

ANCIENT INTERMENTS AND SEPULCHRAL URNS FOUND IN
ANGLESEY AND NORTH WALES, WITH NOTES ON
EXAMPLES IN SOME OTHER LOCALITIES.

From notices communicated by the Hon. WILLIAM OWEN STANLEY, M.P.

ON a former occasion, in describing a remarkable sepulchral deposit with cinerary urns brought to light at Porth Dafarch, on the western shore of Holyhead Island, in 1848, the attention of archæologists, of those more especially who devote their researches to vestiges of ancient races in the Principality, was invited to the deficiency of information recorded with sufficient precision regarding interments of the earlier ages.¹ During the interval of nearly twenty years that has elapsed since those observations were made, some progress has been gained in this particular department of antiquarian investigation; a fresh impulse has been given through the annual gatherings held in various districts by the Cambrian Archæological Association, and the constant record in their Transactions, of discoveries that have been made, has essentially contributed to stimulate greater energy and precision in the study of national antiquities. But much remains to be done. We have indeed emerged from that dim age of scanty information when the Nestor of Cambrian archæology, Pennant, was compelled, in his remarks on ancient interments and urn burials, to admit — “I cannot establish any criterion by which a judgment may be made of the people to whom the different species of urns and tumuli belonged, whether they are British, Roman, Saxon, or Danish.”² We are still, however, in uncertainty in regard to various details connected with the fictile vessels of the earliest periods, the distinctive character of their

¹ Memoir, by the Hon. W. O. Stanley, on a Sepulchral Deposit in Holyhead Island; *Archæol. Journal*, vol. vi. p. 226.

² Pennant, *Tour in Wales*, vol. i. p. 383; where a valuable summary of antiquarian knowledge at that period (1778) in regard to the rites and relics of ancient inter-

ments may be found. Several cinerary urns found in burial-mounds in the parish of Llanarmon, Flintshire, are noticed; they had been placed inverted on flat pieces of stone, a second stone being also placed over each urn for its protection in the mound.

fashion, and the uses to which, as some are of opinion, these curious vessels, now known to us only in their application to mortuary purposes, may have been originally destined, in the daily life of ancient occupants of these Islands.

Such have been the considerations that have seemed to give particular interest to some discoveries of sepulchral deposits in Anglesey and North Wales, either recently brought to light or hitherto unrecorded. It is hoped that the following notices may prove acceptable as supplementary to those formerly brought before the Archæological Institute in the memoir that has been cited, describing the very curious deposit at Porth Dafarch.

The general classification of burial-urns of the earlier periods, as proposed by Sir Richard Colt Hoare and other writers, although doubtless familiar to many readers of this Journal, may here be briefly noticed. A very useful summary of our knowledge of relics of this description, accompanied by numerous illustrations, has also been given by the late Mr. Bateman, in his record of the careful investigations of barrows and urn-burials in Derbyshire and other parts of central England.³ The vessels exhumed from the so-called Celtic tumuli may be conveniently arranged, as he has pointed out, under the following classes.

1. Cinerary or sepulchral urns, such as have either contained or have been inverted over calcined bones. They vary much in dimensions, material, and ornamentation. Those that are supposed, from their being accompanied by weapons or other objects of flint, to be the most ancient, are formed of clay mixed with small pebbles or broken gravel. They were wrought by hand alone, and the process of firing them was very imperfect. The color of the surface is dark brown; the interior, as appears by any fracture, is black. These urns measure in height from about 10 in. to 18 in.; the upper part is usually fashioned with an overhanging rim, measuring in many examples more than a third of the entire height of the vessel, and it is decorated by impressions apparently produced by some twisted cord, of skin possibly, or of vegetable fibre, with scored and other patterns also in which the herring-bone prevails in various combinations, frequently presenting a reticulated appearance. The occur-

³ Bateman, *Ten Years' Diggings*, p. 279.

rence of any object of bronze with urns of this class is extremely rare.

2. Incense cups or thuribles ; a designation commonly adopted, although the real purpose of such small vessels is doubtful. They occur with calcined bones, and frequently are found deposited within the urns of the first class. In dimensions they vary from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. to about 3 in. in height ; the color is mostly lighter than that of the large urns, the paste, which is moreover less mixed with pebbles or sand, being more perfectly fired. They have in many instances two perforations at the side, and, more rarely, two also at the opposite side, doubtless for suspension. They likewise are fashioned with open-work or with long narrow slits ; the ornament is impressed or incised, as on the larger urns. There is reason to suppose, as the late Mr. Bateman remarks, that they do not accompany the earliest interments.

3. Small vessels, probably for food, greatly varying in fashion and ornament ; they occur usually with unburnt remains, and were placed near the head or at the feet, but not unfrequently with incinerated bones—not, however, containing them. The dimensions are from $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 5 in. in height ; the mouth usually is wide, the foot small. It is difficult to determine the age of these vessels, which frequently are rude and almost devoid of ornament, whilst others are well wrought and elaborately decorated with impressed markings and herring-bone patterns.

4. Drinking cups, as designated by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, doubtless in true accordance with their intention. These are highly ornamented vessels of fine clay well baked ; the height about 6 in. to 9 in. ; the form contracted in the middle and globular towards the foot ; the color usually light reddish brown ; the ornament, very elaborate and produced apparently by a toothed implement, is arranged in horizontal bands, chevrony patterns, triangular or lozengy compartments, &c., mostly covering the entire surface. These cups are usually found with unburnt remains, and had been placed near the shoulders ; flint relics of superior workmanship occur with them. In a few instances a diminutive bronze awl has been found, but Mr. Bateman, in the course of the indefatigable researches by which his highly instructive collection at Youlgrave was formed, came to the conclusion that these beautiful vessels belong to a period when

metal was almost unknown. Three examples are known of a remarkable variation in form, having a small handle at the side; of these one was disinterred by Mr. Bateman near Pickering, Yorkshire;⁴ another, found in the Isle of Ely, is figured in this Journal;⁵ the third, obtained in Berkshire, is in the British Museum.

