

II.

NOTICE OF A CINERARY URN, CONTAINING A SMALL-SIZED URN (IN WHICH WERE THE BONES OF A CHILD), DISCOVERED IN FIFE-SHIRE; WITH NOTES OF SIMILAR SMALL AND CUP-LIKE VESSELS, IN THE MUSEUM OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND.
By JOHN ALEX. SMITH, M.D., V.P., S.A. Scot.

The small urn exhibited was discovered in the month of February 1866, and its exhibition now is due to the zeal of the keeper of our Museum, Mr Joseph Anderson, who, happening to observe a stranger closely examining the small urns in our museum, entered into conversation with him, and learned that he had in his possession two urns of a similar kind. At Mr Anderson's request, the urns were forwarded for examination, and are now exhibited to the Society.

The first urn is of a flattened and rounded form ; it measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, and $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in its greatest diameter, rather below the middle of its height, from which it tapers upwards to its open mouth, which is 3 inches in diameter, and downwards to its small base, which measures $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches across (see the annexed figure). The urn is formed of a yellowish clay, and is ornamented round the upper part with a series of straight horizontal and parallel lines, next a belt is left, which is divided by short vertical lines into quadrilateral spaces, alternate halves of which are ornamented by oblique parallel lines.

The tapering lower part of the urn is also ornamented by a series of horizontal parallel lines, below which are vertical lines, dividing it into regular spaces, covered with the herring-bone ornament. The base of the urn is plain or unornamented. The urn is pierced at its greatest diameter

with two small holes about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart; and the opposite side of the urn, which has been unfortunately chipped, still shows traces of one hole, at least, of a corresponding kind. These holes have been made with a sharp-pointed instrument, passed from the outside inwards to the interior of the vessel, when the clay of which it is formed was soft. The urn was discovered by a man while ploughing deeply in a field, on a small hill called the Black Hill, on the farm of Wester Bucklyvie, Fifeshire. The plough struck on what was supposed at first to be a boulder stone, but was soon discovered to be the bottom of a large clay urn, which showed

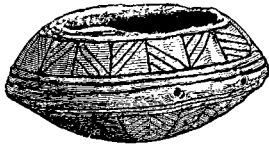


Fig. 1.

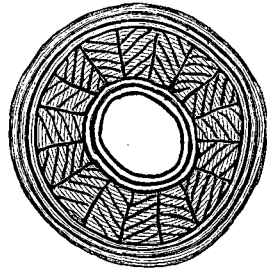


Fig. 2.

Fig. 1. Urn found in a Cinerary Urn at Wester Bucklyvie, Fife ($2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height).

Fig. 2. Under side of same Urn.

little or no ornament on its surface, and appeared to be a foot or 15 inches in height. It was rather narrower at each extremity, and bulged out most in the middle. Unfortunately, it was so shattered by the ploughshare, that it could only be lifted in portions, and was seen to have contained or covered a heap of burnt bones, which fell out when it was taken up, and also this small urn, which was standing filled with bones; the large urn having been placed over the small urn and its contents, and the other burnt bones. Indeed, the mouth of the large urn was not a great deal wider than was sufficient to enclose the small urn. The bones found were considered to be those of children, by the persons who examined

them, albeit unskilled in human anatomy though they were, as they observed what appeared to them to be portions of shoulder-blades of different sizes, which they supposed might possibly be those of children of different ages. On making a careful examination of the contents of the small urn, I found it still contained the calcined remains of several bones, which, from their character and small size, might probably have belonged to a child. The urn also contained a compact mass of indurated ashes, adhering to its interior, from which portions of bone were picked out, and also the fang of a human molar tooth (now exhibited), which, on examination, I have no doubt is part of the first teeth, a milk molar of a child. My friend Mr William Turner, Professor of Anatomy in the University, F.S.A. Scot., has also examined the bones and tooth, and agrees with me that they are those of a child. The milk molars of a child, I may mention, generally make their appearance in the mouth from the twelfth to the twenty-fourth month, so that here in this small urn we have evidence of the incinerated remains of a young child, being interred along with the burnt bones enclosed in the larger urn, in which the small urn was laid. The bones in the large urn were probably the remains of the mother of the child. From the presence of a small seam of black earth, apparently arranged in a square shape, and enclosing the large inverted urn all round, it was supposed that it might originally have been enclosed in a wooden box, of which this black substance was the decayed remains. For all the information about the discovery of this small urn, and indeed the preservation of the urn itself, we are indebted to Mr William Telfer, The College, Fordel, near Inverkeithing, Fifeshire. The urn is now preserved in the local museum at Jedburgh.

