ological and literary indices of the first glimpses of this Western Continent, and glance at it in its distinctive individuality as a world apart from all the historical arenas of Semitic or Aryan civilization.

It is not without reason that we still speak of this western hemisphere as the New World. The date of its discovery, and all the attendant circumstances, constitute the era a definite index beyond all else, marking the world's entrance on modern centuries; a fresh starting-point in the history of the Old World, as well as the beginning of that of the New. The history of the latter is for us necessarily modern. Unless we reckon the Mexican hieroglyphic codices, and the sculptured but undecipherable records of Central America and Peru as historical documents, all that here dates before the memorable A.D. 1492 is prehistoric. How far back that unrecorded period may yet be traced, it would be presumptuous to assign a limit. But of our own Canadian domain, through all its wide stretch of territory, westward to the Pacific, and northward to the Pole, it must be owned that as yet nothing has disclosed itself indicative of other than ephemeral tribes akin to the nomads who still wander aimlessly over the prairies, or linger in diminishing numbers beyond the Rocky Mountains. I know of but one inscription in Canada which seems to suggest the idea of a genuine native, graven record. Of earth-works, graded terraces, or memorial mounds, we have none on a scale beyond the capacity of the rude forest or prairie tribes; and of sculpture or architecture akin to the ruined palaces of Yucatan, or the temples and cyclopean remains of Peru, we have no other trace than is discernible in the curious reappearance of the like style and conventional art-forms, in the ivory carvings of the Tawatin Indians of British Columbia, and the elaborate ornamentations of the ephemeral lodges of the Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

If, indeed, we turn to philological evidence, the languages of the aborigines of Canada, and of the arctic haunts of the Esquimaux in their essentially distinctive families, and the multiplicity of dialects, remote in all respects from the characteristic affinities of the languages of the Old World: point, beyond question, to the lapse of unnumbered centuries during which successive generations have run their course, more unprogressive amid all the inevitable changes wrought by time than the autumns of their own forests. We catch the earliest glimpses of them in the graphic notes of Cartier and Champlain; and yet their own legends seem to tell of a time when the Mastodon—whose huge skeletons are met with in the superficial drift-gravels,—was known to their fathers, even as the mammoth is proved to have been familiar to Europe's palæolithic man. But of the events of all the intervening centuries we have no more definite record than of the leaves of their recurring autumns, or the snows that melted on each return of spring.

But the all-absorbing theme of archæological inquiry, the evidence of the antiquity of man, receives no less attention on this continent than in Europe; and already not only flint and stone implements from the auriferous gravels of California, and the river-drift of New Jersey, have been produced as the workmanship of the men of the glacial period; but even the assumed crania of those palæolithic workmen have been accredited by American geologists and archæologists. So far, however, as the man of this continent and his arts are concerned, the reliable disclosures hitherto made are referable, for the most part, to periods which must be