Letters to the Editor.

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Age of the Oldoway Bone Beds, Tanganyika Territory.

As readers of NATURE are aware, there has been a certain amount of controversy over the Oldoway skeleton found by one of us (Prof. Hans Reck) at Oldoway, in Tanganyika Territory, in 1913.

In order to clear up this question if possible, and to try to find some data by means of which the Oldoway bone beds could be definitely correlated with

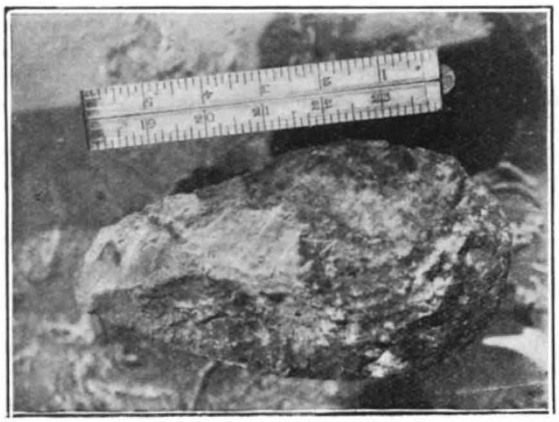

FIG. 1.—One of the coups de poing found *in situ* in Bed B at Oldoway.

those in Kenya Colony, it was decided that the East African Archæological Expedition should spend a part of the 1931–32 season at Oldoway, and Prof. Reck (of Berlin) and Mr. Hopwood, of the British Museum (Natural History), were invited to be mem-

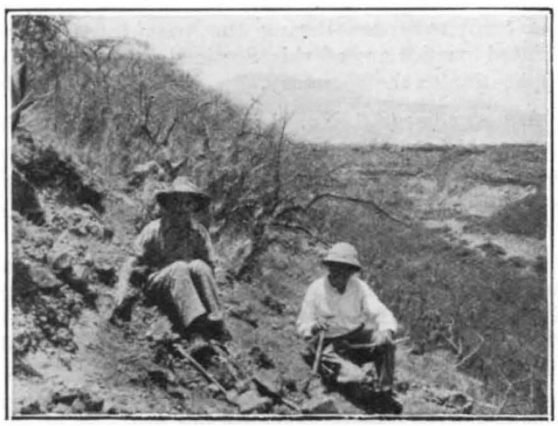

FIG. 2.—Prof. Hans Reck and Mr. A. T. Hopwood sitting on the exact spot where Prof. Reck dug out his Oldoway man in 1913.

bers of the expedition during that part of the season's programme.

After a very careful examination of all the evidence on the spot, and the collection of certain new data, we have come to the following conclusions:

1. There is no possible doubt that the human skeleton found in 1913 came from Bed No. 2, and not from a pocket of Bed No. 4, as was suggested by one of us (Leakey) in "The Stone Age Cultures of Kenya".

2. Beds Nos. 3 and 4, which overlie Bed No. 2 conformably, have both yielded unrolled coups de poing *in situ*, and these tools are absolutely typical of the late Kenya Chellean and of the Kenya Acheulean from the upper part of the Kamasian series at Kariandusi River, as described in "The Stone Age Cultures of Kenya" by Leakey. Bed No. 2 has so far yielded two flakes with definite bulbs of percussion.

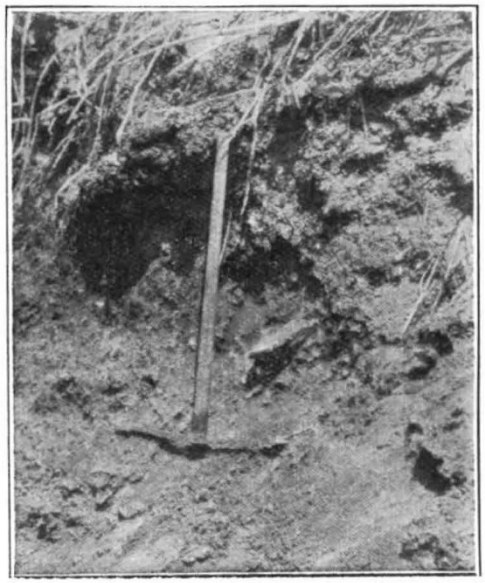

FIG. 3.—The same coup de poing as Fig. 1 but *in situ*.

3. Although in Kenya the deposits of Kamasian age have yielded as yet no identifiable fossils, it thus seems to us clear that the Oldoway bone beds are the equivalent of the Upper Kamasian, and this correlation is borne out by the fact that the Oldoway beds, like the typical Kamasian series in Kenya, are older than the period of volcanic activity and rift faulting, which was responsible in Kenya for the Gilgil and Kikuyu Escarpments and the volcanic mountains, such as Longonot, Suswa, etc., and in Tanganyika Territory for the Ngorongoro volcanic highlands and the escarpment which cuts them to the east.

4. The fact that the Oldoway bone beds prove to be of Upper Kamasian age and not Gamblian is absolutely in harmony with the palæontological evidence, since the Oldoway beds contain a fauna in which more than 50 per cent of the animals are extinct genera and species.

5. From all the available evidence, it thus seems to us that the Oldoway skeleton represents a type of *Homo sapiens* living during the Upper Kamasian period, from which up to the present the only lithic cultures known are the late Kenya Chellean and the Kenya Acheulean.

L. S. B. LEAKEY.
ARTHUR T. HOPWOOD.
HANS RECK.
East African Archæological Expedition,
P.O. Box 658, Nairobi, Oct. 5.

The Mercury Band Spectrum in Fluorescence.

MUCH has been written on the various band-series and isolated bands in the spectrum of mercury, and their relation to the atomic excited states: but it cannot be said that the subject has been satisfactorily cleared up.

I wish here to record an observation which will help to decide between the various alternatives