

XVII.—RECENT EXPLORATIONS IN ANCIENT BRITISH
BARROWS, CONTAINING CUP-MARKED STONES,
NEAR BIRTLEY, NORTH TYNE DALE.

BY THE REV. G. ROME HALL, F.S.A., VICAR OF BIRTLEY.

[Read on 27th January, 1886.]

THE Parish of Birtley, Northumberland, with the adjacent district between the North Tyne and the Watling Street, is remarkable for the number of still existing remains of pre-historic times which can be readily traced upon the summits of its pastoral hills and along the slopes of its upland valleys. Most of these "camps" or hill and vale forts, lines of terrace-culture which are distinctly marked, and cairns or burial-barrows and so-called "Druid stones," have been already described in various antiquarian publications, with illustrative maps and plans.¹ Here and there, however, notwithstanding former careful examination of the district, since the writer's paper "On the Aboriginal Occupation of North Tynedale and Western Northumberland" was read at the Newcastle-upon-Tyne meeting of the British Association for the Promotion of Science and Art in 1863, new and hitherto unobserved relics of these far-distant ages and of the early inhabitants of Britain have come to light either by accident or through scientific investigations.

Many years ago explorations in what appeared to be a primeval cemetery upon the farm of Low Shield Green, near Birtley, had been

¹ *Archaeologia Acliana*, New Series, Vol. VII., pp. 3-17—"On Ancient British Remains near Birtley and Barrasford."

Ibid., Vol. X., pp. 12-37—"An Account of the Gunnar Peak Camp, North Tynedale, and of Excavations in the Ancient Circular and other Dwellings."

Nat. Hist. Trans. of Northumberland and Durham, New Series, Vol. I., pp. 151-167—"On the Opening and Examination of a Barrow of the British Period at Warkshaugh, North Tynedale."

Ibid., Vol. III., pp. 32-53—"An Enquiry into the Origin of Certain Terraced Slopes in North Tynedale."

Archaeologia (Soc. Antiq. London), Vol. XLV., pp. 355-374—"An Account of Researches in Ancient Circular Dwellings near Birtley, Northumberland."

Proc. Soc. Antiq. (London), Second Series, Vol. XI., pp. 187-189—"On an Ancient British Cist at Chollerford, North Tynedale." (See also Dr. Bruce's notice in *Proc. Soc. Ant. Newc.*, ii., 170.)

made, when a great cairn of stones called "Dan's Cairn," and a large group of smaller cairns scattered over a plateau under the crags, were examined in detail; but, as exemplifying the foregoing remark, we had passed close by the first burial-mound now to be described without noticing it, on our way to these prior diggings. There the chief tumulus and several of its satellites, bearing the local and distinctively Gadhelic or Erse name of "currachs," situated near the long ruined cottage of High Shield Green, and an ancient "camp," had either been rifled by former explorers, or, like similar mounds on the Yorkshire Wolds, had another sufficient reason for their unproductiveness. The vestiges of the humbler Britons buried therein had wholly disappeared in the lapse of very many centuries, probably through the absence of any kind of protecting cist or stone-lined sepulchre.² This barrenness of result for three days' hard work made my friends and coadjutors, the Rev. Wm. Greenwell, F.R.S. and the late Rev. J. Bigge, M.A., Vicar of Stamfordham, disinclined, as I was, to undertake fresh investigations in some neighbouring *tumuli* nearer to the village of Birtley—at least on that occasion. The close proximity of the ancient "camp" with its surrounding ramparts and inclosed circular dwellings, rendered the disappointment the greater when the large "Dan's Cairn," and other mounds scattered over the plough-furrowed plateau near it, proved almost wholly unproductive.

Our recent diggings began about half a mile to the south-west from "Dan's Cairn," on the same farm of Low Shield Green, about a quarter of a mile to the south of the well-known farm-house of that name, and the same distance, nearly due north, from the shepherd's cottage of Pitland Hills on the high road to Birtley village. All the four burial-mounds which we examined are upon the estate of the noble Patron of our Society of Antiquaries, the Duke of Northumberland, under whose auspices and by whose liberal aid the researches in the Gunnar Peak "camp," near Barrasford, as well as in these cairns near Birtley, have been carried out.

² *Arch. Aeliana*, New Series, Vol. VII., p. 13. *British Barrows*, pp. 340, 341, where Mr. Greenwell decides against the supposition that "these now empty and tenantless barrows are cenotaphs; that, in other words, no interment has ever taken place." The total decay of the inhumed body would be caused by the free admission of atmospheric influences by reason of the porous nature of the covering matter. Also compare "Introduction;" pp. 27, 28, "Notes."

LOW SHIELD GREEN CRAG BARROW.

In November, 1884, favoured by unusually fine weather for the season, two days were occupied in examining this Low Shield Green cairn or barrow. On the first day, November 6th, besides our usual diggers, who had been with me in other explorations, I had the advantage of the active co-operation and efficient help of the Bishop of Newcastle, Dr. Wilberforce, one of our colleagues much interested in archaeological research, and the Rev. G. B. Fenwick, M.A.; the Rev. W. W. Perrin, M.A. of Southampton, and Mr. Percy Robson and his son, and Mr. T. Robson, tenants of the farm, being also present.

The site chosen is remarkably fine, the mound having been raised upon the brow of the great line of high freestone crags, that lift a bold and rugged front to the north from the Mill Knock "camp" and quarry on the west, and trend round towards Tone Hall on the east. The Tone "Nick," or wide fissure in the crags, is visible from the Scottish hills at the head of the North Tyne and Keilder Burn, and this cleft is near the site of the barrow on the eastern side. A great portion of the valleys both of the Rede and North Tyne appear in the farther distance, while in the near foreground are spread out beneath the eye in panoramic view the terraced hill slopes of Buteland and its "camp," now almost obliterated, the beautiful "clints" or rocky cliffs and deep wooded "denes" of Countess Park, with another "camp" nearly effaced, and the glimmering sun-lit reaches of the broad and winding river (where the famous salmon stream of Hargroves, the best on the Tyne, tempts the angler) as far as the conical-shaped hill of Garret Hot—still crowned with the natural growth of forest which gave its Saxon name, *Holt*—opposite Reedsmouth. The elevated site bears, therefore, a typical character, and is such as the primeval chieftain desired for his last resting place, in order that his burial-cairn, "high and broad" like that of the renowned hero, Beowulf, on the great sea-washed promontory, should be placed so as

"To be seen afar."

It is evident that this barrow has been a time-honoured landmark and boundary mark. Two farms, on the Birtley estates of the Duke of Northumberland and the Duke of Portland respectively, meet in close proximity to it, and an ancient "peth," a bridle road or hollow

way, runs against its circumference on the north. This road was used within memory. The adjoining high walls of the enclosed fields, taken from the "fell" land, have been formed out of the materials supplied by the great cairn, as of a quarry ready to hand. Thus its present surface, covered with short heather and coarse "bent" grass, is only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the natural level of the ground.

