

### III.

NOTICE OF A SMALL CEMETERY, CONTAINING DEPOSITS OF CINERARY URNS AND BURNT BONES, ON THE ESTATE OF BALBIRNIE, IN FIFE; AND OF A SIMILAR CEMETERY, ALSO CONTAINING DEPOSITS OF URNS AND BURNT BONES, AT SHERIFF-FLATS, LANARKSHIRE; WITH NOTES ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF URNS FOUND IN SCOTLAND. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, ASSISTANT-SECRETARY AND KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

In the month of October last, John Balfour, Esq. of Balbirnie, a Fellow of the Society, brought to our Treasurer, Mr Douglas, some fragments of cinerary urns which had been discovered in a rabbit burrow on his estate, and kindly offered an opportunity of inspecting the locality of the discovery. I accompanied Mr Douglas to Balbirnie on the day appointed for the examination of the deposit, which proved to be a group of interments of a most interesting character.

The locality was a very slightly elevated knoll in the wood of Drymmie

in the parish of Kettle, about four miles from Balbirnie House. I exhibit a tracing from the Ordnance Map, made for me by Mr Ballingall the factor on the Balbirnie estate, who accompanied us to the spot and gave us the benefit of his advice and experience. The elevation of the knoll was so slight as to be scarcely distinguishable, but its dryness, and the open nature of the soil, arising from its frequent disturbance for purposes of interment after cremation (indicated by the presence of a thick layer of black ashes and charcoal underneath the vegetable soil), had caused it to be selected by the rabbits as a place for their burrows, by which it was penetrated in all directions. The surrounding land, we were told by Mr Ballingall, had been all under cultivation till about thirty years ago, but had been then planted with firs which are now of considerable size.

The completeness of the arrangements made by Mr Balfour for the necessary excavations left no contingency unprovided for, and, thanks to the energetic superintendence of Mr Gold, the gamekeeper (in whose special department the discovery had first occurred), the work was completed in the pleasantest and most expeditious manner, although the position of the interments underneath the roots of a dense plantation necessitated the cutting and removal of a number of trees, and rendered the digging unusually difficult.

Commencing at the spot where the fragments of the first urn had been found, we dug down to the hard subsoil on which there was a deposit of ashes plentifully mixed with fragments of burnt bones which had escaped from the broken urn. We then trenched over the



Fig. 1. Urn found at Drymmie Wood, Balbirnie (6 inches high).

crown of the knoll for about four or five yards on either side of the first excavation. In the course of this operation we found one entire urn (fig. 1), another with a portion of the side broken away (fig. 2), and three more in fragments. The bed of black ashes we had first met with covered a space of three or four square yards in the centre of the excavation, and the urns were met with at irregular intervals within it. The entire urn (fig. 1) stood with its mouth downwards, and it will be seen that its interior is perfectly clean for about half the depth from the bottom upwards. I need hardly say that this could not have been the case unless it had been inverted. When found, the mouth was completely closed with earth, of which it appeared to be full, and it was retained in this condition for a day or two; but as on drying it showed symptoms of cracking, I judged it better to remove the earth from its interior, and allow it to dry equally. On

doing so, I found that the earth only stopped the mouth of the urn, and that there was a hollow space underneath, in which there were a very few fragments of burnt bones quite white and free from any admixture of soil. The can-shaped urn (fig. 2) stood mouth upwards, and was entirely filled with fine black ashes, part of which I have allowed to remain in it. Taking some portions of this fine black powder, I have examined it microscopically, and find that it presents traces of vegetable structure, so that it is in

all probability the finely-levigated ash of wood burnt in large quantity, so as to render combustion incomplete. One reddish-coloured urn lay on its side in fragments, the upper part crushed down on the lower, so that it must have been broken long ago, probably by the passage of the plough when the land was under cultivation. Other broken urns lay quite

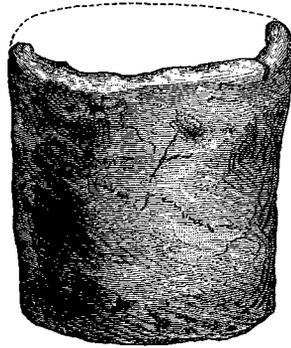


Fig. 2. Urn found at Drymmie Wood, Balbirnie (4½ inches high).

