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INDICATIONS OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS, SUGGESTED BY
CERTAIN CRANIAL FORMS.

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Among the characteristic customs of greatest prevalence throughout this continent, none has attracted greater attention than that of artificial cranial distortion. To all appearance, the civilized nations of Mexico and Peru had developed independent phases of progress in arts, science, and social policy, without mutual intercourse or any knowledge of each other. Nevertheless, we trace the singular practice of moulding the human head into abnormal forms, alike among the civilized races of Peru, the ancient lettered architects of Central America and Mexico, and among barbarous tribes both to the east and west of the Rocky Mountains. The earth-works of the Mississippi Valley mound-builders have been found to cover artificially flattened crania; and the student of American native civilization, as he turns from pondering over the marvellous bas-reliefs and hieroglyphics on the sculptured slabs of Palenque or Uxmal, is startled to find the very cranial forms and strange physiognomical contours of the architectural race of Central America reproduced among some of the most barbarous living tribes of Oregon and the Columbia River. But, now that the study of craniology has been carried out by many intelligent observers, the fact is becoming familiar to us, that artificial cranial deformation is no peculiarity of the American continent, either in ancient or modern times. The compressed crania of the Asiatic Macrocephali attracted the attention of Hippocrates five centuries before the Christian era; and Blumenbach, the foremost of European craniologists, figured in the first fasciculus of his "Decades Craniorum,"

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