



THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

779283

*Vol 15
July 1917
Apr 1918*

P. 10

PUBLISHED BY
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

FROM THE HIGHLANDS OF LEMURIA

III

TWO ATLANTEAN COLONIES IN MEXICO

MME. BLAVATSKY tells us, in *The Secret Doctrine*, that Atlantis was the prolongation, and afterwards the survivor of Lemuria. Several regions still existing seem to have belonged first to Lemuria and later to Atlantis. Mexico appears to have been one of these Lemuro-Atlantean regions; Scandinavia seems to have been another. Apparently western Mexico, probably including Southern California, was joined to Lemuria at an immensely remote period, probably a million years ago, when, as has already been related, certain groups of birds akin to the scarlet tanagers, inhabited the Lemuro-Mexican region, which included the peaks of Hawaii. So it comes that the descendants of these birds are still found both in the Hawaiian Islands and in the American continent; one of their peculiarities, in both regions, is the seasonal change of plumage from scarlet to green.

Professor William Niven has for a number of years devoted his leisure to the exploration of the buried cities in the valley of Mexico and, in a profoundly interesting narrative recently contributed to *The Mexican Review*, some account is given of his discoveries, which are the more interesting to us, because they have led him to accept the Atlantean theory completely, so that he even proposes to give the name Atlantan to one of the superposed civilizations which he has unearthed.

For he has laid bare a series of successive civilizations, each destroyed by a natural cataclysm, and separated from its successor by enormous spaces of time; one city being built upon the buried ruins of another, as Schliemann discovered in his excavations at Troy, and, as we are told, on high authority, in *Five Years of Theosophy*, there are several buried cities beneath the present town of Florence. Natural advantages of position, with regard to a river, a fertile valley, a rich deposit of minerals, would account for this; the same advantages would attract successive peoples to the same site.

Professor Niven discovered the buried cities of the oldest Mexican civilization he has yet unearthed (the race to which he has given the name Atlantan), at great depths, in some cases as much as sixty feet below the present surface. This civilization, which was probably Lemurian rather than Atlantean, was completely wiped out by a series of volcanic eruptions, its buried cities being covered with a thick deposit of volcanic ash: Lemurian prototypes of Pompeii. And it is of immense interest that, just as the bodies of Pompeian citizens, who were overtaken while

fleeing from that famous catastrophe, have been found buried in the volcanic ashes of Mount Vesuvius, so escaping "Atlanteans," were overwhelmed by the falling ashes of the volcanoes close to Mexico City; their skeletons have been recovered from depths of sixty feet. This is the more interesting, because *The Secret Doctrine* records that "Lemuria was destroyed by fire; Atlantis by water."

At present, the formation of new layers of soil is going on very slowly, so slowly that the giant cypress trees at Chapultepec under which Montezuma walked four centuries ago are practically unaltered in position. But we may obtain a working average for the rapidity of earth deposition from other regions. Thus in the Somme valley, dated Roman coins are found at a depth which shows that soil there has formed at the rate of three centimetres a century. Sections of peat in Ireland, subjected to microscopic examination, show fine layers of yearly growth, a thousand being contained in a foot thick of peat. These two bases of measurement give the same result: a foot of thickness in a thousand years. If we apply this standard to the deepest layer of buried cities so far laid bare by Professor Niven, at a depth of sixty feet, we shall get an antiquity of sixty thousand years.

But long periods of development certainly stretch back behind even these ancient cities, since they show a very considerable advancement in the arts of life, and evidences of very considerable culture, religious life and scientific knowledge. For example, there is much artistic skill shown in the design of a censer, decorated with the figure of the god of flowers; and small portrait busts, of which Professor Niven has unearthed large numbers, seem to have taken the place of oil paintings or photographs. There appear to have been two distinct races, one of marked Chinese type, the other with Egyptian features, if we judge by these small portrait busts. The former, who in all likelihood came from the west, from the Pacific side, are probably "Lemuro-Atlanteans;" the latter, "Atlanteans," related to the ancestors of the ancient Egyptians. We are even told that Chinese characters have been found on some of the objects unearthed, but these do not seem to be among the most ancient. We are further told that Carl Lumholtz, who made a reputation by his book on the cannibals of Queensland, has found in the remote fastnesses of the Sierra Madre mountains in Mexico, a race in whose language numbers of Chinese vocables are still found; this race may possibly be a survival of the ancient Lemuro-Atlantean colony in Mexico. There is nothing impossible, or even improbable, in this; since we have seen that widely spread elements of the far older Lemurian languages are in common use throughout the Polynesian islands even to-day. The language of the Pharaohs has still a living descendant in the Coptic tongue, which was extensively used in the deciphering of the Demotic and Hieroglyphic inscriptions; and it is said that there are descendants of the ancient Chaldeans among the water-carriers of Tiflis.

Among the interesting relics dug up by Professor Niven, there is

one, a small, rudely carved statuette, which has exactly the features and appearance of the huge, grotesque statues on Easter Island, some of which are in the British Museum. The resemblance is so complete that it irresistibly suggests a former connection between this Mexican colony and that part of Lemuria of which Easter Island is a survival. "The Easter Island relics are the most astounding and eloquent memorials of the primeval giants. They are as grand as they are mysterious; and one has but to examine the heads of the colossal statues, that have remained unbroken on that island, to recognize in them at a glance the features of the type and character attributed to the Fourth Race giants. They seem of one cast though different in features—that of a distinctly sensual type, such as the Atlanteans (the Daityas and "Atalantians") are represented to have in the esoteric Hindu books . . . the brood of mighty sorcerers." (*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, p. 224.)

