24 June 1935.

O.G.S. Crawford, Esq.,  
"Antiquity",  
Nursling,  
Southampton.

Dear Mr. Crawford,

Thank you for your last letter with which I find myself in entire agreement. My point was only this:—

Supposing that osteological measurements do contain information concerning ethnic affinity in man additional to the information obtainable by simpler and more direct means, such as are provided by characters of the skin and hair, then, as you say, something could be solved from the Herculean labours of the past 50 years. This possibility is an important one to those officially connected with anthropological research. It can, I suggest, only be excluded after entirely competent and adequate methods of interpretation have been applied to the existing data. Technically, I think that the coefficient of racial likeness does not come up to this level, and indeed I think that no great reliance would ever have been placed on it but for a number of misunderstandings at and subsequent to its origin.

What it attempts to do, namely, to answer the question whether a given skull or series of skulls, can be regarded as a random sample from the same material as a given
series, is certainly quite feasible. It seems certainly worthwhile that methods for making such a test should always be available, even though taking simply height at a given age the children of a London borough, such as Ealing, measured during the last five years may differ very significantly from children in the same borough measured previously.

In all scientific work we must keep separate the facts and their interpretation, and when the raw facts are very complex, as in anthropological work, we must keep separate also the different stages of interpretation. The stage at which I am concerned to stress the need for technical competence is the statistical reduction of a large body of measurements to a smaller number of so-called constants, for if this stage is misunderstood or mishandled inferences derived from the constants have no secure basis.

I hope sometime to get the technical problems adequately discussed in the Annals of Eugenics, and, if at its roots the subject can be made clear, it would then be time to try and make it clear to a wider audience in Antiquity.

Yours sincerely,