexican civilization, offers the following reflections on the antiquity of American ruins:

It is impossible to contemplate these mysterious monuments of a lost civilization, without a strong feeling of curiosity as to who were their architects, and what is their probable age. The data on which to rest our conjectures of their age, are not very substantial; although some find in them a warrant for an antiquity of thousands of years, coeval with the architecture of Egypt and Hindostan. But the interpretation of hieroglyphics, and the apparent duration of trees, are vague and unsatisfactory. And how far can we drive an argument from the discoloration and dilapidated condition of the ruins, when we find so many structures of the Middle Ages dark and mouldering with decay, while the marbles of the Acropolis, and the gray stone of Paestum, still shine in their primitive splendor? There are, however, undoubted proofs of considerable age to be found there. Trees have shot up in the midst of the buildings, which measure, it is said, more than nine feet in diameter. A still more striking fact is the accumulation of vegetable mould in one of the courts, to the depth of nine feet above the pavement. This in our latitude would be decisive of a very great antiquity. But, in the rich soil of Yucatan, and under the ardent sun of the tropics, vegetation bursts forth with irrepressible exuberance, and generations of plants succeed each other without intermission, leaving an accumulation of deposits, that would have perished under the northern winter. Another evidence of their age is afforded by the circumstance, that, in one of the courts of Uxmal

the granite pavement, on which the figures of tortoises were raised in relief, is worn nearly smooth by the feet of the crowds who have passed over it; a curious fact, suggesting inferences both in regard to the age and population of the place. Lastly, we have authority for carrying back the date of many of these ruins to a certain period, since they were found in a deserted, and probably dilapidated, state by the first Spaniards who entered the country. Their notices, indeed, are brief and casual, for the old conquerors had little respect for works of art; and it is fortunate for these structures, that they had ceased to be the living temples of the gods, since no merit of architecture, probably, would have availed to save them from the general doom of the monuments of Mexico.^c

It is proper, to say, however, that Mr. Prescott declares that some of the remarks in the above paragraph would have been omitted had he enjoyed the benefit of Mr. Stephens' researches when it was originally written. Mr. Stephens, it should be remembered, is among those who grant no great antiquity to the ruins. On this subject, however, I find the fairest treatment in the profound reflections of Mr. Baldwin:

The Mexican and Central American ruins make it certain that in ancient times an important civilization existed in that part of the continent, which must have begun at a remote period in the past. If they have any significance, this must be accepted as an ascertained fact. A large portion of them had been forgotten in the forests, or became mythical and mysterious, long before the arrival of the Spaniards.

In 1520, three hundred and fifty years ago, the forest which so largely covers Yucatan, Guatemala, and Chiapa was growing as it grows now. * * * How many additional centuries it had existed no one can tell. If its age could be told, it would still be necessary to consider that the ruins hidden in it are much older than the forest, and that the period of civilization they represent closed long before it was established.

^cConquest of Mexico, Vol. II., pp. 405, 406.

In the ages previous to the beginning of this immense forest, the region it covers was the seat of civilization which grew up to a high degree of development, flourished a long time, and finally declined, until its cities were deserted, and its cultivated fields left to the wild influences of nature, it may be safely assumed that both the forest-covered ruins and the forest itself are far older than the Aztec period; but who can tell how much older? Copan, first discovered and described three hundred years ago, was then as strange to the natives dwelling near it as the old Chaldean ruins are to the Arabs who wander over the wasted plains of Lower Mesopotamia. Native tradition had forgotten its history and become silent in regard to it. How long had ruined Copan been in this condition? No one can tell. Manifestly it was forgotten, left buried in the forest without recollection of its history, long before Montezuma's people, the Aztecs, rose to power; and it is easily understood that this old city had an important history previous to that unknown time in the past when war, revolution or some other agency of destruction put an end to its career and left it to become what it is now.