near it, and owe their fragmentary condition probably to the same cause. The burials are all after cremation, and they are probably placed on the spot on which the burning of the bodies took place. The layer of ashes extending over the area on which the urns were found gives probability to this. When the funeral pile had burnt out and cooled down, the fragments of the bones were carefully collected together, the urn inverted over them, and the surrounding ashes and earth heaped over all. The interments were not necessarily all made at one time. The probability is that no two of them were absolutely contemporaneous, but there is nothing to show that any one of them is very much older than any of the others. Perhaps no great length of time may have elapsed between the first and the last. In all probability the period during which this solitary burial-place was used was also the period in which some family of influence and distinction flourished in the neighbourhood. The occurrence of so many interments of similar character in a single spot suggests that it must have been a family cemetery; and from the ornate character of the urns we may fairly draw the conclusion that it must have been a family of some distinction. There was no great cairn or superincumbent mound to be removed in order to permit the ashes of the later members to be placed beside those of their kindred who had gone before. Indeed, this peculiar form of urn seems usually associated with burials that are not distinguished externally by cairns or barrows of great size raised over them. I am unable to say whether this difference in the external form of the burial may be due to a difference in time or to difference of customs subsisting at the same time. This is one of those interesting points which it is impossible to determine in consequence of the imperfection of the record. But it is possible to recognise in this group of burials a specimen of a class of sepulchral deposits which is peculiar in its character. Little local cemeteries, consisting of groups of urns of this special form, inverted over the burnt bones at a slight depth under the surface of the ground, and unprotected by either cists or cairns of stones, have been more frequently recorded in Fife than in any other part of Scotland.

One of these small local cemeteries discovered at Westwood, near

Newport, in October 1865, is described in our "Proceedings"<sup>1</sup> by the late Mr Andrew Jervise. It consisted of a group of nine or ten urns disposed in a circle, about 14 feet in diameter. They were for the most part inverted, and placed at a depth of from 8 to 28 inches beneath the present surface. Eight of them were of the same typical form as these urns from Drymmie Wood, flower-pot-shaped below, constricted in the upper part, and having above the constriction a heavy overhanging rim. They were set in the ground without any protecting stones, and it was noticed that underneath several of them there was a hard bed of burnt ashes 2 or 3 inches in thickness. In one case there was a small cup-shaped urn within the larger one, and in another instance a smaller urn of the same shape as the others was found inverted in the mouth of a larger one. Nine of these urns are in the Museum, having been presented by Mr Walker of Westwood, on whose lands they were found.

Another very remarkable cemetery of this kind was discovered in 1845 near Carphin House, in the parish of Creich, Fifeshire, and is also described in our "Proceedings."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the description is dated twenty years after the discovery, and thus loses much of its scientific value. Still more unfortunately, although there were no fewer than twenty-two urns discovered, not one of them was obtained for preservation in the Museum, and it is doubtful if even any fragments of them now exist from which their precise form and character might be determined. They are described as of various forms, and differently, though rudely, ornamented. One was placed mouth uppermost, and is said to have had a lid, a very unusual, though not an unparalleled circumstance.<sup>3</sup> Most of the others were inverted, and all of them contained burnt bones and black earth or ashes. Fourteen of them were placed singly in a row, and about 3 feet apart; the others were disposed irregularly. One, which is rather oddly described as "in no way uncommon in appearance," is nevertheless said to have been a "cup filled with earth

<sup>1</sup> Vol. vi. p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. vii. p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> The food vessel type of urn has been occasionally found with a lid, but I have seen no record of such a lid occurring on a cinerary urn.

without bones,"  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height and  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches in breadth. Another was conical in shape,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, 9 inches diameter at the mouth, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch thick. A third was 14 inches high, with an overhanging rim 3 inches deep, and projecting about an inch over the collar of the urn. They were all found about a foot below the surface. There is no doubt that this was a cemetery of a character similar to that in Drymmie Wood, and it is greatly to be regretted that a group of urns which is the largest on record should have been allowed to perish thus utterly, without an effort having been made for its preservation.

The third group was discovered in 1847 on the east side of Craiglug in the same parish.<sup>1</sup> The group had been partially disturbed about fifty years before that time, but in 1847 Mr Lawson, the minister of Creich, disinterred six urns, which he found at depths of from 3 to 15 inches below the surface, placed without regular order, and, as he says, crowded together. One was  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter at the mouth and 18 inches high, another 11 inches diameter at the mouth and 15 inches high, a third about 9 inches diameter at the mouth and 10 inches high. They were all of the same typical form—flower-pot-shaped below, with a perpendicular upper part having a collar or constriction beneath the overhanging rim.