In form it is, as usual, nearly circular, being 60 feet in diameter from east to west, and 54 feet from north to south. Above the undisturbed level, unhewn stones brought from the neighbouring crags are mingled with "forced" soil, many stones, large and small, being much reddened by the action of fire, and others having apparently been chosen on account of their peculiar hollowed-out and honey-combed appearance caused by natural accretions and crystallization. In the trench, 3 feet wide, which we opened from the southern limit northwards for 27 feet, there were several large flagstones set up on edge towards the centre; here were two white quartzite pebbles and a small indurated and glaciated boulder, while on the undisturbed surface we met with a well-preserved and carefully chipped scraper or thumb-flint, for use in preparing the skins of animals for various purposes of dress, etc., such as the Eskimo and other northern races still use in this way in adapting the produce of the chase—for clothing especially. This worked flint is of an irregular oval shape, formed with skill. In length it is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches and in breadth 1 inch. The original colour is lost, as it has now become a greyish-white from the calcining action of fire, shown also by slight cracks and flakings off at the thin cutting edge.

The first trench cut came very near to the centre of the barrow, as it were grazing the western side of a massive slab of freestone which was 2 feet 1 inch in length by 1 foot 11 inches in breadth, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness. It lay north-east by south-west.

CINERARY URN, No. 1.

After carefully removing this flat stone there was found beneath it a large cinerary urn of very rude material and character, lying on its side, having probably been overturned by the superincumbent pressure. Instead of a cist or stone-lined grave a hollow had been made in the natural surface of white sandy clay, which had been beaten



CINERARY URN, NO. 1, FROM LOW
SHIELD GREEN CRAG BARROW.

“FOOD-VESSEL,” WITH SKELETON
FROM CIST NO. 1, PITLAND HILLS
BARROW, WITH INCENSE CUP AND
FRAGMENTS OF URNS.

CINERARY URN, NO. 2 (CRUSHED),
FROM LOW SHIELD GREEN CRAG
BARROW.

URNS FROM BIRTLEY, NORTH TYNEDALE.



into a hard and consistent mass almost like cement, as if during the funereal rites and obsequies of the British chief it had been rendered so by the tread of many feet, while the rainy season of that far-distant time was prevailing on the (then) forest-clad hills and valleys. The surface-soil, at the time of cremation, may also to some extent have been subjected to fire beforehand, judging from the indications. This urn is $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, 10 inches in diameter at the top, and $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the bottom. The pottery is of a very thick and coarse kind, and the scoring or ornamentation is of the simplest character, impressions made by a notched stick, upon the upper portion of the exterior. The urn is now in the possession of the Bishop of Newcastle, at Benwell Tower, and his lordship has kindly presented a photograph of it to illustrate this paper. Being in an exceedingly damp and friable state, when discovered, a part of the rim unfortunately broke off and stuck to the covering slab in the act of raising it. The under-surface of this stone was blackened with an unctuous adhesive mould that seemed to have been laid over the rude vase. It had been very carefully wedged in against the sides of the artificially-made hollow by small stones and the cement-like clay, already referred to. Such was the extreme hardness and tenacity of this material that it resisted the application of smaller tools; and the blows of a pick-axe, wielded by a powerful arm, were needed to make any adequate impression upon it. Then the urn, guarded by the spade during the difficult process of extrication, was at length displaced. This tenacity of the surrounding mass is a peculiar feature, which I had not previously met with in the barrows of Western Northumberland, though the Rev. Wm. Greenwell informs me that he has observed it in the course of his very wide experience. The urn came forth still embedded in cement in one great block, which broke into two pieces, after which it was soon cleared of the incrustation. From the very damp and friable condition of the vase we were obliged at once to set on fire much dry grass and paper—often a most necessary precaution—in the interior as well as around the exterior, in order to dry and harden the frail and rude pottery. After this it could be safely placed on a prepared pile of hay procured from the neighbouring farm-house, where it became still more hardened in the flames of the great “bon-fire” lighted in the “gloaming.” In the fast-gather-

ing darkness of a November evening it might well have been compared with the pre-historic chieftain's funereal pyre itself once lit on the same spot long ages since, or with the watch and beacon fires of mediæval days on our Border hills; for it must have been seen very far off in the valleys northward and southward, and across the "wastes" westward to Christenbury Crags in Cumberland.

Another trench made towards the west from the centre was 4 feet broad and 17 feet long, but nothing of interest was here disclosed but a little charcoal and some fire-reddened stones. We dug much below the level of the undisturbed surface into subsoil which consisted of yellowish-coloured sand, mixed with bands of a pure white sand. Eastward of the urn-deposit and close to it stood an upright monolith of irregular pyramidal form, with its solid base firmly set in the ground. It was 4 feet 4 inches high, 1 foot 6 inches broad at the widest part, and from 10 to 12 inches in thickness. The top of this pyramid-monolith, now truncated, seemed to have been broken off in comparatively recent times, probably at the building of the adjoining fence walls to bring it near the level of the present surface of the burial-mound. Originally the stone must have stood higher.

CINERARY URN, No. 2.

Upon this monolith, laid prostrate, was placed the other half of the rude block of cement-like clay, which had broken off from the part in which the cinerary urn, just described, was imbedded. On returning to the spot four days after to finish the exploration of this barrow, we were surprised to find that by the drying action of the sun and wind a second rude cinerary urn had appeared in the interval and was now separated from the previously adhering mass as from a mould. It also had been lying on its side, with the bottom towards the mouth of the other, and in closest proximity. It was smaller than the other, being 10 inches in height, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, respectively, at the top and the bottom. Unfortunately, by pressure from above, the second urn had been crushed inwards, and the broken part, nearly half round, now lies within it, covering the ashes of cremation, a portion of which can be seen protruding at the edge. The burnt bones, which are practically indestructible, were somewhat less than usual in quantity in both vases, as if the work had been done

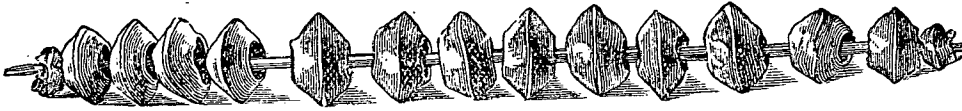
very effectually. They were mingled with small fragments of charcoal, and burnt earth much reddened by fire.

INNER CIRCLE OF STONES.

