

APPENDIX.

REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND, APPOINTED TO ARRANGE FOR THE APPLICATION OF A FUND LEFT BY THE LATE MR A. HENRY RHIND, FOR EXCAVATING EARLY REMAINS. BY JOHN STUART, Esq., Sec. S.A. Scot.

Among the means by which Mr Rhind desired to promote the study of archæology, he set a high value on a systematic examination of the remains of early races, being persuaded that, from a careful study of the structural details and contents of the abodes and tombs of our forefathers, we might glean many facts illustrative of their feelings and condition.

With this object he lost no opportunity of personally examining such objects in his lifetime, both in Scotland and in Egypt, and, at his death, he left to the Society of Antiquaries a fund to be expended in prosecuting similar explorations in the northern districts of Scotland.

The terms of Mr Rhind's bequest are as follow :—

“And further, I direct my trustees to pay Four Hundred Pounds to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, to be expended in practical archæological excavations in the north-eastern portion of Scotland, where the remains are mostly unknown to the general student, are often in good preservation, and, from ethnographical reasons, are likely to afford important information; and I point more particularly, but not exclusively, to the upland districts of the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, and Ross.”

At a meeting of the Committee on the 9th of July last, they resolved that, “With the view of fixing on a methodical plan for carrying out the excavations of these early remains, under suitable local superintendence, the Committee think it necessary to have submitted to them a Report on the nature and condition of such objects, in order that they may have the means of forming an opinion as to their relative importance in an archæological point of view, and be enabled to determine on a plan of operations

sued to the circumstances. The Committee therefore request Mr Stuart to examine the districts of country referred to in Mr Rhind's bequest, and to avail himself of the experience and local knowledge of the Rev. Mr Joass of Edderton, and Mr Joseph Anderson of Wick, in making himself acquainted with the remains still to be found there."

Having this object in view, I visited the counties specified in Mr Rhind's bequest during the month of September last, and in reporting the results I propose not only to give a general account of the remains which thus came under my own observation, but of others in districts beyond my reach, of which descriptions are preserved.

I am enabled also to record notes, prepared by Mr Rhind himself, of a group of such objects.

The Committee will thus be able to form an opinion of the character of the monuments still remaining, in connection with those to which, from their having engaged Mr Rhind's attention when alive, he may be supposed more particularly to allude in his bequest.

I began by an examination of various objects of interest in Sutherlandshire. It happened that the Duke of Sutherland had arranged for excavating some of these in the Strath of Kildonan, under the superintendence of Mr Joass, on the day after my arrival in that district. I had thus an opportunity of seeing some groups of circular hut foundations on the moors sloping up from the river Helmsdale. These were formed of well-defined walls of stones, with the entrance to the south, and, in some cases, with traces of internal dividing-walls. Two of them were remarkable for having each an underground chamber, with entrances concealed in the foundation-wall. One of these chambers had an opening or trap at the other extremity covered by a slab. Cairns were seen in the neighbourhood of the circles.

In the neighbourhood of these, and overlooked by higher ground, is Kilphader Tower, one of those circular structures of which the number in this county is enormous. The present example has walls of about fifteen feet in thickness, containing chambers which enter from the central open space. On the opposite side of the glen, on the water-side, is another ruined tower of the same character. A flight of stairs, formed of flags in the centre of the wall, is yet entire. At Torrish, on the river-side, an "eirde house" was cleared out. It was of the usual curved form, widen-

ing slightly at one end, where it had a funnel-like opening running up vertically to the surface, besides the sloping entrance at the other end. On digging in the floor of the widest end, portions of an urn were found, with chevron ornaments in great relief, and bits of charred wood.

On the river-bank, half-a-mile down from the eirde house, is a cairn of about 120 feet in length, wide at the east end, and tapering considerably to the other. At the east end an opening has been made, which discloses a gallery of upwards of two feet square, formed of flags, leading towards the centre of the cairn, where doubtless one or more chambers are placed. These, however, wait for examination.

At Kintradwell, about seven miles north from Golspie, are many groups of hut-circles and cairns intermingled—some of them worth examination. Here also is a double weem, or eirde house, with a narrow entrance at one end, and a flight of steps leading to the surface at the other. In the chamber reached by the steps was found a deposit of bones of animals and shells, with charred wood and peat. At this place also, on the sea-shore, is a ruined Pict's castle, or "broch," with oval chambers in the thick walls, and traces of some external defensive walls, the whole surrounded by a ditch. Close to it a mass of black earth appears, containing shells and bones, as if they might have been thrown out of the tower. Near the spot is a stretch of benty link, in which kists have been found at various times. In one, opened some time ago by Mr Houston, a doubled-up human skeleton was found, with a bone needle, and near to it was a sculptured pillar with some of the symbols peculiar to the Scottish stones on the north-east coast. One of the kists was opened in my presence; it contained a doubled-up body, but no relic. The kist was formed of slabs rudely adjusted, and the skull was packed with small stones about it, apparently to keep it in its place. In a neighbouring spot of the link a kitchen-midden has been partially examined. It contained bones of large animals, deer's horns, a quern, and a long bone sharpened to a point.

