

The following paper was read by Captain Burton :—

On STONE IMPLEMENTS *from the* GOLD COAST, WEST AFRICA.
By Captain R. F. BURTON, F.R.G.S., and Commander V. L. CAMERON, C.B.

[WITH PLATE XIII.]

THE discovery of a stone age in these barbarous regions is thus reported by my late friend¹:—"One morning, in 1870, Mr. Zimmermann, of the Basle Mission at Odumassi, near the Volta, brought me a stone which had evidently been shaped by human hands into the image of an axe. It was so small as rather to resemble a toy or model than a real implement of work; yet such in past ages it had been. With these miserable tools the ancestors of the white men, the red men, and the black men, had hewed down the oaks of Europe, the cedars of Asia, the pines of America, and the huge silk-cotton trees of Negroland. Not only are these stone implements dug up all over the world, but all over the world they are supposed by the common people to be thunderbolts. As regards Western Africa this belief is easily explained. The stone age is there comparatively recent, and many axes are merely covered by the upper soil (?). After heavy storms of rain, which are usually accompanied by thunder and lightning, this upper soil being washed away, the stone implements are found lying on the ground, and so seem to have fallen from the sky. However, the stone which Mr. Zimmermann showed me had been dug in his yard at some little depth below the surface. He informed me that he had sent specimens to the Missionary Museum at Basle, and I afterwards discovered that the specimens from Christiansborg (while that fort was under the Danes) had been sent to the Copenhagen collection, which is unrivalled in the world for its relics of the age of stone. But I was the first to bring stone implements from Western Africa to England, and being thus put upon the scent, obtained large numbers at two other missionary stations—Akropong and Aburi."

And here I must note that Mr. Crocker, of Crockerville, on the Gold Coast, told me that Winwood Reade had found, at Aquapim, fine specimens of hatchets, with holes pierced for hafts. Of these Captain Cameron and I found none on the Gulf of Guinea.

Winwood Reade resumes: "The next time I saw a stone implement was in the tent of Mr. Kühne, at Prahsu. He had

¹ Winwood Reade, "The Story of the Ashantee Campaign," pp. 2-4. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1874.

