

CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF WISCONSIN—MILWAUKEE—WAUKESHA—JANESVILLE—MONROE—
SCHLESINGERVILLE—WAUPUN—RIPON—OSHKOSH—FOND DU LAC—
GREEN LAKE—MENASHA—SHEBOYGAN—MANITOWOC.

RECENTLY as the fertile, wealthy and populous section now known as the state of Wisconsin, was rescued from the control of its savage nomadic inhabitants, and new as it appears in the light of our European civilisation, there are yet evidences that it has been the seat of an elder civilisation so remote as to make the earliest human annals within our ken seem but the record of yesterday. In common with other portions of our country, there are evidences in this state that, long before the time of the American Indian, a teeming population lived and thrived within its boundaries. One proof in support of this theory, showing as well the great distance in time from our days at which these people existed, is to be found in the mounds—miscalled until within a few years "Indian mounds"—which singular structures may be seen in many parts of the state. The outlines of birds, men and reptiles are yet to be distinguished, often very perfectly, in the conformation of these works.

In the south-western part of Wisconsin, near the Blue Mounds, a mound elevated about six feet above the level of the surrounding prairie, represents the extended figure of a man. It is 120 feet in length, the body 30 feet in width, with a well formed head, and the general contour true enough to nature to astonish us at the skill of its constructors. Turtles, lizards, elephants, and other creatures are represented in these earthworks in different localities; but perhaps the most interesting one of all yet discovered is located near Cassville. This is in the form of a mastodon, and, moreover was found to contain the bones of that long extinct animal. The obvious inference from this startling connection of human art with the fauna of a period generally believed to have been pre-Adamite, is that the Mound Builders of Wisconsin were contemporaneous with the mastodon and other creatures of the geological period in which that gigantic animal flourished. In thus putting in a claim to respectable antiquity for the magnificent Badger State, we have touched upon a subject of great interest to archaeologists, to whose careful attention we commend the entire region considered in this book, replete as it is with the evidences of human life and labor of hundreds of ages ago.

As to its geological characteristics, Wisconsin does not present any well defined differences from the conditions of its neighbors. Limestone under