

## III.

## NOTICES OF RECENT DISCOVERIES OF CISTS, OR BURIALS WITH URNS, &amp;c. COMMUNICATED BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

A number of brief but valuable notices of isolated discoveries of cists, sent to me from different parts of the country, having accumulated in my hands, I think it may be of use to lay them before the Society, so far at least as their bare facts are concerned, in order that a record of these facts may be preserved in the Society's *Proceedings* :—

1. *Urn at Smiddy Burn, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire.*—The Rev. Alexander Leslie, Folla Rule, Rothie Norman, sends the following notes of this discovery :—“A large-sized clay sepulchral urn was found on the 15th June 1885, in a field on the farm of Smiddyburn, in the parish of Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, by a servant ploughing. The tenant of the farm, on being communicated with, took care to have the spot marked, and the urn was in due time disinterred. It was then seen that the plough had removed the bottom of the urn, or the part nearest to the surface, but otherwise it was taken out entire. The excavation showed that a circular hole, measuring  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, had been made in the ground, and a quantity of peat ashes and charcoal indicated that cremation had taken place. At the bottom of the hole there was a saucer-shaped cavity, 20 inches in diameter, and formed of clay, in which were embedded small flat stones, and on these the urn rested. It was coated over with clay to the thickness of 2 inches, and this again was covered with flat stones about 8 or 9 inches long, 6 inches broad, and nearly 2 inches thick, and outside there was a mixture of fine soil, charcoal, and peat ashes—large lumps of the last being taken out entire. The bottom of the cavity from the present surface of the ground is about 2 feet 5 inches. The urn is one of the largest as yet found, and measures 16 by 15 inches; the circumference at the mouth is 45 inches; at 4 inches from the mouth, 48; at  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , 42; and at bottom, 18 inches. It is made of clay, and well formed, but has no ornamentation. There is merely a slight ledge or moulding at the bottom. On the soil being

removed, the urn was found to be 'inverted,' and to contain a quantity of calcined ashes, with a number of moderately large pieces of bones. These, on examination by Dr Davidson, Wartle, were pronounced to be human bones, part of the jaw, the skull, shinbone, and vertebral bones being most distinct; other fragments, however, gave rise for doubt whether they belonged to the human species or not. A careful search was made to discover any implement or other object which might have pertained to the deceased, but without success."

2. *Cist at Upper Mains of Muiresk, Turriff.*—Mr R. Cruickshank, farmer, Upper Mains of Muiresk, near Turriff, Aberdeenshire, sends the following notice of the occurrence of an urn within a cist on his farm:—  
"On the 7th July 1885, an urn was found in a cist, composed of rough slabs enclosing a space of 3 feet in length by 1 foot 10 inches in breadth at the east end, and 1 foot 5 inches at the west end, the side stones of the cist lying nearly east and west. The bottom slab was about 5 feet below the present surface of the soil. The slabs of which the cist was composed were unequal in size and irregular in shape—such as might have been collected from the outcrop of the rock at no great distance. The burial was unburnt. The bones, which were much decayed, seemed to be those of a young person—judging by the teeth, probably under fifteen years of age. The urn was found in fragments, a few of which have been presented to the Museum by Mr Cruickshank, and pieced together to show the shape and character of the vessel. It is of the tall thin variety, with bulging sides and everted rim, which are often called 'drinking cups.' It seems to have been above 7 inches in height, ornamented all over the surface with parallel bands of incised lines, and zigzags encompassing it horizontally towards the top and bottom, and triangular spaces filled with similar ornament between."

3. *Urn found on Dunion Hill, Jedburgh.*—Mr A. S. Forrest supplies the following particulars of the discovery of a cremated burial on Dunion Hill, Jedburgh:—"On 30th October last, when returning with two other sergeants of the Jedburgh Company, from class firing at the Dunion Range, we met an Irish labourer, who relieved his mind of the extraordinary discovery of a jar with a child in it having been ploughed up at a spot which he indicated. Suspecting what it was likely to be, we

went to the place, and found the fragments of one of the most highly ornamented cinerary urns that I remember having ever seen, although I have seen most of those that have been found in this quarter for the last forty years. Its peculiar feature is that the chevron ornament which surrounds the vessel underneath the brim is in high relief. The urn had been found mouth downwards, resting on a rough slab of whinstone about 17 inches in length by 9 inches broad. It had been placed



