

Among a large number of stumps examined by the author in Wisconsin, the oldest, but not the largest, showed but 414 rings of growth. From the evidence presented it would appear that the large trees frequently found growing on mounds present no certain evidence of their great antiquity.

#### BY HUMAN BONES.

The often poor state of preservation of the human bones exhumed from the bases of mounds is occasionally offered as conclusive evidence of the high antiquity of the works in which they repose. In exposing the fallacy of such conclusions that experienced archaeologist, Mr. Gerard Fowke, gives the following undisputable facts:

"The condition of a skeleton bears no relation to the length of time that has passed since its interment. The preservation of bones is dependent almost entirely upon the protection afforded them. If kept perfectly dry they will last indefinitely; if exposed to dampness, especially to the percolation of rain water, they will disappear in a very short time. In sandy ground they will last much longer than in clay. The physical condition of the individual also has a decided influence. Frequently in the same mound, at the same level, in the same kind of earth, in short under identical conditions so far as could be determined by careful inspection, I have found bones so fragile that they would fall to fragments when their removal was attempted, while others within a few feet were hard enough to withstand a sharp blow with a trowel."—Ohio, 116.

The above conclusions are in accord with those of leading investigators in the Wisconsin archaeological field. Inquiry at almost any large modern city cemetery will procure similar information concerning the lasting qualities of human bones, under similar conditions.

In explorations conducted by Dr. Hoy, at Racine, assisted by the author, it was not uncommon to find a skeleton at one side of the base of a mound, in a fair state of preservation, and another, but a few feet distant, on the same level, almost entirely gone, which well illustrates the unreliability of such evidence.

Clarence B. Moore writes:

"At times, in various portions of the mound, the skeleton was represented by remains with hardly greater consistency than putty, while again, often at no great distance from the base, the bones are fairly well preserved. Such remains lay near oyster shells from which doubtless, the infiltration of lime was a potent factor."—Moore, Duval, 32.