Time Required to Erect.

The great number of the earthworks scattered throughout the mound district of Wisconsin, at first thought impresses the average man with the idea that at the time they were built, this region must have been the seat of a vast population. A practical consideration of the subject will dispel this fallacy.

Mound building in this state doubtless extended through several centuries. Operations first commenced in the southern portion and gradually extended northward. But few mounds were erected on any site during the same generation and the time and labor necessary for the building of any particular earthwork is usually over estimated. Fowke explains that:

"The most exaggerated views prevail as to the amount of labor that must enter into the erection of mounds and earthworks."—Fowke, Ohio, 81.

He estimates that the 10,000 mounds of Ohio would contain about 30,000,000 cubic yards of earth (probably four times as much soil as was required to erect all of the Wisconsin mounds combined), would require 1,000 men, if each carried a wagon load a day, to build all in less than a century, were they to work 300 days a year.

The Wisconsin works were built of material scraped up, usually in their immediate vicinity, or carried in baskets or bags from places where it could be most easily worked with wooden paddles or spades. Investigation has shown that in most cases the earth was moved but short distances.

In some instances the separate loads of earth deposited by those assisting in the construction of a mound are still distinguishable. An example of this may be noted in Thomas' description of the exploration of a number of mounds in a group at Rice Lake, Barron county. (12 B. E., 94–95.)

Among the largest Wisconsin mounds are the effigies. The frequent type known as the "bear effigy" is one of the most bulky forms, yet it rarely exceeds 80 feet in length, an average of 20 feet in width and four feet high. Such an earthwork would probably contain less than 237 cubic yards of earth and the