A fourth small cemetery of this kind—distinguished from the others, however, by the presence of bronze—occurred near Law Park Nurseries, St Andrews.<sup>2</sup> A large stone which stood in the way of the plough was being removed, and in the operation of digging it up, two urns were discovered by the farmer, in one of which were "two thin bronze knives about 3 inches in length." Eighteen other urns of large size, varying in height from 10 to 16 inches, were found in the immediate vicinity. Some were inverted, others were upright and had their mouths covered with thin flat stones. They all contained calcined bones. One flint flake, and considerable quantities of the bones and teeth of oxen and sheep and cores of their horns, occurred beside the urns. It is not

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings, vol. vii. p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Sculptured Stones of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 59.

known that a cairn had covered the spot, but it is stated that in the course of agricultural operations stones had been removed from it. In all probability there had been in this case some accumulation of stones and earth, forming a tumulus over these deposits. The urns, a number of which are preserved in the Museum of St Andrews University, are mostly of the same type—flower-pot-shaped and plain below, with an ornamented overhanging brim. The bronze blades were oval-shaped, and terminate in a tang at one end.<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, are five cases in the county of Fife having the following characteristics in common :—

1. They are local cemeteries, each containing a small group of burials.
2. The burials are all after cremation of the body, and the ashes are enclosed in urns.
3. The urns are all, or nearly all, of the same typical form—flower-pot-shaped below, perpendicular, or nearly so, above, having a collar or constricted part immediately underneath the overhanging rim.
4. The ornamentation of the urns is of the same character—groups of straight lines differently disposed, and is confined to the upper part of the urns.
5. The urns were for the most part inverted over the burnt bones.
6. They were all set in the earth, at slight depths beneath the surface, generally unprotected by stones, and always without enclosing cists or great superincumbent cairns.
7. In these five cemeteries, including an aggregate of seventy-four separate burials, there was nothing found deposited with the burnt bones, and their enclosing urn, except in one solitary instance. In other words, no implement, weapon, or ornament occurred with seventy-three urns, while two bronze blades occurred with the seventy-fourth.

A few days after having been at Balbirnie I received information from Mr A. Hunter, M.A., schoolmaster at Covington, and from Mr Baillie of

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings, vol. x. p. 436. Notices of Small Bronze Blades, by Dr John Alexander Smith.

Culterallers, a Fellow of the Society, that several urns had been found by Mr William Bell, farmer, Sheriff-flats, on his farm near Thankerton, Lanarkshire. Sir Windham C. Anstruther, M.P., on whose property the place is situated, kindly offered the opportunity of further investigation, and I went down in company with Mr Carfrae to see the

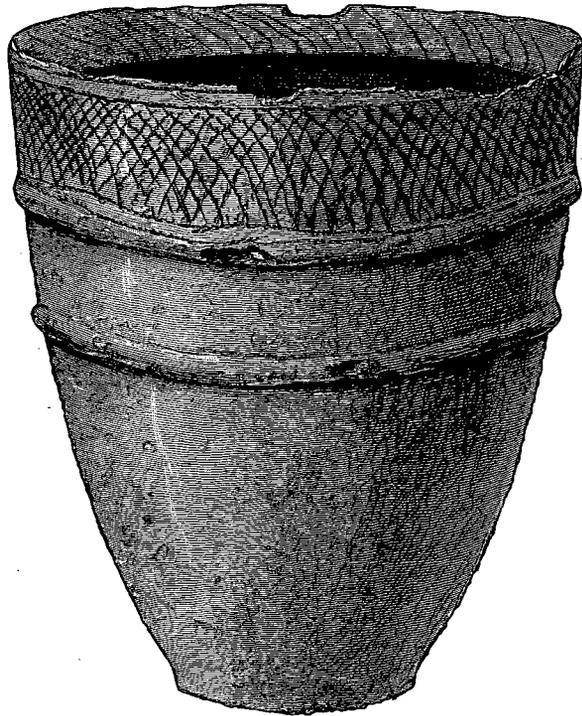


Fig. 3. Urn found at Sheriff-flats (13 inches high).

locality. Sir Windham Anstruther had arranged to meet us, but was unfortunately called away on business. Mr Bell, by Sir Windham's instructions, provided a couple of men, and we proceeded to excavate what of the cemetery had been left undisturbed. It had been situated on

a gravelly knoll in a field near the road on the south side of the farmhouse of Sheriff-flats. A large space on one side of the knoll had been used as a gravel-pit, probably at the time when the road was made, and it was in levelling down the remainder of the knoll that Mr Bell had discovered the urns. Three of them were more or less entire, and several



Fig. 4. Urn found at Sheriff-flats ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches high).

others were broken in small fragments. The two largest of those that are preserved, viz., fig. 3, which is 13 inches high by 12 inches in diameter across the mouth, and fig. 4, which is nearly of the same dimensions, although originally it must have been considerably larger, were found simply inverted over the burnt bones, the third (fig. 5),

which is  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches high by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in diameter, was in a small cist formed of four flat stones, with a large flat stone laid over them.