Of the first class of cinerary urns, namely those which may be regarded as earliest in date, a good example found in Carnarvonshire has recently been brought under the notice of the Institute by the obliging permission of Mr. Turner, of Carnarvon, in whose possession it is preserved. We are indebted to Captain Turner, his son, for the following particulars regarding the discovery. The urn was found a few years ago near Festiniog, at the side of the ancient way known as the *Sarn Helen*, and about a mile distant from the Roman station *Heriri Mons*, the site of which is now known as Tomen y Mur.⁶ At that spot, where entrenchments are to be seen and numerous Roman relics have been brought to light, the Roman road ascribed to the Empress Helena, consort of the Emperor Maximus in the fourth century, leading from Uriconium by Rutunium, and among the wild mountains of Wales to Caer Seiont near Carnarvon, and thence into Anglesey, crosses at right angles the Roman line of way from Muridunum (Caermarthen) by Llanio and Penalt in a straight course towards Conovium (Caer Rhun) on the Conway. To a considerable portion of this last mentioned way the name *Sarn Helen* is likewise given by popular tradition. These vestiges of Roman occupation are indicated by Mr. Wynn Williams in a map of *Britannia Secunda* that accompanies his memoir in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*.⁷

The urn in question, however (see woodcuts, fig. 1), belongs to a more distant period; it contained incinerated bones and ashes; amongst these were found three relics of unusual occurrence. These are, a bronze blade, fig. 2, supposed to have been a knife or small dagger, which in its perfect state measured about $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. in breadth at the end where it was affixed by two rivets to a

⁴ Figured in *Ten Years' Diggings*, p. 209.

⁵ *Archæol. Journ.*, vol. xix. p. 364.

⁶ *Sarn*, in Welsh, signifies a paved road, or some kind of pavement. The urn was exhibited at the Monthly Meeting on March 1, *ult.*

⁷ *Arch. Camb.*, vol. vi. third series, p. 186. A considerable collection of pottery found at or near *Heriri Mons* was in possession of the late Mr. Lloyd, of Maentwrog.

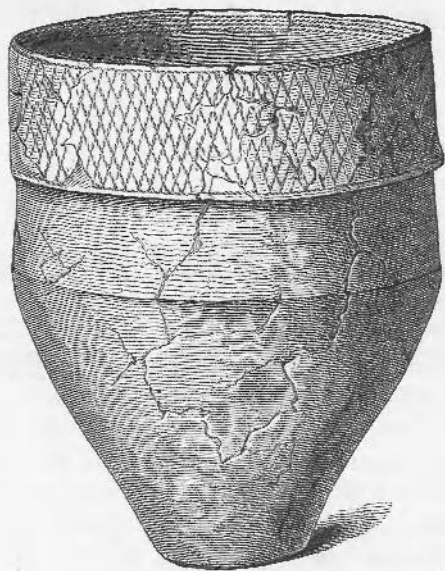


Fig. 1.—Urn found near Tomen y Mur, Carnarvonshire, the Roman Heriri Mons.
Height $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter at the mouth 11 inches.

In the possession of Thomas Turner, Esq., Carnarvon.

handle; an oval disc, apparently a broken pebble of flint, fig. 3, of brown color, the edge white or cream-colored; and a needle

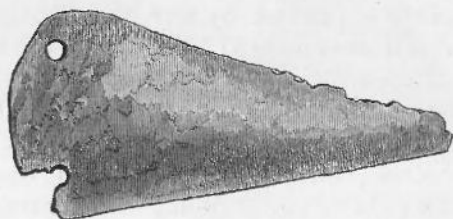


Fig. 2.

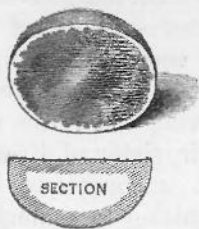


Fig. 3.

Bronze blade and relic of flint(?) found in an urn near Tomen y Mur. Original size.

of wood, fig. 4, measuring 6 in. in length, pierced with an eye like a bodkin. It has been supposed, possibly from this accompaniment of the deposit, that the remains may have been those



Fig 4.—Wooden needle found in an urn, Tomen y Mur, Carnarvonshire. Length 6 inches.

of a female; this, however, is perhaps questionable. It seems that in the urn-burials of the early occupants of the British Islands the burnt bones were collected from the ashes of the funereal fire and wrapped in some coarse tissue, fastened or held together by a pin, which in deposits of somewhat later times is of bronze. The wooden object here found in remarkable preservation may doubtless have appertained to the deceased person; the conjecture is, moreover, by no means inadmissible that it was placed with the ashes as a relic associated with daily life or industry.

This interesting urn, which had been much fractured, has been repaired under Mr. Ready's skilful care. The color is reddish brown; the dimensions are $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. in height; 11 in. in diameter at the mouth. The ornament seems to have been produced by impressing a twisted thong or sinew, possibly a twisted rush or some vegetable fibre might thus be used.

To the same early period may be assigned the urn of large dimensions (about $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter) found in a mound at Porth Dafarch in 1848, as before mentioned. It was more elaborately decorated than the specimen in Mr. Turner's possession. It had been placed inverted on a slab of stone, and carefully protected by stones set edgewise to protect

the vessel from the weight of the surrounding soil. A small urn of elegant fashion was found within it.⁸ Anglesey has supplied another memorable example of this class of cinerary vases—unequaled possibly in interest by any like discovery on record—the urn disinterred in 1813 in a cist on the banks of the Alaw, and regarded with some probability as having been the depository of the ashes of Bronwen the Fair, sister of Bran the father of Caractacus, and consort of the incourteous Matholwch, an Irish prince, from whose insulting treatment she sought refuge in Mona.⁹ The circumstances of the discovery at the spot still known traditionally as Ynys Bronwen, the Islet of Bronwen, agree in a remarkable manner with the mention of her obsequies in the *Abinogion*, where we read that a square grave (the rudest of flag-stones within the cairn) was made for Bronwen on the banks of the Alaw. The special interest of this relic is obvious, if the conclusion is accepted that the deposit was in fact that with which the tradition has been associated; in other instance, as Sir R. C. Hoare observes, has the antiquary been able to determine to what personage or at what precise period the sepulchral mound was raised. The urn of Bronwen, now preserved in the British Museum, is here figured.¹ See woodcut, fig. 5.

Another urn, an example more elaborately ornamented, whose lines arranged in zigzag fashion around its upper part, deserves notice (fig. 6). It was found in Anglesey about twenty years ago about five yards from the turnpike road towards Holyhead, at a spot opposite the Anglesey Arms, near the Bridge. This urn, here engraved, measures in height 11 in., the diameter of the mouth is $11\frac{1}{2}$ in., and that of the base 4 in.; the lip is beveled off inwards; the thickness of the sides is $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch. It contained burnt bones, and was surrounded by a little protecting wall of loose stones, with a flat slab placed on the top of the vessel. It

⁸ These with other sepulchral urns found at the same place are figured, *A Journal*, vol. vi., pp. 228-230.

