

A Remarkable Object.

METEORIC STONE SAID TO HAVE FALLEN IN JAMAICA

THE EDITOR:

Sir.—I wonder whether any of your readers can help in elucidating the question raised by Herr Schmid of Rastede.

A short while ago Mr. Schmid wrote to me asking whether a meteoric stone which had fallen in Jamaica in 1862 was in the Museum of the Institute. I told him in reply that I knew nothing of the matter and that the stone was certainly not in the Institute.

In reply Mr. Schmid writes as follows:—

"In reply to your letter of January 20th, I enclose herewith a copy of the German translation. As the stone is not in your Museum, would it not be advisable to make enquiries as to whether any descendants of Dr. Hopkins exist who would know about the matter.

"If Dr. Hopkins' statements are correct, this must be one of the most remarkable objects in the world.

"My son arrives at Kingston on March 8th on board the M. S. "Frida Horn" and will call on you with the book. I hope that the enquiries will lead to some result, and would ask you to be good enough to keep me informed.

KARL H. SCHMID
Engineer."

On page 311 in the book entitled "Leben und Weben der Natur" by Dr. August Bohner, publishers, Karl Ruempler, Hanover 1874, is an article by a Dr. Hopkins regarding the fall of a meteor, taken from the publication "Proceedings of the Kingston (sic) Association XII, 1862."

This article is of great interest inasmuch as if the statements are correct, it proves that in our planet system, or in the universe, there are, or have been, planets which are inhabited by intelligent beings. But it is, however, remarkable that such a thing should not have been generally known and that the various Museums should not have preserved the meteoric stone in question. The article by Dr. Hopkins, member of the Scientific Society of Kingston, Jamaica is as follows:—

"At 11.30 p.m. on August 10th, 1862, I returned to Port Royal along the banks of the river of Sixteen Milewalk, accompanied by John Ergail and W. Yorrell, a lawyer from Linguan-Side. The sky was perfectly clear. My attention was drawn towards the Zenith of a magnificent shooting-star which crossed the constellation of Cassiopeia like a lighted ball, about 2/3 the moon's diameter and then dropped towards us with the utmost rapidity. It seemed to remain stationary for about half a second then burst with a slight crack sending rays in three directions.

"Seven to eight seconds after this phenomenon we heard, about 50 feet behind us, a noise of breaking branches and the fall of a heavy object. My two companions and I went to the place where the fall had occurred and there we saw an indigo bush split to pieces. Aided by the moonlight we found, quite near, a black mass which was embedded in the ground. Five minutes after the explosion the heat of the stone was 220 deg. Fahrenheit.

"The next day the meteoric stone was carefully dug out, and fifteen small pieces which were blown off the big stone were found nearby. The largest stone was embedded 2 1/2 feet in the ground and projected about 1 foot. The stone was in the form of an irregular cube and weighed about 6,000 lbs. The black-appearance of the upper surface came from a dusty substance which was proved, by chemical examination, to be coal dust. Moreover, a brown, plant substance was found at several cracks in the stone which was recognised by Servais, Professor of Chemistry in

Port Royal, as organic bituminous matter.

The upper, slightly arched surface of the stone resembled the shape of an irregular square, about the size of a 'quadrattelle'. The lower surface represented a fairly decided fragment of an arch. Of the four sides, two are broken, conchoidally, a third is even and smooth and the fourth is irregularly rough and coated with a grey green cement. The chemical

examination of this cement showed the following composition: One hundred parts consisted of: 61.1 chalk; 21.2 silica; 6.5 Tonnerde (? pitch 3); 4.9 oxyd of iron; 1.0 cobalt oxyd; 4.3 loss. One solitary grain of rock crystal was found in the cement.

"The upper surface of the cement covering is crossed by a half cylindrical groove which appears to come from a hollow cylinder about 3 inches in diameter.

