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A • JOURNAL • DEVOTED • TO  
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AMERICAN • PEOPLE • IN • RESPECT  
TO • THE • HOPES • AMBITIONS  
BENEFICENT • INTENTIONS • AND  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS • OF • THE  
CONSTITUTIONALIST • GOVERNMENT  
• OF • THE •  
REPUBLIC • OF • MEXICO



VOL. 1

WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL, 1917

NO. 7

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# FOOTPRINTS OF LOST TRIBES

*Races That Once Inhabited the Valleys of Mexico—Interesting Speculation as to Their Origin and Fate*

BY GEORGE F. WEEKS

There has been much speculation ever since the discovery of the Western Hemisphere regarding the probable location of the first habitation of the human race thereon. While some very ancient pre-historic remains are found on both the North and the South American continents, and there is more or less difference of opinion as to which belongs the honor of having first afforded a home to human beings, there seems to be good reason to believe that to the Valley of Mexico and the immediately contiguous portions of this country should be ascribed the credit of having been the home of the tribes which first penetrated this con-



Macuilxochitl, the God of Flowers, an Incense Burner of Terra Cotta 16 Inches High; Found by Prof. William Niven Near Atzacapotzalco, in the Valley of Mexico.

continent from some unknown source, lived here for centuries, and then suddenly perished, leaving behind them for discovery thousands of years later certain imperishable remains that are being unearthed from day to day from their tomb of ages and presented to the world of the twentieth century for conjecture, study and enlightenment.

It is scarcely venturing too far to say that no portion of the globe offers so fertile a field to the archaeologist and student as this. While in the old world the imperishable traces of long extinct races are found in abundance, the history of most of those races is well known, and these relics of stone and metal, the carved inscriptions and printed tablets, serve but to verify the written or traditional

records. Here, however, all is different. The races whose remains are unearthed in this country from day to day perished from off the face of the earth how many thousands of years in the past only conjecture based on the stories written by ashes, gravel, sand and earth, stone and terra cotta, can determine—and that with no great degree of accuracy. Of anything approaching written or engraved records of these ancients there is nothing. Of tradition even there is little, except in regard to the races which have inhabited this region within the past ten or a dozen centuries. These facts make the study of these pre-historic races all the more interesting and absorbing, and small wonder is it that some should devote many of their best years to this most fascinating avocation.

Prominent, foremost it might well be said, among those who have devoted many years of ardent study to this absorbing problem, is Prof. William Niven, who has passed the greater portion of his life in Mexico, and has for an average generation's lifetime spared neither pains, labor nor time in delving, both physically and mentally, into the records of the past, buried for more centuries than the average mind can grasp, beneath the accumulations of time and the debris of fire, flood and storm whose record is plain and uncontradictable to those who can read it. Every hour that this enthusiast—and he is a veritable one—can spare, he devotes to this pursuit. Equipped with pick and shovel, he plunges bodily into the dust and ashes of forgotten ages and races, and no gold hunter ever followed a bit of "float" toward its source more eagerly and more enthusiastically than he pursues the trail indicated by a fragment of pottery, a bit of carved stone, or other object bearing the impress of human handiwork. With chosen Indians to aid him in the crudest of the work of removing the superincumbent earth and gravel, no sooner is a layer struck

that shows signs of human habitation, than he takes charge of the operations and carefully excavates wherever there are indications of treasure trove, extracting each object encountered as carefully as if it were some living organism necessitating the most tender care in order to preserve it from destruction.

Devoting as he has so many years to this study, noting carefully each fact as it is brought to light by the excavators or by himself, comparing the remains of the different races that have succeeded each other in this cradle of the human race, so far as the Western Hemisphere is concerned, whatever Professor Niven has to say in connection therewith carries with it the weight of authority and reliability.

It is his opinion—and he can cite facts by the score to substantiate it—that there have been three great eras or periods of human occupation of this region, and that each met its end through natural causes—by fire or volcanic eruption, by water or flood, and by storm, hurricanes and tempest. Accompany him to any of the many scenes of his labors and he will point out to you the finger prints of Nature, infallible as the finger prints utilized by the modern investigator, which have written this history in unmistakable and indestructible characters.