This urn, I may remind the Fellows, belongs to the class of small fictile vessels, which, for want, perhaps, of a better explanation, have been described as lamps, censers, incense cups, or thuribles. They have been generally found along with burnt bones, either enclosed in, or covered by, an urn, but in some cases they have apparently been simply laid beside the larger cinerary urn, and they have been found in circumstances of a corresponding character both in Scotland, England, and Ireland.

From the interest excited among antiquaries by the small size and peculiar shape of these urns, I have thought the different examples pre-

served in the Museum might be brought together under the notice of the Fellows of the Society.

In the Museum there are now fourteen specimens, apparently belonging to this class of small urns; of these, one was found in the north of England, two in Ireland, and the rest are believed to have been discovered in Scotland.

These small vessels have been grouped together, not only from their general correspondence in size, but also from the apparent similarity of their character. They vary, however, in shape and in ornamentation, but may perhaps be divided into two general groups or classes.

First, those which are more or less of a compressed or flattened form; and Second, those of a more simple rounded or cup-like shape.

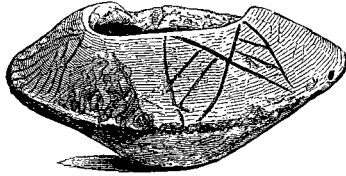
In all of these varieties we find some specimens pierced with a pair of small holes—sometimes on one side only, in others on both sides,—while in others these holes are wanting altogether.

I shall first describe those more flattened in character, which include those that are the smallest in size. These urns vary somewhat in shape, some being rather larger in size, the upper part of the urn more expanded, larger, and deeper, the bottom being more flattened, and often terminating in a small base; until we find in some urns the sides becoming nearly vertical, and the bottoms almost flat. I shall describe them in the order of this gradual change in form; from those of a compressed character, towards those with the upright sides and flattened bottom. The small pair or pairs of holes are generally found at the greatest circumference of the urn, from about the middle of its height, to near the bottom of the vessel.

I. A very small, rather rudely formed urn, of a compressed flattened shape, formed of reddish clay. It measures $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height; its greatest diameter being $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, where it is pierced with a pair of small holes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart, on one side only. From its greatest diameter it tapers rapidly upwards to its mouth, which measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches across, it also tapers rapidly downwards to a small concave base or bottom, about an inch across which is plain or unornamented; the cavity of the vessel being very small.¹ It is ornamented round the upper part with

¹ Proc. vol. v. p. 13.

a pattern of a couple of rude triangles, placed point to point, ornamented with two parallel lines, and by a single vandyke pattern, alternately ; the pattern being four times repeated. The lower half of the vessel is



Small Urn of reddish clay ($1\frac{1}{2}$ inch high).

ornamented with a repetition of the rude double triangular-like figures. Unfortunately its history is not known (see woodcut).

II. A small urn of reddish clay, rounded and compressed in shape, but



Small Urn found in a cairn at Benachie.
($1\frac{3}{4}$ inch high.)

not so much so as the one last described. It measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch in height. The bottom of the urn is small, measuring $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in breadth, and from this part it expands rapidly to its greatest diameter of 3 inches about the middle of its height, and then contracts again upwards to its mouth, which is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch across.