⁹ *ibid.* See also the account related by R. C. Hoare, *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. 11; *Ancient Wilts*, vol. ii. p. 112.

¹ Several other good examples of urns of the same class have occurred in the Priory. See in Fenton's *Tour in Pembrokeshire* one elaborately decorated

with zigzag and chevron patterns, pl. I. fig. 2, it was found in mounds near Fishguard, as related p. 581. An urn of very unusual fashion, described as in form "like a peg-top," is given, pl. II. fig. 5, described, p. 579, as found in a mound at Park y Och (Field of Lamentation). It was in a cist with burnt bones, inverted, and measured 18 in. in height, diameter at the mouth 13 in.

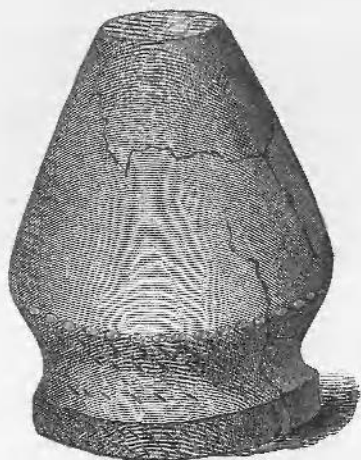


Fig. 5.—Urn, as supposed, of Bronwen, daughter of Llyr. Date of her death, about A.D. 50. Height 12 inches ; diameter, at the mouth, 9 inches. British Museum.



Fig. 7.—Three Urns found at Mynydd Carn Goch, near Swansea. Height of the largest urn 10½ inches. British Museum.

was in possession of Mr. Fricker, near Bangor. In 1857 a stone relic described as a celt or axe-head was found near



Fig. 6.—Urn found about 1855 near the Menai Bridge. Height $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter at the mouth $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

the same spot; the material seemed to be limestone containing shells.

Of another urn, similar in its form and ornamentation to that last described, the fragments are in the Carnarvon Museum. They have been there deposited with other relics by Mr. Turner. This vessel, unfortunately broken, was brought to light in Anglesey, at Cadnant, about a mile from the Menai Bridge; the discovery occurred during the formation of the road to Beaumaris about 1825. The interment was found in the grounds at Cadnant; the fragments were given by the owner of that place to Mr. Turner's father.

By courteous permission of the Society of Antiquaries a beautiful group of urns found near the southern shores of the Principality is here placed before the reader, in illustration of the varied fashion of the interesting fictile relics of this early period. See woodcuts, fig. 7. They were found by Mr. J. T. Dillwyn Llewellyn, in a cairn on waste land, about five miles W.N.W. of Swansea, known as Mynydd Carn Goch—the Waste of the Red Cairn. The heap measured 90 ft. or upwards in diameter, and about 4 ft. in height; but some sixty years ago there was a pile of large

stones, that were removed to make a road. Within, at about 8 or 12 in. from the surface, there was a circle of stones nearly concentric with the circuit of the cairn. The largest of the three urns here figured, and which measures $10\frac{3}{4}$ in. in height, had apparently been deposited in the ground before the cairn was raised, having been placed below the original surface. After the vessel had been interred in the cavity formed to receive it, the space around the deposit seems to have been filled in with charcoal, supposed to be of fir-wood, and the whole was covered by a flat slab. The urn next in size, which measures about 7 in. in height, was found above the original level; it was placed inverted on a flat stone. The smallest, which measures about 2 in. in height by $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, is pierced with small holes; this curious little vessel, of the "incense cup" type, lay near the western margin of the cairn. Charred wood was found throughout the mound in large layers, especially near the spots where urns or bones occurred; the latter were principally within the vessels, and were almost wholly human. These urns have been presented by Mr. Llewellyn to the British Museum, where the series of this class of early relics is very scanty.² Although not immediately connected with the district to which the present memoir chiefly relates, the foregoing details cannot fail to prove acceptable, as showing in a remarkable manner the usages of the earlier races in regard to urn-burials.

Several other interesting illustrations might be cited of these usages, that varied in some respects according to local conditions of the surface or the soil; the ready supply, for instance, of slabs suited for the sepulchral cist, or of loose stones for raising the cairn, would necessarily lead to certain modifications in the funereal deposit. Of the cist, or diminutive chamber constructed within the mound, the discoveries made by Mr. Llewellyn at Carn Goch, as before cited, supply most instructive illustrations. Examples, figured in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, accompany the present memoir, in which

² Proceedings Soc. Antiqu., vol. iv. p. 303. Mr. Llewellyn has given some further notices of this cairn in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, vol. ii., Third Series, p. 65, where a ground plan of Carn Goch may be found. Amongst other results of researches there made

in 1855 are noticed cists cut in the substratum, with bones and ashes; also a large urn much broken measuring more than 13 inches in height, and much ornamented by impressions of twisted thongs or reeds.

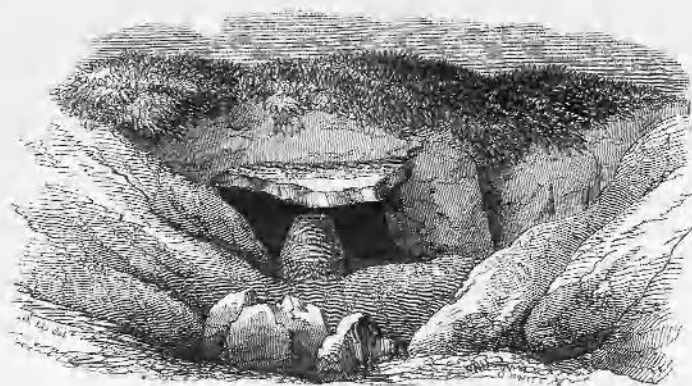


Fig. 8.

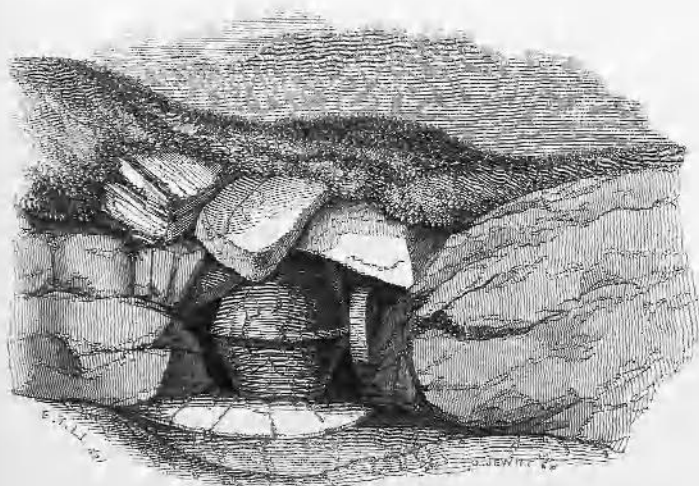


Fig. 9.

