

"The early American settlers on Mattagorda Bay were greatly harassed by a tribe of Indians, called Carrankowas, inhabiting the bay shore, and subsisting chiefly on fish and oysters. But they were known to have a keen relish for human flesh, which they sometimes added to their ordinary menu. In 1834-5 the custom was, however, becoming obsolete, and about that time was wholly abolished by the reigning chief. But there was a cognate tribe, a remnant of which still exists, which practiced cannibalism as late, certainly, as 1854. At that time I was an officer in the United States Army, and stationed at Fort Inge, in Texas. The Tonkows, the tribe to which I allude, being on good terms with the whites, were allowed to roam about Western Texas, and in the summer of 1854 were camping on the Nueces River, a few miles from the fort. I was frequently at their village, and on one occasion, when encamped with a party of soldiers not far off, a returning war-party of the tribe brought in the remains of a Comanche whom they had slain, and the night was made hideous, in a double sense, by the orgies that followed. During the night the entire remains were eaten, principally by the warriors. I do not think that the eating of human flesh was often practiced by them at this time, and even on this occasion it may have been done more as an expression of exultation over a fallen enemy than for the mere satisfying of hunger. But these Indians, afterwards confessed to me that formerly their tribe habitually fed on human flesh when they could obtain the bodies of their enemies.

"It seems inconsistent with the facts I have just stated, but it is nevertheless true, that these semi-cannibals were less fierce and blood-thirsty than most of the other wild Indians. They were always on good terms with the settlers, and made common cause with them against the Comanches, Kiowas, and other predatory tribes on the northern border of the State. * * * I have often heard from participants in some of these engagements that it was the invariable custom of their Tonkowa allies to have a feast of roasted Comanche after their battles."

The evidence for the practice of cannibalism in America furnished by archæology is somewhat less conclusive than that which history presents. Bones, supposed to be the remains of the feasts on human flesh, are found in but few places; and even when found, other hypotheses than that of cannibalism may be offered to explain their presence. The recitals of eye-witnesses of these horrid orgies, from which we have abundantly quoted, have a value as evidence which the discovery of human bones, however irregular their position, peculiar their fracture, or large their accumulation, cannot possess. Yet the evidence offered by archæologists is of much worth.