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Indian First to Irrigate

American irrigation was old when Rome was in the glory of its youth. The ancient aqueducts and subterranean canals of South America, extending for thousands of miles, once supplied great cities and irrigated immense areas. Centuries before the venturesome Norseman landed upon the bleak and inhospitable shores of New England a large population dwelt in the hot valleys of the far Southwest. From the solid rock, with primitive tools of stone, they cut ditches and hewed the blocks for many-chambered palaces, which they erected in the desert or on the limestone ledges of deep river canyons.

These voiceless ruins, older than the memory of many centuries, tell the story of a thrifty, home-loving and semicivilized people, concerning whose fate history brings us no word. In these palaces and in many miles of canals we may almost read the story of another Egypt—a people toiling under the burning sun of the desert, wearily and painfully executing the commands of an American Pharaoh.

Coming down to a period less remote and only slightly less interesting, is the first page of modern American history.

Here, in the sixteenth century, Coronado, the first great American explorer, swept up the Rio Grande valley and journeyed as far north as Kansas. In new Mexico he found a pastoral race dwelling in pueblos and practicing the gentle art of irrigation as had their forefathers, perhaps as far back as in the days of Abraham.

Certainly their agricultural methods were in no wise different from those which prevailed in the days of the prophets. Even unto this day their grain is gathered in great willow baskets, is threshed by the trampling of sheep and goats and winnowed by the winds. Fields which were cultivated three centuries ago are still producing crops each year.

Some of these thoughts came to the government engineers as they ran their lines of levels in the valley of the Salt river, in Arizona, and it seemed to them a proper task for the greatest nation on earth to restore once more the oases of verdure which the desert had long ago obliterated.

During the last quarter of a century a crop producing area of 10,000,000,

Continued on page 2.