Commencing at the side of the knoll next the road, where there was a part still undisturbed, we trenched the ground over for some distance, meeting with a stratum of black ashes, occasionally mingled with fragments of urns, but nothing more encouraging appeared until a large stone was exposed with evident traces of disturbance of the gravel underneath. Following this indication, we dug to the depth of about

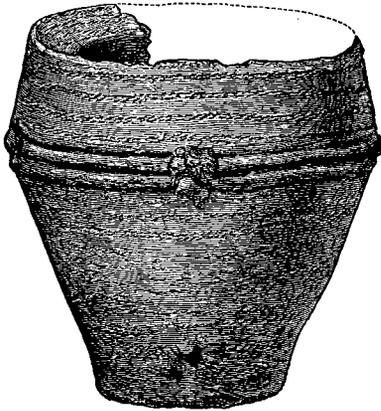


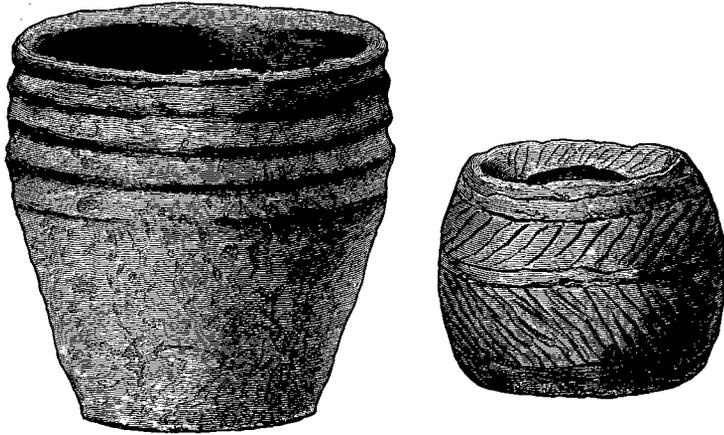
Fig. 5. Urn found at Sheriff-flats  
( $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches high).



Fig. 6. Urn found at Sheriff-flats  
(5 inches high).

$3\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and found the deposit of burnt bones, among which lay the urn here represented (fig. 6), in fragments. The fractures are old, and the urn must have been broken long ago. It lay partly on its side, the upper parts crushed down upon the lower. The bones were spread so much that they could not have been all contained in the urn, the pieces of which seemed rather to lie among the bones. Two or three more deposits, more or less disturbed, were met with, and some fragments of urns; but as there was now little left of the original area of the knoll

in this direction, we shifted one of the men to the other side in the afternoon, and got a third to assist in running a trench along from one end of the knoll to the other. Three or four deposits were found in the course of this operation, but no urns. The burnt bones were simply laid in a heap at a depth of about a foot and a half under the present surface. They were in some cases more scorched than burned; but all were much broken, and always mingled with a large quantity of very black ashes. In one case the heap of bones was placed within an imperfect cist formed of three flat stones, each about a foot in length, and set so as to form three sides of a square. There was neither bottom nor cover. At the other end of the knoll, near where the largest urn was found, we came upon a deposit of bones at a depth of about 2 feet from the



Figs. 7 and 8. Urn and small Cup-shaped Urn found at Sheriff-flats  
(6 inches and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches high).

surface. They formed a heap, covering an area of about 15 to 18 inches diameter, thinning to the outside, and about three or four inches

deep in the centre. Near one side of the heap, partly upon the bones and partly containing them, the urn here figured (fig. 7) lay on its side, and we were fortunate enough to be able to extract it entire. Close beside it, and apparently underneath the bones (for it was not seen until they and the larger urn had been removed from the hole), lay the small cup-shaped urn (fig. 8) which had been unfortunately broken in the removal of the rest of the deposit. It was so soft that the part that was first found would scarcely bear separation from the moist earth, but we ultimately succeeded in getting the most of the pieces, and it is now reconstructed.

Both the small cup-shaped urn and the larger one with which it was found are interesting specimens. They each present peculiarities that are uncommon in the class of vessels to which they belong, and there is no urn exactly similar to either of them in the Museum. The small urn belongs to the rare variety of unpierced vessels of this class, and it is also rounder in form and more highly ornamented than usual.

