

## I.

NOTICES OF (1) A STONE CIST CONTAINING A SKELETON AND A DRINKING-CUP URN DISCOVERED AT MAINS OF LESLIE, ABERDEENSHIRE ; (2) A SMALL CINERARY URN FROM MILL OF WARDES, INSCH, ABERDEENSHIRE ; (3) OF CINERARY URNS AND OTHER REMAINS FROM THE ESTATE OF LOGIE-ELPHINSTONE, ABERDEENSHIRE ; AND (4) A BRONZE SWORD FROM GRASSIESLACK, DAVIOT, ABERDEENSHIRE. BY J. GRAHAM CALLANDER, F.S.A. Scot.

I. A STONE CIST CONTAINING A SKELETON AND A DRINKING-CUP URN AT MAINS OF LESLIE.

A short distance south of the summit of the Hawk Hill, a short spur running north from the Benachie and Correen range of hills and rising to a height of rather more than 700 feet, are two standing stones, the remains of the Loanend Circle. Near the south-east edge of this Circle the Ordnance Survey Map records "urn found." About 292 yards to the N.N.W., on the north-west shoulder of the hill, about midway between the 600 and 700 feet contour lines, a stone cist was discovered on the afternoon of the 13th November 1906 by Mr John Thomson, through his plough coming in contact with one of the cover stones, which had only 5 or 6 inches of soil above it.

The site is on the farm of Mains of Leslie, but within the parish of Premnay, Aberdeenshire, about 266 yards east of the boundary between it and the parish of Leslie. The place of burial, though at an elevation of nearly 700 feet and on the side of a river valley, commands no extensive uninterrupted view of the country ; only to the west, up the valley of the Gaudie, and to the north-east is there any extensive vista. On the south Benachie and the Correen hills rise abruptly ; to the west are seen the Buck of the Cabrach, distant Benrinnes, and the nearer Tap o' Noth, with the prominent remains of its vitrified fort peeping over the shoulder of one of the intervening hills ; against the northern horizon rise

the hills of Knockandy and Foudland, partly hid by the hills of Christskirk and Dunnydeer, the latter also crowned with a vitrified fort enclosing the ruins of a castle of which history seems to have no record ; to the north-east there is an uninterrupted view to the rising ground on the northern boundary of the Garioch.

On the evening on which it was discovered, the grave was opened under the supervision of Mr Peter Thomson, the farmer, and Mr John Morrison, a local antiquarian, and I am indebted to them and to the discoverer for many details of the find.

The mouth of the grave, with the exception of a small part at the north-east corner, was covered by an irregularly shaped, somewhat oblong slab, measuring 4 feet 5 inches at the greatest length, 3 feet at the greatest breadth, 2 feet 1 inch at the least breadth, and about 6 inches in thickness. A much smaller slab covered the north-east corner, and a still smaller one was placed above the junction of these two stones. Against each end of the large cover stone a slab was laid in a slanting position. Round about the mouth of the cist, though now not above the cover stones, a number of stones up to 12 and 15 inches in diameter were placed.

When the cover stones were removed, the chamber, which was nearly rectangular in shape, was seen to be full of surface soil which apparently had found its way into the cist through the joint between the cover stones. The walls of the cist were formed of four fine slabs set on edge. They were nicely dressed, especially along the top, and were very regularly split, but no signs of tooling were to be observed. Tool-marks could not be expected to remain distinct, as the stone, andalusite mica schist, which is found in the adjoining Correen Hills and locally known as "correen stone,"<sup>1</sup> weathers rapidly. At the east end of the grave the slabs had been sunk into the ground rather more than at the west end, and to bring it nearer to the level the wall had been built up carefully 2 or 3 inches with thin flat stones, tough yellow clay being used as mortar. On clearing the soil out of the cist, the remains of a skeleton

<sup>1</sup> At one time this stone was a favourite material for making querns.

