

ever visited them, or cared to brave the dangers naturally following an attempt to penetrate into the home of the barbarous tribes who roam over this immense range of territory, together with the fact that there is absolutely no scrap of written history to be found in existence, previous to the year 1680, made my attempts quite futile.

The whole subject is shrouded in an impenetrable veil of mystery, although upon an examination of the ruins themselves, I became fully convinced that they were of undoubted Aztec origin. There is but little question that those found upon the Gila, and upon the Casas Grandes, in Chihuahua, are more ancient than the others described in this work, and were probably erected by the Toltecs or their contemporaries. This opinion was founded more upon conjecture and speculation than upon any tangible proofs which the examination afforded; nor have I ever, since my return, learned anything to cause me to change the opinion then formed. There they stand, magnificent, though decaying monuments of the energy, skill, and civilization of a mighty people who flourished but a few hundred years since, yet have now no history save the crumbling evidences of their works, to tell us of their rise and fall.

Does not the sad fate of these nations furnish us who to-day journey over the deserts which their civilization and industry caused to "blossom as the rose," ample material for reflection?