

## I.

NOTES ON A BURIAL MOUND AT TORPHICHEN, AND AN URN FOUND NEAR THE "CROMLECH" AT KIPPS, LINLITHGOWSHIRE. BY PROFESSOR DUNS, D.D., F.S.A. SCOT.

A good many years ago, when talking with Sir James Simpson about surface deposits, chiefly gravels and sandhills, in a part of Linlithgowshire with which we both were intimately acquainted, I chanced to say, "One would like to have a section or two made in the conical sandhills near Westfield Mill." "I never," remarked Sir James, "passed that way when a boy without wondering if there were anything inside of these." Not long after he had a section made through one of the low outliers, on Ballmuir farm, in the course of which the remains of a small circular tower were exposed. The building consisted of large unworked stones, laid rudely down in rows, and having the interspaces, formed by their irregularities, filled in with smaller stones. I visited the spot the day after the discovery was made. Much interested in this "find," Sir James arranged to have a drawing made of the building. But as some time elapsed before arrangements were completed, and as no instructions had been given to the tenant on whose farm it stood as to its preservation, he sold the stones for a few shillings to a man who was in search of material readily at hand to build a cottage. The stones were speedily removed. Once or twice afterwards, Sir James merrily asked me to "tell the story of our Pelasgic tower." I refer to this now because the low sandhill in which occurred the cists, which form the subject of this notice, lies much in the same relation on the north to the large sandhills, as that in which the stones were found does on the south-east. The immediate neighbourhood generally is one of much archaeological interest. Wallace's cave is about a quarter of a mile distant; the ruins of the foundations of Ogilface Castle, the seat of the family of De Bosco, Barons of Ogilface, lie about a mile to the south-west; one of the refuge stones, which indicated the western boundary of the Torphichen *refugium*, is within stone-throw of the burial mound; and the Torphichen Preceptory ruins are not more than a mile to the east.

Several years ago, in the course of carting away sand for building purposes from this mound, an empty stone coffin was laid bare. Later, I caused a section to be made through part of the mound, which had not recently been disturbed, and which, indeed, was covered with a pretty thick turf. At a depth of little more than two feet from the surface several cists were exposed. In some instances the stones had fallen in, and no traces of human bones were seen. Of five uncovered, four lay east and west, the head to the east; one lay north and south, the head, or broad end, being to the south. From this last the skull on the table was obtained. This cist was nearly a foot deeper in the sand, and had evidently been made with more care than the others. This was shown in the mode of placing the small slabs of freestone which formed the sides and ends. They had been carefully selected and put in position, so as to present a somewhat regular edge to the covering slabs. Each end of the cist consisted of one slab, broader than the sides against which it was placed. The sides were formed by three slabs each, the middle slab on both sides being the largest. A few thin, irregular slabs were laid in the bottom. The other cists had no stones in the bottom. Even the best made of those examined was so clumsily put together as to leave free access to the sand. The following are the measurements of this one: Length, nearly 4 feet; depth, 14 inches; breadth at middle 16 inches, at head 14 inches, and at foot 8 inches. This was the largest of the set exposed.

Besides the skull mentioned, this cist contained a fragment of the lower jaw and the upper part of the left femur. The cranium was soft when found, and required careful handling, but as it was filled with sand, the shape was preserved by leaving the sand in its place till the bone was well dried before a fire. I am indebted to Dr M'Bain, R.N., who has given a good deal of attention to prehistoric and other crania, for some notes of his examination of that now before us.

The base of the cranium and the greater part of the orbital plates are wanting. The complete ossification of the sutures, and the strongly-marked muscular impressions under the external occipital protuberance, show that it belonged to an individual far advanced in life. The cranium is somewhat flattened above, bulging outwards, especially at the right parietal tuberosity. It is compressed at the outer edge of the upper transverse arch of the occipital bone, and the occipital protuberance is

