

MIRZAPUR.

A GAZETTEER,

BEING

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saws, rasps and borers ; while some of the last-named implements are very fine, tapering from a tenth of an inch to a point as sharp as that of a needle. So far search has not revealed a single representation of an axe, though it is well known that it was by the stone axe that prehistoric man wrought the destruction of the primeval forest. These stone implements belong to the class known as "pygmy flints," and are believed to be of neolithic age. The available evidence goes to show that their manufacture extended over a long period, and there is reason to believe that the earlier examples go back to the beginnings of the neolithic age. It is possible that they are the memorials of the survivors of palaeolithic man, working as the slaves or dependants of the more advanced neolithic races.

Tombs.

The stone implements from the south of Mirzapur are associated with neolithic interments. In prehistoric, as in modern, India various methods for the disposal of the dead were adopted. The men of palaeolithic times probably abandoned their dead in the forests ; in the neolithic age burial was perhaps the rule, and it seems certain that the practice of burial is older than that of cremation. Examples of sepulchres which can be referred with confidence to the neolithic period are rare, but besides those in the south of the district, a certainly neolithic cemetery near the town of Mirzapur was explored by Colonel Rivett Carnac and Mr. Cockburn. The grave fully excavated was six or eight feet deep, enclosed in a stone circle about twelve feet in diameter, and contained the skeleton of an adult male over six feet in length, lying on a stone slab pointing north and south. A flat dish of "glazed" pottery was placed at the head of the skeleton, and a similar vessel lay at each corner of the tomb, which also contained a long narrow lachrymal vase of green glass about seven inches long. In a second grave opened two stone hammers and sundry flint flakes were found.

Rock dwellings.

Coeval, in part at least, with the "pygmy flints" are rock-drawings, which are found in many places in the Kaimur hills, under boulders, in rock shelters, on vertical precipices, and on the roofs of caves. They are executed in red, yellow and white pigment, the red predominating and only traces of the yellow and red being visible. Mr. Cockburn was the first to point out that as the red pigment was an oxide of iron and all sandstone contained iron many of the drawings were in the nature of a stain on the rock,

and that, as the sandstone on which the most perfect drawings had been done is a vitreous quartzite harder than granite, weathering very slowly, the drawings in protected situations were of great antiquity.* These drawings generally depict hunting scenes. Some of the more interesting ones deserve description. In one cave Mr. Cockburn discovered a collection of characters and symbols which are in the earliest Asoka characters and may belong even to an older era and be one of the sources of the Asoka characters. Some of the symbols associated with them represent the nine planets, whose influence is considered to play a very important part in the life of a Hindu, and must have been drawn by a civilized people. Another drawing represents a tiger drive and is better executed than the others. It was found at China Durra and is evidently a mediaeval picture, for barbed iron arrows of a form impossible in wood or stone, swords, shields and spears are conspicuous. On the other hand, no firearms are visible. This picture is probably about 500 years old. In one rock shelter was discovered the drawing of a plan of an ancient city and the exodus of its inhabitants. The latter from their dress appear to be men of northern race. They are represented with hair flowing down to their shoulders and curling up, with long robes, and with turned-up shoes like sabots, quite unlike drawings of aborigines. The plan of the city is interesting. It is entirely surrounded by a wall while outside is a temple or *stupa*. Possibly the city intended to be represented is Benares and the *stupa* may be Sarnath. The roads are evidently drawn on a plan by one who knew them. Various other plans on much more simple lines of what appear to be large villages have been found, similar to the plans engraved on stone discovered in Switzerland and Germany. Among other drawings there is a picture of two war chariots apparently opposed by aborigines. One of the chariots has a protective mantlet in front and a pole with a standard or crest on top: it has only two wheels behind and is drawn by four mules. A savage with a mace and shield opposes it. The second chariot is a four-wheeled one and the charioteer flourishes what looks like a spare wheel; the animals drawing it are evidently, from their tails, horses. Most interesting of all are the drawings of animals whether in

hunting scenes or otherwise ; the latter include the rhinoceros, the *gaur*, swamp deer and wild buffalo. One drawing depicts a rhinoceros hunt by men using a multi-barbed spear, which argues a high antiquity. It is impossible to turn from these antique pictures, the earliest expression of the thoughts of man, without considering the dim vistas of history they open up. They establish the fact that the rhinoceros was once found in and around these hills and suggest that extensive swamps once existed here, side by side with primeval forest ; that the climate was then different and rainfall heavier ; and that the forests have been gradually cleared by the patient labour of man, who has, in his efforts to grow food-producing grasses only, levelled the soil and at the same time destroyed the inequalities of surface loved by arboreal vegetation, causing a change in climate, the drying up of springs, and the many changes in the habits of man that these have brought about. It is possible that some of the rock drawings of the Kaimurs are 3,000 years old or even more ; but some, as has been seen, are more recent. The caves were inhabited first by savages and then by Buddhist and Hindu ascetics ; and holy men from Benares even yet occasionally take up their quarters in them. But most of the drawings are probably the work of aborigines ; and represent scenes in their lives dating from the remotest antiquity to the time when they were driven by the strong immigrants from the north to the fastnesses of the hills, where the latter did not care to follow them. Many of the drawings are palimpsests, while others are covered with a deposit of carbonate of lime, the satisfactory removal of which may yet display older pictures.

Tradition, however, is wholly silent as to these ancient dwellers in caves. The Bhar is everywhere the *autochthon* of popular story. Every ancient tank, every half-obliterated entrenchment, and every fort of rude and massive masonry is, by common consent, attributed to a "Bhar Raja." The Bhar empire probably extended northwards as far as Bhadohi and southwards to Barhar, both of which parganas derive their names from the ruling race. In the former their forts and tanks abound. The tanks are specially numerous and it is hardly possible to travel three miles in any direction without meeting examples of these which are always to be distinguished from later work by the fact that they are *suraj bedi*, that is, having