

VIII.

ANCIENT BRITISH BARROW AT
TEDDINGTON.

THIS Barrow was opened under the direction and superintendence of Mr. Akerman, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, during a meeting of the Surrey Archæological Society, held at Kingston-on-Thames, on the 30th June, 1854. It is situated on some ploughed land, long known as "Barrow Field," on the right hand of the carriage-road called "Sandy-lane," leading from Hampton Wick to Bushey. A portion of this tumulus was removed when the road was widened about twenty years since; but there is no record of any relics having been then discovered.

There were, as usual, many traditions—some of them wild enough—respecting the spot. The country people had a story that a man and his horse were buried beneath the mound; and many of the better educated believed that it covered the remains of numerous victims of the plague in the seventeenth century. This last notion had so possessed the mind of a late royal personage then residing at Bushey, that a contemplated opening of the Barrow some years since was positively interdicted!

This mound had clearly been previously assailed; doubtless by treasure-seekers, who, finding their researches opposed by a compact mass of sand, had desisted after cutting into the south side, and digging into the apex; in which latter assault they appear



ANCIENT WEAPON DISCOVERED IN A TUMULUS AT TEDDINGTON.

BRONZE—length, 7 in.; breadth, $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.

to have dislodged and broken to pieces a fine mortuary urn.

Thus mutilated, the Barrow afforded but slight encouragement to the explorers : it was, however, resolved to excavate it to its base. In its imperfect state, its altitude was about twelve feet ; its breadth from north to south fifty-two feet, and from east to west ninety-six feet. These measurements show how much had been removed when the road was widened.

The exploration commenced by the opening of a trench eight feet wide, but the presence of bricks and tiles, carelessly thrown in by former investigators, discouraged further excavation in that direction ; accordingly, a trench of the same width was opened on the south side. After several hours' work, the labourers reached the centre of the floor, which was plainly indicated by the sand being burnt to a brick-colour. Traces of charcoal were now apparent, and after a few minutes' careful examination and removal of these indications, a small heap of calcined human bones was discovered. Upon these was laid the dagger-blade represented in the accompanying plate.

No traces of an urn, nor of any other object, except a few chippings of flint, were observed. Fragments of the like character are found in primeval tumuli, and may have been used by the tribe which assisted at these obsequies.

This Barrow was formed entirely of the surrounding soil, consisting chiefly of a compact sand, and was singularly free from large flints and stones. Nor was the heap of bones protected by a covering of stones, or by soil differing from that of the mound.

Further excavations on the following day brought to light the fragments of the large urn already spoken of,

and a flint hatchet-head, or celt; also the bones of an adult, superficially buried; but these had no connection with the interment already described, which was doubtless that over which the mound was first raised.

The bronze dagger-blade, if not belonging to the very earliest period, must yet be referred to a very remote age; and the individual whose obsequies had thus been celebrated by the rite of cremation, was probably a person of some rank and consideration among the primeval inhabitants of the southern district of Britain, long previous to the advent of Cæsar.

Mr. Quekett, of the Royal College of Surgeons, has inspected the calcined bones, which he states are those of an adult. He has detected among them portions of the cranium, portions of the upper and lower maxilla, the fang of an incisor tooth, and a fragment of a phalangeal bone of a finger. The whole had been reduced by great heat, and with free access of air during combustion.

The dagger may be compared with the examples figured in Akerman's "*Archæological Index*," Plate V. Nos. 40, 41, 42. The handle, of bone, wood, or horn, has perished; but traces of its form are yet observable on the blade. It is represented in the plate of two-thirds the actual size.