Moreover, these old ruins, in all cases, show us only the cities last occupied in the period to which they belong. Doubtless others still older preceded them; and, besides, it can be seen that some of the ruined cities which can now be traced were several times renewed by reconstructions. We must consider, also, that building magnificent cities is not the first work of an original civilization. The development was necessarily gradual. Its first period was more or less rude. The art of building and ornamenting such edifices arose slowly. Many ages must have been required to develop such admirable skill in masonry and ornamentation. Therefore the period between the beginning of this mysterious development of civilized life and the first builders who used cut stone laid in mortar and cement, and covered their work with beautifully sculptured ornaments and inscriptions, must have been very long.

We have no measure of the time, no clew to the old dates, nothing whatever, beyond such considerations as I have stated, to warrant even a vague hypothesis. It can be seen clearly that the beginning of this old civilization was much older than the

earliest great cities, and, also, that these were much more ancient than the time when any of the later built or reconstructed cities whose relics still exist, were left to decay. If we suppose Palenque to have been deserted some six hundred years previous to the Spanish conquest, this date will carry us back only to the last days of its history as an inhabited city. Beyond it, in the distant past, is a vast period in which the civilization represented by Palenque was developed, made capable of building such cities, and then carried on through the many ages during which cities became numerous, flourished, grew old, and gave place to others, until the long history of Palenque itself began. * * *

No well considered theory of these ruins can avoid the conclusion that most of them are very ancient, and that, to find the origin of the civilization they represent, we must go far back into the "deep of antiquity." * * *

Nevertheless, some of them must be very old. The forest established since the ruin began, the entire disappearance of every thing more perishable than stone, the utter oblivion which veiled their history in the time of Montezuma, and probably long previous to his time, all these facts bear witness to their great antiquity. In many of them, as at Quirigua and Kabah, the stone structures have become masses of debris; and even at Copan, Palenque, and Mitla, only a few of them are sufficiently well preserved to show us what they were in the great days of their history. Meanwhile, keep in mind that the ruined cities did not begin their present condition until the civilization that created them had declined; and, also, that if we could determine exactly the date when they were deserted and left to decay, we should only reach that point in the past where their history as inhabited cities was brought to a close.

Take Copan, for instance. This city may have become a ruin during the time of the Toltecs, which began long before the Christian era and ended some five or six centuries probably before the country was invaded by Cortez. It was built before their time, for the style of writing, and many features of the architecture and ornamentation, show the workmanship of their predecessors, judging by the historical intimation found in the old books and traditions. We may suppose it to have been an old

city at the time of the Toltec invasion, although not one of the first cities built by that more ancient and more cultivated people by whom this old American civilization was originated.^d

From the foregoing it will be apparent how unsatisfactory are the conclusions respecting the age of America's ruined cities and monuments of antiquity; and since, as Mr. H. H. Bancroft remarks, there is nothing in the ruins themselves by which their age may be determined, it is clear that all the authorities are merely dealing in conjecture concerning them. The value of that conjecture will, of course, depend upon the general breadth of knowledge and judgment of the individual expressing it. This much may be safely claimed, so far as the Book of Mormon is concerned, in the question: there is nothing as to the age of American ruins that contradicts its statements, nor can I conceive of the rising of any circumstance in connection with the age of American ruined cities that would conflict with its claims. If it should turn out eventually that all the monuments of American ruins are of comparatively modern origin, that is, suppose they have arisen within that thousand years preceding the advent of the Spaniards, who came early in the sixteenth century, it could then be claimed that they were the monuments of Lamanite civilization merely; and that the monuments of the Jaredite and Nephite civilizations had passed away, or that the monuments of Lamanite civilization were built in the midst of the monuments of the earlier civilizations, and so intermingled as to confuse everything and render classification impossible. If investigation, however, should finally establish the fact that the ruined cities of America are the monuments of very ancient and perhaps of successive civilizations, it would tend in a positive way to establish the truth of the Book of Mormon more

^dAncient America, J. D. Baldwin, ch. vi.

clearly, and I now proceed to the consideration of that branch of the subject.

