

## IV.

NOTICE OF A SMALL CEMETERY OF THE BRONZE AGE, RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT SHANWELL, MILNATHORT, KINROSS-SHIRE. By JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

By the courtesy of Mrs Coventry of Shanwell and Miss M. J. Coventry, who have taken much interest in the discovery of a series of prehistoric interments excavated in the course of improvements which were being made in the neighbourhood of Shanwell House, I am enabled to place on record some of the circumstances and characteristics of what seems to have been a small cremation cemetery of the Age of Bronze.

As is usual in most cases of similar discoveries, the site of the cemetery was a natural ridge or hillock of no great altitude, and the burials were brought to light in consequence of the excavation of the mound for gravel. During the progress of this operation, deposits of burnt bones were met with from time to time at no great depth from the surface, and chiefly towards the central portion of the eminence. In the case of several of these deposits no fragments of urns were detected in association with the cremated bones, but in at least four cases urns of the usual cinerary form were present. They appear to have been simply set in the soil, and covered over without any protecting cist. The most interesting circumstance in connection with this cemetery, however, was the discovery, in connection with one of the deposits, of one of those thin oval bronze blades with incised ornamentation, which seem to be more characteristic accompaniments of Bronze Age interments in Scotland than any other implements, the thin flat triangular dagger blades perhaps excepted. This blade (of which a view of both sides and a section across the middle of its length are shown in fig. 1) is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, and may have been slightly longer, as the extreme tenuity and fragility of the edge have caused it to give way all round, and especially towards the point. The middle portion of the blade is ornamented on both sides with a diamond-shaped pattern of incised lines enclosed within a double border, consisting of a

band of oblique lines, and a smaller band with a row of punctulations running down each side. On the one side of the blade the diamond-shaped pattern is filled with cross-hatching, and the triangular spaces on either side are left blank. On the other side the diamond-shaped spaces running down the centre of the pattern are blank, and the triangular

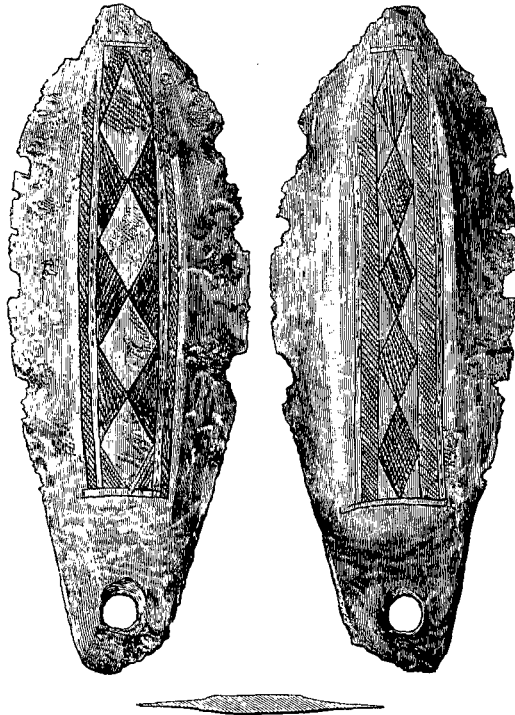


Fig. 1. Oval Bronze Blade, found with Burnt Bones at Shanwell (actual size).

spaces on either side are filled with cross-hatching. In this case it is observable that the positions of the two bands which compose the border are different from their positions on the other side, the open band, with a single row of punctulations, being placed inside the band

filled with oblique lines, and thus preventing it from coming against the similarly filled triangular spaces on either side of the lozenge-shaped pattern. The reversal of this on the opposite side of the blade fits the case there in a similar manner by preventing the open band from coming against the open triangular spaces. The decorator evidently knew what he was about. The blade has been hafted in a handle of bone, horn, or wood, all traces of which have disappeared, but the broad flat tang shows a single rivet-hole. This is the only example yet known (in Scotland at least) of this variety of oval blade furnished with a broad flat tang pierced for an attaching rivet. The blade of



Fig. 2. Urn found at Shanwell (9 inches in height).

similar type found in a Bronze Age cemetery of the same description at Magdalene Bridge, near Joppa, was broken off by the rivet hole, and merely showed an indication of its existence. Most of the others that are known were furnished with spike-shaped tangs.

Two of the urns from the Shanwell Cemetery are sufficiently entire to show the form and ornamentation. They are both of the usual cinerary form, with two slightly raised mouldings round the widest part, and tapering below in a flower-pot shape. The smaller of the two (fig. 2) measures 9 inches in height and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter across the mouth. The upper part between the first moulding and the brim is orna-

mented with a series of scorings crossing each other obliquely, and a band of similar scorings surrounds the interior of the brim. This urn and the bronze blade are preserved at Shanwell House.

The larger of the two urns (fig. 3), which has been presented to the Museum by Mrs Coventry, measures  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height and  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter across the mouth. As in the case of the other urn, the space between the first moulding and the brim is ornamented with

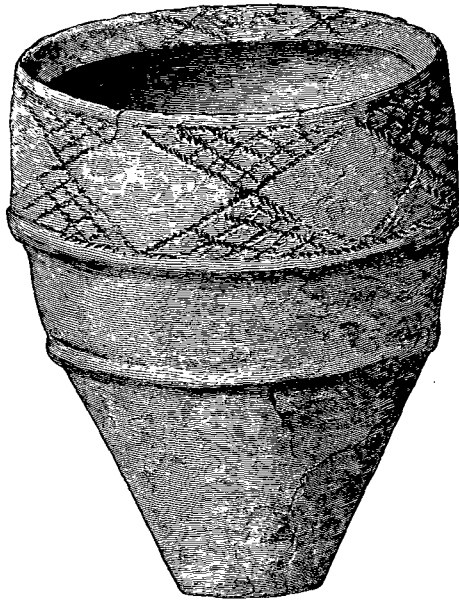


Fig. 3. Urn found at Shanwell ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height).

a lozenge-shaped pattern, the triangular spaces on either side of it being filled up with lines crossing each other in a direction parallel to the adjoining sides of the lozenge-shaped spaces. These lines are formed of impressions of a twisted cord in the soft clay. The interior of the rim is ornamented with a band of obliquely crossing lines of similar character. The resemblance of the pattern on the exterior of the urn to the lozenge-shaped pattern on one side of the bronze blade is sufficiently obvious.