

**RUINS IN GREAT AMERICAN DESERT.**

**Vandals Destroying Priceless Specimens—Ancient History.**

Special Correspondence of The Florida Star.

PHENIX, A. T., Dec. 3.—Should America ever produce an archaeologist who will do for our prehistoric cities what Schliemann did for Troy it is in southern Arizona that he will find his most fruitful field of research. But he must appear soon, for the vandals are and have been at work for a long time, and what are probably the oldest of American ruins are being carried away piecemeal. Hitherto their inaccessibility has protected them, but with the increased means of travel has appeared a horde of ruthless, unskilled, unscientific relic hunters and amateur archaeologists, and they are carting away and scattering broadcast prehistoric weapons, utensils, jewelry, skeletons and pottery that should be secured by national statute from their profane touch.

The mystery of long dead ages and peoples broods over much of southwestern America, and the tale of its prehistoric peoples is not even guessed at. Evidence there is, however, in plenty that this region was once inhabited thousands of years ago by a dense population of skillful and intelligent farmers. They left behind them traces of their agricultural ability in the shape of irrigation works, with canals and water gates. In many parts of this country also have been found agricultural implements. Pottery abundantly, together with polished woods, stones and shells and finely woven cloths, showing conclusively that manufacture was not unknown in America thousands of years before Columbus sailed from Spain.

There is evidence that southern Arizona once held in place of the frontier towns that now dot its surface no less than 14 aboriginal cities, with populations ranging from 10,000 to 75,000. By all standards of archaeological research there could scarcely have been less than half a million of people here. This is probably far below the real number, for doubtless many traces of these primitive people or peoples have been lost. There is probably no region of the world, not even excepting the sites of famed historic cities, that would so richly repay scientific investigation.

The remains of the large cities lie in a plain between the Salt and the Gila rivers. The plain is about 45 miles in every direction and is overgrown by the rank desert growth. The presence of the houses underneath the soil is indicated by mounds, many hundreds of them, of varying shapes. They vary in height from one foot to about 25. Broken pottery, the utensils of the ancient people, lies scattered around, ready to be picked up and sold to the tourist as souvenirs. A trade has grown up in relics of these prehistoric people, and they bid fair to be scattered far and wide, beyond the hope of redemption. Everybody takes a hand at it and goes forth to dig up something old to sell to the tourist from the east.

In some parts of Arizona boulders and stones inscribed with hieroglyphs have been found. The prehistoric races evidently knew how to communicate their thoughts in writing, but it is an open question whether moderns will ever be able to read them. The origin of these prehistoric peoples may remain forever clouded in mystery and doubt, though scientists who have examined the ruins advance various hypotheses. Of positive evidence outside of the ruins themselves there is little or none. It is said that the Chinese claim that one of their explorers founded a colony on our side of the Pacific; but, on the other hand, the Indians have traditions of a "bearded white race." And the Chinese are neither white nor bearded.

The United States has been culpably negligent of the Arizona ruins. While European nations spend vast sums on investigating every trace of their ancient history we have done little or nothing to throw light upon a past that probably extends farther back than that of any other people. Visiting archaeologists from Germany and other countries have expressed surprise that the United States should allow such a fertile field of research to lie fallow. Several years ago somebody had a spasm of virtue in this respect, and the ruins of a temple at Casa Grande were preserved for future generations by creating a national reservation around them. At least as much should be done for the remains of the prehistoric cities, to save what is left of their relics from the ruthless hand of the vandals who are rapidly despoiling them. The supply of relics cannot last forever.

CHARLES E. ROBINSON.

**WANDERING MARINERS' GUIDES.**

**Our Nation's Lighthouses and How They Guard the Coast.**

Special Correspondence of The Florida Star.

COHASSET, MASS., Dec. 4.—Now is the storm season drawing near, and the time approaches when the lighthouse keeper in his lofty wind and wave swept refuge must needs be ever on the alert to warn the mariner of lurking rocks and treacherous shoals. The New England coast was ever the scene of the wildest and most violent of Old Neptune's assaults on human life and ill fated vessels, and it is but a natural consequence that many millions of dollars have been expended by the United States government in making the much trafficked waters as safe a thoroughfare as possible. Some of the best equipped lighthouses as well as lightships and life saving stations in the world are scattered along danger breeding shores from Point Judith to Grand Manan, and if the lives preserved could be accredited with monetary value and added to the worth of the property saved through their agencies the cost of the sustenance of this branch of signal service would appear insignificant in the extreme.