II.

Successive Civilizations.

Scattered over the southern plateaus are heaps of architectural remains and monumental piles. Furthermore, native traditions, both orally transmitted and hieroglyphically recorded by means of legible picture-writings, afford us a tolerably clear view of the civilized nations during a period of several centuries preceding the Spanish conquest, together with passing glances, through momentary clearings in mythologic clouds, at historical epochs much more remote. Here we have as aids to this analysis—aids almost wholly wanting among the so-called savage tribes—antiquities, traditions, history, carrying the student far back into the mysterious New World past; and hence it is that from its simultaneous revelation and eclipse, American civilization would otherwise offer a more limited field for investigation than American savagism, yet by the introduction of this new element the field is widely extended.

Nor have we even yet reached the limits of our resources for the investigation of this New World civilization. In these relics of architecture and literature, of mythology and tradition, there are clear indications of an older and higher type of culture than that brought immediately to the knowledge of the invaders; of a type that had temporarily deteriorated, perhaps through the influence of long-continued and bloody conflicts, civil and foreign, by which the more warlike rather than the more highly cultured nations had been brought into prominence and power. But this anterior and superior civilization, resting largely as it does on vague tradition, and preserved to our knowledge in general allusions rather than in detail, may, like the native condition since the conquest, be utilized to the best advantage here as illustrative of the later and better-known, if somewhat inferior civilization of the sixteenth century, de-

scribed by the conqueror, the missionary, and the Spanish historian.^e

In addition to the "passing glances" through "momentary clearings" in the mythological clouds "at historical epochs much more remote" than those "several centuries preceding the Spanish conquest," there is also the evidence afforded by the different ages in which the cities of America now in ruins were built; the difference being so marked in some instances as to suggest not only different ages for their construction, but their construction by different races. "That a long time must have passed between the erection of Copan and Utatlan,^f the civilization of the builders meantime undergoing great modification, involving probably the introduction of new elements from foreign sources, is a theory supported by a careful study of the two classes of ruins.^g * * * Then we have the strong differences noticeable between Uxmal^h and Palenque, which lead us to conclude that these cities must have been built either at widely different epochs, or by branches of the Maya race which have long been separated, or by branches, which, under the influence of foreign tribes, lived under greatly modified institutions."ⁱ

Speaking of the ruins at Quiche, Mr. Stephens says:

The point to which we directed our attention was to discover some resemblance to the ruins of Copan and Quirigua; but we did not find statues, or carved figures, or hieroglyphics, nor could we learn that any had ever been found there. If there had been such evidences we should have considered these ruins the works of the same race of people, but in the absence of such evidences

^eNative Races, Vol. II., pp. 83, 84.

^fOne of the old American cities located in Central Guatemala.

^gNative Races, Vol. IV., p. 128.

^hOne of the old cities of northern Yucatan.

ⁱNative Races, Vol. IV., p. 361.

we believed that Copan and Quirigua were cities of another race and of a much older date.]

On this point of distinct eras in American civilization, Baldwin says:

It is a point of no little interest that these old constructions belong to different periods in the past, and represent somewhat different phases of civilization. Uxmal, which is supposed to have been partly inhabited when the Spaniards arrived in the country, is plainly much more modern than Copan or Palenque. This is easily traced in the ruins. Its edifices were finished in a different style, and show fewer inscriptions. Round pillars, somewhat in the Doric style, are found at Uxmal, but none like the square, richly carved pillars, bearing inscriptions, discovered in some of the other ruins. Copan and Palenque, and even Kabah, in Yucatan, may have been very old cities, if not already old ruins, when Uxmal was built. Accepting the reports of explorers as correct, there is evidence in the ruins that Quirigua is older than Copan, and that Copan is older than Palenque. The old monuments in Yucatan represent several distinct epochs in the ancient history of that peninsula. Some of them are kindred to those hidden in the great forest, and reminded us more of Palenque than of Uxmal. Among those described, the most modern, or most of these, are in Yucatan; they belong to the time when the kingdom of the Mayas flourished. Many of the others belong to ages previous to the rise of this kingdom; and in ages still earlier, ages older than the great forest, there were other cities, doubtless, whose remains have perished utterly, or were long ago removed from us in the later constructions.

