

grants were not in sympathy with the existing impiety of their ungodly neighbors; and the inference is that it was a religious animus—that most powerful of all moral forces—that actuated their remarkable exodus.

At the time of the crucifixion, when it is said that even Pagan sages exclaimed, "Surely the God of nature suffers," the stupendous convulsions of the earth, and the tumultuous agitation of the elements, experienced in the immediate vicinity of the matchless tragedy, were extended with augmented energy of destruction, to the land of America. We made reference to these fearful visitations in our last article.

By this terrible burst of elemental strife the face of the country "became deformed." "The rocks were rent in twain, and broken up upon the face of the land, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams, and in cracks, upon the face of the land." III Nephi, viii, 18. Nothing is more certain than that such terrible convulsions and calamitous events should leave an ineffaceable impress upon the face of the land, such as the procession of the ages could not obliterate. The ghastly wreck should remain; and the gaping wounds and frightful scars made in the bosom of the earth, inflicted by such a scourge, would never heal over or close up. And we might reasonably listen for some faint echoes of that mighty alarm, even after the lapse of eighteen centuries.

No country in the world bears such deep and extended rents and fractures, such signs of physical commotion as America does. No country in the world bears upon its face such vestiges of active and vigorous life. Hundreds of miles of connected forts and ramparts, trenches and breastworks attest, as President Harrison remarked, "a condition of permanent military contests;" while earth mausoleums, numerous and large, with their ghastly cavities arching over the moulding remnants of stupendous carnage, bear witness to the importance and fierceness of the quarrels of which they are the evidence. These mighty events, like substantial structures, have cast their shadows behind them in the legendary "folk-lore," of their degenerate survivors. The unanimous opinion of explorers and antiquarians is, that the American continent is a stage upon which has been enacted a

long series of varied, strange and tragical events. There are the unmistakable marks of advanced civilization, with the evidence of races sunken into the slough of poverty, ignorance and degradation; the visible traces and trails of nomadic hordes, and the permanent memorials of tranquil life. According to the Book of Mormon record, the higher and nobler state of life of these primitive races, preceded the debased condition in which they were found by Europeans. But it has become fashionable to speak familiarly of the "primeval savage," in regard to the priority of the human races in general; and to say, that "civilization is a plant of slow growth."

There might be found, perhaps, cases where people have passed from a low and barbarous state to that of powerful, intellectual and splendid civilization. This is true, in a moderate degree, of the Greeks, as described by Homer, and the same race as placed upon record by the historian, Xenophon. We see the Romans, also, rise from the barbarous robber life, which characterized them in the eighth century B. C., to the zenith of splendor in the Augustan age. Then again, we observe the fierce and semi-savage races which overran and crushed the Roman empire, settling down into respectable and powerful nations, and even surpassing the civilization which their forefathers destroyed.

The partial improvements which have come to portions of the Arab hordes of India, and the present ameliorating and softening processes going on in Turkey and Russia, all throw their weight in favor of the assumed principle of gradual development, or evolution of civilization. But it should be borne in mind that all these improvements have been brought about through the contact and agency of superior circumstances.

And further: How do we know that the barbarous state of *any* people is the primeval state of that people? One of the first branches of art and science which suffers neglect, and the first to be lost in a declining nation, is that of literature. Savages keep no records; and one of the earliest developed frenzies of a lapsing race, is that vandal mania of hostility to the existence of chronologies, histories, and records of every kind. The reason for this vandalism is obvious; the annals of a prosperous and happy people are a treasury of delightful themes, of

glory and honor to them; but, like all signs of lost greatness, these records become mementoes of disgrace and reproach to a retrograding people.

This was exactly the case with the ancient American races. In the days of their glory and righteousness they prized their treasures of literary wealth; but in their decline, they endeavored to stamp out and obliterate every register of their former happy estate. Hence the last vestiges of their history had to be put into an enduring shape and buried in the earth, in order to secure their preservation.

But while examples favorable to the primeval savage, strike the eye of the superficial and biased reader of history, yet there are numerous and striking proofs of a reverse process.

"Herodotus tells us of the Geloni, a Greek people who, having been expelled from the cities on the northern coast of the Euxine, had retired into the interior, and there lived in wooden huts, and spoke a language half Greek and half Sythian. By the time of Mela, this people had become completely barbarous, and used the skins of those slain by them in battle, as coverings for themselves and their horses." George Rawlinson M. A., in "The Origin of Nations."

There has been a gradual dwindling of the Spanish on the coast of North and South America since their brilliant ancestors invaded the country and conquered the natives. The modern population of Cairo includes about 10,000 Copts, descendants of the ancient Egyptians, who are represented as being very degraded. They are very short and diminutive in stature. Their character is in general gloomy, deceitful and avaricious. Their ancient language has been lost.

A most striking example of the decline of a great and highly civilized nation is exhibited in the history of the Israelites. Theologically considered, they reached a height of grandeur in the purity of their morals, and the perfection of their government, which no nation has ever equaled. And yet they became broken up, and scattered; while the Jews, the remnants of that once mighty people, became debased to a condition of savage ferocity, lower than the brutes. And, probably, their mixing with the civilized nations, is the only reason why they have not become as low and barbarous as their blood relations, the American Indians. Prof. Rawlinson observes:

"Civilization is liable to decay, to