

ANCIENT STONE IMPLEMENTS FROM THE YODDA
VALLEY GOLDFIELD, NORTH-EAST BRITISH
NEW GUINEA.

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(Plates vi.-vii.)

From time to time rumours of the discovery of ancient stone implements in the auriferous alluvium of the Yodda Valley Goldfield have reached us, supposed to be those of a pre-existing race. I have been unsuccessful in finding any description of these implements or references to their discovery other than the following brief statement by Mr. C. A. W. Monckton, one of the New Guinea Resident Magistrates:—"A remarkable pestle and mortar of plainly great antiquity have been found by some miners in gold workings at a depth of 12 feet below the surface in the Yodda Valley. The mortar, which with the pestle weighed 66 lbs., was roughly ornamented with barbaric carving. . . . The pestle and mortar were discovered in the same creek as an obsidian battle axe given by me some years ago to the Hon. David Ballantine, and both would appear to be relics of a forgotten race. The natives to whom the recently found articles were shown could not make any suggestion as to their original use or purpose, and all agree that it is not the work of any now existing tribes."¹

No description or measurements of this interesting relic are given, which has unfortunately found its way to the British Museum. From the drawing accompanying the above remarks it appears to be a depressed, hardly round piece of rock hollowed in the centre, and scalloped round the edge. Two other objects, a pounding-mortar and a nondescript implement, are in this Museum, also from the Yodda Valley Goldfield, presented by Mr. A. L. Joubert.

¹ Monckton—Brit. N. Guinea. Ann. Report for Year ending 30th June, 1904 (1905); Commonwealth Parl. Papers, 1905, No. 1, C. 7001, p. 31, 4th pl.