The evidence of repeated reconstructions in some of the cities before they were deserted has been pointed out by explorers. I have quoted what Charnay says of it in his description of Mitla. At Palenque, as at Mitla, the oldest work is the most artistic and admirable. Over this feature of the monuments, and the manifest signs of their difference in age, the attention of investigators lingered in speculation. They find in them a significance

[Central America, Vol. II., p. 186.

which is stated as follows by Brasseur de Bourbourg: "Among the edifices forgotten by time in the forests of Mexico and Central America, we find architectural characteristics so different from each other, that it is impossible to attribute them all to the same people as to believe they were all built at the same epoch." In his view, "the substruction at Mayapan, some of those at Tulha, and a great part of those at Palenque, are among the older remains. These are not the oldest cities whose remains are still visible, but they may have been built, in part, upon the foundation of cities much more ancient. No well considered theory of these ruins can avoid the conclusion that most of them are very ancient, and that, to find the origin of the civilization they represent, we must go far back into the 'deeps of antiquity.'"^k

Further on, in speaking of the Aztecs and their civilization, Mr. Baldwin says:

They were less advanced in many things than their predecessors. Their skill in architecture and architectural ornamentation did not enable them to build such cities as Mitla and Palenque, and their "picture writing" was a much ruder form of the graphic art than the phonetic system of the Mayas and Quiches. It does not appear that they ever went so far in literary improvements as to adopt this simpler and more complete system for any purpose whatever. If the country had never, in the previous ages, felt the influence of a higher culture than that of the Aztecs, it would not have now, and never could have had, ruined cities like Mitla, Copan and Palenque. Not only was the system of writing shown by the countless inscriptions quite beyond the attainments of Aztec art, but also the abundant sculptures and the whole system of decoration found in the old ruins.^l

"Two distinct classes of ruins appear to have been observed in Central America," says Nadaillac.^m And then later, "All the Central American tribes do not seem to have lived in an equally degraded condition before the period of

^kAncient America, pp. 155, 156.

^lAncient America, p. 221.

^mPre-Historic America, p. 156.

the Mayas. Ruins of considerable extent are met with in Gautemala. These consist of undressed stones similar to those used in the cyclopean buildings of Greece and Syria; but no tradition refers to their origin. They are, however, attributed with some reason to a race driven back by conquest, and superior in culture to the people overcome by the Maya invasion of Central America.”^u

Nor is it alone in the differences that exist between some of these ancient ruins, proclaiming for them at least erection in different ages, and perhaps by different races, that the idea of successive civilizations in Ancient America is established. In the matter of language no less than in ruins is this fact proclaimed. “Traces are also supposed to have been met with of a more ancient language than the Maya, Nahuac or their derivatives,” remarks Nadaillac, in a footnote to page 264 of his “Pre-Historic America,” and cites Humboldt’s “Views of the Cordilleras” in support of his statement. This, however, is a subject which is too extensive to be considered here.

Closely connected with the subject of successive civilizations is also that of ancient migrations, but that is a matter I shall treat in another chapter, and more especially for another reason, than maintaining successive civilizations, as I esteem what is here set down as sufficient proof for the existence of successive civilizations in ancient America.

III.

Peruvian Antiquities.

