

pass along the great Bath-road, and mark that everybody of note in England for over a century passed along by the door, and often stayed and slept here when the snows were deep and they could not gain the usual stopping place at Devizes. We see Lord Chesterfield and Lady Mary Wortley Montague making for scandal and the waters; Walpole riding in his chariot, thinking of his ailments and antiquities; Sheridan running away with his beautiful wife; Garrick posting to Bath in search of new talent for his stage; Lord Byron looking eagerly at the refreshment which mine host of the "Bear" proffers him, knowing that he may only drink soda-water and eat biscuits; Beau Brummell creating a new cravat or waistcoat, and Gentleman Jackson on his way to a prize-fight; Lord Chatham, after staying several weeks at the "Castle" Inn, Marlborough, owing to an attack of gout, and the Princess Ann, at whose passing the bells of Hungerford rang out. These, and I know not how many more we can see, as we gaze from the windows of the "Bear," and hear the merry post-horn sound as they pass.

---

## **Berks Archæological Society.**

---

### **THE CINERARY URNS AT SUNNINGDALE.**

---

THE first meeting of the Winter Session of the Berks Archæological Society was held at the Abbey Gate on November 26th, when an interesting lecture was given by Mr. O. A. Shrubsole, on "An ancient British barrow containing cinerary urns at Sunningdale." Mr. O. A. Shrubsole said the subject of graves and dead men's bones was not an attractive one, but it was a subject which, if pursued reverently and scientifically, was capable of yielding very fruitful results. Remarkable discoveries had been made quite recently in Egypt, in this direction. The cinerary urns—specimens of which were recently found at Sunningdale—showed what a lot of trouble the people took with regard to the burying of their dead. They saw at once there was a great deal of civilization behind it. With regard to the particular urns before them, the body of a person had been cremated, the ashes

collected and placed in an urn, which was deposited in a convenient place. Then, too, they found a number of ideas connected with this practice. At a very early period, before that represented by those urns, the bodies of persons were placed in a chamber in a large mound, the chambers representing houses. Here they had a situation pregnant with ideas—that the dead person would appreciate the comforts of a house. There was an instance in this county where a deposit of charcoal was found, it evidently being thought that the dead person would be able to warm himself. It was frequently found that the earlier ancient Britons buried their dead without cremation. They used to lay the corpse in a reclining or sitting position in a huge mound of earth, and put vessels of food and drink near. All investigation pointed to the fact that as far back as they could go in the neolithic ages social distinctions existed. This was evident from the fact that some of the burials were on a larger and more costly scale than others. The mounds and urns in one case would be large, and in another small. The urns found at Sunningdale were of great variety, and the mounds in which they were found differed in size. They belonged to the Bronze period. These urns were found upside down, and he had no doubt that in certain cases the people thought it undesirable that the spirit of a dead person should escape, and so inverted the urns to prevent this. There were other tumuli in the immediate neighbourhood of Sunningdale which had not been examined, and he would like all landowners, and those who had influence with landowners, to know the great desirability there was to have these “barrows” examined. But for the intelligent care of Mr. W. G. Craig (of the firm of J. D. Craig and Sons, contractors, Camberley) they would have known nothing whatever about these tumuli. They saw how difficult it was to strike out anything new in this world; at the present moment there was an agitation for the substitution of cremation for inhumation. No doubt the ancient Britons were much more practical in sanitary science than we were at the present day.—Mr. J. D. Craig and Mr. Ll. Treacher took part in the discussion which followed the lecture.

