

situ or in consequence of human agency (as, perhaps, on the Gila), is in itself of importance, for it furnishes an additional illustration of the far-reaching communications among the aborigines of North America.

MICA.

Like the shining galena, mica (commonly called isin-glass), was a substance held in high estimation by the former inhabitants; but, while the first-named mineral apparently fulfilled no definite purpose, being deemed valuable merely for its brilliancy, the latter was often made into articles of ornament, a purpose for which it certainly was well fitted on account of its metallic lustre. It is also said to have been used for mirrors. Mica is found in the tumuli in considerable quantities, sometimes in bushels, and is often ploughed up in the neighborhood of old earthworks. It occurs in sepulchral mounds as well as, though more rarely, in those of supposed sacrificial character. In the former the plates of mica are placed on the chest or above the head of the skeleton, and sometimes they cover it almost entirely. If I speak here of "plates of mica," the expression is to be taken literally, it being known that this mineral occurs in some of the eastern parts of North America in masses of considerable size, as, for instance, in New Hampshire, where pieces of from two to three feet in diameter have been observed.

The most important archæological finds of mica, as far as I know, occurred in Ohio. Of some of them I will give here a brief account.

Mr. Atwater has left a very accurate description of the earthwork at Circleville, Ohio, now mostly obliterated, which consisted of a large circular and adjoining quadratic embankment. In the centre of the circle there arose a sepulchral mound which contained two skeletons and various objects of art, among which was a "mirror" of mica, about three feet long, one foot and a half wide, and one inch and a half in thickness. Atwater found these so-called mirrors at least in fifty different places in Ohio, mostly in mounds. "They were common among that people," he says, "and answered very well the purpose for which they were intended. These mirrors were very thick, otherwise they would not have reflected the light."* It has been doubted, however, whether the objects served as mirrors. It is true, every one who has come in contact with the modern Indians knows how eager they are, prompted by vanity, to obtain from the traders small looking-glasses, which they often carry about their persons in order to contemplate their features, or to have them on hand when they are about to paint their faces, or to eradicate their scanty growth of beard. Yet, after all, I am inclined to believe that Atwater's so-called mirrors were nothing else but those large plates of mica, probably of symbolic character (as will be seen), which have frequently been met since the publication of his account.

In the year 1828, during the digging of a canal near Newark, Ohio, one of the low mounds frequent in that neighborhood was removed. It

* Atwater, in: *Archæologica Americana*, Worcester, 1820, Vol. I, pp. 173, 225.