

EDITORIALS.

ANCIENT AMERICAN HISTORY.

The recent exhibition in this city of the mummified remains of five white people of an alleged prehistoric race lately discovered in Arizona, is connected with a subject in which the Latter-day Saints particularly have a deep interest—the history of the ancient inhabitants of America. Sixty years ago the Book of Mormon was brought forth and a short time later published to the world through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. That work was issued as a history of the ancient inhabitants of this continent down to about A.D. 420. It sets forth the origin of the people, their character, the high state of civilization to which they attained, their religion, and the history of their migrations and civil wars, until finally the record closes with an account of how the few believers in Christ were destroyed by the multitudes who had fallen into wickedness.

When the Book of Mormon was first published to the world, a howl of ridicule went up at the idea that America had ever been peopled by a white or a civilized race. It was in 1822 that the first work on the antiquities of America was published in England, and so general and strong was the belief that only savage nations had ever occupied this continent, that it received little credence. The civilized world had accepted as final the conclusion of Dr. Robertson, the historian, that it was "a certain principle that America was not peopled by any nation of the ancient world which had made considerable progress in civilization."

In 1834-35 Captain Dupuix's account of his explorations in Mexico and Central America first saw the light. It then began to dawn upon the minds of scientific men that perhaps, after all, the new world had a history of its own, and scientific research commenced. Following Dupuix came Lord Kingsborough, whose investigations convinced him that America had been peopled by a branch of the House of Israel. When he presented his ideas on this subject to the world, explorers saw in the countries of North and Central America a field for their highest ambition. Colonel Galendo, Waldeck, Rosny, Squier, Larroze, Stephens, Catherwood, Powell, Jackson, Charnay and a host of others have since that time made comparatively rapid progress in bringing to light the fact that centuries before Columbus lived there had flourished on the then unknown continent a civilization rivaling if not surpassing anything known in the old world.

When the discovery of these facts was made public, the spirit of inquiry was increased, and the public mind began to be convinced, as is said by the historian Bancroft, that "the tendency of modern research is to prove the great antiquity of American civilization as well as of the American people; and if either was drawn from a foreign source it was at a time probably so remote as to antedate all Old World culture now existing."

Stephens and Catherwood did more, perhaps, than any others, in their two visits, to bring to our knowledge the ruins of Central America, where they discovered upwards of forty ruined cities, besides making careful examinations of the great cities of Uxmal, Copan, Palenque and Quirigua. Their labors, added to those of the others, have placed beyond doubt the ancient occupation of America by a civilized race.

These researchers have developed more than the fact that there existed a knowledge of astronomy, architecture, mechanics, etc., among these peoples. Their ideas of religion and their traditions of their origin are brought to light in such plainness that the connection with the religion of the Bible, at some remote period can be distinctly traced. It is true that no one has yet been found to decipher their hieroglyphics, and give to the world the history of ancient civilizations engraved on metal or stone. But sufficient has been obtained to enable scholars to agree that one of the hypotheses is correct regarding them: Either first, that the American races were autochthonous, as claimed by Agassiz, in accordance with his doctrine of multiple centers of creation; second, that they are of one blood with the races of the eastern continent, from whom they were separated by the subsidence of the intervening land; or third, that they represent a migration from Asia via Behring Straits, or across the Pacific in lower latitudes. The first two of these theories are rapidly losing ground in the face of the development of facts. Of the third the advocates of the Behring Straits course of migration point to the linguistic theory, or the existence of language similar in construction to the Aztec along the north-west coast of America; while those who believe the migration came direct across the Pacific in lower latitudes, point with a reasonable degree of certainty to the traditions of all the Maya and Nahuatl races, that their forefathers made a long journey by land and by sea, from "toward the setting of the sun." The Nahuatl also claim that in this migration the company that came over in ships numbered seven families.

While all these developments have

been going on, the Book of Mormon history has not been taken into account, except in a spirit of jest, by those engaged in this work. But now strange and marvellous is the authentication which it has received from this source. The gorgeous palaces, sacred temples and half-buried cities that have been unearthed slowly but surely are increasing the indisputable proofs of the correctness of the historical statements in that sacred record, and as each successive year rolls round some new discovery is made, some new fact brought to light, as supplemental and external evidence of its truthfulness.

