

1/6
REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

AT ITS FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,

MAY 22, 1882,

WITH AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY,
1881—1882.

ALSO

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXIV.

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WITH APPENDIX.



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PLATE I

1.

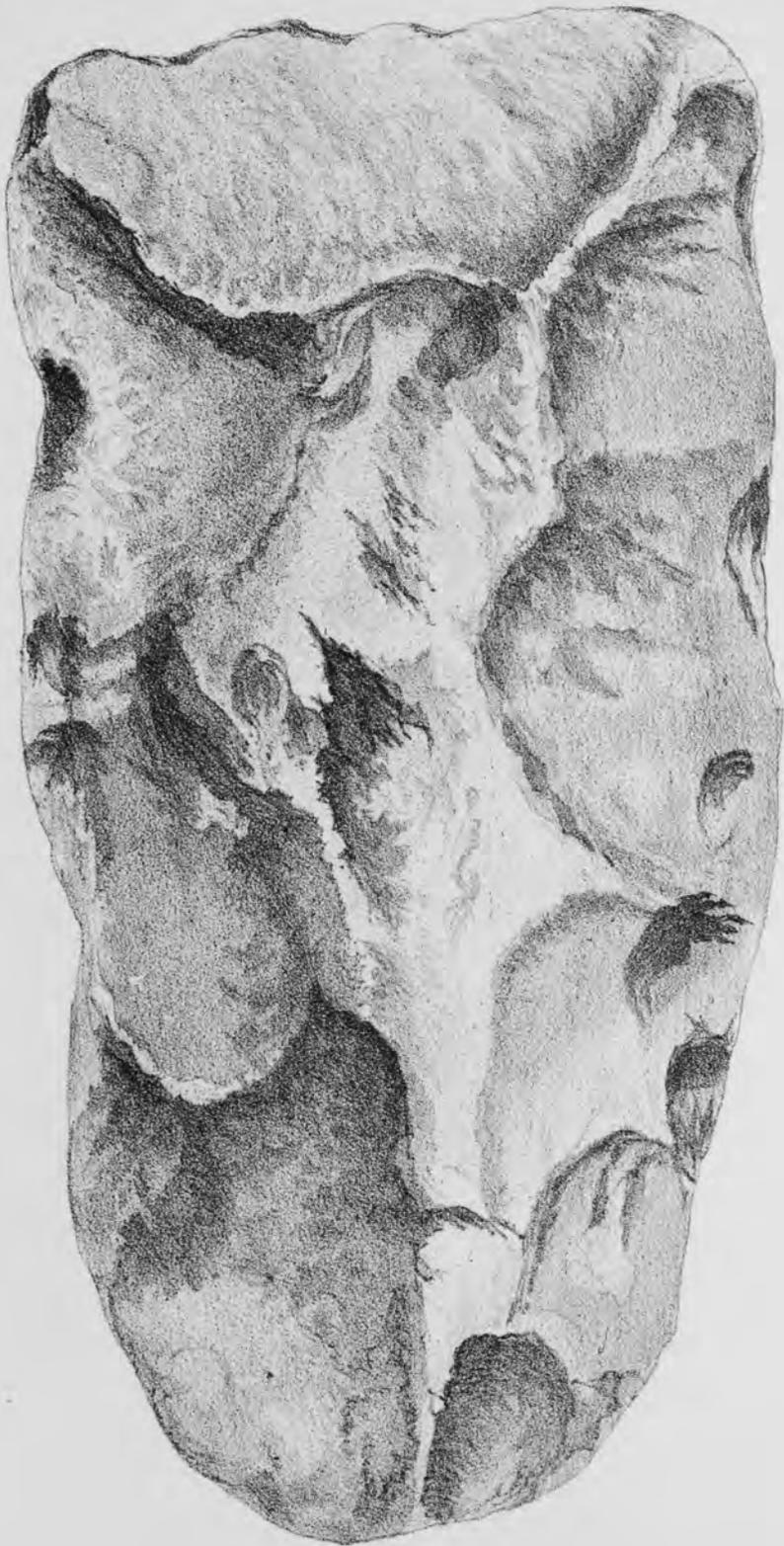


Reduced half the natural size.