In the glen behind Dunrobin are two "brochs," within little more than a mile of each other. The one is yet a shapeless mass of stones; the other, at Baikies, farther into the glen, was cleared out by the late Duke. It looks out on the Dornoch Firth, on the south, across which is seen the coast of Tarbat, while, in the distance, appears the lofty Benrinnas, on

Speyside, and farther west are seen the great shoulders of the mountains: "which guard the infant rills of Highland Dee." It is a very instructive example of these curious structures, showing the arrangement of their galleries and chambers. As in most of the castles, or "brochs," which I examined, there is a projecting ledge of about 9 inches in breadth, at a height of 8 or 10 feet from the floor, which goes round the internal wall. The wall which supports this ledge is bonded into the outer structure, but inside there is added at two points a wall not bonded into the other, shaped like the stairs in the Staique foot in Kerry, and apparently for the purpose of giving access to the ledge.

The only objects found in clearing out the tower were a small stone cup, fragments of rude pottery, portions of an armlet of shale, and bits of vitrified stones.

I examined another ruined tower about a mile north of Dunrobin; also a cave in the adjoining cliffs, called *Strath Steven Cove*, reached by steps cut out of the rock; it contains several seats fashioned by art, but no archaic carvings are to be seen.

I next proceeded to Wick, where I was joined by Mr Joass. In examining the remains in this neighbourhood I had the valuable assistance of Mr Joseph Anderson of Wick, and Mr Shearer, factor at Thrumster, who have of late made many excavations in cairns at the instance of the Anthropological Society of London.

Mr Rhind, during his lifetime, examined several cairns in the neighbourhood of Wick, especially the Piet's house at Kettleburn, and the chambered cairns at Yarrows; and in doing so he was assisted by Mr Shearer, who is warmly interested in the antiquities of his native county.

Of the vestiges in this neighbourhood Mr Rhind has left a description in one of his common-place books, dated in March 1851; and as this account is interesting in itself, and may be regarded as an index to the class of antiquities which engaged Mr Rhind's attention, and from the examination of which he anticipated important results, I think it right to record it in this place. He says:—

"Perhaps, with the exception of some districts in the Orkney Islands, there is, so far as I am aware, no tract of country in all Scotland of similar extent that can furnish the archæologist with so many examples of primeval skill as are yet to be found in the southern corner of the

parish of Wick, comprehending the localities of Yarrows, Warehouse, Ulbster, Watnyn, and Camster."

1. He first describes a green mound at the north end of the loch of Yarrows, which he assumes to be a ruined Pict's house.

2. "On the bank of the loch southwards there was till lately one of the largest cairns in the neighbourhood, which is said to have resembled the large cairn at Camster. Several cists were in it, and a very fine stone hammer of a dark granite (now in the possession of Mr Innes of Thrumster), and a little cup of sandstone, with flutings on the outside.

3. "At the south end of the loch, and close to its edge, is a cairn of great size, surrounded by a wet ditch, inside of which are two bases of stones. It appears also to have been surrounded by standing-stones. The cairn is chambered.

4. "On the east side of the loch is or was a cairn over a cist of more than ordinary size, being 8 feet 4 inches in length, by 2 feet 1 inch in breadth.

5. "Near it is another standing-stone.

6. "A few hundred yards from this stone is the Battle Moss, where is an assemblage of small stones set on end, apparently in seven rows of many paces in length, and from 6 to 8 feet separate from each other.

7. "On the brow of a rising ground, not many yards from the cist mentioned (No. 4), there is an oblong cairn about 110 feet in length.

8. "A streamlet of water finds its way to the loch by a ravine known as Lime-Slack. On the low ground, at the entrance of the valley, are the remains of a circle of standing-stones, with some appearances of a cairn or Pict's house having been within its circumference.

9. "On proceeding up Lime-Slack, and climbing a projecting hill of no great elevation, another long cairn is found, with crescent-shaped ends curving inwards.

10. "On the same hill, but farther to the south, is another and perhaps larger cairn, with the crescent-shaped terminations more clearly defined.

