

VI.

NOTICE OF SOME PERUVIAN ANTIQUITIES OBTAINED FROM A BURIAL-MOUND AT ARICA. (WITH PHOTOGRAPHS.) BY REV. C. L. ACLAND, FOLKESTONE.

In the early autumn of 1868 the west coast of South America was visited by a fearful earthquake, whose effects were distinctly felt even as far off as New Zealand.

Among the phenomena of this earthquake was an enormous wave which rolled in upon the land with irresistible force, and did terrible damage to not less than 1200 miles of coast.

At Arica on the coast of Peru this wave tore open a long line of sandhill running parallel with the shore, and exposed to view many hundreds of corpses, proving that the sandhill had at some time been a burial-mound or place of general sepulture. As far as my informant was able to learn, all tradition of such use of the mound had long been lost.

With the corpses had been buried vast numbers of what may be called domestic articles, and it is upon a small but very perfect and interesting collection of these that I wish to say a few words. The collection was made by G. La-Coste, Esq., H.M.S. Malacca, and by him presented to me. He apologised to me for its being so small, on the ground that as he was but a midshipman at the time, he had nowhere to stow the things but in a corner of his box, but I think it will be admitted that had he gone about to make a collection with a view of illustrating as far as possible the life and manners of these early inhabitants he could hardly on so small a scale have done better.

At first sight it is difficult to believe in the antiquity of the various objects, so perfect is their condition, and so free are they from any traces of even the ordinary wear and tear of a moderate period of time. If, however, we bear in mind that the climate of Peru is one of absolute drought, that no shower of rain ever falls on this strip of land between the Andes and the sea, this preservation of even the animal and vegetable fibres and woven tissues will cease to surprise us. Buried in perfectly dry sand, and thus exposed to neither air nor water, what should cause them

to decay? This peculiar state of preservation appears to me to give the chief value to the collection, enabling it to throw no small light on the prehistoric antiquities of our own and other countries, for here we have the perishable and the imperishable alike presented to our eyes in the connection in which they were undoubtedly employed by the early inhabitants of Peru, and some closely similar connection we may presume to have existed between the similar imperishable objects elsewhere found and the perishable objects with which they too were no doubt once associated.

We have here the flint arrow head still remaining in its curious shaft, the latter apparently so shaped as to fit into a socket in the end of a heavy pole, which pole could be withdrawn and used for a second dart when the first had been driven home. We have the bolas, a formidable block of hard volcanic stone slung at the end of a cord of hair, at the other end of which is a leather loop to pass over its owner's thumb and prevent loss of the weapon. The more modern South American bolas has two stones, one at each end of the cord, and is thrown at the person or animal pursued, instead of being used for striking only, as this one is evidently intended to be. We have a well-shaped copper blade fitted into a convenient wooden handle, used perhaps to curry the hide from which have been cut the child's sandals, placed it may be by some mourning mother in the grave of her little one. We have twisted cords and woven braids, and the raw material of each, necklace, fish-hooks, ear-rings, pins of reeds, of stone, of bronze or copper, showing much elegance of design, and no mean skill of execution.

Again, we have pottery, shapely and somewhat shapeless, the latter bearing evident marks of much use on the fire—bone implements, well made and useful, one so pierced towards its point as to carry a thread through any material perforated by it—spoons, a comb, pins and stamp of wood—spindles, on one of which the yarn still remains, with their whorls of wood or earthenware, and one whorl of stone begun but not completed,—and pins and needles of the long thorns of the acacia. The needles are ground flat and pierced at one end, and among them is one much ruder-looking, made of bone. There is also a small parcel of what appears to be metallic antimony, done up in raw hide. This was taken from a bag hanging round the neck of one of the corpses, and may have been an

amulet. A well-made fishing line and stone sinker were perhaps used with the hooks made of bone and barbed with thorn, and the fish caught therewith no doubt served to give zest to the potatoes, which the forethought of the living has apparently provided to meet the necessities of the dead. Truly a strange thought, suggesting reflection, and strange no doubt the history that would be unfolded by a real knowledge of the first owners of these long-buried treasures.

Are we at liberty to come to any conclusions as to the opinion of these remote ancestors of the human race on the subject of their condition after death, from the fact of their burying with the bodies of their dead friends these objects of every-day use to the living? This is a question most difficult to answer. We may, on the one hand, suppose that the interment with the dead of the utensils which had served them while living proceeded from a natural disinclination in the survivors to use what had been employed by the departed, though in this case we should have expected to find more and larger relics committed to the ground. The notion that the few actually found are typical of the many destroyed, and that the whole property of the deceased was devoted to destruction, though but little was buried with the corpse, involves ideas almost too complicated for those to whom on this theory we should attribute them.

On the other hand, we may think that this plan of sepulture indicates a clear belief in a future state, not perhaps very circumstantially realised, but which will be so far like what the dead are quitting that the utensils of daily life here will be of equally general employment hereafter. The happy hunting-grounds of the North American Indians or the Wallhalla of the Norseman, with its constant scenes of battle and of slaughter, naturally lead to the interment with the dead, in the one case of the implements of the chase, and in the other of the favoured weapons, and perhaps horses and attendants of the departed warrior. A like feeling or expectation may have led these simple Peruvians to bury with their friends these objects of every-day use. An easy, happy, contented people, such as the Spaniards describe the American aborigines to have been wherever they met them, if they looked forward to a future to be modelled, as the mind of man unaided by revelation always does model his future, upon the present, would naturally take care that in this future

life their friends were provided with what might be necessary for the supply of the simple wants to which they had been liable here, and so would bury with them the pottery, fish-hooks, and ornaments to which they were accustomed.

But upon points like these we may wander into almost endless discussions. Perhaps after all the easiest solution is the truest and the best, namely, that these familiar objects thus buried with their departed friends were but the modest offerings of love placed in the tomb to mark affection for the living, and not in any way to indicate belief or expectation for the dead.

It is difficult, with our limited knowledge, to arrive at any idea of even the relative date of these simple pieces of domestic furniture, if I may apply this term to them. My own opinion is that they range over a considerable lapse of time, for it is difficult to believe that the same people at or about the same date used fish-hooks differing so widely from each other, as the thorn armed pieces of bone differ from the shapely copper hooks, while the apparently indifferent occurrence of stone and copper or bronze implements points to the same conclusion. If it be not so, then the broad line between the stone and bronze periods is to a great extent obliterated, so far as Peru is concerned, for here we find both materials present in nearly equal proportions. The ear-rings, if such they be, afford a curious instance of the simultaneous employment of the two, since they consist of cylinders of hard blue stone, pierced longitudinally, from which hang small pendants of bronze, these latter folded so as to resemble tweezers or sugar-tongs.

No trace of iron is found in the collection. This is the first positive fact about it, and from this I conclude that the articles date at latest from a time preceding or very shortly subsequent to the Spanish discovery of Peru; but I own that another consideration inclines me to ascribe to them a much higher antiquity—an antiquity which would carry them back beyond the epoch of the civilisation which the Spaniards found existing in Peru at the time of their first visit. Any one will at once know what I mean when I say that the pottery in my collection is not at all of the recognised Peruvian type. It presents us with none of the double vessels, with quaint uncouth human heads, which are familiar objects in the ordinary collections of Peruvian antiquities. The vessels

here found are simple, though in one or two cases elegant in shape, and utterly without any attempt at ornamentation. The large one is extremely rude, and altogether, except from the presence of the ears upon them, they look as if they belonged to a period of very primitive pottery indeed.