Here we have a small cemetery which in many of its features bears a striking resemblance to those I have previously described in Fife. Its features of resemblance are that the interments are all, except in one case, after cremation of the body, that they are mostly accompanied by urns, and without weapons or implements, and that they are mostly placed at a slight depth in the gravelly soil. Its features of difference are that none of the urns are of the type with the thick overhanging rim, that they vary extremely in shape and size, that a number of the deposits were unaccompanied by an urn, and that one was protected by an incomplete cist and another enclosed in a cist of the ordinary construction.

It becomes an interesting question whether the materials exist for the determination of the place of this class of local cemeteries in the chronological series. So far as the record at present shows there is no decisive evidence that they are of the Stone Age, and, on the other hand, they have nothing in common with the burials of the early Iron Age. Later than this they cannot well be. So far as the negative evidence goes, it would,

therefore, assign them to the age of bronze in Scotland, that is to a period certainly anterior to the Roman Invasion. The evidence of the few things actually found with the deposits in these cemeteries is entirely in accord with this conclusion. The two knives of bronze found in one of the urns at St Andrews, and the occurrence of small cup-shaped urns in the cemeteries at Westwood and Creich, as well as at Sheriff-flats, taken in connection with the fact that these small urns are often found with articles of bronze, point distinctly to the conclusion that the burials with which they are associated must be referred to the Bronze Age. It may be objected that among such a large number of interments, such implements or weapons as bronze swords, celts, or spear-heads ought surely to have been found if these are Bronze Age cemeteries. But it would be contrary to experience that these should be so found. I know of no single instance that can be authenticated of a bronze sword, a bronze spear-head, or a bronze celt having been found with a burial in Scotland. The notion that such objects ought to be found with burials has given rise to much confusion, but a careful investigation of the evidence shows that no case can be substantiated. There are certain forms of bronze implements and weapons which are usually found with burials, such as the knife-dagger with rivets, knife or blade with tang, awl, called frequently a pin, &c., and there are certain forms of bronze implements, such as the sword, the large heavy broad-bladed dagger, the spear-head, and the flanged and socketed celt, which though frequently found in hoards, or singly in the soil, do not occur in association with interments in this country.

The beautifully-ornamented bronze celt (fig. 9) now exhibited, though obtained by Mr Douglas and myself on the occasion of the excavation of the cemetery in Drymmie Wood, was not found in association with the interments. It was discovered some years ago by Mr Robert Lindsay, the tenant of the neighbouring farm of Dams, in a mossy piece of ground at a short distance from the place where the interments were made. There is no reason to doubt that it belonged to the people of the locality, and it may have belonged to the people who used the cemetery; but

of course there is no ground for attributing it positively either to them or to any other individuals. It is, however, a remarkably beautiful and interesting specimen of its class. The form is not uncommon in Scotland, but the ornamentation is rare, and we have no other specimen in the Museum exhibiting the same ornamental pattern.

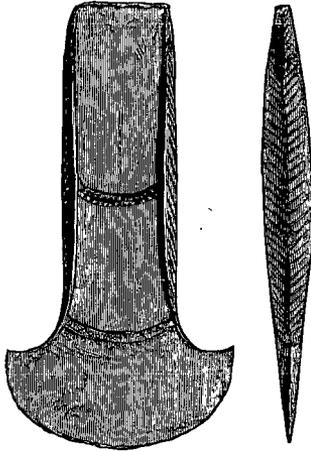


Fig. 9. Bronze Celt found at Dams, Balbirmie ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long).

I shall conclude this paper by a broad general classification of the clay sepulchral urns found in Scotland. They are readily divisible into four classes, two of which are found with burnt bodies, and two with bodies unburnt.

Those found with burnt bodies are the large cinerary urns and the small cup-shaped vessels.

1. *The Cinerary Urn*.—This is usually a vessel of large size, formed of coarse paste, plentifully mixed with broken stones to prevent it cracking in the fire. In shape it is narrow at the base, widening greatly to the shoulder, above which it contracts and is finished by a heavy overhanging rim, or a simply moulded or slightly everted lip. Its ornamentation is always on the upper part, usually above the shoulder, and consists either of moulded horizontal bands, or of impressed groups or bands of straight lines placed roughly parallel or intersecting each other obliquely. Occasionally a moulding is found below the shoulder, but this is rare, and the lower part of the urn is always absolutely plain. There is perhaps less variation in the general form of this variety than any of the others. These urns are found only with burnt bodies, either enclosing or partly containing the incinerated remains. Sometimes they are inverted over the burnt bones, at other times they are set upright with the bones placed within them and the mouth covered with a flat stone. In the case of the

