

III.

NOTICE OF ANCIENT GRAVES AT DOUNAN, NEAR BALLANTRAE, AYRSHIRE. BY JOHN CARRICK MOORE OF CORSEWELL, ESQ., F.S.A. SCOT.

The site of the graves is an old upraised beach, some forty or fifty feet above the sea, composed of shingle, with three or four feet of sand at the surface, with a slope inwards to the land. The graves are in the highest part of the ridge; and though the depth of the bodies when found was only three or four feet below the surface, it is probable that it was more considerable when they were laid there, for no addition to the ridge could take place, and winds and rains would tend to lower the ridge. The space occupied by the bodies was about twenty feet square. The sand had been excavated down to the shingle, on which the bodies were laid. Immediately above the bodies there were two or three feet of sand; then, a layer of flat pebbles, and upon the pebbles a layer of sea shells (*Purpura lapillus*) about nine inches thick, and over them the sand had been replaced. The bodies were seven in number, all laid east and west, with their heads to the west. They were laid carefully, with the legs close together and the hands crossed over the stomach. Under one of the skeletons was the skeleton of a child, perhaps ten or twelve years old. The bones of it were soft and much decayed, and its skull fell in pieces in our hands. The toes were standing upright in the sand, though, of course, as the sand was removed, the bones of the feet fell down. The teeth were all in the sockets, and were generally very perfect. One skull had lost two of the molars, and the two corresponding on the lower jaw were remarkably ground down, while the incisors were all quite sound and unworn. One skeleton had the humerus of the left arm broken. Another skull had the jawbone apparently broken and greatly displaced. I should state that several of the bodies had been discovered and partly exhumed before I and my son visited the ground. But it had been done entirely under the supervision of Mr Wright, the tenant, by a very intelligent artizan, Mr Walker. All that Walker told me of the condi-

tion of the bodies which he first exposed was confirmed by what I witnessed in exhuming the last. The skull with the dislocated jaw is preserved, to be laid before some good authority ; also another, which seemed remarkable for the very low forehead and great depth of the posterior part. Although we made most careful search, and examined every pebble in the sand, we could not detect any implement of flint, stone, or bone ; in a word, nothing but the skeletons.

28th September.—Mr Wright writes to inform me, that after we left the ground, another skeleton in a very decayed state was discovered immediately under the skeleton which was in such perfect preservation, and of which the jawbone seemed dislocated.