

## I.

### NOTE OF EXCAVATIONS IN SANDAY, ONE OF THE NORTH ISLES OF ORKNEY. BY JAMES FARRER, Esq., HON. MEM. S.A. SCOT.

Quoy Ness, in Elsness, presents the usual appearance of a large brough. It is close to the sea, and only a few feet above high-water mark. The diameter of the mound in its present ruined condition is about 63 feet, and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet in height. From the vast quantity of debris, it may be fairly inferred that, when originally constructed, it must have been much higher. The diameter of the building in which the graves are found is 32 feet. The space between the inner wall and the outer one is 12 feet, and may have been an area or court encircling the whole building. This area is now completely filled with rubbish, and the outer wall itself shows symptoms of decay. Outside this wall another appears, built with great

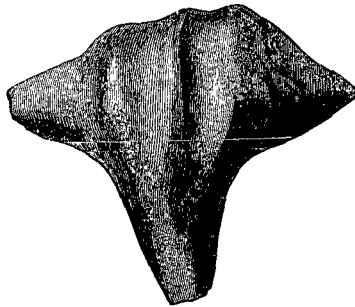
regularity on the outside, but the interior is filled up with loose stones, possibly with the intention of giving additional strength to the original wall of the building. This rude outer wall is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet in width. On the south-east side of the mound, facing the sea, is a passage 12 feet long and 21 inches wide, covered with large stones set on edge. Here several skulls in a very decayed state were found. A stratum of decayed bones was cut through, but few of them were in a sufficiently sound state to bear lifting. Some of the skulls were of great thickness; one was at least half an inch thick. The passage in which these remains were found was paved with flat stones. It was completely filled up with rubbish. Entering the main wall of the building, it continued a farther distance of 12 feet, till it arrived at the central chamber, round which the graves had been constructed. This passage was 3 feet in height and 21 inches wide, and only partially blocked up with stones and earthy matter. It was unpaved, and, like the outer passage, covered over with large stones set on edge. One of these stones had fallen in, and there appeared to be an upper tier of similar stones, though this could not be ascertained with certainty without injury to the roof, and possibly some risk to the excavators. The chamber itself was filled up, and when cleared out proved to be  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  wide, and in its original state probably 12 or 13 feet in height. The walls are at present about 12 feet high, but may have been somewhat higher. Within the wall on the north-west side are two cists of a semicircular shape, 19 inches wide at the entrance, and 6 feet high inside, and 5 feet respectively. When entirely cleared out, it is probable that they will both be found to be of the same height.

These cists did not contain any bones. On the right of the entrance passage is a cist 20 inches wide at the mouth and 6 feet high; and on the left another, probably of the same dimensions, but which I had not time to see entirely excavated. Both of these cists contained skulls and a few other human bones. In the angle formed by the south-east and south-



Implement of Bone, found in the Broch of Quoyness, Sanday, Orkney. (7 inches in length.)

west walls there is a small circular cist sunk in the floor of the chamber. It is two feet in diameter, and contained some human leg and arm bones in the last stage of decay. On the south-west side is another grave, 5 feet high and 2 feet wide at the entrance, and also one on the north-east side, pear-shaped, in which human remains were discovered. This latter cist was 7 feet 3 inches in length, 4 feet 8 inches wide, and 2 feet 6 inches at the entrance. The skulls and jaw bones were in a very fragile state,



Stone Implement, found in the Broch of Quoyness, Sanday, Orkney  
(6 inches in greatest length).

though many of the teeth were perfect and still preserved their enamel.<sup>1</sup> A stone implement of very peculiar form (see the annexed woodcuts on this and the preceding page, and donation list, pp. 358-9), a bone dagger about 7 inches long, and a stone for pounding corn, were the only things of an artificial character discovered amongst the rubbish. Being pushed for time, I was unable to remain until all the cists had been entirely

<sup>1</sup> I forwarded them to Dr Thurnam (the well-known craniologist), but in their very decayed state he declined to express any positive opinion as to their antiquity. He says—"They are evidently of great antiquity. There are two forms recognisable, the long and the short (skull); there are fragments of twelve or fifteen skulls, some male and female, some of them children or quite young persons; one or two of them have the appearance of having been cleft prior to being interred, and the teeth in the lower jaws are much corroded."

cleared out, but this has subsequently been effected, and Mr Petrie informs me that another stone implement, in excellent preservation, has been found in one of the cells, and I have desired that it may be sent to the care of Mr Stuart at Edinburgh. A very interesting question arises as to the original character of the mound. It may at one time have been a brough, subsequently converted into a burial-place, and the space between the inner and outer walls, which I have called an area or open court, may have been simply a mass of rude walling, constructed with the view of supporting the building containing the graves. Should further investigation justify this suggestion, great antiquity may be attributed to the brough, since undoubtedly the remains found within it belong to very ancient times.

Before leaving Sanday, I gave instructions to have the mound protected, and the walls restored as far as was practicable; but it is not probable that, where they have been uncovered, they can long resist the influence of weather and climate.