The idea of a belief in the doctrines of Christianity among the progenitors of the present Indians was, a few years ago, looked upon as too absurd for consideration, for now, it was asked, could the teachings of the Savior be brought across the ocean when his disciples had no knowledge of the existence of another continent? This difficulty seemed insurmountable, and as a result the accounts of the natives concerning the Crucifixion were cast aside, and the analogies between the religion of the Mayas and Nahuatl and that of the Jews adjudged to be the result of accident. The traditions of the deluge, among the Mexicans and Yucatecos, were interpreted to refer to some local inundation, the destructiveness of which had made a deep impression on the minds of the people. The story told of the terrible visitations of storms and earthquakes at the time the "White God" was slain, was characterized as an exaggeration of some minor event, or as a myth, the object of which was to awe the unbeliever into an acceptance of religion. But with the historic knowledge given by the Book of Mormon is an explanation of these otherwise mysterious traditions. True, they are interwoven with a legendary lore that is of itself inexplicable, but the principal facts stand out in such bold relief as to make them easily recognizable from the mass of incongruities with which they are surrounded.

Up to the present time there has been found no key with which to unlock the mysteries of the written language of these ancient people, as they appear on their sculptured tablets. They have been compared with the Greek, Hebrew, Basque, West African and North European languages, and have some features in common with each, but none furnish a sufficient rule or translation. But it is not too much to hope that, in the developments of scientific research, these records will yet yield up their secrets to the world. When this is done the history therein contained will doubtless be found to accord, in respect to the same period, with that which has been revealed by the power of God to the people of this generation. And as the architectural ruins and preserved remains of a people who existed in America centuries ago bear silent but incontrovertible testimony to the existence of an intelligence and a civilization of a high degree, so also will their history, carved in stone, tell to later generations the story of their toils and triumphs in life's battle; and being thus united, all will corroborate the voice of revelation and bear faithful witness to the accuracy of the history compiled and abridged by the Nephite Prophet.

EVIDENTLY IMPRACTICABLE.

It appears from the dispatches that there is an intention on the part of Senator Palmer, of Michigan, to introduce a singular bill into the upper house of the National Legislature. Its purpose is to restrict immigration to this country. In legislating for a great nation like this, how necessary it is to take in all the bearings of each particular measure! If this were done with statesmanlike grasp, many of them would die in incipient conception and thus strangulation immediately after birth would be avoided.

An act of the kind referred to smacks too strongly of the passport system of effete despotisms so heartily despised by the citizens of free nations, to find much favor in the great Republic.

In addition to its spirit being out of harmony with the genius of American liberty, its practicability may readily be questioned. In this connection it is in point to consider the extent of the immigration to this country. The influx from abroad probably reaches about 250,000 annually. It may be urged in this regard that it is only those belonging to that class intending to make the United States their future residence that would require a certificate of good character from a consul to entitle them to land on our shores. This distinction, it may be claimed, would lessen the number of permit-holders. Those who come to stay are, however, largely in the majority, and aside from that fact it would be decidedly difficult in the manipulation of such a statutory requirement to separate the two classes. In addition to the labor of examining emigrants by consuls, only think of the difficulties of the situation on this side, in investigating passengers, some of whom have and others have not certificates. Consuls can have no power in the districts where they act to prevent shippers from taking people on board their ships, certificate or no certificate, so after all the burden of the preventive business would be on this side.

On arrival near the shores of this country passengers who might be deemed doubtful by the United States officials, would have to be thrown back upon the hands of shipping companies to be returned by them to the ports from whence they came. This would involve business, commercial and probably international difficulties.

Shipping companies are proverbially enterprising, and as a stoppage of the passenger traffic would suggest their interests, how easy it would be for them to find a means of avoiding the requirements of a statute of the kind said to be contemplated. There are other ports than those immediately belonging to this country at which people could be landed, and from which they could make their way into this land, unless indeed a mammoth share of diligent attention should be devoted to this subject, involving the examination not only of the living freight carried by the ships of the sea, but also those conveyed by land, on railroads, over the borders separating this from contiguous nations.

The probability of reciprocity of embargo legislation by other nations in relation to this subject may well be contemplated in the same connection. Take Great Britain, for instance, which claims to have suffered from Fenian and home rule plots hatched in this country, and forwarded in execution by parties who had come from here there for that purpose. It would not look very well for all passengers from the ports of this country destined for Great Britain or Ireland to be subjected to an investigation at the hands of the British consuls in the districts from which they sail, and be obliged to obtain a certificate indicating their probable good behavior after arriving at their destination. Unless the proposed measure has been misrepresented, it is not likely to ripen into a legislative actuality.