The volume whose pages have been opened by Professor Niven is a ponderous one. It is anywhere from twelve to sixty feet or more in thickness and the individual leaves are of corresponding dimensions. The first or earliest pages in this unwritten history are found at a depth of four to twenty yards and even more from the present surface. In this page, which bears unmistakable evidence of its artificial character, being made up of kitchen debris, etc., are found many artifacts of a crude but intensely interesting nature, illustrating as they do the first attempts at human handiwork in stone and clay. Among these relics of the forgotten race that trod this valley tens of thousands of years in the past, are many of unmistakably Chinese origin, as seen by the illustrations herewith. The human faces depicted are now generally conceded by students of archaeology to have been portraits of the persons represented, and which were kept about the houses of these for-



San Miguel Amantla.

gotten ancients such as photographs are preserved today, or buried with their originals when death overtook them. These terra cotta portraits are usually not more than a couple of inches in diameter and are of a wide range of type, showing characteristics of races from all portions of the world.

Others of the artifacts found in these first pages of Nature's record are of an Egyptian or Oriental cast, and from what he has gathered Professor Niven is of the opinion that the first and earliest races inhabiting this valley were of two distinct origins, living here side by side and intermingling—Chinese and Egyptians. To the race of the presumably latter origin he has given the name *Atlantas*, both because of its appropriateness and because this is a good Nahuatl word in use in this connection. The marked resemblance of many of the figures and decorations used by this prehistoric people to those found in Egypt and western Asia lends strong color to the existence of the traditional lost continent *Atlantis*, or to some direct connection between what now constitutes the western hemisphere and the eastern. Some of the basso-relievo inscriptions found in the ruins to the south of this valley bear such a resemblance to those of Egypt and Babylon as to be actually startling, and suggestive of a common origin.

As to the presence of Chinese in this country many thousands of years ago there is no doubt in the minds of investigators. The artifacts or images with Chinese characteristics are so common as to admit of no doubt in this connection. Ancient Chinese characters too have been found carved or impressed upon prehistoric objects resurrected from beneath the buried cities of San Juan Teotihuacan, adjacent to the valley of Mexico, while as Professor Carl Lumholtz, the noted traveler and investigator, has shown, in his intensely interesting work "Unknown Mexico," some of the aboriginal tribes of the remote Sierra Madre have a most remarkable vocabulary of Chinese words or their very evident corruptions and carrying the same meaning with them as with their manifest originators.

But whatever the origin of the two distinct races that peopled the valley so long ago, there appears to be little doubt as to their fate. A layer of volcanic ashes and pumice as much as 36 inches in thickness overlies the human remains, telling the story of a cataclysm of Nature in unmistakable fashion. In this deposit human remains are found showing how the unfortunate victims met their fate, much after the fashion of the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Above this layer of volcanic origin is another of earth formed by the slow and gradual accretion of soil created by decaying vegetation, and above this is what may be called the second page of Nature's history of the habitation of this valley. This layer contains many artifacts of stone and terra cotta, all of a higher grade of workmanship than the primary one and evidencing a more advanced stage of civilization, if their prog-



IDOLS AND OTHER PREHISTORIC OBJECTS FROM MEXICO'S BURIED CITIES.

This photograph, taken especially for *The Mexican Review* by C. B. Waite, of Mexico City, shows a recent find of artifacts from Niven in the buried cities in the Valley of Mexico. The dark figure in the lower right hand corner, it will be noted, has abundant dental development that has led some facetious persons to christen it "Teddy the First." The large, crude figure in the center with a pointed skull, bears striking resemblance to the massive stone figures found on Easter Island in the South Pacific.

ress may be so called. Abundant indications are found demonstrating that the race whose prehistoric remains were thus demonstrated perished by flood, gravel and sand showing the action of water being abundant between that and the topmost layer. For lack of any distinctive name, the race responsible for these remains is known merely as Pre-Aztec.

The next page in Nature's history is the Aztec, and the layer containing these artifacts is overlaid by deposits showing the action of hurricanes and windstorms, bringing about the destruction of the people whose homes were thus buried from sight.

Thus are evidenced the three periods of Mexican mythology—Fire, Water and Wind—and in the remains exhumed are found abundant specimens of the three respective gods of those elements.