"This exhausts the neighbourhood of Yarrows. Proceeding eastward to the estate of Camster, may be noticed, at the source of the burn of Toft Gunn, the side of a Pict's house, now destroyed.

11. "At Camster are the Blue Cairns. The first is of a conical form, rising from a circular base of 70 paces to a sloping height of 30 feet.

A recent breach into the cairn has disclosed a chamber with a bee-hive roof.

12. "On an adjoining knoll to the north is another cairn, of oblong shape, and of such gigantic proportions as probably to surpass in size every similar structure to be found in Scotland. It is about 190 feet in length, its greatest sloping height about 35 feet; at the one end 75 feet in breadth, and at the other 40 feet."

Mr Rhind heard of other smaller cairns at Camster, and some green mounds, the probable covering of so-called Picts' houses, in the country on the south-east of Yarrows, and near Borrowstone.

13. "Two standing-stones, 20 feet apart, and near a small cairn, on a hill commanding an extensive prospect to the west, north, and east.

14. "Between them and the public road is a moor, on which are the remains of a circle of standing-stones, and a cromlech within it.

15. "On the ridge of the hill on which are the two pillars, and about 200 yards to the north, is a cairn of peculiar arrangement, popularly known as M'Coul's Castle.¹ It was partially opened by some rude hands, and within is a chamber about 9 feet long by 4 feet broad. It is rounded at the east end, and at the west a flight of steps descends.

16. "Between this cairn and the monuments at Warhouse is a small cairn, partially destroyed.

17. "On the summit of the highest hill in the neighbourhood are three large cairns, conical in shape, and nearly of equal size. Two of them, on the Ulbster estate, are almost untouched; the third, on the boundary between the lands of Ulbster and Thrumster, has within the last year 'fallen a prey to a man who built his house from the graves of his ancestors'—being a sturdy borderer, who destroyed the large cairn on the lochside (No. 2) for building purposes.

"As in the case of M'Coul's Castle, the top of the cairn was thrown aside, and chambers and a gallery disclosed; but no correct information could be obtained as to the construction of the roof, except that the chambers were filled from one end to the other with loose stones, and

¹ The fort on Knockfarril, in Ross-shire, is popularly believed to have been a castle of Fin M'Coul; and one of the many circular strengths of Cyclopean work in Glenlyon is called Castle Fionn, from its traditional association with Fingal.

that two distinct sets of bones were found in one of the compartments, in which were two skulls.

18. "About a mile south of Warehouse, and on the estate of Ulbster, is a hill-fort, known as Garry Whuine or Foyne, formed of a rampart of unhewn stones, with two entrances, one at the south and the other at the north end. That at the north is *guarded by three large standing-stones*, 14 feet apart, two being on one side of the passage, which is 7 feet broad, the fourth probably removed.

"The entrance at the south end is equally well defined, but only a single standing-stone remains to mark one side of the way. Beyond the rampart at this (south-east) end are the ruins of at least two cairns and several standing-stones, both upright and prostrate; and scattered all over the moss which surrounds the fort are many standing-stones.

"On the east side, at some little distance from each other, were observed what seemed undoubtedly to be two small chambers, built in the thickness of the wall, of stones perhaps larger than those used throughout the rest of the building. They had been lately interfered with, and almost entirely deformed, but it is still possible to perceive that the entrance to them must have been from the outside. On the west side, nearly opposite one of the small chambers, there are two standing-stones, of no great height, though of considerable breadth, apparently inside the line of the wall.

19. "Perched on the protruding point of a small hillock which overlooks on the one hand the loch of Watnyan, and on the other a low-lying morass, which extends to the base of the Ulbster fort, is a small entrenchment, which perhaps served as an outpost to the principal stronghold.

20. "On a slight eminence a short way north of the fort is a Pict's house, partially ruined. An oval chamber in the thickness of the wall, with a roof of the horizontal arch, was forced open by the neighbouring farmer. At the east end it had a passage, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet square, leading to the inside of the mound, but it was blocked up. The floor was of black rich mould, and several large bones were lying about, some of which appeared to be human."

I inspected all the more important remains thus described by Mr Rhind, several of which have of late been carefully examined by Mr Anderson and Mr Shearer, and they certainly convey the impression of their having

been the work of an abundant and powerful population. Many of them are interesting from their structural character, and from the well-marked points which they afford for comparison with like objects in other countries. In some, the chambers afford good examples of the horizontal arch, while others in the same cairn are flagged across. In some the deposits seem to prove that burial by cremation was in use at the same time as the contracted and full-length interment. Abundant vestiges of refuse-heaps appear, containing the bones of animals, shells, pottery, and bronze relics.