"The arched shape of the lower part of the black

SHOWS DISTINCT TRACES

of mechanical work. The very hard stone is cylindrically chiselled out with a sharp instrument, following the line of the natural structure. The fourth side is even, almost polished, about a 'quadrattelle' in size. At the first glance it seems to be covered with a large number of irregular strokes and curves, but after the resinous substance which had formed a coating was washed out with alcohol and distilled water, an engraved picture appeared, the drawing practically undamaged. At the top, near the centre, the sun can be recognised by its form and extended rays. In the background is undulating ground which seems to be covered with a kind of vegetation. To the left and in the foreground a row of arches appears, extending under a slope and making a cross section. The openings of these arches are in the form of a half circle—the columns stand in a row. At three of these openings three figures of the same shape and dimensions are seen. Each looks like the barrel of a gun resting on four pipes. The length of the barrel is almost exactly half as long as the height of the arched passages. On the right side of the picture, in the foreground, the stone is the most damaged. It has lost its polish and some pieces have been broken off. The centre ground shows a kind of half circle in which, at certain parts, can be seen something that resembles steps and seven figures which have the same formation as those below the arches. In the foreground two figures can be seen which are different from the others but which appear to belong to the same type.

"To get an approximate idea of these figures imagine two worms raising themselves one against the other whilst they support themselves on the ground with two legs and have the back feet rolled together like two wheels. The cylindrical bodies are all of the same size and are provided with three vesicular knots, two at each end and a larger one in the middle. The symmetrical formation of these creatures is unrecognisable."

Dr. Hopkins makes the following conjecture:

1. The meteoric stone appears to have been part of an arched stone and to have belonged to a star having plant life, on its upper surface, capable of forming charcoal and vegetable resin.

2. The star is inhabited by creatures who have knowledge of building, drawing and perspective.

3. These creatures are furnished with two sets of symmetrical limbs so they are capable of swinging them in a circle similar to the movement of the small "wheel animal" under the 'infusory animal'.

Dr. Hopkins' report ends here. The author of the book, Dr. Bohner, considers it unnecessary to determine to what extent human phantasy has coloured these puzzling figures. On the other hand, of this much we can be certain:—

1. The report of a member of a scientific association specifying the place and time and actually a witness of the event, cannot be simply laid aside without further consideration but merits credibility.

2. If Dr. Hopkins' statements are correct, this meteoric stone would be, as far as we know, the only message bringing us news of a culture on another (of course bygone) star.

3. After all, a meteoric stone

weighing 6,000 lbs is something that does not easily disappear. It should therefore be possible to find out if the stone is in the Kingston Museum, and if not, where it has got to. In any case, owing to the close relations that exist between scientific associations in all countries, it should be easy to obtain further information or a reproduction of the amazing picture in question."

The difficulty is that although I have studied the history of learned societies in Jamaica for upwards of forty years, I

HAVE NEVER COME ACROSS a Kingston Association as being in existence in 1862. The only societies I know of existing at that time were the Royal Society of Arts of Jamaica (the predecessor of The Institute of Jamaica) and the Colonial Literary and Reading Society, Kingston. The publications of the transactions of the Royal Society of Arts ceased in 1861.

Sixteen Mile Walk, now forgotten, run east and west towards the foot of Mount Diavolo.

Dr. Hopkins is not mentioned in the contemporary lists of medical practitioners in the colony. Yorrell is not mentioned in the list of Attorneys-at-law; nor have I come across any reference to a chemist by the name of Servais. It is possible, of course that he may have been a chemist attached to one of the sugar estates in the old parish of Port Royal.

There were at that time five papers published in Jamaica--The "Gleaner," "Jamaica Tribune," the "Morning Journal," the "Jamaica Guardian" were published daily in Kingston. The fifth, the "Falmouth Post" was published bi-weekly in Falmouth. In none of the four last mentioned is there any reference to the incident. Unfortunately the file of the "Gleaner" in the West India Reference Library only commences in 1865.

It is of course possible that Dr Hopkins or someone else interested in the subject may have written an account of the occurrence to England or America and enquiries are being made into the matter in those directions. In the meanwhile it is just possible that some one amongst your readers may be able to throw some light on the subject.

I am, etc.,

FRANK CUNDALL

Kingston,

March 29, 1932.