2.



Natural Size.



Natural Size.

PLATE III.

1a.



Natural Size.

2.



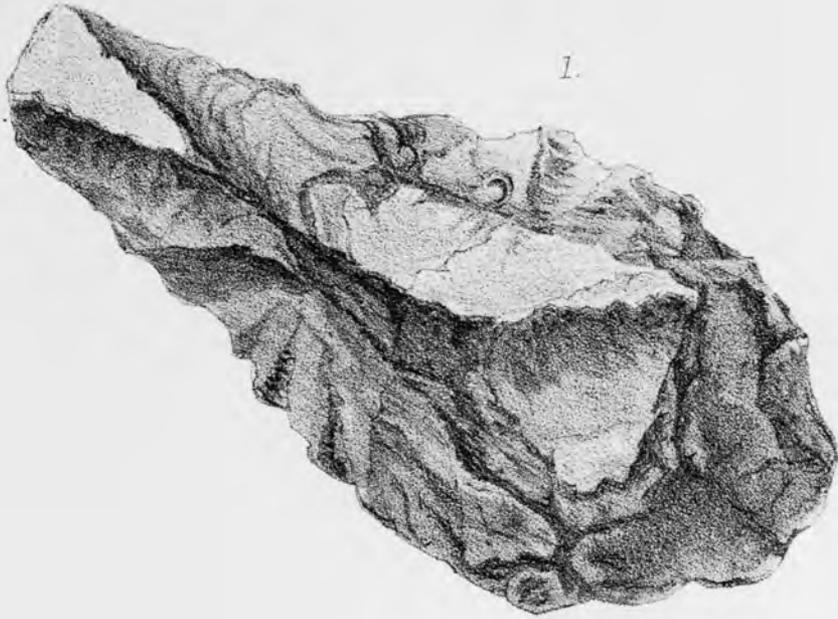
Natural Size.

1b.

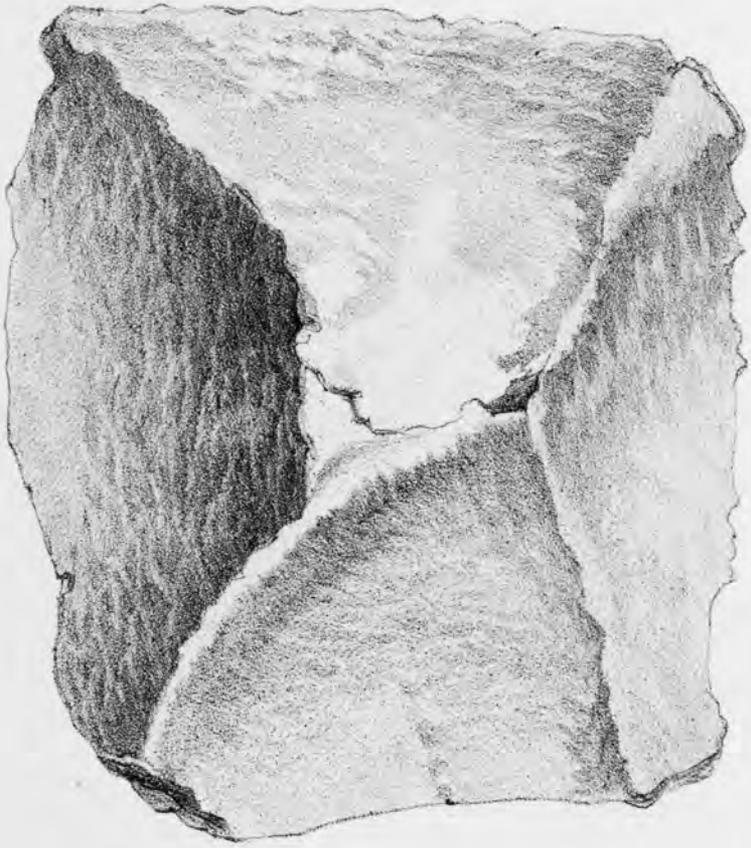


Natural Size — Same as above, showing iron pyrites at the back.

