Notes on Some Indian Remains Found in Venezuela

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Dr. RICHARD KING, Sir DUNCAN GIBB, Dr. CARTER BLAKE, and Mr. AVERY, spoke on the Report.

Dr. CHARNOCK then resigned the chair to Mr. Dendy, and read a paper on "The People of Marken." [This paper appears in the *Journal of Anthropology*.]

The discussion on Dr. Charnock's paper was sustained by Sir DUNCAN GIBB, Mr. DENDY, Dr. BLAKE, and Mr. LEWIS.

Dr. CHARNOCK, in answer to Sir Duncan Gibb, Dr. Carter Blake, and other speakers, said he was not aware that the Markeners had any dislike to the people of the mainland; but it was a fact that the former seldom intermarried with the latter, and that the proportion of such marriages was not more than that stated in the paper. He did not say that the Markeners were giants, but that the Dutch people so put them down, and they were certainly very considerably taller than the latter. The name of the island, as mentioned in the paper, was probably derived from a district on the mainland. The word in most Teutonic languages would mean "limit," "boundary," or "border." The people of Marken were probably descendants of the Frisabones. The Batavi occupied the district between the Waal and Maas above their junction, and the island formed by the arm of the Rhine, the Waal, and Maas, after their junction, and the ocean, which island now forms part of the province of South Holland; but a large part of the Batavi were slain in the Roman armies, and the rest were either transplanted by the Romans, or became blended with Franks, Saxons, and Frisians. Indeed the name of this people was nearly obliterated in the fifth century. In ancient times, the Frisii not only occupied what is now called Friesland, but also the present provinces of Oberyssel, Gelderland, Utrecht, and Groningen, the country now covered by the Zuider Zee (which was then nearly all dry land), and the province of North Holland, which in Lubach's map is marked "*Frisabones*." The Frisabones probably had the last part of their name from some river (perhaps the Ij), anciently called the *Abon* or *Avon*. In like manner another tribe, the *Sturii*, were so called from living near water (Celtic *stour*), and the *Marsatii*, or *Marsäci*, were so named either from dwelling on a lake, or on the sea coast (*mere-sætas*).

MR. A. ERNST, Loc. Sec. A.S.L., contributed "Notes on some Indian Remains found in Venezuela".

I. During one of the heavy rains in the last year a temporary torrent discovered, in a street of the place called El Valle (three miles south from Caracas), the burial spot of an Indian. The skull and other remains were lost, but a collar of white teeth-like bodies was secured, and presented to the Sociedad de Ciencias Fisicas y Naturales by Señor Alvarez, C.M., residing in that place. It is formed of forty-six pieces, of the size and shape indicated by a sketch exhibited, looking like soft white lime-stone. Their texture is very distinctly lamellaceous; the lamellæ being visible on the convex and concave side. It is pure carbonate of lime, dissolving without any residue in diluted muriatic acid. When examined under the microscope, after a convenient preparation, the lamellæ showed the singular structure of the Guayacan wood, easily to be recognised by the diagonal intercrossing of its

fibres. The wood being a known and prized remedy among the Indians, it is not improbable that it was wrought into pieces of apparel, or perhaps also used as a kind of talisman. *Guajacum officinale*, L., is common in the *tierra caliente*, and known under the name "Vera." The region of El Valle contains much lime, and so the collar was completely petrified.

II. In one of the sessions of the Sociedad de Ciencias Físicas y Naturales of Caracas, Dr. Manuel V. Díaz presented to the Society five small earthen figures, which had been sent to him by Dr. Gabaldon of Mérida. It was stated that they had been taken from a burial-cave near Boconó, not far from the town of Trujillo, in Western Venezuela. I hope to get further information about that interesting place, as I have invited some friends residing in the neighbourhood to explore the cave carefully, and to send to Caracas skulls, and other remains, which might be found.

It is known that the country round Trujillo was formerly inhabited by the *Tostos*, *Escuques*, *Cuicas*, and *Timotes* (A. Codazzi, *Resúmen de la Geografía de Venezuela*, Paris, 1841, p. 256, and Waitz, *Anthropologie* iii, 385). Codazzi is probably right in bringing these tribes together with those inhabiting the mountains of Mérida, and supposes that they all spoke dialects of the Muisca language, from the circumstance that the sounds *b*, *d*, *z*, which are said not to exist in the Muisca, are also wanting in all original local names known from that country. (?)

