

### III.

NOTICE OF THE CONTENTS OF AN URN FOUND AT MURTHLY, PERTH-SHIRE. By ARTHUR MITCHELL, M.D., COMMISSIONER IN LUNACY, SEC. S.A. Scot.

This urn was found last year in the grounds attached to the Asylum at Murthly, and was sent to me by Dr M'Intosh.

*Position.*—It was turned up by the patients while trenching. There was no trace of a cist or any special arrangement of stones or earth about it. Several other urns were found in the grounds of the Asylum in 1863, and these were generally in groups of two or three, but this one was buried alone.

*Character of Urn.*—The urn had fallen to pieces before it reached me, and it has been found impossible to rebuild it; but it can nevertheless be determined that it was not small, that it was of a common pattern and ornamentation, and that it was rudely made of coarse clay.

*Contents.*—These consist entirely of bones, which are human, and

belong to a child. There are only a few fragments which cannot be pronounced to be human, and even these are possibly so. Professor Turner assisted me in this inquiry. The bones present the following characters :—

(a.) They show the usual evidences of having been exposed to the action of fire.

(b.) They are transversely fissured, the fissures being more or less nearly parallel and curved.

(c.) They are bent upon themselves or twisted.

(d.) The long bones are also fractured, like the bones of a kitchen midden.

(e.) The whole skeleton is clearly not in the urn, but there are parts of the head, limbs, vertebral column, and pelvis.

*Special object found in the urn.*—Among the fragments of bone in the urn there was found a piece of worked bone, which appears also to have been exposed to the action of fire, and is twisted and bent on itself, but not fissured. Its shape and full size are shown in the annexed woodcut. It is less than an eighth of an inch in thickness.



Bone Object found in Urn.  
(Actual size.)

So far as I am aware, this is the first instance in which a piece of worked bone has been found in a funereal urn. What use this little bone implement served I cannot tell. It may have been the plaything of the child whose remains were buried in the urn, or a fragment of a bone button.