

I.

NOTES OF THE EXCAVATION OF A TUMULUS, AT AUCHLEVEN, IN THE PARISH OF PREMAY, AND DISTRICT OF GARIOCH, ABERDEENSHIRE. BY CHARLES E. DALRYMPLE, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

This tumulus stands on the north side of the water of Gadie, which washes its base. It was, in the recollection of persons still living, about eighteen feet in height, but has been lowered about six feet by cultivation, "improving," &c., and is now not more than twelve feet high. The diameter at base is about eighty feet, and the slope of the tumulus is rather abrupt. The top, as far as can be ascertained, seems to have been rounded, like the usual bowl-shaped barrows, not flat, like the Bass of Inverury, to which, in respect of situation and general form, this mound must have borne a good deal of resemblance, although greatly less important as to size.

On carrying a deep and wide cutting through the centre of the mound, there was found, exactly in the centre of the base, and apparently on the original surface of the ground, a deposit of ashes and charcoal, of the usual character, but merely inclosed by a few rough boulder stones heaped round and over it. These remains may have been, and probably were, originally inclosed in an urn; but if so, it had entirely disappeared. The soil composing the lower part of the tumulus, being of a very wet clay, would account for this, as any description of earthen-ware, unless well burnt, would soon become disintegrated and disappear if brought into contact with so much moisture.

At the bottom of the mound, at the outer edge, nearly due west from the centre, was found a chamber or grave, eight feet long, two feet deep, and two feet wide, the sides of which were built up with stones of different sizes and shapes, some being flat, like those which form the cists, others, again, merely small boulders, while two long-shaped boulders were placed across one end of the grave, so as partly to cover it in. The cavity itself was filled up with soil, and one or two stones, similar to the covering boulders, lay confusedly among it. At the bottom of the chamber, towards the west end, was found some ashes and charcoal, and a few horse's teeth of a small size. The impression conveyed by the appearance of the chamber was, that it had been opened at some former but remote period, when the stones covering it had been displaced and removed, excepting those above mentioned, and the chamber itself filled up.

No other remains of any kind were found. The question suggests itself, whether these two deposits—the small one in the centre, over which the whole tumulus was heaped, and the chamber or grave—are of the same date, or was the

last mentioned formed at a later period, as it is known that new interments were sometimes made in tumuli long after their original formation? At p. 55 of the "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," is a notice of the examination, by digging, of the "Black Knowe," "one of the most remarkable for size in the parish of Rendale, Orkney," by Lieutenant Thomas and Mr Petrie of Orkney, where was found, "in the centre and on a level with the natural surface of the soil, a small chamber or cist of undressed stones, measuring eighteen by twelve inches, and containing only an extremely rude cinerary urn, filled with bones and ashes, mixed with clay."