Continuing the trench eastward to the circumference, 3 feet wide and 20 feet in length, we found no cist or deposit there, as might have been expected from the size of the mound. At the end of the trench but few stones had been left by the "dry-stone wallers," who had made that part roughly level with the soil. The south-east portion of a barrow is a direction often productive, as well as the east, and for the same reason; because, as many think, connected with sun-worship, that oldest and most widely diffused of nature-cults. (This was found well illustrated some years since in the exploration of the Warkshaugh Family Barrow, on the east bank of the North Tyne.) We now, therefore, made another trench from the south-eastern edge, 4 feet wide and running north-west for $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet to the centre. Near the latter we discovered a singular arrangement of flat slabs of no great size, set on end, two and two together, which had surrounded the central double cremation, instead of the more usual oblong cist or stone-lined grave. On the west side the plan adopted was most evident. In this way a rude circle had been formed all round, except on the east where smaller single stones had been set up in a line with the pyramidal-monolith, before described. The diameter was 9 feet 9 inches, within the encircling stones, of this nearly circular space. This was probably the portion of the grave-mound first built over the urns when deposited in the central cist-like hollow.

It may be considered a proof of the comparative poverty, even more than the extreme antiquity of the pre-historic tribe inhabiting the district, that nothing was found within this barrow except the *cinerary urns* of the Ancient Briton, and, it may be, of his wife (the very close association in death suggesting relationship in life, if not also her death by Sutteeism of which indications elsewhere exist); and a solitary specimen of *worked flint*, certainly brought from a distance, to denote human handiwork. About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant, however, to the north-east, near Four-Laws Inn on the Roman road, the Watling Street, and near Agricola's camp, a similar cairn produced a necklace of *gold* beads which had probably been attached to or strung upon a piece

of bronze. Some of these beads are now in our Society's Museum at Newcastle, and others are in that of Alnwick Castle.³



PITLAND HILLS BARROWS.

In the middle of June, 1885, we were led to undertake the examination of a group of mounds, apparently a so-called "Twin-Barrow," two being closely adjoining, and a third outlying about 80 yards distant to the north-west. The site is near the cottage of Pitland Hills, on the farm of Mr. Harle of Barrasford, who readily gave permission to make the explorations we desired. Here are numerous remarkable "pits" or hollows in the ground, not "swallow-holes" in the limestone rock, but evidently artificial, in some cases having a ring of earth thrown out in their excavation surrounding them. Some of these circular hollows are from 6 to 8 feet in depth and from 10 to 16 feet in diameter across the upper part, becoming very narrow at the bottom by a regular slope. They might easily be mistaken for Ancient British pit-dwellings, such as I have observed in Yorkshire and Cumberland, and which are met with in many districts in the south of England. But from the result of digging, when only nodules of ironstone, whole or broken, came to light, they seem to be ironstone workings of uncertain date. The double or triple lines of these cup-like excavations pass eastward for some distance beyond the shepherd's cottage, and westwards, along the slope of the limestone escarpment above the freestone, for more than a mile by Cornacres and Birtley West Farm. Those near Pitland Hills, however, are by far the largest of the series, which not improbably may have been the work of late Ancient British, Roman, or Romano-British, and also of mediæval seekers for the valuable ore, which is here found close to the day.⁴

³ See *Arch. Ael.* (O.S.), Vol. I., pp. 1-9.

⁴ About two miles to the north in the valley of the "Steel-burn," a tributary of the Rede, in the parish of Birtley, it is well-known that Sir W. G. Armstrong and Company, obtained until a few years since (till Spanish ores superseded it) a large quantity of iron ore of rich quality for their Elswick Ordnance Works. It should be here noted that a supposed Roman way from PROCOLITIA, by Wark's ford across North Tyne to the Watling Street, passes close to Pitland Hills. Local tradition relates that it was "made" through the ancient forest before the Norman conquest.—See *Arch. Ael.* (N.S.), Vol. VII., pp. 19-21.

There is little doubt that these ironstone excavations give the origin and derivation of the place-name, "Pitland Hills"—the "hills" being the mounds or "hillocks," now to be described, which alone break the level surface of the green plateau of limestone on which they have been raised. Yet another and interesting derivation is suggested by local tradition, which was mentioned to me many years ago by an intelligent neighbouring farmer.⁵ He informed me that his "fore-elders" called the place not Pitland, but "*Pictland* or *Pickland*" Hills, and that the ancient people, the Picts, or "Picks," as he preferred to pronounce the word, had a settlement here, and in working for iron and coal in the shallow pits on the moor first used the implements which our miners still call "picks," thus named after the people who introduced them! It is noteworthy that the cairns scattered over our wild Northumbrian uplands, as at High Shield Green previously described in this paper, and on those of the Scottish Borders, are often associated with that fierce race of invaders from the north, whose name and deeds became a terror to the Romanised Britons of the Lower Isthmus, and probably for long afterwards. "On the moors of Northumberland, such heaps are pointed out as places where a Pict's apron-string had broken, as he was carrying a load of stones to some of his superhuman erections."⁶

The Pitland Hills group of barrows stands about 600 yards south-south-west from that on the Low Shield Green Crags. The whole surrounding and adjacent land was once a portion of the common-field used for arable cultivation by the villagers of Birtley in what was formerly termed "rig-and-rean" cultivation. This seems to have been a kind of "survival" of the ancient system of the Aryan Village

⁵ The late Mr. Wm. Charlton of Rushy Law, which is the next farm to Pitland Hills eastward. His father lived to the great age of 103 years. Both were well-versed in the folk-lore of the district. *Pickland Hills* is still the more common local pronunciation.

⁶ *Rambles in Northumberland*, p. 104. Compare Mr. James Hardy's "Ancient Sepulchral Monuments in the East of Berwickshire" (*Proc. Berw. Nat. Club*, Vol. III., p. 103), who describes the moorland tumuli of various dimensions as "mere rounded conical eminences, overgrown with heath or long grass, with lichen-covered or white-bleached stones peering through. Tradition tells that they were put together by 'little strong men' called 'Pechs.' This is so far correct if we regard the name 'Pechs' as one applied indiscriminately to any of the original native tribes, and affords an indication that they belong to a class of antiquities, unconnected with the present Saxon population, and placed beyond the aera of their traditional reminiscences."

Communities; such as the late Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, Bart., has noticed as also occurring near Wallington.⁷ The presence of these wide, not straight but curving furrows, made by oxen-ploughing, caused the Rev. Wm. Greenwell and myself, when examining the district, to infer that they were most probably heaps of stones gathered from the tillage land. But on later and closer inspection I found those which were exposed near the crown of the largest mound and on its east side proved to be weather-bleached sandstones, as were also those which had been removed thence to form the foundation of the closely adjoining "dyke" or hedge-row, on which a long line of tall hawthorn trees still flourishes, testifying to the native fertility of the soil. Further, it was observable that these hillocks had been in existence before this long-discontinued culture began; because the furrows ran into the bases of and between the "Twin-Barrows." In the case of the larger mound they diverge at the western side, and make an acute-angled bifurcation; the ridge and hollow of two furrows passing nearly north-east and south-east respectively, so as to render the shape of the barrow approximately like that of the half of a pear cut lengthwise.

BARROW NO. 1.

