

rior; in this instance, however, the tube used by the medicine-man was a smooth hollow bone, probably of the brant-geese.*

A far more numerous class of articles often made of the greenish striped slate is represented by small, variously-shaped tablets of great regularity and finish, which are pierced in the middle with one, two, or more round holes. The most frequent shape of these tablets is illustrated by the upper figure on Plate 28 in Vol. I of Schoolcraft's work on the Indian tribes. It is that of a rectangle with sides exhibiting a slight outward curve. The full-size drawing of this rather large specimen is done in colors, and thus affords the advantage of showing the greenish tint and the markings of the stone. Other tablets are lozenge-shaped, quadratic with inwardly-curved sides, oval, cruciform, &c.† Most of them have two perforations, though specimens with only one are not scarce, while those that have more than two holes are of less frequent occurrence. The holes are drilled either from one side or from both, and, accordingly, of conical or bi-conical shape. They seldom have more than one-eighth of an inch in diameter at the narrowest part. Concerning the destination of the tablets nothing is definitely known. At first sight one might be inclined to consider them as objects of ornament or as badges of distinction; but this view is not corroborated by the appearance of the perforations, which exhibit no traces of the wear produced by continued suspension, being, on the contrary, in most cases as perfect as if they had but lately been drilled. The classification of the tablets as "gorgets," therefore, may be regarded as erroneous. Schoolcraft calls them implements for twine-making. It has been suggested that they were used in condensing and rounding bow-strings by drawing the wet strips of hide, or the sinews employed for that purpose, through the round perforations. The diameter of the latter, it is true, corresponds to the thickness of an ordinary Indian bow-string; but also in this case the usually unworn state of the holes rather speaks against this supposition.

Being desirous to learn whether Mr. George Catlin had seen, during his first sojourn among the western tribes, anything like those tablets used by them in making bow-strings, I availed myself of that gentleman's return to the United States, and asked him by letter, among other matters, for information concerning this subject. He replied (December 24, 1871) as follows:

"Of the tablets you speak of, I have seen several, but the holes were much larger than those you describe. Those that I have seen were

* Kohl, *Kitschi-Gami, oder Erzählungen vom Oberrn See*, Bremen, 1856, Vol. I, p. 148. Compare: Venegas, *History of California*, London, 1759, Vol. I, p. 97, and Baegert's *Account of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Californian Peninsula*, Smithsonian Report for 1864, p. 386. Drawings of the stone tubes are given on pp. 224-27 of the "Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley."

† The various shapes of these tablets, and of other perforated objects, not exactly tablets, but probably intended for the same purpose, are represented on pages 236 and 237 of the "Ancient Monuments."