

Beaddoe

22861

The Chantry
Bradford - Am

Feb 11. 99

Dear General Pitt-Rivers

I quite agree
with all you say - I
attach no value to an
estimate of capacity
based on such data.

As you justly say,
it is difficult enough
to approach accuracy
even with a perfect
cranium, and with

a calvarium, in poor condition, and probably distorted, it is absolutely impossible to make even an estimate of any value.

I am sorry to hear so poor an account of your health. I have myself had two months in bed this winter, with cystitis, but am now pretty well recovered, though not strong or

active. Your fourth volume is very fine. I am glad to learn that a fifth is in progress.

Yours sincerely
John Beddoe

Copy.

Rushmore,
Salisbury.

Feb.9th,1899.

Dear Dr.Beddoe,

My attention has been drawn to the skull of the Pithecanthrope given in Mon.G.de Mortillet's "Formation de la Nation Francaise",p.224, in which he gives the cubical contents estimated at 1000 cubic centimetres. M.de Mortillet ought certainly to have known how to measure the cubic contents of a skull, but I have measured a good many skulls, and I feel sure that it is quite impossible to estimate with any approach to accuracy the cubic contents of a portion of a calvarium, such as is represented in Fig.66, p.224. The position of the basion is merely guessed at. One knows that even with a perfect skull it takes a good deal of care in tapping it whilst filling to get a reliable measurement. Moreover the skull seems to be in a very rotten state, as shown by the holes in the superciliary ridges in Fig.65; and with the base of the skull quite gone, it must have been liable to great distortion, and the top of the skull may have been pressed out and flattened by time and moisture. I should like to know your opinion upon these points. Accuracy of measurement is so very important and such false conclusions may be formed through the want of it.

I hope you are pretty well. I have been ailing for some time and have not been able to do much, but my Vol.IV of "Excavations" has been finished and Vol.V commenced.

Yours very truly,

A.Pitt Rivers.

MS
1534