I then crossed to the west coast of Caithness and Sutherland, with the view of returning to the south through Strathnaver, where I was led to expect some specimens of early remains. Near the church of Reay I heard of curious cists in the sandy links; also of refuse-heaps containing bones of animals, in which relics of bronze have been found. In Glenhalladale I heard of the usual *duns*; and on the brae above the Free Kirk of Farr I observed many cairns.

At the mouth of Strathnaver, between Bettyhill and Skelpig, on the roadside near the latter place, are many small cairns, and one very large one (yet untouched), shaped like the long cairn in the strath of Kildonan, already described—broad at one end and tapering to the other. Near the house of Skelpig, on the shoulder of the opposite hill, is a ruined “broch,” commanding the valley both up and down, and backed by long stretches of rocky moor. It is about 30 feet in diameter inside; and the walls are about 18 feet in thickness, with remains of a projecting ledge, at a height of about 8 feet, on the south-east side. Lower down the hill is an extensive group of small cairns, with a large central one yet undisturbed. Its chamber can be detected from the top. Lower still, and on the water-side, is a long cairn with a chamber at its north end, of about 12 feet across, formed of six slabs, with the spaces between them carefully filled up with masonry. Some of the slabs are of great size. A passage leading to another chamber or gallery is blocked up. The walls of the chamber begin to converge at a height of 6 feet, and were probably covered by flags. On the moor, near the house, is an enormous cairn, which has been opened and partly removed. It contained three chambers. Two of them were large and almost octagonal, formed of great slabs, with good masonry in the intervening spaces. They were 9 or 10 feet across, and the covering gone; but the floor had not been dug into. The third ad-

joined the others on the south, and measured about 6 feet across. A few hundred yards farther to the south is another ruined cairn with a few large slabs of its central chamber yet *in situ*. It is remarkable for its correspondence in outline with the forked or horned cairns of Caithness. About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther up the glen from Skelpig is Dunviden, a ruined tower or "broch," on a natural insulated hillock, and just opposite to it, on the west side of the river, is another ruined tower, placed on a slight eminence overhanging a ravine and burn. On the haugh at its base are many cairns and circular hut foundations. Two of the latter, about 27 feet in diameter, with entrances to the south-east, are joined together.

Passing up to Syre, a great cairn appeared on the east side of the water. On approaching the farm-house of Syre, a ruined "broch" appears on ground overhanging the burn, and a little farther up the burn is a circular hut foundation which encloses two smaller ones. At Syre is an eirde house, of the usual curved form, constructed of flags. On the hill above are great numbers of small cairns, and among them several hut circles. Two of the cairns have been opened, one of which contained a short cist, and another a long one.

This hill has at one time been covered with fir-wood, and many of the trees may yet be seen rooted in the ground. On other hills in the glen the wood dug from the ground is used for rafters in the roofs of the houses.

About 12 miles farther up is Lochnaver. On the north shore is a ruined "broch." In the thickness of its north wall may be seen a chamber arched with flags. On the opposite side is a vaulted chamber approached by a gallery covered with flags; and a third vaulted chamber is on the side towards the loch, on which side the usual projecting ledge may easily be traced. A causeway of flat stones runs out from a ledge of rock on the shore, forming a pier, beyond which the water is deep. On the sloping ground beyond the tower, towards the head of the loch, are innumerable cairns, and the appearance of these grey-headed memorials of the departed cropping out from the surrounding stretches of bright heather, is most impressive. Among them are hut-circles.

On the south side of the loch the lofty Ben Clybrick lifts up his towering head above all the hills of Sutherland. On this side, near to the head of the loch, is an islet close to the shore, on which is a ruined "broch,"

reached from the shore by a causeway, of which some of the stones are yet seen above the water.

About 10 miles from the head of Loch Naver is the ruined tower of Dundornadilla, on a bend of the dark water of Strathmore. On the north-east is the grand mountain of Ben Hope, with his lofty flanks. On one side of the tower the river sweeps along to Loch Hope, and on the other the ground rises in rapid swells which end in the peaks of Benhee.

The lower part of the tower is filled with debris, and it is now difficult to understand its plan. From a description of it by Mr Alexander Pope, minister of Reay, to Mr George Paton of Edinburgh, when the tower was much more entire than it now is, dated in March 1777,¹ we may gather that Dundornadilla was similar in plan to the "broch" of Mousa in Shetland, the towers in Glenelg, and the tower of Dunaliscaig, in the parish of Edderton, now razed, but of which we have a description when its plan could be traced.²

He thus writes:—"The present height on the north-east and north sides is 25 feet; on the south and south-west 9 feet, filled up with the falling of the roof and part of the walls. The door, 3 feet square, fronts the north-east, as in all the round buildings in the north. The thickness of the wall cannot be taken exactly at the bottom by reason of the heaps of stone about it, but at 9 feet from the ground the wall is 7 feet thick.

