

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

BY JOSIAH PRIEST.

Great Works of the Ancient Nations on the North Fork of Paint Creek.

On the north branch of this creek, five miles from Chilicothe, are works so immense, that although we have given the reader several accounts of this kind, yet we cannot well pass over these. They are situated on an elevated piece of land, called the second bottom. The first bottom, or flat, extends from Paint Creek, till it is met by a bank of twenty-five feet in height, which runs in a straight line, and parallel with the stream. One hundred rods from the top of this first bank, is another bank of thirty feet in height; the wall of the works runs up this bank, and twenty rods beyond it. The whole land enclosed, is six hundred and twenty rods in circumference, and contains one hundred and twenty-six acres of land. This second bank runs also parallel with the creek, and with the first. On this beautiful elevation, is situated this immense work, containing within it, *seventeen mounds* of different sizes. Three hundred and eight rods of this fort are encompassed with a wall twelve feet high, a ditch twenty feet wide, and the wall the same at its base. Two hundred and forty rods, running along on the top of the first bank, is the rest of the wall; but is without a ditch; this is next to the river or creek, between which and the water is the first bottom or flat. At the time the builders of this vast work erected it, it is likely that the Creek run along near the wall, but has now receded by being drained off, at the time the Ohio with other western rivers ruptured the mountains which evidently once dammed them up, of which we shall speak in due time. Within this great enclosure, is a circular work of one hundred rods in circumference, with a wall and ditch surrounding it, of the same height of the other wall. Within this great circle, are six mounds, of the circular form; these are full of human bones; the rest of the mounds, eleven in number, are for some other purpose. There are seven gateways, of about five rods in width each. "The immense labour, and numerous cemeteries filled with human bones, denote a vast population, near this spot, in ancient times."—*Atwater*.

"Tumuli are very common on the river Ohio, from its utmost sources to its mouth, although on the Monongahela, they are few, and comparatively small, but increase in number and size, as we descend towards the mouth of that stream at Pittsburgh, where the Ohio begins; after this they are still more numerous and of greater dimensions, till we arrive at Grave Creek, below Wheeling. At this place, situated between two creeks, which run into the Ohio, a little way from the river, is one of the most extraordinary and august monuments of antiquity, of the mound description. Its circumference at its base, is fifty-six rods, its perpendicular height ninety feet, its top seven rods and eight feet in circumference. The centre at the summit, appears to have sunk several feet, so as to form a kind of amphitheatre. The rim enclosing this concavity is seven or eight feet in thickness; on the south side, in the edge of this rim, stands a large beech tree, the bark of which is marked with the initials of a great number of visitants."

This lofty and venerable tumulus has been so far opened as to ascertain that it contains many thousands of human skeletons, but no farther; the proprietor will not suffer its demolition, in the least degree, for which he is highly praiseworthy.

Following the river Ohio downwards, the mounds appear on both sides, erected uniformly on the highest alluvials along that stream, increasing in numbers all the way to the Mississippi, on which river they assume the largest size. Not having surveyed them (says Mr. Atwater), we shall use the description of Mr. Brecken-

ridge, who travelled much in the west, and among the Indians, and devoted much attention to the subject of these astonishing western antiquities.

“ These tumuli (says Mr. Breckenridge), as well as the fortifications, are to be found at the junction of all the rivers along the Mississippi, in the most eligible positions for towns, and in the most extensive bodies of fertile land. Their number exceeds, perhaps three thousand ; the *smallest*, not less than twenty feet in height, and three hundred in circumference at the base. Their great number and their amazing size, may be regarded as furnishing, with other circumstances, evidence of their great antiquity.

I have been sometimes induced to think, that at the period when these were constructed, there was a population as numerous as that which once animated the borders of the Nile, or the Euphrates. The most numerous, as well as the most considerable of these remains, are found precisely in those parts of the country where the traces of a numerous population might be looked for, namely, from the mouth of Ohio, on the east side of the river, to the Illinois, [and on the west side from the St. Francis to the Missouri. I am perfectly satisfied that *cities* similar to those of ancient Mexico, of several hundred thousand souls, have existed in this western country.”

From this view we are *compelled* to look upon those nations as agriculturists, or they could not have subsisted ; neither wild game nor fish could possibly support so great a population. If agriculturists, then it must follow, of necessity, that many modes of building, as with stone, timber, earth or clay, and brick were practised and known, as well as methods of clearing the earth of heavy timber. And if they had not a knowledge of metals, we cannot well conceive how they could have removed the forests for the purposes of husbandry, and space for building. But if we suppose they did not build houses with wood, stone and brick, but lived in tents or some fragile hut, yet the use of metals cannot be dispensed with, on account of the forest to be removed for agricultural purposes. Baron Humboldt informs us, in his *Researches in South America*, that when he crossed the Cordillera mountains, by the way of Panama and Assuay, and viewed the enormous masses of stone cut from the porhyry quarries of Pullal, which was employed in constructing the ancient highroads of the Incas, that he began to doubt whether the Peruvians were not acquainted with *other* tools than hatchets made of flint and stone ; and that grinding one stone on another to make them smooth and level, was not the only method they had employed in this operation. On which account he adopted a new opinion, contrary to those generally received. He conjectured that they must have had tools made of copper, hardened with *tin*, such as it is known the early nations of Asia made use of. This conjecture was fully sustained by the discovery of an ancient Peruvian mining chisel, in a silver mine at Vilcabamba, which had been worked in the time of the Incas. This instrument of copper was four inches long, and three-fourths of an inch wide, which he carried with him to Europe, where he had it analyzed, and found it to contain ninety-four parts of copper and six of tin. He says, that his keen copper of the Peruvians is almost identically the same with that of the ancient *Gallic axe*, which cut wood nearly as well as if made of iron and steel.

