

VII.

NOTES ON THREE BUTTONS OF JET OR CANNEL-COAL, FOUND IN A CIST AT OLD WINDYMAINS, KEITH MARISCHAL, EAST LOTHIAN.
BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

The three jet buttons, which are the subject of this notice, were brought to me in the beginning of August by Miss Fraser-Tytler. The circumstances in which they were found are as follows:—In the course of operations for a water-supply to the residence of Mr G. M. Fraser-Tytler of Keith Marischal, a cistern was being sunk on the highest convenient site in the neighbourhood. The site selected was a small wooded knoll behind the cottages at Old Windymains, and the excavation was made in the summit of the knoll. At no great depth from the surface, two interments were found. The first, which was under the centre of the summit of the knoll, showed a cist of undressed slabs, in which the skeleton lay on its side in the usual contracted position, and near the head was an urn, which was unfortunately broken, but seemed to have been about 6 inches in height. The second interment consisted of a large cinerary urn set round with boulders. The urn, being so large and fragile, was only recovered in fragments, among which appeared the three buttons of jet (fig. 1) now described. They are of different sizes, but all of the same form and character, being circular discs, with more or less convexity in front, and more or less flattened on the reverse side, in which there are two holes sunk obliquely and in opposite directions, so as to meet under the centre of the button. The smallest of the three is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. It is well polished, and has a prominent central boss in front, and is also more rounded on the reverse than the others. The holes in the back, which are placed somewhat to one side, are $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart. They contract rapidly inwards, until at

the junction the aperture is scarcely larger than would be made by a pretty thick pin. The second button measures $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches in diameter; the central boss in front is less prominent, and the reverse side of the disc more flattened. The holes in the reverse side are slightly nearer one side of the button than the other. They are obliquely perforated in opposite directions, and about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch apart; their diameter at the surface is rather more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, narrowing to quite a small aperture at the

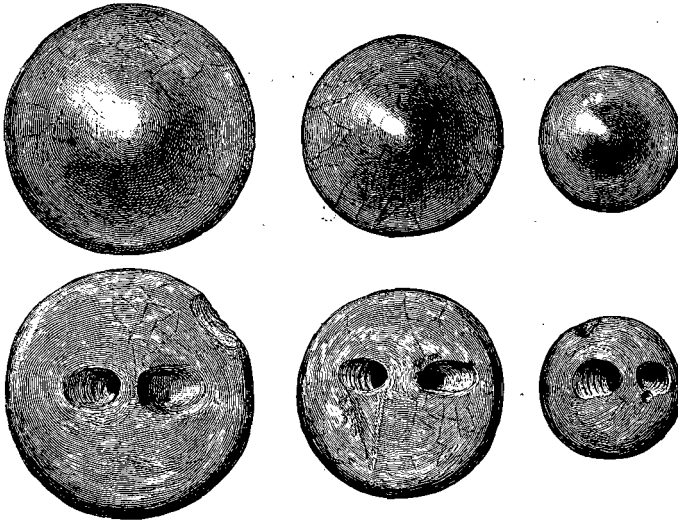


Fig. 1. Three Buttons of Jet, from a cist at Old Windymains, Keith Marischal. (3.)

junction. The largest of the three buttons is $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter, and has only a slightly prominent boss in front. It has the holes on the reverse nearly in the centre, $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter and $\frac{1}{16}$ inch apart. Similar studs or buttons of jet have been found not unfrequently with Bronze-age burials in England, occurring in sets of from two to five. They are not so common in Scotland.

[The three buttons have since been presented to the National Museum by the Earl of Hopetoun, on whose estate the burials were found.]