Cists enclosing urns found in a mound on Mynydd Carn Goch, near Swansea, Glamorganshire, in 1855, by Mr. J. T. Dillwyn Llewellyn.

the large inverted urn appears, protected by flat pieces of rock, that were doubtless easily obtained in those parts of Glamorganshire.³ See woodcuts, figs. 8, 9. It is not without a certain deep interest that we may mark the feeling of pious affection or respect to the remains of the relative or the chieftain, the desire for preservation of their ashes, the careful precaution against their mingling with the common earth, that almost might seem darkly to shadow forth some notion of a future existence.

It may here deserve notice in regard to cist-burials that examples not unfrequently occur in which the corpse had been deposited unburnt, either crouched up or extended at full length, and it is probable that some of these deposits may be referred to times anterior to the practice of cremation. About the year 1860 the remains of five skeletons were found in making a road at Carreglwyd in Anglesey, the seat of the late Mr. R. Trygarn Griffith, in the parish of Llanfaethlw. From the remains, which were much decayed, the bodies seemed to have been stretched out at full length; four of them appeared to have been of small stature, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft., the fifth had been nearly 5 ft. in height. They had been placed upon rough stones, and surrounded by other stones in the form of a rude coffin or chest, but apparently without any covering-stones. The bones had mostly been reduced to dust. These graves were sunk about 2 ft. in the clay below the general surface of the field. From the appearance of the ground there had, in all probability, been a mound over the graves, but it had been removed, the spot being near the lodge-entrance to Mr. Griffith's house. The direction in which the bodies had been buried appeared in this instance to have been east and west. Each corpse had a separate cist of rough stones; no object of bronze, no ornament of metal, of jet, or of amber was found. According to tradition, a battle was fought near Carreglwyd with the Danes; a large upright stone or menhir, about a mile distant from the interments in question, has been traditionally regarded as marking the spot where that conflict occurred; there is, however, no distinctive feature in the discovery above related that would associate it with the invasions of the marauding Northmen.

³ The Institute is indebted to the courtesy of the Cambrian Archæological Association for the use of these and some

other woodcuts that accompany this memoir.

Of the second class, the urns designated by the late Sir Richard Colt Hoare "incense cups," a very curious example (see woodcut, fig. 10) has been found near Bryn Seiont, Carnarvonshire, not far from the site of Segontium. It lay within a large cinerary urn that was unfortunately broken into fragments by the finders. It is to be regretted that the form and ornamental peculiarities of that vessel are not known; these little cups, especially of so curious a fashion as the specimen in question, have rarely occurred in Wales. As already noticed they have commonly been found associated with the large cinerary vessels of the early races, although probably not with the most ancient of their interments. The cup is formed with considerable skill; the paneled compartments are arranged lozengewise, with open work suggesting a certain resemblance to a little basket; some of the mouldings are impressed with irregularly formed punctures. The bottom of this vessel is very curiously wrought with bands disposed spirally in contrary directions; the upper series of these bands, six in number, is marked with punctures or dots like those already mentioned; the bands, as will be seen by the woodcut, radiate from a central disc that is impressed with a small cross surrounded by dots (fig. 11). Although this cruciform ornament may probably have no special or symbolical significance, it is doubtless remarkable that on the bottom of another of these "incense cups" found in Pembrokeshire, having likewise lozengy apertures around its circumference, a cruciform ornament is found of even more remarkable fashion than on the Bryn Seiont vessel. By the friendly permission of the Cambrian Archæological Association a representation of the cup, published in their Transactions, is here given. See figs. 12, 13. It was found in a carnedd or stone heap at Meinau'r Gwyr in the parish of Llandyssilio, Pembrokeshire.⁴ A small sword or dagger of bronze is stated to have accompanied the deposit. A circle of large stones formerly existed near the spot.

⁴ See a memoir by the late Mr. John Fenton, son of the author of the *Tour in Pembrokeshire*, *Archæol. Cambr.* vol. vi., third series, p. 32. This cup was in possession of the late Rev. E. Harris of Bryndyssil, but the bronze blade had unfortunately been lost. Another very singular little vessel was likewise found at Meinau'r Gwyr; a representation is

given by Mr. Fenton, who describes it as resembling "a miniature Stonehenge," being fashioned with upright projecting ribs that meet a rim at the top of the drum-shaped urn, and may remind us of a certain general resemblance to the trilithons of the massive monument in Wiltshire.



Fig. 10.—Incense Cup found in a sepulchral urn near Bryn Seiont, Carnarvonshire.
Height nearly 2 inches, diameter 2½ inches.
In the possession of the Rev. W. Wynne Williams, of Menaifron, Anglesey.

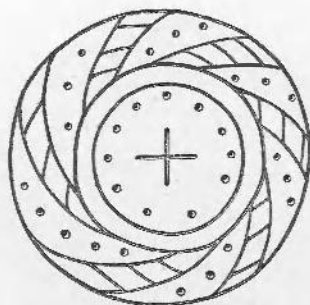


Fig. 11.—Incised ornament on the bottom of the cup found near Bryn Seiont.



Fig. 12.—Incense Cup found in a carnedd or stone heap at Meinau'r Gwyr, in the parish of Llandyssilio, Pembrokeshire. Orig. size.

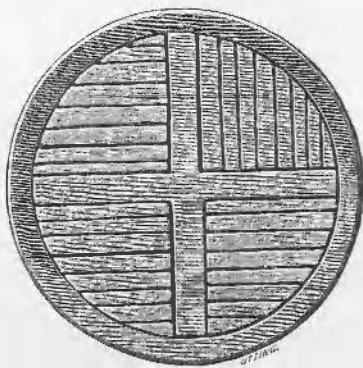


Fig. 13.—Cruciform ornament on the bottom of the incense cup found at Meinau'r Gwyr. Orig. size.

The strange notion suggested by the late Mr. John Fenton in his account of this curious discovery can scarcely be accepted. He observes that these little vessels "may have appertained to inhabitants of diminutive stature that existed among the Celtic tribes at a prehistoric period;" and he adds that vestiges of such a supposed race of pygmies have occurred likewise in Wiltshire, with very small bronze weapons and stone celts. Mr. Greenwell has noticed the occurrence of such "toy implements." *Arch. Journ.*, vol. xxii. p. 243, note 3.

