

V.

NOTE ON LARGE STONE IMPLEMENTS FOUND IN SHETLAND.

By ARTHUR MITCHELL, M.D., F.S.A. SCOT. (PLATE VI.)

Since my first communication on the collections of rude stone implements discovered in Shetland, was laid before the Society, I have had an opportunity of paying another visit to that part of Scotland. The additional information which I then obtained is embodied in this note.

1. When the subject was first brought before the Society these implements had only been found in three places, but since that time they have also been picked up at Watsness in Walls, and at Burrafirth in Unst, by Mr Umphray of Reawick, a zealous antiquary and careful observer. I am inclined to think that it will eventually be found that they are widely and generally distributed over the country.

2. In an interesting collection made by Mr Umphray, I found two large and evidently unbroken implements. In a similar collection, made by the Rev. James Russell, the parochial schoolmaster of Walls, I found another implement, still larger, but of exactly the same type and character, and also unbroken. Through the kindness of these gentlemen, I am now

able to exhibit these implements (figs. 1, 2, and 3 of Plate VI.), and along with them a fourth of the same kind, but rather less and better finished, which has come into my possession, and which was recently found at West Houland, where the majority of those first shown to the Society were discovered.

The chief value of these four remarkable stones consists in this, that they show that the great majority of those which appear in all the collections yet made are, as was suspected, merely fragments, and fragments of large or small implements of this type. Such, for instance, are 2 and 3 of fig. 4, and 1 and 2 of fig. 6 in my first communication (Proc. Soc. Antiq. Vol. VII. p. 118). Why so many of them should be broken I cannot tell, and I am equally unable to explain why, whether broken or whole, none of them should exhibit unmistakable evidence of use.

3. The spud-like or handled implement (fig. 5 of the Plate) is in all respects as rough and rude in its finish as the rudest which have been found, and it becomes useful in connecting an extremely rude workmanship with workmanship of a higher character, seen in the group of handled implements in fig. 7 of the previous communication on this subject. The handled implements formerly exhibited, and now in the Museum, were of a finish so much better than the other implements, that, though found along with them, it was doubted whether they belonged to the same period. But the discovery of this *very rude* one, which is perfect, and of many fragments of others equally rude, removes this doubt. It is noteworthy that even these handled implements show no distinct sign of having been used.

4. The rude ball (fig. 6 of the Plate) was also sent to me by Mr Umphray. It presents another type of implement, and occurs with frequency. It is very rudely rounded, and shows no sign of use, differing in all respects from the *stone pestle* found at Houland, and shown in fig. 8 of my last paper on this subject.

The following extract from Mr Umphray's letter, announcing the despatch of these implements, contains interesting and valuable information regarding them:—

“The two long ones, 19 and 20½ inches,” he says, “were not found near underground buildings, as such implements usually are, but lying apparently where made. Moss having accumulated over them, they are

uninjured by exposure. So also, the large rough stone with a handle was found, when cutting peats, 5 or 6 feet below the surface. I have about a dozen of this kind in fragments, which were found along with other rough stones near the usual places. The round stone described in your paper (pestle) is not so rare as the one I forward. I have a small one like the one you describe, and I gave Dr Hunt a large one. I had another, but lost it, which was nearly 4 inches in diameter. The round one which I forward was found where there had been some underground structure, and where hundreds of the long-shaped stones are. I have as yet got very few of the latter, which show use at both ends; but as you will find in those I send, and as many have noticed in your own collection, they have been so used. There are two whole ones among those sent showing use at both ends, one $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches and the other 7 inches long, and about a dozen of fragments, some showing use at the broad and some at the narrow end.

“Some of the stones I send belong to a collection which I am making from a spot, where there has been an underground structure. They are all *rough*—the small perfect one, 7 inches \times $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches \times $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch, showing use at both ends, being the least rough. I got from this place a large piece—5 inches thick and 13 inches broad—of a stone, hollowed out somewhat like a mill-stone, but without a hole in the middle, and not round. Judging from the appearance of the fragment, the whole stone must have been 18 to 24 inches long. The concave part is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep, and systematically worked. I think similar stones have been found, but the interesting thing is its being found in company with these rude ones.”

The evidence of *use* to which Mr Umphray refers is to be seen at one or both ends of these implements, as if they had been rubbed against something. I have not been able, however, to satisfy myself or others that it is of anything like regular occurrence, or that, when it does occur, it is not accidental. The point is one, however, which deserves attention, and it is very much for the purpose of securing this that I have given so full an extract from Mr Umphray's letter.

The fact, that so many of these stones are broken, has been regarded by some as an evidence of their having been used.