

2 *On the Supposed Prevalence of One Cranial Type*

Columbus to Barcelona, where the Spanish Court then was, were baptized with the utmost state and ceremony, as the first fruits offered to Heaven from the new-found world. Ferdinand and the enthusiastic and susceptible Isabella, with the Prince Juan, stood sponsors for them at the font; and when, soon after, one of them, who had been retained in the Prince's household, died, no doubt as to their common humanity marred the pious belief that he was the first of his nation to enter heaven.

Such was the earliest knowledge acquired by the Old World of the singular type of humanity generically designated as the Red Indian; and the attention which its peculiarities excited when thus displayed in their fresh novelty has not yet exhausted itself, after an interval of upwards of three centuries and a half. That certain spécial characteristics in complexion, hair, form, and features, do pertain to the whole races of this continent is not to be disputed; and these prevalent characteristics were so generally noted, to the exclusion of all others, that Ulloa, and after him others of the Spanish explorers of the New World, remarked: *He who has seen one tribe of Indians has seen all.* In the sense in which this remark was first made, and by Spaniards who knew only of Central America and the tropical region of the Southern continent, there was nothing in it to challenge. But that which was originally the mere rude generalization of a traveller has been adopted in our own day as a dogma of science; and the universality of homogeneous characteristics of the aboriginal tribes and nations of America, with the exception of the Esquimaux, is assumed as an established postulate for the strictest purposes of scientific induction, and has been repeatedly affirmed in those very words.

Such authorities as Robertson the historian, and Malte Brun, may be classed along with the first Spanish observers, in the value to be attached to their sweeping generalizations. "The Esquimaux," says the former, "are manifestly a race of men distinct from all the nations of the American continent, in language, in disposition, and in habits of life. But among all the other inhabitants of America there is such a striking similitude in the form of their bodies, and the qualities of their minds, that, notwithstanding the diversities occa-