"This wall is divided into two; the outer wall is 2 feet 9 inches thick; then a passage or opening betwixt the two walls, 2 feet 3 inches; the inner wall is 2 feet thick. This opening is divided into galleries, which run horizontally round the building. Each gallery is 5 feet high, the bottom or floor laid with large flat stones, which gird and bind the whole building compactly together. This inner wall of 2 feet thickness was again divided from top to bottom by perpendicular openings, 2½ feet wide, round about the building, and these openings were full of shelves, formed of large flat stones 2 feet broad, each shelf 2½ feet distant, and some 3 feet

¹ "Archæologia," vol. v. p. 216.

² Maitland's "History of Scotland," vol. i. p. 145. Cordiner's "Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland," p. 118. Of Dundornadilla Cordiner says:—"There are three distinct rows of apartments and passages within the wall. I walked up and down different stairs from the first to the second story, but those to the third seemed too confined, owing probably to many of the stones being displaced or fallen" (*Idem*, p. 109).

from top to bottom. The use of them seems to be to give light and fresh air to those that slept in the galleries.

“We know not what convenience they had at the bottom, 9 feet being filled with stones.

“The entry to the galleries was from the north side of the door by a stair that went to the top; but as the stair is not entire, we cannot pretend to describe it.

“Three of the galleries are entire, and goats take shelter in them in snowy weather. Five of the shelves are distinctly to be seen, and parts of them on the fallen side.”

The following note is added to the article:—“The two buildings of this kind described by Mr Pennant in Glenbeg [of Glenelg], and ascribed to the Danes, are of larger dimensions; but in other respects exactly the same, and in nearly the same state of ruin. The largest is $30\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, the diameter within $33\frac{1}{2}$ feet at 10 feet from the bottom; the wall 7 feet thick; the inside wall perpendicular, the outside sloping; the lower gallery 6 feet two inches high, and 2 feet 5 inches wide at bottom, narrowing upwards; the next is $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, and 20 inches wide. The entrance of the building is a square hole on the west, and before it are remains of some buildings like an avenue, and close to this a small circle of round stones, called the foundations of a Druid's house, and probably religious.

“The second building, a quarter of a mile from the first, is $24\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, 130 in diameter; the wall at bottom, 12 feet 4 inches thick, has three galleries—the lowest all round 6 feet high and 4 feet 2 inches broad; the next of the same height, but only 3 feet wide; and the third inaccessible. Two other such buildings here were entirely demolished.”

In Mr Rhind's common-place-book he notes from the Old Statistical Accounts the number of antiquities in Kildonan—the occurrence at Melness, in Tongue, of several circular buildings, and other remains; at Farr, of six Picts' castles; at Rogart, traces of encampments, many tumuli, and remains of Pictish buildings, almost everywhere; at Clyne, an artificial island in Loch Brora; at Assynt, cairns of stones; at Latheron, Pictish castles, cairns, both round and square, now covered with grass, some of them so high within that a person of ordinary size may stand erect. At

Halkirk, the notice which he quotes refers to Picts' houses, Druid circles, and innumerable cairns, adding,—“ Besides these buildings of stone, several of which were prodigious, there are in various parts of the parish ditches or entrenchments no less astonishing, edged on the outside or opposite parapet with large mounds of earth and stone, and enclosing a deep hollow in the centre.” From the “Statistical Account” we gather that at Dunnet there is a number of Pictish houses in the parish. “ One of these, at Ham, is still pretty entire. Their construction seems to have been a circular room in the centre, contracting at the top like a bottle by the projection of one stone over another, with a number of out-buildings or cells all around. A doorway and passage, covered with strong lintels of stone, seem to have led into the centre apartment. There is seldom anything discovered in them when opened, except deer's horns, bones, and shells, and occasionally a quern-stone.”

In crossing from this country to Laing cairns are seen near the road, and one of them appears to be the ruins of a tower. The road here runs along very high ground, and rooted trees, the remains of former woods, may be seen in the moors.

Notices of the appearance of such trees on lofty ground in other parts of the country frequently reach me. Throughout Lochaber, on the borders of Loch Treig, and at Locharkaig, the remains of wood in the ground are abundant, and supply many domestic and agricultural wants.

