

The bowstring is a thick flat band of rattan, and the arrows, like all New Guinea arrows, have no notch, but are flat at the ends, and are also without feather. The natives have never learnt the improvement of the notch and feather. The men of Api Island, New Hebrides, have most carefully worked notches to their arrows, but still no feather. The Aru Islanders have both notch and feather.*

The Humboldt Bay arrows further are excessively long, far too long for the bows, being five feet in length, so that not more than half of their length can be drawn. They are small spears thrown by a clumsy bow for short distances rather than arrows. They go with immense force for a certain distance, but only fly straight for ten or a dozen yards, wobbling and turning over after that length of flight.

As the anchor was being got up, when the ship's screw was beginning to turn, two natives, who happened to be close to it in a canoe, drew their bows hastily on it as if it were some monster about to attack them from under water.

In the Humboldt Bay stone choppers, the stone blade is mounted in the end of a long wooden socket piece which is fitted into a round hole at the end of the club-like handle. The socket piece can thus be turned round so that the blade can be set to be used like that of either an axe or an adze.

The handle and socket piece form nearly a right angle with one another, and the latter is so long that the whole seems a most clumsy arrangement, and it is most difficult to strike a blow with it with any precision.

The shorter the socket piece the easier it is to direct the blade with certainty in a blow. In Polynesia generally the stone blades are thus fixed close up to the ends of the handles, but in New Guinea this curious long-legged angular handle is in vogue. It is difficult to understand the reason, unless these natives began with a chisel and mallet; and having got so far in improvement as to join them together, have not yet discovered the advantage to be gained by shortening up the socket piece.

A curious stone implement, similarly mounted to the chopper, was common in most of the Humboldt Bay canoes. It seems to be a kind of hammer. The stone head is cylindrical in form, tapering to fit the socket at one end, and hollowed slightly on the striking face. The exact use of the implement is uncertain. The awkwardness of its method of mounting is at once felt on trying to drive a nail with it.

* For the distribution and various forms of bows and arrows, see Gen. Lane Fox, F.R.S., etc., "On Primitive Warfare." Journ. of United Service Inst., 1867-9.