These reasons decided me to test this largest mound, which was 46 feet in diameter from east to west and 35 feet from north to south. The height from the undisturbed surface to the crown was found to be 5 feet 6 inches; but the northern face was on a slight rise of the limestone rock, so that it appeared on that side 6 to 7 feet high. On the south it remained only from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet high. The slope of the hill on the west was very gradual, and measured 28 feet from the meeting point of the furrows on the level up to the crown.

A tradition, which I first heard during the progress of our excavations, was known to a former shepherd's wife, an aged dame, who had often spoken to her family of her desire to dig into the great mound in search of "the treasure of silver" said to be secreted in this great fairy knoll, so like the Gaelic "*shian*" associated with the hero Ossian. Children of the cottage have since told me they had

⁷ See Seebohm's *Village Communities*; also *Arch. Ael.*, Vols. IX. p. 53, and XII. p. 189.

often danced upon it and heard something "rattle and jingle" beneath their feet. Strange it is that the old dame's wish had not long ago been gratified; but, deterred by superstitious feeling, the mystery of the cairn remained unrevealed.

CUP-INCISED STONES.

Our diggers first opened a trench, 3 feet 6 inches wide on the south side, and proceeded 10 feet due north, when they came upon two sandstone slabs bearing upon them the singular incised cup-markings *on both sides*, which were found by their earliest discoverer, Mr. Langlands at Old Bewick, so long since as 1825, and afterwards by the Rev. W. Greenwell near Doddington in Northumberland. Two of the hollows were very large, and one was not round but in shape like a gibbous moon. All the cavities were filled with clay, so that the men had not noticed the cup-markings when removing the stones. These at once served as indications that this was undoubtedly a pre-historic burial-barrow. Altogether, I may here add, *seventeen stones* bearing incised cups of various sizes and shapes were discovered in this mound, and not a single example in the other grave-hills, although there as well as here many sandstone blocks seemed to have been selected because they were naturally of a "honey-combed" character. A portion of an upper mill-stone—a quern for grinding corn—was found, an unique feature so far as Mr. Greenwell's wide experience in barrow-digging on the Yorkshire Wolds serves. The broken ends of this half-quern had each been graven with an incised cup, the tool-marks or dints by means of which they had been cut into the stone remaining perfectly fresh and distinct. One small slab had upon its upper surface more than a dozen shallow cups, each being only about an inch in diameter. The discovery of these cup-incised stones appears, however, to deserve to be treated more fully than the limits of time now at my disposal will permit. Ere long I hope to give some detailed description for the consideration of our members, and to discuss any special and peculiar features presented by them that may throw, perhaps, some light, feeble though it may be, upon this most difficult subject—still confessedly one of the greatest enigmas of archaeology. A very comprehensive summary of all that had become known on this subject up to

1881, both in the Old and New World, and of the various opinions respecting the origin and meaning of these mysterious archaic rock-sculpturings, is contained in an elaborate paper printed by the United States Government, in *Contributions to North American Ethnology*, Vol. V., pp. 7-112 (4to. 1882), entitled "Observations on Cup-shaped and other Lapidarian Sculpture in the Old World and in America," by Charles Rau. Thirty-five plates of engravings of examples are given, which have been found in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Denmark; also in India, and in North and Central America.

CINERARY URN.

Passing over for that time a large flat slab of sandstone, a second trench was made at right angles to the first, bearing east for 10 feet. Here, close to the now lowered summit of the mound, so that the roots of the green sward were growing down into it, we came upon a small CINERARY URN inverted upon a flat stone. It had a very slight protection from other stones very rudely placed around it, for there was no cist, and no cover-stone remained, if there ever had been one, above it. From pressure by the tread of people, and of cattle and sheep, upon the overlying sward, the urn was unfortunately crushed into a hundred fragments, and therefore impossible to restore. This was the more to be regretted, as it had been probably a fine specimen, the pottery of good, hard-baked clay, well and carefully ornamented with lozenge-shaped scorings made by a twisted thong. Some of the cremated bones of a *young child*, which had been deposited in it, lay amongst the sherds; the rest had fallen into the interstices of the cairn beneath its resting place.

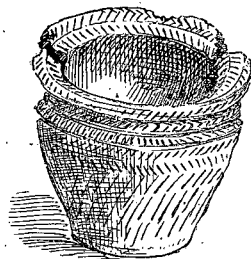
CIST No. 1.

On the next day, June 16th, 1885, I had again the advantage of the presence and assistance of our colleague, the Bishop of Newcastle, and with his lordship were Dr. Hodgkin, one of our Secretaries, and the Rev. Mr. Wilson (late Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight). Another colleague Mr. J. G. Fenwick, Mr. Percy Robson and Mr. D. Wood, churchwardens of Birtley, with others, were also present. The weather favouring us, the results of our second day's explorations were of considerable interest. We were able to do a good deal of

work, having several experienced diggers, and energetic help rendered by volunteers.

FOOD-VESSEL.

On carefully raising and removing the large freestone slab found, as previously mentioned, at the junction of the two trenches cut the day before, nothing appeared at first but a bed of clay level with the surface. The slab was of irregular form, 3 feet 6 inches long, and from 1 foot 6 inches to 2 feet 3 inches wide, by 4 to 5 inches in thickness. When about 3 inches of the clay had been taken out at the top we discovered at the south-west corner another *urn*—of the “*food-vessel*” type. It was removed, after applying fire, in fair condition, and is now exhibited. A “herring bone” ornament runs around the inside of the rim, and upon the exterior on the upper part of the urn and all over its surface are punctured dots, made with a pointed stick or bone, and lineal scorings. The vase is in diameter at the rim 6 inches, at the shoulder $6\frac{1}{2}$, at bottom $2\frac{1}{2}$, and in height $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. (In size and ornamentation it closely resembles the “*food-vessel*” from Hallington, now in the Black Gate Museum, of which the above is a representation.—See *Proc. Soc. Ant. Newc.*, ii., p. 377ff.)



INHUMATION.

This was a pretty sure indication of what might now be expected, for the outline of a cist or stone-lined grave was perceptible, of which the large stone was the cover. Working out the clay very carefully to the north of the food-vessel for a few inches the skull of an Ancient Briton appeared, and soon afterwards the whole of the skeleton, excepting the smaller bones of the hands and feet, was disclosed. He had been laid to rest on his right side, the direction being nearly due east and west, the head to the west, and the body was in the contracted posture, as if of sleep, with the knees doubled up towards the chin. The left hand was under the thigh, and the right arm across the chest. Under the right cheek, as if it were supporting the head, was a rude pebble-hammer of rounded and flattened form, bearing marks of abrasion from use. From the position of the skull and the bony structure, embedded in clay for an unknown but very long

period, the whole bony structure was in a most friable condition ; yet the outward shape being well preserved in its clay-mould, it presented a very striking appearance at the moment of discovery. The numerous fractures, probably of ancient date, caused by superincumbent pressure, made it impossible, with the most careful manipulation to get even the skull out whole.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRANIUM, ETC.