The cup found near Bryn Seiont is of pale brown color; the paste well compacted and burned. It measures nearly 2 in. in height by $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter. No example of the like form and elaborate fashion, it is believed, has hitherto been noticed in Wales; it may, however, be compared with other "incense cups" of more simple character, such as that above described, from Llandyssilio, and another, which differs from it in not having compartments of open work, being only pierced with small perforations as if for suspension. This last, likewise from Pembrokeshire, was brought to light in a *carnedd* near Cronllwyn. Three of these little vessels were, as related by Mr. Fenton, placed around an urn of very large dimensions (nearly 3 ft. in height). Such small urns, he observes, had occasionally been found placed within those of larger size in mounds or "*carneddau*"; from the perforations in the sides and underneath, and also from the very singular shape of these vessels, it might be presumed that they were filled with some combustibles or oleaginous substances and suspended over the sepulchral fire to add force to the flame.⁵ In these conclusions Mr. Fenton seems to have found, whilst engaged on his tour through Pembrokeshire, a very able guide and coadjutor—the first reliable authority in regard to sepulchral vestiges of the earlier periods in these islands—Sir R. Colt Hoare. Subsequent investigations have not adduced any fact, so far as we are aware, opposed to the probable notion that has given the designation "*thuribles*" to the diminutive vessels in question.

⁵ Fenton, *Tour in Pembrokeshire*, p. 580; see pl. II. fig. 7. Some interesting particulars are there given in connexion with interments and burial-urns in that part of Wales. The upper part of the cup that he has figured is ornamented

with a trellised or lozenge pattern, but without open work. It is not stated whether any markings were to be seen scored or incised on the bottom, as on the specimen found at Llandyssilio. See figs. 12, 13, *supra*.

The supposition that they were intended to be hung up above the level of the eye may seem in some degree confirmed by the occurrence of ornament on the under surface, wrought with considerable care, and never found, so far as we are aware, on the bottom of any urn of the other types, in which also adjustment for suspension is very rarely, if ever, provided.

A brief notice of some other examples of the "incense cup" found in various parts of England may be acceptable. One, elaborately worked, pierced also with lozengy and oval apertures over the whole surface, has been figured in this Journal; it was brought to light in 1859, with a large cinerary urn, in a barrow at Bulford near Amesbury.⁶ The form is unusually elegant; this cup, of dark brown color, measures nearly 3 in. in height by $3\frac{1}{4}$ in diameter. Two small bronze pins and some little beads of a white coralloid material occurred with it. On the under side of the base an ornament

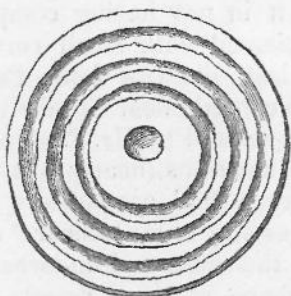


Fig. 14.—Ornament incised on the bottom of an incense cup found at Bulford, Wilts. Orig. size.

is deeply incised, as here shown, fig. 14. The concentric circles are traced with great precision, and they bear a certain resemblance to some of the mysterious rock-markings that have recently excited so much attention in Northumberland, North Britain and other localities, as described by Mr. George Tate and Sir James Simpson.⁷ A similar ornament occurs on the unique gold cup found in a cist in Cornwall, and preserved, as treasure trove of the Duchy, in

⁶ Arch. Journ., vol. vi. p. 319. The circles on the bottom are not there noticed.

⁷ The Ancient British Sculptured Rocks of Northumberland, by George Tate, F.G.S.; Alnwick, 1865, twelve plates.

The remarkable volume lately published, under the auspices of the Antiquaries of Scotland, by Sir J. Simpson, Bart., comprises all examples of the markings hitherto noticed in various parts of the British Islands.

possession of the Prince of Wales, through whose kind permission it was lately brought for the inspection of the Institute by Mr. Smirke.

A curious "incense cup" is figured in the *Archæologia* that was found near the "Nine Ladies," on Stanton Moor, Derbyshire. It measures about $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. in height, by 3 in. in diameter; the form is cylindrical, like a small barrel; it is fashioned with triangular openings, in zig-zag design, around the upper part, and it is pierced on each of its sides with two small perforations (about an inch apart), probably for the purpose of suspension.⁸ It was found in a large urn which had the unusual accompaniment of a cover, a disc of baked clay.

In another example the upper part of the cup is entirely closed, and impressed with corded lines, trellis-fashion; the lower part is formed with narrow diagonal slits. The dimensions are $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter. It was found on Clayton Hill near Brighton, and contained a circular object of very curious character, a little locket of vitrified paste of light blue color.⁹ The fashion of the "thuribles," or "incense cups," is singularly varied; Sir Richard Colt Hoare gives several examples, one of them covered with bosses, like a bunch of grapes, in his *Ancient Wilts.* They have occurred likewise not uncommonly in barrows in Yorkshire and Derbyshire.

Of the third class of sepulchral urns no well characterised specimen has been noticed, so far as we are aware, in Anglesey or Wales. The small urns, however, that accompanied incinerated deposits at Porth Dafarch, before noticed, may possibly belong to this division, as they have no lateral perforations, and possess none of the usual features of the "incense cup." They seem more suited to have served as food-vessels.¹ The urns of this class, however, usually accompany unburnt remains; their varied fashion has been well illustrated by Sir Richard C. Hoare and by the late Mr. Bateman in his works on sepulchral vestiges in Derby-

⁸ *Archæologia*, vol. viii. p. 59.

⁹ *Arch. Journal*, vol. xix. p. 185, where both the urn and locket are figured. A specimen found in a "bell barrow" at Beedon, Berks, is given, *ibid.* vol. vii. p. 66, with another from the Malvern Hills; see also a good example from Dorset, vol. xii. p. 193. Mr. Greenwell found

one in a barrow in Yorkshire; *ibid.* vol. xxii., fig. 12, p. 247. See various other forms of the thurible in Akerman's *Archæol. Index*.

¹ Memoir on a Sepulchral Deposit in Holyhead Island; *Arch. Journal*, vol. vi., p. 230.

shire.² The ornament is mostly wrought by pointed or blunt implements, of wood probably or bone, and it is usually found only on the upper part of the vessel.

