

'less hard work. The altar-mounds suggest sacrifice,' and the burnt human bones may indicate human victims, but they may be the result of the custom of cremation. They were probably erected by a race that lived long in the land, and which is not represented by any of the tribes now to be found in those regions. Mr. Bancroft concludes that—

'The monuments are not sufficient in themselves to absolutely prove or disprove the truth of any one of the following theories: 1. An indigenous culture springing up among the Mississippi tribes, founded on agriculture, fostered by climate and unknown circumstances, constantly growing through long ages, driving back the surrounding walls of savagism, but afterwards weakened by unknown causes, yielding gradually to savage hordes, and finally annihilated or driven in remnants from their homes southward.' 2. A colony from the southern peoples already started in the path of civilisation, growing as before in power, but at last forced to yield their homes into the possession of savages. 3. A migrating colony from the north, dwelling long in the land, gradually increasing in power and culture, constantly extending their dominion southward, and finally abandoning, voluntarily or against their will, the north for the more favoured south, where they modified or originated the southern civilisation.' (Vol. iv. p. 787.)

Of these theories Mr. Bancroft adopts the last, and holds that 'they were probably a colony of the ancient Mayas who settled in the north during the continuance of the great Maya empire of Xibalba in Central America several centuries before Christ.' It seems to us, however, that the absence of bronze, used by the Mayas and Nahuas for implements and weapons, among the traces left behind by the mound-builders, is fatal to that view. Had they advanced northwards they would have left behind more distinct traces of their culture. The view which suggests itself more forcibly to our minds is that the mound-builders gradually extended their borders in very remote times from north to south, and that during the long centuries of their migration they developed a civilisation of comparatively high order. It is indeed possible that the pyramid mounds may have been the prototypes of the teocallis, and the germs of the religion which was so highly organised in Mexico originated in this area; but whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt that the Nahuatl or Mayan influences, as proved by works of art, occur as far north as Cincinnati. The coiled rattlesnakes, emblematic of royalty among the Mexicans, have been found in Tennessee and Ohio.

The proof that the mound-builders disappeared from this region in remote times is tolerably clear. The fertile plains of the Mississippi and its tributaries consist of three terraces, the one extending on each side of a river, and the two others