

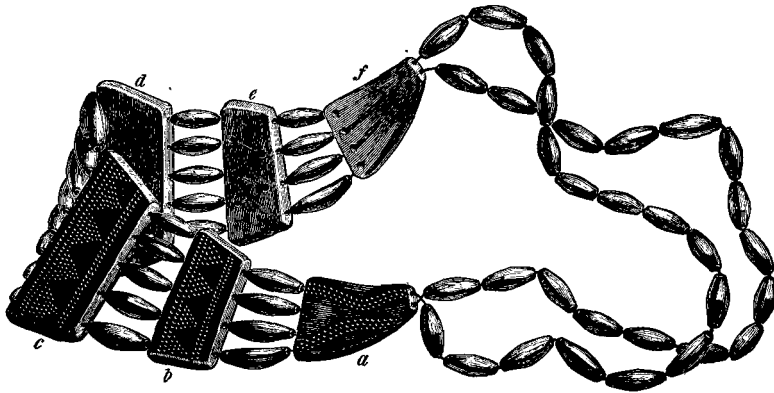
V.

NOTES OF THE DISCOVERY OF A NECKLACE OF BEADS AND PLATES OF SHALE AND JET, ALONG WITH FLINT ARROW HEADS, FOUND IN A CIST UNDER A SMALL TUMULUS AT TORRISH, KILDONAN, SUTHERLANDSHIRE. BY THE REV. J. M. JOASS, GOLSPIE, COR. MEM. S.A. Scot.

A few days ago, as some boys were digging after a rabbit in a tumulus at Torrish near Helmsdale, they came upon a cist. In clearing it out they found a number of black beads and some small plates. These were secured and sent to me by Captain Houstoun, Kintradwell. On examination I found that there were twenty-six small beads made from the shale associated with the Oolitic Lignite of this coast. There were also three whole plates and part of a fourth of the same material. These were orna-

mented on one side by a double line of punctures parallel to the sides, with triangles extending between, each alternate triangle being filled in with similar punctures, as in the accompanying sketch. There were, besides, a whole plate of jet of the same size as one of the above, but not ornamented, and fragments of another. Jet also is a product of our local Oolite, but rather rare.

On laying these out as suggested by the Assynt Necklace ("Wilson's Prehistoric Annals," p. 294, 1st edition), I found that the pieces marked *a*, *c*, and *e* (see the accompanying woodcut) were present, and half of *b*, all of shale. The whole jet piece was similar in size and style of string-holes



Necklace of Beads and Plates of Shale and Jet found in a Tumulus at Torrish, Sutherlandshire.

to *e*, but for the opposite side, so that it might be substituted for *b*. The fragments of jet belonged to a plate like *d*, judging by size and style of boring. The upper and lower string-holes in these plates were bored right through, the intermediate holes, entering like the others at the edge, came to the surface behind a short way inwards. This was the style of all the holes in the terminal plates. The twenty-six smaller beads being all required to match the perforations in the plates, none were left to complete the circuit of the necklace. It was, therefore, proposed to explore the cist on the presumption that this had not been thoroughly done.

Accordingly Captain Houstoun and myself, accompanied by his keeper (a capital practical antiquary), with digging tools and a *riddle*, made an early start for the ground, which we reached after a two hours' drive, and found *the cist cleared out*. This we now learned had been done on its discovery. After taking dimensions and bearing of the cist, which were found to be, length 3 feet, breadth and depth 20 inches, direction north and south, there seemed as if nothing more could be done; but, on handling the out-turned earth, a bead was found. The riddle was brought to the front, every handful of earth sifted, and thirty small beads discovered, and the remaining half of *b*, but no trace of *f*. During the riddling a chert arrow-head was found, when a shepherd, who was present at the first search, said that he had then found in the cist a flint tool twice as long as the arrow, but had broken and thrown it away. Part of this was afterwards recovered, and identified by him as the point of what, when found, was an inch wide at the other end. It seemed a javelin-head made of yellow flint. Several small pieces of charcoal were found, but no trace of bones or pottery.

The cist seemed to have been formed upon the undisturbed gravel. Over this lay yellowish clay and sand, and next a stratum of peaty earth reaching to within six inches of the covering flag, which, with the sides and ends, were made of the undressed Granitoid rock of the district, and bore no artificial markings. The covering mound, about 8 feet in diameter and 3 feet high, consisted of peaty mould and stones—the larger of these appearing to have been arranged as a retaining circle around the base.

Upwards of sixty similar tumuli lay round about, all more or less marked by a circle of large stones below. Three of these tumuli, equal in size to that with the cist, were dug through and proved barren.

On the outskirts of this group were two hut-circles of the usual diameter of 33 feet. These occurred on a gentle slope facing southwards, and about 500 feet above the bottom of the valley.

At the same elevation, proceeding down the strath, we passed through groups of tumuli almost continuously, and counted five other hut-circles, till about a mile off we reached the Cil-Pheadar burn, close to which, on the further bank, is the hut-circle with Eirde-house underneath, and, towering near, the most imposing Broch in all Sutherland, where there are so many. (See Proc. Soc. Ant., vol. v. p. 246.)

With reference to the occurrence of the pieces of jet which seemed to have belonged to another necklace, it may perhaps be suspected that there was another, and that we missed it. This, however, can hardly be the case, as the riddle worked well, and was carefully watched. It is probable that the shale plate *d* being lost, a jet substitute was used, of which we have the fragments, and another for *b* which, though broken, was preserved and buried with the owner's ashes. The connection of the flint implements with the necklace is of peculiar interest, reminding us, as stated by Wilson, that "the modes of personal decoration which modern taste and refinement reserve for the fair sex are very differently apportioned in ruder states of society."—"Prehistoric Annals," p. 294.)