PLATE IV.

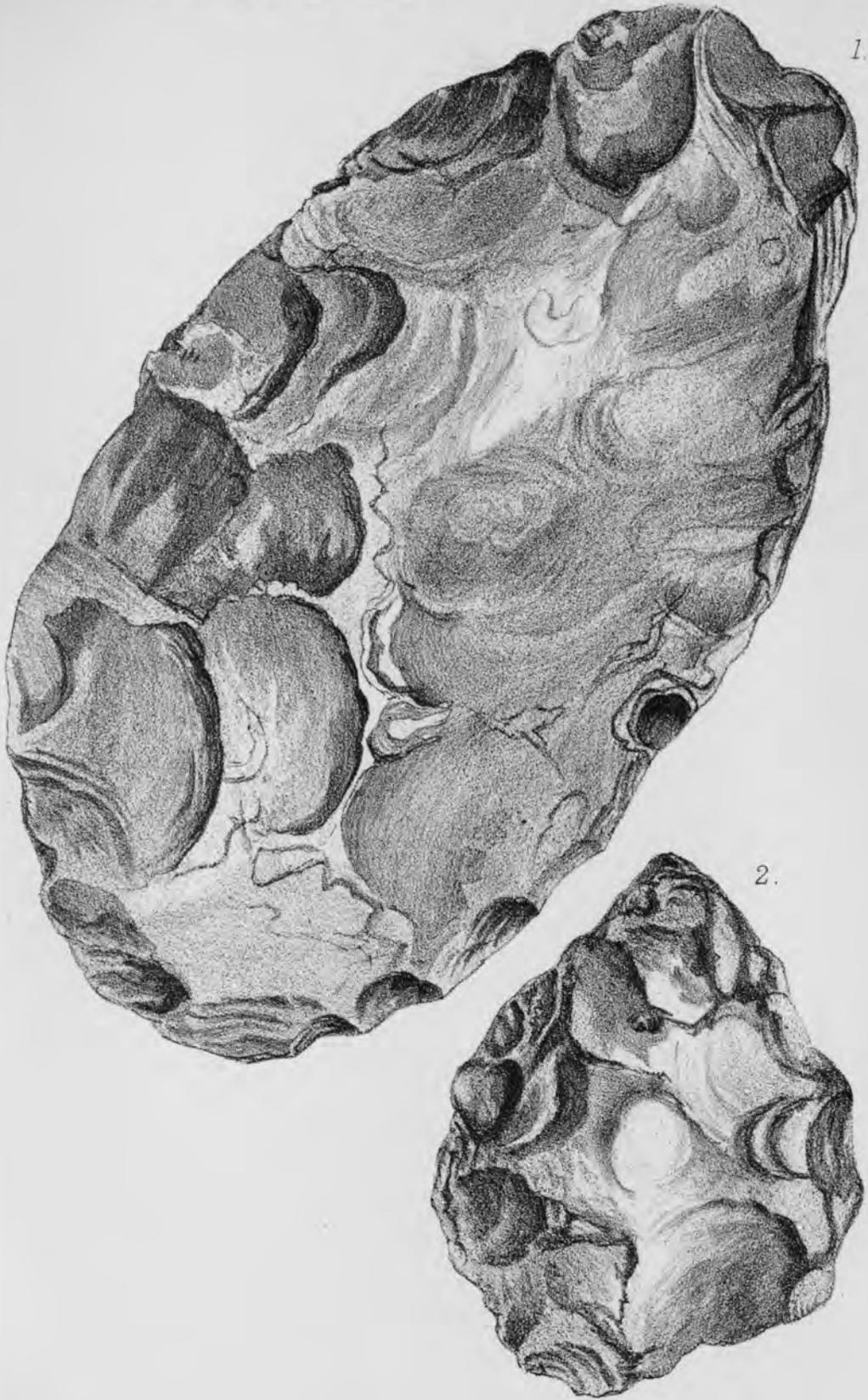


1.



