XXX.—*Examination of a Group of Barrows, Five in number, in Cambridgeshire.*
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Read April 29th, 1847.

SITUATED at the distance of a mile and a half from Royston, two miles from Melbourne, and three from Barkway, these barrows give a name to the locality,

“ Campus ab illis

Dicitur, æternumque tenet per sæcula nomen,”

the spot where they stand being called “ Five Hill Field.” On an eminence, they form a conspicuous feature throughout the surrounding country, as yet only partially inclosed, and command an extensive view over the adjacent flat. Their exalted position would seem to favour the opinion of Professor Henslow, that they were originally intended for beacons: those however that have come under my notice are by no means to be included in such a classification, as, of the nine I examined, eight were decidedly of a funereal character, and one in the same neighbourhood equally so. Commencing with the tallest of the group, its shape, nearly oval, was longer than appeared altogether proportionate to its circular form, which cannot be better described than by a reference to “ Fosbrooke’s Antiquities,” whose account of the “ Long Barrow ” and its contents coincides most remarkably with the one now under consideration. Incontestible proof that the mound had never been disturbed was afforded by the regularity of the strata, which continued unbroken alternate black and white all through the structure, though at the present day black soil does not exist nearer than two or three miles, that of the hill being of pulverized chalk: 54 feet in diameter and 10 in height, a small cinerary vase of unbaked clay soon made its appearance, very rude in workmanship, and at the depth of 4 feet from the superior surface; quickly followed by a human skeleton $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, and distant 12 from the vase. As far as could be judged from the bones that remained, they would seem to have appertained to a youth, probably between 12 and

16 years of age. Another cinerary vase $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep and the skull of an animal, pronounced by Professor Owen to be that of a badger, were next elicited; but the object of greatest interest in the barrow was undoubtedly a much smaller vessel, composed of the same unbaked clay, and of very peculiar shape. It lay in an inverted position, 6 feet deep. Being pierced, I have conjectured it to have been used as an incense burner, though, never having previously encountered anything of the kind, there is no guide for a positive opinion on the subject. This little vase was nearer the exterior surface than any other remain; a human skeleton, very perfect, 2 feet deep, that of a male of 50 or 60 years, charcoal in small patches, the horn of a roebuck, and a small double buckle of the peculiar yellow British bronze, and two minute fragments of light red pottery, concluded the contents of this the largest tumulus, which was formed of 490 loads of earth.

The labourers worked from east to west; none of the human bones bore traces of cremation, nor were they below or even resting upon the virgin soil, which consisted of solid clunch chalk, so firm as to resemble a threshing floor. About 150 yards from this spot, an earthwork or covered way runs in a direction from the south-east towards the north-west; another also exists of nearly the same description two miles distant, extending as far as the eye can reach to the westward; indeed all this country exhibits evident marks of occupation, and that probably by large bodies of men.

The second barrow, to the westward of the first and on the verge of the covered way, is 59 feet in diameter, and 4 feet high. Allowing for a few irregularities in the surface occasioned by the lapse of time, this mound is circular, and probably composed of materials taken from the adjacent earthwork. A mixture of black earth with the original chalky soil was disclosed by the interior; working from north to south, 6 feet from the centre, there appeared an oven-shaped hole a span in diameter; it bore palpable traces of fire, 3 inches below the original soil, and was well nigh filled with burnt fragments, the remains of men and animals, literally baked, and so mingled together as to be nearly unintelligible, combined with pieces of charcoal. The strata of the hole proceeded in a perpendicular direction 3 inches in diameter. A short distance from it I found a very large deer's horn, certainly of superior size to any now extant; this was in the centre, 4 inches deep. Still further south appeared a beautifully preserved coin of Marcus Aurelius in first brass ($1\frac{1}{2}$ foot deep), patina very fine; legend, "Antoninus Aug. Armeniacus," on the obverse: reverse, a winged victory to the right holding a spear, a figure seated on the ground; legend, "Vict. Aug. T R P X VIII. Imp. II. Cos. III.: S. C. in the field. Lastly was found the unbaked bottom of a small vase, blackened probably in the course of cremation.

Barrow No. 3. Nearly circular, 72 feet in diameter and 5 in height. This mound, although covering the largest surface of ground, contained but little in the shape of antiquarian remains; these however still tend to confirm the supposition that barrows of this kind were designed for sepulchral purposes, and afford another illustration of the poverty of their contents.^a Worked from east to west, black mould was again perceptible, running through in a perpendicular line.

Barrows 4 and 5 had been nearly levelled previous to my visit, so as to render their examination useless; I am assured however that earthenware vessels were taken from both, and broken by the spade.

