

KING SOLOMON'S MINES.

King Solomon, in the fourth year of his reign, began the building of the Temple, or the House of the Lord. The length of the Temple was sixty cubits. And the height was thirty cubits and the breadth was twenty cubits. The Temple was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither; so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool was heard in the house while it was building.

He built an oracle in the Temple twenty cubits long, twenty cubits broad and twenty cubits high, and he overlaid it with gold. Solomon then overlaid the Temple within with gold and precious metals. He made a partition of chains before the oracle and overlaid them with gold. And all the statues and images in the Temple, as well as all the vessels and utensils, were of precious metals. And after he had finished all the Temple he overlaid the whole building with gold and precious metals.—1 Kings, vi and vii.

Strange as it may seem, the same mysterious mines from which King Solomon obtained his fabulous amount of gold, copper and other precious metals are also being

worked by modern miners. Even after fully 4,000 years these ancient mines are still yielding precious metal for the enrichment of man. The sound of blasting vibrates through the huge hollow vaults, where, centuries ago, countless thousands of workers toiled, taking on the gold that was to embellish the mighty Temple. Instead of the faint tinklings of thousands of hammers, the echoes of mammoth steel drills float up through the endless and shafts. Wonderful indeed, are these ancient works that have witnessed the rise and fall of empires and now remain as a monument of Solomon's great engineering skill. They are near the town of Cordova, Spain. What they were called in ancient times is unknown, but of the fact that they were King Solomon's own mines there is no doubt. But not alone did he confine himself to these particular mines. Some distance away in Spain, in the northern part of Galicia, on the banks of the river Sil, are similar mines that yielded him gold of the finest quality. The old workings still remain, but little changed in appearance. English companies are now being formed with large capital to again extract the gold.

Even to day, says a writer 'a compensative quantity of gold is washed from these old deposits on the banks of the river by the local peasant women, who stand in the shallow places and wash the gold they have collected in wooden bowls, in the working of which they have become expert.'

Professor Alexander Hill, one of the greatest mining experts of the present day, has carefully examined these mines for the Spanish Government, and confirmed the theory that has for years been held by scientists and scholars of ancient research, that these ancient workings were indeed King Solomon's mines.

Professor Hill has been appointed consulting engineer of the mines, and it is under his direction that they are now being worked.

'The mines,' he says, 'were worked by the Phoenicians 2000 B.C., and it was here that King Solomon undoubtedly obtained much of the metal for the Temple. In my investigations of these wonderful mines I discovered many wonderful things.'

'As we journeyed down the immense gloomy caverns we from time to time stumbled against water wheels, made of oak, completely covered with a coating of copper and perfectly preserved. The copper covered the wheels in some instances an inch thick. It must have taken thousands of years for the coating to have formed in this manner.'

'The wheels, nothing similar to which has ever before been discovered, were evidently used by the ancient toilers for raising the water that washed into the tunnels and filled the depths below. The water was raised by a series of tanks, one tank being placed above the other until the surface was reached. There are to be seen remains of these tanks still clinging to the rough sides of the walls.'

'In other subterranean vaults we found clay lamps that were used by the workers thousands of years ago to light the gloom when they were toiling away in the passages. The lamps were filled with oil and were placed about in the interstices of the rocks.'

'It was wonderful to perceive how much this ancient people knew about mining. I was astonished to see how systematically their tunnels and drifts were run. King Solomon's miners were evidently magnificent engineers, as good as any we have at the present day, and they carried out their work on the most scientific principles.'

Their tunnels were much the same as our own. There was no shoddy work in cutting them, out of the living rock. Many of the timbers originally put in these mines by the ancient workers are yet preserved. They stand there, covered with the accumulated dirt and metallic coatings of ages, in the same position they were placed in when the metal for the Temple was being taken out.

'From out of a deep and weird passage, four hundred feet under the earth, we took one of the oak water wheels and carried it to the surface, where the copper was taken off. The wheel was found to be in perfect condition. Time had evidently not wrought its ravages upon this ancient mining device. Living hands once more grasped the long levers, as they were held when in daily operation forty hundred years ago.'

Strange is the history of these wonderful treasure caves. In their subterranean depths, hundreds of feet from the light of day, toiled countless workers when the world was in its very first stages of development. When the Saviour walked the earth these caves were then two thousand years old.

To go back still further, these same mines had witnessed the rise and fall of Egypt; had seen Jerusalem grow from a humble hamlet to be the richest city in the world, and remained as a commemoration of her glory centuries even before the palace of Nimrod was built. Rome was not founded until hundreds of years after they had been abandoned.

