



Further explorations in the land of the Incas

Hiram Bingham

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1916 Excerpt: ...construction of the artificial lands in the warmer valleys seems almost incredible. Even irrigation agriculture appears to us as a new and very specialized branch of the art, and we think ourselves very enterprising to have undertaken the reclamation of our so-called "deserts" in the Western States, where wide expanses of nearly level and very fertile soil have been made richly productive simply by being supplied with water. The native agriculture of Peru reached the stage of reclamation projects long before America was discovered by Europeans. Our undertakings sink into insignificance in the face of what this "vanished" race accomplished. The narrow floors and steep walls of rocky valleys that would appear utterly worthless and hopeless to our engineers were transformed, literally made over, into fertile lands, and were the homes of teeming populations in the prehistoric days. liPiWIWBB The native people take the amazing works of the ancients as a matter of course, as we accept the natural features that surround us, and are no more inclined than we are to such impossible undertakings as the ancient people accomplished. That the ancient people should have taken to terrace-building is not difficult to understand in the presence of the natural conditions where the art developed. With an agricultural population becoming crowded in steep, rocky valleys, the removal and piling up of the stones to give more room for plants would be a most natural step for a primitive people to take. In the early days the building of terraces may have appeared simply as an effective way of disposing of the stones and leaving the largest area of tillable land after the work was done. If there were more stones than could be used in building the walls, the surplu...

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