

NOTE UPON THE PERFORATED INDIAN HUMERUS FOUND
AT CONCORD, MASS.

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This interesting relic was exhibited at the last meeting of this society, and its peculiarity was explained and commented upon by Dr. Woodward and other members.

It is important to observe that this perforation of the lower extremity of the humerus, which is so noticeable in the prehistoric races of America that it has been called a "characteristic of the Mound-builders," is found to be equally prevalent among the prehistoric peoples of Europe. The percentages, however, indicative of its occurrence there, that have thus far been observed, are in no instance so high as the *fifty* per cent. which Dr. Gilman found to prevail in a mound in Michigan. I will give such of these as I have met with.

In the quaternary gravels of Grenelle, at Paris, M. Martin found the proportion to be *twenty-eight* per cent. In the caverns of the valley of the Lesse, in Belgium, in the case of the so-called fossil "race of Furfooz," M. Dupont found *thirty* per cent. to be the rule. M. Leguay observed the proportion to be *twenty-five* per cent. in the Dolmen of Argenteuil (near Paris); and Dr. Pruner-Bey found that it was *twenty-six* per cent. in the neighboring one of Vaureal. He also reports that it is common in the skeletons of the Guanches, the ancient inhabitants of the Canary Islands, whose mummies are found in caverns there. In the sepulchral cave of Orrouy, belonging to the Age of Bronze, Dr. Broca found the proportion to amount to *twenty-five* per cent.¹ Among the two thousand skeletons, of the Age of Polished Stone, discovered by the Baron de Baye in Champagne, in artificial grottos excavated in the chalk, he reports it as very frequent.²

I have brought here for comparison one of these perforated *humeri*, which I took from one of the sepulchral grottos at Baye.

It will be noticed that this *humerus* from Baye is broken in the middle

¹ *Compte rendu du Congrès International d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie pré-historiques de Paris—(1867)*, p. 146.

² *L'Archéologie pré-historique*, p. 203.

like the one found at Concord, and like those discovered by Dr. Gilman in mounds in Michigan. So also Dr. De Hart remarks of one which he figures, procured from a mound in Wisconsin: "In no case did I find any of the long bones of the extremities wholly perfect, but all of them were broken in the centre of the shaft, the other extremity not being found. It is hardly probable that this is due to decay in every instance, but may point to some superstitious rite, or custom connected with the sepulture of the dead, among the ancient Mound-builders."¹ Dr. Chauvet also describes one found in the cavern of La Buisse (Isère), which was broken in the middle in the same manner.²

It is hardly probable that these instances, occurring in regions so widely separated, could be due to accident only, however difficult may be the explanation of so strange a custom.

¹ Transactions of Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Vol. iv., p. 194.

² Congrès de Paris, p. 140.

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