It is covered all over with alternating vandyke ornaments, each covered with parallel lines, running in opposite directions; also with straight lines running round the mouth, and the greatest circumference of the vessel, where it is pierced with two small holes, $\frac{7}{8}$ ths of an inch apart, on one side of the vessel only (see the preceding woodcut).¹

The mouth is ornamented with short lines, and the small base or bottom is also ornamented with four triangles meeting in the centre, and covered with parallel lines, the intersecting lines of which may perhaps be described as a cross. It was found in a tumulus or cairn, along with another larger and somewhat similar vessel to be afterwards described, on the lower part of the hill of Benachie, Aberdeenshire.

III. Another vessel of closely corresponding character, but larger in size, was found in the north of England, at the burial-ground belonging to old Pendrith (Fort Patrianus of Camden's Britannia), about six miles from Penrith. It measures 3 inches in height, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in greatest diameter, just below which it is pierced by a pair of holes, 1 inch apart, on one side only of the vessel.²

The upper surface of the urn is ornamented by small chevron-like ornaments, between two straight and parallel horizontal lines, which surround the vessel; and this is repeated at its greatest diameter, the space between these bands being filled up by a series of short vertical lines. The under surface of the vessel is ornamented by a concentric circle, then a series of rude chevrons laid laterally, or herring-bone-like patterns; two concentric circles surround the base of the vessel, which is unornamented, and measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch in width (see fig. 1 of the annexed woodcut).

IV. The next urn was found in a mound or tumulus, enclosing the foundations of an "ancient ruin," in the island of Ronaldshay, Orkney.

It considerably resembles the one last described; it is formed of yellowish clay, and measures $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height. Its greatest breadth of 4 inches is towards the lower part of the vessel, where it is also pierced with two pairs of small holes, 1 inch apart, one on each side of the base; from this part it tapers upwards to a mouth, 3 inches across; and downwards rapidly

¹ Proc. vol. v. p. 13.

² See Proc. vol. iii. p. 48.

to a small base, measuring 1 inch across.¹ It is ornamented round the mouth with a band of three concentric circles, and below this a double chevron ornament, then at the greatest diameter five parallel concentric circles, and below, an alternating vandyke ornament, covered with oblique parallel lines; other three concentric circles surround the small concave base, which is unornamented (fig. 2 of the annexed woodcut).



Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 1. Urn found at Old Pendrith (3 inches high).

Fig. 2. Urn found in Ronaldshay, Orkney (2¾ inches high).

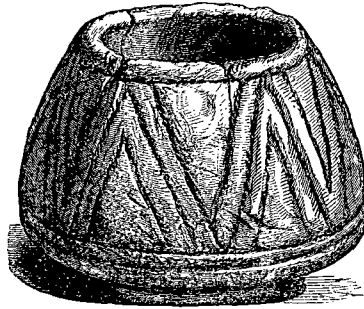
Fig. 3. Urn found near Dunbar (2½ inches high).

V. Another urn, very similar in character to the last; was found near Dunbar. It measures 2½ inches in height, and 3¾ inches in greatest diameter near the base, where it is pierced with a pair of small holes, 1½ inch apart, on one side only of the urn. It is ornamented by two parallel lines running round the mouth, and next by two intersecting lines, which form a series of small lozenges covered with parallel lines, and below this, another parallel line; the under part of its upper surface being ornamented by a herring-bone-like pattern, enclosed between two parallel lines. The lower part of the vessel is ornamented by a band of vandyke

¹ Proc. vol. iii. p. 485.

patterns, alternately plain and covered with parallel lines, a similar and smaller band surrounds the small base of the vessel, which displays a rude lozenge-shaped figure covered with parallel lines (fig. 3 of the woodcut).¹

VI. This urn was found along with the small urn already described, in a tumulus at the foot of the hill of Benachie.² It is formed of a yellowish clay, and measures 2 inches in height; its greatest diameter of 3 inches is at the bottom of the vessel, which is flattened, but has a slightly project-



Small Urn found in a cairn on the Hill of Benachie (2 inches high).

ing ring, forming a small base $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch in breadth. Just below its greatest diameter, on the commencement of its under side, it is pierced with a pair of holes, $\frac{7}{8}$ ths of an inch apart; and a similar pair of holes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart, pierce the opposite side of the vessel.

