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Old America - The Mound Builders (Continued) (2)

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

They are cramped from the time they are infants until they have done growing. This spoils the shape of the feet so much that they cannot walk with them only to stomp about like cripples, and if they have to go any distance fine ladies have to be carried. It is a mark of gentility to have feet like these. Not to be behind hand the gentlemen let their finger nails grow as long as ever they will, so that they become regular claws. The object of this, of course, is to show that they do no sort of handiwork, and they think that it is much to be proud of. Before a lady is married she plaits her hair in a tail which she passes under her right arm; but when she becomes a bride, her hair is twisted up into a knot on the top of her head. They are very fond of painting their faces, and in this respect many of the fashionable ladies in this country resemble them.



A CHINESE LADY'S FEET.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

THE MOUND BUILDERS.

(Continued.)

NEAR Chillicothe, Ohio, on the bank of Paint Creek, are extensive ancient ruins located 250 feet above the stream. The walls are of stone laid in mortar, and about one mile in extent. The stones were taken from the bed of the stream below. The walls appear to have been shaken down by an earthquake. Four wells were discovered on this stream which had been dug through solid pyrites stone in the bed of the creek. When discovered they were covered by stone lids about the size of mill-stones, and of the same shape, that had evidently been wrought with tools of some hard substance. Each of these stones had a hole in the centre four inches in diameter. Near Port-mouth are extensive ruined fortifications with walled roads. At Circleville, Ohio, are remains of vast military works; two of them—one round, the other square—are of extraordinary size and are laid out with great engineering skill. The circular fort was surrounded by two walls, twenty feet high and also by a deep ditch. Eight gateways led into the square fort. In front of each gateway stood a mound forty feet in diameter and four feet high. Near the round fort was a mound ninety feet high, overlooking the whole county. At Newark, Ohio, very extensive ruined fortifications exist. The main work, of horse-shoe form, is nearly two miles in circuit. Several forts, round and square, are in its immediate vicinity. One of them is surrounded by a wall twenty-five feet high, on the outside of which is a deep ditch, and on the south side of the main work is a covered roadway leading to the country. Near the village of Miamisburg, south of Dayton, are ancient ruins similar to those at Newark. On an elevation 100 feet above the Great Miami river is situated the largest mound of the valley. It is 800 feet in circumference at the base, and was, when first discovered, 67 feet high

and wholly overgrown by forest trees. Extensive mound forts exist on the Muskingum. One of them encloses sixty acres by an earth wall six feet high, by from ten to twenty broad. On each side are gateways. Leading from the one next the river is a covered way formed by two parallel walls of earth one hundred and thirty feet distant from each other. These walls are twenty feet high. Within the enclosure is a mound 180 feet long, 130 feet broad and 9 feet high. In the vicinity of Wheeling, Virginia, on both sides of the Ohio river are extensive fortifications and mounds. What are called the "Grave Creek Flats" have been the site of a very ancient city, of what nation it is not known. The Great Mound at Grave Creek is one of the largest in the Mississippi valley. It is 330 feet in circumference and 70 feet high. This mound was opened and explored in the year 1838 by Mr. A. B. Tomlinson. It contained two vaults. In the lower one were found the osseous remains of human bodies. One was ornamented with six hundred and fifty beads. The upper vault contained but one skeleton. A great number of trinkets, among which were 1700 bone beads, 500 sea shells, 150 pieces of mica, 5 copper wrist and arm bands, and a flat stone with engraving upon it were found. This stone was taken to Washington by Dr. Huss in 1860, but thus far they have been unable to decipher the engraved characters. Dr. Morton, of Philadelphia, has given a full description of the skull of the skeleton found in the upper vault. The posterior portion is strongly developed, the facial angle being 78°. His description classes this skull with the southern type, it evidently being not Mongolian. Ruined works of great magnitude are found in the State of Georgia. On the banks of Little River near Wrightsborough are the remains of a gigantic pyramid and large town. Near Savannah, among other ruins, is a conical truncated mound 50 feet in height and 800 feet in circumference at the base. Others of similar character are frequent in the States of Georgia, Florida and Alabama. In Westmoreland County, Penn., is a remarkable mound from which several specimens of art have been taken. One was a stone serpent five inches in diameter. Part of the entablature of a column carved in the form of diamonds and leaves, also an earthen jar or urn containing ashes, were found. At Brownsville, in the same State, were discovered ruins of an ancient fortification, circular in form, enclosing thirteen acres. The walls were of earth seven feet high, and within was a mound thirty feet high. In New Hampshire, near the town of Sanbornton, formerly existed a remarkable work, the walls which were composed for defense, were faced with stone, regularly laid up outwardly, and filled in with clay, shells and gravel. In Montgomery County, New York, are ancient fortifications. Outside of one of these enclosures a number of skeletons have been uncovered. A few miles eastward of Buffalo are ancient works. Tradition fixes upon this spot as the scene of the final and most bloody conflict between the Iroquois and the "Gah-Kwas" or Eries. A little distance from the fort is a small mound, said to have been regarded with much veneration by the Indians, as it covered the remains of victims slain in some remarkable conflict in the olden time. Overlooking the town of Auburn, Cayuga County, situated on an eminence are circular works of defense. One of the best preserved works of defense in the State is found in Oakfield, Genessee County. A mile to the northeast of this work was formerly a large enclosure called "Bone Fort" by the early settlers. In Erie County, N. Y., are earth embankments of various dimensions. A "bone pit" excavated near one of the forts in that county, is estimated to have contained four hundred skeletons heaped promiscuously together. Descriptions of ancient