The fragmentary portions of the entire skeleton were removed, and are now in the hands of the Rev. Wm. Greenwell, F.R.S., for further examination, and, if possible, to restore the cranium. This was of the usual type found in Northumberland, namely, *brachy-cephalic*, of the broad or round-headed race. My eldest son, Mr. G. Rome Hall, M.B., took an interest in making out for us the special characteristics of the whole bony fabric, and his notes will be found as an Appendix to this paper.

We were thus able to ascertain that the Ancient Briton was a man in all probability in the prime of life, that is, from forty to fifty years of age at the time of his death. But whether he had died by violence, as in battle, or from natural causes, there was nothing to indicate, as there was in the case of one or two of the (Romano-British ?) skulls from the Gunnar Peak *talus* below the camp, where a sword-stroke across the forehead had evidently given the death wound. The angle of the lower jaw of the Pitland Hills cranium sufficiently decided the age. From the length of the *humerus* his height might be approximately fixed at 5 feet 4 inches ; and he was of a strongly built frame. He had enjoyed the enviable possession of a perfect set of teeth, though some were worn and flattened at the top, so that the dentine was exposed and bared of the enamel, perhaps caused by the friction of sandy particles left in the cereal food after grinding in the gritty stone querns or hand-mills which seem to have been in use from early pre-historic times. The great strength of the muscular markings of the ridge of the leg-bones, etc., denoted the male sex. The comparatively long *os calcis* or heel-bone is supposed to show that the man was of a weaker-muscled race than the Teutonic ;—that is to say, of the preceding and conquered British or Celtic stock. The method of interment corroborated this inference. From the curvature of the frontal bone it was further judged that he possessed a very fair mental development.

The cist itself was not so well-formed as the stone-lined graves found in the Warkshaugh barrow. A hollow, about 4 feet long and 2 feet wide had been first rudely scooped out in the native limestone-rock, leaving a shelf at the western end as a pillow for the head which, as before-mentioned, was also supported by the pebble-hammer. Then three rough oblong slabs of freestone had been set up on the north, south, and east sides, with a smaller slab to fit in at the west, on which the cover-stone had been placed perfectly level. Much of the clay within the grave was of a very unctuous and adhesive character, and the peculiar yellow, oily, and waxy appearance of all the bones is thought to show a tendency in them to turn into *adiposcere*.

CIST No. 2.

Proceeding with our first trench due north from Cist No. 1, at 11 feet distant from its *south* side we came upon a still more rudely made and smaller stone-lined grave of an irregularly oblong form, measuring about 2 feet 6 inches in length by 2 feet in greatest width. Under its covering slab it was filled to the top with stiff unctuous clay, so tenacious that it seemed almost as if kneaded with the hands and then filled in. The spade cut this clay into solid lumps, which retained their form as they rolled down the northern slope of the barrow. Nothing was found within, save small fragments of stone reddened by fire, and pieces of charcoal mixed with the clay. The position of this second cist was about 9 inches above that of the first, and of the undisturbed surface of the ground—the original level. A large unshapely block of stone was placed so, as to slightly project over the cist at the south-east corner which was near the site of the broken cinerary urn. Upon this stone on the upper face were two cup-markings, one of which was smoothed within the hemispherical cavity by use for some unknown purpose. This is the first instance of an incised pit or cup worn smooth in the interior which Mr. Greenwell has heard of, or which I have met with. The body originally inhumed here had entirely disappeared, as in so many similar instances. From the small dimensions of the grave it was probably that of a child. It was much nearer the exterior surface of the burial-mound than the first cist, and less carefully protected from the percolation of rain carrying air with it, which had probably caused the entire decay of the bony structure during the long lapse of time.

East from Cist No. 1, we next drove a trench, and 2 feet 6 inches from its eastern extremity was an upright stone 1 foot 10 inches long by 1 foot 4 inches broad, much reddened by fire at the eastern side, where close to it we took out a large quantity of fiery-red earth and some pieces of charcoal. There were no burnt bones, except a few very small fragments which had dropped down from the cinerary urn that had been placed almost exactly over this spot. Passing 2 feet farther to the east, a yet larger block of freestone had been set up, 3 feet 3 inches in length by 2 feet in height, which was wedged, as it were, into position by small stones fixed there above the limestone strata. This block also was reddened by the action of strong fire at its base on the east side. Continuing in the same easterly direction for 3 feet 3 inches we discovered near to the present edge of the grave-hill a small square stone with a cup incised both on the upper and under side.

MODE OF BUILDING THE BARROW.

On either hand of this stone, to right and left, we noticed in excavating that the barrow had been very carefully built. On the south side the stones were large and massive, laid perpendicularly one upon another for three courses in height. On the north side were several large flat slabs, three of which were *in situ* and overlapping each other like scale armour, diminishing in size from the bottom to the top. It seemed, further, as if a passage-way had been intentionally made from this east side of the mound to the central grave, the primary interment, as it may have been, though it is not the present centre. This way—in some degree corresponding with the duct or channel leading out from the central cup through the incomplete concentric circle on many Northumbrian rock and stone sculpturings—seemed to have been blocked up when the barrow was fully formed, the small cup-marked slab being placed to mark the entrance. The sloping inwards and overlapping arrangement of the barrow-builders externally was again evident at the north side, where there did not appear to have been so much disturbance in recent times as at the south, the plough having cut very largely into that portion of the mound.

Passing to the west of Cist No. 1, a very massive flat slab was observed placed horizontally, which, though not one of the more usual positions in a barrow, we yet hoped might have covered an interment.

It was left undisturbed for a while, until our noble patron, the Duke of Northumberland, when staying at Keilder Castle, should be able to visit the site of our explorations. Nothing, however, rewarded our efforts here when his Grace favoured us with a brief inspection of this group of barrows in August last.

CREMATION-DEPOSIT IN A CIRCULAR PIT.

In one other direction there seemed a probability of finding another interment; that is, on the south-east of the mound. This position would be in the full sun-light, which our Ancient British ancestors most appreciated, generally neglecting the dark and colder north aspect in their funereal arrangements. A similar feeling with respect to the burial of the dead has survived to these late Christian times, the northern and shadowed part of our churchyards being avoided as far as possible. In the large family-barrow opened at Warkshaugh, already referred to, we found the central, east, south-east, and south interments, which were likewise both by inhumation and cremation. At the south-east of this chief barrow of the Pitland Hills group we were similarly successful, though the interment was of so peculiar a character that it is said not to have previously occurred in our county.⁸ At a distance of $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet from Cist No. 1, an afternoon's work, undertaken shortly after the Duke of Northumberland's visit, disclosed two large slabs of sandstone placed horizontally, side by side, and close together. (A kind of flagged way like this was also noticed between the south cist and a cinerary urn westwards in the Warkshaugh barrow.) Under both the slabs there was much reddened earth with pieces of charcoal, almost as if the fires of cremation had been set ablaze upon the spot. The slab farthest to the south-east from the first stone-lined grave had beneath it a very large deposit of burnt bones. The artificial hollow in the soil, covering, and partly in, the limestone rock, which had been made to contain them, was circular, 18 inches in diameter and the same in depth. The soil was thoroughly reddened by fire to the bottom, except on the east side, where the limestone showed itself.