were found lying on its right side, facing the south, in the usual crouching position, the skull being near the south-west corner of the grave. From behind the skull there were recovered the fragments of a drinking-cup urn lying on its side with the mouth towards the east. The bottom of the grave was composed of the gravelly subsoil of the locality, over which a very thin coating of charred wood had been sprinkled, hardly thick enough to be termed a layer; on the top of this black coating was a layer of tough yellow clay  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick, on which the body and the urn had been deposited. The same yellow clay had been packed into the joints at the corners of the grave, and under the cover stones, between them and the upright slabs, in a most careful fashion, so that the chamber when newly closed must have been almost hermetically sealed. No other relics were discovered, but several pieces of white quartz, less than an inch in length, were noticed near the bottom of the grave, but it is impossible to say whether they had been placed there purposely or not.

The longer axis of the grave lay  $10^{\circ}$  N. of E. and  $10^{\circ}$  S. of W. magnetic, nearly E.N.E. and W.N.W., and the inside measurements were 3 feet  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches along the north side, 3 feet 5 inches along the south side, 2 feet  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches and 2 feet  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches across the east and west ends respectively. At the west end the depth of the chamber was 1 foot 8 inches, and at the east end, to the top of the upright slab, 1 foot 6 inches, above which, as already mentioned, were about 2 inches of built flat stones. The slabs at the sides and at the east end were practically perpendicular, but the top of the west end slab inclined inwards about 3 inches.

When I visited the site a day after the discovery, several of the leg bones were still *in situ*, having been left undisturbed when the grave was examined. The position of these bones showed that the body had been placed on its right side. The skull, with the exception of a small part on the right side, little more than a square inch in area, which had decayed and broken off, is in a very good state of preservation, and several of the long bones are complete. From these remains it

is found that the skeleton is that of a man not over 5 feet 4 inches in height, and between twenty-five and forty-five years of age.

The urn (fig. 1) is of the drinking-cup type and is of a very elegant shape. The clay is of fine texture, and is dark reddish brown in colour. The vessel measures  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height, the exterior diameter of the



Fig. 1. Urn of Drinking-cup type from the cist at Mains of Leslie.

mouth is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, of the neck 5 inches, of the bulge  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and of the base 3 inches. The wall is  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{5}{16}$  of an inch thick. Four parallel zones of ornamentation, divided from each other by plain bands devoid of design  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{9}{16}$  inch broad, encircle the urn, and they are each contained within single transverse lines on their margins. The upper zone covering the everted part of the urn from the neck to within  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch of the rim, a breadth of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches, is divided into seven narrow bands

separated from each other by a single transverse line. The first and fifth of these narrow bands are filled in with short oblique lines slanting to the left, the second with crossed zigzag lines forming a series of longitudinal diamonds or lozenges about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in length, the third and seventh with a herring-bone pattern with the angle to the right, and the fourth and sixth each with a single transverse zigzag line. The second zone, which is just above the bulge and  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch broad, is formed of three narrow bands each separated by a single transverse line. The first and third of these bands are formed by almost perpendicular lines with a slight slant to the left, and the second band is composed of short horizontal lines about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in length and  $\frac{3}{16}$  of an inch apart, arranged in two parallel transverse rows, the impressions of the one row being opposite the vacant spaces of the other row. The third ornamented zone, just below the bulge and  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch broad, is composed of perpendicular zigzags of four parts slanting first to the right, or it might be called a double herring-bone pattern, having the angle to the right. The fourth zone is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch broad, and encircles the vessel 1 inch from the base. It is formed by three narrow bands, the two lower ones only having a separating line. The upper band is composed of two transverse zigzag lines crossing each other and so forming a series of lozenges about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in length, the lower band has a single transverse zigzag line, and the middle band is filled in by short vertical straight lines. All the ornamentation has been impressed on the moist clay with a toothed stamp, and the vertical, oblique, and upright zigzag lines are usually about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch apart.