The urn which remains to be described is an example of the fourth group, the "drinking cups," according to the classification previously given. Vessels of this peculiar and highly decorated type are not uncommon in Wiltshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and some other parts of England, but no specimen appears hitherto to have occurred in Anglesey or in Wales. The discovery was made at a farm-house belonging to Mr. Lloyd Edwards at Rhosbeirio in the northern parts of Anglesey, about two miles from the coast, and in a district full of ancient remains. A burial-place was brought to light in the farm-yard; it measured about $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in each direction, and was covered by one large unhewn flagstone, the bottom and sides being formed of several large flat slabs. Within this cist lay human bones and the urn, of which a representation carefully executed from a photograph accompanies this account. See fig. 15. This vessel is elaborately ornamented with lines of impressed punctures produced by a cord or some blunt instrument; it was much broken, but has been skilfully repaired by Mr. Ready. No bones or ashes were found in the urn; the body appeared to have been interred crouched or doubled up. The urn, which was placed at the back of the head or the shoulders, measures 8 in. in height; the circumference at the mouth is about 11 in. It is of a light reddish-brown color, and slightly lustrous in some parts.

Not far from the spot where this discovery occurred there was found, in a place described as a semicircular fort, at Llanrhyddlad, a bronze celt or axe-head of the most simple type, stated to have been in shape like "the heater of a box-iron." Its weight was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.; this relic is unfortunately lost, having been sold to a pedlar for three shillings and sixpence. Within the earthen fortification a pavement of stones was noticed. The urn remains in possession of Miss Maria Conway Griffith, of Carreglwyd, by whose permission it was sent for the inspection of the Institute.

² Bateman, Derbyshire Antiquities: see also his Ten Years' Diggings, and the detailed Catalogue of his Museum at Youlgrave. The permanent preservation of that very instructive collection has

been ensured, as far as practicable, by the provisions of Mr. Bateman's will. Mr. Greenwell figures two examples of the food-vessel, Yorkshire Grave-hills, Arch. Journ., vol. xxii., p. 260, figs. 8, 17.



Fig. 15.—Urn found in a cist at Rhosbeirio, Anglesey. Height 8 inches; diameter, at the mouth, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

In the possession of Miss M. Conway Griffith, of Carreglwyd.
(From a photograph.)

This part of Anglesey is believed to have been the scene of many a conflict between the ancient inhabitants and the Irish or Danish marauders. There are, as already observed, numerous vestiges of antiquity scattered throughout the district. At no great distance towards the west a spot is still pointed out that is associated with very interesting tradition. The small creek or landing-place known as Tre Fadog, a name in which, through a mutation of letters for the sake of euphony, the obscure trace of Porth Madoc is supposed to be preserved, has been pointed out as the port whence Prince Madoc embarked on the quest for the New World. Whatever may be its claims in comparison of those of another place with which so interesting a tradition has more commonly been connected, here are to be noticed grassy entrenchments that appear to have protected the landing-place; and, if we may suppose this to have been a haven at which the piratical Northmen effected their incursions, many bloody struggles must have occurred in the neighbourhood.

The beautiful urn, however, brought to light in the cist at Rhosbeirio may probably be assigned to a period anterior to local tradition. Vessels of this type, of which a few remarkable varieties have been noticed in a previous part of this memoir, seem to appertain to a race that had comparatively made advancement in civilization. The urns, and also the relics or weapons by which they are accompanied, indicate superior skill in working and polishing the flint or other material: the use of bronze was not wholly unknown. Cremation had, moreover, been almost discontinued; the corpse was deposited in a contracted posture either in a cist of stones set edgeways, or in an oblong cavity formed in the earth, the head being in many instances placed towards the north. In Wiltshire and other parts of England the sepulchral depository is sunk in the chalk, clay, or other local substratum; a mound or a cairn, according to the nature of the material at hand, usually marked the site of the burial.

As the urns of this fourth class, and also those designated food-vessels (class 3), very rarely, if ever, contain either ashes, burned bones, or any object of personal use, we may conclude that they were appropriated to some other special purpose. The custom appears to have prevailed amongst certain races of antiquity, as Sir R. C. Hoare has remarked, which is still practised by some savage peoples, of depositing

articles of food with the corpse, and it seems highly probable that the vessels in question may have served such a purpose. This conjecture has received some confirmation from the curious observation recorded by Mr. Bateman.³ That careful investigator describes a deposit at Castern near Wetton, Staffordshire; the skeleton lay in a cist cut in the rock; it was accompanied by a single implement of flint and a remarkably fine "drinking cup." The vessel showed distinctly on its interior surface an incrustation indicating that it had contained some liquid when deposited in the grave; the liquid had filled about two-thirds of this very curious vase. Sir Richard Hoare has described a remarkable interment in a barrow near Stonehenge; three skeletons were found laid one over the other, placed north and south. Near the right side of the head of one of them was a cup containing a quantity of a substance that in its perishing condition seemed to be decaying leather, possibly, however, some article of food; six feet below lay a skeleton, with a richly-decorated "drinking cup."⁴

Many notices and representations of "drinking cups," closely resembling in form and dimensions that found at Rhosbeirio, may be found in the works of Sir Richard Hoare and other antiquaries.⁵ Amongst these, however, there is none so remarkable as a specimen found some years ago under a barrow at East Kennett, Wilts, near that described by Stukeley as "The long Arch-druid's Barrow."⁶ It was sent by the late Bishop of Salisbury, with the other relics disinterred at the same time, to the Museum formed at the Annual Meeting of the Institute at Salisbury in 1854. The vase, placed at the feet, and similar in shape to that found in Anglesey, is of more graceful

³ Vestiges, Antiqu. in Derbyshire, p. 87.

⁴ Ancient Wilts, vol. i. pl. xvi. p. 163.

⁵ See especially the account of a large circular barrow at Winterbourn Stoke. Ancient Wilts, vol. i. pl. xiv. p. 118. Skeletons were found in cists cut in the chalk; at the feet of one of them lay a cup ornamented with horizontal bands, also two pieces of dark colored stone, resembling hones or burnishers, a bed of jet, and a rudely-chipped flint spear. A barrow near Stonehenge, described *ibid.*, pl. xvii. p. 164, contained three skeletons; at the feet of that first deposited there was a drinking cup very elaborately orna-

mented; it contained a broad flat blade or spear-head of flint, and a singular oblong stone highly polished. Another specimen, found at Dorrington, lay at the head of the skeleton with stags' horns and pieces of flint apparently prepared for implements of war or for the chase; this urn is probably the best preserved and most richly decorated specimen disinterred by Sir R. C. Hoare. *Ibid.* pl. xviii. p. 168. Several urns of this class, scarcely less remarkable, may be found in Mr. Bateman's *Vestiges of Ancient Races in Derbyshire*, and his *Ten Years' Diggings, passim*.

