

X.

NOTICE OF ANCIENT CHRISTIAN GRAVES ON THE FARM OF WOOD-
END, IN STENTON PARISH. BY JAMES T. RICHARDSON, M.D.

By invitation of Mr Hamilton-Ogilvy, I had the opportunity of examining some ancient interments discovered in October 1904 at the farm of Woodend, on his estate of Biel, East Lothian. The locality was a piece of arable land on the top of a slight declivity sloping down to the west end of Presmennan Loch, in the parish of Stenton, at the foot of the Lammermuir Hills. The graves were met with in the process of trenching some potato pits, in a spot where, on previous occasions, the plough had struck what was then thought to be merely an outcrop of surface rock, but which the greater depth now reached by the spade showed to be the covering slabs of ancient graves.

On notification being given to the proprietor, he suggested that I should make a more thorough investigation of the ground, and on viewing the place I found the interments already discovered to be eight in number, a few feet to several yards apart, and all lying east and west. They had been considerably broken up, but I had fortunately observed indications of another which had not been disturbed. On digging down a short distance three slabs of red trap rock were uncovered, beneath which was a compact mass of large gravel and earth. This was carefully removed, disclosing a cist of the long type, 5 feet in length, $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width, and 1 foot or more in depth, with its long axis east and west, and having its sides and ends formed of a number of upright flat stones. The skeleton it contained, which appeared to be that of a female of middle age, was fairly intact; the body had been laid on its back on a flooring of thin grey shale, with the head at the west end, slightly raised and bent forward on the chest; the arms by the sides, with the hands placed under the hips. The teeth were in a healthy condition, and not ground flat, the molars being only slightly grooved on the crown. Nothing was found along with this interment. The general character of these burials indicated that they belonged to the early Christian period.