

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper
BURIED 1860 YEARS.



AND it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, in the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land; and there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, inasmuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder; and there were exceeding sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land. * * * And there was great and terrible destruction in the land southward. But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward: for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest, and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the exceeding great quaking of the whole earth; and the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough, and many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shook till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate; and there were some cities which remained; but the damage thereof was exceedingly great, and there were many in them who were slain; and there were some who were carried away in the whirlwind; and whither they went no man knoweth, save they know that they were carried away; and thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempest, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth."

Thus it was, more than a thousand years before Christopher Columbus was born, that the great historian of prehistoric America graved upon golden plates his brief account of the most terrible upheaval the Western Hemisphere has known, and of which, occurring four centuries before his time, he had learned from the records of his fathers, except as he might have seen the deserted ruins of some of those cities he describes, and which remain to this day, a solemn memento of the outburst of Almighty anger against the wickedness of men.

Within the area of country to which this American historian referred as "the

land northward" is embraced what is now known as Central America; and in Guatemala, Honduras, Yucatan and neighboring localities the evidences of this terrible visitation still remain, objects of wonderment, mystery and awe to the venturesome explorer in archaeological fields. The date of this appalling event, so briefly told by the historian, and which filled its destructive mission in about three hours' time, is disclosed in the opening words of the record quoted: thirty-three years and three days after the Savior's birth, or somewhere near April 9, A. D. 34, according to our reckoning. Six centuries before this the scene had been viewed in vision by the great Prophet of mediæval American history, who says: "I saw a mist of darkness on the face of the land of promise; and I saw lightnings, and I heard thunderings, and earthquakes, and all manner of tumultuous noises; and I saw the earth and the rocks that they rent; and I saw mountains trembling to pieces; and I saw the plains of the earth, that they were broken up; and I saw many cities, that they were sunk; and I saw many, that they were burned with fire; and I saw many that did tremble to the earth, because of the quaking thereof." And now in this latter age of earth's existence, when a new civilization is overspreading the American continent, comes the uncovering of many of the mighty ruins that for nearly nineteen centuries have been hidden from the eye of man.

There has been discovered, and is now being unearthed a great city which probably was one of those buried 1860 years ago, on the day when Christ was crucified and the Savior of the world was nailed on Calvary's cross. This buried city, which flourished on this continent ere the birth of the Maya-Quiche civilization that elicited the admiration of Cortez and his coadjutors and immediate successors, is distant but about three miles east from the Ciudad Vieja (old city) of the early Europeans in Guatemala—Santiago de los Cubuleros, the first capital of the modern state. The new discovery is on the Pompeii plantation of Manuel J. Alvarado, on the slope of the Volcan de Agua (watery volcano). The plantation acquired its name from the ancient ruins which exist on it, and regarding which the natives have many interesting traditions.

Of the new discovery, however, there is no tradition among the natives now residing in the locality which connects it with the present age. So far as the people there are concerned, its record is wholly obscured in the dim and distant past. The result of the earlier investigations were noted in a News editorial a few months ago; the details of further development can be given now. It was under the orders of Senor Alvarado that the excavations now going on were commenced. He had found a few relics, and determined to make further search. At one place, at a depth of twelve feet below the surface of the mountain slope, he has taken out many rare and interesting objects, such as flower pots, earthen vessels for domestic use, ancient glazed ware, large vases of ex-

ceedingly fine manufacture, covered with engravings and with pictures in brilliant colors painted upon them; domestic utensils, such as are discovered among the Indian relics in Utah; axes, hammers, tomahawks and war clubs of stone; knives and daggers of obsidian, with sharp points and edges; lances and lancets of the same material; idols of stone and clay; and well wrought jewelry of turquoise and other precious stones, of all ordinary sizes and figures. Among the latter was a stone like those worn by Indian royalty of ages ago, on state occasions; it is a rare kind of precious stone of deep green color, capable of the highest polish, and known to the natives as the chal-chi-villi stone. Artistically traced symbols and characters, the colors apparently as fresh and brilliant as though they had just left the artist's hands, were to be seen on some of the finest vases.

Deeper down, the investigation revealed that the people who had dwelt there were idol worshippers, or at least had figures representative of deities or enshrined personages, just as some professed Christians of today have statues of St. Peter, the Virgin Mary and other notable characters in religious history, to which they bow in adoration. There were two classes of idols, those of clay and those of stone, many in each class exceedingly well formed, showing high knowledge of the sculptor's art. The clay idols show great variety, and are not always of the kind that might be regarded as sacred. Some of the carved faces wear the tragic mask, but one particular figure was that of a fat, pot-bellied, round-faced, plump-cheeked chap, the incarnation of merriment and good living. Among an idolatrous people he might be easily regarded as deserving reverence as the god of humor.

Chiseled from a hard brownstone, and representing a person in a recumbent position, with head erect and the chin on a line with the body, was one figure, the head, face and neck of which were cut to a perfect finish; but the sculptor evidently had not had time to complete his work on the entire body. The face is a striking likeness in contour and expression to the features of the Hebrew race; while a smaller unfinished stone statue is a type of the ideal Lamanite of today. On the head of each of these figures is a remarkably well executed warrior's helmet, mounted with a clear-cut tuft or crest of feathers hanging over a rimless front. Encircling it is a wide band, well up on the forehead, ornamented with quadrant figures in bas-relief set closely one within another from the outer lines to the center, all arranged with perfect mathematic precision. The figures evidently were intended as monuments of great military leaders. In its makeup the helmet closely resembles the pictures handed down to us of the headgear worn by the prætorian guards of Rome.

Other figures there were, of more or less merit, and in different states of preservation, and all representing the Indian type of character, except one which had the Mongolian cast of slanting moon eyes. There was the flat nose, the high cheek bones; and it may be it was intended to preserve the peculiarly interesting features of some distinguished person.

In the actual remains of former human life there was deeply interesting field.