On the opposite shore of the firth from Dornoch is the east coast of Ross-shire. In this district is the parish of Edderton, where there are long stretches of land covered with small cairns and hut-circles. The cairns are especially numerous near to the hut foundations. One of the cairns near the shore is of great size. Several of them were carefully opened without the discovery of any trace of deposit. In others in the same line, noways distinguished outwardly, deposits have been found. In one destroyed by the railway operations, a bead and piece of bronze appeared.

In a wood at Caribhlair, near to a stone sculptured with the symbols, is a circle of pillars or “Druid” circle, and in the centre of it a short cist was discovered, containing burned bones, and portions of an urn. On the rising ground to the south is a circular foundation of unusual size, and a similar structure beside it has only been recently obliterated by

cultivation. Before its destruction it was examined by Mr Joass, who found near the entrance portions of three querns, shells, bones of animals, and bits of charred wood.

On the glebe of Edderton is a cairn which has been recently opened. It was found to cover five cists, in one of which was a skeleton with an urn ; in the others, burned bones, charcoal, pieces of flint, and fragments of urns.

On the Hill of Tain, in this parish, is a long cairn ; and on the hillside below it there is a rectangular structure of large slabs, one of which has four cups cut on it.

In Killearnan, near Kilcoy, are two great cairns and a monument of pillars in three concentric rows. In the glen opposite to and south of Ardross are two great cairns.

On Knockfarril is a vitrified circular wall, enclosing about an acre of ground. On the same ridge there was a cairn, of which the two ruined chambers alone remain. A little westward of this is a structure of three concentric ridges, and numerous cairns. It is probable that pillars originally were placed on the ridges.

At Clyne, in Kiltearn parish, there was, in the end of last century, a monument thus described :—" It consists of a single row of twelve large stones placed upright, and so disposed as to form ovals, which are joined to each other. The areas of these ovals are equal ; they are 13 feet from east to west, and 10 feet in the middle from north to south. At the west end of one of them is a stone which rises 8 feet above the surface of the earth ; the other stones are from 4 to 6 feet long. There is also in the middle of this oval a flat stone, which seems formerly to have stood at the east end, but has been thrown down. Distant about 3 paces from the eastern oval is a circular hollow, said to have been a well of considerable depth, but it is now filled up ; its diameter at top is 8 feet. These ovals are situated on the top of an eminence, round which are marked out three concentric circles ; one at the bottom, another 28 paces above the former, and the third 12 paces higher, immediately surrounding the ovals. The circumference of the first is 80, of the second 50, and of the third 35 paces."¹ I quote the account of this remarkable structure in the hope that research may bring to light others of the same description.

Near the same hill there is a circular hollow surrounded with stones

¹ " New Stat. Acc." xiv. p. 321.

and in another part of the parish of Fodderty one of the same kind—both locally termed “fairy-folds.”

At Park is a circle of erect stones, 15 feet in diameter, from which run eastward two rows 9 feet in length and 6 feet apart.

On the heights of Hilton is a cairn measuring 260 feet by 20 feet, having at the east end a standing-stone. In the same neighbourhood are the remains of two stone circles. One on the march between the properties of Cromartie and Hilton presents the following appearance:—In the centre the stones are from 5 to 6 feet above ground, one foot apart from each other, and inclose a space 9 feet in diameter. On each side are the appearances of two spaces of smaller dimensions, one having only two stones placed at right angles, and the other only one, which measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and at the height of two-thirds has an indentation slightly angular in the centre, and cut more deeply towards the edges. Surrounding the whole are the appearances of several concentric circles of considerable dimensions, but most of the stones have been carried away. On each side of the church are two standing-stones.¹

In Rosskeen are many cairns. One, very large, near Loch Achnacloich, is surrounded by an outer circle of stones, and measures in circumference 130 yards. Near it are a great many tumuli. “There are several small enclosures in the parish which appear to have been places of sepulture. The most perfect is of an oblong form, about 12 or 14 feet long, and 2 or 3 in breadth. It consists of large and massive flat stones placed upright at the head, while on either side are three or four similar stones placed in a line, but none at the foot. It was, we believe, originally roofed over, the entrance being at the open end; but it was several years ago considerably injured by some masons who wished to obtain the stones for building a house in the vicinity.”²

I could not hear of any eride houses in Ross.

In the Aird, near to Beaufort, I saw the remains of two stone structures, originally formed of three concentric rows of pillars.

On a piece of ground rising from the Relig burn a curious cairn was pointed out to me formed in a semicircle. It has large boulders along the edges. The wall is about 5 feet in thickness, and from one point of the semicircle to another is about 38 feet.

¹ “New Stat. Acc.” Ross-shire, p. 252. . . . ² Ibid. 271.