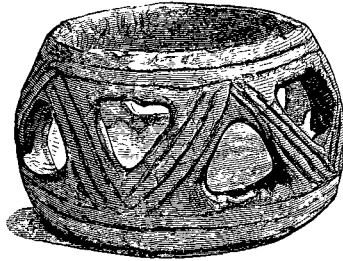
From its greatest diameter below, it tapers gradually upwards to a wide mouth, 2 inches across. It is ornamented by a large chevron-like pattern, which runs round the vessel, and is enclosed by a straight line above, and two parallel lines below, all marked as if with a twisted cord, the base being plain (see the preceding figure.)

VII. The next urns of this class which I have to notice are distinguished by a series of large fenestra or perforations through their sides. These urns were found in Ireland; and belong to the Bell Collection.

¹ Proc. vol. iii. p. 485.

² Proc. vol. v. p. 13.

One of these is a perfect urn, formed of reddish clay, and measures 2 inches in height, and 3 inches in greatest diameter, and about $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches across the mouth. It is ornamented by a series of alternating triangular perforations round its sides, with parallel lines between (see the following woodcut).



Small urn found at Killucken, Tyrone, Ireland (2 inches high).

Two large cinerary urns were found near each other in the townland of Killucken, county Tyrone; one was much ornamented, and the other plain; the former measured 14 inches high and $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the mouth; it was, like the other large urn, in an inverted position, and they both contained calcined bones. The small perforated urn first described was found erect in the large ornamented urn. An account of the discovery of the urn is given by Mr Bell in the "Journal of the British Archaeological Association," vol. i. p. 243, 1846.

VIII. The other is a smaller portion of another broken urn of reddish clay and of similar character. It was also found in Ireland.

Urns of a similar kind, pierced round their sides with numerous lozenge and oval apertures, have been also occasionally discovered, along with incinerated remains, in England and in Wales.

IX. Is a plain or unornamented urn of yellowish clay and of a rounded form, becoming rather suddenly contracted above. It is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and 4 inches in greatest diameter, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the mouth; the greatest circumference being a little below the mouth, and the under side of the vessel the deepest, differing in this respect from those previ-

ously described. It contained burnt bones, but its history is not known.

X. The next urn is of a similar shape to the last. It is formed of reddish clay, and measures 2 inches in height, and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch across the mouth, the greatest diameter is 3 inches towards the upper part of the urn, where it is pierced with a pair of holes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart, on one side only, and it tapers downwards to a small base of about 1 inch across,—unfortunately it has been much chipped on its sides. The upper part is ornamented with a herring-bone pattern, and the rest of the urn is plain. It was found along with a number of cists containing urns, in some excavations at Crailing Hall, near Jedburgh, and was contained in a larger wide-mouthed cinerary urn of blackish clay, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, covered over with a rude pattern of a series of short lines, showing toothed or twisted cord markings. This is the second urn referred to at the commencement of this paper.

We now come to the Second group or division of these urns, namely, those of a more simply rounded character or cup-like form, some of them being almost entirely without ornament of any kind; these urns are also, in some instances, pierced with the usual pairs of small holes.

XI. A portion of a small cup-like urn, ornamented with concentric circles, and alternating vandyke patterns covered with parallel lines, and below them two straight lines or concentric circles; the lower part being plain. The mouth of the vessel is thick, and is ornamented on its lip with three parallel longitudinal lines, or concentric circles. It measures $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in height, by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in greatest breadth, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ across the mouth. It was discovered on Arthur's Seat, near Samson's Ribs, when the Queen's Drive was being made some years ago. The workmen discovered a sepulchral deposit, containing a cinerary urn, which was broken to fragments, and probably this small cup-like urn,—although it is stated to have been found with some bronze celts, a little more to the eastward; the account of the navy who found it being not altogether to be depended on. The details of its discovery are given in Dr Daniel Wilson's "Prehistoric Annals," 1851, p. 228-29; and the urn was presented by him to the Museum, in June 1863.¹

XII. Portion of another small cup-like urn, apparently measuring $2\frac{3}{4}$

¹ Proc., vol. v. p. 127.

inches in height, and about 4 in diameter. It is ornamented with alternating vandyke patterns and straight lines, the same being repeated on the under surface, and was found on levelling a tumulus on the Dighty Water, near Monifieth, Forfarshire; when found, it was filled with black earth and burnt bones.¹

XIII. and XIV. These are two small rounded urns of coarse clay, without ornament of any kind. One measures $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, by 3 inches diameter across the mouth. It is pierced with two small holes, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart, on one side of the vessel.

