

IV. *Notice as to the supposed Identity of the large Mass of Meteoric Iron now in the British Museum, with the celebrated Otumpa Iron described by RUBIN DE CELIS in the Philosophical Transactions for 1786. Communicated in a Letter from WOODBINE PARISH, Esq. F.R.S. to CHARLES KÖNIG, Esq. Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society.*

Received and read November 21, 1833.

AS the identity of the large mass of meteoric iron in the British Museum with the celebrated Otumpa iron, described by RUBIN DE CELIS in the Philosophical Transactions for 1786, has been the subject of frequent inquiry, the following short historical notice, relating to that mass, is communicated by WOODBINE PARISH, Esq. F.R.S., by whom, when His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Ayres, it was sent to England.—C. K.

“ London,  
August 10th, 1833.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ AGREEABLY to my promise, I have taken some trouble to ascertain the precise history of the large mass of native iron which I sent home to Sir HUMPHRY DAVY from Buenos Ayres, and which is deposited in the British Museum. There is no doubt of its coming from the same place as that described by RUBIN DE CELIS, though whether it be a fragment of that particular mass upon which he made his report, or a smaller one in its immediate vicinity, I am not able to say, for there certainly is an impression at Buenos Ayres that there is not only one, but that several masses of this iron are to be found in that part of the Gran Chaco referred to by RUBIN DE CELIS. I was under the impression that it had been sent for in order to be forwarded to Madrid; but in this I was led into error; and I have only lately ascertained through Mr. MORENO, the Buenos Ayrean Minister, that the real history of its being at Buenos Ayres is as follows.

“ After the people of that country had declared their independency of Spain, they were blockaded by a naval force, which cut off their communication with Europe, and especially prevented their receiving what they were in great need of, viz. arms and other warlike stores. In this dilemma it was suggested that muskets might be made if they had but the material; and it was then that the iron formerly described by DE CELIS was recollected as existing within their own territories, and people were sent to the Gran Chaco to bring away at least a part of it, that it might be ascertained how far it was fit for the purpose; and thus this particular mass was brought to Buenos Ayres. By the time it arrived there, early in 1813, the necessity for using

it had ceased: the projected experiment, however, was tried, and a pair of pistols were made of it, which were afterwards sent as a present to the President of the United States. The remainder of the mass brought down from the Chaco, after some specimens were taken from it, was laid aside in the arsenal at Buenos Ayres until it was given to me by the Government of that country on the occasion of my having to carry into effect the recognition by Great Britain of its political independence. And this is the precise history of this iron. If you think there is anything in it worth making known to the Royal Society, you are quite at liberty to copy or extract this account of it.

“ Believe me to be, my dear Sir,

“ Very truly yours,

“ WOODBINE PARISH.”

“ To CHARLES KONIG, Esq.,  
British Museum.”