Waitz (quoting from Piedrahita, xii, 5) mentions that the Cuicas and Timotes had in their temples *idols made of clay* and wood, which they adored by offerings of cotton, precious stones, and butter of cocoa.

I have little doubt that the figures found in the cave at Boconó are the work of one of these tribes; and I believe them, therefore, interesting enough for being the object of a detailed description.

The larger is 17 centimetres high. The head is extraordinarily flattened from face to back, forming on the top a very narrow stripe (14.5 centimetres long), covered with what appears to be a plaited ornament, and running out on each side in a blunt point. The ears are well marked, and have large holes for earrings. The eyes are indicated by two deep impressions on either side of the nose, connected by a flat channel, so that the spherical form of the eyeball is tolerably visible. The throat is very short, and 7 centimetres from the vertex. The arms are comparatively small, resting on the thick and prominent thighs, but the hands are not visible. The feet are short, and show clearly the five toes. There is on the upper part of both legs a circular outcut, like a ring, and in the breast are two holes. On the hind part of the head, close to the upper margin, is another hole, leading into the hollow interior of the figure, which contains some small pebbles, or coarse grains of sand, so that the figure produces a rattling noise when shaken; just as the native instrument known under the name of *maraca*. The larger figure represents a female. A cross on the forehead is of very recent origin, probably scratched by the finder, who, as a good christian, must have been anxious to exorcise these remnants of devilish heathendom.

The second figure is smaller, (13 centimetres high), and represents a man. Its shape is the same in every respect but for the eyes, which are less carefully made. It shows, besides, more clearly than the other one, the painting it is covered with, consisting of a great number of blackish diagonal stripes, intercrossing each other in oblique angles.

The clay used for these figures contains much mica ; the workmanship reveals some practice, and indicates a relatively advanced condition of the makers.

The photograph I send with this note gives a front view of the larger figure, and a back view of the smaller.

In the same cave were found numerous hatchets (?) of porphyritic diorite, in the shape of half a Malta cross, 22 centimetres long, and 8 broad.

Caracas, 18th April, 1870.

The announcements for next meeting having been made, the meeting adjourned.

Nov. 15TH, 1870.

DR. R. S. CHARNOCK, V.P., IN THE CHAIR.

THE Minutes were confirmed.

R. H. Adam, Esq., and David Kinloch, Esq., of Old Calabar, West Africa, were elected Fellows.

The list of presents was read, and thanks were voted for the same.

FOR THE LIBRARY.

From the AUTHOR—*Les Emanations ; Nouvelle Théorie sur la Formation des Comètes ; Storia della Casa d' Austria ; Le Création et ses Mystères dévoilés.* By A. Snider-Pellegrini.

From the INSTITUTION—*Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, vol. xiv, No. 9.

From the SOCIETY—*Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, vol. ix, part iii.

From the SOCIETY—*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, vol. iv, No. 8.

From the AUTHOR—*Dell' Indice Cefalospinale dell' uomo e nelle Scimmie Antropomorfe e del Metodo per determinario ; Di un Caso di Singolare Microcefalia in una Donna.* By Professor Paolo Mantegazza.

From J. F. COLLINGWOOD, Esq.—*The Origin of Matter and its Mental Government.* By R. Laming, M.R.C.S.

From the SOCIETY—*Proceedings of the Royal Society*, vol. xix, No. 123.

From the INSTITUTION—*The Canadian Journal*, vol. xii, No. 6.

From the Hon. E. G. SQUIER—*Report on the Management of Indians in British North America by the British Government.*

From Dr. ROBERT PEEL—*Woolner Vocabulary.*

FOR THE MUSEUM.

From Dr. ROBERT PEEL—*Three Skulls of Australian Aborigines and Half-Caste, and two flint implements.*

MR. C. H. E. CARMICHAEL, delegate of the Society to the International Congress at Bologna, read the following communication :