Professor Niven, who as stated has made a study for many years not only of the buried ruins in the valley of Mexico but elsewhere in the Republic, notably in the State of Guerrero, where he has made some most remarkable discoveries of buried cities, is of the firm belief that the comparatively limited period of the existence of the human race on this globe as taught by many is by no means equal to what he believes Nature has written here. Scientists who have visited these localities for brief periods have expressed the opinion that the periods referred to are of comparatively recent origin and date back to no more than one thousand or fifteen hundred years. But a logical calculation can be and has been made from long study and observation which would seem to upset these very conservative statements. This country has been known to civilization for practically four hundred years—since the landing of Cortez in 1519, and in all that time the ac-

cretion of the surface from natural causes has not been visible to any extent. The historical cypress trees at Chapultepec beneath which Montezuma walked, and which even in his time were gray with age, are exactly in the same condition as they were when Cortez first saw them, and the surrounding surface shows practically the same condition as then. So too with the famous tree of the Noche Triste, and other well-known growths in this and other portions of the Republic by which the changes in the surface could be measured if they were of an appreciable extent. In all those four centuries the topography of the valley in this respect has undergone but slight change. Study of conditions in surrounding localities gives ground for the conclusion that at a conservative estimate the surface under normal conditions and where undisturbed cannot have been built up at a greater ratio than perhaps an inch and one-half in a century, if indeed this be not an overestimate. Six inches at the outside would cover what has been accomplished by Nature in four hundred years. On this basis, which must be conceded by any observer to be in excess of the actuality, something like 30,000 years must have elapsed since the destruction of the combined *Atlantas-Chinese* race which was overwhelmed by volcanic action as stated.

That this theory has good foundation is borne out by the wonderful buried ruins at San Juan Teotihuacan, some thirty miles southeast from this city and on the border of the Valley of Mexico. Here a cross section cut through an extensive mound by railway construction shows two ruined prehistoric cities, built of stone, one superimposed upon the other. The streets of the older city have stone pavements showing channels or grooves six inches or more in depth worn

# MEXICO'S TRADE GROWING

in the solid rock by the constant passage of barefoot or sandal-wearing people. This city, after existing for ages, must have been destroyed by human agency, as the walls of the houses are still standing in good condition, but the rooms and the intervening streets have all been filled level with the eaves with broken rock, manifestly deposited by human agency. No signs of the roofs remain in any instance. Over this buried city is a layer of earth of varying thickness—four to six feet—deposited by natural accretion, and on this layer another city of stone, has been built. This in turn, after ages of habitation, was destroyed, how is not apparent, the buildings filled level with the tops of the walls, and on this still another layer of earth several feet in thickness was gradually deposited by the passage of time. On the surface of this deposit there was originally, so the Spanish historians say, a heavy growth of trees and shrubbery at the time of the advent of Cortez and remained for a long period subsequent thereto. Without allowing for the ages during which these cities existed in their prime and were inhabited by long forgotten races before their final destruction, a period of several thousand years must have elapsed while the normal accretion of the earth was in progress between the two buried cities and over the latest one.

In the same locality are a series of pyramids covered with soil from natural accretion, and also at one time covered with a heavy tree growth. This has been removed, and in some places excavation has disclosed the existence of flights of solid stone steps running from the surface of the ground to the apex of the structure. By accident it was discovered some time ago that these stone steps, deeply worn as they were by the countless thousands who must have ascended them, were underlaid by still another and far more ancient series, also of solid stone, which had been worn completely out in the flight of time, making the substitution of others necessary, and this had been done by simply laying new slabs of stone over the old ones, the latter only being accidentally disclosed by the removal of the earth which covered the sides of the structure.

When one attempts to estimate the time that must have elapsed between the placing of the first solid stone steps in position, their wearing out by the passage of thousands perhaps millions of feet, their being covered by another layer of stone, and it in turn being worn to its present state, one becomes bewildered. The mind refuses to grasp the unavoidable conclusion in this direction, just as it refuses to grasp the conclusions based upon unmistakable evidences of the lapse of tens of thousands of years since the first human foot trod this valley down to the time when the imperishable evidences of the existence of that long forgotten race were first unearthed here. Every pre-conceived and pre-taught idea as to the age of the human race is negatived by the evidence written by Nature in the vast mounds of buried ruins in the Valley of Mexico.

From the figures compiled by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the United States Department of Commerce, it will be seen that the foreign trade of Mexico is in a remarkably healthy condition, showing as it does a constant increase. Notable among the facts gathered are the following:

Imports from Mexico to United States for eleven months ending November, 1916		
1916		\$94,666,087
Ditto for 1915		77,382,112
Ditto for 1914		80,894,117
Exports United States to Mexico for eleven months ending November, 1916		
1916		48,358,378
Ditto for 1915		36,573,237
Ditto for 1914		30,850,965
MOST IMPORTANT IMPORTS FROM MEXICO FOR ELEVEN MONTHS ENDING NOVEMBER, 1915 AND NOVEMBER, 1916		
	1915	1916
Cattle	\$ 6,551,630	\$ 2,104,280
Coffee	6,485,446	6,432,722
Copper (unmanufactured)	1,892,888	6,504,587
Copper (manufactured)	2,298,916	12,090,002
Hats	374,662	187,473
Hides (cattle)	7,399,323	5,553,490
Goat Skins	15,213	1,091,068