very large urns there is rarely an enclosing or protecting cist. Sometimes one urn is placed inverted over the bones within another urn, as in the cemetery at Westwood already referred to. I have attributed these urns to the Bronze Age, on the ground that articles of bronze are occasionally found with them. But nothing can more forcibly illustrate the scantiness of the materials that exist for such attributions than the vain search among the records of their occurrence in Scotland for some tangible data. These failing, I have analysed the tabulated statements of the results of Canon Greenwell's examination of 220 barrows chiefly in the North of England. From these 220 barrows he obtained 69 cinerary urns or vessels of cinerary shape. With 52 of these neither stone nor bronze implements occurred. Of the remaining 17, three only had implements of bronze and 14 had articles of stone. The bronze implements were one knife and two awls. The stone articles in seven cases were flint flakes, two were scrapers, two arrow-heads, and three were knives of flint. I mention these facts to show how very rare is the occurrence of objects whose character is sufficiently distinctive to differentiate the burials with which they occur.

Including those now described, there are 36 urns of this class now in the Museum. They are chiefly from the counties of Mid-Lothian, Fife, Forfar, Aberdeen, and Banff, but this gives no clue to their actual distribution in the country, it only shows where the Society has had zealous friends. Scarcely one in twenty of these large vessels is extracted from the soil entire, and the fragments are usually left scattered where they are found. Hence the scientific value of such really remarkable discoveries as those at Drymmie Wood and Sheriff-flats, is greatly enhanced by the preservation of the urns.

2. *Small cup-shaped Urns.*—The second class of clay vessels also found with burnt bodies is the small cup-shaped urn. This class of urns has been so fully treated of by Dr John Alexander Smith, in a recent volume of our "Proceedings,"<sup>1</sup> that it is only necessary to refer to that paper in which all the examples found in Scotland up to that date are

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ix. p. 189.

figured and described. Since Dr Smith's paper was written three specimens have been added to the Museum. One is from Beith,<sup>1</sup> another from Blairgowrie,<sup>2</sup> and the third is the one dug up by Mr Carfrae and myself at Sheriff-flats.

The purpose of these tiny vessels has given rise to a variety of conjectures. It has been suggested that they may have been censers or incense cups, or lamps, or salt-cellars, or vessels for carrying the sacred fire that was to light the funeral pile, or cups for the strong drink required on the occasion of the funeral feast, or vessels destined to contain the ashes of the brain or heart, or for the bones of an infant sacrificed on the death of its mother. All these conjectures are equally probable, inasmuch as they are all equally unsupported by evidence. The only thing known in connection with their use is that in one or two instances they have contained the bones of a child,<sup>3</sup> in all other instances they have contained nothing. They have never been found unless with burnt bodies, and usually placed within a larger urn and upon or among the bones contained in it. They have often occurred in England in association with articles of bronze, such as knife-daggers and awls, and at other times with implements of flint, and ornaments of jet.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to observe, however that these small cup-shaped and perforated vessels are peculiar to Great Britain and Ireland. I saw none of them in the great Scandinavian collections, and I can find no record of their occurrence in France or Central Europe. Their use is still a matter of speculation, on which no decisive evidence is available. But the fact that they form such a special class of sepulchral vessels, when taken in connection with the other fact that they do not occur beyond the British Isles, invests them with a peculiar interest. Not only so, but we have in this another link towards the demonstration of a great fact in Archæology, which has not hitherto received the attention which it

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings, vol. xii. p. 685.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings, vol. xii. p. 624.

<sup>3</sup> See a paper on these small urns, by Dr John Alexander Smith, in the "Proceedings," vol. ix. p. 189. See also a paper on "Ayrshire Urns," by James Macdonald, LL.D., F.S.A. Scot., in the Ayr and Wigtown Collections, 1878, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Greenwell's British Barrows, p. 80.

deserves, viz. :—that special areas present special phenomena, and that, therefore, the general principles which apply to one area are not always or necessarily applicable to any other.

The next two classes of urns, viz., food-vessels and drinking-cups are usually, though not exclusively, found with unburnt bodies. They are called food-vessels and drinking-cups from their supposed use—not because it has been definitely ascertained that they were placed beside the dead filled with meat and drink. If this were the case it would require explanation why some were provided only with food and others only with drink, for I know no instance in which both a food-vessel and a drinking-cup have been placed in the same grave.

