

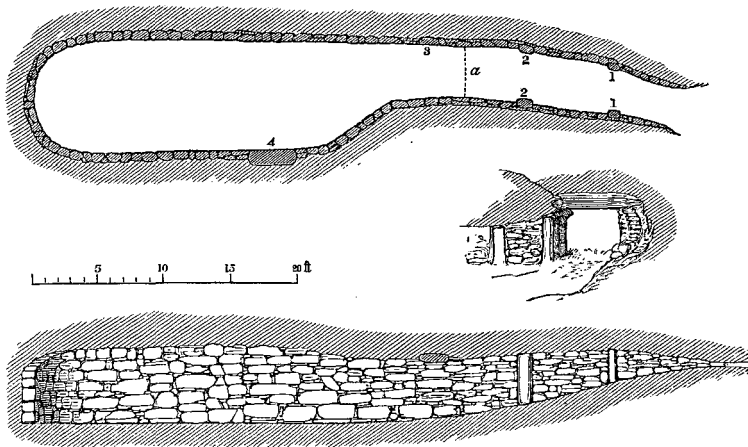
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NOTES OF THE OPENING OF TWO EIRDE-HOUSES AT CLOVA, KILDRUMMY, ABERDEENSHIRE, AND OF A CIST WITH AN URN AND FLINT IMPLEMENTS AT NEW LESLIE. BY HUGH GORDON LUMSDEN, OF ACHINDOIR AND CLOVA, ESQ., F.S.A. SCOT.

Eirde-House No. 1.—The structure now under notice is one of a number of weems or earth houses situated in the moor of Clova, Kildrummy, Aberdeenshire. It is the northmost one of two, which were cleared out (being mostly filled with earth and stones) under the personal superintendence of Hugh G. Lumsden, of Auchindoir, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., in the autumn of 1875. The ground on which they are situated belongs to C. P. Gordon, Esq. of Wardhouse and Kildrummy, who likewise evinced great interest in the operation, and visited the work several times. The progress was slow, as the weather was often very rigorous, with snow and severe frosts; and notwithstanding the subsoil being gravelly, the water did not sink away so fast as the snow melted, which rendered the thorough searching of the earth a difficult operation. Scarcely anything was found which had belonged to the original inhabitants, except some broken querns and a stone (which was likewise broken), scooped out as for a lamp. In almost every part of the weem ashes and charred wood were found, mixed with bones of horses and other animals. No flint implement was found. It is probable that the earth in the weem had been turned over and searched formerly, as some of the oldest inhabitants in the neighbourhood remember smugglers making malt in the "Picts' houses." The site is a gently rising slope inclining to the east, dry, with an open gravelly subsoil as already mentioned. The weem runs nearly due east and west, curving round to the southward at the west or entrance end, where the entirety of the structure is destroyed, evidently by the stones being removed at some former period. The other or east end has suffered from the same cause. The flags were taken away in 1821 by a neighbouring farmer, to be lintels for doors in a farm-steading he was erecting at that time; the space uncovered by him is about six feet, but the rest of the roof is entire, as left by the original builders. It consists of one chamber rather irregularly built of stones, bearing no marks of hewing or hammering, without mortar; the entire length as it now stands is about 50 feet, the

width varying from about 4 feet 7 inches to 6 feet 8 inches, and the height from 5 feet to 5 feet 8 inches; the walls, as the section shows, are not perpendicular, but widen a little from the floor, while towards the roof they are made to converge somewhat by the stones overlapping each other, which admits of the roof being spanned over by stones of less dimensions than would otherwise have been required. Near the east end, and about 2 feet 6 inches from the floor, is an opening in the wall about 2 feet square, and extending 4 or 5 feet in a southerly direction. It appears as though it had come to the surface, although now defaced by the plough, and had probably been used as a door or entrance, or for watching their cattle, as there are vestiges of a fold about 20 yards from the place. The floor of the weem is roughly paved throughout.

Eirde-House No. 2.—In clearing out house No. 2, we commenced at the entrance, and found that the covers had been removed, extending as far



Plan and Sections of Eirde-House at Clova.

as where the first cover-stone is marked at *a* on the plan. The rest of the house is completely roofed in with large rough stones spanning the width. On clearing out the earth, we found that it mostly consisted of mould,

mixed with a great quantity of charcoal, bones, horses' teeth, and the jaws of dogs. Below that there was a depth of about a foot of sand, and below that again rough flag-stones. The sand, however, extended only about 10 feet from the entrance, after that there was nothing but earth with rough stones. The stones marked (1) at the entrance are upright pillars; those at (2) are the same; but (3) a stone with cup-markings on it; and No. (4) a large boulder with many cup-markings.

About eight feet distant from the house, we discovered a rough pavement of slabs about a foot and a half under ground, and about 7 feet in width. It seems to extend for some distance, but we only cleared a small space.

Cist found in New Leslie.—A stone cist or ancient grave was recently found on the farm of William Ingram, New Leslie. It contained a skeleton, and along with it was a very neatly made urn, a flint spear-head, and also a rough flint bearing marks of chipping. These were found in the sandy decayed granite below the urn.

The grave, which was made of slabs of what they call in these parts Coreen stone, was also covered with the same. It was about 4 feet long, and 2 feet 9 inches in width.