⁸ *British Barrows*, p. 9, Mr. Greenwell says:—"Similar holes are found in the Long Barrows of the south-west of England; but I have never observed anything like them in the barrows of the North Riding or of Northumberland, common as they are in those on the Wolds."

Streaks of yellowish clayey soil intervened here and there around the pit, which may indicate that the cremated remains together with the earthy and other adjuncts had been roughly gathered together and then deposited in this prepared hollow.

Thus the first and principal cairn contained, so far as the result of our explorations serve to enlighten us, a central cist—for it was probably near the original centre—with inhumation (the skeleton of an adult male with his “food-vessel”), and a cremated body, sex or age uncertain, placed in a circular cavity in the same natural level of the ground. These may, therefore, in all likelihood, be safely considered the primary interments. The smaller cist on a higher level, filled with tenacious, unctuous clay, perhaps originally containing the body of a child, and also the crushed and inverted cinerary urn inclosing the burnt remains of an infant, may possibly have been secondary and later interments; they may readily be supposed, however, to have all been the contemporary burials of members of the same family rather than of the same tribe.

BARROW No. 2.

The second burial-mound of this Pitland Hills group has a simpler record of contents, though it also is of considerable interest. It is 20 feet distant to the south from the other—the width of the broad furrow that the oxen-ploughing has cut into both barrows. At first the bases must have been nearly joined, thus forming what is often called a “Twin-Barrow.” This smaller tumulus is now 27 feet in diameter from east to west, and 24 from north to south, and only 2 feet 6 inches in height. Working near the centre, we first came upon a large flat stone about a foot above the undisturbed level, under which were several sherds of thin and rather fine British pottery. No urn seems to have ever been placed there. It may therefore be taken as another example of the ancient Pagan custom of casting broken pieces of earthenware, with flints and pebbles, upon the grave-mound of the dead, as Shakespeare speaks of the funereal obsequies of the fair suicide, Ophelia. Douglas, in the *Nenia*, p. 10, seems to have been the first to call attention to the passage of our great poet as illustrating the frequent presence of these in ancient graves, into which it is difficult to think they could have come by accident.

The priest in *Hamlet*, answering Laertes, the brother of Ophelia,

respecting the "maimed rites" alone permitted in her case, answers (Act V., Scene I.):—

"Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warrant: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her."

CINERARY URN.

Only one interment had taken place in this second barrow, and that by cremation. Near the centre, about 2 feet westwards from the deposit of sherds of pottery, a large cinerary urn with broad projecting rim and two rows of intersecting twisted-thong lines for ornament upon it, was standing, mouth upwards, within an artificial hollow made in the ground, which seemed to be scarcely large enough to admit it. The soil all around it, as in the case of the similar cremation (without an urn) in the adjoining barrow, was much reddened and blackened by fire. With all the care we could exercise, by applying heat to the exterior and interior of this rude and imperfectly burnt vase, we could not save it from falling into many pieces. It was near the present surface of the mound, which had suffered much from being used as a quarry; thus through the single layer of rough stones the damp had penetrated, from which for a long time it had had no adequate protection. The height of the urn was approximately $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter of the mouth 10 inches, at the rim or shoulder 11 inches. The bottom was slightly *convex*, so that it could never have stood alone, and had therefore probably been made specially for its funereal purpose, and had not previously served for domestic use. Its diameter was $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The coarse dark pottery was half an inch in thickness.

INCENSE CUP.

One of these curious, very small vessels called "incense cups," which are only found connected with cremations, rare even on the Yorkshire Wolds—only six were found by Mr. Greenwell of this rarest class of sepulchral pottery—though comparatively frequent in Wiltshire, had been placed near but not in the urn. It had escaped our notice, and a few days after finding the cinerary vase a diligent searcher

lighted upon one-half of the incense cup, which was quite plain, of dark grey pottery, very rudely made, without any scoring upon it, or any perforation. When perfect, it was about 3 inches in diameter, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. Different from the ordinary type, it did not expand from the mouth towards the middle, and then contract gradually again towards the bottom;⁹ but the sides were perpendicular, curving slightly towards the bottom. These small vessels are unknown amongst the various forms of pre-historic sepulchral pottery which have been discovered in Scandinavia, Germany, and France, but are found with more or less frequency in many districts throughout Great Britain and Ireland. As the name implies, the "incense cups" have been regarded as vessels in which to burn incense, aromatic oils, or perfumes. As it is very doubtful if the latter could be obtained in the late Neolithic or early Bronze periods, a more natural supposition is that of the Hon. Mr. Stanley and Mr. Albert Way who incline to the belief that they may have been "chafers," "for conveying fire, whether a small quantity of glowing embers, or some inflammable substance, in which the latent spark might for a while be retained, such, for instance, as touchwood, fungus, or the like," with which to kindle the funereal fire. I have only heard of one other instance of an "incense cup" being found in North Tynedale. It was described to me by the man who came upon it in draining at Robin Hood's Well near Blindburn Hall, in Birtley parish, as resembling a "salt-cellar," which he kept in his house for some years. Nothing was found with it, and the site is about two miles westwards from Pitland Hills, close to the bank of the river.

The cinerary urn from this second barrow was full to overflowing with burnt bones, so that the "incense cup" could not have been contained within it. No fragments of calcined bones were of sufficient size to indicate the sex with sufficient accuracy. A small part of the left temporal bone of the cranium, a piece of the vertebrae, a portion of a radius, femur, and finger-bone, could alone be distinguished.

BARROW NO. 3.

But little appearance of the original tumulus remained here. It was about 80 yards north-west from the largest Barrow No. 1, and

⁹ See *British Barrows*, p. 74 *et seq.*

was situated near the limestone escarpment along the abrupt slope of which run the numerous ironstone delves before referred to, east and west, and overlooking a lower plateau of freestone. Still there were *in situ* three irregularly-shaped blocks of sandstone, larger and more massive than any found in the other grave-hills, standing two or three feet above, and deep-set beneath the ground. They were surrounded by a low "cast" of earth, a portion of the primeval tumulus, which long cultivation on this site had nearly levelled. The grey, lichen-covered stone at the eastern side was deeply furrowed and guttered through the weathering of long ages of time, and it had evidently continued there undisturbed by human hands since the prehistoric inhabitants placed it and the other monoliths in position to form a monumental cairn to be seen from far. On removing the earth-fast blocks, a work of difficulty, and then clearing away soil and stones, the diggers thought they had come to the unbroken limestone strata. But proceeding a little further down near what appeared to be the centre of the original mound—now only 15 feet from east to west, and 10 feet from north to south—an artificial hollow was found: The cavity was about 3 feet 6 inches long, running north-east and south-west, by 3 feet wide, and about 3 feet deep.