1. *Food-Vessels*.—These vessels are usually conical below, with the upper part ornamented with mouldings or knobs, and a thick lip. They are often highly decorated over the whole surface. In rare cases they have been furnished with lids. No instance of this, so far as I am aware, has been recorded in Scotland. Ornamentation of the bottom is almost as rare. We have one belonging to the Museum so ornamented, and another at present exhibited in the collection also presents this peculiar feature. Their geographical range extends over the whole of the British Isles. But they are rare in the South of England, increasing in number northwards, while in Ireland they are the prevailing form. In this country they are usually found in cists, set in the soil, in natural hillocks of sand or gravel, or in small barrows, and more rarely in cairns.

In a series of 70 interments with food-vessels described by Mr Greenwell, 53 had nothing with the body except the urn, 15 had implements of flint, and 2 had implements of bronze. Of the 15 implements of flint 7 were knives, 4 were scrapers, and 1 was an arrow-head. The two bronze implements were awls.

2. *Drinking-Cups*.—This tall, handsome form of sepulchral urn is very common with us. It is usually 7 or 8 inches in height, thin and well baked, made of fine paste, well mixed with sand or finely pounded stone, and usually of a bright red colour. It is more limited in its range than the food-vessel form. While the food-vessel is the commonest of

Irish urns, there is not a single specimen of this tall thin-lipped drinking cup in Ireland. It is thus a form peculiar to Britain. Vases having a certain analogy with it occur in France, and one or two examples in Denmark seem to be akin to the British form, but the analogy is not so close as to warrant us in saying that they are the same. In this case, again, we have an instance of a limited area possessing a very peculiar and characteristic form of sepulchral vessel—so peculiar and so characteristic that one may almost say with certainty, when such a specimen is presented to him, that this form belongs to a region so well defined that it could not have come from any part of the earth's surface outside the coast line of Great Britain, unless it may be from one of the Channel islands.

As yet, however, we are only awakening to the important bearing of the question of the geographical distribution of archaeological forms. When the progress of investigation has widened the field of observation sufficiently, there must inevitably arise a new science, which I may call, by anticipation, the science of comparative archaeology, whose province it will be to deal with differences rather than with resemblances, and to differentiate rather than to generalise. The results of this study will be the sharper definition both of the areas of space and the periods of time over which specific differences can be traced, and the demonstration of the great principle that, in the process of association for the purpose of defeating the law of natural selection, the social aggregates thus formed had each an individuality of character which expressed itself in all its methods of doing things; and that just as no two men do the same thing in exactly the same manner, we must cease to talk in such a confident way of similar results being always produced by the human mind and the human hand acting under similar circumstances in similar stages of progress, because this is the question whose answer lies at the end and not at the beginning of such an investigation as I have indicated.

MONDAY, 10th February 1879.

JOHN R. FINDLAY, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

A Ballot having been taken, the following Gentlemen were duly elected Fellows :—

JOHN RANKINE, Esq., Advocate.

CHARLES POYNTZ STEWART, Esq., M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge.

The following Donations to the Museum and Library were laid on the table, and thanks voted to the Donors :—

(1.) By JOHN BALFOUR, Esq., of Balbirnie, F.S.A. Scot.

Two Urns and fragments of seven others, from an ancient cemetery in Drymmie Wood, on the estate of Balbirnie, Fife.

Ornamented Bronze Celt, found on the farm of Dams, near the Cemetery. [See the previous communication by Mr Anderson.]

(2.) By JOHN BRUCE, Esq., of Sumburgh, through Gilbert Goudie, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

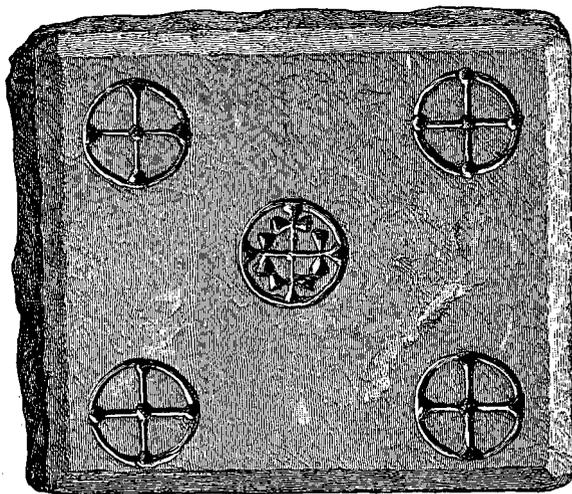
Rune-Inscribed Stone, found at Cunningsburgh, Shetland.

[For a drawing of this stone, with reading of the inscription, see the subsequent paper by Mr Goudie.]

(3.) By JAMES WOOD, Esq., Galashiels.

