

There is another organic form contained in this limestone, of which the following figure No. 3, will give an idea, and which I think may be the true transverse section of No. 2. It exhibits concentric lines of holes or pores, slightly depressed at the extremities, and generally three in number. (*See Fig., Diagram 3.*)

These fossils do not appear in the Cutch catalogue, or in other figured fossils of India that have fallen under my notice.

On the MERIS and ABORS of Assam. By Lieut. J. T. E. DALTON, Assistant Commissioner, Assam. In a letter to Major JENKINS. Communicated by the Government of India.

MY DEAR MAJOR,—I have this moment received yours of the 8th, for which many thanks. I fully intended sending you a supplemental paper, giving such information as I was able to collect regarding the Abors, their trade with the Meris, and communication with Thibet. The account I sent you was hurriedly written, and is, I know, very incomplete in many material points; but as a mere programme for the more ample narrative we may next year be, I hope, enabled to compile, it may not be necessary to add much to it at present.

The Customs, Language, Religion, &c. There is no very material difference between the Abors and Meris. They are evidently of common origin, and the Duphlas are of the same race. The Meris from their intercourse with the plains are, in some respects, more civilized, but almost all I have said concerning them applies equally to the tribes more remote. They intermarry with them, exchange slaves, and are generally in the habit of constant intercourse. The Meris, many of whom have become rich in cattle and goods, appreciate the value of combining for mutual support, and dwell in villages. The Abors, as they themselves say, are like tigers, two cannot dwell in one den; and I understand their houses are scattered singly or in groups of two and three over the immense extent of mountainous country occupied by them.

The Meris say, that whenever a few families of Abors have united into a society, fierce feuds about women and summary vengeance, or the

Fig 2

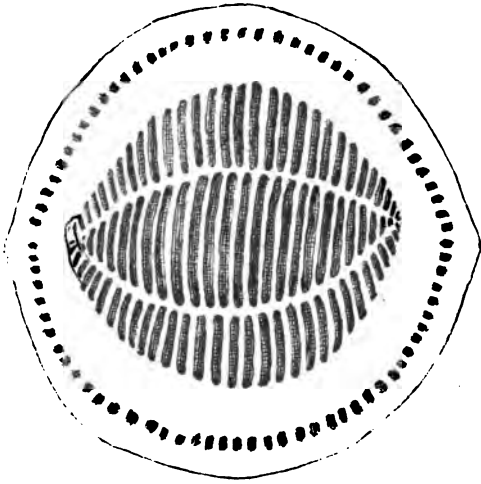


Fig 1

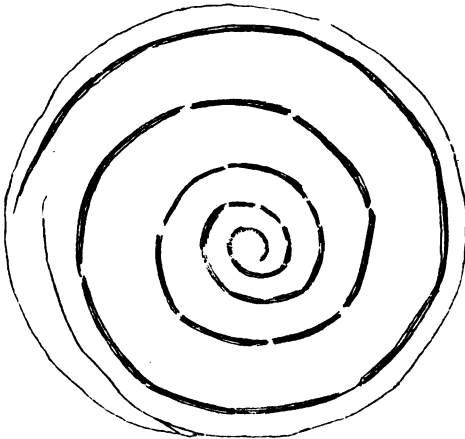
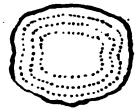
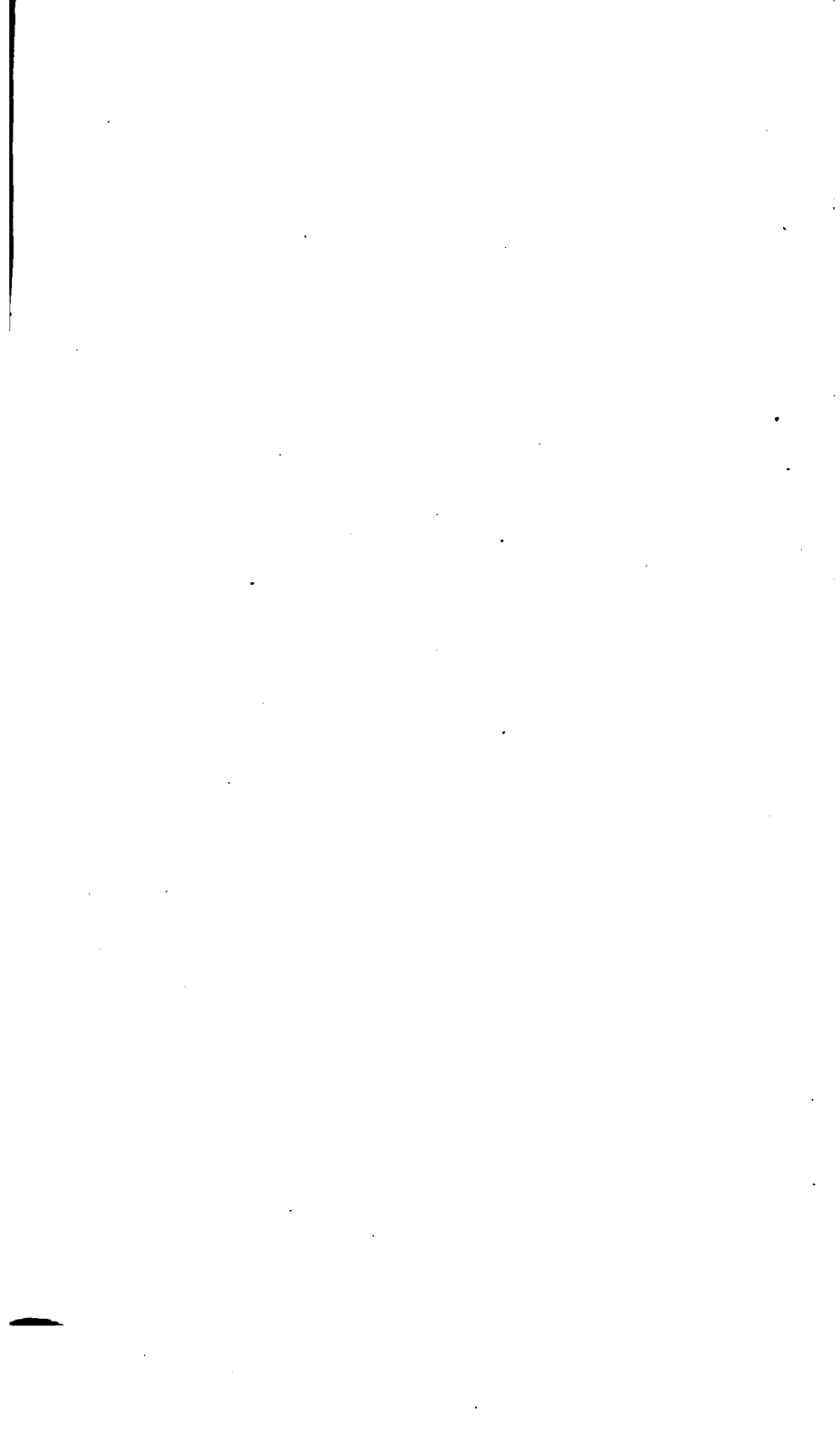