⁶ Abury, p. 46.

outline ; the incised decoration is perhaps unique in delicacy of execution. It consists chiefly of horizontal bands of zig-zag work, and square compartments that are traversed by diagonal bands, saltire-wise, the ground minutely stippled. The skeleton, in perfect preservation, the head towards the east, lay in a cavity, about 5 ft. deep and about the same in length, cut in the solid chalk and roughly vaulted over with blocks of "sarsen stone." Along the right side of the corpse there had been a wooden staff. There were also, near the right elbow, a beautiful axe-head of hard grey limestone perforated for a haft, and a broad thin blade of bronze, probably a dagger ; the handle had wholly perished, it had been attached by three rivets that still remained. This blade measured $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length, and $2\frac{3}{8}$ in., greatest breadth.⁷ The cist, in this remarkable interment, lay beneath a small barrow raised about 4 ft. above the natural level, and composed of chalk covered with dark mould full of animal bones. In a small adjacent mound were bones of deer, wild boar, and birds, in very large quantities.

The foregoing notice, hitherto it is believed unpublished, of one of the most remarkable interments on record, of the age to which the highly ornamented drinking cups appertain, cannot fail to be an acceptable accompaniment of the account of the urn of that class, the first found in Anglesey. It presents, moreover, an instructive exemplification of the burial-usages of the period, with the combination, comparatively rare, of weapons both of stone and metal that show the highest skill in their manufacture.

In concluding this account of fictile relics brought to light in Anglesey and various parts of the Principality, in which also it has been thought desirable to refer, for the purpose of comparison, to such objects of the like class, respectively, as have occurred elsewhere, it is almost needless to remind the reader that it is almost exclusively from the grave-mound and the recesses of the burial-cist that our very

⁷ Compare the axe-head of similar type, Hoare, *Ancient Wilts*, vol. i. p. 165, and the bronze dagger, p. 105. The deposits of the period that have been examined in Wiltshire mostly present relics of superior workmanship, indicating a higher degree of civilisation than may have existed at the same age in other districts of Britain. Several beautifully wrought

drinking-cups, exactly similar in fashion to that found in Anglesey, have occurred in Northumberland, accompanying unburnt bones deposited in stone cists, but without objects of metal. A valuable collection is preserved at Alnwick Castle. A good specimen from a cist at Amble near the mouth of the river Coquet, is figured, *Archæol. Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 282.

imperfect knowledge has been gathered in regard to the earlier occupants of the British Islands. Of the active life of those remote races we possess doubtless some vestiges in the strongholds and vast entrenched works that crown many of our hills, whilst no one can fail to be impressed by the solemn yet simple grandeur of stone monuments,—the Cromlech, the Circle, and the Menhir,—but it is from the dark chambers of the tomb that we are enabled to gain our slender knowledge, not merely of the funereal usages of those ancient races, but of the skill to which they had attained in fabricating objects of warlike or of domestic use. Hence, moreover, may we seek, however dimly, a certain insight into the progress of civilisation. Amongst those relics, the urns, commonly designated sepulchral, are almost the only objects that present any approach towards the arts of decoration, and afford some evidence of peculiar style or motive of ornament.⁸ Hence it is, that fictile vessels of the earlier races may claim careful consideration. Greatly are we indebted to such zealous and acute observers as Mr. Greenwell, who, during recent investigations of grave-hills in Yorkshire, has thrown much light on the traces of early occupation in the northern counties. We may refer to the series of burial-urns brought to light in his researches in 1864, and published in this Journal, as comprising the most instructive exemplification, probably, hitherto brought before the archæologist.⁹

A question of considerable interest suggests itself in connection with the ancient vessels, the fashion and uses of which it has been the object of the present memoir to illustrate by examples chiefly derived from the northern parts of Wales,

⁸ A few examples of celts and blades of bronze with geometrical ornament incised or impressed by hammering have occurred in England, the designs resembling for the most part those that occur upon urns, such as zigzag lines and the like. Such objects of bronze, are, however, very rare in this country, although comparatively common in Ireland. A large celt found in Northumberland and thus decorated is in the Museum at Alnwick Castle. *Archæol. Journ.*, vol. xix. p. 363. See also vol. xviii. p. 167. These relics are, however, of a much later period than the greater portion of the large cinerary urns, such as those noticed

in this Memoir, and which present, without exception, the only examples of decorative work in Britain at the early period to which such fictile productions may be assigned.

⁹ *Archæol. Journ.*, vol. xxii. pp. 97, 241. The long promised work on the grave-hills and earlier antiquities of Dorsetshire by Mr. Charles Warne, F.S.A., will supply a very valuable illustration of the burial-urns of a district singularly rich in ancient remains; many of these vessels are of unusual dimensions, differing, also, in their fashion from those of other parts of England.

or from the ancient Mona. The urns familiarly designated "sepulchral" have been regarded by some antiquarian authorities, whose conclusions well deserve consideration, as properly and exclusively destined for mortuary uses, presenting also in their form or their decoration features specially significant or symbolical in connection with the hallowed purposes of funeral rites. Such an opinion has lately been expressed in this Journal by one of our most sagacious investigators, who distinctly asserts his belief that none of the vessels accompanying interments,—incense-cups, drinking-cups, or the like,—were domestic; all these *ficilia* were, according to his judgment, specially manufactured for the purposes of burial.¹ This may, however, appear questionable. Amongst ancient peoples, of whose advanced conditions and of whose skill in decorative arts we have ample evidence,—the Greeks and the Etruscans,—we may recognise the use of sepulchral vases, properly thus designated; the subjects delineated upon them appearing, in many instances, to indicate such a primary intention. On the other hand, the admirable vases of bronze, of clay, and of glass, that occur with Roman interments, are, perhaps without exception, such as were in daily use. The so-called "cinerary vases," with which frequent discoveries of Roman burials have made us familiar, are almost exclusively such as were, in their original intention, of daily use, but most readily available also as *obruendaria*, or depositories for the incinerated remains. Of the same unquestionably domestic character are the *ampullæ*, *patellæ*, and *pateræ*, the lamps, and the jars or *ollæ*, with other accompaniments of burial in the Roman age.

To revert, however, to burial-urns of the pre-historic age to which the present memoir relates; it appears highly improbable that, in times of low and inartificial conditions, any objects or fictile vessels should have been specially fabricated for funeral rites. It must be considered, moreover, that no other pottery whatever, of that early period, has been brought to light in Britain, so far as we are aware, that may be regarded as of domestic use, in contradistinction to such as may have been exclusively sepulchral.² All other accom-

¹ See Mr. Greenwell's Memoir on Grave-hills in the North Riding of Yorkshire, Archæol. Journ., vol. xxii. p. 99, note 4.

