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TRAVELING THROUGH SOUTHERN UTAH INTO ARIZONA.

SIXTH LETTER.

When the Jesuit priests entered the Salt River valley, Arizona, upwards of three hundred years ago, they were surprised to find everywhere vast evidences of an old civilization, the remains of a people who, through long periods, had grown and developed, flourished, and passed away. On every hand were the ruins of their houses, temples and forts, reduced by the action of the elements, during the long ages that had passed since their abandonment, to mere heaps of earth, on which were growing the mesquit brush and around which stood the great cactus trees like solemn sentinels, as if keeping guard over the graves of the ancient people. In every direction ran the ancient canals which in former times had enlivened the desert and given life to the fields of green that spread like a mantle over the plain. When asked regarding the ancient people, the wild Indians shook their heads. Their traditions had become silent concerning them. Since that time there has been little change in the condition of the ruins. The tops of the mounds are crusted and baked until now the rainfall has little effect upon them; indeed we believe that they are still capable of enduring for many hundreds of years to come without material change, that is so far as the elements are concerned; but modern civilization is making inroads upon them and fast obliterating them from the face of the earth.

The first canal was taken out of Salt River a few miles above the mouth of the Verde, and skirting the base of Superstition mountain it ran off southwards towards the Gila, a distance of thirty-five miles or more. From that point, at intervals of a few miles all the way down the valley to the mouth of the Hassayampa creek, a distance of nearly eighty miles, are traces of the ancient canals. Then, too, the waters of the Agua Fria and Verde rivers were utilized for irrigating purposes, as is attested by the old canals found along their banks. The waters of the Gila were diverted at convenient points and canals carried far out into the desert south of the river, where Casa Grande now stands.

I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that there was more land irrigated by the ancient people

in this part of Arizona than is today cultivated in all Utah. And when I consider the productiveness of the soil here, and the advantages of the climate, I believe the country could sustain, and did sustain, more than twice the present population of our fair Territory.

The combined length of these old canals would be more than 1000 miles, to say nothing of the thousands of small canals and ditches radiating in every direction, distributing the waters to every part of the plain.

The ruins of the villages and cities are found almost everywhere, and in that olden time when the buildings were intact and inhabited the people must have been in easy call of each other from one end of this great valley to the other. The ruins of large buildings, which are usually believed to have been temples or places of worship, are found distributed among the other ruins at distances of from three to five miles apart, all over the valley.

One of these buildings I visited is just north of Mesa city. It stands on a level plain and is surrounded on all sides by hundreds of smaller mounds. It is rectangular, being four hundred feet long and about sixty feet wide, and about twenty feet high. On the eastern side was an apron of open court the same size as the building, and which was enclosed by a wall ten or twelve feet high. The entrance to the enclosure was in the center of the east wall of the court. The building corresponded as nearly to the cardinal points as it would be possible for our best engineers to make it today. Judging from the vast amount of rubbish that occupies the site of the building and which at one time formed a part of its walls, I incline to the opinion that it was from three to four stories high and must have been a conspicuous object on the plain. There are a great many of these temples in the valley, and while they differ some little in plan of building they all were constructed of the same material and have the same air of antiquity about them.

The dwellings of the people are everywhere. You find them thickest on the edge of the mesa along the river, and away out on the plain they are grouped around the temples. But it seems that there was nothing to prevent the inhabitant from building where he chose, as you will find ruins

of houses along the canals and scattered about over what must have been the cultivated lands. I have no doubt but that men built their houses where they would be convenient to their work. The man whose duty it was to watch and keep the canal in repair lived there; the farmer lived convenient to his lands; but the ruins testify that the most favored place to dwell was in the vicinity of the temple.

There seems to have been as wide a difference between the dwellings of this strange people as there is with us at the present time. Men built houses according to their requirements and their wealth. You will find small mounds, mere heaps of earth, that indicate that there once stood the humble one-room abode of some poor mortal. In another place not far away are larger remains, a house of many rooms, where no doubt lived a man of wealth, rolling in all the luxury of those primeval times. It would be difficult to say definitely just what was the design of these ancient abodes, but after making a careful study of them I believe they were not very unlike the box-shaped, mud-roofed Mexican house of the present time. That style of a building is very popular in this country; indeed from the earliest times it has been very popular among the inhabitants of the warm countries of the East. It was the prevailing style at Jerusalem, in Egypt, and was even used by the Mexicans at the time of the conquest, three hundred and fifty years ago. The Zuni Indians still build their houses much after the same principle. It is particularly adapted to the requirements of a country like this, where the climate is warm and where wood, because of its scarcity, becomes a consideration.

It has been said many times that these old buildings were constructed of adobe. This is a mistake. I have examined many of them and have yet to see one so constructed. They are built with cement, and after the manner that we erect our concrete houses. No one who has seen the ruins and noted the layers of cement as they have been placed on the walls one after the other, will be willing to admit that adobe in any form entered into their construction. Another thing: all who have carefully examined the material used in these old buildings claim that lime was used largely in its preparation. The resi-