The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, 8th of April, 1884. The Vice-President, J. Bancroft, Esq., M.D., in the chair.

The following papers were read:

**ON AN UNDESCRIBED CLASS OF ROCK DRAWINGS OF ABORIGINES IN QUEENSLAND.**

By Henry Tryon.

Plates (XI—XIII).

These rock drawings, or rather rock engravings to which my attention has been called by Mr. Philp of Haddon, are on the right bank of Pigeon Creek, along the bridle path leading from Tenthill to Pilton, near where it emerges from the scrub to ascend the main range. This track to the Darling Downs, which has only been known to the settlers for a few years, formerly served as a means of retreat for the blacks, in escaping from raids made upon them by the colonists; and they could rest secure in the mountain fastnesses through which it conducted, hunting meanwhile the game which to this day is here so abundant. The neighbourhood knows the blacks no more, and an attentive observer can meet but few indications of their former occupancy.

An outcrop of the sandstone, which, of similar age to the Hawkesbury series perhaps, largely contributes to form the Main Range of Southern Queensland, has here given rise to a cave or rather rock-shelter, and it is on its flat perpendicular wall that the figures have been delineated.

On my visit I found the face of the wall of this rock-shelter, having an extension of 18 feet in one aspect and 6 feet in the other, from the ground upwards to the height of a black of ordinary stature, completely covered with various figures cut in the hard
sandstone rock. The floor was entirely hidden by a considerable quantity of fine wood ash, but without further evidences of fire. No smoke discoloration on the walls, which however, were covered by that fine algaceous growth which affects the slow weathering of sandstone rocks in similar situations, everything in fact was invested in a garb of comparative antiquity.

The inscriptions are in some cases mere shallow depressions, plainly traceable when viewed in a proper light, whilst others are deeply scored in the rock, occasionally to the depth of an inch. Scattered throughout them are numerous drilled holes of different size and varying depth, some 1 inch deep, and several 1 1/2 inches in circumference, some of which appear to have no relation with the grooved figures, whilst others are so grouped as to form figures themselves. Seldom the grooved figures have been evidently preceded in construction by series of drilled holes.

That they are the works of an autothotonous or indigenous people may, I think, be taken for granted.

An examination of the figures (Pl. XI) plainly shows that they are not the fruits of idleness, that they are not imitative symbols for mammals, birds, reptiles, or fish, &c., but insomuch as they conform to a limited number of types, the same figure occurring several times over, they may be conventional symbols for natural objects. "The natives have conventional forms for trees, lakes, and streams, and in transmitting information to friends in remote tribes they use conventional forms, but in many cases modified," (Brough Smith "The Aborigines of Victoria," Melb. 1878, vol. 1, page 285). Their "message sticks" may also be adduced in support of this opinion.

The ashes before alluded to, of sufficient quantity to fill a large cart, yielded on examination some remnants of previous feasting—bones of various animals still living in the neighbourhood, a few pieces of charred wood, fragments of sandstone from the rock above, and what is especially interesting several rude flint implements. (Appendix.)

Examples of indigenous native art are by no means uncommon in Australia, even if we limit our view to "rock drawings" as they are commonly called. From the time of Collins ("Account of the English Colony in New South Wales," 1804, page 381) onwards, the subject has been frequently discussed in the works of our explorers, and elsewhere; and Brough Smith has sufficiently summarised these notices in his work previously alluded to, (Op. Cit. vol. 1, Pg. 283) dwelling more particularly on Grey's narrative concerning the wonderful drawings or rather paintings met with by this explorer during his Western Australian Expedition, which to
some are evidences of a higher civilization than the Australian natives have otherwise ever exhibited.*

Almost without exception these descriptions have reference to rock paintings proper, and have this character in common in that they represent with more or less fidelity easily recognised objects, indeed some of their figures the outstretched hand for example, are repeated throughout the Continent.

In reference to another class of native delineations, inscriptions of the rudest type engraved in the rock itself. These are found throughout the world, and are especially numerous in the United States and South America. Their origin is assigned by the denizens of the localities where they exist, almost without exception, to a mythical source. It is to similar productions that Alexander Humboldt refers as occurring in the Savanahs, bounded by the Cassiquaire, the Atabapo, the Orinoco and the Rio Negro, "attesting the previous occupation of an anterior race of men very different from those who now inhabit the same regions. Rude figures, representing the sun, moon, and different animals traced on the hardest rocks of granite." — (Travels, Eng. Trans., vol ii., p. 471-472, cf., also John Whitfield on "Rock Inscriptions in Brazil." Jour., Inst. Anth, 1873.)

