

Dr. Morton's *Crania Americana*.

We have been requested to express our opinion on the above work. No one can reasonably express an opinion in the case without awarding the highest praise. Influenced by a taste for liberal illustrations of sciences, Dr. Morton has already laid before the public a practical work in medicine, on diseases of the lungs, which in richness and abundance of engraved and coloured specimens far outshines the customary style of such professional publications in our country. The same taste and feelings have led him to the formation of a large collection of *Crania*, principally American; and to the publication of the present work.

The volume before us is a folio, very handsomely printed on a superior paper, bound in embossed muslin, with the margins untrimmed, containing in all 308 pages; and adorned with seventy-three beautiful lithographs, very handsomely finished, we feel sure with extreme attention to accuracy. One of these, a portrait of our acquaintance, the Great Elk of the Omahaws, stands as a frontispiece. There is a map of the world, to illustrate the distribution of the races of mankind; which we are sorry to see, in one specimen, incorrectly colored. Besides these, there are near 160 figures in wood cuts.

It is evident that such a volume as this could only be in market at the price of twenty dollars by means of pecuniary sacrifices. Dr. Morton acknowledges, in his preface, the receipt of beneficial patronage from his relative, Mr. Morton, of Clonmel, in Ireland, and from William McClure, Esq. formerly of this city, but now of Mexico. These gentlemen, therefore, and much more Dr. Morton himself, must be set down among those citizens who merit well of the public, a public by no means confined to America, by a liberal contribution, to improve and illustrate human knowledge. The claim derived from this consideration is enhanced by

the much regretted fact that forty copies of this beautiful work have gone to the bottom of the sea, in one of the late unhappy shipwrecks near Boston.

It is apparent that the principal value of such a work is to be sought from the number, source and exactness of the illustrations, and of the facts collected. These possess a higher importance, in the case, than any considerations about style, or even thorough soundness in the reasoning. They are meant to employ the reasoning faculties of other men; and in this respect unquestionably is rich to the most extraordinary extent. We notice among those who have contributed to the store, the name of Mr. George Combe, of Prince Maximilian, of Wied-Nieu-Wied, and of Professor Florens, of Paris; besides those of many other gentlemen distinguished for character and for scientific attainments, but who have not, like the present, achieved the good or evil fortune of becoming celebrated authors. A phenological dissertation on the *Crania* of Nations, is contributed by Mr. Combe, and a very copious tabular series of admeasurements, furnished with all the neatness and precision for which he is remarkable, by John S. Phillips, Esq. of this city. Two dedications are addressed, one to this gentleman, the other to Dr. Ruschenberger, whose two works on his travels have acquired it much just popularity.

Dr. Morton's style is by no means in fault; and we will disregard the question. With regard to his matter, we have at times given a share of attention to this subject; and we are grateful for a flattering mention of our own pen, in the preface. We might, perhaps, were the present a good occasion, comment on some points. Thus, we do not like the appropriation of the term, Mongolian Americans, to the Eschimaux; and should have rather liked that Hyperborean, which has been very improperly applied to the Laplanders, and to the various nomadic families, and to the conquering founders of empires. These last, we apprehend, from travellers, there is a close approach on the North Western Coast, north of the United States Territory. Again, we do not think the evidence sufficient for the inference drawn that the Incas were Toltecs. Besides, we have seen statements that the Toltec nation still survives, and preserves its language and pristine history, in the republic of Central America; which, in the hasty reading we gave the volume, we did not observe Dr. Morton to notice. Once more, we did not observe that the author took much notice, in his cranial admeasurements and in his tables of the decided superiority in volume of brain which his tables show the Mexican race to have possessed, over the other races, designated as belonging to the Toltec family.

Questions like these, however, require time that cannot possibly be given to them on occasions like the present; and we are extremely exposed to find ourselves ultimately in the wrong. It is evident that such discussions in no way impair the value and beauty of the work.

B. H. C.

Harvard Medical Library  
in the Francis A. Countway  
Library of Medicine - Boston

VERITATEM PER MEDICINAM QUÆRAMUS

To John C. Warren  
with the author's  
Sincere regards.

Philadelphia

Jan. 4. 1839.

# CRANIA AMERICANA;

OR,

A COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE

SKULLS OF VARIOUS ABORIGINAL NATIONS

OF

NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ESSAY ON THE VARIETIES OF THE HUMAN SPECIES.

*Illustrated by Seventy-eight Plates and a Colored Map.*

BY

SAMUEL GEORGE MORTON, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE AT PHILADELPHIA; MEMBER OF  
THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA; OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY; OF THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA; OF THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY, &c., &c.

---

PHILADELPHIA:

J. DOBSON, CHESTNUT STREET.

LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO.

1839.