

of the whole enigma.\* Mr. Stevens, in a paper on the origin of the Indians, concludes that little or nothing can be known on the subject. Mr. Prescott, in the chapter alluded to in our opening remarks, arrives at the same conclusion. Mr. Schoolcraft leaves the question more deeply involved in mystery than he found it, concluding that the true aborigines, to use his own language, "probably broke off from one of the primary stocks of the human race, before history had dipped her pen in ink or lifted her graver upon a stone. Herodotus is silent; there is nothing to be learned from Sanconiathus or the fragmentary ancients. The Cuneiform and Nilotic inscriptions, the oldest in the world, are mute. Our Indian stocks seem to be still more ancient."†

The grand error of these writers, I conceive to be this:— They assume, first, that what they consider the *original Indian race*, must have sprung from some one nation of the Old World, and all from one original American stock which came to the country direct from the nation to which they belonged, and by voluntary emigration; so that at whatever period it occurred, the rest of the world must have been cognizant of the fact and preserved some record of it; and hence Mr. Schoolcraft concludes that because Herodotus and Sanconiathus and the Cuneiform and Nilotic inscriptions are all silent on the subject, therefore the migration must have taken place before their day! The facts we have adduced lead more naturally to the following *proximate* conclusions.

1st. That the origin of the Indian tribes upon this continent, viewed as a whole, is an event of not *very* ancient date. Their oral and pictorial history, the remains of Indian art, and all the other traces of the presence of human beings upon the continent, indicate an origin quite recent, as compared with the pyramids.

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\* If we can arrive at satisfactory conclusions respecting the origin of the more civilized tribes, and the means by which they reached the continent, it should, at least suggest to us the possibility that the primary stock may have originated from the same quarter, and found their way hither by similar means; especially if we find they all belonged to the same family of nations and first appeared on the same part of the continent.

† Natural and Tribal History, pp. 16, 17.