

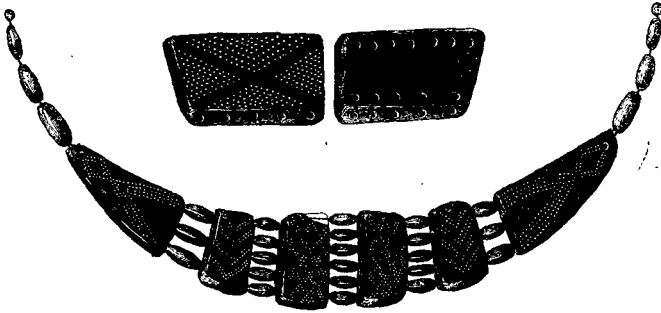
### III.

NOTICE OF A TOMB ON THE HILL OF ROSEISLE, MORAYSHIRE,  
RECENTLY OPENED; ALSO OF THE CHAMBERED CAIRNS AND  
STONE CIRCLES AT CLAVA, ON NAIRNSIDE. BY COSMO INNES,  
Esq., V.P.S.A. Scot.

#### ROSEISLE.

The Hill of Roseisle bounds the plain or "laigh" of Moray to the north. Its top is crowned with a little wart, apparently a gathered cairn, known as the "Tappock" of Roseisle. The plough is encroaching upon it from all sides, and last summer the farmer of Hill of Roseisle came upon a grave with a cist of rough stones about twelve yards north of the Tappock. The soil is very light there, and the deposit was near the surface. James Jeans, the very intelligent young man who made the discovery, gave me the dimensions of the cist. It was 2 feet 10 inches in length, 18 inches in depth, and 18 or 20 inches broad. It contained bones and a skull tolerably entire,—the latter carried to the Museum at Elgin; and it contained also the beads, sixty-four in number, and the larger ornaments of jet, which James Jeans still keeps. I do not know that I should have been so successful in my own person, but Jeans did not hesitate to lend these to Lady Dunbar of Duffus; and that lady has been good enough to make the careful and accurate drawing of these jet ornaments, which I now exhibit, and which she allows me to present to the Society. [The drawing referred to exhibited two triangularly-shaped portions, each ornamented with a double row of punctured lines; and a series of rounded beads of an oblong shape.] You will observe their great resemblance, I might almost say indentity, with beads and ornaments of

jet in the Museum of the Society, found in an urn contained in a stone cist within a barrow near Assynt, Ross-shire, of which the annexed is a careful drawing; and may therefore serve as an illustration of those now described.<sup>1</sup>



I may add, that the Tappock of Roseisle commands a most extensive view, stretching from the Ord of Caithness to the Cairngorms, and is a striking and conspicuous site for a sepulchral deposit. If it shall turn out that the excrescence on the top is of gathered stones—a cairn, in short—though at present obscured by rank whins, I should expect that a section of it would discover a grave of some importance. When I left Moray, there was an intention at least to make the experiment; and I hope to be able to report the result at no very distant period.

#### CLAVA.<sup>2</sup>

Passing by a road, now little travelled, which leads from Cawdor and Kilravock to Moy, along the southern bank of the water of Nairn, about six miles above Cawdor, and opposite to the Moor of Culloden, upon crossing the ravine of a rocky hill-burn, looking down to the river, you come in sight of the little haugh of Clava, where the soil is not alluvial

<sup>1</sup> See *Archæol. Scot.*, vol. iii., p. 49; and *Wilson's Pre-Hist. Annals*, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> See *Anderson's Guide*, 1st edition, Appendix to Route III. p. 4. Sir T. Lauder's *Moray Floods*, p. 15, gives drawing of chamber.

