XII. *An Account of Researches in Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Filkins, and at Broughton Poggs in Oxfordshire.* By JOHN YONGE AKERMAN, Secretary.

Read 27 November, 1856.

DURING the last winter a mason, named John Farmer, while engaged in digging for stone in the village of Filkins, unexpectedly brought to light some Anglo-Saxon remains. Hearing by chance of this discovery, I proceeded to Filkins, and from the account I then received, I at once determined to apply for permission to undertake a systematic investigation of the spot. This was kindly granted by Mr. Robert Watts, the owner of the land, and on the 30th of September I commenced operations.

The village of Filkins is a township or hamlet about three-and-a-half miles north from Lechlade, and about five miles south-south-east from Burford, containing a population of between five and six hundred souls. It is a chapelry of Bradwell, from which it is distant one mile west. In the older maps it is divided into two portions, called "Over Filkins" and "Nether Filkins;" but this distinction appears to be now unknown to the inhabitants, and in the Ordnance Map it is marked less conspicuously than Broughton Poggs, a place with a much smaller population, from which it is divided by a brook, the confluence of two small streams, which I shall again have occasion to mention.

The spot in which the Cemetery is situated is on the north side or rear of the village, where the ground rises slightly and then sinks again, forming the bed of a small stream, which has its source in a field called "the Heads," a short distance to the east.^a The site, formerly a small paddock or garstun, called, from a former owner of the land, "Purbrick's Close," is occupied by a few cottages with small plots of garden-ground, and is bounded on the west by an ancient roadway called Thrup, or "Trupp Lane."^b This lane joins the high road, running northerly in

^a This is the actual source of the stream ; the water-course beyond, represented in the Ordnance Map, being merely a drain from the upland above it.

^b Probably a corruption of Thorp Lane.

the direction of Eastleach, first crossing the small stream which surrounds an old moated farmhouse a little to the left. The stream continues its course for a short distance, when it deviates to the south, and, uniting with the brook which has its rise about half a mile to the north, separates the villages of Broughton and Filkins.

The objects discovered by Farmer are as follow :

1. Grave containing the skeleton of a man, lying east and west, the head to the west. On the right side, the blade of a sword of the usual form, measuring with the tang exactly thirty-five inches ; a spear-head of iron, measuring from the point to the end of the socket nineteen inches. The umbo of a shield, placed on the breast, was unfortunately broken into fragments by the pickaxe.

2. Grave in close proximity with the former, containing the skeleton of a woman lying east and west, with a number of amber beads near the neck, and a pair of dish-shaped fibulæ on the breasts. They are of a more simple pattern than the example figured in the Society's Proceedings,^a but have a similar star-shaped ornament in the centre, and are gilt on the inside.

3. Grave of a young man, the skeleton lying east and west. On the right side of the head a small spear, and by the side a knife.

4. Grave containing a skeleton without any relic.

The following is a diary of my own operations :—

Sept. 30. No. 1. Opened ground in "Purbrick's Close," a few feet eastward of the spot where the four graves had been previously discovered, but found no traces of interment in that direction. The excavation was then continued southward of the former opening, when a grave was found, at a depth of twenty-one inches only from the surface. It contained a skeleton of a young man, measuring about six feet. The *dentes sapientiæ* were not developed. No relic was observed.

No. 2. About three feet to the left of this grave another skeleton was discovered, without any relic. It measured four feet five inches. The *dentes sapientiæ* were not developed.

October 1. No. 3. Grave of a woman, the body in a crouching position, and the bones mingled with what appeared to be the remains of a prior interment. At the waist were two purse-guards. On the breast a saucer-shaped fibula between two others of Roman fabric. A single blue porcelain bead was found near the neck.

No. 4. About three feet south of the previous interment, a male skeleton was

^a Proceedings, vol. II. p. 132 ; Fairford Graves, p. 16.

found, lying on its side with the face turned to the north. On the breast were two flat ring-shaped fibulæ, and at the waist a bronze buckle.

The foregoing were all lying nearly east and west, the heads to the west, the graves varying from twenty-one inches to two feet in depth.

Objects found in Grave No. 3.

No. 5. Grave (two feet deep) of a young person, lying as nearly as possible *north and south*, the head to the south. On the shoulders two plain flat circular bronze fibulæ, and on the breast a portion of a hair-pin of bronze, which appeared to have been used for fastening the winding-sheet.

No. 6. Skeleton of a man, the femur measuring nineteen and a half inches, with a spear lying on the *left*^a side of the head and a knife at the waist.

October 2. No. 7. Grave of a man, the skeleton measuring six feet two inches, the head turned to the left, the legs parallel. On the *right* arm, just above the elbow, the iron umbo of a shield. No other relic was observed.

No. 8. Skeleton of a woman, with two saucer-shaped fibulæ on the breast, and a hair-pin. At the waist, a large iron buckle and a knife, which fell in pieces on removal.

^a This, I believe, is an unique instance of the spear being placed on the *left* side of the head.

