

criticism. Indeed, he purposely records not merely those facts which are indisputably true, but the larger class of facts which have not been proved to be untrue.

It is scarcely necessary for us to call attention to the opportuneness of this work. The red man is swiftly passing away before the face of the white, and every day destroys some trace of the former. The westward advance of the frontier of the Eastern States is estimated by Professor Wilson to average nine miles per annum; * and the trapper and woodsman, the advance guard of European civilisation, are steadily marching onwards to the setting sun, followed closely by the ranchero and tiller of the soil. The Pacific coast affords another base for the approach of the Europeans from the east. From 'the Golden Gate' and other places which have sprung up as it were by magic, the banners of civilisation have steadily passed forward to the east, until the lands of the red man, from the British possessions in latitude 40° down to the frontiers of Mexico, are to be found mainly between the Sierra Nevada and the Mississippi; beyond these boundaries, if he exist at all, it is as a servant, and even in this tract the lines of railway, which may aptly be termed the iron bonds of civilisation, are bases of attack. The vast mineral wealth of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and California offer irresistible allurements to the gold and silver miner; the buffalo—the great staff of life—is rapidly perishing under the rifles of the trapper and English sportsmen, and consequently the red hunter, listless and incapable of adapting himself to the changing conditions of life, has the choice of dying of starvation, of living by plunder and being eventually shot down, or of submitting to the charity of the white man, exposed to the unutterable evils which flow from the contact of civilised with uncivilised peoples. Their history must be seized now, or it will be lost for ever. 'To us,' says our author, 'the savage nations of America have neither past nor future, only a brief present, from which we may judge somewhat of their past' (ii. 81). The stone implements, tumuli, and rude rock sculptures are rapidly becoming as non-historic as similar relics of barbarism in Europe, and in many regions the memory of the ancient inhabitants is preserved only in the names of the mountains and of the rivers. At this time, therefore, such a work as this, done by a man living in the great metropolis of the West, and personally conversant with many of the rude tribes about which he writes, is singularly opportune. Its subject-matter, indeed, is not accurately expressed in its title, for it embraces

* Prehistoric Man, ii. 302.