In Inverness-shire structures of stone-pillars are frequent, arranged in three concentric rows. One of these is on the Hill of Leys, on the south of Inverness, in or near to which a curious rod of gold was found about forty years ago, and I was able to examine this circle; another is on the ridge west from Craighphadric. I heard of one in the parish of Daviot, with a cairn in its centre, and of another near Aviemore. In the last was a flat stone at the base of one of the pillars marked with three cups. It was lately raised by a neighbouring farmer, and broken, with the view of being used for the lintels of a door, but being found too short, the fragments were replaced. Mr George Anderson has described¹ other circles of pillars, with various arrangements, at Kinchyle, at Milltown of Culloden, and at other spots on the road between Inverness and Nairn.

These details will enable the Committee to form an opinion of the general character of the remains to be found in the districts referred to in Mr Rhind's bequest. They apply only to *parts* of the country; but from all that I can learn, they comprehend satisfactory specimens of the objects to be found in the other parts, although in the case of the district around Wick there is an accumulation of important remains not to be found elsewhere.

The objects referred to comprehend—

1. "Picts' castles," variously called round towers or brochs.
2. Eirde houses or weems, which at times are double.
3. Circular hut foundations, with and without an underground chamber.
4. Groups of small cairns, frequently in connection with the hut foundations.
5. Large cairns, long, circular, oval, and "horned," with one or more central chambers and galleries.
6. Standing-stones, single and in circles.
7. Rows of standing-stones radiating from cairns.
8. Rows of standing-stones without any apparent connection with cairns.
9. Hill forts of stone ramparts.
10. Hill forts of vitrified stones.
11. Stones and boulders, with cup and ring markings.

It was from an examination and classification of such remains that Mr Rhind expected to throw light on the condition of the early races by

¹ "Archæologia Scotica," vol. iii. p. 212.

whom they were erected, and it will be the object of the Committee to carry out his intention in the best way they can.

I therefore venture to make the following suggestions and remarks for their guidance :—

1. I am of opinion that the most satisfactory result is to be anticipated from undertaking little at a time. It would be a simple thing to engage a squad of workmen, and dig into a variety of objects, so as to ascertain their general character ; but as their real meaning, and the relation which they bear to each other, often depend on details which are disclosed only to cautious and protracted examination, it seems plain that any general system of examination would be undesirable. It appears to me that the Committee will act wisely in selecting good specimens of the various objects, and having these examined with care and time—especially providing that the central chambers and deposits shall only be opened under the eye of competent observers, and with the means of recording, by drawings and otherwise, their appearance before they are disturbed.

The excavations conducted by Messrs Anderson and Shearer have been mostly made under their own inspection by two steady workmen, who are now thoroughly acquainted with what is required. I propose that, as far as possible, we should avail ourselves of their services, under the superintendence of the gentlemen just referred to. They have offered to aid the Committee in every way, and I need hardly say that their experience and taste for the pursuit render such aid more than usually valuable. They will be able not merely to superintend, but to suggest to the Committee the most desirable objects for excavation. The chambers in cairns near to Wick, which have already been opened by Mr Rhind himself,¹ and under the eye of Messrs Anderson and Shearer, disclose peculiarities of structure of which the details ought to be carefully preserved.

It appears to me, therefore, that the Committee ought to obtain careful ground-plans and architectural drawings of these chambers, so as to show

¹ Mr Rhind's examination of some of the chambered cairns at Yarrows led him to see their structural conformity with the great cairns on the Boyne at New Grange and Dowth ("The Ulster Journal of Archæology," vol. ii. p. 100). After much study of the subject of "brochs," or Pictish towers, and a special outlook for them in other countries, Mr Rhind was led to conclude that they are only found in the northern division of Scotland, the Orkney, Shetland, and Western Isles ("Memoir of Alexander Henry Rhind," p. 15).

the construction of their walls and vaulting ; and I am not without hope that we may obtain the assistance of Mr George Petrie of Kirkwall in attaining this object.

When the objects of the Committee become better known, I am confident that local aid and superintendence will be offered to them in the different districts. I can already count on valuable assistance from friends in Strathnaver ; and the Committee may rely on the valuable co-operation of the Rev. Mr Joass of Edderton [now of Golspie] in the investigation of the remains in the south of Sutherlandshire and in Ross-shire. On various occasions the services of workmen were placed at my disposal ; and I am sure that such offers will be warmly accepted by the Committee, as it will enable them to do the more with the funds at their disposal.

The most prominent objects of antiquity in Sutherland are the circular towers. Generally speaking, they are filled with the debris of their ruined walls ; and in Caithness—where perhaps they are less numerous than in Sutherland—they are so ruined as to be undistinguishable from cairns except by their colour, which is green, while the cairns are gray.

