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A NOTE ON FULGURITES FROM SPARTA, WISCONSIN.

W. D. SHIPTON.

During the summer of 1915 some fulgurites were found near Sparta, Wisconsin, in a small sand knoll composed of residual quartz grains of the Potsdam formation, which is Upper Cambrian in age. The sand is fairly clean and of uniform character and is being reworked continually by the wind since there is only a scant covering of vegetation.

The fulgurites consist of irregular, thin-walled tubes of fused siliceous sand grains. The tubes vary in length and diameter. The smallest are about one-eighth inch long while the largest are several inches in length. The pieces may be the fragments of one large tube, the smaller pieces being the branches from the main stem. The surfaces of the fulgurites are very irregular and are traversed by deep furrows with minor undulations. The entire surface is covered with the grains of sand which came in contact with the fused material. Some of the grains are white and opaque, due to complete fusion, while others are brown and have remained unaltered. The interior of the fulgurites is smooth, highly glazed glass and the surfaces correspond to the furrowed surfaces of the outer walls in outline. The deviations of the tubes from a circular form are due probably to the pressure of the adjacent sand while the fulgurites were still in a fused condition.

Fulgurites are caused by lightning striking in sand and fusing the siliceous sand grains into a tubular form.