

V.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF AN ANCIENT GRAVE AT BALFARG,
FIFESHIRE, IN A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY. BY JOHN BALFOUR
OF BALBIRNIE, F.S.A. SCOT.

Yesterday (March 28) in trenching a plot of ground enclosed in a garden at the farm house of Balfarg, close to the North Lodge and in my occupation, the labourer employed struck what he thought was the cover of a built drain. He removed a flat stone of some size, and several others, without giving much heed to what he was about, when he turned up a piece of bone, which on examination proved to be a portion of the remains of a human skeleton. Unfortunately the skull (which was in its proper place) was broken and injured, and had fallen to pieces. The bones of the limbs were in their proper places. In short, the grave had evidently not been disturbed.

The cist is carefully formed; the position from west to east; the slabs of stone on the top completely covered the cavity from end to end; the sides and bottom of grave are in their position, and have not been disturbed. It is remarkable that the grave is only about 18 inches—certainly not two feet—from the present surface of the ground.

The bones have crumbled away since they were exposed, and it is unfortunate that the place was so seriously disturbed when first discovered.

There is not, so far as I am aware, any record of any burial place in

that locality. Nothing has been found in the grave ; the soil is light and sandy ; some roots of trees had penetrated a little between the side stones ; but the tomb is carefully constructed, 6 feet in length, rather narrow and tapering to the foot.