

V.

NOTICE OF TWO CISTS ON THE FARM OF ANTABRECK, NORTH RONALDSAY, ORKNEY. BY DR WILLIAM TRAILL OF WOODWICK, CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT.

Two stone cists were recently found at the farm of Antabreck, in the island of North Ronaldsay, Orkney. The farm is not nearer to the sea than three-quarters of a mile. The field where the cists were found consists of a clay loam, sufficiently impervious to moisture to have kept the interior of the cists remarkably free from water or other extraneous substances.

The sketch I have sent shows the general position and appearance of the two cists, which were only about 1 foot below the surface of the ground.

The smaller cist was 2 feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$, and 18 inches deep. It contained portions of two skeletons and a very little brown earth, that may have fallen in while opening it. There were three thigh bones, two arm bones (a radius and ulna), fragments of skulls and vertebræ, &c.

The other cist, contiguous to the first, was 4 feet 5 inches long by 2 feet 4 inches wide, and 2 feet 5 inches deep. The flagstones of which it was composed were more perfectly rectangular in shape, and more

carefully dressed, as if by a skilled mason. It contained a heap of ashes, apparently of wood, which seemed as undisturbed as when they were originally deposited there. So fresh did they appear, that it was difficult to divest one's self of the impression that they had been smouldering only a short time before. The west end of the heap of ashes was a good deal incrustated with oxide of iron. Some small fragments of half-calcined human bones and teeth were found among the ashes. The entire mass of burnt material appears to have been laid upon coarse cloth or interlaced rushes, portions of which could be distinguished on the floor of the cist so decayed that it was almost impossible to take it up without destroying it. I, however, secured a small fragment, along with a little of the ashes; after which the covering stones were carefully replaced and covered with earth as before.