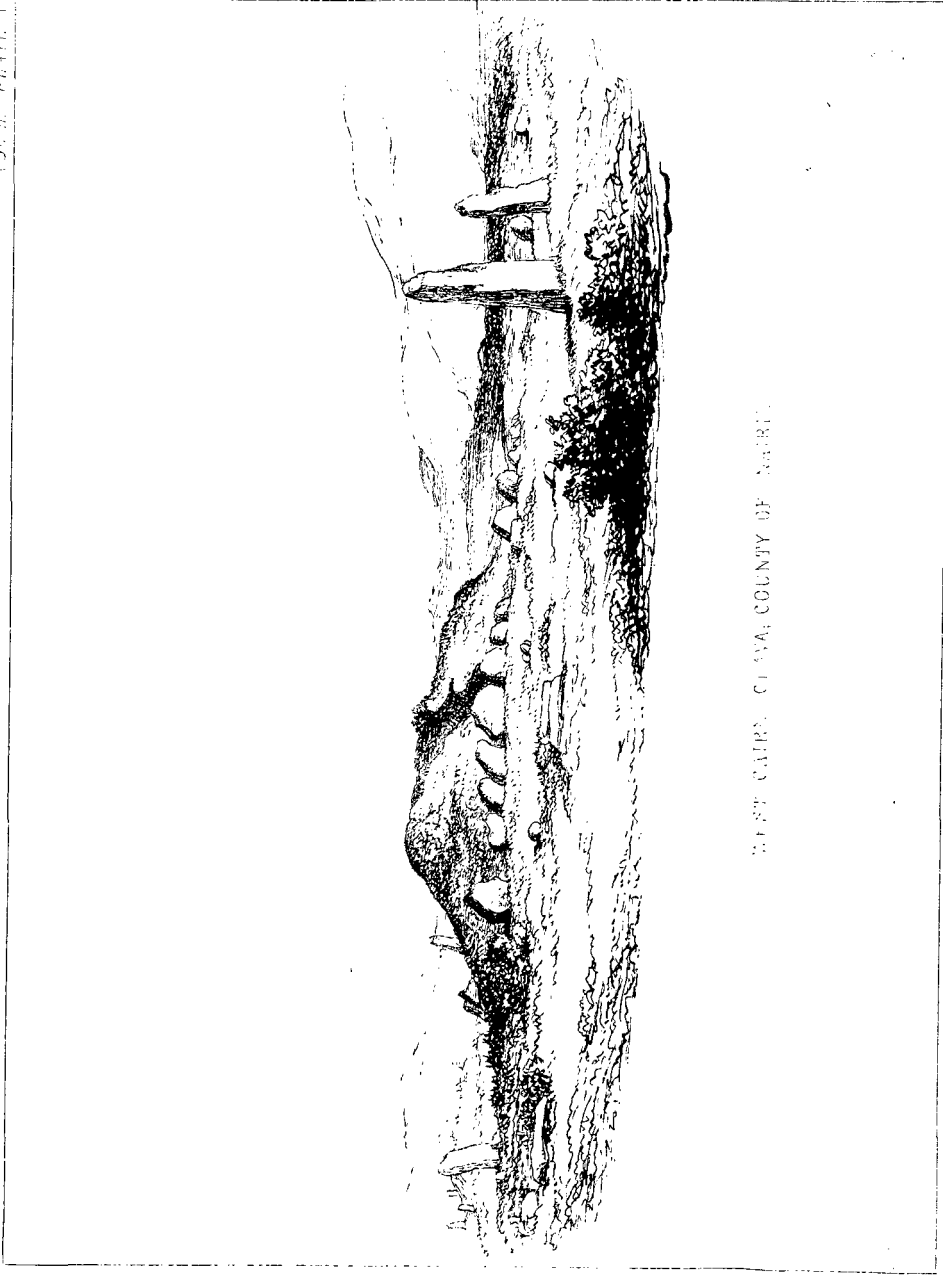
like our haughs generally, but showing rock cropping out at many places, and at others boulders of gneiss, and many cairns of smaller stones.

The whole length of the haugh may be rather more than half a mile; and as you go down the bank towards the sequestered place, the appearance of the plain, thickly strewed with the remains of primeval building, is very striking. At first sight, it looks a mere confused assemblage of gray cairns and "standing stones," but on getting among them, you discover some order and method.

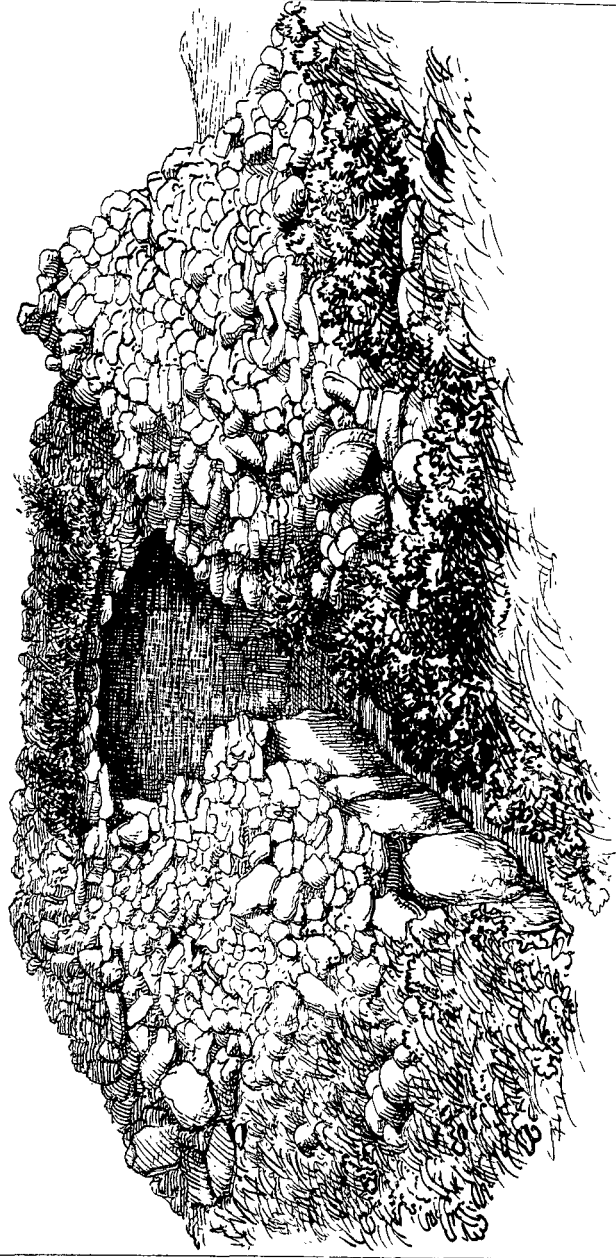
At the extreme western extremity (for convenience I take the river to run from west to east) is an enormous erect stone, standing at least 12 or 14 feet above the soil, and beside it a cairn as yet undisturbed. The natives called this *Culduich*; but I could not make out whether the name applied especially to the western erection, or to the whole of the ruins.