It will be observed that thus far, in dealing with American antiquities, I have said nothing concerning Peru and

^uPre-Historic America, p. 165.

the monuments of its civilization. Still, as Book of Mormon peoples inhabited South America as well as North America, some attention should be paid to the monuments of Peruvian civilization. For the general description of South American antiquities I find what Professor Baldwin says to be most acceptable:

The ruins of Ancient Peru are found chiefly on the elevated tablelands of the Andes, between Quito and Lake Titicaca; but they can be traced five hundred miles farther south, to Chili, and throughout the region connecting these high plateaus with the Pacific coast. The great district to which they belong extends north and south about two thousand miles. When the marauding Spaniards arrived in the country, this whole region was the seat of a populous and prosperous empire, complete in its civil organization, supported by an efficient system of industry, and presenting a very notable development of some of the more important arts of civilized life. These ruins differ from those in Mexico and Central America. No inscriptions are found in Peru; there is no longer a "marvelous abundance of decorations;" nothing is seen like the monoliths of Copan or the bas-reliefs of Palenque. The method of building is different; the Peruvian ruins show us remains of cities, temples, palaces, other edifices of various kinds, fortresses, aqueducts (one of them four hundred and fifty miles long), great roads (extending through the whole length of the empire), and terraces on the sides of mountains. For all these constructions the builders used cut stone laid in mortar or cement, and their work was done admirably, but it is everywhere seen that the masonry, although sometimes ornamented, was generally plain in style and always massive. The antiquities in this region have not been as much explored and described as those north of the isthmus, but their general character is known, and particular descriptions of some of them have been published.^o

The chief thing to be noted with reference to South

^oAncient America, pp. 222, 223.

American monuments of ancient civilization is the fact that they are located along the line of Nephite movement from thirty degrees south latitude northward along the western plateau of South America, though it must be confessed that during their movements northward the Nephites were not sufficiently numerous nor did they stay sufficiently long in the southern part of the region now covered with ancient ruins to erect such permanent monuments of civilizations as are now to be found there in ruins. In their occupancy of the northern section of the region described by Baldwin it is different. There, in the land of Nephi and the land of Anti-Lehi-Nephi—supposed to embrace say the northern part of Peru and Ecuador,—we have reason to believe they stayed a sufficient length of time and were also sufficiently numerous to leave enduring monuments of their sojourn in that country. For the existence of the more southern monuments we must suppose one of two things, or perhaps both of them united, viz.:

First: Lamanites who remained in the far south paid more attention to civilized pursuits than has usually been accredited to them, and the remarks of the Book of Mormon concerning the Lamanites being an idle people, living upon the fruits of the chase, and their marauding excursions into Nephite lands are to be more especially applied to those Lamanites more immediately in contact with the Nephites, while further southward they were pursuing the arts of peace. Or, second: that after the fall of the Nephites at Cumorah there were strong colonies of Lamanites that pushed their way through Central America down into Peru, subdued the inhabitants who had remained there and established themselves as the ruling class, constituting, in fact, the invasion of the Incas, under whom arose the monuments of civilization found in the land by the Spaniards

when they invaded it. The difference between the monuments found in Peru and those found in Mexico and Central America arises, in my judgment, from the fact that there was not present in South America the monuments of the great Jaredite civilization, to crop up through and become intermingled with the Nephite and Lamanite monuments of civilization.

IV.

The Mound Builders.

As I have noted South American antiquities, so also I think it necessary to note the more northern antiquities of North America—the works of the Mound Builders of the valleys of the Mississippi and its tributaries. It is matter of common knowledge that throughout the region of country just named there exists in great number artificial hillocks of earth, “nearly always constructed,” says Nadaillac, “with a good deal of precision.” “They are of various forms, round, oval, square, very rarely polygonal or triangular. Their height varies from a few inches to more than ninety feet, and their diameter varies from three to about a thousand feet.”^p Evidently the mounds were erected for a variety of purposes, and the author last quoted, following Mr. Squier^q and Mr. Short,^r makes the following classification: 1, defensive works; 2, sacred enclosures; 3, temples; 4, altar mounds; 5, sepulchral mounds, and 6, mounds representing animals. Short (“North Americans,” p. 81) gives a slightly different classifications, as follows: I., Enclosures: for

^pPre-Historic America, p. 81.

^qAncient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley.