² The investigation, however, of any sites of dwellings in the early times has hitherto been very imperfect. It is probable that some of the "hut circles" or

paniments found in the grave-hill are such as were used in daily life, implements of the chase or of war, the knife or the arrow-head of flint, ornaments of jet and of amber, the whorl of the distaff. Of the four types of urns, according to the classification given at the commencement of this memoir, two,—the food vessel and the drinking cup, appear unquestionably designed for the ordinary uses of life. We can scarcely doubt that such was their original intention; that they were actually the household appliances used by the deceased when living, and placed near the corpse, with provision for the dreary journey of darkness to a state of existence beyond the grave.³ The so-called food vessel is, in many examples, provided with projections or ears pierced, so that a cord, of twisted sinew possibly, or of vegetable fibre, might pass through them. The inference seems obvious, that such vessels were adapted either for convenient transport or for suspension in the dwelling.

In regard to the curious so-called "incense cup," and the purpose conjecturally assigned to it, namely, to contain certain perfumes or unguents suspended over the funereal fire, either, as Mr. Fenton imagined, to augment the flame, or to diminish in some degree the disagreeable odors of the burning corpse, it is doubtless possible that even in a very primitive state of society such a practice may have existed. It were, indeed, no idle supposition to trace herein some tradition of Oriental usages, preserved amongst the descendants of Aryan or other immigrant Asiatic races. We are indebted to Mr. Lodge, whose residence in India has made him conversant with usages in the East, for the information, that in cremation at the present time, as he had occasion to observe, it is not unusual to place upon the breast of the corpse a small cup of earthenware, containing some powerful perfume, whereby the disgusting and insalu-

of the remains of trogloditic abodes, for instance in the cavities lately explored near Salisbury, may be referable to very archaic times. At Caerleb, Anglesey, fragments of pottery resembling the sepulchral urns have been found in a circular dwelling inside the camp. The earliest traces of fictile manufacture have been assigned to the "Reindeer Age"; fragments of rude pottery occur in the kjoekkenmoedding in Denmark, supposed to be of the age of polished stone implements.

³ In some "long barrows," (in which

urns are not found,) for instance at Winterbourne Stoke, Wilts, small circular or oval cavities have occasionally been noticed, sunk in the chalk, near the deposit of bones. These may, as Mr. Greenwell observes, have served the same purpose, namely receptacles for food or drink, as the urns deposited with unburnt bodies in the later grave-hills. *Arch. Journal*, vol. xxii., p. 105, note 9. Such cavities were also formed to receive the incinerated bones. *Ibid.* p. 259, note 3.

brious stench might be remedied. In Eastern lands, such potent fragrance was readily obtained ; but whence, it may be asked, were perfumes or unguents to be procured in the "Neolithic" or Later Stone Age, to which the vessels under consideration appear mostly to belong ? In some districts of Britain even the resin of the *Pinus sylvestris*, the stately growth of which in Denmark at that period seems subsequently to have been superseded by the oak, may have been obtained with difficulty, although possibly this and other coniferous trees had long flourished in some of our forests.

These are, however, points of curious investigation that the limits of the present notices do not permit us to pursue. It may suffice to invite attention to the probability that all the so-called sepulchral vessels, without exception, were fabricated for the ordinary purposes of daily life.

In the foregoing notices of a very remarkable class of early relics, no endeavour has been made towards determining the age of the various types respectively, or the precise periods of advancing civilisation to which they may appertain.

The address on primæval antiquities, delivered by Sir John Lubbock, at the congress of the Archæological Institute in London, has brought before us a valuable and lucid summary of the results of modern research in regard to the succession of periods, and the evidence on which conclusions have been based.⁴ In the "Palæolithic Age," it is believed that, in Western Europe, no trace of pottery or of metal is found ; implements of stone, never polished, and distinct in their form, characterise that archaic period. Hand-made pottery, with polished stone axes or implements, occurs first amongst vestiges assigned to the "Neolithic Age." To this later stone period, extending, according to the conclusions of archæologists of reliable authority, to a thousand years, approximately, before our era, the most ancient interments seem to belong. The corpse, in a sitting posture or crouched up, or the ashes after cremation, was deposited in the burial-mound. The introduction of bronze into Western Europe, about the time that has been mentioned, by no means superseded the use of stone implements. During the examination

⁴ Arch. Journal, vol. xxiii., p. 190.

of burials by Mr. Bateman, in three-fourths of the barrows containing bronze, stone objects also occurred. It should be borne in mind, although the case may be purely exceptional, that the Normans found opponents who wielded the axe of stone as late even as the battle of Hastings. The fashion of the burial-urn likewise was in all probability retained occasionally, long after the supposed limits of the Stone Period to which it properly may be ascribed; and it is by no means incredible that the vase disinterred, as before related, in the Islet of Bronwen near the banks of the Alaw in Anglesey, should have actually contained the ashes of the Fair Aunt of Caractacus, in accordance with the local tradition.

To the Bronze Age, commencing possibly some thousand years before our era, the more skilfully fabricated urns are doubtless, for the most part, to be assigned. It should, however, be no marvel if, with vessels apparently analogous to the drinking cup, the thurible, or the food vessel, relics of types recognised as properly of more archaic character,—the axe of stone, or the flint flake—should, in certain exceptional cases, be found associated in the tomb. It is even possible, that some evidence of the incipient knowledge of iron, by which bronze may have been almost superseded, in most parts of Western Europe, about two thousand years before our days, should, in a few exceptional instances, be brought to light amidst vestiges of more ancient usages and industry.

These, however, are subjects still involved in great obscurity; the most sagacious may hesitate to assert positive conclusions, in regard even to inquiries that arise as we approach more nearly to the dawn of historic light.



Fig. 7, a.—“Incense Cup,” found at Mynydd Carn Goch, near Swansea. British Museum.
Original size.

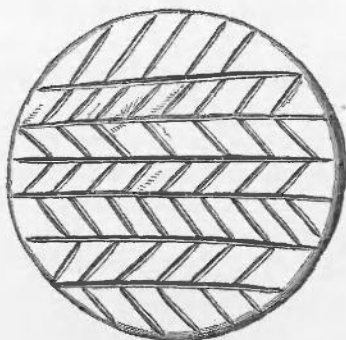


Fig. 7, b.—Ornament on the bottom of the “Incense Cup” found at Mynydd Carn Goch.