

III.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF STONE COFFINS, AT CARNOUSTIE,
FORFARSHIRE. By ROBERT DICKSON, Esq., SURGEON, CARNOUSTIE,
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Extensive drainage operations in the village of Carnoustie, Forfarshire, have recently brought to light several interesting memorials of the past. The cuttings are from 7 to 5 feet deep and about 2 feet wide, and are in the middle of the streets. On Friday last (March 15, 1878), while excavating in Dundee Street, three stone coffins with human remains were discovered all within a distance of 50 feet. They were lying east and west, and the skeletons within had their feet to the east. The cists were about 5 feet 9 inches in length, formed of very rude slabs of sandstone, the tops

being of somewhat larger pieces than the sides, but there were no stone bottoms to any. The long bones in two cists were in tolerable preservation, as also portions of the skulls, jaws, and teeth. Two of the disinterments were made under my supervision, and I retained the best of the bones. One of the thigh bones is 18 inches long. The westmost cist contained a younger and smaller skeleton than the others—perhaps a female—and it was lying with its face downwards. The skull was perfectly entire when first exposed, but broke into fragments in the attempt to remove it. It was only one foot from the surface of the road, and like the others was imbedded in sand and shingle—the general character of the upper layer of the soil in the neighbourhood. The other cists were about 18 inches below the surface. A few weeks ago another cist with bones enclosed was found not far from those to which I have particularly referred; and I recollect seeing another exposed about twenty-three years ago, when the foundation of one of the houses at the Cross was being cleared. It is likely, therefore, that this particular locality is pretty thickly sown with human remains. In 1810, when a sandy mound was removed to make way for the erection of a small place of worship, not above 400 yards from the Cross, about 30 cists containing human remains were found, and at different times since then, in founding houses in the low part of the village, single cists have been exposed. In one a gold bracelet is said to have been got, and given to the then owner of the soil, the late George Kinloch, Esq. In the cists recently discovered no vessels or implements were seen.

The village of Carnoustie occupies the ground on which Boece states that Malcolm II. fought and defeated the Danish invaders under their general Camus. Our worthy historian is nowhere so minute as in his narrative of this engagement, describing the situation with all the vigour of an eye-witness. Although no written confirmation of Boece's assertions exists, yet he may have been giving what was likely a tradition in the district of which he was a native, and with which he was personally familiar. The tradition regarding the burn of Lochty having run three days with blood is well known; but while the numbers of ancient burials in the vicinity might be adduced in favour of the tradition, it is significant that no weapons of any kind have been found. The larger portion of the village (west of the Cross) has yet to be drained, and I will take care that

any further discoveries brought to light during the progress of operations will be at once made known to me.
