

in all its branches has, within the present century, proceeded at an exceedingly rapid rate, we must not as a consequence infer that our ancestors of a thousand, or even of five thousand years ago, were destitute of inventive genius, the faculty of reason, or the ability to put their common sense to a profitable use, or that their craniums were not furnished with as good a quality of brain matter as those of the present day. The magnificent ruins of fifty, or even possibly a hundred centuries ago, since no real date can be assigned to many of these monuments of a long extinct people, which are found both in the new and old worlds, show at least that the sciences of architecture, of sculpture, and of the highest of the mechanical arts, must have reached a very advanced state of perfection even at that early time; while among the very earliest remains of our race, viz., those who dwelt in caves and were contemporaries of monstrous beasts which have long since become extinct, such as the mastodon or the cave bear, when the ice of the glacial period was even yet descending from our mountain sides, we find that the genius of sculpture, and to a certain extent the knowledge of it existed, though probably without having reached any very great degree of excellence. The magnificent sculptured forms and architectural wonders of Egypt are familiar to you all, and show that in this country, one of the great centres of the human race, knowledge of these arts had also become very highly developed, according to the most recent and reliable investigations at least 6,000 years ago; while on our own continent, in the curious remains left by the mound-builders and the cliff-dwellers, races so far removed that their origins have never yet been satisfactorily explained, but which evidently have preceded the present races by an unknown and lengthy period of time, many of the lines of decorative work have also been cultivated to a very considerable degree. In fact, the present race is very often confronted with the accuracy of the statement that "there is nothing new under the sun," and it may probably be accepted as a sober truth that, making all due allowance for cultivation, the human nature and the intellect of the present day, differs very little, and that not in kind, from that which prevailed among the earliest settlers of the globe. It may even be said that, with many of the so-called startling discoveries of modern