Every where on the old continent, at the beginning of the civilization of nations, the use of copper, mixed with tin, prevailed over that of iron, even in places where the latter had been for a long time known. Antonio de Herera, in the tenth book of his *History of the West Indies*, says expressly that the inhabitants of the maritime coast of Zoctallan, in America, prepared two sorts of copper, of which one was *hard* and cutting, and the other malleable. The hard copper was to make hatchets, weapons and instruments of agriculture with, and that it was tempered with tin.—*Humboldt*, vol. 1, pp. 260, 268.

Among a great variety of the gods of the people of the Tonga islands, in the South Pacific ocean, is found one god named *To-gi Occumea*, which is, literally, the iron axe. From which circumstance we imagine the people of those islands, sometimes called the *Friendly Islands*, were, at some period before their having been discovered by Captain Cook, acquainted with the use of *iron* and consequently

in a more civilized condition. Because men, in those early times, were apt to deify almost every thing, but especially those things the most useful.

Were the people of Christendom to lose their knowledge of the true God, and to fall back into nature's ignorance, is there an article within the compass of the arts which would from its usefulness, have a higher claim to deification than the metal called *iron*.

That group of islands belongs to the immense range shooting out from New-Holland, in south latitude about 20 degrees, and once, perhaps, were united to China, forming a part of the continent. But however this may be, the *first* inhabitants of those islands were derived from China, and carried with them a knowledge of the arts, among which was that of the use of iron, in form of the axe, which it appears had become deified from its usefulness. The reason of the loss of this knowledge, must have been the separation of their country from the continent by convulsions, from age to age, which not only altered the shape and condition of the land, but threw the inhabitants into confusion, separating them far from each other, the sea running between, so that they became reduced to savagism, as they were found by the first Christian nations.

Traits of Ancient Cities on the Mississippi.

Nearly opposite to St. Louis, there are the traces of two ancient cities, in the distance of a few miles, situated on the Cohokia Creek, which empties into the Mississippi, but a short distance below that place. Here is situated one of those pyramids, which is one hundred and fifty rods in circumference at its base (nearly half a mile), and one hundred feet high. At St. Louis is one with two stages or landing places, as the architectural phrase is. There is another with three stages, at the mouth of the Missouri, a few miles above St. Louis. With respect to the stages or landing places of these pyramids, we are reminded of the tower once standing in old Babylon, which had eight stages from its base to the summit, making it six hundred feet high. At the mouth of the Cohokia Creek, a short distance below St. Louis, are two groups of those mounds, of smaller size, but we are not informed of their exact number. At Bayeau Manchac and Baton Rouge, are several mounds, one of which is composed chiefly of shells, which the inhabitants burn into lime. There is a mound on Black River, which has two stages or stories; this is surrounded with a group of lesser ones, as well as those at Bayeau Manchac, and Baton Rouge. There is one of those pyramids near Washington, in the State of Mississippi, which is one hundred and forty-six feet high; which is little short of nine rods perpendicular elevation, and fifty-six rods in circumference. Mr. Breckenridge is of the opinion that the largest city belonging to this people, the authors of the mounds and other works, was situated on the plains between St. Francis and the Arkansas. There is no doubt but in the neighbourhood of St. Louis must have been cities or large towns of these ancient people, as the number and size of the mounds above recounted would most certainly justify.

Fifteen miles in a south-westerly direction from the town of St. Louis, on the Merrimack River, was discovered, by a Mr. Long, on lands which he had purchased there, several mounds of the ordinary size, as found in the valley of the Mississippi, all of which go to establish that this country, lying between the Missouri and the Mississippi rivers, below St. Louis, and between the junction of the Illinois and the Mississippi above, with the whole region about the union of those rivers with each other,—which are all not far from St. Louis—was once the seat of empire, equal, if not surpassing, the population and the arts as once they flourished on the plains of Shinar, the seat of Chaldean power, and on the banks of the Euphrates.

In connexion with the preceding pages, we have made a few extracts from the Book of Mormon, to shew in what manner its truths are confirmed by such writers as Mr. Josiah Priest and others. We know it is an easy matter for the unbeliever and the mocker to remark that our lamented prophet might copy from various writers the passages we have quoted below; but we would here remark, once for all, the researches from which we have extracted, were not printed until about three years after the Book of Mormon had been published. Every lover of truth will rejoice in the continued increase of testimony arising from the researches of travellers and others, that continue to come forth from time to time, to establish the word of God in the last days. We shall recur again to this subject from time to time, and endeavour to add testimony to testimony in confirmation of the truths of heaven.—ED.

