

that the breech of the gun was not locked, the only thing that occurred to him to prevent the gun being discharged was to destroy the circuit, which he did promptly and effectively. When all this occurred there was a charge of 250 pounds of powder in the gun, another charge of the same size in the turret ready to be served, and the passageway leading to the powder magazine was wide open. But for the quickness of the gunner's mate the gun would have been discharged, the breech block would have blown out inside the turret, the gases from the burning powder would probably have ignited the charge lying in the turret; this explosion would have ignited the powder in the magazine, and the chances are that the whole ship, crew and all, would have gone up in the air. A thought that has occurred to me is this: Suppose the accident had occurred, what do you imagine the verdict of a board of inquiry as to the cause of the loss of the ship would have been? Since this experience the department has adopted electrical means to prevent the discharge of any of the large guns until the breech is locked."

EARLIEST AMERICANS.

The veil which so long has rested upon the early history of the American continent is being rolled back by degrees, and the probability is that the day is not very far off when the events can be read with as much clearness as those relating to the countries of the eastern hemisphere. Everything is not yet perfectly clear, but some mysteries once believed to be impossible to fathom, have already been solved. Others are nearing a solution.

Curiously enough, through the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the facts were first proclaimed to the world that America has a wonderful history; that this continent was the tomb of civilizations long ago buried in oblivion; that, in fact, the first home of man was on this hemisphere. All these assertions seem about to the proved by scientific research.

The subjoined clipping from a magazine, sent to the "News" by a friend, summarizes what scientists believe to be known about the earliest inhabitants of America. Some of it is merely hypothesis, but the main features are believed to be established. When the results of Mr. Le Plongeon's extensive researches are made public further light will undoubtedly be thrown on the subject. The clipping referred to is as follows:

The knowledge that America was inhabited by a highly civilized people many centuries before its occupancy by the race of red men which the earliest European settlers found here, is not new. Yet it was not until lately that actual records of information concerning this people were found, and for more than four hundred years all that we have known of them was gathered from a careful study of the relics of their greatness—the ruins of their edifices, which have been found scattered over the entire Western hemisphere. But the earthen tablets found in Peru, Central America, and Mexico, engraved on plastic clay in perfect Phœnician characters, and afterwards burned to render them imperishable, extend back nearly two thousand years before Christ. According to these records, these people, the Toltecs, came from some remote country and settled in South America. They were an eminently civilized and religious people, vesting the laws of their government and their theology in the same persons, and believing in one God, the creator and ruler of all, and in a mediator (Tzuma) who was to come to guide

and teach them aright. Two distinct classes existed among them, the "Olp-tecs," or workers, and the "Orp-tecs," or thinkers, the latter including not only their priests and rulers, but their architects, artisans, engineers, and nobility. The "Olp-tecs" were serfs with no voice at all in the government or public affairs. These people rapidly increased, and by the year 400 B.C., had settled nearly the entire South American continent and spread over Mexico, where they found an aboriginal race dwelling on the banks of the streams and living upon the natural produce of the soil and upon fish and game. For over a thousand years the Toltecs occupied the land, until, in the last century before Christ, the Aztec invaders sailed up the Amazon, claiming to have come from an Oriental country which they called "Aztlan." The Aztecs soon overruled the Toltec government, and in the course of two or three centuries the Aztecs were the dominant people. Their supremacy lasted for seven centuries, and then, through luxurious abundance, their commerce and industries became less active and extensive, and their power commenced to wane. In 800 A.D. a savage horde from the North and West came down upon the Aztecs, and wiped out the primeval civilization in a savage war of extermination, lasting for years. The remnants of the stricken people fled to the mountains, where they became cliff and cave dwellers, and others became amalgamated with the destroying race, the Chidmecs. This is but a sketch of the wonderful history these long-hidden records relate. It was reserved for the progressive and enduring Indo-European branch of the Aryan race to open the pages and read for us the instructive history of those thirty forgotten centuries during which America was peopled in turn by the Hamitic branch of the Semite race, then by the Semites proper, and these finally exterminated by the fierce Turanians from Chinese Tartary, until today, nearly every vestige of their existence is being crushed out of the world's history by the rapid paces of an advancing civilization.