Before the plough struck the cover stone of the grave there were no indications of its presence, and though the number of stones placed round about the grave may point to there once having been a cairn erected over it, every above-ground trace of it had been removed. While the slabs forming the chamber had been brought some little distance, the stones placed around it had evidently been collected about the hill or from the burns at the foot of it.

Quite a number of stone cists containing drinking-cup urns and

skeletal remains have now been recorded from the north-east of Scotland. In our *Proceedings*, vol. xxxix. p. 426, Dr T. H. Bryce has compiled a table of the measurements of eleven skulls from such burials—six from Aberdeenshire were examined by Dr Alex. Low of Aberdeen University, one from Ross-shire by Sir Wm. Turner, and four, one each from the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Banff, and Midlothian, by Dr Bryce himself. Since then Dr Low has recorded the measurements of another found with two drinking-cup urns at Whitestone,<sup>1</sup> Skene. This discovery at Mains of Leslie is the thirteenth. Of these thirteen burials twelve were males and only one a female, that from Dunrobin, Sutherlandshire.

The proprietor of Mains of Leslie, C. E. N. Leith-Hay, Esq. of Rannes and Leith-Hall, has gifted the contents of the cist to the Museum at the University of Aberdeen, and I am indebted to Professor Reid, the curator, for photographs of the skull and of the urn.

NOTE ON THE SKELETAL REMAINS RECOVERED FROM THE SHORT CIST AT MAINS OF LESLIE. By DR ALEX. LOW, Demonstrator of Anatomy in the University of Aberdeen.

The bones, with the exception of the skull, are mostly much broken, but the remains indicate the skeleton of a male about middle life.

The breadth of the skull (fig. 2) as compared with its length is relatively very great, while the height of the skull as compared with the breadth is relatively low. The skull shows parieto-occipital flattening.

The left humerus and the left femur are intact, and from these the calculated height of the individual would have been not more than 5 feet 4 inches.

The bones thus indicate an individual of low stature, with a brachycephalic skull having a low breadth-height index and showing parieto-

<sup>1</sup> In the *Proceedings*, vol. xl. p. 28, where this discovery is recorded, the name is given as Whitehouse. Whitestone is the correct name.

occipital flattening—character common to a series of skeletal remains from short cists recovered in Aberdeenshire and now preserved in the Anatomical Museum, Aberdeen University.

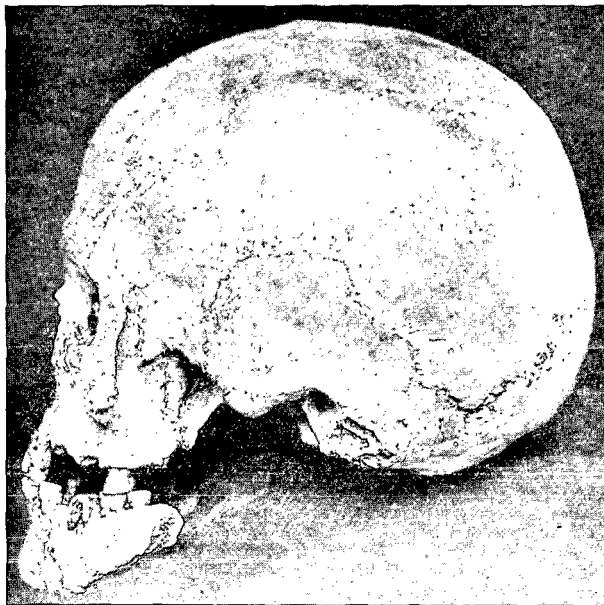


Fig. 2. Skull from the cist at Mains of Leslie.

