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TRAVELING THROUGH SOUTHERN UTAH INTO ARIZONA.

[SEVENTH LETTER.]

Next in importance to the question of "Where they came from," is the question of "What became of them?" I have stood upon the old mounds and imagined myself upon some citadel or tower in the old city and have reconstructed all the buildings again, planted anew the fields and covered the plain with a carpet of green, inhabited the buildings and filled the streets with a bustling, busy population, and then I have asked myself the question: How could all this pass away?

One evening I walked out to the ruins of an old temple. As I passed among the old buildings I frequently frightened the screech-owls from their perch on some high mound, and as I did so I could not help but think of that other civilization in the far east where the Euphrates flows calmly seaward. That city flourished contemporaneously with this one. In its palmy days it was written of her: "But these two things shall come to thee in a moment. In one day, the loss of children and widowhood. Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly. Thy astrologers and star-gazers shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them. Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the land shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein, and Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and a hissing without an inhabitant."

If those words had been spoken over these old cities they would have been fulfilled almost literally, for almost every evidence here testifies of the sudden destruction that came upon them. If you dig into the ruins everything you encounter gives evidence that they were destroyed by fire. Underneath the fallen walls you find the skeletons of the former inhabitants mingled with the charred rafters of their buildings. It would seem that in the midst of their greatest development they were swept into eternity by the venom of destruction. The condition to which their canal system was left indicates that it was at its highest limit of perfection when abandoned. Through it the land had reached its highest limit of productivity, and that, to such a degree that it could have, and must have, sustained hun-

dreds of thousands. The ruins of the cities indicate no gradual decay before their abandonment, but everything points to a land prosperous and populous from which apparently in one single day its people were swept like chaff from off the summer threshing floor, leaving no history, no tradition. The dried-up canals, the ruined houses, alone remain to whisper the story of a people whose history perished with them; whose traditions no grey-haired sire ever relates to eager grandchildren; whose altars lie buried under the dust of centuries; whose ruined homes stand in the shadow of the mountains untrod by mother or child for many generations; a people whose gods have boasted neither shrine nor worshiper since that day so many hundred years ago, when the savage tribes of the mountains came down upon them, burned their cities, destroyed their canals and swept from the earth a civilization, the most interesting and least known of all our pre-historic nations.

While the large majority of the ruins indicate a destruction at the hands of men, there are one or two that would lead us to believe that nature had contributed to the woes of that unfortunate people. We are told that when Prof. Cushing was here, the ruins of one of the cities he excavated gave evidence of having been destroyed by an earthquake. The walls had evidently been shaken down, and he found the skeletons of several persons who were caught by the falling walls while trying to escape through a window. In another place lava streams have been found to cross the course of an old canal. And an olla, or crock jar, and pestle were found 115 feet underground. These would indicate at least that at some time during the residence here of the old people the country had been visited by one of those great convulsions of nature that has upturned so much of this western country, at some remote period in the past. While it may be true that at some period some of the old cities were destroyed in this manner, and by natural agencies, it is clear to any casual observer that the last great destruction was not brought about in that manner. Earthquakes do not usually crack the skulls of their victims with war clubs and burn the skulls over the heads of the slain.

It is difficult at this late day, to form

a correct estimate of the degree of civilization attained by this old people. If we walk over the site of one of their cities and pick up samples of the many pieces of pottery scattered about, or if you excavate into one of the mounds and find there stone implements and grinders, you are apt to say "This people was only partially advanced in the arts of civilized life; at best they can only be classed among the semi-civilized nations of the past." But when you examine more carefully the great works they accomplished you are filled with wonder and astonishment. Their canal system was indeed a remarkable one. The most skilled engineer of the present day, armed with the most improved instruments known to science, can do no better than to follow the lines laid down by his prehistoric predecessor, so that every ditch thus far built along the Salt and Gila rivers either runs parallel to or merges into some ancient canal, while there are places which the older ditches irrigated, but which the present ones thus far have not been able to bring under water. Just out from Mesa a mile or two, one of the old canals runs for some distance through a slight raise in the mesa where it was necessary for the builders to make an excavation to a considerable depth, to accomplish which they had to remove great quantities of cement rock. Now, all excavators know how difficult an undertaking it is to remove this kind of rock, even with our modern appliances, but if you take away from us gunpowder and our other explosives by which we loosen and break up the rock, it would puzzle our best engineers today to know how to remove any quantity of it. With these facts before us, our wonder increases when we take from these ancient builders all knowledge of iron, steel, copper, and in fact any metal whatever and give them some rude stone hammers and mauls and perhaps some wooden shovels made of cottonwood or mesquite, and then try to imagine how they went to work to excavate this cement rock which is even harder than their basalt implements. How did they do it? was the question that I asked several gentlemen. None of them could give a satisfactory answer. One gentleman gave it as his opinion that they had removed the dirt from the rock, and built fires on it, and, after heating it, dashed on water and in this way cracked it, after which it