

## I.

NOTICE OF THE REMAINS OF TWO ANCIENT LAKE DWELLINGS OR  
CRANNOGES, IN THE LOCH OF THE CLANS, ON THE ESTATE OF  
JAMES ROSE, ESQ., OF KILRAVOCK, NAIRNSHIRE (WITH A PLAN.  
PLATE II.) BY JOHN GRIGOR, M.D., NAIRN.

Having understood from a small farmer in the neighbourhood of this almost extinct loch, that, whilst ploughing a bit of new ground some time ago, he had turned up a few flint arrow heads and flakes, and being anxious to procure some of them for the Nairn Town and County Museum, I asked him to accompany me to the spot of ground; and in the course of the walk I came upon a cairn, which differed from all those I had ever seen before in situation and appearance. It was raised on the edge of a small ploughed field within the old margin of the loch, which is bounded on the north and east by a moraine;<sup>1</sup> and on the south and north

<sup>1</sup> An object of interest to the geologist, from the sudden and wonderful manner in which it is broken up into a succession of heights, hollows, and ridges, in this vicinity; might I also add, from its apparently being a portion of a glacial formation extending in the above forms, and also as mounds and hills, with frequent breaks, and many undulating gravelly surfaces, varying in breadth in various localities, and extending through the mid portion of this division of the province of Moray—from the banks of the river Ness to those of the Spey—a distance of nearly fifty miles; the most prominent parts of these raised formations running from west and north-west to east and south-east, or thereabouts.

sides, the country is open to the river Nairn. This cairn, then, or at least the situation, must have formed an islet in early times; and I regarded it as one of those crannoges which have of late occupied so much of the attention of the antiquary.

At different places around, and through the mound, I then observed oak beams and sticks cropping out, much charred and decayed. At first sight, I thought these were parts of the ends of a rude flooring of a dwelling; on a closer inspection, however, I found that the greater portion of the wood inclined upwards towards the summit of the cairn; and on removing a considerable number of the stones from one side, I reached a few rafters with cross sticks, which I believed to have been originally parts of an upright roof. Underneath the stones and wood, and resting on the mud bottom of the ancient loch, I found in some places from six to twelve inches of charcoal and burned vegetable matter, along with small bits of bone, and this particularly at the south side, where the tenant farmer had some time ago removed a part of the cairn, along with many loads of piles and half-burned wood; and whilst doing so, several stone things of antiquity had been found, none of which, I regret to say, are now forthcoming, with the exception of the half of the stone cup, one of the whetstones (the other one I found myself), and the iron axe, which I have sent for the Society's inspection. The Rev. Dr Gordon of Birnie, and Mr Lubbock, of London, lately visited the spot, and the latter gentleman picked up a sharp-pointed piece of bone, such as are got sometimes in tumuli.

As my explorations have as yet been very much on the surface, I am consequently unable to give any fuller description; enough, however, I think, has been said to establish it as a place of considerable, if not of very great antiquity, and of interest as a vestige of the ancient inhabitants of Scotland who lived far beyond the memory of history.

Some forty odd years ago, a canoe—described to me as made out of the hollowed trunk of a tree—had been dug up between the cairn and the sloping hill on the north. That this place had been originally an insular dwelling, a wooden castle, can hardly be doubted; but whether erected for the purposes of defence—an idea rather weakened from its proximity to the side of the loch—or for safety from the wild beasts of the surrounding forests, or for the convenience of the hunter, or for what

purpose, it is difficult to determine. In my limited antiquarian research, I have not found any description of a similar mound or cairn, nor of a similar primitive habitation, as this seems originally to have been. Julius Cæsar tells us, that, when he came to Britain, he found the natives living in houses with high pitched roofs, covered with straw. May not this have been one of that age?

The cairn, again, is sepulchral in meaning, and probably of a subsequent formation and history, now, perhaps, the closed habitation and the grave of its prehistoric indwellers, and may contain the bones and urns of the dead: or it may have been erected to commemorate some great event, such as the monument to the departed warrior or aged patriarch, or to signalise a victory over some predatory chief, and the burning and destruction of his castle and island home; or it may have formed the site of religious rites or Pagan customs.