Now it came to pass that while Amalickiah had thus been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni, on the other hand, had been preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God; yea, he had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth round about, to enclose his armies, and also building walls of stone to encircle them about, round about their cities, and the borders of their lands; yea, all round about the land; and in their weakest fortifications, he did place the greater number of men; and thus he did fortify and strengthen the land which was possessed by the Nephites. And thus he was preparing to support their liberty, their lands, their wives, and their children, and their peace, and that they might live unto the Lord their God, and that they might maintain that which was called by their enemies the cause of christians. And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery; yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labour exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people; yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath, to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.

And now it came to pass, in the eleventh month of the nineteenth year, on the tenth day of the month, the armies of the Lamanites were seen approaching towards the land of Ammonihah. And behold, the city had been re-built, and Moroni had stationed an army by the borders of the city, and they had cast up dirt round about, to shield them from the arrows and the stones of the Lamanites; for behold, they fought with stones, and with arrows. Behold, I said that the city of Ammoniah had been re-built. I say unto you, yea, that it was in part re-built, and because the Lamanites had destroyed it once because of the iniquity of the people, they supposed that it would again become an easy prey for them. But behold, how great was their disappointment: for behold, the Nephites had dug up a ridge of earth round about them, which was so high that the Lamanites could not cast their stones and their arrows at them, that they might take effect, neither could they come upon them, save it was by their place of entrance. Now at this time, the chief captains of the Lamanites were astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing their places of security. Now the leaders of the Lamanites had supposed, because of the greatness of their numbers; yea, they supposed that they should be privileged to come upon them as they had hitherto done; yea they had also prepared themselves with shields, and with breast-plates; and they had also prepared themselves with garments of skins; yea, very thick garments, to cover their nakedness. And being thus prepared, they supposed that they should easily overpower and subject their brethren to the yoke of bondage, or slay and massacre them according to their pleasure. But behold, to their utmost astonishment, they were prepared for them, in a manner which never had been known among the children of Lehi. Now they were prepared for the Lamanites, to battle, after the manner of the instructions of Moroni. And it came to pass

that the Lamanites, or the Amalickiahites, were exceedingly astonished at their manner of preparation for war. Now if king Amalickiah had come down out of the land of Nephi, at the head of his army, perhaps he would have caused the Lamanites to have attacked the Nephites at the city of Ammonihah; for behold, he did care not for the blood of his people. But behold, Amalickiah did not come down himself, to battle.

Now behold, the Lamanites could not get into their forts of security, by any other way save by the entrance, because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance. And thus were the Nephites prepared to destroy all such as should attempt to climb up to enter the fort by any other way, by casting over stones and arrows at them. Thus they were prepared; yea, a body of their most strong men, with their swords and their slings, to smite down all who should attempt to come into their place of security, by the place of entrance: and thus were they prepared to defend themselves against the Lamanites. And it came to pass that the captains of the Lamanites brought up their armies before the place of entrance, and began to contend with the Nephites, to get into their place of security; but behold, they were driven back from time to time, insomuch that they were slain, with an immense slaughter. Now when they found that they could not obtain power over the Nephites by the pass, they began to dig down their banks of earth that they might obtain a pass to their armies, that they might have an equal chance to fight; but behold, in these attempts, they were swept off by the stones and the arrows which were thrown at them; and instead of filling up their ditches by pulling down the banks of earth, they were filled up in a measure with their dead, and wounded bodies.

And now it came to pass that Moroni did not stop making preparations for war, or to defend his people against the Lamanites; for he caused that his armies should commence in the commencement of the twentieth year of the reign of the judges, that they should commence in digging up heaps of earth round about all the cities, throughout all the land which was possessed by the Nephites; and upon the top of these ridges of earth, he caused that there should be timbers; yea, works of timbers built up to the height of a man, round about the cities. And he caused that upon those works of timbers, there should be a frame of pickets built upon the timbers, round about; and they were strong and high: and he caused towers to be erected that overlooked those works of pickets; and he caused places of security to be built upon those towers, that the stones and the arrows of the Lamanites could not hurt them. And they were prepared, that they could cast stones from the top thereof, according to their pleasure and their strength, and slay him who should attempt to approach near the walls of the city. Thus Moroni did prepare strong holds against the coming of their enemies, round about every city in all the land.

THE JOINT STOCK COMPANY.

If we could thoroughly lay aside the remnants of our sectarian prejudices, and form a true conception of the nature of the kingdom of God in the last days, we should see the folly of endeavouring to build up a system of mere spiritualities.

What do we understand the perfection of individual existence to consist in? Is it not the inseparable union of intelligence with elementary matter, redeemed and sanctified by the great plan of salvation? Of a like nature also is the kingdom of God. It cannot possibly be constituted of temporal things merely, and it is equally impossible to build it up of spiritualities alone. So long as the Saints are engaged in the great work of the Lord, they will continue to require a subsistence; they must be fed and clothed, and have habitations wherein to dwell? and while they