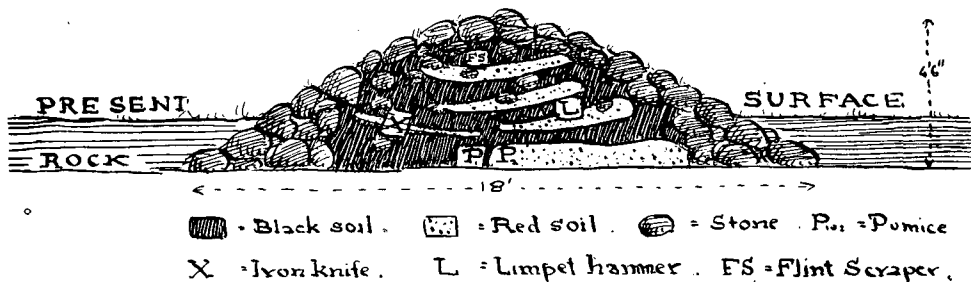


II.

EXPLORATION OF A CAIRN ON CANNA. BY THOMAS C.
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A small cairn on the south side of Sanday and almost due south of Canna Pier was opened in June 1924. The cairn was one of a pair of small structures standing on the foreshore; before excavation it was 3 feet 6 inches above the ground and about 16 feet in diameter. The actual section is shown in the illustration.

SECTION OF CAIRN.



Section of Cairn on Canna.

When the outer layer of stones had been removed, the mound was found to consist of alternating bands of red and black soil. The black soil was full of charcoal, and the red consisted of some burnt clay-like material.

The following objects were found during the excavation:—

1. Numerous shards of coarse hard-paste pottery dispersed throughout the mound. Amongst the shards, which are all hand-made, are three small rim fragments and two basal fragments; the latter are slightly everted. With one exception, which is of bright red ware, the potsherds are very dark in colour. It is impossible to tell the period of this pottery, but it is of the same class as that found in many kitchen-middens and brochs in the west of Scotland, and might easily go back to the early centuries of this era.

2. A small thumb scraper, measuring 7 inches by 6 inches across and 35 inches deep. It is of honey-coloured flint and very steep edged. Several other chips of flint occurred at different levels.

3. A small limpet hammer or hammer-stone 3·7 inches long.

4. A piece of an iron knife blade 1 inch long, and another iron fragment.

5. Two bits of pumice of irregular shape. One of these pieces of pumice, which measures 1·55 inch in length and 1·3 inch at greatest breadth, has a perforation running through it longitudinally; this has been picked out with a pin or some similar instrument.

6. Numerous very minute fragments of burnt bone, not certainly human.

The whole probably represents the remains of a funeral pyre scraped up and covered by a heap of stones.

No urn or cist was discovered.