THE PRESENCE OF ABORIGINAL FLAKWORK.

Sir,—The presence of Aboriginal flakework in the Newcastle district has been known to a few of your observant citizens for some time past, and has been noted by these kindred spirits, and, as usual in such cases, friendly rivalry and keen interest has resulted in the aggregation of quite a remarkable variety of these examples. Numerous flaked implements have been found in the different sites where flakework occurs. Moreover, they have been carefully drawn and prepared a monograph for publication. Amongst some of the sites we find Tiriirkha Paddocks, Merewether, Bar and Redhead Beaches. The search for these implements is a very fascinating, and while they are now found in a comparatively abundant abundance, the time is not far distant when, owing to the march of civilization and progress, some, if not all, of these flaked implements will no longer be recognisable. The person of average intellect knows, and if not, it is courtesy to inform him, that all nations have gone through the stone implement age. Even our forefathers, the Romans and the Britons, flaked flint, and found it good in the manufacture of tools and implements. The Aboriginals hold undoubted sway over our fair Commonwealth, perhaps for thousands, and in this State, especially in the Newcastle district, they alone have occupied the flaked implements, so freely scattered about their camp sites. This being admitted, thoughtful individuals will regret that no local civic authorities—do not—show a keener interest, and establish a museum to house these and other relics of an interesting people, who lived, loved, and died among the banks of the Hunter, and the adjacent beaches. I am sure these aforementioned enthusiasts would gladly deposit the best part of their collections if such an institution were established. At the time of writing, the trustees of the Aboriginal Association have been seized with the importance of the stone implements of the Newcastle district, that they have instructed me to collect a representative quasia from the different sites, and the object of fostering an interest in these matters. Thinking that the Chinese gardeners at Sankate might have noticed these implements when turning over the ground, I took some pains to explain all the Chinese dialects, and to give them examples to them. Imagine my dismay, when, passing after a long dissertation, and fervently feeling that they thoroughly understood, I was greeted with "Sorry, no white man." I explained themselves in the same way, and looked upon others who wish to add to the sum of human knowledge as so many cranks, a sort of a blackguard, and not only the collectors of Newcastle would cause them to modify their opinion, and in all probability induce some to join up with those who spend their spare time in such a productive way.

W. W. THORPE,
Ethnologist, Australian Museum.