INHUMATION.

Here amongst many curiously-shaped angular masses of limestone, full of madrepore, we discovered an interment of an unburnt body. From the few remaining portions of the bony structure it was possible to determine that the individual had been an adult male. Among other indications we judged this from the large size of two fragments of the femur or thigh bone, in which the "linea aspera" was especially well-marked.

Unless some very sharp-pointed limestones had been used as "rough-and-ready" weapons and implements (one small piece, thin and sharp-edged, of oval shape, might readily serve as a "scraper" for dressing skins and other work), nothing appeared to have been buried with this Ancient Briton. No "food-vessel" or worked flint had been provided in his case for the journey to the "happy hunting-grounds," or the Celtic "Valhalla" of "Annwyn," believed to exist far away under the glowing sun-set skies.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

If we consider merely the relics of ancient times and human handiwork, now first brought to light in these recent Barrow-diggings near Birtley, we might reasonably be inclined to class them among the grave-mounds of some isolated tribe who lived in the Neolithic period—the New or Polished-Stone Age of Pre-historic Archaeology. Yet, I do not think, taking the whole indications into account, especially the *cranium*, in the rude cist of Barrow No. 1, the largest of the Pitland Hills group, as we saw it revealed to our gaze with the entire skeleton, that we would be justified in assigning these tumuli to that very remote date. There is as yet no evidence whatever of the existence of Paleolithic men in Northumberland, nor, indeed, north of Norfolk. Nor is there any proof of the existence of the Neolithic race in our county, if, as it is generally supposed, the latter buried their dead in the large and often chambered long barrows, many of which have been explored by Mr. Greenwell on the Yorkshire Wolds, and by Dr. Thurnam in the south of England. No undoubted long barrow, belonging to the *dolicho-cephalic* or long-headed people, allied to the Basques and Eskimos, has been hitherto discovered north of Yorkshire. In the Warkshaugh barrow, to which reference has been made more than once, there were three stone-lined graves, which had probably contained unburnt bodies interred in the usual contracted position. In them, however, we found no bony relics whatever, but in the eastern cist were a “food-vessel,” a thumb-flint or scraper of brown chert, and a split-nodule of ironstone which had the thin end carefully chipped to a sharp edge. The latter formed a large axe-head that might be used to advantage both as an implement of peace and an effective weapon of war. Many years since, after examining fully that interesting burial-mound, with the relics of its builders and occupants before me, I was induced to class them among the remains of Neolithic times. But cremation was met with there, as well as here in these Pitland Hills barrows. It is generally accepted that the Turanian or non-Aryan people of the New Stone Age used inhumation alone, and that in the succeeding transition-period and early Bronze Age, inhumation and cremation (now first introduced), were practised contemporaneously. These rude sepulchral monuments may certainly be assigned to the pre-historic and pre-Roman period, because not the slightest trace

of Roman or even of Saxon influence or art is found in them. Therefore they may be attributed with very high probability to the early Bronze period and to the first Celtic invaders of Britain, who, using well-tempered weapons of this metal, were able to conquer and subjugate the native tribes who had not advanced beyond the possession of polished stone weapons and implements.

This conclusion seems to find corroboration in the place-name of the nearest of the ancient camps or fortified villages which, when the enclosed hut-circles and dwellings have been excavated, bring down their term of occupation to Romano-British and late Celtic times, and end there. This large camp is described by the writer¹⁰ as occupying "the summit of a lofty rounded hill," being an acre and a half in area, and commanding "a prospect only limited by the Cheviots and the Crossfell range." It is called the *Mill Knock*, or, as it is given in Sir David Smith's "Alnwick MS.," more in accordance with the local pronunciation and its original application, "*Male Knock*," that is, in the Gadhelic or earlier Celtic (occurring frequently in the Erse of Ireland and the Gaelic of the Scottish Highlands), the "*maol*" or "headland," exactly descriptive of its position (exemplified in the "Mull of Cantyre"), and the simpler "*Knock*," a "hill." This camp is about half a mile distant to the north-west from the Pitland Hills barrows, and is well placed for defence on the rounded projecting spur of the Low Shield Green Crags, that forms their western extremity in a bold and striking headland, having a lofty precipice river-wards, now broken into as a quarry, with abrupt declivities on the north and south.

We can scarcely doubt that the interments in these barrows, now first explored, were connected with the early inhabitants of this strong hill-fort or ramparted village, like the Maori "pahs," and that they belonged to the Gadhelic or elder branch of the great Celtic family, the first Aryan immigrants into Western Europe. They seem to have migrated into the British Isles from the valleys of the Rhine and the Moselle, while the Cymry, the later Celts, came from the region of the Alps.¹¹ Dr. Frederic Wiborg suggests that the earlier Celts, the

¹⁰ *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Vol. VII., p. 6 (New Series). See also *Notes on Camps in Northumberland*, by H. Maclaughlan, F.G.S. (printed for private circulation), 1867, p. 74, and Note.

¹¹ Compare the Rev. Canon Taylor's *Words and Places*, 2nd edition, pp. 233 and 478.

“Goidels,” introduced the practice of cremation of their dead because they were probably fire-worshippers, like the modern Parsees of Bombay. Inhumation would, nevertheless, linger long into their time, it may be partly through intermarriages with the vanquished race that preceded them to our shores.

It must be borne in mind, if we wish to compute approximately what may be the age of these Pitland Hills and Low Shield Green Crag barrows, that the historic times in the Mediterranean countries largely overlapped the pre-historic times in Britain. Nor would the inhabitants of our country be all in the same social condition at the same time. In its various districts there would be an overlapping of the different ages, of Polished Stone and Bronze especially, as the more isolated communities would be the less advanced. The tribes in these inland valleys of the North Tyne and Rede were on this account comparatively poor, as their sepulchral relics testify. The gold beads found in the Four Laws Cairn on Chesterhope Common were of rude workmanship; and when, as they are very rarely, discovered in tumuli, articles of gold are usually associated with those of bronze, as at Cressingham in Norfolk and Kelleythorpe near Driffield in Yorkshire.¹² The late Dr. Charlton mentions¹³ the discovery about twenty years since of a gold armlet near Bellingham. About two miles distant from Pitland Hills to the south-west two celts and two spear heads of bronze were found by the workmen hidden in the crevices of the rock at the Chipchase Park House freestone quarry.¹⁴ Among as yet unrecorded “finds” in the district are those of a chert (flint) scraper, carefully chipped, and larger than the specimen from the Warkshaugh barrow, which Mr. Hugh Miller, F.G.S., obtained from the gravel in the pool beneath the Holywell Linn and Devil’s Rock near the Mill Knock Camp. Besides this I have a well-shaped barbed arrow-head of flint, which came from the foundations of the new tower of Birtley Church three years since. These implements and weapons of flint and bronze and ornaments of gold may all have been in contemporary use in the early Bronze period, when the first Celtic inhabitants probably raised these burial-mounds in honour of their

¹² *British Barrows*, pp. 55 and 436.

