

The most important testimony is that of the late Professor Jeffries Wyman, than whom a more competent authority it would be difficult to name. As early as 1861, Professor Wyman began an examination of the shell heaps on the St. John's River, in Florida. After repeated examinations of the more important collections, he came to the conclusion that the remains found in them prove, so far as archæology can prove, that the ancient dwellers on the St. John's were cannibals. After describing minutely the position of the bones unearthed, he suggests the reasons leading him to this decision. We cannot do better than to cite these four reasons in brief:

1. The bones were not deposited there at an ordinary burial of a dead body. In this case, after the decay of the flesh, there would have remained a certain order in the position of the parts of the skeleton. The bones would be entire, as in other burials. In the cases here described they were, on the contrary, scattered in a disorderly manner, broken into many fragments, and often, some important portions were missing. The fractures, as well as the disorder in which the bones were found, evidently existed at the time they were covered up, as is shown by the condition of the broken ends, which had the same discoloration as the natural surfaces.

2. The bones were broken as in the case of edible animals, as the deer and the alligator. This would be necessary to reduce the parts to a size corresponding with the vessels in which they were cooked.

3. The breaking up of the bones had a certain amount of method: the heads of the humerus and femur were detached, as if to avoid the trouble, or from ignorance as to the way, of disarticulating the joints. The shafts of these bones, as also those of the fore-arm and leg, were regularly broken through the middle.

4. There is no evidence that the bones were broken up, while lying exposed upon the ground, by wild animals, as the wolves and bears. If they were thus broken, one might reasonably expect to find the marks of teeth, but after a careful examination of hundreds of pieces, they have not been seen in a single instance.

It has been suggested that the quantity of the bones may be explained without regarding them as remains of human feasts. When the French first came to America it is known that many of the natives had the custom of dismembering their fallen enemies and bearing away their limbs and scalps as trophies. "While such a custom," Professor Wyman remarks, "might account for the presence of human bones in the shell heaps, it would not for the fragmentary condition in which these are found, nor