

II.

NOTES (1) ON AN ANCIENT INTERMENT RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT THE LEITHIES; (2) A KITCHEN MIDDEN AT THE RHODES LINKS; AND (3) A CIST, WITH AN URN OF DRINKING-CUP TYPE, NEAR THE WEST LINKS, NORTH BERWICK. BY JAMES T. RICHARDSON, M.D., TIGHNAMARA, NORTH BERWICK.

Ancient Interment at The Leithies.—A high tide which lately washed away the lower part of a grassy slope adjoining the beach in a small bay a short distance to the E. of North Berwick exposed a bank of water-worn stones, from which, at a distance of 4 ft. or thereby from the surface, some human bones were observed protruding. On removing the sand and stones forming the bank a skeleton was found, placed at full length on its back, lying somewhat N.E. by S.W., with the head to the N. The arms were folded across the chest with the hands resting on the shoulders. The body had been laid simply among the stones, and was not encased in anything resembling a cist. No articles of any kind were found buried along with it. The bones were in a very brittle condition, and, as far as could be judged, from the shape of the lower jaw and the condition of the teeth, were those of an adult of middle age. The teeth were complete in number, with the exception

of a canine tooth which had been lost during life, and both the canine and incisors were much worn down, presenting a flat surface and exposing the dentine. From the pelvis being broken up it was impossible to determine the sex. There was noticeable a marked flattening of the upper part of the shaft of the femur and a small indented facet on the anterior edge of the articular surface at the lower end of the tibia,—a condition of these bones found among existing races, or members of them, who practise a squatting posture. There were no evidences of other interments at this spot, whereas, at a distance of 4 m. further E., in a bank of sand similarly situated, cisted burials are pretty numerous, also lying N. and S., but in this case the bodies have not been laid at full length.

Kitchen Midden at the Rhodes Links.—In one of the bunkers recently formed in the Rhodes Links, when laid out a few years ago as a golf course, several pieces of old pottery were recently picked up which had been exposed by the drifting of the sand. On digging in this bunker there was found, at a distance of 3 ft. beneath the surface of the Links, an area of fine black earth about 5 yds. wide by 3 in breadth. This mould rested on sand, and was 2 ft. thick in the centre, thinning off gradually to the edges. A well-marked stratum of shells ran through it, and pieces of broken pottery, fragments of bones, wood ashes, etc., were found scattered throughout its substance. The whole area was dug over, and each spadeful of earth carefully examined. This resulted in securing a considerable quantity of pieces of earthenware, varying in quality and colour, including a fine buff-coloured ware; a red kind covered with a greenish glaze; and a very coarse grey variety. Some of the ware was glazed on both sides, some on one side or the other, and many of the pieces were coated with soot on the outer surface. It was found possible partially to reconstruct an oval-shaped vessel (fig. 1) 7 ins. in height by 11 ins. in its longest diameter. This vessel was glazed internally over the bottom and had a well-defined rim. Its outer surface was thickly coated with a layer of soot, and bore no evidence of having had handles attached to it. Much of the pottery was undoubtedly superior to any of the mediæval ware hitherto found in the district. There were, at least,

twenty different patterns of rims. The bed of shells was composed mainly of those of the limpet and periwinkle, together with a few oyster shells and claws of the edible crab. The bones were those of the ox, sheep, and pig, with some fish and bird bones. There was also the greater part of a human occipital bone, but no vestige of any other portion of the skeleton. Two pieces of flint, appearing to have been flaked, and several good-sized lumps of slag completed the find.

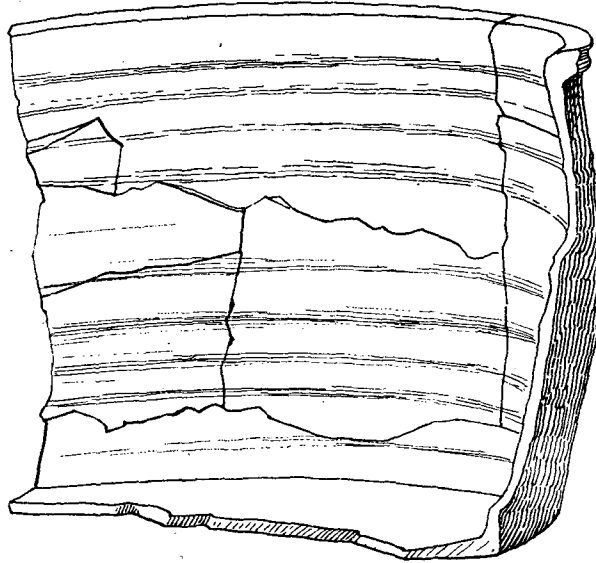


Fig. 1. Oval vessel of glazed pottery, found in the kitchen midden on the Rhodes Links.

Cist near the West Links.—While digging a drain in a field which slopes down to the golf links at North Berwick, the workmen came upon a cist measuring 3 ft. by 2 ft. at a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. below the surface. This cist contained a skeleton in a bent posture, with the skull lying beside the legs. It was evidently that of a young person, as the

epiphyses of the long bones were not ossified, and the front teeth were very slightly blunted. The bones were in a fairly firm state. At the side of this skeleton were the fragments of an urn (fig. 2), unfortunately broken when the cist was opened. The side on which the urn was lying had been dissolved away, possibly by its contents, which seemed, from a deposit, to have been of a fatty nature. Externally and internally the clay of which the urn was made had been smoothed by the hand or by some spatulate instrument, and there were no marks of the potter's wheel.

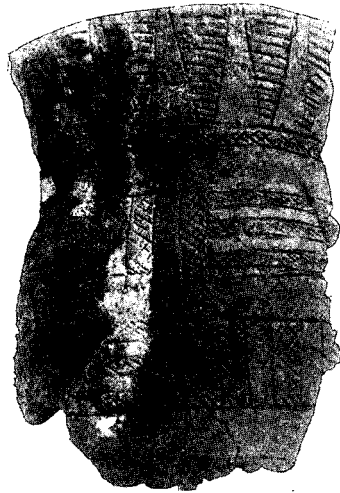


Fig. 2. Portion of an urn from a cist near the West Links.

It was only partially reddened by firing on the two surfaces, and was exceedingly friable. This urn was of the drinking-cup type, with a zig-zag ornamentation round the brim, while that around the body of the vessel consisted of circular bands of six lines, alternately horizontal and perpendicular, filled in with chevron markings. As the style was unusual and the ornamentation somewhat elaborate, photographs were taken of the two pieces, and these show the pattern sufficiently clearly. The cist had no other contents.