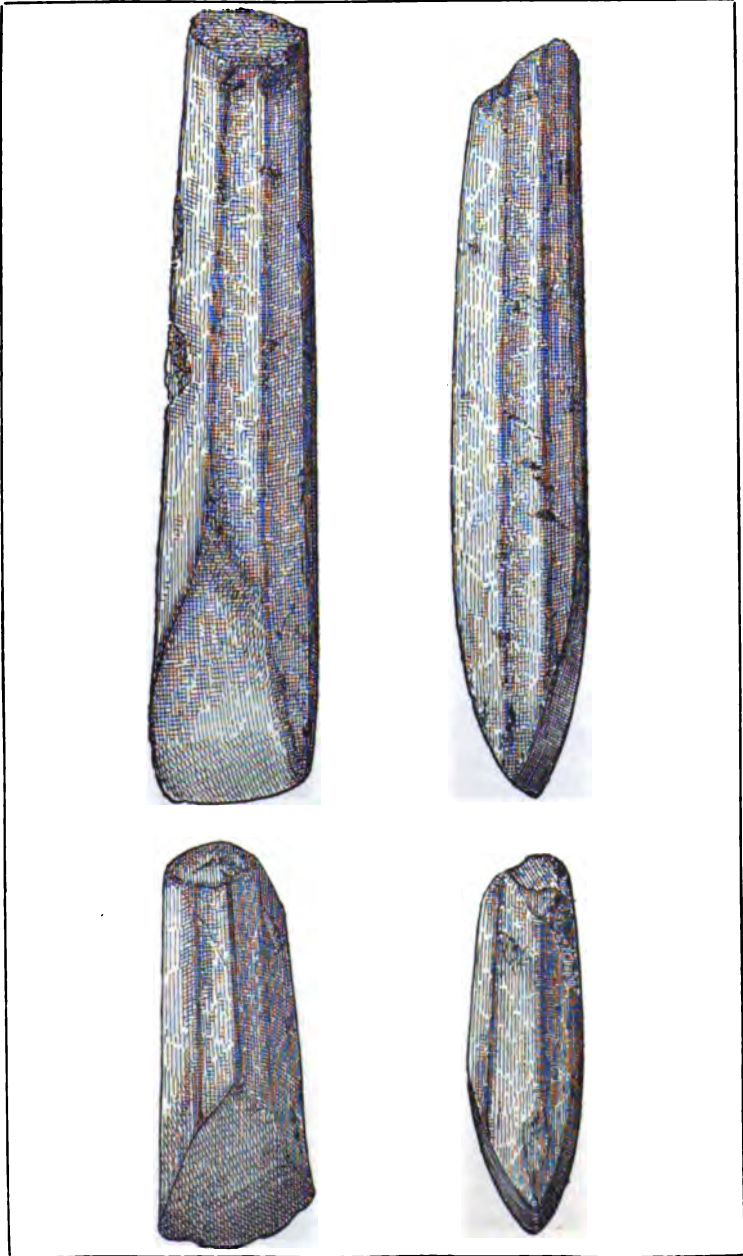
found it on an Ashantee altar, or shrine, as he was on his way from Coomassie to the camp. I asked my interpreter if he had ever seen one before; he replied that they were 'found everywhere,' and I made a small collection during the march through Ashantee. When the troops took a village I always hunted for this kind of plunder. Sometimes I found the stone hanging before doorways at the end of a string, like a plummet, and often it would be daubed over with chalk. The natives regard these stones with superstitious reverence, and call them *god-axes*; and, believing that all things sacred are medicinal, grind from them a powder which they use for rheumatism and other complaints."

Lastly, we are told (p. 314) that Reade's companion, Lake, found at Amoaful some stone implements, which are now in Sir John Lubbock's collection. Dr. John Evans owns, I believe, one of the Aquapim finds.

Arrived at Axim, I nailed to the wall of our sitting-room a rough print, showing the faces and profiles of stone implements, and drew to it the attention of all native visitors. The result was that the people began bringing specimens at once. The supply continued to come in, both up and down the coast, until I had secured thirteen fragments and entire specimens. When, however, the vendors found that value was attached to their wares, the price rose from a shilling to a dollar, and at last £100 was freely talked of. All were of the neolithic or ground type; none was of the palæolithic or chipped; and arrow-heads and spear-heads were apparently unknown.

Mr. Carr, native factotum at Axim for Messrs. Swanzy, an able and intelligent man, brought in sundry pieces, and furnished me with the following notes. The stones are picked up at the mouths of streams that have washed them down after heavy rains. But the people here, as elsewhere, call them "thunder-stones" (*Srāman-bo*). These Keraunia are supposed to fall with the "bolt," to sink deep in the earth, and to rise to the surface in the process of years. Hence the people search for them where the "thunder has fallen."

The stones are used in medicine, and those of black colour have generally been boiled in oil to preserve their qualities. After this process they resemble the *Básanos* (*Βάσανος*) of Lydian Tmolus: on the Gold Coast, however, the touchstone is mostly a dark jasper imported from Europe. The thunderstone is supposed to "cool the heart"; and the infusion, regularly drunk, prevents infantine diseases becoming too severe. They are mostly of fine close felsite, or the greenstone-trap (diorite), found everywhere along the coast. I heard, however, that at Abusi, beyond Anamabo, and other places further



STONE IMPLEMENTS FROM THE GOLD COAST, WEST AFRICA.

east, specimens of a lightish slaty hue are common. Captain Cameron, whose fine collection is described elsewhere, brought home one that felt and looked like soapstone coloured *café-au-lait*.