## THE DRAGO DOCTRINE

Dr. Enrique Gil, member of a prominent Argentine law firm represented in New York, has written a pamphlet for the American Association for International Conciliation on "Pan-Americanism and the International Policy of Argentina" that tells the long-established Argentine policy opposing intervention. Of the Drago Doctrine, opposing intervention for collection of debt, he says:

"The Drago doctrine, which may be said to be supplementary to the doctrine of Monroe, was formulated, as is well known, as the result of the coercive action exercised in 1902 by a number of European countries against Venezuela. The cardinal principle of the doctrine is that public debts give no right to armed intervention or to a material occupation of American territory by a European power."

And the generally accepted national policy opposing intervention on general principles he discusses thus:

"Our great international jurist, Calvo, who claimed that the independence of the states, with all the corresponding rights, must be absolute, clearly laid down the points that usually constitute a ground for intervention; but, at the same time, he made it clear that intervention, for whatever reasons, either in the external or internal affairs of another country, was distinctly opposed to the spirit of the Argentine principle. Intervention may be diplomatic, pacific, armed, official or unofficial, and some publicists recognize armed intervention only as the true intervention in international law. Thus there is such a divergence of general view upon this subject that it becomes unnecessary to enter into it in detail in this review of Pan-Americanism."

And he quotes the Argentine-Peru treaty of 1874, which includes this statement:

"As a consequence of the established principle of equality in virtue of which the citizens of each of the high contracting parties shall enjoy in the territory of the other the same rights as nationals . . . the damages caused by factions or by individuals, and in general by accidents of any nature whatsoever,

## Interesting Figures Demonstrating the Rapid Return of Normal Conditions

Rubber	612,712	1,027,528
Lead	3,138,761	1,722,102
Mahogany	458,069	511,343
Gold	6,809,089	6,691,995
Silver	19,050,275	14,407,209
Sisal	17,357,712	21,962,599
Oil	9,840,219	12,610,418

## MOST IMPORTANT EXPORTS FROM UNITED STATES TO MEXICO FOR ELEVEN MONTHS ENDING NOVEMBER, 1915, AND NOVEMBER, 1916

	1915	1916
Breadstuffs	\$2,190,826	\$3,300,567
Wheat	191,503	53,329
Automobiles	102,402	532,186
Railway Cars	40,021	213,832
Coal	1,185,475	694,670
Cotton (unmanufactured)	1,773,420	302,396
Cotton (manufact'd cloth)	618,215	4,631,737
Tires for autos	133,463	203,020
Locomotives	85,800	367,555
Typewriters	23,220	132,827
Pipe Fittings (cast)	47,940	241,310
Pipe Fittings (wrought)	268,274	737,428
Rails	79,357	127,521
Structural Iron and steel	66,825	239,294
Tin Plates	237,517	152,437
Boots and Shoes	994,874	1,679,851
Lard	572,047	1,259,425
Books, Music, etc.	80,270	511,534
News Print	121,112	193,341
Boards and Planks	501,609	914,918
Wearing Apparel	221,037	233,497

shall not give rise to any right of special indemnity."

## SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MEXICAN STUDENTS

The need of education in Mexico was considered from the point of view of constructive peace work, at a recent meeting of the peace committee of the Philadelphia yearly meeting of Friends. It was felt that permanent friendly relations between the United States and Mexico would be practically encouraged by having a number of well-prepared Mexican students aided in studying year by year at American colleges and universities by means of scholarships, so that hundreds of Mexico's ablest young men could look back on the United States as their educational home.

This has been proposed to Haverford College, Pennsylvania, and its managers, at their meeting in September, awarded one \$400 or two \$200 scholarships to suitably prepared Mexican students.

The statement has been made to the committee on good authority that "several of the students who finish their studies in such institutions as the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria of Mexico have both the right character and preparation to enter colleges. They are about 18 years of age, with knowledge equivalent to that of average high school graduates of the United States." Further information in regard to Mexican candidates for entrance into our colleges and universities may be obtained from Señor Andrés Osuna, Director-General de Educacion Publica, Mexico, D. F.

In the hope that other colleges may favorably consider the establishment of scholarships for Mexican youth, the matter has been referred to the sub-committee on Governmental relations, with the request that they bring the matter to the attention of presidents of colleges and universities throughout the country.