[Communication on a Unusual Method of Drilling]

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL MISCELLANEA AND NEW BOOKS.

Readers of the Journal are invited to communicate any new facts of especial interest which come under their notice. Short abstracts of, or extracts from letters, will be published at the discretion of the Editor. Letters should be marked "Miscellanea" and addressed to The Secretary, 3, Hanover Square, W.

We are indebted to Mr. J. J. Atkinson for the following interesting communication accompanied by the sketch which is here reproduced. This method of drilling is unusual, the employment of a weighted bag apparently not being known elsewhere.

The Editor of the ANTHROPOLOGICAL JOURNAL.

Dear Sir,

I send you a drawing of the drill used in former times by the natives of New Caledonia to pierce their stone axes—although the pump drill was also known to them. It is quite new to me, nor do I see any mention of it in any of my books—although perhaps within the knowledge of wider students of Anthropology. It

seems a remarkable instrument to have been evolved by so comparatively low a race in its utilization of centrifugal force for the economy of labour. Its peculiar action in use would seem to explain the fact of the abnormally large external diameter of the holes found in such axes, and which it was difficult to explain even on the improbable assumption that an unnecessarily large borer was used.

The hard flint-like stone used as borer was lashed to the end of a stick about 2 feet long. The other extremity ended in a blunt rounded point. About 8 inches from this and within a groove carved in the wood was fixed a bit of string, some 7 inches long, to the other end of which was fastened a bag containing a stone $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound in weight. The worker took in his right hand the half of an empty cocoanut shell, this he placed on the upper blunted end of the stick, thus forming a loose ball and socket joint. Pressing lightly he began by giving it a gentle circular motion which rapidly increased in speed; the weighted bag at once flew out, and thus with very little physical exertion the process of piercing is continued; the left hand holds to the ground the axe which is to be bored. This instrument is now so little known that the Curator of the Noumea Museum, M. Bernier, had much trouble in getting a model made by some old natives.

Yours truly,

J. J. ATKINSON.

Thio, New Caledonia,
January 28, 1897.

THIS Peruvian vase, recently acquired by Mr. Read for the British Museum, is of exceptional interest on account of the figures represented in relief on its sides. It will be seen that the warrior who is being carried off by the lower figure has two spears in his left hand, and what appears almost certainly to be a throwing-stick in his right. Hitherto the examples of throwing-sticks known to belong to the Peruvian area have been very rare. One from Riobamba, Ecuador, will be found figured by Dr. Max Uhle ("Wurfhölzer der Indianer Amerika's." *Mittheilungen der Anthr. gesellschaft in Wien*, vol. xvii, 1887, Plate IV, Fig. 2, where it is seen upside down); the other, from Quito, by Dr. Stolpe ("Ueber altmexikanische und Südamerikanische Wurfbretter." *Internat. Archiv für Ethnographie*, vol. iii, 1890, Fig. 6). Both thus belong to the inland country where pottery of the type represented in our illustration was probably not made. Dr. Uhle is of opinion that the throwing-stick was not in general use in ancient Peru; but the design upon this vase suggests that it was at any rate known in the lower country nearer the coast, though whether it was regularly used in warfare or not is still uncertain. Any discovery tending to increase our knowledge of the area over which throwing-sticks were used in South America is always worth recording, and it is to be hoped that further examples either of the weapon itself or of representations of it may be found from the same locality.