Three hundred yards eastward is the trace of a rectangular enclosure, 40 yards long by 20 broad; inside of which is a smaller rectangular building, 9 yards long by 6 broad, and another much smaller, which may probably have been a Christian chapel and cemetery, though the neighbours did not speak of its name or purpose; and it is only from Mr Anderson's "Guide" that we learn the place was used for the burial of unchristened children, within memory.<sup>1</sup> I saw no trace of recent graves. To the east of the clachan or "chapel" is another fine standing stone

<sup>1</sup> Pointing to a superstition which, I fancy, is common in Scotland. Passing, one day, from Cromarty to Tarbet in Easter Ross, I observed several small cemeteries and remains of ruined chapels. There were numerous green graves about them, but the natives were unwilling to admit that any buried there now. At last I came to one where we found a little grave freshly covered, and my informants—country people of the neighbourhood—admitted, only under pressing cross-examination, that these old chapel-yards are used for the burial of unchristened children only, while all the other dead of the district, and for many miles around, are carried for burial at Nig. The church of Nig is of high and ancient sanctity, and to its cemetery the inhabitants of many other, and even distant, parishes, bring their dead for sepulture. I do not know of any such peculiarly revered cemetery within reach of Clava; but the parishioners of Croy and Bar-evan seem to have the same objection to admit among them after death their unbaptised infants. I find no record of any chapel at Clava; but the vestiges I have described seem to indicate the primitive Christian chapel and cemetery, superinduced upon the little cluster of edifices of pagan religion, law, sepulture, and what not.



WEST CAVERNS, CLIVA, COUNTY OF MARIETTA



EAST CAIRN, CLAVA, COUNTY OF NAIRN.

9 feet above the ground, and which has apparently been one of a circle, of which the others have fallen.

Here begin the cairns, which at wide intervals extend over the whole hough to its eastern extremity. They are, I think, eight in number, and it is apparent that each cairn has stood within and filled the entire space formed by a circle of standing stones—a common “Druids’ circle.” The cairns are of no great size or height, and the stones of which they consist are quite small, and not fitted to give much consistency to the pile.

The remarkable thing is, that two of these cairns have been opened, and each was found to have been built or piled round a circular chamber. What we shall call the eastern cairn had covered a round dome-topped chamber about 12 feet in diameter, probably 8 or 9 feet in height in the centre, entered by a passage from the west about 15 feet long and 3 broad. The interior walls are of large courses of stones at bottom and smaller above, the courses converging at the top to form the roof.

The first of these drawings represents the farthest west of the opened cairns, with several erect stones in a circular line round it, but not, I think, quite concentric with the “Druids’ circle,” which forms the outer boundary of the cairn itself (see Plate VI.); it also includes a distant view of the eastern cairn; and in the other drawing (Plate VII.) there is given a nearer view of the eastern cairn, and it shows the construction of the chamber within and the passage of entrance much better than I can describe them. This is the cairn which was opened by Miss Campbell of Kilravock, and where there were said to be discovered, a few inches under the original soil, two urns of the common funereal kind, which were broken in the search.

I would call your attention to the close resemblance of these chamber-cairns to the chamber at New Grange on the Boyne. The size of the Irish subterranean dome, which may be almost called magnificent, the altar vessels still remaining, the fine material and elaborate ornaments, are indeed very different from the little chamber-cairns on the Nairn side, yet the purpose must have been the same, the period and people not very different. Even yet we have not collected sufficient materials to decide the questions which such structures raise; but if we suppose the circles of erect stones and the chamber-cairns to be relics of a pre-Christian place of assembly, where the elders of the land met to make

laws and to administer them, and to worship the unknown gods of the Picts, we may conclude that the little Christian chapel and cemetery were set in the place of old reverence, just as St Paul's Cathedral and York Minster are found placed on the ruins of pagan temples.

Only one of the remaining cairns is of sufficient size to make it probable it contained a chamber within it; and that one is flattened at the top, as if the imperfect cupola roof had been crushed in by the weight above it. It might be worth while to open it, taking care to observe whether the stones showed the peculiar structure of the chambers, and also to ascertain whether in the soil of it, and of the more recently opened of the other two, had been deposited any sepulchral urns.

For these drawings the Society is indebted to the Rev. Burnett Stewart, an accomplished artist, who accompanied me in an expedition to the cairns of Clava, and made his drawings with patient care and accuracy.