The introduction of those professing a belief in the "Mormon" religion in connection is incongruous. Surely people are not to be prevented from coming to the home of the oppressed of all nations on the ground of mere religious belief. If such a bill were to become law by any possible chance, it would not affect the "Mormon" immigrants except on that untenable ground, as they have no intention of breaking the laws of this country but to support them. To shut the doors of the Republic to such people as they are would be placing an embargo on industry, sobriety, honesty and thrift, qualities for which they are justly noted. Those possessing them are a valuable acquisition to any nation.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND has placed before the country the briefest annual message we have any recollection of. This is something of a surprise after the announcement being sent in advance that it would be the longest, containing 22,000 words, or about four thousand columns of the News. Our readers will find the document in its proper place, and they would have received it in these pages at as early an hour if it had been as voluminous as was represented, ample arrangements having been made to that end.

The message is, after all, a "monograph," that is, it deals with but one subject—the tariff. The brevity of the document will enable all to spare the time to read it carefully, and upon doing so we feel assured there are but few who will dissent from our conclusion in relation to it—that it is *multum in parvo*. We have rarely if ever seen the question of tariff reform handled with greater skill or more consummate reasoning. It is quite argumentative, but all the arguments are logical and each reaches an irresistible conclusion in favor of the necessity of a change all along the line. The sophisticated utterances and delusive presentations of strict protectionists are exposed in a most masterly manner, not in the words or the spirit of a partisan, but with a high and profound regard for the well-being of the Republic; and in the accomplishment of this, there is no advocacy of free trade strictly speaking, only that condition of things wrongly so called which aims at reform of abuses by curtailing war taxes and customs duties which have taken from the channels of traffic hundreds of millions of dollars beyond the government's actual requirements only to be hoarded away in idleness in the national treasury.

All in all, the message is a patriotic, statesmanlike document, one that places its author in the front rank of the thinkers and political economists of our day. It is well worthy a thoughtful perusal by all.

THE LEADING ISSUE.

THE tariff question is probably the leading issue in this country. If there has been any doubt upon this point the exclusive devotion to it of the presidential message wipes it out.

It is a subject of vital importance and should be considered from the standpoint of unadulterated statesmanship. Unfortunately this course is not taken, as politicians make it a

handle which they work vigorously to produce the detriment of their antagonists. The moment a man of conservative views announces that he favors a moderate reduction of the tariff in special directions, he is denounced as an out and out free trader and the advocate of a policy that would bring financial ruin to the country. So far from this aspersion being correct he may be inspired with a pure desire for the public weal.

It ought to be acknowledged on all sides that the surplus in the treasury should not be locked up in the national vaults, where it is a species of financial corpse, but should be circulating in the avenues of trade, enhancing the prosperity of the country. Neither should it be denied that such dead accumulations should be prevented in future. If this latter contingency can be reached by such a reduction of the tariff as shall not injure home industries, what valid objection can be offered to the adoption of such a policy?

It should be remembered that the commonwealth is entitled to two kinds of protection—against encroachments from abroad and from impositions at home. If it can be discovered—that has been already—that in some industries monopolists of trade have been imposing on the public by charging vastly too high for commodities and have consequently been amassing immense wealth in brief periods, why not reduce the tariff on the classes of articles involved in that species of manipulation to a point that would threaten the monopolists with importation unless their prices were materially reduced? It may be taken as a certainty that such action on the part of the government would speedily bring down the prices, and a part of the enormous profits heretofore monopolized by the owners of industries would go to the consumers and the whole country benefited by the change. The reduction of the revenue would at the same time prevent, so far as it went, the accumulation of a surplus in the treasury, a resource which appears now to be a white elephant. The kind of reform needed is of a double-action character, that will strike in two directions—outside and inside the nation.

In making any disposition of the tariff on importations, due care should be taken to avoid striking an injurious blow at home industries. But any action that will preserve to those engaged in them a reasonable profit would not have that effect.

There are some industries peculiar to this region the products of which should be protected. Among these are wool and lead. If there were any material reduction of the first named article the American market would be flooded with fleeces from New Zealand. No reduction that would bring such a formidable competitor into the market would be wise or proper. The same argument attaches to lead, the production of which is one of the chief industries of the growing West. It is a young industry in a youthful country, and should therefore have all the encouragement and support that can be accorded to it by the powers that be. Any movement looking to a diminution of the tariff on that commodity should be contested and, if possible, its consummation prevented.

If there can be a conservative reduction of the tariff without crippling some industrial pursuits, the country would be all the healthier for it in a financial point of view. It is a question, however, whose manipulation will require the greatest care. All extremes should be strenuously avoided. It is a subject that can be treated gradually.

THE PANAMA CANAL.

