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Where are our Chiefs of old? Where our Heroes of mighty name?
The fields of their battles are silent—scarce their mossy tombs remain!—OSSIAN.

\$1.50 per Annum
IN ADVANCE.

VOL. I.

HAGERSVILLE, ONT., WEDNESDAY, MAR. 31, 1886.

NO. 6

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FROM CELEBRATED WRITERS.

BY B. L. G.

The ancient remains of arts found in North America, has evident marks of being the production of a people elevated far above the condition and circumstances of the common savage, many of them indicate great elegance, taste, and a high degree of mechanical skill; others indicate a religious worship of some supreme deity. The size and great number of earthen mounds and fortifications, clearly show the existence of numerous people, capable of executing such enormous works requiring skill perseverance, and the combined efforts of a vast population, directed by some settled form of Government, and requiring much time for their erection.

A description of some of the remains left by that vast population which in remote ages occupied this portion of the globe, may not be deemed of interest to its present occupants, and these relics should attract our attention as monuments of an enlightened species of the human family. Articles of mechanism have frequently been discovered in graves, mounds and mural remains, also objects of a miscellaneous character.

The art of pottery is of very early invention, as its fragments are to be found among the best ruins in the world. Its productions, though fragile, have withstood the efforts of time more durably than the most massive monuments, and specimens still exist entire, of equal date with the remotest period of civilization.

Those found in North America of ancient construction, are of different qualities and dimensions, some by estimate from fragments having been of large capacity. The chalk banks below the mouth of the Ohio river, have contained several of great merit in execution, and a pitcher which has been discovered there, is said to resemble the Leyphus of the ancients. Its model was a bottle-gourd, its neck is moulded in imitation of that of a woman with clubbed feet; the outlet resembles a distorted human mouth; and the whole vessel, though formed by hand, is moulded with great nicety and precision. An earthen vessel found at Nashville, Tennessee, twenty feet below the surface, is described as being circular, with a flat bottom, rounding upwards and terminating at the summit in the figure of a female head. The face is plastic, the head is covered by a conical cap, and the ears are large. The most curious specimen of potters is that called the Triune-vessel, which was disinterred from the earth, near an ancient work upon the Cumberland river. It consists of three heads, joined together at the back near the top, by a hollow stem or bottle.

The heads are of the same dimensions, and represent very accurately their different countenances, two appearing young and the other old. The faces are partly painted with red and yellow, the colors still preserving great brilliancy; the features are distinguished by thick lips, high cheek bones, the absence of a beard, and pointed shape of the head.

An idol discovered in a tumulus at Nashville, presents the figure of a man without arms, and the nose and chin mutilated. The head is covered with a fillet and cake, and the hair is plaited; the composition is of fine clay, mixed with gypsum. Colored medals representing the sun with its rays, other idols of various forms, and urns containing calcined human bones, some modelled after the most elegant and graceful patterns, have been found in the mounds. The fragments of earthenware, discovered at great depths near the western salt works, are often of immense size. A vessel, of coarse description, has been found there eighty feet below the surface, large enough to hold ten gallons; while others have been excavated at greater depths, and of larger dimensions.

Within a mound opened at Lancaster, in Ohio, upon a furnace disposed at the level of the earth, there rested the largest earthen vessel yet discovered. It was eighteen feet long, six broad, composed of clay and broken shells, and moulded on both sides with much smoothness. Some of them appear to have been painted before burning, are skilfully wrought and polished, well glazed and burned, and are inferior to our own manufactures in no respect. At Hamburg, in the State of New York, within an urn in the interior of a mound curious beads have been found deposited, consisting of transparent green glass, covered with an opaque red enamel, beneath which and in the tube of the head was a beautiful white enamel, indicative of great art in its formation. On opening an old grave, at Big River, in the State of Missouri, whose antiquity was sufficiently attested by a heavy growth of forest trees over the spot, beads of a similar shape, appearance and composition have also been found.

The bricks found in the mounds appear to have been formed after the modern method, and are well burnt. The art of working in stones, and other hard substances, was brought to a great degree of perfection by this people; and beads of bone and shell, carved bones and sculptured stones are by no means rare. The covers of some of the urns are composed of calcereous breccia, skilfully wrought; the pieces of stone worn as ornaments, and found interred with the dead, have been drilled and worked into exact shapes, and the pipe-bowls are ornamented with beautiful carved reliefs. An idol of stone,

representing the human face, has been found at Natchez, and an owl carved in stone at Columbus, Ohio. The most singular of these sculptures has been found on the banks of the Mississippi, near St. Louis. This is a tabular mass of limestone, bearing the impression of two human feet. The rock is a compact limestone of a grayish color, containing encrinite, echinite, and other fossils. The feet are flat, but the muscular marks are delineated with great exactness. Immediately before the feet marks lies a scroll, sculptured in the same style. It is the received opinion that these foot-marks are the work of art, and exhibit an extraordinary analogy with similar appearances in Asia and in Central America.

Ancient inscriptions on rocks have also been observed. Dr. Barton examined some, on a large stratum of rock, upon the east shore of the Ohio, about fifty miles below Pittsburgh, and found them in great numbers, and apparently the work of a people acquainted with the use of iron instruments, or with hardened metallic instruments of some kind. Similar sculptures have also been found in Missouri.

Many metallic remains have also been discovered among the ancient ruins, some quite perfect and others in a state of decomposition. Copper appears to have been in the most general use. It has been found in the mounds, either in irregular masses or worked into various forms, and sometimes plated with silver. Arrow-heads, bracelets, circular plates or medals, beads, a cross, and pipe-bowls, all composed of this metal, have been disinterred from the tumuli. One of the ancient mounds at Marietta, Ohio, was situated on the margin of a stream, which had gradually washed away the surrounding soil and part of the structure itself, when a silver cup was seen in the side of the mound. Its form was very simple, and resembled some of the earthenware patterns, being an inverted cone. It was made of solid silver, all its surfaces were smooth and regular, the inside nicely gilded. Some writers have endeavored to show that the use of iron was common among the ancient red men, yet the supposition is supported by no positive testimony, from the perishable nature of metal, when exposed to the atmosphere or moisture, may have destroyed all vestiges of its use at the distant period when the mounds were erected.

The antiquities discovered in the western caves are of a remarkable character, and have given rise to much speculation. They cannot be ascribed to the present tribes of Indians, in consequence of the reverence in which caverns are held by them. They view them with superstitious feelings, thinking them to be the residence of the Great Spirit, and seldom entering