

ART. X.—Notes on some Relics of Cannibalism.

By H. D. M. HASZARD.

[Read, before the Auckland Institute, 14th October, 1889.]

JUST outside of the south head of Whaingaroa, or Raglan Harbour, between the cliff and the sea, there extends a stretch of sand-dunes some chains in width, and in places from 30ft. to 40ft. above high-water mark.

Some time since, whilst surveying the vicinity, I was fortunate enough to come across some relics of the old cannibal times, a short description of which may prove of interest to the members of this society and the general public. I had heard of bones being occasionally found in the sand, but, on proceeding there one morning after the wind had been blowing for some days from the north-east, I was surprised to find that a great deal of the superincumbent sand had been carried out to sea, exposing what had evidently been the camping-ground of the natives during some of their sanguinary feasts.

In two distinct places, about four chains apart, there were a number of *kapura Maori*, or native ovens, scattered about in no regular order, but each group contained within a radius of about 40ft. Among the stones of the ovens were lying charcoal and the charred remains of bones: the former was remarkable for its fresh appearance, and, as far as looks go, might have been burnt only a few weeks ago. Near the ovens there were great quantities of human bones; in some places being in little piles, with the larger bones split as if to get at the marrow, before being dispensed with by the picnickers. In other places there were odd bones scattered about, and still further away there were some complete, or nearly complete, skeletons sticking up through the sand, which, judging from the size of the frames and the state of the teeth, may possibly have belonged to some hoary old warriors who had looked too tough to be eaten, and had been given their quietus simply to keep them out of further mischief. I also noticed some bones that, from their size, must have belonged to children.

Among the *débris* there were plenty of fish-bones, the *tamare* (*Pagrus unicolor*), *kahawai* (*Arripis salar*), and *kanae* (*Mugil perusii*) being conspicuous, also the *pipi* (*Venus stutchburyi*) and other common shell-fish; so that the feasters had evidently not depended altogether on one course.

I searched carefully to see if I could find anything to throw light on the discussion as to whether the moa was used as food by the natives, but could not see any trace of large bones.

Scattered about on the sand were numerous pieces of obsidian broken into thin flakes. Some of these still retained an edge "keen as a razor," some were serrated, and others, again, were rounded by the ceaseless drift of sand. These obsidian knives must have been brought from some distance, the country immediately surrounding being of limestone formation, and, though the Karioi mountain at the back is trachytic, I never saw any obsidian *in situ*.

There were also picked up some of the ordinary stone axes, and I found a carved bone *mere* (whale bone, I think), but it was broken across the handle, and rather decayed. I did not notice any greenstone ornaments or implements, though, of course, there may have been some buried deeper in the sand.

I made a collection of some of the most interesting things found, including a skull with a specially retreating forehead, and intended handing them over to the museum; but, unfortunately, in moving camp they got lost.

It is difficult to estimate how long ago these feasts took place, but I think it could not have been less than seventy years, probably much more. I made inquiries of some of the old natives living near, and they did not seem to have any tradition respecting the spot, and it was not *tapu* (sacred), as it would have been had it concerned any of their immediate ancestors. The implements, too, point to a time previous to the advent of the white man.

In a few weeks this modern Golgotha was again buried deep in the sand, which will no doubt preserve these interesting remains of a bygone time till a continuance of north-easterly winds again exposes them to the gaze of any observers who happen to be near.

ART. XI.—*Description of a Meteor, of 4th May, 1888.*

By TAYLOR WHITE.

[*Read before the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, 8th July, 1889.*]

I WILL endeavour to describe the appearance, or my impressions, of a meteor which was visible in apparent close proximity to my position at Wimbledon, Hawke's Bay, on the 4th May, 1888, between 8 and 9 o'clock p.m. It was the most beautiful and grand sight it has been my lot to witness.

The shortness of time allowed for inspection makes it difficult to fix certain points as to the position of blue and green bands showing in the tail or streamers, but I feel justified in placing them on the outer edge. The nucleus, or head, was of oval form, of a transparent light-yellow colour, as of iron at a white-heat. The tail was in the form of the tail of a pheasant,