2.





VI. NOTES ON FOUR SERIES OF PALAEO-LITHIC IMPLEMENTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA. By Mr JOHN C. RICKARD, Cambridge. Communicated, with remarks, by A. F. GRIFFITH, Esq., B.A., Christ's College.

[November 29, 1880.]

THE four series of Palaeolithic Implements which I have the honour to bring before your notice this evening, have a peculiar interest, not only as coming from a district from which very few have hitherto reached England, but more especially from the careful way¹ in which their finder, Mr J. C. Rickard of this town, has recorded the circumstances of their discovery. During a residence of some years in the colony, and a journey to and from the Diamond fields, he has collected a large series of both Palaeolithic and Neolithic types. The specimens before you are a selection from the former, which he has very kindly lent for exhibition. In general form they at once strike one as being very similar to those discovered in England and France, the differences being in most cases due rather to the different character of the rocks employed in their manufacture than to any radical divergence in type. In fact the few similar specimens from the same part of the world which had formerly

¹ Others who have collected these implements have not succeeded in giving a very clear history of their origin. Mr Sanderson (*Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* 1878, p. 15) quotes Mr Gooch as dividing the implements of Natal into two groups, one comprising those occurring at a depth of from 1 to 4 feet in deposits of laterite, nodular limestone and marl throughout the colony, belonging to Palaeolithic types, and distributed very evenly throughout those deposits, the other including those found in the drift sand on the surface, these being of more local distribution and of Neolithic age. The President in his Annual Address, January 28, 1879, desired "further information before adopting any definite views upon this subject."

found their way to England have simply from this external resemblance to our European Palaeolithic implements been assumed to be of the same age with them. The account which Mr Rickard has drawn up, giving the particulars of their mode of occurrence, will I think conclusively prove on surer geological grounds the truth of this assumption. I cannot do better than read *in extenso* the notes he has kindly placed at my disposal.

MR RICKARD'S NOTES.

"The Stone implements of South Africa, like those of Europe, belong to two distinct periods, the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic.

"Those of the Palaeolithic age may again be subdivided into two groups, which I may provisionally name from the localities in which they are respectively the predominant forms, calling the first the Port Elizabeth, and the second, which may possibly represent the earlier part of the Cave-period of Europe, the East London group. I prefer for the present to use these names, since the term 'Cave-period', applied to South African implements, would be so suggestive of 'Bushman caves' that confusion would probably arise from its use; there is also the objection that implements of Palaeolithic age have not yet been discovered in South Africa in caves.

"In point of fact, the implements from this district may be classified generally as follows:—

PALAEOLITHIC.

I. *Port Elizabeth group*:

- (a) Port Elizabeth gravels capping hill (B); fauna unknown.
- (b) River-bed at the Junction (A); fauna unknown.

II. *East London group*:

- (a) Port Elizabeth rocky *débris* on slope of hill (C); fauna unknown.
- (b) East London lateritic (?) deposits (D); fauna unknown.

NEOLITHIC.

I. *Prehistoric*:

- (a) Early Kitchen Middens; Eland, Koodoe (?) seal, birds, tortoise, fish, and abundance of shells; pottery absent or very scarce.
- (b) The Cape Flats deposits (implements of vastly superior workmanship to any of the others); pottery and fauna unknown (to me).

II. *Historic* (or overlapped by the Historic period):

- (a) Bushman caves and rock shelters (many of the surface implements belong to this period, but it is very difficult to distinguish them from others); pottery present.
- (b) Late Kitchen Middens (scarcely to be called a "stone" period, *no* cutting implements of stone; but rubbers, hammers, grindstones, &c. plentiful); a few bone pins; beads; pottery ornamented. The bones are principally of fish and small rodents; plenty of shells.