WITHIN the past fortnight the press of the country has been flooded with statements regarding the Panama Canal, going to show that it is destined to prove a flat and disastrous failure; that the funds subscribed for its completion are almost exhausted and that not so much as one-third of the required excavation has been made. This it appears is only one side of the story, and it transpires that very different ideas are entertained concerning it by parties who are certainly in a position to know whereof they speak. Among the passengers on the steamer *Gasconne*, which arrived at New York on the 29th ult., was Commodore Henry E. Slaven, president of the Mexican Contracting and Dredging Company, which has been employed upon the excavation from the beginning. He says:

"I can say that the canal is more than half done. It is open at present for vessels drawing 15 feet of water for 20 kilometers on the Atlantic side, out of a total length of 70 kilometers. We will have 24 done by July next, and the French company on the Pacific end will have five more completed. After long consideration, and in view of the fact that it is taking more time and costing more money to complete the canal than at first estimated, M. de Lesseps has concluded to build temporary locks for the middle sections. De Lesseps has no fear about money. It stands to reason that the 400,000 people who have put up nearly \$200,000,000 so far will put up enough to complete the canal, even if it costs \$100,000,000. De Les-

seps denies that he ever said that the canal would be opened in February, 1889. My own judgment is, however, that ships will cross within three years from January 1st next."

A GOOD OFFICER GOES OUT.

THE soil being the primary and principal reliance of man for support, it becomes a subject which we cannot at any time or from any cause neglect. Its disposition and regulation are matters fraught with the greatest and gravest of consequences to every country and every citizen, and therefore that bureau of other nations corresponding with the Interior Department in ours, is in every instance presided over by a man presumably learned in the law of real property and as experienced as may be in the methods and forms of the acquirement, regulation and disposal of lands. Not only should such officer have all these and other many other qualifications, but he should be in possession of a disposition which is seldom acquired and rarely cultivated, that of philanthropy tempered with reason and guided by justice. The nation having such a man in such a place is likely to be as prosperous in relation to its internal affairs as the circumstances in each case will permit.

Without being invidious, and with only a desire to pay a tribute to merit modestly worn out conspicuousness through it all, we name the outgoing Secretary of the Interior, Mr. L. Q. C. Lamar, as such an officer and such a man. During the three years he has been at the head of that department he has kept aloof from partisanship or local squabble of whatever nature and brought to the discharge of his duties a high sense of public spirit and native patriotism. His last report, published a day or two ago, is illustrative, and abundantly so, of the purposes which animated him, of the methods which controlled him. He would not rob those who are honestly in possession of vast tracts of land whether used or unused; but he would have the would-be "barons" and "grubbers" shorn to just what they can show a clear title to, and where real property is held in large or small areas which is unused and improperly held, he would have it revert to the original grantor—the government—so that it might be available to those who would make it productive.

The ex-Secretary thinks it would be all the better if the lands now so rapidly diminishing from the government's possession were being filled up with bona fide settlers who would subdue the waste places and bring forth hardy, prosperous and virtuous communities to add to the wealth and stability of the nation, but that the opportunities intended only for this class have in numberless instances been taken advantage of by those whose only object was and is to hold desirable locations in great areas for speculative or luxurious purposes. This makes it all the more obligatory upon the government to be watchful and discriminating; not only this, but to continue the measures of reclamation inaugurated and carried forward zealously by himself, the extent of which during the fiscal year was 91,078 canceled entries, embracing the enormous quantity of 14,238,913 acres. The gratification which the good and thoughtful citizen must feel at such vast areas being restored to the public for proper and actual use, can surely only be equaled by his indignity at the possibility of a state of things which permitted the robbery of those in the present while entailing a landless condition upon those to come, existing so long.

Mr. Lamar advocates the total repeal of the timber culture, pre-emption, relinquishment, desert and cash entry laws; in fact, he would strike all enactments under which abuses have grown up off the statute books, and leave nothing to remain but the system by means of which the possibility of dishonest acquirements and fraudulent speculation is reduced to the minimum. He is also averse to the leasing system through which countless acres have been taken hold of and held by large cattle-men and others to the exclusion of bona fide settlers who would in many cases have taken up the ground and used it as the government has all along contemplated. By the complete removal of these illegal fences, it is claimed that nearly 5,000,000 acres of valuable land will be thrown open to settlement.

Something of the kind which Mr. Lamar has put in operation may have occurred to most of our predecessors since the great west was practically opened up and the rush for big slices of the public domain began. But if it did it assumed very little more in the shape of a tangible proceeding than such as white paper and black ink can invest them with. It has been reserved for the outgoing incumbent to take the first really practical steps in the direction of the judicious and legal disposition and management of the public lands, and accomplish something decided and comprehensive.

DEPUTY MARSHAL ARTHUR PRATT has been left in charge of the Marshal's and receiver's offices and business during Marshal Dyer's absence in the east.