In the United States they occur everywhere, and are especially reported from Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming, Arizona, and other parts of the Rocky Mountain Region. In Utah, in the Upper streams of the Colorado, where once resided the mythical ancestors of the Moquis Pueblo Indians, (the present inhabitants of these spots who are "incapable of expressing an idea, or representing anything by means of signs or drawings."—Bull. Buffalo Soc. Nat., etc., vol. iii., p. 173), the red sandstone rock which forms the Cañon walls, and also the broad blocks of it on which the houses of these people are said to have stood, are covered with chiselled inscriptions, the significance of which is problematical. The inscriptions moreover are not always on sandstone, sometimes "they are engraved on the smooth exposed

* It will not be without interest, in this connection, to refer to the rock paintings of New Zealand, which have been subjects of communication to the New Zealand Institute, by W. B. D. Mantell, (Trans. N. Z. Inst. 1868, vol. 1, n. e., page 6), and Dr. Haast (op. cit 1877, vol. x, page 44.) Although we may feel sceptical towards the inferences which have been drawn on a critical examination of them by Mr. Mackenzie Cameron (op. cit 1879, vol. xi page 154,) who is of opinion that they are eloquent of a prehistoric intercourse between India and New Zealand. Also to the anomalous exhibition, in the Tattoo marks of Motu natives of New Guinea, of characters similar to those of the Azoka Inscriptions of India, which are themselves allied to Phœnician, (Journ. Anthrop. Inst. 1878 Paper by Mr. Park Harrison.)
ROCK DRAWINGS IN QUEENSLAND.

surface of detached boulders of a hard dark colored rock." They occur also, "pricked out, and not scratched or cut and generally, but not always, are shallow and not easily discernable."—(J. D. Putman in Proc. Davenport Acad. Nat. Sc., 1875, vol. i. p. 14).

I have referred especially to these American illustrations because they present much in common with the subject of my remarks. The figures too are often conventional signs, and it is not a little curious to meet with ones similar in form to these from a Queensland locality.—(Proc. Davenport Acad. Nat. Sc. vol. i. Pl. xxviii., fig. 4., and Pl. xxix. fig. 8).

Rock engravings have also been previously shown to exist in Australia.

G. Krefft, in 1873, sent to England a copy of a few sketches found in the neighbourhood of Sydney, engraved on rocks, and representing fishes, whales, birds, and a few men.—(Nature, vol. ix., 1874, p. 322).

Peschel, in 1874, writes of "remarkable etchings an inch in depth on the East Coast," instancing those at "Camp Cove, near Sydney, where rude outlines of men and animals may be discerned."—(RACES OF MAN. 2nd Ed. Eng. Trans. 1876, p. 332).

Brough Smith, in 1878, mentions "sculptured rocks on the South Head of Sydney, near Bondi, where men, sharks, fish, etc., are carved on the flat sandstone rocks."—(Op. Cit. vol.i. p. 292).

Sir Charles Nicholson, in 1879, at a meeting of the Botanical Institute (March 29th), referring to stone engravings near Sydney,—rude carvings of animal forms, especially kangaroos, and fish—takes occasion to mention their occurrence at various points between Cape Howe and Moreton Bay.

From all these descriptions the inference is unavoidable that the respective authors are dealing with figures which without hesitation they can refer to known objects or classes of objects.

As a further instance I wish to refer you to some figure (Pl. XII) a drawing of which has been in the Queensland Museum without history, since 1876. The originals are engraved on a sandstone rock or rocks, in the bed of the Burnett River, at Bingera. I need scarcely point out the interest which resides in these. They resemble some of the ones I am more immediately concerned with, and although the objects to which they refer may be inferred, they are further evidence that this custom of rock engraving had a sufficiently wide extension.

