

## V.

NOTE OF A CARVED STONE BALL RECENTLY FOUND IN ORKNEY. (A CAST OF THE BALL WAS EXHIBITED.) BY JAMES W. CURSITER, F.S.A. SCOT., KIRKWALL, ORKNEY.

The ball (fig. 1) (of which a facsimile is now presented to the Museum) was found 5th April 1882, by Mr. George Stevenson, on his farm of Hill-

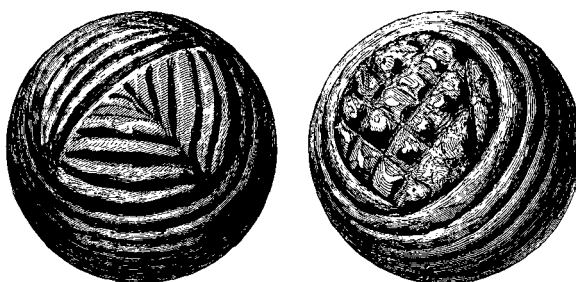


Fig. 1. Stone Ball found at Hillhead, near Kirkwall.

head, St. Ola, and is now in my possession. The farm is situated about a mile and a half south of Kirkwall, on the west side of the road to Holm, and, as the name implies, is on high ground. The field in which the ball was found is to the N.W. of the steading, and slopes steeply to the west above the head of Scapa Bay. In this and the adjoining field there is a large circular mound full of stones, so much so as to be unfit for cultivation, and allowed to lie in grass, but whether it contains building or not, has as yet not been ascertained. About 70 yards N. by W. of this mound there was an old well, which was destroyed about ten years ago, and it was to carry away the water from this spring that Mr. Stevenson saw fit to make a short rubble drain, in digging which the ball was found. He informs me that the ball was about 6 feet from the site of the well at a depth of about 3 feet in clayey soil. It measures  $2\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter, weighs 17 ounces, and is composed of compact bluish-grey

sandstone. The divisions under which the stone balls are classified in the notice in vol. xi. p. 29, of the Society's *Proceedings*, by Dr. Smith, fail to include this specimen, the character of which is as follows:—

The ornamentation is all in grooves, varying in depth, but averaging about  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch. On one side of the ball there is a circle  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, divided by a straight line; in one semicircle is described a triangle, with its apex a little to the left of the centre of the base, having lines inside running parallel to the sides of the triangle, to a line springing from the centre of the base. The interior space of the other semicircle is occupied by four meniscus lines; from one corner of the triangle a spiral runs round the circle, traversing the circumference of the ball for a breadth of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches, with a thread of between four and five to the inch, leaving an oval  $1\frac{7}{8}$  by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches, on the opposite side of the ball to the circle. This oval is cross-cut, leaving low pyramidal projections, which somewhat resemble those of the two balls found in the underground house at Skail. The resemblance to the smaller of the two (fig. 2) is

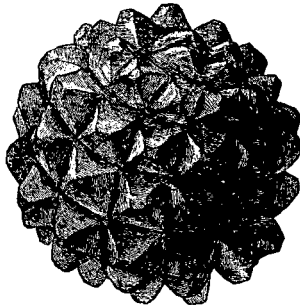


Fig. 2.

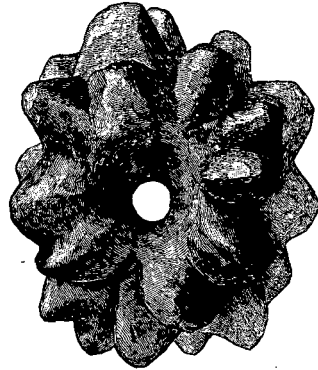


Fig. 3.

Figs. 2 and 3. Stone Balls found in Underground House, Skail.

greater than in the other case (fig. 3), which is more rudely executed and perforated, as if for the insertion of a thong or a handle.