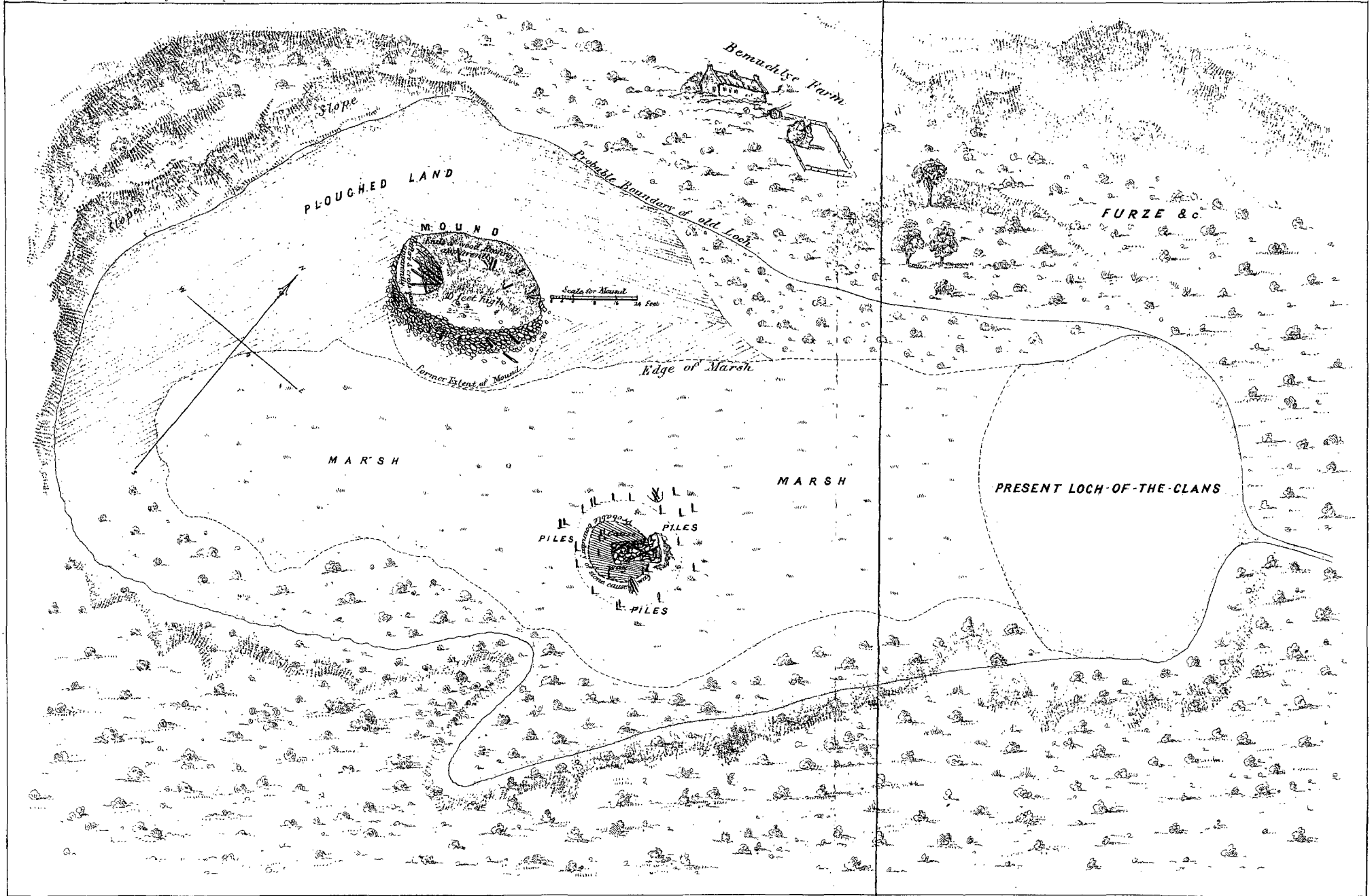
This question is only to be decided by further exploration, and by more experienced archæologists than myself.

About 150 feet, in a south-easterly direction from this place, and in marshy ground, were found a great many pile heads, covered with grass and vegetable matter; and after removing this covering, they stood as shown in the accompanying plan and scale (see Plate II.). This is no doubt the foundations of another crannoge or lake habitation. An area of six feet in the centre seemed, so far as I examined, to have been laid with large stones, and intersected with small trees and stakes. Beyond this space I observed no stones, only the mud of the lake, and a few bits of small trees. Three stones in the centre seemed marked by fire; and below those I turned over, and under water, there was a good deal of charcoal, mixed with small bits of bone, but, owing to the present wet state of the ground, I deemed it right to desist from further exploration till the season would be further advanced, and the ground in a drier state, and when those interested in these discoveries would have an opportunity of being present.

In the neighbouring "Loch of Flemington," and covered with several feet of water, are to be seen, when the water is frozen over, similar remains of piles.

In the east end of the small pond called "Loch in dunty," about two miles in a westerly direction from that of Flemington, are to be observed

three vestiges of piles about a foot above water; these, notwithstanding the evidence of a Highlander living close by, "That the piles had been put into the Loch in auld time, for the purpose of steeping the lint," are, in my opinion, of the same description, day, and generation, as those I have attempted to describe in the Loch of the Clans.



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LOCH - OF - THE - CLANS.  
NAIRNSHIRE.