

**The First Possessors of Acadia.**

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In the chapters which have preceded the present one in this series of geological sketches, it has been pointed out that as the great geological winter passed away, and the period of floods consequent upon the melting of the ice gradually subsided, the condition of the world, and with it that of Acadia, was at last brought approximately to what it is today. It has also been intimated that through all the changes of the past, through the evolution of continents and seas, through the elevation and subsidence of the crust of the earth, through the uplifting of mountains and the outflow of igneous rocks, through the growth of corals and the accumulation of shell deposits, through the formation of great coal beds, through the plication of strata and the storing of the rocks with economic products, there runs a distinct purpose, viz., the fitting of the earth as the abode of man. Just when, and where, and how he first appeared, science as yet is unable to tell us with certainty, and we need not trouble ourselves with the problem here. What we do know is that when the first daring voyagers from the old world landed upon the shores of the new they found this already peopled by tribes, which, on account of their prevailing colour, were called and have ever since been known as Red Skins or Indians. We know, too, how, along with certain good qualities, such as bravery and endurance, they had also others, such as cruelty, treachery and cunning, which caused them to take a fearful part in the struggles which subsequently ensued between the invading European nations for the possession of the continent. Before contact with the latter we know also that the Red Skins were savages, though with some degree of tribal organization; that they lived on the products of the bow and spear, and, though doubtless acquainted with the use of fire, knew nothing of the separation of the metals from their ores, stone and clay being the only materials employed for constructive, offensive or defensive purposes. They belong, therefore, to what geologists have termed the "Stone Period" of human history, and this period must in America have come down to the time when iron and useful metals were first introduced from the other side of the Atlantic.

But while in Acadia and other parts of north-eastern America we find no evidence of other

racés than the ordinary Indian, (unless we except the Eskimo), we do find in other parts of the continent and in South America evidence of the fact that long prior to the coming of the Europeans there were races which had advanced far beyond a state of barbarism, and in some instances give indications even of a somewhat advanced civilization. Thus in Ohio and some other parts of the Mississippi Valley we have the works of what are known as the "Mound Builders." The Mounds, which are quite numerous, and in some instances of large size, covering, it may be, an acre or two of ground and from sixty to ninety feet high, have commonly the forms of animals, such as men, buffaloes, elks, bears, birds, serpents, lizards and frogs; but occasionally they exhibit in their arrangement such forms as the square, the circle, the octagon and the ellipse. Some of these were doubtless designed for sacrificial purposes or for sepulture, (in one instance no less than one hundred skeletons having been exhumed from a single mound of no great size), but others were for defensive purposes, showing indeed in their construction a somewhat advanced knowledge of the principles of fortification. The mounds contain great numbers of stone implements, but with these others of copper and silver (probably derived from Lake Superior, where traces of aboriginal mining may still be recognized) besides knives, bracelets, beads, woven cloth, elaborately ornamented pottery in great variety, together with pipes and idols of many, often grotesque designs. Both the nature and extent of their work are opposed to the idea that the Mound-Builders were ordinary Indians, as are also the forms of their peculiarities of their mode of burial and the fact that they were sun-worshippers. In all these respects, as well as in the mode of wearing the hair, the facts suggest comparison with those relating to the Aztecs of Mexico, another Pre-historic American race, whose works and sculptures arouse the admiration of all who study them, or again those of the primitive inhabitants of Bolivia and Peru, which are equally remarkable. Finally we have in different parts of Arizona and the Rocky Mountains, remains of what are known as the "Cliff Dwellers," people who were in the habit of occupying the summits of isolated perpendicular hills or else crevices in the rocks, with structures or fortifications, often of an elaborate character. These also, like the modern Zuni Indians, who are