The other urn measures $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in greatest diameter, and $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches across the mouth; it is also of a rounded form, and, like the other, is somewhat contracted in shape at the top and bottom. It is also pierced with a single pair of small holes, 1 inch apart, at about the middle of its height.

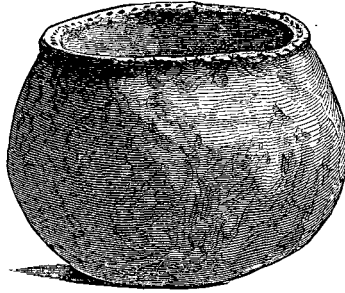
A group of cinerary urns was discovered at Westwood, on the Tay, near Ferryport, in 1867. It consisted of eight large urns with overhanging rims, generally ornamented with chevron or herring-bone patterns, disposed in a circle round a central urn, the diameter of the circle being about 15 feet. The urns varied in size from 5 to 15 inches in height. Some were placed erect, others inverted, and all contained burnt bones. In two of the urns these two small cups were found, filled also with burnt bones, and lying above the other bones in the large urns. In one of the erect urns another urn was enclosed in an inverted position, also covering burnt bones.

This discovery was described by Andrew Jervise, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., in vol. vi. p. 388 of the Proceedings of the Society, where the urns are figured and described.

XV. The last urn is of blackish clay, a regularly rounded or globular cup-like vessel, apparently made by the hand, and without ornament, except a row of punctured dots along the edge of its slightly everted lip. It measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, and $3\frac{1}{4}$ in greatest diameter, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across its mouth. Its history is, unfortunately, not known. Judging from its appearance, however, and its general resemblance to some hand-made clay vessels in the Museum to be afterwards described, I am inclined to think it must belong to the same class of vessels made for

¹ See Proc. vi. p. 313.

domestic use in some of the Hebrides in recent times, indeed almost in our own day (see woodcut).



Cup-like Urn ($2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high).
(Probably of recent manufacture in the Hebrides).

It might be interesting to collect the details of all the instances of the discovery of these peculiar small cup-like urns in Scotland. I shall, however, only refer to other three examples.

The first I shall notice is given in the "New Statistical Account of Scotland," vol. v. 1845, in the account of the parish of Beith, in Ayrshire. On the lands of Townend of Threepwood, a large urn was found of a size capable of holding about 6 gallons; it contained calcined bones, and also a small open or cup-like urn of hard burned clay as if formed by the finger and thumb, and in it were two perforations, as if for fixing it to some other body, probably, it is said, to the larger urn in which it was found, or to attach a lid or cover. Another small urn was found by itself at a small distance from it. The writer supposes the small urns were doubtless for receiving the ashes of the brain or heart, and the large urn those of the rest of the body. The date of this account is May 1839.

Another example is recorded in our "Proceedings," vol. ii. p. 11, by the Rev. Mr Lawson—"Notice of Urns and Sepulchral Monuments discovered in the Parish of Creich, on the property of Carphin." He tells us several cinerary urns were found; and in one instance as many as fourteen large cinerary urns were discovered, running in nearly a straight line from east to west, at about 3 feet apart from one another; some were

erect, but they were mostly inverted; and in one of the urns of this row a small cup-like urn filled with earth, but without bones, was discovered.

