

baffle the speculations of modern science. Further discoveries, however, have sufficed to dispel this gratuitous assumption; and it is no longer doubted, that the remarkable abnormal skulls, both of Kertch and other localities along the shores of the Euxine and in the Valley of the Danube, confirm and illustrate the references by Hippocrates, Strabo, Pliny, and other early writers, to an Asiatic people among whom the very same practices prevailed as still form special characteristics of some of the north-west tribes of America, on the Columbia and Fraser Rivers and on Vancouver's Island.

More recently, the discovery of a skull with a very remarkable vertical occiput, rising almost abruptly from the *foramen magnum*, in an ancient subterranean quarry near the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem, has added a curious and unexpected confirmation of the Asiatic source of the compressed crania of Europe. This interesting example, obtained by Mr. J. Judson Barclay during his travels in the East, and deposited by him in the cabinet of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, has been made the subject of an ingenious and able treatise by Dr. J. Aitken Meigs,* who is led to refer it probably to an Asiatic people occupying the region around Lake Baikal, and on the highway of the migrating nations tending eastward towards the Okhotsk Sea, and the islands occupied by races common to the Old and the New World.

The inference suggested by such traces of ancient community of customs between America and Asia cannot fail to point to intercourse between the two continents, and to confirm the idea of those who believe in the common Mongolian characteristics of the American and Central Asiatic races. It is not, however, necessarily to be assumed on such a theory, that Asia, as the older continent, historically considered, contributed the singular custom of cranial deformation to the New World. On the Asiatic shores of Behring Straits, and throughout the intermediate islands of the North Pacific, the traces of migration from America to Asia are abundant; but no evidence points directly to the flow of a nomad current in the opposite direction within any historic period. Considering the very wide diffusion of the practice throughout Southern as well as Northern America, and the very partial character of its adoption in Asia, I am strongly inclined to regard it as one of the traces of ethnical influence contributed by America to Asia. This view of the question is replete with interest in relation to inquiries into the origin and sources of the peopling of the American continent; but other evidence of a like kind warns the inquirer of the necessity for a thorough appreciation of the comprehensive bearings of this class of evidence, before making it the

* Description of a deformed fragmentary skull found in an ancient quarry cave at Jerusalem. *Proceed. Acad. Nat. Science of Philadelphia*, September, 1859.