

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

1.—THE *TAVAU*—OR COIL FEATHER MONEY OF
SANTA CRUZ.

In response to my enquiry as to the whereabouts of examples of this interesting form of currency, Prof. W. T. Brigham, M.A., has briefly described a specimen in the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum¹, and Prof. F. W. Hutton has forwarded me a description of an old coil in the Canterbury Museum, at Christchurch, bringing the number of recorded coils at least up to six. The Honolulu example is twenty-three feet long, and a trifle over an inch wide, and like our specimen is coiled on wooden hoops, with Job's Tears (*Coix lachryma*) seeds on the edges near the ends, but no other decorations.

The Canterbury coil is thus described by Prof. Hutton:—“The feather part of the belt is twenty-two feet, nine inches long and three-quarters of an inch wide. At each end it tapers off into a piece of plaited sennet, to which is attached a ring of wood, six inches in diameter. The wooden rings are made of split liana, and are double, or two turns. The belt is formed of bundles of vegetable fibre rolled transversely, pressed flat, and held in their places by narrow, longitudinal strips of fibre blackened on the outside with some kind of varnish; there are from two to four of these longitudinal bands. This internal structure shows on only one place on the belt where it is very much worn, for outside this mat-work there is another layer of string, like what sailors call ‘serving.’ It is in this binding that the feathers are inserted with a black varnish which sticks them all together. In our specimen most of the red feathers are worn down to blackened stumps. The belt is ornamented at the two ends, and at two places in the middle, with little strings of beads made of white seeds, and each string has an obsidian bead in the centre, and a fish cut out of *Haliotis* shell at the end.”

The wooden hoop support is evidently a favourite form of core in these coils, for it is present in the Australian Museum specimen, in Prof. Brigham's, and again in that described by Prof. Hutton. I suspect the white seeds mentioned by the latter are Job's Tears, similar to those on the Honolulu coil.

Still later Baron A. von Hügel has informed me of the existence of a fine specimen in the Cambridge Archæological and Ethnological Museum², formerly in the possession of the late Bishop Selwyn, thus raising the number to seven.

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¹ Brigham—Mem. Bernice Pauahi Bishop Mus., i., 5, 1903, p. 18, f. 20.

² 17th Ann. Report Antiq. Committee Mus. General and Local Archæol. and Ethnol. Cambridge, 1902, p. 14, No. 1316.