We look upon the days when Daniel, the great prophet, addressed the multitudes from the steps of the Temple as extremely remote, yet even this was so recent that Daniel was unable to find the sources from which Solomon procured his metal, all traces of the fabulous treasure vaults having been lost hundreds of years before, and apparently forever.

Hidden from the world in the then unknown land of Spain, they were mute witnesses of the advent of civilization. In the dim dawn of human history, when the peopling of the world began, they were there, and were co-existent with the birth and death of races so remote that even history fails to record them.

It is strange how Solomon came to discover these treasure caves. Neither history nor the Bible makes any reference to the manner in which he found them. They were far away from his place of birth. It is thought more than likely that Hiram, King of Tyre, was the real finder, and that he communicated the discovery to Solomon, who at once proceeded to extract the metal. What is now Southern Spain was then the richest and most valued of the Phoenician possessions. The land was a mine of wealth to them, and Hiram was well acquainted with its great caves and riches. So great was its wealth in gold, silver, copper, and precious metals that even the ships of the Phoenicians carried silver anchors.

It was at this time that Hiram journeyed to Jerusalem, where he met Solomon and took part in the building of the Temple. He became a goldsmith, as it were, to Solomon, and it was he that furnished the Temple with such stores of precious metals from the mines of Spain that silver soon became so common that it 'accounted as nothing in the Temple,' as we read in the First Book of Kings.

Remains of the Temple are still standing near the eastern wall of the present Jerusalem. Excavations have been made of one of the ruined walls and a series of piers have been unearthed. These originally supported the arches of the bridge which Solomon built to span the valley connecting the Temple with Jerusalem.

The unearthed wall is in a good state of preservation, retaining as it does a trace of the massive and perfect character of the Temple's architecture, and bringing to mind some of the past glories and sanctities. Many of the stones are twenty-five feet in length, and apparently have remained undisturbed since the time Solomon placed them there. Beneath the foundation of the Temple have been unearthed various subterranean chambers and passage ways of immense size.

None of the Temple's gorgeous ornaments has been discovered, although it is believed

that fragments of these may yet be found under the hidden foundations.

It was these ornaments of gold and precious metals that made Solomon's Temple the most wonderful building the world has ever known. To obtain this treasure the Temple was plundered no less than twelve times, and thousands of men slaughtered.

A HINT TO YOUNG FOLK.

THEY ARE APT TO BE CARELESS WHERE HEALTH IS CONCERNED.

A GREAT many people, and especially young people, are too careless of their health. They will sit in a draught when they know they are taking cold, and in numerous other ways show their indifference to the rules that govern health, realising, sometimes when it is too late, the serious cost of their carelessness. Never neglect an illness no matter how trivial it may appear. It is in this class of persons that Miss Annie Ramadell, of Whitehead, N.B., wishes to speak. 'In June, 1895,' she says, 'I contracted a cold, but did not take anything for it, thinking that it would soon pass away. In this, however, I was disappointed, and I finally realised that it had settled on my lungs, and I was obliged to take to bed. A doctor was called in, and he said I was a very sick girl, which truth it is needless to say I had realised before he was sent for. At the outset his medicine helped me somewhat, but the improvement was not lasting, and I found myself growing weaker and weaker. At last I reached that stage when I despaired of getting better. My appetite had almost entirely failed; I was reduced nearly to a skeleton, had a hacking cough, and suffered from headache and fluttering or palpitation of the heart. As a matter of fact both myself and friends thought I was at death's door. While in this condition I read in a newspaper of a case similar to mine cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I procured a supply, and by the time I had taken six boxes I was almost completely recovered. My appetite had returned, a healthy colour came back to my face and my cough ceased troubling me. I am still occasionally using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and my recovery through their use has made for them hosts of friends in this locality, who look upon what they have done for me as little short of miraculous.'

Professor: "Give me the names of the bones that form the human skull." Medical student: "I've got them all in my head, but I can't recall their names."

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LIST OF SUCCESSSES FOR THE YEAR 1897.
Four Boys passed the Matriculation Examination.
Four Boys passed the Senior Civil Service Examination.
Nine Boys passed the Junior Civil Service Examination, two of whom gained the 1st and 3rd places in New Zealand on a List of 258 successful candidates.
Special Bus Arrangements for Day Boys.
Prospectus may be had on application to the Principal, or from Messrs Upton and Co. Queen-street.