The last instance I shall refer to was brought under the notice of the Society by the late Rev. Dr Chalmers, of Dunfermline, and probably belongs to a later date. In May 1857 a small mound or cairn of stones and earth was opened at Craighdu, near North Queensferry. The cairn measured 40 to 45 feet in circumference, and in it three cists were discovered; the largest was 5 feet long and about 2 feet broad, another was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by 20 inches broad, and the third about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet by a foot broad. In the larger cist was found the jaw-bone and other remains of a skeleton, and also the broken portions of an inverted urn about a foot in diameter, which covered some calcined bones and a small cup-like urn, like a food-vessel, about 2 inches in diameter, containing calcined bones. Both vessels were ornamented with short, straight, and sloping lines, and the small vessel with zig-zag lines on its lower surface. Full details, with a figure of the urn, are given in the "History of Dunfermline, by Dr Chalmers," 1844, vol. ii. p. 387. This very curious urn is still, I believe, in the possession of Mrs Douglas, the proprietor of the locality where it was found, and it is to be regretted that it has not been deposited for preservation in our national collection of antiquities. In this case have we to suppose a wife and child both sacrificed at the death of a husband to accompany him on his journey to the world of spirits?

In these various instances you have examples of the different circumstances in which these small urns are generally found.

In a learned and important memoir "On Ancient Interments and Sepulchral Urns found in Anglesey and North Wales," from notices by the Hon. W. Stanley, M.P., by Albert Way, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., Hon. Mem. S.A., Scot., &c., which is published in the "Archæologia Cambrensis," vol. xiv. 1868, the whole subject of the varied characters and uses of sepulchral urns has been carefully considered and fully discussed. In treating of this class of small urns, "incense cups," or "censers," he mentions the various theories that have been suggested for their use;—that they were employed for holding tinder, or for conveying fire or glowing embers—it may be, to the funeral pile—or for adding inflammable substances to augment the flame of the funeral pile, or perhaps to hold aromatic

perfumes of some kind to diminish the disagreeable odours of the burning corpse, as was done in India. He considers it not improbable that they might also have been used for domestic purposes, as well as put to sepulchral uses; and he is inclined to think that the so-called drinking cups and food vessels found in cists along with skeletons were probably also the vessels in ordinary domestic use.

From the fact of the perforations through the sides of these small urns, and the ornamentation frequently occurring on the bottom of the vessel, it has been supposed that some of them may have been used for suspension above the level of the eye. They have, therefore, been considered by some antiquaries to have been lamps or vessels for holding fire.

Mr Way in his paper also refers to the fact of a small ornamented bowl-shaped cinerary urn, only $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches in height, which was found within a large cinerary urn, and was ascertained by the late Mr Queckett to contain portions of the skeleton of a very young infant; probably the remains of a mother and her infant.

Other antiquaries, as Mr Llewellynn Jewitt in his valuable work on "Grave Mounds and their Contents, a Manual of Archæology," 1870, consider these small urns to be not "incense cups, but" simply "small urns made to receive the ashes of an infant, perhaps sacrificed at the death of its mother, so as to admit of its being placed within the larger urn containing the remains of its parent" (p. 107); "and from their usually containing small calcined bones, that they were the receptacles for the ashes of the infant, to be buried along with those of its mother." He mentions that they vary in form and ornamentation, that some are pierced with holes as if for suspension, and one or two examples have handles at the side. At the latter part of his book (p. 265), Mr Jewitt gives a figure of the contents of a grave mound at Selzen, on the Rhine, by Lindenschmidt, in which is the skeleton of a warrior, with remains of his horse and trappings, also a large urn and two small cup-like urns, one being apparently very small. He does not, however, state whether he considers these were cinerary urns, or simply food vessels.

In a paper on "Ancient Feeding Bottles for Infants," read before the Society at a recent meeting, I referred to the similarity, or rather identity, of the pottery found in the ruins of buildings and also in the Gallo-

Roman cemeteries of France ; and I am much inclined to take a similar view of the pottery found with sepulchral deposits in our own country. In the various kinds discovered, I am inclined to believe that you have specimens of some of the fictile vessels of ordinary domestic use in early times ; the large urns, containing burnt bones and ashes, the food vessels, and the drinking cups, found along with human skeletons in the tombs, like the ornaments and weapons also found in them ; being those used by the same people while living. Indeed, if I mistake not,



1. Food-vessel with spoon, found near Inverurie, Aberdeenshire (urn $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. high).
2. Spoon (?) of ox horn (11 inches long).

in a recent work on the inscriptions and drawings discovered on the walls of the catacombs at Rome,¹ you have a representation similar to those of the Last Supper, where large vessels, not unlike our large cinerary urns, are placed in the foreground filled with provisions for the table. It is well known that the indwellers of the Swiss lake houses also used large and coarse clay vessels, for storing up their provisions for future use.

