

II.

NOTE OF THE OPENING OF A GROUP OF CISTS NEAR LAUDER.

By THE RIGHT HON. LORD ROSEHILL, F.S.A. Scot.

The Lady John Scott, a Lady Associate of this Society, first heard of the discovery of this ancient burial-place, and asked me to accompany her in examining it.

Altogether we had three days' work at the spot at different times ; and in a few words I will try to give a general idea of the result.

The chief interest, in my mind, is the curious resemblance of this group of stone cists to another group of fifty-one cists, discovered and examined in 1864 by Mr Hutchison, of Carlowrie, near the "Cat-Stane," at Kirkliston. (See Proceedings, vol. vi. p. 186.)

Mr Hutchison in his paper, read the 10th April 1865, suggests a con-

nection between this group of cists and the Cat-stane; and the late Sir James Simpson, in a paper read February 11, 1861, gives a Saxon origin to the stone, and attempts to identify it as the tombstone of the grandfather of Hengist and Horsa. (See Proceedings, vol. iv. p. 119.)

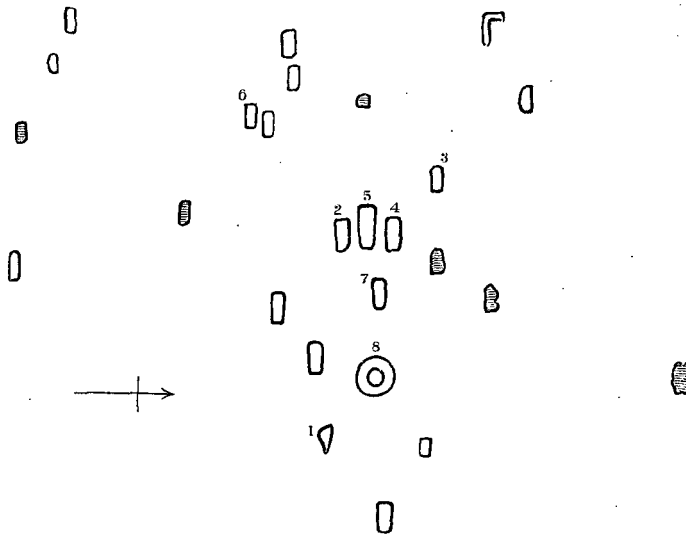
With the one exception, that the cists I am describing did *not* lie in regular rows, the rest of the description of the Cat-stane cists, both as to formation, contents, and general position, might apply word for word to them.

The group under consideration are on the Addinstone farm, about three miles from Lauder. Here a tongue of land stretches down from the hills, between the Leader River and the Long Croft Burn, on the eastern slope of which, a few hundred yards above the junction of the two streams, a slight rise above the general level of the field may be observed from below, having the general outline of a circle, enclosing about an acre of ground. Within this space the plough had frequently turned up flat slabs of freestone; and our three days' examination proved that nearly the whole mound, especially the highest part of it, was more or less thickly studded with cists. In all, we opened about twenty, besides several which had been partly broken up by the plough; and doubtless many more still remain undiscovered, the irregularity of their position (sometimes singly, and sometimes in clusters of three and four together) making their discovery, when working against time over a large space of ground, somewhat a matter of chance. The relative position and arrangement of the cists will be seen from the annexed ground plan.

As a rule the cists were long, viz., from 2 feet 6 inches (for a child) to 6 feet 6 inches (for adults). These were well made with rude, unhewn slabs of freestone or whinstone, the sides being usually made of from three to five slabs each; the head and foot, of one or two each; and the lid, of two to four, the gaps between being filled in with smaller stones, when necessary. The floor or bottom stone was often a single slab; or, if composed of several slabs, they were always very neatly and carefully put together, so as to form a compact and level bed for the corpse.

In these "long cists" the bodies were, with two or three exceptions, lying at full length on their backs, with the feet towards the east,—the exceptions being, one lying with feet towards the west, one flat on his face, and one or two on their sides. The cists were closely packed with

gravel and earth, so much so, that when the side slabs and covering stones were removed, the interior formed a mould, which might almost have been lifted in one piece without breaking. Even the skulls were filled with gravel, some of the stones of which were so large, that it is difficult to imagine how they got in, since I had considerable difficulty in getting them out again.



