

combs of the British Kumbecephali have no claims to a primeval rank among the recovered traces of early human arts. Supposing them to be three, four, or five thousand years old, grave-mounds, barrows, and tumuli of every form and proportion may have preceded them, and been erased. Neither history nor definite archaeology, moreover, confirms any such "natural order." On the contrary, in Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy; in Peru, Central America, and even in some of the islands of the Pacific, the oldest traces of architectural or constructive efforts survive in megalithic remains, ascribed for the most part to unknown and ante-historical races. Less substantial mounds or catacombs, which may have preceded or accompanied them, necessarily experienced the fate of all ephemeral structures; and it is probably mainly due to the cyclopean masonry of the chambered-barrow builders, that any evidence of the physical characteristics of so ancient a race are still recoverable.

But to this race succeeded a short-headed one, the Brachycephali of the later tumuli, which apparently survived in Britain to Roman times. The characteristic skull-form of this period has been repeatedly defined; and the significance of the vertical or obliquely flattened occiput of frequent occurrence, has been repeatedly discussed by me in former communications to the Canadian Institute. The point specially to be noted at present is, that not only considerable variations from any assumed typical British or Celtic cranium occur; but that at least two types of the most striking diversity mark the sepulchres of the megalithic era, and the seemingly later earth-barrows and cists. Their relative chronology is not indeed of permanent importance in the present inquiry. Both undoubtedly occur in ante-Christian and ante-Roman sepulchres. In referring to the doctrine of a pre-Celtic population for the British Islands, maintained in my "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," Dr. Thurnam remarks: "Previous to inquiry as to the form of the skull in any possible pre-Celtic race, it is necessary to determine the form of the Celtic skull itself. Proceeding from the known to the unknown, we may then hope to trace the form of the skull in races which may possibly have preceded, or been mingled with the early Celtic population of Britain."* If possible, this is unquestionably most desirable; but as Dr. Thurnam here assumes that there is

* *Crania Britannica*. Chap. V. p. 55. The author adds, "such an inquiry is an important object of the present work." But the concluding Decade, with its summary of results from the accumulated evidence is still unpublished.