

III.

NOTES ON A COLLECTION OF VERY MINUTE FLINT IMPLEMENTS FROM
SCUNTHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE. BY REV. REGINALD A. GATTY,
LL.B.

Before describing these minute tools, it may be well to give a general statement regarding their discovery in various places. Five and twenty years ago, when living on the moors at Bradfield, near Sheffield, I found these small implements associated with neolithic flints on the ploughed fields, at an altitude of a thousand feet above sea level. In this place were several earthworks and dykes, and tools of flint were common, though in no instance out of a collection of several thousand flints did I find an axe-head, or any polished weapon. As the ground had been broken up from moorland in quite recent times, it was not probable that the larger tools had been gathered previously by others. I collected there for twenty years. There was one peculiarity about the flints of this high district, which was that they rarely showed any sign of patination. My next experience of finding these minute flint implements was at Hooton Roberts, near Rotherham, eighteen miles from Bradfield, and in the valley of the Don. Here they were more plentiful, and again associated with neolithic tools, and the same absence of axe-heads and polished flints. I may mention that there is no chalk in South Yorkshire, so that the flint itself must have been brought about eighty miles from the Wold district. It is surprising that no large tool should have been discovered either at Hooton Roberts or Bradfield. The race of flint folk seems to have been of the most primitive character, though only in East Yorkshire, from where they probably got their flint, the people were making axe-heads and weapons large enough for defence or attack. I lay stress upon this fact, as so far as I can ascertain these exceedingly small flint tools have only

been found associated with such implements as I have described. I have been collecting at Hooton Roberts twelve years, and have perhaps twenty thousand flints.

It was a paper published by Dr Colley March of Rochdale which first drew my attention to these very small flints, and I saw afterwards some specimens of his collecting in the Cambridge Museum. These were minute tools for cutting, or graving, Dr March suggested, and shaped, as M. Pierpont described similar ones from Namur, like a small tattooing implement from the Congo. They are identical with what I found at Bradfield and Hooton Roberts, but were got from the floor of a peat bog, ten feet thick, at an altitude of thirteen hundred feet on the moors of the Pennine range of hills. Here again the flints were associated with arrow-heads, thumb scrapers, etc.; but there were no large tools or axe-heads.

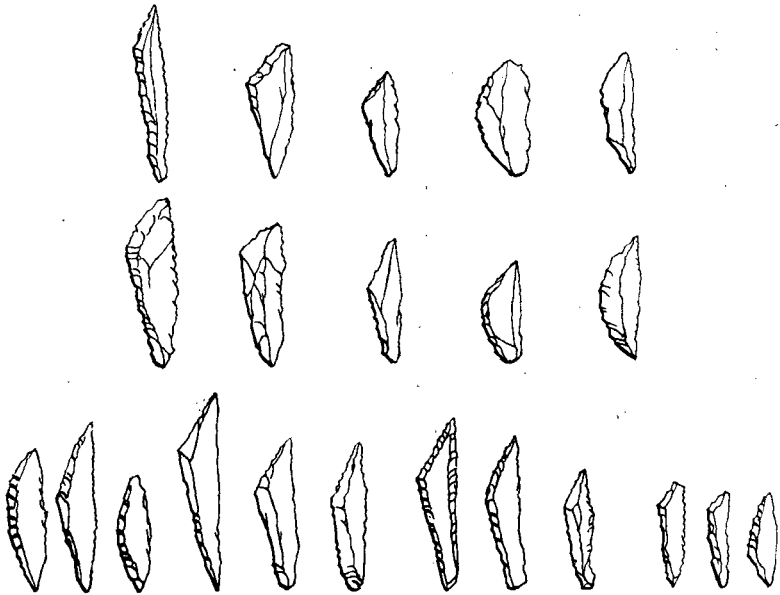
M. Pierpont,¹ describing certain stations, as he calls them, in Belgium and France, states that in some these flints were found by themselves with no other weapons near them. In other stations the ordinary neolithic tools were present with them.

Mr Carlyle, when out in India up in the Vindhya Hills, found in caves and rock shelters a great quantity of these minute flints, identical with English types, and with no other implements with them.

The same types of flints were found at Scunthorpe in the first instance by Mr Edgar E. Brown, and his careful investigations have been well rewarded. For years past flints have been found in this locality, but he was the first to draw attention to these minute forms. My experience at Scunthorpe leads me to believe it more nearly approaches the finds of Mr Carlyle and M. Pierpont, as the proportion of pigmy flints in comparison with ordinary neolithic forms is quite astonishing. With regard to the ground itself, Scunthorpe may be described as a sandy district,

¹ "Observations sur de très petit Instruments en Silex provenant de plusieurs Stations Neolithiques de la region de la Meuse," par É. de Pierpont, *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Bruxelles*, xiii. 1894-95.

where a few feet down under the sand, a rich bed of ironstone has been discovered. The ground rises rather abruptly, and a low range of hills begins which extends thirty miles to Lincoln. The ground is covered with heather and bracken, and where a sand mound has been, so to speak, broken, and acted upon by weather, and dispersed by wind, you may find among the sand the very small flints in some quantity. There



Minute Flint Implements found in India and at Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire. Those in the upper row are from India, the rest from Scunthorpe. (Actual size.)

are two other spots, each two miles distant from the hill, where they are found. Again, they occur six miles away in a similar locality. It is premature to say more about this place until further investigation has been made. It is interesting to observe, again, the absence of large tools. The arrow-heads and knives found there are of a superior workmanship to those at Bradfield or Hooton.

With regard to these minute flints, and their special characteristics, I find some difficulty in saying to what purpose they were applied. The common type of India, Belgium, and Scunthorpe, appears to be the cutting or graving tool, with a sloping shoulder, and worked sometimes on one and sometimes on both sides. This tool varies in size, the smallest being so minute as to need a magnifying glass to show the working.

There are found also minute scrapers, small circular tools, sixty-four of which were lately weighed and found to scale less than half an ounce. Small knives, borers, and triangles also occur, the latter being specially mentioned by M. Pierpont.

Mr M. E. Peacock of Cadney, six miles distant from Scunthorpe, reports very similar discoveries, and has sent me an arrow-head which he found in the bottom of an urn among human ashes. This arrow-point is so remarkably small that it seems to suggest a sort of offering to the dead rather than a weapon to accompany the departed. It has established the fact that cremation was adopted by the makers of the small implements.

Without venturing to express any opinion about the makers of these small tools, I think their absence in so many parts where neolithic flints abound rather suggests that the makers were a distinct tribe. There are many variations in the characteristics of arrow-heads, etc., found in various localities; such, for instance, in East Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. But there is no deviation in the absolute similarity of these minute implements of special forms, whether found in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, France, Belgium, and India.