

Standing quite alone among the building achievements of the tribes N. of Mexico are the works of the ancient mound-building Indians of the Mississippi valley and the Southern states. Earthworks, grand in proportions and varied in character, remain as a partial and imperfect index of the extent and nature of the architecture of these people. The great embankments probably inclosed thriving villages, and the truncated pyramids must have supported temples or other important structures. But these, built no doubt of wood or bark, have wholly disappeared. The nearest approach to permanent house construction observed in E. United States is found in the clay-covered wattle-work walls of the more southerly tribes [Thomas Adair.] The people had acquired only partial mastery of the building materials within their environment. Earth, sand, and clay, indestructible and always at hand, were utilized for the substructures and embankments, and the cumulative growth gave massive and enduring results, but the superstructures were of materials difficult to utilize in an effective manner by a stone-age people and, being subject to rapid decay, were not cumulative. Had the environment furnished to this group of vigorous and talented tribes the materials for adobe cement or plentiful deposits of readily quarried stone, the results might have been very different; the mound-builders' culture and the mound-building people might have been no mean factor in the American nation to-day.

The primitive habitations of the Pacific slope from the Straits of Fuca to the Gulf of California afford a most instructive lesson. In the N. the vigorous tribes had risen to the task of utilizing the vast forests, but in the S. the improvident and enervated natives were little short of homeless wanderers. In the N. the roomy communal dwellings of the Columbia valley, described by Lewis and Clark, were found, while to the S. one passes through varied environments where timber and earth, rocks and caves, rushes, bark, grass, and brush in turn played their part in the very primitive house-making achievements of the strangely diversified tribesmen.