

place. But it would seem that the United States government did not fully keep their plighted faith; for Pike says, "My faith was pledged to the savage chiefs for the replacing of these medals and flags," but owing to the change of agents, "and a variety of circumstances, it was never fulfilled. This has left a number of the Sioux and Sauteur chiefs without their distinguishing marks of dignity," which they considered as a fraud practiced upon them, "and would render my life in danger should I ever return among them." This is one of the many instances in which this people have been treated in bad faith by the whites.

(To be Continued.)

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## INDIAN MOUNDS.

BY CHAS. A. WHITE, M. D., STATE GEOLOGIST.

The whole history of the American continent, previous to its discovery by Columbus, is so wrapped in impenetrable mystery, that the least memento of its ancient inhabitants is regarded with unusual interest. Of the race which existed when Europeans first visited America, and which now occupies a large portion of it, we have comparatively full information; yet of their origin or advent upon the continent, we know nothing with certainty.

Notwithstanding this want of knowledge of their early history, the evidence seems to be satisfactory, that an aboriginal race more ancient than they, and having entirely different customs, once inhabited the country now occupied by the northern and north-western States, as well as parts of Canada.

The principal features of this evidence within the area named, consists in the remains of ancient copper-mining in the Lake Superior region, and the presence of what are commonly known as Indian Mounds.\* It is believed that the present race of Indians, at the time of the first visit of the

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\* The so-called walled lakes of Northern Iowa have been supposed by some to present evidence of the handiwork of an ancient race of men, but as I have elsewhere shown, those phenomena are entirely due to natural causes.

whites, knew nothing of the working of any metal, not even of lead, and they also seem to be in as utter ignorance as ourselves concerning the origin of the mounds.

These mounds are rounded elevations of earth evidently scraped up from the surrounding surface; usually small, often scarcely distinguishable, but occasionally of considerable size. They are usually circular, sometimes oval, and even in some cases bear a fancied resemblance in outline to some animal. They are almost invariably in groups, numbering from two or three, to fifty or more. Sometimes they seem to be arranged on a definite ground-plan, but are oftener distributed without order.

Concerning the purposes for which they were constructed we are much in doubt, but they are usually regarded as memorials of the dead. Human remains have often been found in connection with them, but this is by no means invariable. When these remains are found they are usually placed around the base of the mound, where they are sometimes marked by the presence of flat stones, but they seldom if ever occupy the centre, with the earth heaped upon them. Rude pottery and other relics are frequently found with these remains, to which the present race of Indians seem to be entire strangers.

The mounds commonly occupy prominent, or otherwise interesting locations, in the majority of cases being found upon the brow of the bold characteristic bluffs which border the valleys of our western rivers, but are not unfrequently located upon an elevated plateau which is skirted around by a low range of bluffs or hills. Standing among any of these mounds one finds the surrounding scenery invariably interesting, and often very impressive, showing that a certain sentiment guided the builders in their selection of the ground, but what this sentiment was, whether of religion, veneration of the dead, or an appreciation of the beautiful and sublime in nature, we are left to conjecture. They are quite numerous along the bluffs of the Mississippi river, and the lover of that romantic scenery, having sought out some point from which to obtain a view more beautiful and impressive than

the rest, will almost always find himself in the immediate presence of a group of mounds.

During the progress of the State Geological Survey, many of these interesting objects have been observed, but the press of other matters has prevented that careful examination of them which the interest of the subject requires. Along the bluffs of the Iowa river between Iowa City and Columbus City, a large number of them have been observed, a very numerous group of which occur just below the mouth of English river, about twelve miles from Iowa City. An interesting group is also found on land of Hon. Eliab Doud, near the Des Moines river in Van Buren County.

Visiting Sac City, Sac County, last autumn, I observed several mounds within the village, and having no time to devote to a careful examination of these, Mr. D. Carr Early, an attorney of that place has kindly furnished me with data for the following account of them, accompanied by a carefully drawn plat, which I regret cannot be published with this article.

Sac City is pleasantly located in an abrupt bend of Moon river, which sweeps around it upon the north, east and south, and rests upon one of those level, or gently inclined spaces called by the settlers "second bottom." They were doubtless true bottom lands ages ago, long before the river had cut its valley so deep as it now is, and long before the mound builders occupied the ground, but they are now, and were when the mounds were built, some of our most interesting and fertile spots, far above the reach of floods. On the west the town is bordered by a moderately elevated bluff, and thus the whole space is surrounded by strongly marked topographical features rendering it one of the most interesting spots in the whole region. It is about the centre of this space that we find the mounds, and doubtless an appreciation of the surrounding features guided the mound builders in the one case, and the town builders in the other, in the selection of grounds. The mounds are eight in number, arranged in a general direction from north-east to south-west, but without regular order,

the distance between the two extremes in that direction being a little less than six hundred feet, and in the traverse direction, less than one hundred feet.

Two of these mounds are oval in outline, and all the others are circular. The oval ones are located further to the north-east, and commencing with the first of these, which is near his residence, Mr. Early gives their dimensions, as follows, progressing in the order of their occurrence to the south-west.

No. 1, 96 feet in diameter, east and west, and 36 feet north and south, and two feet high.

No. 2, 60 feet in diameter, east and west, and 30 feet north and south, and two feet high.

No. 3, circular, 66 feet in diameter and 5 feet high.

No. 4, " 80 " " " 6 "

No. 5, " 60 " " " 3 "

No. 6, " 60 " " " 3 "

No. 7, " 50 " " "  $2\frac{1}{2}$  "

No. 8, " 60 " " " 3 "

It will be observed that three of these mounds are of exactly the same dimensions, and that the long axes of two oval ones are in an east and west direction, and not in the line of their distribution.

Nos. 4, 5 and 6 have been dug through the centre to the undisturbed earth, the public well having been dug through No. 5, and the flag-staff set in No. 6; and nothing of human remains or works of art have been discovered.

It is to be hoped that during the progress of the State work sufficient time may be devoted to the careful examination of these works of the former owners of our soil.

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