PREACHING AND OPPOSITION.

From communications received at this office every week it appears that the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are meeting with much opposition in many places. Some of this takes the form of newspaper articles in which the teachings of Mormonism are caricatured and held up to public ridicule, or vile slanders published of the adherents of that particular faith. No wonder if a traveling Elder seeing the power of the adversary over the hearts of men, at times feel discouraged, and like Elijah of old, when his mighty testimony in words and deeds seemed in vain, give way to despair. A more extended experience, however, in the service of the Lord brings encouragement. By close observation it will almost invariably be found that where there are many adversaries, a wide door is also open for the Gospel; the latter fact very often accounts for the violence of the opposition.

There is this peculiarity about the Gospel, that it commands itself to every honest heart. When preached under the influence of the Holy Spirit, those who give prayerful attention to it always find in it that for which their souls are longing. Man, conscious of sin and guilt, needs salvation; living in a world where perfect happiness seems impossible, he asks for knowledge as to whether death is the final chapter in his history. In the Gospel he finds what he desires. That points out how to obtain pardon, peace and holiness; it opens to his mind a clear

view of the beyond and brings life eternal to those sitting in the shadow of death. For this reason the messenger of the Gospel fulfills his duty when he fearlessly and clearly points out to his fellow-men the truth as revealed in the word of God and as he, himself, has experienced it. It does not devolve upon him to refute every slander he hears, or to explain every difficulty the ingenuity of scholarship may be able to put in his way. As long as he is breaking the bread of life and distributing it with free hand among those who need it, he is fulfilling his mission. The preaching of the Gospel and the theological discussion of doctrine are widely different acts, no more related to each other than the serving of an enjoyable feast to those who need it is to the chemical analysis in a laboratory, of the food. The need of the world is not the chemical analysis of the Gospel, but the Gospel itself.

Among newspaper articles on Mormonism we notice one in which the author, after having in a general way denounced the faith of the Saints and the people, makes the subjoined appeal to his readers:

"Go to Utah if you want to; you will find good people there who are Christians. You will find a prosperous country, rich in natural resources, which are being rapidly developed where gentle enterprise and intelligence predominate; but don't—I pray you don't—join the Mormons till you see them in their pulpits and become acquainted with their history and their literature."

The writer of this paragraph evidently believes that Mormonism cannot stand the test of close investigation. But he is mistaken. The Mormons themselves very often have given the same advice, the advice of Philip to Nathanael, "Come and see," with the result that seeing has become believing. It will invariably do so in the case of those of whom it can be said: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

THE LAW'S RUTHLESSNESS.

Rip Van Winkle, the hero of the long slumber in the Catskills, is made to say by the playwright, "Are we so soon forgotten after we are dead?" It seems that in many instances it is even so, and such cases do not pertain exclusively to the commoners by any means, but attach to all stations and conditions in life. These reflections are suggested by a little item in today's dispatches relating to the attachment of ex-President Hayes' homestead pursuant to a judgment because of a runaway caused by a dog belonging to the estate, the sum involved being \$5,000 in favor of the plaintiff and \$1,019 costs. No doubt it is all correct enough, since the owners of dogs and other animals must be made responsible for the trespasses which such animals commit; but it is a sad demolisher of sentiment and that old-fashioned type of national feeling which used to obtain before most of the people had acquired the habit of plunging through life under a heavy pressure of steam, regardless of all things save that of temporal gain, with a modicum of moderation and veneration thrown in once in a while.

President Hayes may not figure among the greatest of our Presidents. Indeed, there may be many who do not yet and will not while they live admit that he was ever anything more than a President de facto, his title to the place being not only clouded but actually nil. Be that as it may, the fact that he filled the office and emerged from his great task with clean hands, coupled with the additional fact that personally he was beyond reproach, ought to be enough even with the hostiles to inspire a feeling of regret that