^rFootprints of Vanished Races.

defense; for religious purposes; miscellaneous. II., Mounds of sacrifice; for temple sites; of sepulchre; of observation.”^s

On the subject of the mounds being erected for purposes of fortification, Nadaillac says:

The whole of the space separating the Alleghanies from the Rocky Mountains affords a succession of entrenched camps, fortifications generally made of earth. There were used ramparts, stockade, and trenches near many eminences, and nearly every junction of two large rivers. These works bear witness to the intelligence of the race, which has so long been looked upon as completely barbarous and wild, and an actual system of defences in connection with each other can in some cases be made out with observatories on adjacent heights, and concentric ridges of earth for the protection of the entrances. War was evidently an important subject of thought with the Mound Builders. All the defensive remains occur in the neighborhood of water courses, and the best proof of the skill shown in the choice of sites is shown by the number of flourishing cities, such as Cincinnati, St. Louis, Newark, Portsmouth, Frankfort, New Madrid, and many others, which have risen in the same situations in modern times.^t

Concerning the matter of the Mound Builders in general we are again in the presence of a subject concerning which there is very great diversity of opinions on the part of authorities. Learned opinion is divided as to whether the mounds represent an indigenous or exotic civilization; whether they were built by the ancestors of the near or remote Indian tribes of North America, or by a race now extinct, or by some mysterious process or other, “vanished.” Also they differ as to the antiquity of the mounds, some ascribing to them quite a recent origin, and others ascribing to

^sPre-Historic America, pp. 87, 88.

^tPre-Historic America, p. 88.

them an antiquity of thousands of years. It must be obvious that I cannot enter into a consideration of all these questions, and hence content myself with a few quotations from those whose information and judgment I most esteem."

Upon the subject of Mound Builders, as upon so many subjects in American antiquities, I find what Mr. Baldwin has said—except wherein his remarks are against migrations from other continents for very ancient American peoples—most acceptable."

That appears to me the most reasonable suggestion which assumes that the Mound Builders came originally from Mexico and Central America. It explains many facts connected with their remains. In the Great Valley their most populous settlements were at the south. Coming from Mexico and Central America, they would begin their settlements on the gulf coast,

"Those desiring to enter upon a further inquiry of this subject will find it somewhat elaborately treated in Allen's Pre-Historic World or Vanished Races, chapter 10; also Nadaillac's Pre-Historic America, chapter 3; History of America Before Columbus, P. De Roo, chapter 3; and in Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley, by E. George Squier.

"Throughout this writing I have often felt the need of some sort of compendious work to guide me in my researches, and in all the collection of my works upon the subject I have found Mr. Baldwin's Ancient America the most useful; and should the readers of these chapters desire a special work upon the subject of American antiquities, I do not think they could find a single book on the subject which would be more satisfactory than the little work (293 pages) here referred to; and since I have quoted so extensively from it, I cite the following to show in what esteem Mr. Baldwin is held by one who is the author of the most elaborate work on the subject of American antiquities. "Mr. Baldwin's most excellent little book on Ancient America is the only comprehensive work treating of this subject now before the public. As a popular treatise, compressing within a small duodecimo volume the whole subject of archaeology, including, besides material relics, tradition, and speculation concerning origin and history as well, this book cannot be too highly praised." Bancroft's Native Races," Vol. IV., 2.

and afterwards advance gradually up the river to the Ohio valley. It seems evident that they came by this route; and their remains show that their only connection with the coast was at the south. Their settlements did not reach the coast at any other point.

