

all here, and the whites were intruders, to get even a hint of what might have existed in the preceding ages, and our very civilization is a barrier in our way in this respect.

3d. The different conceptions which we have in reference to religious facts, the soul, the deity, and everything which pertains to the invisible and spiritual world, render it very difficult for us to conceive the ideas which were expressed by these mound representations. The effigies are indeed expressive of animal life, and are very true to nature. We not only recognize the shape of the animals, but we find that their different attitudes are life-like, and we come to admire the mounds as works of art, for they are complete representations of the animals. But the attitudes were expressive of a deeper meaning than this. A strange superstition seems to have fixed upon these animal shapes, to make divinities of them, and the attitudes of the animals became not only expressive of what was natural, but also significant of a certain supernatural element, the soul of the animal being the thing which was recognized and worshiped, rather than the form. It becomes very difficult for us to catch the meaning of these emblems on this account. If we do not put ourselves into the very state of mind in which the builders were, we shall not understand the shapes. If we ascribe to them our own religious conceptions, we shall go far amiss in interpreting their works.

Our conceptions, as civilized people, have come from a very different source from theirs. We picture dragons, and crosses, and other forms, as the traces of pagan, classic, and Christian symbolism; but we know nothing of native symbolism as such, therefore our imagination is sure to go astray. A picture on paper will sometimes convey an idea which the massive effigy will not; and yet, to a stranger, the picture can give no idea of the impressiveness of the effigies themselves. We need to study the works, with their natural surroundings, catch something of the inspiration of the scenery, and then draw the outlines from an actual survey; and so, by the accommodation of a natural and an artificial skill, determine what the symbols are which are represented in the effigies.

In considering these figures, there are two or three divisions of