

we except some tropical countries where spontaneous fruits are in perpetual season, and even there the aboriginal population was found to be very sparse as compared with countries where agriculture furnishes the principal sustenance to man.

From the changes which had recently taken place among the original inhabitants of this country, when they were first discovered, as told by their old men, and also from the changes which occurred after their discovery, but before the exterminating influence of civilization bore upon them, we may safely assume that national and even tribal formations had been quite recent, yet recent as they no doubt were, we know almost nothing of them. While we know that some nations become totally extinct by reason of aboriginal warfare alone, we cannot point to a single instance of the birth and growth of any native tribe unless the uniting of the remnants of several broken tribes into one, may be so considered.

At last we are forced back to the conclusion that it is only comparatively in modern times and of civilized communities that history, whether written in books or among the rocks, tells us of the origin of nations. To this we can mention one notable exception. By divine interposition, we are told of the beginning and of the progress, and by profane history of the final extinction of one of the great ancient nations of the earth. There we are told of its founder, Abraham, of its struggles, of its triumphs and its misfortunes, of its victories and its defeats, of its pure worship and its gross idolatry, and of its final extinction as a nation under the Roman Empire.

Necessarily, the history of the aborigines of this country is confined to the period since their first discovery by the educated man, and to the few uncertain traditions told by them of their comparatively very recent times, and most of these traditions as handed down to us are purely of a mythological character, and serve to teach us of the nature of the imagination or mental