

boats built of plank, and, as a modern shipwright would express himself, copper-fastened, cinerary urns,—for it would seem that, while in an earlier, as in a later age, our country-folk buried their dead, in this middle period they committed their bodies to the flames ; and, withal, evidences, in the occasional productions of other countries, that commerce had begun to break up the death-like stagnation which characterized the earlier period, and to send through the nations its circulating tides, feeble of pulse and slow, but instinct, notwithstanding, with the first life of civilisation. And thus we reason on the same kind of unwritten data regarding the human inhabitants of our country who lived during these two early stages, as that on which we reason regarding their contemporaries the *extirpated* animals, or their predecessors the extinct ones. The interest which attaches to human history thus conducted on what may be termed the geologic plan is singularly great. No nation during its stone period possesses a literature ; nor did any nation, of at least Western Europe, possess a literature during its bronze period. Of course, without letters there can be no history ; and even if a detailed history of such uncivilized nations did exist, what would be its value ? ‘Milton did not scruple to declare,’ says Hume, ‘that the skirmishes of kites or crows as much merited a particular narrative as the confused transactions and battles of the Saxon Heptarchy.’ But the subject arises at once in dignity and importance when, contemplating an ancient people through their remains, simply as men, we trace, step by step, the influence and character of their beliefs, their progress in the arts, the effects of invasion and conquest on both their minds and bodies, and, in short, the broad and general in their history, as opposed to the minute and the particular. The story of a civilized people I would fain study in the pages of their best and most philosophic historians ; whereas I would prefer acquainting myself with that of a savage one archæo-