Australian Rock-drawings, whether painting or engraving, may I think, be classed either as:

1. Idle scratchings without further significance.
2. Delineations of Natural Objects grouped to form pictographic expressions, intelligible alone to those to whom the facts to which they relate are previously accessible, which will include the ordinary rock engravings or paintings whether on stone or bark.

3. Delineations of conventional symbols universally intelligible amongst the blacks themselves, a class to which I refer the present examples.

Regarding the engravings from an intrinsic point of view, it is not difficult to apprehend that some at any rate may represent animals, especially when a native fashion in pouringtray objects is borne in mind. I allude to that of tracing lines parallel to those first intended to mark the bounding surfaces, a practice which would certainly result in very attenuated objects.

Without further conjecture, however, I wish to point out what may be learnt by instituting a comparison with other figures of conjectural meaning only found amongst the blacks, either on their bodies or on their personal property.

Fig. 1 resembles one of the figures given by Sir John Fraser in his paper on the “Aborigines of New South Wales,” (Journ. Roy. Soc. N.S.W., 1882, vol xvi, page 201) as that of the “Mombarai” or drawing, i.e., the characteristic scar on arm or chest, of a native of Queensland.

Fig. 2 is evidently the equivalent of this “Mombarai” which a photograph of a Brisbane black well known as “King Sandy” plainly exhibits on the left arm. (Pl. XII.)

Fig. 3 is the counterpart of another similar mark also found on the arm of a Brisbane black. (Pl. XII.)

Fig. 2 also corresponds with the mark which forms a conspicuous pattern on a shield of a Queensland native as figured by Brough Smith (Op. Cit., vol. 1, page 334).

Fig. 4 finds its equivalent in a mark repeated several times, on a boomerang of a Queensland black in the collection of the Queensland Museum. (Pl. XII.)

I have no doubt also that numerous of the figures on the rock tablet, if not all, could be similarly correlated with and illustrated by marks of this character, derived from such various sources as indicated, which will be best seen by those whose avocations lead them where the aborigines are still plentiful. Reference to the paper above cited, will show the value of these marks on their bodies as distinguishing signs to other natives, marking the tribe or sub-tribe to which the holders of them belong. Mr. Fraser who moreover regards these marks as symbols, further adds
that their own tattoo mark is that with which they distinguish personal property. Now this custom is alluded to by Collins (Op. Cit. 1804, page 377), who writes "in ornamenting their weapons and instruments each tribe used some peculiar form by which it was known to what part of the country they belonged." Brough Smith has also written in the same strain, and figures several marks found on boomerangs from Queensland.

These "Mombarai" or distinguishing tattoo marks, these signs of ownership on their personal property, may, I think, be regarded, with those blacks who made use of them, as conventional symbols for the totems which may be any natural object, especially when one bears in mind the purpose which pictorial representations or symbolical representation of totems are made to serve amongst races other than the Australians, where totemism exists. As for instance, amongst the North American Indians, where as Max Müller expresses it (Chips from a German Workshop, vol. i, p. 318).—"Every warrior has his crest which is called his totem, and it is painted on his tombstone," a subject which is fully entertained in Mallery's "Sign Language amongst North American Indians," (Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of Ethnology) where the very instance which Max Müller introduces as a typical illustration of his remark appears to form the subject of a figure.

This connection between tattoo marks ('totem' signs where 'totemism' exists) distinguishing marks for personal property, and stone engravings is a very interesting one, especially for those who endeavour to find, in this practice of tattooing, the origin of the use of graved or written symbols. Peschel in writing of the Berbers of Algeria, remarks: "In the hieroglyphic inscriptions these people bear the name of 'Temhu,' and are recognisable on the Egyptian monuments by tattoo marks in the shape of a cross, which are said to be still customary among the Kabyl (Fr. Berber) women."—("Races of Man," p. 482).

