

greenstone, from Spital, and two from Rock Ferry, are more carefully worked, and may be classed as stone weapons. As flints are extremely rare in the geological gravel drifts of this part of the country, those in any way worked are probably mostly imported from a distance for use. At Rock Ferry, within a few hundred yards of the flint weapons, was found the rim of the neck of an ampulla of Phœnician glass—blue, with bands of yellow, corresponding exactly with perfect examples in the Birmingham Museum, dated 600 B.C. As this was found on the surface, it is possible that it may have been a fragment of an antiquity brought hither in recent times and lost; but should other such evidences turn up in future, it is thought well to record this “find” at the present time.

E. W. Cox.

A PAIR OF GOLD MATÉ STANDS,

EXHIBITED BY

MR. ARTHUR MUSCHAMP ROBINSON, F.R.G.S.¹

THESE two very interesting objects were obtained by Mr. Robinson, when in South America in 1863, from a Bolivian gentleman, in whose family they had remained since the Spanish conquest of Peru. They are of pure and massive gold, in perfect condition, and believed to be unique specimens in this metal of the beautiful Indian ornamental work mentioned by the contemporaneous Spanish writers, Garcilasso, Sarmiento,

¹ The plate of these maté stands is from a photograph kindly taken by Mr. F. K. Glazebrook.



GOLD MATÉ STANDS

in the possession of Mr. A. M. Robinson.

Oviedo, &c. Each stand consists of a boat-shaped receptacle for the gourd, in which the maté is made, with a hinged cover, and a loose top is attached by a gold chain. The stands and covers, excepting an oval space underneath ($1\frac{3}{4}$ inch by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch), are covered with fine repoussée work, with the characteristic Inca emblems of the sun and moon constantly repeated. The quaint figures surmounting the stems of the gourds are, no doubt, meant for pumas (sometimes called cougar, *Felis Concolor*, the Peruvian lion), and from their primitive design and the appearance of the gold are evidently contemporaneous work. But the three legs seem to be a subsequent addition, when it was desired to adapt the stands for placing on a table, and they appear to have been adapted from a French design (Louis XIV). The height of the whole is five inches. The two accompanying bombillas are also of comparatively modern work; the originals, probably highly ornamented ones, having disappeared. There are no goldsmiths' or other marks upon the metal-work.

Maté, or, more correctly, *Yerba Maté*, generally known as Paraguay tea, consists of the dried leaves of *Ilex Paraguayensis*, an evergreen shrub which grows in Paraguay and Southern Brazil, and is said to have been used by the Incas from time immemorial; indeed the word maté comes from their language, and originally meant a calabash. The Jesuits in Paraguay were the first to cultivate the plant.

The gourd, or calabash, is made of the fruit of *Crescentia cujete*, about the size of an orange, the tapering end serving for a handle. A circular hole, about the size of a florin, is made, and through this opening the maté is sucked by means of the bombilla—a tube about six inches long, formed either, as in the present instance, of metal, with a

bulb at one end, perforated with minute holes, to prevent the particles of the leaves from being drawn up into the mouth ; or the bombilla is made of a reed, with the bulb of very fine basket work.

The drink is prepared as follows :—Some sugar and a little hot water are first placed in the gourd ; the maté is then added, and finally the vessel is filled to the brim with boiling water. Lemon juice or milk is sometimes added, and the beverage is then handed round to the company, and the custom is to drink it as hot as possible. The leaves will bear steeping two or three times, but if not drunk soon after it is made the infusion turns black. Maté is generally considered disagreeable by those unaccustomed to it, but it acts as a restorative after fatigue in the same manner as tea, and its still extensive use in countries where tea and coffee are known, indicates that it may possess virtues peculiar to itself. At any rate, the Indian inhabitants of Peru, Bolivia, and Chile believe that maté has great sustaining and invigorating power. And it must be borne in mind that we are indebted to the civilization of the Incas for the discovery of those two other vegetable products, the medicinal values of which are so universally recognised at the present day, viz., quinine (*Chinchona*) and coca (*Erythroxylon Coca*). The properties of the last-named plant appear, indeed, to be only imperfectly understood in Europe even yet.