¹ Northcote and Brownlow's "Roma Sotteranea," 1845.

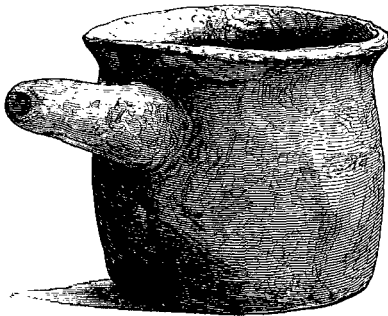
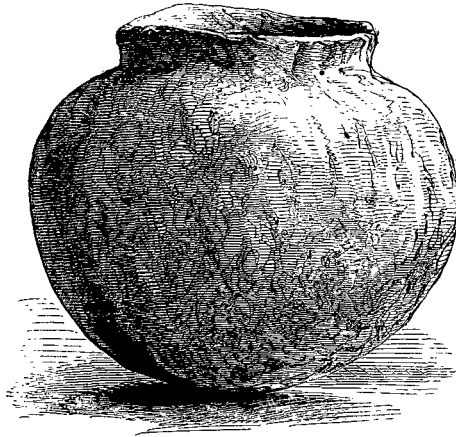
One of the class of food vessels was found in a short stone cist, along with a human skeleton at Broomend, near Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, to which I had the pleasure of formerly calling the attention of the Society,¹ as it seemed to have had placed in it something which certainly looks not very unlike that common accompaniment of a food vessel, in our day at least, a ladle or spoon, formed of cow's horn, now split and bent by damp and age, and is the only instance of the kind found in a cist that has yet been observed, as far at least as I am aware² (see the preceding figure).

Some may point to the very rude character of much of the pottery found with the dead, and the consequent unlikelihood of their ever having been used for domestic purposes. We are told also by some archaeologists who are perhaps rather too fond of classifying antiquities, in accordance with imaginary periods of time, that the hand-made pottery belongs especially to what they style the Neolithic period; in their more ancient or Palæolithic period indeed, they fancy man had not got the length of making pottery at all. In our Museum we have a series of hand-made vessels, sufficiently rude in their style and ornamentation to have belonged to the earliest Neolithic period (some of which are figured in the annexed woodcut). For the drawing of the largest of these crogans I am indebted to Mr Muir, the learned author of the "Characteristics of Old Church Architecture, &c., in Scotland," from whose valuable work it is taken. These vessels, however, have been actually used as domestic utensils in our own day and in our own country, in the Hebrides. They are shaped by the hand, fired or baked with burning peat, and milk is then poured into them when they are still very hot, in this way they are made fit to hold fluids; and they are then employed for cooking and other purposes of ordinary domestic use. Dr Arthur Mitchell, Sec. S.A., Scot., who presented these vessels to

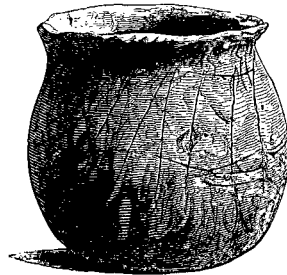
¹ Proc. vol. vii. p. 561.

² The Rev. J. M. Joass, Golspie, in a paper read before the Society, 9th January, "On the Brochs or Pictish Towers of Cuin-Trolla, Cairn-Liath, and Craig-Carril, in Sutherland, with notes on other Northern Brochs," which will be published in the "Archæologia Scotica," vol. v., mentions that among the various stone, bone and other relics found in excavating the broch of Craig-Carril in Sutherlandshire, there was found "a concave oval plate of ox-horn, like the bowl of large spoon, 6 inches long, and apparently 4 broad at the middle when entire, with four rivet-holes above end, and two iron rivets *in situ*." Another example apparently of an ancient horn spoon of a larger size.

our Museum, tells me he has seen the whole process gone through, and I hope, at his leisure, he will give us the full details and results of his



(5 inches high.)