"The four series of implements at present under discussion belong to the Palaeolithic age, series *A* and *B* representing the Port Elizabeth, and *C* and *D* the East London group; those in series *A* are from the junction of the Riet and Modder rivers, tributaries of the Vaal, *B* and *C* from Port Elizabeth, Algoa Bay, and those in *D* from East London, at the mouth of the Buffalo river. These localities are widely separated, the coast stations being about 150 miles apart, the 'Junction' about 350 miles north of Port Elizabeth, and about 320 miles from East London.

"The implements from the 'Junction'¹ were found in the bed of the river immediately below the point where the rivers become confluent, lying either on the bare rock, or in small hollows containing a little coarse gravel; I collected upwards of eighty specimens in a few hours, but had to abandon the majority of them on account of the difficulty and cost of transport.

"Those from Port Elizabeth marked *B*² are from two de-

¹ See Plates I. and II.

² See Plate III. and Plate IV. fig. 1.

pressions on the hill above the business part of the town; these hollows have lately been deepened some two or three feet, connected by an open trench, and utilized as water reservoirs; the material excavated was used for embanking the lower parts of the margin; it consists of water-worn gravel sometimes cemented together into 'ironstone,' and yellowish sandy clay; the implements were collected from the embankments and from the newly exposed bottoms of the reservoirs.

"I have formed an opinion of the great age of these specimens independently of their singular resemblance to European implements. The hill referred to is in fact the projecting extremity of a plateau, which rises about 200 or 250 feet above the sea; this projecting area is of hard quartzite of supposed Devonian age, and is four or five miles long and a mile or mile and a half wide; it is bounded on three sides, either by deep ravines, low-lying land, or the sea; on the remaining side, kloofs have so cut their way down as to shut off all drainage from the interior; we thus have what is practically an isolated table-land, of an area far too limited to have important streams or rivers; consequently the implement-bearing gravels must have been deposited before the area in question was cut off from the inland districts; it is also remarkable that I have not found a single implement referable to the Port Elizabeth group on the lower levels, although those belonging to later periods are not uncommon.

"The third series¹ is also from Port Elizabeth and may perhaps be equivalent to the one from East London. Most of them were found amongst the naturally formed *débris* on the slope of the hill, some 60 or 70 feet above the sea, a few in the main street of Port Elizabeth, and one under hard limestone, covering what is probably an old sea-beach.

"The fourth series², that from East London, comes from a spot close to the town which was up to quite recent years

¹ See Plate IV. fig. 2.

² Plate V.

covered with drift-sand to a depth of six or eight feet; this has now been removed, so that at present the surface consists of a blackish sandy clay; towards the lower part of this layer, which is from one to three feet thick, the implements are found; lower still it becomes lighter in colour and seems to blend with the decomposing surface of the bed rock; on the opposite side of the river, at about 150 or 200 feet higher elevation than the East London side, the same layer occurs, containing similar implements; here deep kloofs have cut their way back, apparently at a date subsequent to the formation of the black stratum. The wagon traffic has in places cut up this black surface layer to such an extent as to displace the implements, which are therefore to be found in some numbers also on the surface, together with a few Neolithic forms.

“The great majority of this series are simple modifications of ridged and flat flakes¹, and show well-developed bulbs of percussion; a few are similar to those of the Port Elizabeth group; there are also cores, and one or two hammer-stones, a great number of very small flakes and chips of chert, and a series of irregular flakes from quartzite pebbles.

“No organic remains have been found with these implements, and although the remains of animals belonging to the higher orders are absent, yet in a locality so close to the sea one might naturally expect to find a few shells, and their absence almost seems to imply that the black stratum was deposited at a time when the area in question was more remote from the sea-shore than it is at the present day; otherwise the ancient races would have probably left the shells, the tenants of which they had eaten, in almost as great abundance as did the Neolithic men in their kitchen-middens on the same spot.

“In his work on ‘Early Man in Britain’ Prof. Boyd Dawkins makes some remarks on the distribution of the River-drift and Cave men; on page 232 he states of the river-drift

¹ Plate V.

men, that 'traces of their presence have been found over the whole of Europe south of Norfolk, through Asia Minor and the whole of India'; and of the cave-man he writes 'he is restricted to the area extending from the Alps and Pyrenees as far north as Derbyshire and Belgium, and has not been as yet found farther east than Poland and Styria.' I think these four series of implements prove that the range of one or both of these ancient races must be extended so as to include the southern parts of Africa."