Their constructions were similar in design and arrangement to those found in Mexico and Central America. Like the Mexicans and Central Americans, they had many of the smaller structures known as teocallis, and also large high mounds, with level summits, reached by great flights of steps. Pyramidal platforms or foundations for important edifices appear in both regions, and are very much alike. In Central America important edifices were built of hewn stone, and can still be examined in their ruins. The Mound Builders, like some of the ancient people of Mexico and Yucatan, used wood, sun-dried brick, or some other material that could not resist decay. There is evidence that they used timber for building purposes. In one of the mounds opened in the Ohio valley two chambers were found with remains of the timber of which the walls were made, and with arched ceilings precisely like those in Central America, even to the overlapping stones. Chambers have been found in some of the Central American and Mexican mounds, but there hewn stones were used for the walls. In both regions the elevated and terraced foundations remain, and can be compared. I have already called attention to the close resemblance between them, but the fact is so important in any endeavor to explain the Mound Builders that I must bring it to view here.

Consider, then, that elevated and terraced foundations for important buildings are peculiar to the ancient Mexicans and Central Americans; that this method of construction, which, with them, was the rule, is found nowhere else, save that terraced elevations, carefully constructed, and precisely like theirs in form and appearance, occupy a chief place among the remaining works of the Mound Builders. The use made of these foundations at Palenque, Uxmal and Chihen-Itza, shows the purpose of which they were constructed in the Mississippi valley. The resemblance is not due to chance. The explanation appears to me very manifest. This method of construction was brought to the Mississippi valley from Mexico and Central America, the

ancient inhabitants of that region and the Mound Builders being the same people in race, and also in civilization, when it was brought here.

A very large proportion of the old structures in Ohio and farther south called "mounds," namely, those which are low in proportion to their horizontal extent, are terraced foundations for buildings, and if they were situated in Yucatan, Guatemala, and Mexico, they would never be mistaken for anything else. The high mounds also in the two regions are remarkably alike. In both cases they are pyramidal in shape, and have level summits of considerable extent, which were reached by means of stairways on the outside. The great mound at Chichen-Itza is 75 feet high, and has on its summit a ruined stone edifice; that at Uxmal is 60 feet high, and has a similar ruin on its summit; that at Mayapan is 60 feet high; the edifice placed on its summit has disappeared. The great mound at Miamisburg, Ohio, is 68 feet high; and that at Grave Creek, West Virginia, is 75 feet high. Both had level summits, and stairways on the outside, but no trace of any structure remains on them. All these mounds were constructed for religious uses, and they are, in their way, as much alike as any five Gothic churches.

Could these works of the Mound Builders be restored to the condition in which they were when the country was filled with their busy communities, we should doubtless see great edifices, similar in style to those in Yucatan, standing on the upper terraces of all the low and extended "mounds," and smaller structures on the high mounds, such as those above named. There would seem to be an extension of ancient Mexico and Central America through Texas into the Mississippi and Ohio valleys; and so, if there were no massive stone work in the old ruins of those countries, it might seem that the Mound Builders' works were anciently extended into them by way of Texas.

The fact that the settlements and works of the Mound Builders extended through Texas and across the Rio Grande indicates very plainly their connection with the people of Mexico, and goes far to explain their origin. We have other evidence of intercourse between the two peoples; for the obsidian dug from the mounds, and perhaps the porphyry also, can be explained only by supposing commercial relations between them.

We can not suppose the Mound Builders to have come from any other part of North America, for nowhere else north of the Isthmus was there any other people capable of producing such works as they left in the places where they dwelt. Beyond the relics of the Mound Builders, no traces of the former existence of such a people have been discovered in any part of North America save Mexico, and Central America, and districts immediately connected with them. At the same time it is not unreasonable to suppose the civilized people of these regions extended their settlements through Texas, and also migrated across the gulf into the Mississippi valley. In fact, the connection of settlements by way of Texas appears to have been unbroken from Ohio to Mexico.