Fig. 1. Cinerary Urn found on Dunion Hill, Jedburgh  
(12 inches in height).

in a hole dug for it about 20 inches the one way, and 16 inches the other. The heap of burnt bones which lay upon the stone, and over which the urn stood inverted, was plentifully intermixed with charcoal of burnt wood. The place where the urn was found is in a field on the northern slope of the Dunion Hill, in the parish of Bedrule, belonging to Mr Pott of Dodd. I had Mr Pott's instructions to place the urn at the disposal of the Marquis of Lothian, President of the Society of

Antiquaries of Scotland, and by his Lordship's orders, I have now sent it to the Museum to have the fragments put together."

The urn (fig. 1), which measures 11 inches diameter at the mouth, widening to about  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter at the shoulder, stands 12 inches high, and is decorated with an implanted chevron ornament in relief round the upper part, and a double-raised moulding underneath, connected by vertical projections at intervals. The rim is slightly bevelled outwards, and the whole upper surface is ornamented with bands of impressed lines.

Mr W. Laidlaw, The Abbey, Jedburgh, gives some notices of the

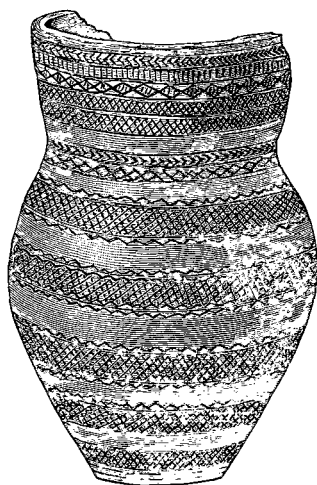


Fig. 2. Urn found at Mawk's Mill, Berwickshire ( $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height).

discovery of other cists and urns in the vicinity:—"In the spring of the year, while ploughing a field belonging to the farm of Mosstower, a cist was come upon, which contained human bones. After harvest, in ploughing a field called the Mansehill, about 200 yards from Eckford, two cists were discovered. A very beautiful and complete urn (fig. 2) was found in a sand hill at Mawk's Mill in Berwickshire, in the beginning of May 1885. Its measurement in greatest circumference is 1 foot  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches, in height  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches, diameter at top 5 inches. There are two urns in the Kelso Museum, one of which was found in the Friars, Jedburgh, in 1815, and there is but little doubt it is one of

the four found in one cist in what is now the Boston manse garden, Friars. The other urn in Kelso Museum was found at Crailinghall in 1832, by a mason building a stone dyke, from a heap of stones. Two of them are in the Antiquarian Society Museum, bought in 1874."

4. *Burial with Flint Instruments at Torry, near Aberdeen.*—Mr George Sim, 14 King Street, Aberdeen, sends the following notice of

the discovery of an interesting prehistoric burial on Torry Farm, on the south side of the river Dee:—"In the course of opening a sand-pit here, the labourer, seeing some fragments of bone, gathered them up and showed them to his employer, who, in turn, brought them to me. Seeing that they were human, I thought that by a careful search something more might be discovered. Accordingly I visited the place immediately, and with the assistance of the workman, we went carefully over all the materials, and found that the burial had been deposited in a kind of grave of an oval form, 3 feet long by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, built round with loose water-worn stones, none of them being of any great size. There was no covering stone, but the land has been long under cultivation, and it is possible that the cover, if it ever existed, might have been removed by the plough. The bottom of the grave was not more than 2 feet 9 inches from the surface. The bones, which were very much broken, seemed to have been those of a full-grown person, and to have undergone cremation. There was no trace of an urn, but three flint instruments and three flakes of the same material were found deposited with the interment. Two of the implements were well made arrow-heads of the form commonly found in this district; the third was a leaf-shaped implement which might have been a spear-head or a knife. The two arrow-heads were made of greyish flint, almost precisely of the same size and shape, triangular with barbs and stem, the edges of the one serrated and of the other plain; dimensions  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in length by 1 inch in greatest width across the base. Both had slight indications of having passed through the fire. The spear-head or knife of yellowish flint measured  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in greatest breadth near the butt, which was rounded off, the sides tapering equally to the point. The implement was almost flat on one face, rounded and somewhat ridged on the other. It showed no signs of burning. The three flakes were slightly worked on the edges and considerably calcined."