remarkably prominent. Its internal capacity is very small, being about 67 cubic inches. Parietal diameter, which corresponds to the space between the centre of the parietal protuberances, 5 inches and three-tenths. Frontal diameter, measured from the commencement of the coronal suture at the anterior inferior parietal angle to the same point on the opposite side, 4 inches and two-tenths. Vertical diameter, from the centre of a line drawn between the external auditory meatus to the vertex, 4 inches and five-tenths. Intermastoid line, 4 inches and one-tenth. The same from the upper root of the zygomatic process, 5 inches and two-tenths. Occipito-frontal arch, from the glabella to the posterior edge of the foramen magnum, 14 inches. The same to the occipital protuberance, 12 inches. Horizontal periphery, 20 inches. The proportion of length to breadth is 100 to 75; of length to height, 100 to 64. The forehead is narrow, the frontal sinuses large, the frontal eminences scarcely marked, and all measurements short. In the fragment of the lower jaw only one tooth remains—the second true molar, and there is no appearance of a wisdom tooth ever having been developed. This tooth is much worn on the crown. The upper part of the left femur is 11 inches long, broken at the junction of the middle and lower third. The thinness of the shaft of the femur, the slight obliquity of its neck, the disappearance of the line of junction of the epiphyses with the shaft, seem also to indicate that it was that of a person far advanced in life, and probably a female, which is still further confirmed by the slight development of the mastoid processes of the skull and the slender proportions of the fragments of the lower jaw. The length of the femur corresponds to the stature of a person about five feet high.

The mode of burial illustrated by these cists can be traced over the whole of this part of Linlithgowshire. Dr Hetherington refers to another mound, in his "Statistical Account of the Parish of Torphichen." In Penney's "History of Linlithgowshire," 1831, the following sentence occurs: "Near Bathgate there are also memorial remains of the Druid worship" (p. 27). The author of the "Statistical Account of the Parish of Bathgate," the Rev. Samuel Martin, says: "I give this statement as I find it, but do not know to what it refers." Then noticing the few traces of Bathgate Castle still extant, he says: "Coffins formed of flat stones have been torn up in the neighbouring grounds."

Circumstances led me to take some pains to get light on Penney's remark, and in the course of enquiry I learned that some of the old people were wont to talk of a "Druid's burying-place" as being near Kirkroads, close on Bathgate. Further, it was ascertained that the remains of a stone coffin had once been found in the farm-yard of Kirkroads. No doubt Penney referred to the standing stones at Stonerig in the neighbourhood, but the facts as to Kirkroads ultimately led to a section being made through the farm-yard, in prospect of a visit from an excursion party (July 3, 1852) of Members of this Society, which was about to visit the district.

I have sometimes regretted that no record of that excursion found a place in our "Proceedings," because it might have directed attention to certain objects of interest likely soon to pass out of view. The party was about twenty in number, led by Dr Daniel Wilson. Among those present were the late Sir George Harvey, the late Dr Robert Chambers, the late Sir Henry James, the late Mr W. A. Parker, the late Mr J. M. Mitchell, Professor Liston, and Mr Charles Cowan. I am indebted to Mr Cowan for an extract from his diary with reference to this pleasant excursion party.<sup>1</sup> Dr Simpson was to have been present, but was prevented by

*"Saturday, July 3, 1852.—At Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway at 9.15, and off by train to Bathgate with a lot of antiquarians,—Dr D. Wilson, Prof. Liston, R. Chambers, J. W. Mackenzie, George Harvey, W. A. Parker, J. M. Mitchell, Captain James, and others—in number about twenty. We were met by Mr Duns of Torphichen, who took us first to a farm called Kirkroads, where we saw two stone coffins not far from the surface, in which some human bones had been found. Then pleasant walk to Torphichen; visited the Manse—beautiful situation, and very nicely fitted up with specimens of fossils, &c. Visited the ancient preceptory of Knights of St John of Jerusalem, close to the Parish Church; very beautiful ancient arches, but kept in bad order. Mr Duns had lately erected a fountain in the village, out of £20, the proceeds of a course of lectures he had given on Geology, which we all thought highly of. Walked to the top of a hill (wooded) to look at traces of an ancient fort, but Harvey and I could see nothing defined or remarkable, so we enjoyed the landscape. Down on other side of hill, and soon came to some lime quarries, on surface of which traces of glacial action, according to Chambers, &c. Walk through fields and undulating grounds. Saw a monolith in a wall; ancient cross on it—serves to mark boundary of property. The Kipps Cromlech, very large stones near Sir R. Sibbald's house. To Linlithgow at 4.30. After going through the old Palace, we all dined pleasantly at "Star and Garter," R. Chambers in the chair."*

professional duties. In his absence, I was asked to become the guide for the day. Our first halting-place was Kirkroads, in front of the cottage in which the late Professor Fleming was born. Two well-formed stone cists, half-length, had been exposed, and traces of several others had been found in the course of digging. In both there was a good deal of dark-brown dust, some fragments of the long bones of the human body, and several molar teeth whose crowns were very much worn. The report of this "find" spread over the district. Shortly after, an intelligent man, Mr