As Mr Rickard in the foregoing Notes has discussed the distribution of these implements, we may now turn to a comparison of their forms with those of corresponding periods elsewhere.

The general resemblance of the specimens found in Africa to those found in Europe is so striking that it has been possible to refer many of the more noticeable to figures of similar English examples published in Mr Evans's great work on British stone implements, as giving a very accurate idea of their shape¹.

Of the 16 implements exhibited from the Junction, the two long and narrow specimens² are longer in proportion than almost any European specimens I know of; the type however is not otherwise dissimilar. There are also four subtriangular and two oval of the ordinary types, but in addition to these there are two somewhat similar in general appearance to ordinary pointed implements, but they have the point replaced by square chisel-ends³. A similar implement⁴ comes from Port Elizabeth, while from East London we find several flakes similarly brought to a square chisel-end⁵. These, so far as I know, belong to a type of Palaeolithic implements not represented in Great Britain, though quartzite specimens very similar to the rudest of these are found in Madras and Spain, and some almost as rude near Toulouse and elsewhere in the South of France. No

¹ For list, with measurements, see Appendix.

² Plate I.

³ Plate I. fig. 1, and Plate II.

⁴ Plate IV. fig. 1.

⁵ Plate V.

flake forms were found in this locality, nor is this strange, the current of the river in the bed of which they were found being so rapid that any flakes washed out of their original bed by it would infallibly be broken up or washed away. A single sub-triangular specimen was found on the Modder river about 20 miles above the Junction.

Of the two localities at Port Elizabeth, one has produced a large number of ordinary types, but amongst them is a single chisel-ended specimen, differing however from those from the Junction in having a less distinctly marked chisel-end, only $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide¹. There are also several abnormally-shaped specimens, mostly more or less wedge-shaped, one of which appears to have been bruised at the butt by hammering. Two hammer-stones from this locality are also exhibited, one of which is bruised at one end only, the other at both. Flakes are fairly numerous.

From the second locality at Port Elizabeth comes the smaller series marked C in Mr Rickard's classification. This is chiefly composed of flake forms, there being but a very small number of thick pointed implements, while the flakes are more numerous and vary in length from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; one is remarkable, being almost square and having a square chisel-end $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide².

All the specimens from Port Elizabeth are of quartzite, with the exception of two short broad flakes of vein quartz in series B. Most of them are much rolled, but a few from each locality are unworn.

The series collected at East London presents an entirely different *facies* from the first three, as there are very few pointed implements (six or eight in all), and these with one exception are very rough; this exception however is a fine implement, differing from the rest both in form and material, being of a flat oval form and made from quartzite. Cores from which flakes have been struck are fairly numerous, but the most striking feature in the series is undoubtedly, as Mr Rickard has pointed out, the abundance of flake-forms made,

¹ Plate IV. fig. 1.

² Plate IV. fig. 2.

like the majority of the pointed implements from this locality, of a hard, close-grained sedimentary rock and sometimes ridged (*i.e.* with three faces), sometimes flat (with four faces, two being approximately parallel). This difference has often been noticed in flakes from all parts, but I do not think much stress ought to be laid on it. Although most are pointed, there are a few exceptions presenting the very unusual form of a chisel¹; in these it will be seen that the cutting edge must have been produced by a blow given perpendicularly to the length of the flake, and before the flake was knocked off its parent core. At this locality, as stated by Mr Rickard, the Neolithic and Palaeolithic implements are sometimes found mixed up on the surface, but the difference in weathering between flakes of the two ages formed from this rock is so marked, that I think no doubt can be felt to which class these ought to be referred. They are formed indifferently from flat and ridged flakes, the longest being 6½ inches long with a cutting edge 1½ inches across; they all have a square end bevelled off to a sharp cutting edge.

There are also a large number of small chert flakes from this locality, from 1 inch to 1½ inches long, which may very probably be of the same age.