## II. A SMALL CINERARY URN DISCOVERED AT MILL OF WARDES, INSCH.

About 100 yards almost due east of the farmhouse at Mill of Wardes, in the parish of Inch, Aberdeenshire, on the east side of a rough bye-road, a sand-pit was opened some time ago. While passing it in the end of April 1906, Mr Alex. Redford, jun., noticed part of a small urn sticking in the face of the cutting. This, it may be mentioned, is the second urn discovered by Mr Redford in somewhat similar circum-

stances, he being one of the discoverers of one of the urns found at Seggiecrook, described by me in the *Proceedings*, vol. xxxix. p. 184.

The spot where the urn was found is near the 500 feet contour line and is on the north-west slope of a small hill which rises to rather more than 600 feet in height. The greater part of the hill is cultivated, but the north-western shoulder, on which is the sand-pit, is rough, rather steep, and overgrown with whins. There was no superstructure of stone or earth to indicate the presence of the urn. When discovered a section of about one-third of the vessel, from the lip to the base, had been worn away by the elements, the remaining part being intact though in a very fragile condition. The urn was inverted and the base was about 15 inches from the surface of the ground. The excavation to receive the deposit had been carried right through the 8 or 10 inches of soil into the sandy subsoil, and it had not been of much extent either laterally or in depth, as the fragments of charred wood, which were mixed with the sand surrounding the vessel, extended only for about 10 inches from its walls and for about 1 inch deeper than its lowest part. The urn was quite empty when found, and not a vestige of bone, burnt or unburnt, was to be seen. No structure of stone above or below the surface had been made in connection with the deposit.

The urn (fig. 3) is of the cinerary type and is specially interesting on account of its small size. It is only  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches in height, it measures 4 inches outside diameter at the mouth, 4 inches at the shoulder, and  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches at the base. The wall of the urn is about  $\frac{3}{16}$  of an inch thick near the lip and gets thicker towards the base. It is reddish in colour and is made of a sandy clayey paste mixed with particles of broken stone to give it better cohesion. Many of these pieces of stone are about the size of small peas. The clay, presumably from its exposure to the weather, is extremely friable, and the greater part of the outer skin or surface has weathered off, carrying away the ornamentation, and leaving that part of the wall studded with pieces of broken stone. One portion fortunately is sufficiently preserved to show a complete section of the ornamentation quite distinctly. The urn is of



the variety wanting the heavy overhanging rim. From the lip to the shoulder, a distance of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches, the wall is almost vertical, and from the shoulder to the base, a distance also of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches, it contracts rapidly. At the junction of the upper and lower parts there appears to be the slightest suggestion of a raised moulding encircling the vessel. The lower tapering part is plain, but the upper part, from the shoulder

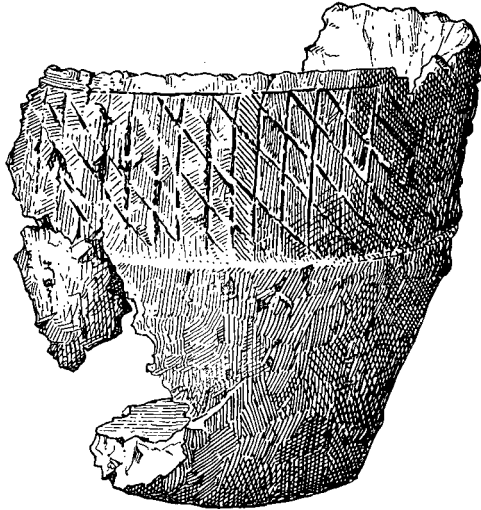


Fig. 3. Urn of cinerary type found at Mill of Wardes.

to the lip, is occupied by a broad band of ornament contained between two transverse parallel straight lines  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart. The space between these two marginal lines is occupied by vertical straight lines about six to the inch, crossed by oblique lines, which commence at the top of each second vertical line and slant to the right, usually crossing five of them. There is no ornamentation inside the mouth of the urn, and the lip is neither flat nor bevelled, but is tapered and rounded to a rather fine curved edge, in a manner seldom seen in cinerary urns. The design has been drawn on the clay while soft with a pointed tool.