Ground Plan of Cists at Lauder.

No works of art, urns, or weapons of any kind were found in or near any of the cists; and my first idea was that of an ancient Christian burial-place, but after finding signs of burning in every cist, and in many even of the long-cist type a distinct layer of charcoal on the bottom flag under the body, I became doubtful, and finally gave up Christianity altogether on discovering not only several short cists, with bodies in the usual contracted position, but also two or three undoubted cases of incineration, in which the bodies had been consumed by fire, and heaps of stones piled

over the remains into a cairn. The particulars and measurements of all these I can give with sketches and full details, should they be thought of any importance; and perhaps this curious grouping together of all the three typical forms of burial—long, contracted, and by burning—may be of some interest, although nothing was found associated with the bodies, except in three cases, where I found as the only *foreign* objects within the cist, the single tooth of a horse or ox, generally placed on the breast.

From the uniform level of the lids and bottoms of the cists, besides the great resemblance in their form and make, I should be inclined to think that the interments were all made within a short time of each other, although they contain the remains of all ages, from that of a child to that of a man of sixty or more.

In No. 1 cist (see woodcut), was a child by itself of from five to eight years old; in No. 3, a young woman on her back, with knees drawn up, and the body of a child resting on her breast.

In No. 2, was a young person in the act of shedding his first teeth;—skull produced; this body was unburnt, though resting on a layer of charcoal, and was in a contracted position on his right side, knees tucked up to his chin, and right hand under his head. The cist was 2 feet 4 inches by 1 foot 8 inches; was made of smaller stones than the rest, and had two covering stones, and one flag-stone at bottom.

A curious circumstance was noticed in No. 3, where the body of a powerful man of about sixty years of age was discovered on his back—(lower jaw exhibited)—with every bone of his body in its proper place except both heel-bones, which were detached, and found high up between the thigh-bones.

No. 4 was divided in a slanting direction by thin flat slabs into an upper and lower grave; in the upper part a few small bones seemed to indicate the burial of a child; whilst the lower half contained only a huge thigh bone, and all the bones of one arm, these, however, pointing to the west, instead of to the east, as in most of the other cases.

No. 5 was a large and beautifully made cist, 6 feet 4 inches long by 2 feet 1 inch broad; sides made of two slabs each, head and foot of one slab, and floor and lid of three slabs each. Inside, a male skeleton, lying feet to the east, on his back—the skull shows perfect teeth, and wisdom teeth just rising.

No. 6 was a very long, narrow cist, in which the body, probably that of a female, was lying face downwards, feet to the east.

No. 7, the most perfect cist of the series, was $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, by 2 feet broad at the head, and 1 foot 8 inches at the feet, and 12 inches deep inside. The top was formed of one large slab over the head and shoulders, and four or five smaller ones below. The skeleton inside was that of a middle-aged man, with very large bones, lying on his back, with feet to the east, and with nearly every bone in his body perfect. The body was unburnt, though a layer of charcoal lay between it and the bottom flag. The skull (produced) is nearly perfect, with the exception of part of the temporal bone on each side, including the "zygomatic process;" and also parts of the "ethmoid bone." The lower jaw was perfect, but has been unfortunately lost. The skull may, I believe, be considered "Dolichocephalic;" the occipital bone bulges out to a very remarkable extent, as in the so called Sion type. Frontal sinuses very well marked; and teeth, except wisdom teeth, worn nearly flat. Circumference of skull, $21\frac{1}{2}$ inches; from ear to ear, $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches; from root of nose (glabellum) to occipital spine, $12\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

The cairn, No. 2, is also curious, as it consisted of a heap of burnt stones 2 feet high surrounded by a great deal of charcoal, in and under which were many burnt human bones, besides those of some animals. Several other heaps of this kind were found which are not marked on the plan. The cists shaded in the plan had been more or less turned up by the plough, and the contents scattered.