There is abundant evidence of the domination of sorcery in Mexico, not only at the time of the Spanish conquest four centuries ago, but for ages before that: the evidence supplied by the existence of a powerful priesthood practising human sacrifices, in which it was the custom to cut to the heart of a living victim, thus supplying the powers of evil with a material basis for manifestation, in a way resembling the materializations of spiritualistic séances. It appears that these human sacrifices took place on the flattened summits of the pyramid temples which are characteristic of the older ruins throughout Mexico, and especially in Yucatan and the regions further south, in Central America.

The succession of civilizations has been clearly revealed by the excavations of Professor Niven, as recorded in *The Mexican Review*. Above the most ancient level of remains is, as has been already said, a thick layer of volcanic ashes, showing that this civilization was destroyed by fire. Then follows a layer of earth, several feet thick. Above this begin the remains of a second civilization, which Professor Niven, finding no sufficient indication of its ethnical character, has negatively named "pre-Aztec." This civilization was evidently destroyed in its turn by water, since its remains are covered by a thick layer of mixed gravel and sand, obviously laid down by water, in a series of inundations. Above this is a second layer of earth, with a layer of remains above it, which represents a third civilization, which Professor Niven calls "Aztec."

An extremely interesting section of these superposed civilizations is shown in a hill at San Juan Teotihuacan, some thirty miles to the south-east of Mexico city. A railroad cutting through the hill gives a cross section of successive cities, one above the other, the thick blocks of the paved streets being worn into deep ruts and cavities by the feet of the citizens passing and repassing through countless centuries. One feature in this layer of cities is described by Professor Niven, but not explained: the houses are found to be filled with masses of broken stone, not with volcanic ash, as at Pompeii, nor with lava, as at Herculaneum.

There are many sites of ancient cities not far from Mexico City and

immediately to the south. In the seldom visited valleys of the Sierra Madre mountains, stretching up to the north-west, towards Arizona, Carl Lumholtz found the ruins of huge stone fortresses, built of rough blocks. He also found tribes of "cave-dwellers," who may be the descendants of some of these old Lemuro-Atlantean colonies. We may be able, later, to recount some of their world-theories, comparing them with those which have been already recorded, from the peaks of Lemuria, scattered through the vast spaces of Polynesia.

There is an important group of Atlantean ruins in the peninsula of Yucatan, in south-eastern Mexico, a general description of which has also appeared in *The Mexican Review*. It seems that the sites of a hundred and seventy-two cities have already been identified, though so far very inadequately excavated or described. Most of them are buried in the densest tropical jungle, fever-infested and inaccessible. It is possible to pass quite close to these hidden cities without even suspecting their presence. Two are also so large, that it is estimated that they had each half a million inhabitants; and in them are found the pyramid temples, on whose summits human sacrifices were offered, sacrifices of sorcery, to invoke the help of powers of evil. The recorder of these discoveries in Yucatan appears to believe that these huge blocks of hard stone were cut and even elaborately carved by masons and sculptors using only flint axes and knives. But this is difficult to believe; and, as Carl Lumholtz found fine cutting implements of hardened copper—practically bronze—among tribes of Indians in the remote Sierra Madre valleys—copper implements of the shapes made familiar by the discoveries of the Bronze Period in Europe—it is not too much to suppose that the Yucatan builders also made use of graving tools of hardened bronze. And no practical demonstration has been given, that hard rock can, in fact, be hewn and carved with implements of flint.

This very imperfect account of these vitally interesting discoveries shows that, while much has been done already, far more remains to be done; and it would seem that Carl Lumholtz has hit upon a valuable clue, though he does not appear to have followed it up: to begin, namely, by bringing together all the light which might be shed on the past of Mexico by a detailed and faithful study of present conditions, language, art processes and so on, among the Sierra Madre Indians and the natives of Yucatan and Central America. Thus many of the conventional patterns on earthenware bowls, which he illustrates, and all of which appear to have symbolical meanings, closely resemble the symbolical figures in the so-called hieroglyphics found in Yucatan; a clue to the meaning of the latter might well be found through a study of the former, just as very valuable clues to the ancient language of the Pharaohs, recorded in equally mysterious hieroglyphics, were found through a study of the Coptic language, which is still studied in Egyptian monasteries.

Further, there is the abundant and still little studied literature gathered and preserved by the early Spaniards, long before the earliest

settlements made by English colonists on the shores of the New World. Thus there is a complete and beautifully printed Aztec-Mexican Dictionary, which was published in Mexico City about the time of Shakespeare's birth. And there is the wonderful text of the Popul-Vuh, which gives a marvelously vivid account of some of the earliest races, with their almost divine powers and many passages in which have admirable qualities of eloquence and devotional fervour.

But this rich material is almost neglected; there is little study of it and less co-ordination. When this study is fully developed and its results intelligently applied to the monuments excavated in Yucatan and elsewhere, we may confidently expect that many chapters of Atlantean history will be restored to the world, and that most valuable corroborations of *The Secret Doctrine* will be furnished.

C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

"The Saint is one who lives life with high enjoyment, and with a vital zest; he chooses holiness because of its irresistible beauty, and because of the appeal it makes to his mind. He does not creep through life ashamed, depressed, anxious, letting ordinary delights slip through his nerveless fingers; and if he denies himself common pleasure it is because, if indulged, they thwart and mar his purer and more lively joys."

A. C. BENSON.