### III. CINERARY URNS AND OTHER REMAINS FOUND ON THE ESTATE OF LOGIE-ELPHINSTONE.

On the evening of the 4th May 1906, I happened to call at the farm of East Law, in the parish of Rayne, Aberdeenshire, while the farmer, Mr Alex. Gilmour, was opening what he suspected to be a grave, about 200 yards north-north-east of the farm-steading. His attention had been directed to the spot by his plough turning up some reddened soil. He had repeatedly seen this same reddened material in connection with other graves opened by him on the farm of Ferniebrae, on the same estate, but about a mile to the south-east and in the parish of Chapel of Garioch. Apparently the soil in this neighbourhood becomes a bright red on being burnt.

On removing 6 or 8 inches of earth the reddened subsoil was met with, and on its being cut into, stones of all sizes up to 18 inches in length were encountered. Apparently they had formed the walls of a roughly built, dry-stone grave, which previously had been disturbed, as the stones were all tumbled into a heap and mixed up with reddened earth and fragments of charred wood. Two feet under the surface, amongst this mixed material, five or six fragments of a cinerary urn were found, some of which were about 3 inches square, but no two parts fitted together. The ware was dark in colour and the wall was about  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch thick. From the arc formed by a fragment of the rim which was recovered it was found that the urn had been about 6 inches in diameter at the mouth. The lip was slightly bevelled inwards. The urn bore little ornamentation, there being only two shallow parallel grooves, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch broad and the same distance apart, encircling the vessel just under the lip, the space between the grooves having the appearance of a slight moulding. Though careful search was made, no osseous remains were found.

About a year before, Mr Gilmour, hearing a hollow sound made by his horses' feet, about 100 yards east of the grave just described and in the same field, opened what turned out to be a roughly built grave of

rounded stones, about 2 feet under the surface. The remains of an unburnt skeleton were found, some of the bones being well preserved. Large pieces of charcoal were found amongst the bones. Some months after the excavation I saw several pieces of charred wood 3 inches in length and over 1 inch in thickness, but by that time the bones had disappeared. Above the bones there were found two naturally rounded stones flat on the under side, about 7 inches thick and 9 inches across, each bearing on the centre of the upper side a shallow cup-marking about 3 inches in diameter and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep.

It may be of interest to mention here another case of a dry-stone built grave containing stones with a single cup-mark on them. In the *Transactions of the Banff Field Club*, 1887-8, p. 37, the discovery of an ancient grave in Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, is described by the Rev. Alexander Bremner:—"The removal of road metal from a sloping bank on the farm of Kirkton, near the road leading from the parish church to the hamlet of Woodhead, exposed the end of a full-length ancient grave. The sides and ends were built of dry stones, and the top was covered with long stones laid across. In the grave itself nothing was found save some minute fragments of bone. On the lower side of the west-most cover there was an ordinary cup-mark, and near it, in the building of the end of the grave, was found a stone having a cup-mark of peculiar construction. In the middle of the plain surface of an irregularly shaped stone about one foot square, the outer edge of the cup was hollowed out in the usual manner. The centre part, however, had not been removed but was rounded off, having the appearance of a segment of a sphere lying in the bottom of the cup and rising up till it was nearly on a level with the plain surface of the stone." Apparently this was a ring-mark.

On the farm of Ferniebrae (already mentioned and not to be confounded with other farms of the same name in Aberdeenshire which have yielded prehistoric relics) many Bronze Age interments have been exposed, both by agricultural operations and by digging where the sound of the tread of the horses' feet indicated that the ground under-

neath was "boss" or hollow. Unfortunately the remains were hopelessly destroyed without any record of them having been made. Occasionally broken urns were observed—I am told one was removed complete,—but in some cases no pottery was observed, only large quantities of reddened soil and charred wood. No relics of apparent value in the excavators' eyes being noticed, any urns, if broken, were left in the hole and the plough soon obliterated all traces of the burials.