Fig 3



*Fossil bodies (magnified)
to illustrate Captain Newbold's paper.*



dread of it, soon breaks up or scatters the community. They therefore prefer building apart, and depending upon their own resources for maintaining themselves in their isolated positions. They are compelled to be more industrious than the Meris, and can fashion themselves daos and weave coarse cloth, arts of which the Meris are ignorant, or more correctly speaking, which they have lost. The iron for the former is, I believe, obtained from the other side, for I have not learnt that they understand the art of working the ore, and that which the Meris import from the plains they purchase ready made into daos for their own use.

The cotton used in the coarse cloths they weave is grown by themselves, very little of it ever finds its way down here; but I saw one load of it this year, and it appeared of excellent quality. Between the Abors and Meris there is a considerable trade. The Meris import from the Abor country munjeet, beads, daos, "Deo guntas" the little bells I have described in my former account, and cooking utensils of metal, Myttons, slaves, and I may say wives, their marriages being so entirely a matter of barter. In return for which the Abors take cloths of Assamese manufacture, salt or any articles imported by the Meris from Assam. Of the mode in which their intercourse with Thibet is carried on, I have as yet obtained very little information. I have never yet met with an Abor who had been across, and the Meris I have questioned on the subject assert they had not seen the tribes who are in direct communication; but from those who had seen them they had heard of a fine rich country inhabited by people who wore fine clothes, dwelt in stone houses, and rode on horses, which was watered by a mighty river. How ever they manage it, the Abors import from this country every thing above enumerated, save the munjeet, slaves, and wives that they interchange with the Meris. The large metal dishes thus imported are of superior manufacture, and fetch high prices when brought in here by the Meris. The Meris possess cooking vessels of great size so obtained, which they use at their feasts, but are very jealous of producing before strangers. The daos are of superior temper, but of rude finish, and of the workmanship, as I believe, of Thibetan blacksmiths; they are probably made in the rough for the express purpose of barter with these people, as they are made in Luckimpore for the Meris. In addition to the articles I have enumerated, the Abors import salt (from the description given of it rock salt) from the north, for it appears they