The relative abundance of flake forms found at East London as compared with Port Elizabeth, which Mr Rickard suggests may be due to difference in the age of the two series, one representing the River-drift, the other the Cave-Period of Europe, may possibly be equally well accounted for by the fact that at Port Elizabeth the implements were found in a gravel, in the deposition of which the thicker and stronger implements would alone escape destruction. At East London, on the other hand, the earthy bed in which they occur would preserve both indifferently; and wherever both forms occur, the flakes naturally outnumber the implements by an immense majority. At the same time the other explanation is by no means impossible.

A number of pointed implements were also collected in

¹ Plate V.

various localities in the Diamond fields and between them and the coast¹. Among them is a beautiful specimen of the somewhat rare thin oval form, with an edge worked on it all round, formed from a black basaltic rock². The rest are of ordinary types.

The success which has followed Mr Rickard, wherever he made a stay sufficiently long to allow him to search for implements, over so wide an extent of country, not very far short of the size of England, comprising an area of about 11,000 square miles, indicates that their distribution is far more general in this region than in Europe. From this fact we may fairly infer that the country must have been either much more thickly populated, or as is more probable, inhabited for a longer time by the races using these tools.

I cannot conclude without thanking Mr Rickard warmly for the readiness with which he put his whole collection at my disposal for exhibition this evening. My best thanks are also due to Mr E. B. Tawney for his kindness in determining the rocks from which the several implements are formed.

¹ Plate VI.

² Ibid. fig. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

Plates I. and II. From 'The Junction'; see pp. 59, 62.

Plate III. and Plate IV. fig. 1. From Port Elizabeth (series B); see pp. 59, 62, 63.

Plate IV. fig. 2. From Port Elizabeth (series C); see pp. 60, 63.

Plate V. From East London; see pp. 60, 61, 62, 64.

Plate VI., fig. 1. From near Bullfontein, Diamond fields; see p. 65.

fig. 2. From Pandam Fontein, a few miles south of Du Toit's pan, Diamond fields; made of indurated fine ash; see p. 65.

The specimens figured in Plates I. III. IV. V. and VI. (fig. 2), have been presented by Mr Rickard to the Woodwardian Museum.

Plate II. represents a specimen which he has been kind enough to add to my collection.

APPENDIX.

The measurements of some of the better implements are here given, with references to figures of similar specimens in Evans's *British Stone Implements*.

N.B. The figures referred to represent with truth only the outline, the difference in fracture making the other details less similar.

	Length.	Breadth.	Thick.	Material.	Reference to Evans.	Remarks.
	(in inches)					
A. From the Junction.						
1	5	$3\frac{3}{8}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	sandstone	Pl. II, fig. 18	
2	$5\frac{3}{8}$	$3\frac{3}{8}$	$1\frac{3}{8}$	quartz-felsite	„	
B. From Port Elizabeth.						
1	$5\frac{1}{4}$	$2\frac{3}{4}$	$1\frac{7}{8}$	quartzite	Pl. I, fig. 8	point broken
2	$3\frac{7}{8}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{3}{8}$	„	p. 537, fig. 459	but smaller; unworn
3	$5\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{3}{8}$	$1\frac{5}{8}$	„	p. 489, fig. 420	point broken; small portion of natural surface at butt
4	$4\frac{1}{8}$	3	$1\frac{5}{8}$	„	p. 550, fig. 469	thicker in middle than figure; unworn; edge worked all round
5	$3\frac{1}{4}$	3	$1\frac{5}{8}$	„	p. 505, fig. 437	
6	$4\frac{1}{8}$	$3\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	„	p. 550, fig. 469	resembles (4) but very rough, with a large mass of ironstone gravel cemented on to one side of it
D. From East London.						
1	5	$3\frac{3}{8}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	hard and fine-grained sedimentary rock.	Pl. II. fig. 18	but rougher
E. From various localities between Diamond Fields and East London.						
1	$2\frac{3}{4}$	2	$\frac{7}{8}$	basalt	p. 550, fig. 469	