¹³ *North Tynedale and its Four Graynes*, 2nd edition, p. 8.

¹⁴ *Archæologia Aeliana* (New Series), Vol. VII., p. 209.

dead kindred, and to save their remains from the ravages of the numerous wild beasts of the neighbouring primeval forests that would then cover hill and dale.¹⁵

Our colleague, Mr. Greenwell, who is the chief authority on these Ancient British times, in cautiously discussing the very difficult subject of the age of the round barrows, remarks,¹⁶ "The date of the introduction of bronze may be estimated as being somewhere about the year B.C. 1000." He adds, "There is a greater probability, I believe, of post-dating than of ante-dating them; and we need not fear that we are attributing too high an antiquity to them if we say that they belong to a period which centres more or less in B.C. 500." In this estimate we may well concur.

Whether in two cremations, so close to each other as apparently to form but one burial in the first described Crag barrow, and in that on the same level adjoining the inhumation in Cist No. 1 in the largest of the Pitland Hills tumuli, we may see grounds for conjecture that a wife had immolated herself, or been immolated, to accompany her husband into the ever-mysterious spirit-land, can only be a matter of opinion. Many authorities have pointed out that, as in the far East in the case of the Hindoo widow until recent days, so in the far West in Northern England in pre-historic times, it is at least probable that Sutteeism was sometimes practised as a funereal usage.¹⁷ It is no unheard-of custom among semi-barbarous races in our own day who occupy a position in the scale of civilisation somewhat similar to that of our very remote British ancestors.

We can at all events recognise in the more or less careful construction of monumental cairn and inclosed cist, in the placing therein of cinerary urn and "food-vessel," often with implement or weapon for use in the unrevealed hereafter, in the incised cup-markings on stones, here without the later concentric circles around them, at the meaning and purpose of which archaeology can as yet but dimly guess, some recognition, partial and faint though it might be, of a life beyond this transitory mortal life.

¹⁵ At Castle Carrock in Cumberland a very aged woman once assured me that "in the old times they always raised a great cairn to prevent the *wolves* from getting at the body." See *Trans. Cumb. & Westm. Antiq. & Archaeol. Soc.* Vol. VI., p. 472, "On Ancient Remains (chiefly Pre-historic) in Geltsdale Cumberland," by the writer.

¹⁶ *British Barrows*, p. 131.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 119, 120, and Notes.

“ This pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality,”

which Plato felt, may have had at least a germinal existence in the hearts of these earliest vale-dwellers by the North Tyne. They buried their dead out of their sight with unmistakable marks of family or tribal affection and reverential regard. And while we gaze at the principal barrow of the Pitland Hills group we may be inclined to repeat, as imagination conjures up the far-past scene of primitive mourning on the green plateau, the words of the old *Bréton* song—that of a kindred people who, for a similar purpose, raised the *menhirs* around Carnac—

“ Plus les morts étaient chers, plus leurs pierres sont grandes : ”

“ The dearer the dead the larger their stones ; ” the greater and more imposing would be their burial-mounds.

APPENDIX.

*Notes on the Human Bones found in the Ancient British Barrows at
Pitland Hills near Birtley, North Tynedale, by Mr. G. ROME
HALL, M.B., M. S.*

IN BARROW NO. 1.—CIST WITH INHUMATION.

CRANIUM.

Part of right temporal bone ; almost entire left temporal bone with the styloid process still attached ; all the apparatus of the ear well-marked. Part of the occipital bone, back of the skull with opening for the spinal cord. Part of the frontal bone, showing the superciliary ridges exceedingly well marked, and frontal eminence. The curve implies *a very good mental development*. Bones of skull do not show sutures from fragmentary condition. Parts of parietal bones from vault of cranium (from thickness, an adult), of frontal bones, and bones of the base of skull. Small portions of facial bones—nothing special about them. Inferior maxillary bone (lower jaw-bone, which was fractured in front part in taking it out, but being replaced in position the angle was readily ascertained). Hence age probably between 40 and 50—a strongly-built man.

Incisors and canine teeth are flattened at top and bared of enamel, dentine exposed at the top.

Portions of upper maxillary bone on each side (upper jaw). The upper corresponding teeth show the same flattening and baring of the enamel. Some African tribes file down the tops of the teeth into a

point ; but here the cause was probably the sand in the cereal food from grinding in the stone querns or hand-mills.

The set of teeth was perfect—in the present day to be envied. There were 31 out of the 32 counted, but all were there when first discovered.

SKELETON.

In neck and spine part of axis and most of atlas with the four next cervical vertebrae and part of the seventh—whole of the cervical region. Some other vertebrae, but not nearly the whole when examined.

Whole of left humerus (shoulder-bone), broken into two pieces ; length about $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Therefore height probably about 5 feet 4 inches. Part of left scapula (shoulder-blade articulating with the left humerus). Corresponding part of right scapula, only most massive portion remaining.

Parts of left radius and ulna. Lower end of both radii, the left showing a peculiar curve suggestive of fracture (?), especially if it happened when a child, and was not properly treated, as would most probably be the case here.

The first and many other rib bones.

The left os innominatum (haunch bone).

Four portions of the left femur, measuring about 16 inches. Therefore height 5 feet 4 inches to 6 inches. Four portions of the right femur. Parts of tibiae and fibulae, both legs, but not enough to show which is right or left.

The left astragalus and left os calcis (heel), practically the whole. Part of the right astragalus and right os calcis. Each os calcis was longer than usual at the present time—therefore weaker-muscled than the Teutonic race.

A *male* adult, from the great strength of the muscular markings, ridge of leg-bone, etc.

CINERARY URN WITH BURNT BONES.

All that can be made out are a part of the skull and portions of small ribs, probably of an *infant* of from three to six months old.

IN BARROW NO. 2.—CINERARY URN WITH BURNT BONES.

Part of left temporal bone. Head of humerus—splint of head of humerus ; some fragments of vertebrae ; part of radius (or ulna ?) ; part of upper end of femur ; part of a finger bone. Not enough remaining to determine sex or probable age.

IN BARROW NO. 3.—CAVITY WITH INHUMATION.

Two pieces of femur (thigh bone) ; chip of femur. A piece of lower end of humerus (the hinge-joint part) ; a piece of the fore-arm, probably the radius, connected with the last ; not of sufficient size to tell whether of right or left leg or arm. Probably an *adult male*, the femur being too large for a female, and the linea aspera (the "rough line") especially well-marked.