Axim seems to have been a great centre of stone manufacture. Mr. Carr showed us some curious remains in Messrs. Swanzy's compound. The slopes of the wart upon which their powder-magazine is built, especially the southern, are garnished with huge untrimmed boulders of this greenstone, whinstone, iron-stone, or diorite. The upper surfaces are scored and striped with leaf-shaped grooves, some of them three feet long by three inches wide and two deep. Probably chippings of the same rock were here ground to the required size and shape. I counted twelve large blocks, chiefly at the south-eastern angle of the monticle, and Cameron photographed the most remarkable. The late Mr. Robertson, of the Izrah Mine, compared the boulders with the Bell Rock on the Winterhoeck farm, 150 miles from the Natal coast, and six miles from Graytown. It takes its name from the ringing sound when struck by stone or bullet. No one has accounted for the stripes down the sides which may result from grinding stone implements. Captain Cameron, in returning from Tákwa, put in a few gads, and with Mr. Carr's leave broke off a fragment weighing some 600 lbs. It is now in the British Museum.

We afterwards found a number of these grooved boulders by walking round the seaward face of the Fort Saint Anthony: some were in the water and others stood high and dry. In the settlement north of the Fort there is one at the corner of a native house; and there is a fine specimen in the bed of the Anjueri rivulet, one of the many which pass through the red clay ground to the north of Axim before the traveller debouches upon the sands leading to the Ancobra river.

Explanation of Plate XIII.

Front and side views of two stone axes brought by the authors from the Gold Coast, and represented of natural size.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. JOHN EVANS observed that there was a strong general resemblance between the West African stone implements and those found in Greece and Asia Minor. He did not recognise any well-marked distinction between the one which was reported to have been used for gold-mining and the other specimens. The reverence shown to those hatchets might be paralleled by that exhibited towards them in India, where it is the custom to daub the ancient stone

hatchets with red paint as *mahadéo*. Curiously enough, the Egyptian hieroglyph for *Nouter*, God, is the figure of an axe. The popular belief of such hatchets being thunderbolts, he observed, was of very wide range. Though polished stone hatchets had already been brought from the West Coast by Mr. Winwood Reade and Mr. Bowen, he believed that they had not as yet been found in Southern Africa.

— Professor BOYD DAWKINS, Lord TALBOT DE MALAHIDE, Dr. ROSS, and the PRESIDENT took part in the discussion.

Commander CAMERON described a number of objects of ethnological interest from the West Coast of Africa, which had been brought for exhibition by himself, Captain Burton, and Dr. Ross.

The PRESIDENT exhibited an ancient Egyptian Boomerang, from Thebes, which had been lately added to his collection, and read the following paper:—

On the EGYPTIAN BOOMERANG and its AFFINITIES.
By Lieut.-General PITT RIVERS, F.R.S.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

WHEN at Thebes, in March, 1881, I heard that an ancient Egyptian boomerang had been sold to Dr. Pinkerton, who was at that time living on board a Dahbeeah in the river. I made several inquiries about it, but failed to elicit any further particulars, and not having the pleasure of Dr. Pinkerton's acquaintance, I subsequently forgot all about it. About a month ago I received a letter from Mr. Samson Gemmel, of Glasgow, informing me that a friend of his, without mentioning his name, had lately died, and had left me a boomerang. Thinking it was probably an Australian boomerang, of which I had already a sufficient number in my collection, I wrote thanking him for the present, and again the matter escaped my memory until within the last few days, when a parcel arrived which I opened, and to my surprise and satisfaction I found that it contained the rare and valuable specimen of an ancient Egyptian boomerang, now upon the table, and figured in No. 6, Plate XIV.

I at once recognised it by the wood, its form, and its peculiar ornamentation, which exactly resembled two others which I had seen and drawn, and which had been lately added to the British Museum. I therefore wrote to Mr. Gemmel for further particulars, and he in reply informed me that the friend referred to was Dr. Pinkerton, who, before his death, had