The foregoing investigation fully establishes in my mind an idea I have long held with regard to British barrows, that cutting through at once to the centre will in general prove inefficacious, though it may be accidentally successful. From the position of the remains in those we have been considering, it is more than probable that had this plan been adopted the excavators, owing to the magnitude of the mounds, would have missed the articles; and, even had they driven horizontal shafts in different directions from the centre, it is fair to conjecture that the result would have been the same, judging from the distance intervening between each vase, and their diminutiveness, added to the reflection that all were separate, no deposit occurring *en masse* in any one instance.

Annexed is a summary of the articles disinterred from all the barrows, with their dimensions, a correct surgical report of the skeletons, and an ably executed plan of the tumuli, with their relative size and proportions; this last by T. Cracknell, jun. of Saffron Walden.

BARROW No. 1.

Diameter 54 feet, height 10 feet, circumference 169 feet.

CONTENTS.

First. Small cinerary vase of unbaked clay, shaped like an inverted cone, with a rim having a sloping roof and ornament, apparently produced by a finger nail, thus, very rude. Height $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, depth 4 inches, diameter at top 5 inches, diameter at base $2\frac{1}{2}$, circumference at top 14 inches, circumference at base 9, depth of sloping roof 1 inch. This vessel contained one piece of charcoal, and was removed with but little injury.

Second. Another small cinerary vase, similar in appearance but rather larger than the preceding. Height 6 inches, depth 5, depth of sloping roof $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch, diameter

^a Annexed hereafter.

at top $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter at base $1\frac{3}{4}$, circumference at top 18 inches, circumference at base $11\frac{1}{2}$, more injured than the first, but wonderfully well restored by my servant.

Third. Very small cinerary vase, without a detached roof. Height 3 inches, depth $2\frac{1}{2}$, circumference at top 10 inches, circumference at base $8\frac{1}{2}$, diameter at top 3 inches, diameter at base 2, slope 1 inch.

Fourth. A thuribulum, or perhaps a vessel used for charcoal, though none of the burnt wood was near it. Circular in form, it was discovered in an inverted position, resembling in appearance a broad-brimmed hat; it has a bronze horizontal rim, serrated on the external edge, and ornamented with the same pattern as No. 1 cinerary vase, and is pierced at irregular intervals with small holes all round, seven in number and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch beneath the rim. It is very perfect, and altogether a most singular vessel; none of the kind have ever been figured, as far as I can discover, if any indeed exist. Height nearly $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch, depth more than 1 inch, circumference at top interior circle 3 inches, circumference at exterior or ornamented edge $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter at top 2 inches, diameter at base $2\frac{1}{4}$, breadth of projecting rim $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch.

Fifth. Double bronze buckle (British) and two very perfect pieces of dried charcoal.

The human bones found in barrow No. 1 consisted of portions of two skeletons; of the first only two bones were forthcoming when they were examined, though the workmen declared they had dug up others, and that they were carried away. Those which remained were the thigh bone and the right "os innominatum" or bone of the pelvis. From their size and the absence of their "epiphyses" they appear to have belonged to a person between 12 and 16 years of age.

Of the second skeleton all parts were perfect. The size and strength of the bones as well as the shape of the pelvis indicated the remains of a male of mature age. In both cases the bones were extremely brittle, nothing remaining but earthy matter; even the larger and stronger one crumbling on the slightest pressure.

Portions of the skeleton of a horse were also discovered.

This barrow contained none of the calculi mentioned by Professor Henslow.

BARROW No. 2.

Exhibited, as we have before observed, the bones of men and animals, burnt, and mixed together in a confused mass; charcoal; a very large stag's horn; and the beautiful first-brass coin of Marcus Aurelius described above; as well as the bottom of a small vase, unbaked and black.

Of Barrow No. 3 the contents are as follows :—

First. Nearest the east end, horn of a fallow deer.

Second. One badger's skull and part of the frame of another.

Third. A solitary lump of charcoal, the only one in this mound.

Fourth. Skull of a third badger, very perfect.

Fifth. 33 feet from west end, a human skeleton, nearly entire, lying towards south-west by south ; depth $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch.

Sixth. A deposit of snail's shells *en masse*, on virgin soil.

Seventh. Skeletons of five males, all lying, as before, south-west by south. The bones most of them tolerably perfect, with the exception of the skulls, those of two only being discovered, though on a surgical comparison 12 thigh bones appeared, 6 pair corresponding and complete. In the opinion of the anatomist these were all males.

Eighth. A pike-head of iron much corroded, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the northern exterior of the tomb, and 6 from the nearest skeleton, verging towards the western end.

BARROWS No. 4 & 5.

Nearly levelled down without examination.

Dimensions, No. 4. Diameter 46 feet, height 3 feet, circumference 144 feet.

Dimensions, No. 5. Diameter 53 feet, height $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, circumference 166 feet.

R. C. N.