CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY INDIAN INHABITANTS.


The record of the early human occupation of the Red River Valley of the North is very incomplete and imperfect. It seems quite probable that from creation until a few hundred years ago it was not occupied at all by human beings, and its only denizens were the wild birds of the air, the wild beasts of the prairies and scanty forests, and the fishes of the lakes and streams. There are no signs of a remote settlement or other form of ancient civilization in the Valley.

That very ancient and very mysterious race, which, for inability to coin a more suitable name, we call the Mound Builders, and which lived at one period in the southeastern part of the State, never dwelt, for any considerable time in the Red River Valley. At any rate, none of their mounds and tumuli, which invariably denote and prove their former presence, are found here. There are mounds but they were not built by the old Mound Builders. The so-called Red Indians were the first human occupants, but their occupation was fugitive, unstable, and disconnected.

It is true that there are mounds or tumuli within the present boundaries of Polk County, and that some authorities have pronounced these to be the work of the old Mound Builders; of course these authorities are of those that believe the Mound Builders were the immediate ancestors of the Red Indians. The principal mound in the county is now within the limits of Crookston, and only three-fourths of a mile from the center of the city. It is on the south bank of the Red Lake River and 35 feet above the stream.

In about 1890 Prof. Moore, then principal of the Crookston City Schools, and some of his pupils made excavations in this mound and found in it human bones, including skulls. From the reports made to the compiler of this examination it does not seem that any pottery, flint, stone, or copper implements, or any other reliable evidences of Mound Builder work or occupation were found. These evidences certainly would have been unearthed had the old pre-historic race been the builders. Their work and former sites of occupation are almost as readily determined as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

In noting the Crookston mound Hon. William Watts plausibly suggests that it marks the site of the cemetery of an old-time Sioux village. This may be a correct theory, although we now know a great deal of the early and very early history of the Sioux, and we do not know that (at least within the proper time when skulls and other human bones would be preserved for a long time in the earth) there was ever a