This colonizing extension of the old Mexican race must have taken place at a remote period in the past; for what has been said of the antiquity of the Mound Builders shows that a very long period, far more than two thousand years, it may be, must have elapsed since they left the valley of the Ohio. Perhaps they found the country mostly unoccupied, and saw there but little of any other people until an eruption of warlike barbarians came upon them from the northwest. * * *

The supposition that the Toltecs and the Mound Builders were the same people seems to me not improbable. The reasons for it will be stated when we come to a discussion of the antiquities, books, and traditions of Central America. I will only say here that, according to dates given in the Central American books, the Toltecs came from "Huehue-Tlapalan," a distant country in the northeast, long previous to the Christian era. They played a great part and had a long career in Mexico previous to the rise of their successors in power, the Aztecs, who were overthrown by the Spaniards.^w

Bancroft, in a general way, coincides with the views of

^wAncient America, pp. 20-24. Rev. J. G. Fish speaking of some of these North American mounds declares that "the summit level of some of them contains more than twelve acres. At their base they appear like walls stretching up to heaven and it requires but a stretch of the imagination to fancy them mouldering bastions and ramparts of some ancient fortress." "Bible in the Balance," p. 237.

Mr. Baldwin. Discussing several theories respecting the Mound Builders, he speaks of this as, "the most reasonable [hypothesis] and best supported by monumental and traditional evidence. The temple-mounds strongly resemble, in their principal features, the southern pyramids: at least they imply a likeness of religious ideas in the builders. The use of obsidian implements shows a connection, either through origin, war, or commerce, with the Mexican nations, or at least with nations who came in contact with the Nahuas. There are, moreover, several Nahua traditions respecting the arrival on their coasts from the northeast, of civilized strangers."* He further says: "I am inclined to believe that the most plausible conjecture respecting the origin of the Mound Builders is that which makes them a colony of the ancient Mayas who settled in the north during the continuance of the great Maya empire of Xibalba, in Central America, several centuries before Christ."^y

It will be observed that these views harmonize almost to completeness with the requirements of the Book of Mormon for such evidences. Whether the Jaredites built some of these mounds or not does not so much matter, though I am inclined to think they did. If some of the earlier monuments of Central America, such as Copan, Quirigua and Palanque, represent Jaredite ruins, as I am inclined to believe, then it is most likely that the truncated mounds in the north—which so much resemble the stone-faced pyramids of the south—were also built by them. Undoubtedly, during the two centuries following the advent of Messiah the Nephites also extended their occupancy of the continent into the valleys of the Mississippi and its tributaries, and then during the next two hundred years of troubled warfare,

*Native Races, Vol. IV., pp. 788, 789.

^yNative Races, Vol. V., p. 539.

erected the numerous fortifications throughout that land which now are so distinctly recognized and spoken of by the authorities which I have here quoted. In any event it is to be seen that the Book of Mormon requires that the civilization of the Mississippi valley should find its origin in Central America, and the fact that such distinguished authorities recognize Central America as its source, is a strong presumptive evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon.

Summary.

I have now presented to the reader all the matter on that part of American antiquities pertaining to the extent and location of the ruined cities and other monuments of ancient American civilization that my space will allow, and I only pause before closing this chapter to summarize the ground covered. Beyond question we have established the following facts:

(1) There existed in ancient times civilized races in both of the American continents.

(2) The monuments of these civilizations are located along the western plateau of South America, through Central America, and in the Mississippi valley—lands occupied by the Jaredites and Nephites respectively; that is to say, the monuments of these ancient civilizations are found where the Book of Mormon requires them to be located.

(3) Successive civilizations have existed in America in ancient times; and the older civilization was the most advanced.

(4) The chief center of this ancient American civilization, and its oldest and most enduring monuments are in Central America, where the Book of Mormon locates its oldest race of people, and where civilization longest pre-

vailed and builded its most enduring monuments; and is the centre from which civilization, beyond question, extended into the north continent.

In making these claims I am not unmindful of the fact that there are authorities who hold somewhat different views from those whose works I have so extensively quoted; but I do not believe that the conclusions here summarized can be disturbed either by facts or theories of other authorities. And however divergent the views of authorities may be, this much can be absolutely claimed, that there is nothing in their works which, on the matters so far considered, directly conflicts with the claims of the Book of Mormon; while so much as is here stated is certainly very strong evidence in its favor.