Just the running of the lighthouses and lightships of the United States and the maintenance of the buoys cost more than \$3,000,000 a year. The salaries of lighthouse keepers alone amounted last year to about \$800,000. The number of these keepers on duty through the whole United States is estimated at about 1,400. The winter months are usually looked forward to with somewhat of apprehension by the watchers of the deep, for no one then knows what a day may bring forth in the shape of hurricanes and roughened seas. The lighthouses, especially those situated at any appreciable distance from land, keep supplies stocked in for several weeks ahead, thus warding off the likelihood of privation during the time when the turbulent condition of the sea renders communication with the shore impossible.

One of the most famous lighthouses in the world is the Minot's Ledge light in Massachusetts bay directly off Cohasset. This light is a marvel in construction and is conceded to be even superior to the well known Eddystone light in the English channel. Minot's is built on a sunken ledge in an open and exposed situation three miles from the rock strewn Cohasset beach. The first time I saw the massive brick and cement cylinder, truly described by Whittier as "a wide mouthed cannon gaping upward at the sky," a feeling of awe tinged with admiration stole over me. What a history that stalwart old sentinel of the sea could write were it but endowed with the power of narration! What scenes of chaotic splendor it had witnessed! What tales of horror and anguish it could unfold! The shriek of struggling seamen mingled with the cries of terrified women and children as the crumpling waves bore them onward and downward seemed almost to have left their imprint on the sullen, gloomy tower. Visions of stout ships straining and vanquished, pounding and grinding on the hungry ledges whose appetites could never be satiated, rose in my mind, and I could almost see the sheets of wind driven spray and foam as they swept over the very top of the structure. Other important lights I have seen and visited include the Highland light on Cape Cod, the Gay Head light on Marthas Vineyard, the Navesink light at Atlantic Highlands, N. J.; the Pumpkin Island light in Eggemoggin reach, Maine; the Green Island light in Blue Hill bay, Maine; also lights on Mount Desert island, but not one of these can hope to outrank Minot's Ledge beacon as an associate with tragical events.

The solid structure now standing on Minot's ledge is the second lighthouse that rock has borne. The first was made of iron pillars set a short distance apart so that the sea might break through them. The idea was that this sort of building would offer less resistance to the passage of powerful waves. One memorable night in the winter of 1856 a great storm arose. The waves twisted and tore the iron pillars and hurled the edifice into the tossing waters, drowning all the five keepers who were inside. The present lighthouse, however, bids fair to stand until the end of time.

The lighthouses along this section of the coast and including those in Boston harbor are in what is known as the Second Lighthouse district. Admiral George Dewey once served as inspector in this district, then was made naval secretary and finally became a member of the lighthouse board. Admiral Winfield S. Schley was twice inspector and afterward occupied Dewey's place as chairman of the board.

FREDERICK R. TOOMBS.

Senator Fairbanks, the presidential heir apparent, is whooping it up for a larger army and a ship subsidy. Let the hide, horns and hoofs go with the meat and bones.

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**Forrest As a Negro Minstrel.**

From almost the beginning of American stage history there were negroes of the minstrel variety impersonated on the stage, though it was not until about 1840 that they were organized into bands. Some of the greatest actors of later days had their experience as minstrels, among them Joe Jefferson and Edwin Forrest.

Forrest was given a negro "song and dance" act to do when he was very young, and after he had studied it up he asked where was the "old negro lady" that was to act his assistant in the piece. The management tried several of the women who were members of the company, but none of them would consent to blacken up, and, in fact, they were very indignant over the proposition. The actor, however, was not easily discouraged, and on the night of the first performance he blackened up and went around the corner to an old negro woman who did his washing.

"Hello, Dinah," he said on entering. "How yo' be er feelin dis bery fine ebenin?"

"Hello, yo'," replied the African lady. "'Pears to me yo' am er bery fresh nigger."

"Ize no nigger," answered Forrest, and then, time being rather short, he assumed his natural voice and told Dinah, much to her surprise, that he was Forrest, the actor, and that he wanted her to go on the stage with him that night and laugh loudly at frequent intervals, which was all the female part called for. The two made a great hit and were kept on for some time, which goes to show that Forrest might have been a good minstrel had he been of an ambitious nature.—Saturday Evening Post.

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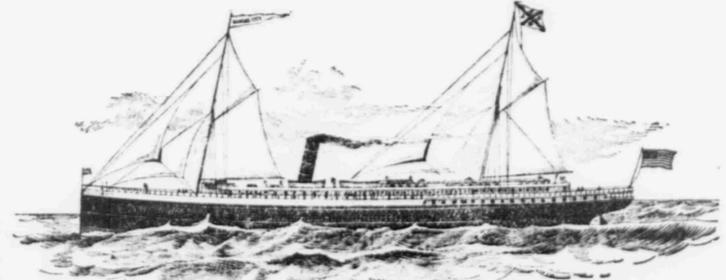
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