On the ground then that we are dealing with signs which represent totems, I am of opinion that these rock engravings, under consideration, are conventional symbols for the totems of several tribes or sub-tribes. These they therefore serve to enumerate, or they may express numerous objects which these signs for totems are known to embrace. In either alternative they may be ideographic expressions of events,—for the ideas of persons, and so tribes, personal or tribal property, and even districts have been expressed by the symbols denoting the totems of the persons.—(cf. Herbert Spencer "Essays, etc."
vol. iii. 2nd Ed. "On the origin of animal worship;" also,
Genesis x. v. i-32, where as Peschel remarks "a system of Ethnography of the Mediterranean nations is sketched, in which names of countries, nations, or towns, are attributed to fictitious heads of families." (Op. cit. p.494)

"Facts of to day are, in a sense, the most ancient history," and the value of recording engravings such as these will, I think, be allowed when their place is assigned amongst the various stages which written speech has gone through in arriving at its present state of multiform expression (cf Herbert Spencer on "Progress" Op. Cit. vol. i, page 18). They are briefly these which may be grouped under the titles, I Non-Phonetic, II, Sub-Phonetic, and III, Phonetic.

I. Non-Phonetic includes (1) Pictographs or imitative signs, a class with numerous examples in the rock engravings and paintings throughout Australia. The mural paintings of early Egyptian and Assyrian monuments also belong, according to some authorities, to this class. With some races it is long obsolete, others recent.

(2) Ideographs, or expression by conventional signs. This is immediately derived from the first class as a higher stage, or is itself primordial and connate with gesture communication. The present rock engravings belong, I submit, to this class which also includes most of the drawings of the Indians of the New World. Representatives are found in New Zealand, (Mantell and Haast) and amongst the less civilized nations throughout the world, and in the traditions of civilized ones. With the advent of proper names and the necessity for expressing these, and abstract ideas generally, arose the

II. Sub-Phonetic expression with (1) cuneiform writing made up of symbols not necessarily phonetic, and when so not always syllabic, accompanied by a determinative sign, (Layard, Nineveh vol. ii. page 192) which is either a conventional symbol or a difficult ideogram. This is the nature of the Assyrio-Babylonian inscriptions.

(2) Hieroglyphic writing with its phonetic symbols representing simple or syllabic sounds, accompanied by an imitative emblem or pictogram as a determinative sign. Examples of this class are found in Mexico and Egypt.

Contemporaneously with hieroglyphic and cuneiform writing arose the Hieratic or cursive forms of each of them, for events of minor importance; and from these again the demotic or popular writing of Egypt, partially alphabetic and the alphabetical Phoenician. This Phoenician with the Oriental languages generally, whose origin it seems to indicate, and all the modern methods of literary expression represent the Phonetic group.
It is very unusual to find in localities frequented by Australian blacks, for camping grounds or other purpose, any but small heaps of ashes. This one was of very considerable size however, occupying the whole floor of the rock-shelter, and heaped somewhat against the wall on which the figures were delineated. On careful examination these ashes were found to contain fragments of bone, and stone implements. Amongst the former were represented the common Wallaby (Halmaturus dorsalis); the Possum (Phalangista vulpina); the Flying Squirrel (Petaurus taguanoides); the Kangaroo Rat (Hypsiprymnus murinus); the common Bandicoot (Vombatus vulcani), and the common Creek Lizard (Amphibolurus branchialis. De Vis). There were also pieces of the shell of the large fresh-water Unio, from the Condamine waters; and of Helix Cunninghamii, from the adjacent scrub. No vestiges of human bone were met with, and if any sepulchral rites were performed at this spot they seem to have been of the nature of eating and drinking. To gain the more luscious morsels indeed, all the medullary bones of the animals mentioned had been split across, and in some instances slight cuts had been made on the shafts of the long bones, to determine, as it were, the points of fracture.

The stone implements which were also amongst the ashes, eight of which are figured (Plate XIII.) are made of quartz rock of different degrees of silification from almost pure amorphous quartz to phonolite. They are mostly flakes which have been variously chipped, but none of them polished.

No regular cores were met with but most of the specimens exhibit the "bulb of percussion," in attestation of their genuineness. They were evidently intended for cutting instruments (especially Nos. 7, 8, 9), and several have their cutting edges slightly chipped on one face rendering them finely serrated. They may have been fastened into handles by "native pitch," as is customary amongst the tribes of the north-west. Some conform to certain types presented by examples of the European pre-historic stone age (Nos. 3 and 5) viz., elongated so-called spear heads plane on one side and with a mesial longitudinal ridge on the other.

It is evident that all these implements would serve a useful purpose, as knives and scrapers, in connection with the comestibles enumerated, and might have been used in making the numerous chiselled figures, especially the drilled holes, on the rock wall.

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