Altar-Slab of Sandstone, found in digging a grave at Coldingham. This interesting relic is a square slab of whitish sandstone, 11 inches by 10, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in thickness, slightly bevelled on the upper edges and smoothed on the upper surface, which has the usual five crosses incised upon it, as seen in the accompanying engraving. Such slabs

were usually inserted in the wooden framework of the altar, and, in fact technically formed the altar itself. This slab may have belonged to one



Altar Slab found at Coldingham (11 inches by 10).

of the smaller altars, of which there were usually a number in churches like that of Coldingham.

(4.) By Mr WILLIAM BROWN, Shepherd, through Benjamin N. Peach, Esq., H.M. Geological Survey.

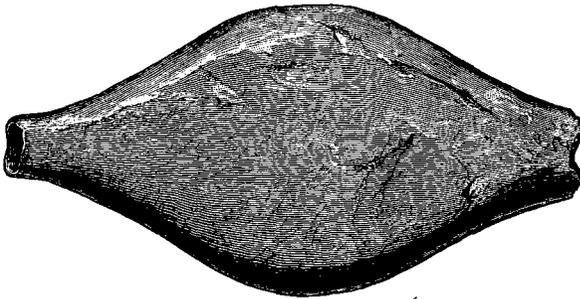
Large oblong Bead of Cannel Coal, cylindrical in form and swelling in the middle, perforated longitudinally by a hole which is wider at the extremities than in the centre of the bead, and shows signs of wear, as if by a string, at the outer edges. The bead measures  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length. It was found at the bottom of a peat bog on the Watch Hill, near Loch Skene, Moffatdale. Beads of this form, and especially of such a large size, are very rare. A necklace of such beads, ranging from 1 to 5 inches in length, and mixed with rudely-shaped and perforated pieces of

amber, was found, along with a fine well-polished celt of black flint, in the parish of Cruden, Aberdeenshire, in 1812. The beads and celt are



Bead of Cannel Coal found near Loch Skene ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long).

figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities, &c., exhibited in the Museum of the Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, held during their annual meeting at Edinburgh in 1856. They are preserved in the Arbuthnott Museum, Peterhead. Another bead of a similar material, and also of very large size, is in the Society's Museum. It is wider in proportion to its length than the first-mentioned bead, and is also distinguished by being greatly flattened on two opposite sides. It measures



Bead of Shale found near Pencaitland (6 inches long).

6 inches in length, 3 inches in width, and is fully an inch in thickness. It was found in the bed of a burn in the parish of Pencaitland, East Lothian, and presented to the museum in 1870, by Arthur Trevelyan, Esq., of Tyneholme. It is here figured for the sake of comparison.

(5.) By BENJAMIN N. PEACH, Esq., H.M. Geological Survey.

Rounded Hammer-Stone of white quartz, 2 inches in diameter, bearing marks of use all over its surface. Found in Shetland.

(6.) By JOHN S. GIBB, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

Leaf-shaped Arrow-Head of reddish flint, 1 inch in length, found at Wandershiel, Aldbar, near Brechin, Forfarshire.

(7.) By J. R. WALKER, Esq., Architect.

Drawings of two Sepulchral Slabs at Killarrow, Island of Islay. The first is a slab 6 feet 10 inches in length, 2 feet wide at the top, and 18 inches at the bottom. It has the figure of an ecclesiastic in relief within a tri-cusped niche; on the one side the figure of a chalice, the other plain. The lower part of the stone is occupied with a pattern of foliaceous ornament, and the whole surrounded with a border consisting of a flat band.

The second slab is considerably mutilated in the upper part, so that the original length is uncertain. It contains part of the effigy in high relief of a man in armour, a sword with recurved guard and knobbed pommel, right arm and head gone.

(8.) By THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY.

Catalogue of the Library of the Royal Scottish Academy. Compiled by John Hutchison, R.S.A., F.S.A. Scot., Librarian. 4to. 1878.

Forty-first Annual Report of the Council of the Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. 8vo. 1878.

(9.) By WALTER DICKSON, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Japan: Being a Sketch of the History, Government, and Officers of the Empire. By Walter Dickson. 8vo. 1879.

(10.) By the Right Hon. the LORD CLERK REGISTER.

The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland. Edited by George Burnett, Lyon

King of Arms. Vol. II. A.D. 1359-1379. Published by the Authority of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Lord Clerk Register of Scotland. Imp. 8vo. 1878.

(11.) By the MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1652-1653. Imp. 8vo, 1878.

There were exhibited—

(1.) By J. R. FINDLAY, Esq.

Two Engraved Plates or Trenchers of white Metal, brought from Venice, one having a scriptural and the other an allegorical subject.

The following Communications were read :—