

them the funeral rites. The gifts to, and the property of, the dead, illustrate their arts and customs, and tend to throw some light on their daily life; whilst the evidences of their modes of burial afford glimpses of religious beliefs and superstitions. They give also undoubted evidences of tribal distinctions, and enable us to determine, in a general way, the respective areas occupied by the different tribes, during the age they represent. Distinction must be made in investigations of this nature, to distinguish between the burial mound proper, and the ossuary; the former affording more historical data from its contents than the latter. These seem to have been erected solely for the purpose of covering a confused mass of human bones, gathered together after the flesh had disappeared. Speaking of these Mr. Armstrong says, in the Smithsonian Report of 1879, that "the dry bones were gathered together there in the large mounds first, and those in the smaller mounds afterwards, and placed in loose piles on the ground, and the earth heaped over them until the mounds were formed." There is no doubt that the bones were gathered together from other temporary burial places, and at a given time the ceremony of a general burial was held. Dr. Lapham, an eminent authority on this point, says that the earliest mounds are attributable to the Indian race before European occupation—the tribes to which they belonged migrating on being driven off by other tribes. But he maintains that the subsequent tribes, or those found occupying the country at the advent of the white race, "continued the practice of mound building, so far as to erect a tumulus over their dead." And he adds, this practice appears to be a remnant of ancient customs that connects the mound-builders with the present tribes. That works of different tribes or nations may frequently be found intermingled on areas over which successive waves of population have passed, is admitted; but that one part of what is clearly a system is to be attributed to one people, and the other part to another people, is very doubtful. Investigation into the mounds and earthworks in various parts of the country is strongly invited.