

ART. XVI.—*Cists and Urns found at Brackenhill.*

By G. H. Dixon and Lord Northesk.

Communicated at Carlisle, August 20, 1891.

THE President read the following Report:—"I have the honour to submit an extract from a newspaper, the *Carlisle Patriot* of May 1, 1891, containing an account by Mr. G. H. Dixon, of a find at Brackenhill, near Longtown, Cumberland, in December, 1890. Mr. Dixon informed me of the find so soon as it occurred, but ill health and the severity of the weather made it impossible for me to visit the place.

EXTRACT.

Some few months ago, whilst Mr. Standish's workmen were employed in getting gravel from an old pit in the vicinity of Brackenhill Tower, they came upon sundry rough unchiselled stone flags, which unfortunately were considerably broken before it was found that the structure which they formed contained human bones. After this discovery was made, the men went to work in a more careful manner, and ultimately exposed a rough *double* tomb or cist, containing evidently the remains of two human bodies. The cists were only about 3 feet in length and divided into two compartments, one rather smaller than the other, the whole composed of freestone flags and covered with the same. The cists were as nearly as possible standing south by north. About $1\frac{1}{2}$ yard on the eastern side were found some other flags, set in an upright position, and within them were the remains of broken pottery.

I had the ground carefully examined in every direction for further relics, but no other remains could be discovered.

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I had the bones and all the debris carefully collected, leaving the cists exactly as found (where they now remain).

I forwarded the former to Mr. Standish, the owner of the property, who had them examined by Lord Northesk. I may add that there is a very old and unexpired legend of a ghost haunting this particular locality. I append Lord Northesk's report :

The fragments of pottery are British (early), of cinerary urn type, with a projecting rim. The clay is too thick for the smaller class of utensils commonly called food vessels, drinking cups, &c. I think they belong to two separate urns, but there are not enough to set up, so as to give an idea of their original size and shape. The two fragments of jaw form portions of the lower jaw of one individual, all teeth being present with the exception of the left canine and four incisors. Taken by itself I should attribute it to a woman of somewhat large development, and from 25 to 30 years of age. But the thinness of some of the portions of the crania sent with it, together with the youthful appearance of some of the other bones, suggests that either the remains belonged to two distinct individuals, one much younger than the other, or else that the jaw is uncommonly large for the age indicated.

The bones are fragmentary, chiefly vertebræ, and without fuller examination and measurements I can only give a general and untrustworthy opinion ; that some belong to a much larger body than the other, whilst regarding a few of them, I have doubts as to their being human at all. It is a pity that more of the urns was not discovered, and from the sound state of the jaw, the remainder of that cranium was probably missed when the cists were opened.

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