

supposition. I have never constructed a railroad in my life, though I have been among the advancing lines of a number of new ones and have seen them grow from two iron rails in the wilderness to a great country; and I do not recall any of them now that have had much brighter prospects ahead of them, as far as the eye can determine, than the proposed one along the eastern slopes of the Sierra Madres, should it ever be built. That it will be built some day the resources of the country clearly demand, and, it is to be hoped for the good of the country, that it will be at as early a date as possible.

At Diaz City I learned from Dr. W. Derby Johnson, the ecclesiastical head of the lower Mormon colony, in Upper Chihuahua, that at the lower colony on Piedras Verdes, a number of ancient ruins were known, very few of which had ever been heard of before. I determined to try and reach them in time to incorporate some of their more interesting features, if there were any, in my earlier articles.

Corralitos was reached the first day. It has a very pretty, almost poetical name, that loses much of its romantic character when it is known that it is named for some old, dilapidated sheep pens that once existed there. "Corral" is a pen, or corral; "Corralitos" equals little pens, or little corrals. It is a hacienda some eight years old, and has an extremely interesting history, one that would make a book in itself as thrilling as any of frontier life.

The crack of Apache rifles has been heard around the walls where-in I wrote my second article, while dregs of Spanish blood have mined fortunes from the mountain sides near by in mines that have been worked since shortly after the conquest. It is a hacienda of about a million acres in extent and one of the most beautiful ones in the whole State of Chihuahua, the Casas Grande river running for some thirty miles through the estate. The true hacienda, of which we hear so much in Mexican narration, is really a definite area of 22,000 acres, but it is used now so as to mean almost any large estate from that size, or even less, to any amount whatever, under one management. Under the advance of American railways they are slowly disappearing and will soon exist only in poetry and Cheap-John novels. The views from the hacienda are beautiful in almost every direction. The one given in the illustration is taken from La Ascension road, about six or eight miles from the hacienda.

Twenty-five to thirty miles south of Corralitos we came to Casas Grandes, said to be a town of 3,000 people. We saw about ten people as we drove through the seemingly deserted streets. It is the most important town in the valley, both historically and in numbers. It takes its name, meaning "big houses," from the ancient ruins just in the suburbs of the present place, which contained the largest houses of any found in this part of Mexico when it was first visited by Europeans many centuries ago. The name of the town

has also been attached to the river which flows just in front of it. It has been spoken of in former writings, and although I shall refer to it again in a future article, it will only be to note its change—which has been very great—and my own investigations about it.

The next day we started to visit the ancient ruins on the Tapasita, a branch of the Piedras Verdes, and as beautiful a little valley as I ever saw in my life.

I expected to find a single well-defined set of ruins at a certain point, so one can imagine my surprise somewhat when I found that the country, and especially the valleys, were covered with evidences of ruins. There was a high hill, called the Picacho de Forreon, whose southern face had been occupied by cliff dwellers, while at our feet was a mass of reddish rubbish that indicated an old ruin of the later people, and twelve miles up the Tapasita was a massive ruin of stone in reaching which ruins met the eye the whole way. We were surely in the midst of an ancient yet dense population, and the fertile resources of the country will yet again sustain another such, even far more civilized. Just before our arrival a pot, or jar, had been taken from one of the ruins, and was given to me by a young man of the colony, Mr. Ellis Johnson.

It is like so many jars that have come from Casas Grandes and other better-known ruins that have already figured in works on Mexico, but is exceptional from the most of them in having upon it the figure of a bird, animals of all kinds being here upon their decorated surface. It is represented here with full and quarter view, the double picture being of the same pot, or jar. The bird seems to correspond nearer to the chapparral cock, or California road-runner, than any other bird of this part of the world. The geometrical designs are the most common, and, of these the zigzag, stair-like ones are the most constant. Many other things had been found in this mound, including human bones of the original makers, and no doubt the same, with local variations, can be found in all. I believe I do not exaggerate when I say we found 100 to 150 ruins in the Piedras Verdes region, most of them merely mounds to indicate what they once were; and not one-tenth of which had received notice by pen or pencil before.

On the top of high hills adjacent were fortified places apparently, where they must have fled in times of danger from other tribes. They were a wonderful and interesting tribe of people, and I shall speak more of the little evidence of the existence they left behind them in future articles.

The third sketch is on the Tapasita, near the principal ruins, which must have been a city of these people. The only life we saw here was a mountain lion, or panther, that came trotting along the valley until it saw us and turned back to the mountains. Truly the wild beasts were wandering over the Toltec

Babylon. Half the scenes of this country lose most of their beauty in the rich coloring they possess when transferred into pen and ink sketches. It is the land for the painter to show the people its beauties. FREDERICK SCHWATKA.

#### LETTER FROM PALESTINE.

The Jews residing here, as in other places, have recently celebrated their Passover. Their bazaars and other places of business have consequently been closed, but are now again opened and everything has assumed its usual aspect.

The Passover of the Jews is one of their yearly festivals. It is kept in remembrance of the destruction of the firstborn of the Egyptians, of the sparing of the Israelites, and their subsequent delivery from bondage in Egypt. The Jewish year commences with the month Abib (or green corn) which lasts from the middle of March till the middle of April. On the 14th of Abib the Passover commences. On the evening of that day all heaven is removed from their houses as a preparation for the great feast, which commences on the 15th and lasts till the 21st. In former times the pascal lamb was slain, consisting of a ram or a goat one year old. The blood of the animal was originally sprinkled on the doorposts, and later at the bottom of the altar. The lamb was roasted whole, with two spits thrust transversely through it, as if to typify the cross of the Lamb of God. The flesh was then eaten with bitter herbs; unleavened bread was broken by the master of the family and distributed to each, not fewer than ten nor more than twenty being admitted to the feast. After the third cup, the so-called "cup of blessing," had been drunk, praises were sung, generally in later times Psalms 115-118, and sometimes Psalms 120-137 in addition. It was in connection with this feast that our Lord instituted the last supper. During every day of this great festival sacrifices were offered, and on the 16th of Abib the first ripe ears of corn were presented at the sanctuary, after which the harvest would commence. All this was in ancient times. At present, the Jews having no temple, no altar, no priesthood, properly speaking, they cannot of course, fulfill all the requirements of their ceremonial law, and have consequently no assurance that their services are pleasing before God; for all blessings in the Old Testament are pronounced to the Jews on condition of their keeping the law, which they obviously cannot do so long as they are without a temple and a priesthood. Notwithstanding this, the Jews do the best they can under the circumstances. I have now before me a piece of unleavened bread, a remnant from the Passover feast. It is very thin, like the "fladbroed" of Norway, and is easily broken. There is a Russian lady here in Haifa. She asks me for goodness sake not to eat of that bread, for, says she, "it is sprinkled with Christian blood." Then she tells the tale: The Jews in