works, bearing the general characteristics—mounds and fortifications or defensive works—might be multiplied. Sufficient evidence has been shown that an eminently agricultural population, enjoying a state of society essentially different from that of the natives found by the first settlers, at some time of the past occupied the fertile valleys of the land. And it is abundantly evident that there were large cities at Newark, Circleville, Marietta, and at Paint Creek, Ohio; at Grave Creek, Virginia, and St. Louis, Missouri. While Joseph Merrick of Pittsfield, Mass., was levelling some ground near his woodshed, on a place called Indian Hill, he discovered a black strap having a loop at each end, when attempting to cut it he found it as hard as bone. He succeeded, however in getting it open and found it to be made of raw-hide, sewed and made water tight with the sinews of some animal. In the fold were found four folded pieces of parchment, that contained some kind of handwriting. Curious neighbors coming to see the discovery destroyed one of the pieces. Mr. Merrick sent the other three to Cambridge, where they were discovered to have been written in Hebrew, plain and legible, being the following quotations from the Old Testament: Deut. chap. vi., verses 4 to 9 inclusive; chap. xi., verses 13 to 21 inclusive; and Exodus chap. xiii., verses 11 to 16 inclusive, to which the reader can refer. In Scipio, N. Y. Mr. Halsted plowed up at different times during his ten years occupancy of a portion of his farm, several hundred pounds of brass, which appeared at one time to have been formed into various implements, both of husbandry and war—helmets and working materials mingled together. The finder, as he discovered it by plowing, carried it to Auburn and sold it by the pound ("Priest's American Antiquities, page 254). The Rev. R. G. Wilson, of Chillicothe, furnished the Antiquarian Society with the description of a mound, destroyed near the center of that town. On a common level with the surrounding earth, at the very bottom of the mound, a human skeleton, greatly decayed, was found. On the breast of this person lay what had been a piece of copper in the form of a cross, which had become verdigris. A stone ornament and several beads, apparently of bone, were found with the skeleton. Lexington, Ky., stands on the site of an ancient town. Connected with the antiquities of this place is a catacomb formed in the limestone rock about fifteen feet below the surface of the earth. In this cave were found hundreds of *mummies*, human bodies preserved by the art of embalming to as great a state of perfection as was known among the Egyptians. Unfortunately this discovery or these relics of the past were destroyed. The descent to this cavern is gradual, the height being seven and the width four feet. The interior was sufficiently large to contain at least two thousand subjects.

(To be Continued.)

COLD IN SPITZBERGEN.—No description can give an adequate idea of the intense rigor of the six months' winter of this part of the world. Stones crack with the noise of thunder; in a crowded hut the breath of the occupants will fall in flakes of snow: wine and spirits turn to ice; the snow burns like caustic; if iron touch the skin it brings the flesh away with it; the soles of your stockings may be burnt off your feet before you feel the slightest warmth from the fire; linen taken out of boiling water instantly stiffens to the consistency of a wooden board, and heated stones will not prevent the sheets of the bed from freezing. If these are the effects of the climate within an air-tight, fire-warmed crowded hut, what must they be among the dark, storm-lashed mountain peaks and sides?

ANCIENT ARTS.

IT is a very common idea among people of this generation that the ancients were very much behind us in the knowledge of the arts and sciences and were in a state of great ignorance respecting many things with which we are familiar. The researches of travelers, however, have brought to light many facts connected with the discoveries and progress of the ancients, which show plainly that they were not so ignorant as might be imagined. Many arts with which they were acquainted were lost after their fall and have been re-discovered by the moderns. On this account the moderns have thought that they were entirely original with themselves. The ancient Assyrians and Egyptians made wonderful progress in the knowledge of the arts. Egyptian mummies have been found whose teeth had been filled with gold as neatly and as scientifically as if it had been done by a modern dentist. Layard, the English traveler who explored the ruins of Nineveh, found that the people of Nineveh were well acquainted with the manufacture of scale armor. Each scale was separate and from two to three inches in length, with a raised or embossed line in the center. This armor was made of copper and of iron and of iron inlaid with copper. He also found beautiful helmets that could not be excelled by the moderns; also vases of alabaster and glass which were of elegant form. He also discovered a drain pipe of earthenware, lined and cemented with bitumen. Many have supposed that the arch was unknown to the ancients; but Layard found an arched chamber in Nineveh. He also found that they were acquainted with the use of the pulley, another invention of which the ancients were supposed to be ignorant. His discoveries brought to light the fact that the people of Nineveh were skillful in carving in ivory and in inlaying, for blue opaque glass and other substances of various colors were found set into ivory tablets. Many of the seals which he found gave high evidence of their skill in engraving on gems, many of them being most delicately and minutely ornamented. He found a signet which he supposed had belonged to Sennacherib, king of Assyria, on which was engraved the king himself, standing in an arched frame, before what is supposed to be a symbol of the Deity. There were also other figures engraved upon it. The details of this engraving were so minute that a magnifying glass was almost required to perceive them. He found that they had understood the art of glass-making to perfection, and that they had manufactured and used gold leaf, also that they had plows in those days which resembled very much in shape those now in common use. They also had pick axes, sledge-hammers and saws very similar to those we now use. Among other things which he found were two entire glass bowls, the date of which, by the inscriptions upon them, were fixed at the latter part of the seventh century before the Savior; also a vase blown in one solid piece, and then shaped and hollowed out by a turning machine of which the marks were still plainly visible. With the glass bowls he discovered a rock crystal lens, with opposite concave and plane faces. This conclusively shows that the Assyrians were acquainted with the art of making magnifying or burning glasses. The bricks of Nineveh were beautifully colored, and the means which were taken to color them have always been supposed to be only known to the moderns and to have been discovered within recent times.

It will be interesting to us who use adobes to know that they used sun dried brick extensively in the palaces of Nineveh in these early days. He was astonished at finding how well preserved these adobes were and how successfully they had with.