

rose to the surface of the water, leaving the shell on the bed of the stream. As the dead bodies floated down the current the heads of islands, masses of fixed drifted wood, and the shores in many places were covered with them, tainting the air with putrid effluvia.”

Now, nearly the whole of the shells which occur in this bed of rag-stone appear to have been dead shells. I mean, that from the open state of the valves it is probable that the animals were for the most part dead before they were enveloped in the sand and mud; and from the large quantity of waterworn (coniferous) wood perforated by lithodomi, that is imbedded with them, it would appear that this stratum had constituted a bank of drifted wood and shells, presenting a very analogous condition to the phenomena above described. The molluscous bodies of the trigonias, gervillias, rostellarias, and oysters, etc., detached from their shells, would have been intermingled with drift-wood on such a sandbank; while, in other cases, the animal-matter would remain in the shells. These masses becoming fossilized would present when loose the patches of molluskite, and when retained in the shells the phosphatic casts observed.

The Rev. J. B. Reade submitted some of the molluskite to an analysis by Mr. Rigg, who confirmed Dr. Mantell's suspicion of the presence of animal-carbon in it, and states that the darker portion of the substance contains about 35 per cent. of its weight. Dr. Mantell adds that a microscopical examination of some specimens with a low power detects innumerable portions of the nacreous laminae of shells of extreme thinness, intermingled with carbonaceous matter, together with many siliceous spiculæ of sponges, very minute spines of Echinodermata and Polypifera. Of these extraneous bodies he remarks, that probably they became intermingled in the soft animal-mass before the latter had undergone complete decomposition. He proposed the term Molluskite for this fossil substance, and considers the substance of the dark spots and markings in the Purbeck marble to be identical. Since this paper was read, I have closely examined many of these bodies, and from the presence of minute bones of fishes, I am convinced that a very large proportion are the egesta of fishes.

(To be continued.)

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### *The Muskham Skull.*

SIR,—Have the following facts, stated by an anatomist of European reputation for the last thirty years, any bearing on the question of the obliquity of the *foramen magnum* in the Muskham skull, as described by Prof. Huxley and Mr. C. Carter Blake, in the ‘Geologist’ for June last?

Speaking of the Kaffirs, Dr. Knox states (‘Races of Men,’ p. 226), that “the form of the skull differs from ours, and it is placed differently on

the neck; the texture of the brain is, I think, generally darker, and the white part more strongly fibrous; but I speak from extremely limited experience." Speaking of the Hindús, he states ('Races of Men,' p. 246), that two young Brahmins which he saw had "heads peculiarly formed—hammer-shaped, in fact—set on the neck differently from the European."

It is to be hoped that the forthcoming detailed examination, by Dr. Knox and Mr. Carter Blake, of a large series of recent skulls in the Ethnological Society's collection, may lead to some satisfactory result on this interesting question.—I am, etc.,

POLYGENIST.

### *Flint Implements.*

SIR,—One or two statements made in an article which appeared in the 'Geologist' of last month, on M. Gras' attack on the evidence of the Flint Implements in respect to the antiquity of man, seem to me to require correction.

In touching upon one of the points of M. Gras' attack, viz. "the astonishing multitude of these axes," the following interrogative is put and answered:—"But, in reality, *how* common are the true worked flints? We have seen *one* only from all the great gravel-beds round and under London; and miles of them have lately been cut through for the sewer-works. We have seen, may be, half-a-dozen from Suffolk, a like number from Bedford, two or three from Kent, and less than a dozen from all parts of England. As to the Yorkshire specimens, we must know more about them, and *where* they come from, before we can say much about them. I suppose, however, whether *ancient* or *modern*, not more than a hundred exist from that, the largest county in England, and numbering as many acres as there are words in the Bible."

From the above extract it appears that considerable doubt exists as to the genuineness of the numerous collections of flint-implements made by various individuals in the last-named county. About twenty years ago, I casually saw at Boynton Hall, which is situate a few miles from Bridlington, and which belongs to Sir George Strickland, a small but interesting collection of flint arrowheads, axes, etc., made previous to the year 1800. It was after my inspection of this collection that I was induced to search in the same localities; and during the period above-mentioned, I have accumulated several thousands; nine-tenths I have picked up myself, and the rest have been brought to me by men and children who have found them while working in the fields. I beg to refer your readers to a lecture delivered by the Rev. T. Wiltshire to the Geologists' Association at the beginning of the year, on the "Ancient Flint Implements of Yorkshire, and the Modern Fabrication of similar Specimens." On this occasion the reverend gentleman exhibited two hundred and sixty-eight specimens. To show, however, with what facility spurious flint weapons could be manufactured, a person was in attendance who, with only a small piece of iron rod, bent at the end, produced by a little dexterous manipulation almost any shape required. The forged implements, however, may be detected by the practised eye, as there are certain peculiarities about them which make them differ from the authentic ones. Those interested in such matters I would refer to a report of my collection, which appeared in the third volume of the Proceedings of the Leeds and West Riding of York-