Mr. Benn forwarded for exhibition, a curious spear head; a portion of a stone mould for bronze objects; a triangular crucible, perfect, and another imperfect; a stone or slag crucible, perfect, and another imperfect. The following communication was then read:—

NOTES ON THE PRIMITIVE INHABITANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND. By Edward Saint, Esq.

I have read with great pleasure and instruction the report of the very interesting matters discussed by Mr. Wright, at the late meeting of the British Association in Liverpool. But while admitting the great talent and extensive information of Mr. Wright, I must dissent from some of his views on Irish antiquities. Thus, he expresses an opinion that stone hatchets have been used for striking fire. They do not appear to have been generally used for such a purpose, or indeed to be suited to it. I have examined hundreds of them, and never perceived any marks or chipping, such as might be presumed to arise from frequently striking fire. But I have met with many which were broken, as if by the effect of a violent blow, such as would be given in using the instrument for splitting wood, or the other general purposes, in which, it might be supposed, the tool of all work of a very rude people might be employed. Besides, I may mention that as a general rule, they are made of such stone as would not strike fire, nor do I see how they could be made to produce fire by friction.

The second statement from which I must dissent, is, that the well-known bronze sword found over a great part of Europe, was manufactured by the Romans, and sold as an article of commerce. This, I think, is not correct, so far as Ireland is concerned. In that country two kinds of swords are found, the flag-shaped sword alluded to by Mr. Wright, and the small sword. The former does not appear to have been a good weapon; very few are so heavy that they could be used with effect as broad swords, and their breadth near the point would appear to have rendered them equally unsuitable for stabbing purposes; but the small sword, which is more common, was a most effective weapon. It is shorter than the other, but this was remedied by lengthening the handle, no fixed
place being left for it as in the other kind of sword. The handle may have been of wood, to suit the taste or convenience of the owner, and the rivets by which it was fixed are still very generally found attached. I think there is good reason to believe that these swords at least were of Irish manufacture, for if it can be shown that brass castings were made there, at a time as remote as the period at which brass swords were used, with such extraordinary skill as to astonish and puzzle the best brass founders of the present day, we may well suppose that swords of much more simple workmanship were also made. The brass spear which I exhibit is an example of great skill in brass casting; and in proof of my opinion that such instruments were made in Ireland, I produce a mould found in that country, that had been used, without any doubt, for the casting of spears. This mould is incomplete, having been injured and rejected perhaps. It is made of what I believe is called soap stone. It is so soft as to be capable of being cut with a knife, though it retains its sharpness, is very durable, and seems every way well adapted for the purpose intended.

I also exhibit a perfect crucible, and parts of two others that appear to have been burnt out. These articles are perhaps unique; their date is unknown, but they were found in the north of Ireland, under circumstances that would lead to the inference that they belonged to the Saxon period, or to an era about 1,000 years distant. Of course they are not probably so old as the spear, or swords, or mould, but they are still very curious. Indeed, the every day tools and domestic articles of our ancestors are more interesting and give us better ideas of their state of civilization, than their warlike weapons and personal ornaments.

1st March, 1855. ARCHÆOLOGICAL SECTION.

THOMAS AVISON, Esq., F.S.A., Treasurer, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. John Norman Crosse, F.S.S., of 6, Sweeting-street, was duly elected a member of the Society.

The following Donations were laid upon the table:—
   From Samuel Gath, Esq. Account of the Northern Bar, to the year 1833. Lithographed in fac. sim. of the handwriting of the compiler, the late Fletcher Raincock, Esq.
   From John N. Crosse, F.S.S. A Padlock manufactured and used at Braga, in Portugal.
   The first number of the Archæological Mine, including a new History of Kent, by Alfred John Dunkin, Esq., was laid upon the table. It is received in exchange for the Society's publications.

Mr. Mayer forwarded for exhibition three Danish "prim-staves" or "Runic calendars," two of which are his own, and one belongs to the Society. They were intended to illustrate one of the papers to be read.

Mr. Crosse exhibited a copy of Barker's edition of the Book of Common Prayer, A.D., 1635, with which was bound up the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins, with music, 1632. Mr. Crosse also exhibited a book of proof engravings, of some persons and scenes during the reigns of Charles I and II; a curious contemporary print of the trial of Charles I; and the Raven Almanack, 1677.

Mr. Johnson exhibited a copy of the Goldsmith's Almanack, also of 1677; and a volume bound in vellum, containing a description of Palmistry, Virgil's Eclogues, and an Ecclesiastical Calendar for 1475, 1494, and 1613.

Mr. Jacob exhibited a copy of Cocker's arithmetic of the date 1708.