have a very scanty supply of it, and gladly take our salt from the Meris when they can get it. I presume it to be an importation : what they export in return I know not, but most likely cotton and munjeet. Between the Duphla and Meris countries there is a tribe called "Auks" and "Auka Meris" by the Assamese, who never visit the plains, but yet appear, from all I have been able to glean regarding them, very superior to the tribes of this family we are acquainted with. Surrounded by lofty mountains, the country they inhabit is an extensive valley, represented as being perfectly level, and watered by a branch or perhaps the principal stream of the Soondree, and richly cultivated. They are said to possess fifteen large villages, the cultivation of one adjoining that of the other, so that there is no waste land between. Their chief cultivation and sole staple appears to be rice, to rear which they irrigate the land, and are said to have magnificent crops in return. Their lands are not, I am told, adapted to the cultivation of cotton, but they procure as much of it as they require from the Abors in exchange for rice. In industry and art they are acknowledged by the Meris to be very much *their* superiors, who however, perhaps for this very reason, look upon the Aukas as their inferiors in the scale of creation. The Auka ladies wear blue or black petticoats, and jackets of white cotton of their own manufacture : their faces are tattooed "*unde nomen*" Auka, which is given to them by the Assamese. They call themselves "Tenae." The males do not rejoice in much drapery ; they wear a girdle of cane-work painted red, which hangs down behind in a long bushy tail I am told, and must have a comical effect. Of their religion all I have heard is, that every fourth year there is a kind of religious jubilee devoted to sacrificing and feasting at the different villages by turns ; and on these occasions, some one officiates as priest : other particulars in which they differ from the Meris have been related to me. The Meris, however extensive the family and the number of married couples it includes, all occupy one house. The young men of the Tenae tribe when they marry leave their fathers' house, and set up for themselves. During the Moamorya troubles many of the Assamese of this division are said to have sought and found in the Tenae valley a refuge from the persecutions of that sect, the refugees appear to have been generously treated, and no obstacles were opposed to their return to their own country when the dangers that threatened them were removed ; but I have sometimes heard that a few

remained of their own free-will, who settled in the valley, and are still to be found there.

The Tenae appear to be a very peaceably disposed people, but they occasionally are compelled to take up arms to punish marauding Abors, and they are said to do the business at once effectually and honorably, whilst the Meris and Abors confine their warfare to nocturnal and secret attacks, and, if successful in effecting a surprise, indiscriminately massacre men, women, and children. The Tenae declare hostilities, march openly to attack their enemy, and make war only on men, and their revenge does not extend beyond the simple attainment of their object in taking up arms. If this be true, it places them in a high rank, as a humane people, amongst our Mountain tribes. Tema is my authority for both assertions, humiliating as it should have been to him, and honorable to them; but he made the confession of the Meri mode of waging war without any remorse of conscience.

Assured that a more particular and better authenticated account of a people so sequestered and peculiar, would be interesting, I would, if permitted, next cold season make every effort to visit them, in the manner least calculated to excite jealousy or alarm. Their country is most easily accessible from the Duphla Door; but I am not yet well acquainted with this tribe, and am not prepared to say that it would be safe to attempt a passage through their country without a strong guard, which would defeat my object entirely; and having, I think, secured the good-will of the Meris, I would prefer their route, though said to possess more natural difficulties; ascending the Soobanshiri as before to Siploo Ghaut, I propose, after having paid Tema's country a second visit and explored such of the Sowrock country as lies on this side of the Soobanshiri, to proceed to the Turbotheah villages. The Turbotheah have promised to assist me in every way from Tema's village to their own, and as the Aukas or Tenae are only two good marches from the Turbotheah Meris, I should hope to be able to make amicable arrangements with them and the intervening Abors to permit me to proceed in safety to their valley.

I cannot hold out any very sanguine expectations of being able to penetrate so far as to behold Thibet from the mountain tops, or to gain much knowledge of that country; but without crossing the snowy range there is a vast extent of interesting country to explore, and if Mr.

Maisters agrees to accompany me, we may pick up much worth knowing. I am sorry I was unable to send you a sketch of my late route. I wrote to Mr. Hornton, for a surveyor and the loan of a compass for myself, but unfortunately my letter did not find him at home, and I did not receive his answer till after my return. I had made my arrangements, and could not wait. I send you herewith a very rough ideal sketch, (published at p. 226) the ill execution of which I hope you will excuse, as I am very much hurried.

This time next year I hope to be able to propose an excursion to explore the Duphlas country. I had an interview yesterday with a considerable number of them, those for whom the salt has been sanctioned; and having concluded the business of the day, I had an amicable talk with them, and, on the question of a visit being started, they made no demur.

Luckimpore, the 23rd March, 1845.

Notice of some Unpublished Coins of the Indo-Scythians. By Lieutenant ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, Engineers.

In the accompanying plate are exhibited the small silver disc which was extracted from the Manikyala Tope by General Ventura, and several new coins of the Indo-Scythians, some of which are highly interesting from their undoubted Bauddha figures, emblems, and inscriptions. These coins afford the last links in the chain of evidence to prove the identity of the Indo-Scythian KANERKI, with the Buddhist prince KANISHKA of Kashmir, as was conjectured by Mr. James Prinsep, so far back as 1833.

No. 1.—A thin piece of silver inscribed with an Ariano-Pali legend in two lines. In this short inscription, as in all the Tope inscriptions yet found, the letters are of a cursive and less decided form than those of the coins. Many of them are of course easily distinguishable; but there are others which bear no resemblance whatever to any of the letters found on the coins; and yet they can scarcely be new characters, as I believe that I have found the Ariano-Pali equivalent for every letter of the Sanskrit alphabet. Some of them may be new forms of known characters, and others are no doubt compound letters which may