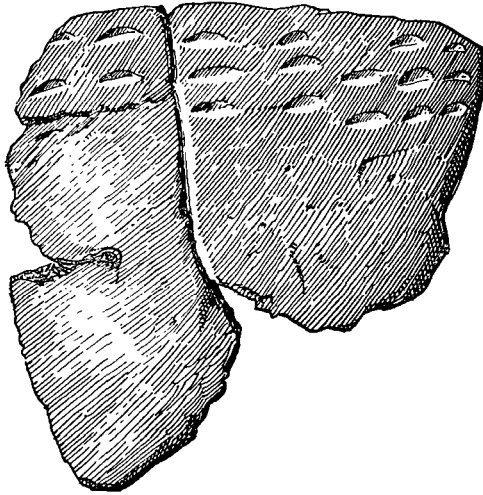


Fig. 4. Cinerary Urn ornamented with finger-nail markings.

On my first visit to the farm I secured some fifteen fragments of urns, which by the merest chance had been carried into the stable and were lying about the inside of one of the windows, quite a favourite place for anything peculiar being deposited: many an interesting relic has lain long in a stable window till lost or secured by some collector. From the fifteen fragments recovered it was clear that there had been at least four different urns, of which three were of the cinerary type.

One of these three cinerary urns (fig. 4) seems to have been of an

uncommon shape. Apparently it had been semi-globular, possibly with a round base, though this cannot be said with certainty, as so little of the urn is left. It is very dark in colour all over the outside and also inside the rim, but it gradually gets red on the inside as it approaches the bottom. The outside diameter of the mouth has been  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches and the wall is  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch thick, increasing to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch just at the lip. There is no overhanging rim, and it is ornamented just under the brim with three parallel transverse rows of finger-nail markings with the curve to the top encircling the vessel. These marks, which are placed immediately below each other, are  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart vertically, and  $\frac{5}{8}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch apart transversely.

The second of these vessels seems to have resembled the one just described in shape, in colour, and in the thickness of the wall. The ornamentation, however, was quite different. The remaining small fragment of the urn, about 2 inches in length by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in depth, shows a band of ornamentation  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches broad, composed of five parallel lines, formed by a very rough twisted cord pressed into the clay while damp, at an angle of  $25^\circ$  to the rim. Apparently this band of ornament had zig-zagged round the vessel just under the lip.

Of the third urn only a small fragment showing a piece of the ornamentation is left. The vessel was bright brick red on the outside and was covered with a black sooty deposit on the inside: the wall was  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. The fragment of ornamentation left is composed of three parallel rows of semicircular markings impressed on the clay as if by a finger nail, with the tip of the finger pointing upwards.

#### IV. A BRONZE SWORD FOUND AT GRASSIESLACK, DAVIOT.

In the autumn of 1906, while the farmer's son was cutting roads for the reaping machine on the farm of Grassieslack, in the parish of Daviot, Aberdeenshire, his scythe came in contact with a piece of metal projecting a few inches out of the ground. When extracted from the soil this proved to be a bronze sword wanting the hilt, but otherwise in a very fine state of preservation. The sword is  $20\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, and  $1\frac{3}{4}$

inches broad at the broadest part  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the point ; it contracts to a width of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches  $17\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the point, and broadens out to  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches at the fracture where the hilt has been broken off. Running down the blade there is a strong broad midrib,  $\frac{5}{16}$  inch thick, which attenuates towards the point in a straight line, and to within  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from each edge in a fine ogee curve. The edge itself is carefully beaten out from the flat of the blade. Both sides of the sword are covered with a fine green patina.

The discovery of a bronze sword in a field which has long been under regular cultivation, and during harvest, of all times, is extraordinary ; but apparently it had been lying nearly parallel to the surface just deep enough to escape the plough for many years. How it escaped notice during the sowing, harrowing, and rolling of the land after being dislodged is quite a mystery.