The expense of clearing any of these ruins would be very considerable, and it is doubtful if the work would be attended by any adequate result. It is in most cases only the lower story of the building which remains, and the slight differences of construction in the chambers, which might be traced by an examination of these, would not be of much weight in estimating the character or original purpose of the buildings themselves. The tower at Baikies, near Dunrobin, was thoroughly cleared out by the late Duke of Sutherland without any relic of importance having been discovered.

It might be desirable to examine the tower at Kintradwell, which is already partially cleared, and where appearances of outworks are to be seen, with a kitchen midden at one side of it. If this should be resolved on, I am sure that the Committee will receive the ready aid and superintendence of Mr Houston, on whose farm the tower is placed.

There may be other cases where it would be prudent for the Society to *join in* such examinations, but I do not venture to recommend any general excavations in Pictish towers or “brochs,” as the expense would very soon exhaust our fund.¹

¹ The excavation of a “broch” at Birsay, in Orkney, has enabled Mr Petrie to record an interesting fact bearing on the *age* of these curious structures. The

There are, however, many points of interest connected with them which admit of investigation without undertaking their *excavation*—such as their geographical distribution, the appearance of surrounding ditches or outworks of stone, and the occurrence of hut circles near to them. In Sutherland there are eirde houses of peculiar design, and it would be desirable to investigate more of them. Careful plans of the double-chambered one at Kintradwell, and of the weems connected with hut circles in Strathdonan—all of which have been recently cleared out, ought to be procured without delay.

In Caithness, most of the large cairns in the neighbourhood of Wick have already been opened; but there are typical specimens there, and in other parts of the county, which have yet to be examined, and which may be selected by Messrs Anderson and Shearer.

The Pict's house at Kettleburn, so fruitful in suggestive relics, which was opened by Mr Rhind, was unfortunately much dilapidated before he saw it; but it would be most desirable to ascertain and record the detailed arrangements of such a structure, if another and more perfect example can be found in Caithness.

Generally speaking, the excavation of small cairns and hut foundations involves little expense; and as the results have been found to be very various, there seems no reason why a wide examination should not be carried out, as well as about standing-stones, in hill forts, and in spots clearly identified as the abodes of the early races, or as their places of burial.

If something is thoroughly done in each year, there will ultimately be an accumulation of facts and observations of the character suggested by Mr Rhind, which will afford a wider basis for general conclusions than has hitherto been attainable.

It appears to me also that, keeping in view Mr Rhind's expressed intentions, it will be desirable that the Committee should undertake or aid in excavations in other districts of the north-east of Scotland than Ross,

upper part having been ruined at an early period, the stones fell into the centre of the tower, and thus gave it the appearance of a cairn. In process of time this cairn came to be covered with earth to the depth of several feet, when it was appropriated by some early race as a burial-mound. Mr Petrie, in the course of his examination, discovered in this cover of earth a great many short cists, some of which contained burned bones and bronze relics.

Sutherland, and Caithness, if objects of interest should occur, while these three counties must be regarded as the chief field of operations.

It has been objected by some that the excavations now suggested will be the means of *ruining* many cairns, and that the investigators ought in all cases to restore such monuments to the state in which they found them.

It has, however, to be kept in view, that even if the explorations should lead to such results, they will frequently be only in slight anticipation of the march of agricultural improvement, which sweeps off such remains without preserving any record of their contents, and that the same result attends the amateur diggings which are now so common; for after enumerating the rich store of ancient monuments near Wick, already quoted, Mr Rhind adds,—“ With extreme regret I remark, that of all the antiquities in this locality, not one has escaped scatheless, but those few that are so overgrown by moss and heather as to be almost imperceptible.”

It does not appear reasonable that the systematic explorer, who preserves to posterity the details of the structures which he examines, should be called on to re-edify these (often in partial ruin at the outset), merely that they may be wholly swept away a few years afterwards.

In all cases, however, there are exceptions; and where a monument is in a spot remote from the invading plough, and can be preserved either as a good specimen of its class, or as an old landmark in the district, there can be no doubt that its preservation ought to be insisted on.

JOHN STUART.

EDINBURGH, *St Andrew's Day*, 1866.

EDINBURGH, 19th *December* 1866.—The above report was this day adopted by the Committee, and the Secretary was authorised to proceed with the arrangements therein suggested. In the meantime, he was requested to circulate copies in the districts to which the report specially refers, with the view of drawing attention to the objects of the Committee, and in the hope that additional information and local co-operation may thus be secured.

C. INNES, *Chairman*.