(4½ inches high.)

Hand-made Clay-Vessels (Crogans) recently used for Domestic Purposes in the Islands of Lewis and Harris.

inquiries into that, as well as other curious remains of ancient customs, still lingering in some of the isolated and remote borders of our own country.

My object in these remarks has been simply to remind you that you may have rude pottery of any and every age ; and there can be no doubt that fictile vessels, of even the rudest kind, have been actually used for domestic purposes.

With regard to the class of small urns which I have described ; from their various forms, their uses, I have little doubt, may have been also various. They have been generally found in the graves, but sometimes, as the Ronaldshay specimen, probably also in the dwellings of the ancient inhabitants of our country.

Some of these small urns may possibly have been used for lamps, or fire-bearers, filled with burning matter, as we know some of the small stone dishes with handles were so used ; one in the Museum, brought from Faroe by Sir W. C. Trevellyan, was seen by him to be used in this way. The large openings in the sides of some of these vessels might be useful to fan the flame if the vessel was filled with combustible materials. The small pairs of openings so often observed may possibly have been, at least in some instances, for the purpose of attaching a temporary handle, so as to enable it to be more easily carried about ; besides some of these small urns are described as actually having handles attached to them. It has also been supposed that these holes may have been used to attach a lid to the vessel, or it may be to fasten it by pins, or by suspension to a stand, or to the sides of the hut, by means of which it might diffuse a better light through the dwelling. It must be admitted, however, that the peculiar shape of these urns, with the contracted mouths of many of them, do not seem to be very well adapted either for supplying air to a wick, or for diffusing the light of a lamp around them ; though suited apparently for preventing their contents from being easily spilled when the vessel is carried about. The appearance of the urns themselves also does not seem now to bear evidence of their having once been filled with oil or grease, which we might expect to find in a porous clay vessel used as a lamp ; a subsequent exposure to heat would, however, probably remove any stains of this kind. I need not do more than refer here to the well-known fact of the presence of undoubted lamps in the tombs of the Romans and other nations of antiquity ; a fond attempt, doubtless, to give light to their poor occupants through the dark valley of death. If the urns now described were really lamps, they were used,

in some cases at least, for a very different object than as light-bearers in these old British tombs. The ashes of the dead child, once the light and joy of its parents' dwelling, being deposited in the grave, shall we say, with appropriate feeling, in the quenched but much prized and ornamented light-holder or lamp of the household, now darkened indeed by the stroke of death.

Others may have been simply smaller vessels or cups for varied domestic uses, or perhaps also vessels for children, the food vessel of the living child being used, as in Gallo-Roman times, to hold its ashes when dead. Some antiquaries have described these small cup-like urns as somewhat resembling in shape modern earthenware salt-cellars; could it be possible that any of them were used to hold this much valued and necessary condiment, of ancient as well as modern commerce. The small holes pierced through their sides acting as a drain to their contents!

If we suppose from the very close resemblance in character of many of these little urns, that they represent vessels made for some special domestic purpose, it must have been one that required only a very small-sized vessel. The small size of many of them, indeed, seems a reason against the idea of their having been used for lamps; or that they were manufactured solely for the purpose of cinerary urns. The use for which they were originally made, has been one probably often occurring, and of some importance, it may be, to the comfort, or perhaps necessity, of their daily wants; as shown probably by the generally decorated character of the little vessel, and its comparatively frequent occurrence, from one extremity of the country to the other, from the south, reaching north even to the Orkneys.

There is no doubt, from the instance I have described, as well as from the others referred to, that in some cases, at least, these small urns were actually used to contain the ashes of an infant, buried, in all probability, along with the ashes of its mother. I fear, however, we must still wait for further facts and observations before we can definitely say to what other uses, any or all of these vessels, may have been actually applied.