

DISCOVERY OF BRITISH POTTERY.

AN interesting discovery was made, at the close of 1888, of British pottery, on the site of a barrow, long levelled, its position being on a hill known as "Barrow Croft," overlooking the Wycombe Valley, and near to the hamlet of Wycombe Marsh. The pottery consisted of an unusually large cinerary urn, seventeen inches in height, a small cinerary urn, and an incense cup. Mr. John Parker, F.S.A., who had superintended the recovery of the vessels, read a paper on the subject of this discovery, before the Society of Antiquaries, on the 14th of March, 1889; this paper is published in the "Proceedings of the Society." Mr. Parker has since presented the pottery to the British Museum. The discovery is all the more valuable, as there are no other British urns from Bucks in the Museum. Indeed, these urns will be seen with great interest by Buckinghamshire archaeologists, as they appear to be the very earliest specimens of pottery which have been found in the county and preserved. It was felt that the members of the Bucks Archaeological Society should possess an illustration of these unique objects, and it is with pleasure that the editor is able to furnish, in this number of THE RECORDS, a copy of the photograph taken of them.

The paper read before the Society of Antiquaries was chiefly devoted to a comparison of this and other British pottery taken from barrows in different parts of England. The urns are types of those known as urns with overhanging rims; the large one is one of the largest specimens of cinerary urns, whilst the small one is one of the most diminutive of these particular vessels. The tattooing over the upper part of the rim of the large urn is the very pattern which has given rise to the well-known epithet *bascaudæ*, applied by the Romans to this kind of British pottery. Both urns contained calcined bones, and those from the large urn were clearly identified as human.

The discovery of the small pierced vessel, known as an "incense cup," in Buckinghamshire, is noteworthy, as these vessels are not, as a rule, to be found in barrows; they are very rarely found in Dorsetshire, whilst in Wilt-



BRITISH POTTERY, FOUND NEAR HIGH WYCOMBE.

shire and Yorkshire they frequently accompany early interments. Their use is still undecided; they were certainly connected in some way with the burning of the dead: the most ingenious and probable theory is that they conveyed some inflammable substance to kindle the funeral fire. The pottery is of precisely the same character as much that has been recovered from the Yorkshire Wolds by the Rev. Wm. Greenwell, F.S.A. The well-known Greenwell Collection in the British Museum will prove of great interest, if the Bucks pottery is compared with some of the specimens there displayed. The close similarity referred to will also lead to the conclusion that the people, who were interred in Yorkshire, and this county, were in much the same stage of civilization. Mr. Greenwell tells us that the people whose barrows he has opened were possessed of domesticated animals, and that they were beyond the hunting stage. He compares them to the people of the Swiss Lake Dwellings, and says, "Both were possessed of domesticated animals; both cultivated grain, manufactured cloth and pottery, but without the aid of the wheel, and used implements of flint and other stone, as well as of deers' horn, all in each country very similar in their character."* Mr. Greenwell finds evidences at the present time that the dwellers on the Wolds cultivated grain of some description, from the terraces that still remain in certain districts, to which he refers; and it is interesting to remark, as a possible coincidence, that terraces, which clearly indicate a past system of cultivation, are found on the slopes along the Wycombe valley, and on the opposite side to the "Barrow Croft" hill. These terraces are known by the name of lynchets or lynchets, from the Saxon word *hlinc*. In Bucks we have the word in Linslade (*Hlinc-Gelada*). These terraces have been, as might be supposed, associated with the cultivation adopted by the village community in a much later age.

For any further information on the subject of the pottery recently discovered in Bucks, the reader is referred to Mr. Parker's communication to the Society of Antiquaries.

* Greenwell's "British Barrows," pp. 113, 114.