

A few words will be allowed me in reference to the difficulties of fixing the shape of the effigies.

1st. Many of them have been obliterated. Forty years ago they were very plain and distinct. The prairie grass which grew over them helped to bring out their outlines, and made them seem full as large as they were. Their shapes were generally on the summit of the hills, and so their outlines were very striking. It is very different now. The plow has obliterated many of them, the treading of cattle has destroyed the shapes of others, the wear of the elements has taken away the sharpness and distinctness of the emblems, the enthusiasm of would-be scientists, and the avarice of relic-hunters have destroyed others; houses, public buildings and cities have been built on the sites where many of them existed, and all the processes of civilization have only aided to destroy rather than preserve them.

2d. The want of familiarity with the surroundings which were common when they were built, is another difficulty in the way of identifying the shapes. If we knew exactly what animals abounded here, when these effigies were erected, we would more easily see the resemblances. The buffalo, the moose, the elk, the antelope, the panther, the black bear, and the lynx, have all long since departed from this region, and are now well nigh extinct. If we were more familiar with these animals, we would recognize their effigies quicker than we do. They were once very common, and were well known to the hunting races. The people who early settled this country, were better acquainted with these animals than we are. The beaver, mink, weasel, marten, and even the fox and wolf, and many of the birds, such as the eagle, sand-hill crane, swan and wild turkey, have all become rare. If the shape of the mounds perpetuated the badges, weapons and symbols of the natives, these also are unfamiliar. In fact, all that was peculiar to the wild-life faded more and more from sight, and there is scarcely a fragment in memory, and very little record in history, of that which once existed. Civilized life is so different from the savage, that we can form no conception of the definite items which serve to make up the picture which once might have been drawn. We have to go back to the time when the natives were