

IV.

ACCOUNT OF A RECENT DISCOVERY OF STONE CISTS, CONTAINING URNS AND HUMAN BONES, IN THE FARM OF WINDYMAINS, PARISH OF HUMBIE, HADDINGTONSHIRE. BY MR ROBERT FORMAN, TENANT OF WINDYMAINS. COMMUNICATED BY THE REV. JAMES DODDS, DUNBAR, IN A LETTER TO DAVID LAING, ESQ.

F. C. MANSE, DUNBAR, *Dec. 16, 1857.*

DEAR SIR,—You will remember that, when I called upon you about a month ago to show you a Roman coin lately picked up in the farm of Windymains, I mentioned, that there had been made this season, on the same farm, a remarkable discovery of stone coffins, containing human bones and clay urns. I have requested my friend Mr Robert Forman, tenant of Windymains (which belongs to the Earl of Hopetoun), to draw up a short account of the said discovery, and of the articles found. He has drawn up and sent me such an account in a letter, of which I enclose an extract for your use and that of your antiquarian friends. Mr Forman, you will observe, has made a short but instructive reference to Doddridge Law, a place in his farm. It is the old story over again; interesting antiquities sacrificed for the plough, or devoted to utilitarian purposes.

I think a visit to Windymains would be interesting to a zealous antiquarian. Mr Forman, I am sure, would give him a kind and intelligent reception.

I am yours very faithfully,

JAMES DODDS.

“In the course of this autumn (1857), men employed in digging for sand on a slightly elevated piece of ground a little to the west of Keith House, parish of Humbie, came upon a heavy freestone slab, lying about 2 feet below the surface. The removal of this slab brought to view the four sides of a very perfect coffin or cist, formed of dressed freestones; it was 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 19 inches deep. The inside of the coffin was quite filled with the fine sharp sand of which the rising ground referred to chiefly consists. Firmly bedded in this sand was found an apparently complete skeleton, lying east and west, the head facing west, with a clay urn in the right-hand corner beside the head. The urn was broken in the lifting, but the fragments retained very distinct traces of the ornamental work [which consisted of straight and oblique lines]. A similar but smaller and less perfectly formed coffin [or cist] had been discovered in the same place some days before, with few traces of bones, but containing a very perfect urn, which was preserved with but little damage. [This urn or vase, now presented to the Museum, belongs to the class known as “drinking-cups,” and is formed of a reddish-coloured clay, with a black fracture; it is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the mouth, about two inches below which it becomes slightly contracted in diameter, expanding below, and again becoming narrower at the base, which measures 3 inches across; it is ornamented in bands of straight, zigzag, and oblique lines, some of the bands bearing a resemblance to the herring-bone pattern, as it is called.] The bones in the large coffin must have been those of a tall and powerful man. The skull is imperfect [consisting only of the bones of calvarium, the bones of the face being wanting], and the thigh-bone measures $18\frac{3}{4}$ inches from joint to joint. The coffin-stones must have been conveyed from some distance, as there are none of the same kind in the immediate locality.

“On a piece of rising ground a mile due west from this spot, hundreds of coffins, containing bones, have been turned up by the spade or the

plough within the last twenty or thirty years; but these are mostly formed of rough limestone slabs, and seem to have been less carefully deposited.

“About half a mile still further to the west is Doddridge Law, which rises to the height of 700 feet above the level of the sea, and exhibits traces of having been occupied as a fortified position. The surrounding ditch, or “ring” as the people call it, is now completely levelled for cultivation, and the heavy stones, which must have been conveyed with much care and labour up to the place, have been removed at different times to Peaston (parish of Ormiston) and elsewhere, for farm-buildings and other purposes.”