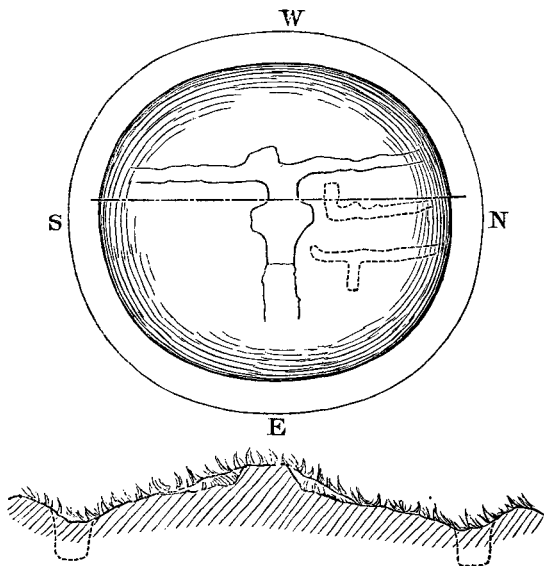


Fig. 1.

Philps, portioner, Gormyre, near Torphichen, brought to me the remains of a pair of spurs, which he assured me he had taken out of a half-length stone coffin, in 1847, dug up in his ground. The coffin, he said, contained a good deal of "black dust, in which parts of the iron of the spurs were found." He was somewhat vexed by an expression of scepticism on my part, and offered to get the testimony of two witnesses in support of

his statement. I confess that the unlikelihood of their occurring in such a position does not seem to me as strong now as it did at the time.

The party next visited a so-called British fort on the top of Cairnpaple (fig. 1), the highest of the Bathgate hills (1000 feet), and their termination to



Fig. 2.

the north. Then the socket of a large wayside stone cross, on the high road at the east side of the hill, was inspected; and afterwards a stone

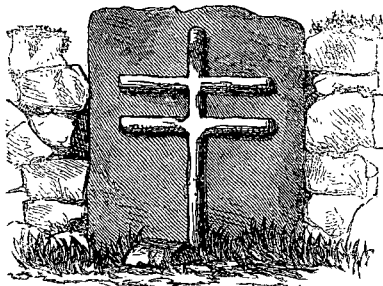


Fig. 3.

with a double cross (figs. 2, 3), relief on the one side and intaglio on the other, was examined. Since then I have been able to trace this as a boundary stone, marking the southern limit of lands once belonging to the

monks of St Sepulchre. The party turned again to the west—inspected the remains of the preceptory of the Knights of St John at Torphichen; noticed traces of a Roman camp on Torphichen hills; examined one of the refuge stones to the east of the Refugium; and halted for some time at the Kipps “Cromlech,” situated to the south of the old keep associated with the name of Sir Robert Sibbald, to whose family it belonged, and where he first formed the *Hortus Medicus*, which ultimately led to the realisation of the Edinburgh Physic Gardens, and, in the long run, to the Botanical Gardens.

We are now in the locality where the urn (fig. 4) was discovered, which forms the second part of this Paper, whose title would better have been “found in the neighbourhood of the Cromlech,” because it was far enough away from it to spare us the necessity of dealing with controverted questions touching the use of such erections. The urn is 12 × 8 inches. It tapers gradually towards the bottom, which is  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter. It seems to have been made in three parts—the lowest being 6 inches high, the middle  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and the top  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . The several parts are indicated by bulging horizontal lines, very rudely formed. The ornamentation is confined to the upper part. This consists (1) of thumb-nail-like marking round the inner edge; (2) of a horizontal, very narrow twisted line at the top of the outer edge; and (3) a number of oblong spaces formed by string-like markings crossing each other obliquely at regular distances. The whole seems to have been covered with a thin coating of lighter-coloured clay than that of which the urn was made. The type is extremely rude. It is not represented in the Museum.

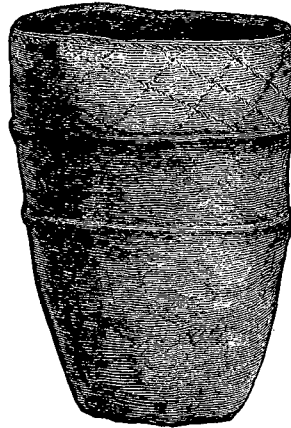


Fig. 4.