October 3. Our work this day much impeded by the rain, but was continued at intervals, without discovering another grave, and, as I had to satisfy the claim of an occupier of the ground before we proceeded further, we shifted the scene of our operations to the adjoining village of Broughton Poggs. Of these I shall presently render an account.

October 8. Resumed work at Filkins, north of the previous opening.

No. 9. Grave of a woman, the skeleton much decomposed, without any relic.

No. 10. Skeleton of a young man, measuring about six feet two inches, lying in a shallow grave hollowed in the rock at about two feet from the surface. The right hand lying on the breast; at the head, a small spear-head of iron. No other relic was observed.

October 9th and 10th. Continued excavations northward without discovering any traces of graves.

October 11th. Interrupted by the rain. Obtained leave to excavate south of the previous opening, but nothing was discovered in that direction.

October 13th. No. 11. On excavating a small strip of land at the eastern extremity of the Cemetery which had not been removed, the workmen discovered a female skeleton, lying north and south, the head to the south, without any relic whatever. It had escaped detection in consequence of its lying in the manner described, the ground being trenched from north to south. Thus terminated our exploration of the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Filkins.

From the foregoing account, it will be seen that the number of interments in this ancient burial-place was limited to fifteen. After carefully excavating the ground on all sides except the west, which is bounded by the ancient roadway already described, I am satisfied that this spot has been thus far thoroughly explored. It seems probable that both Filkins and Broughton were originally detached groups of homesteads, the offshoots of a larger population at Bradwell. We may perhaps refer the derivation of the name of the first to a family whose patronymic was Filk.

While engaged at Filkins, I heard from one of my labourers that he had found several graves some time since, when occupied in quarrying stone on the summit of a hill called "Kinchin Knoll," about half a mile north of the village of Broughton Poggs. On application to John Thickens, Esq. the Lord of the Manor, I was kindly allowed to make further search, and this was prosecuted for two days, but unfortunately with little success, only one grave being discovered. The previous excavations had nearly exhausted this Cemetery, in which I learned that eleven skeletons, with their accompanying relics, had been found at short intervals.

The skeleton now discovered was apparently that of a woman passed middle age. It lay (like the rest, I am informed) east and west, and was less than six inches below the surface; a sufficient proof that these graves, like those at Kemble, had once been covered with tumuli. This was further evident from the crushed state of the bones, and the pressure on the two saucer-shaped fibulæ found on the breast. One of these was squeezed nearly flat, the paste or incrustation with which they had been filled having decomposed, and left the ornamental pattern impressed on the soil which covered it. At the waist was a small knife, the blade much worn by use.

The whole of the ground immediately surrounding the spot where these remains were found, was carefully trenched, but no other interments were discovered; yet we cannot feel certain that this burial-place was limited to twelve graves. Whether these were the sepulchres of the early settlers at Broughton, or of families whose homesteads were situated in the valley north of the village, and near the source of the stream, must be left to conjecture.

The objects exhumed at Filkins and at Broughton, though contributing varieties to the number already known, suggest but little for special observation. Their origin is, however, indisputable, and it is the duty of the Archæologist to place on record the particulars of every discovery of this kind.

The fibulæ resemble, as might be expected, those found at Fairford; and the purse-guards, if these objects are rightly designated, differ slightly in their general form from those already known. They are, I believe, the first that have been discovered in this district of England. They appear to have been fastened by thread, or studs, to the purse, and one of them is much shorter than the other; but probably this is due to accidental fracture during the lifetime of the owner. The purse was doubtless often deposited with the dead, but, being formed of perishable materials, is rarely identified unless accompanied by objects like those under notice. Among the Old Saxons the stealing of a purse was a capital offence,^b and the cutpurse in England in old time forfeited his life.

In two respects there is a remarkable difference between the Cemeteries of Filkins and Broughton. In the former the remains were deposited at an average depth of two feet; at Broughton they were scarcely six inches below the surface. This latter

^a These fibulæ are of bronze silvered, and appear to be constructed like those found at Fairford. *Archæologia*, vol. XXXIV. pl. x. No. 4., Fairford Graves, pl. iii. No. 4: Remains of Pagan Saxondom, pl. xix. No. 2.

^b Qui infra Screonam aliquid furaverit, capite puniatur. *Lex Saxonum*, iv. 4. Leibnitz observes on this: *Screona*, *scrinium* puto seu *arca* clausa. *Hodieque* Germanis *furtum* cum *effractione* capitali est. *Scran* is still a provincial word in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire for a small bag.

is, no doubt, to be attributed to the extreme shallowness of the soil ; and it suggests, as already observed, the inference that these graves were once protected by mounds of considerable height and size.

But the most remarkable distinction is, that the Cemetery at Broughton is situated at some distance from the village, while that at Filkins is obviously within its ancient limits. Both, however, were chosen at an arrow's flight from the sources of streams, so highly venerated by our heathen forefathers. At the foot of the hill or upland of "Kinching Knoll," the site of the Broughton Cemetery, along the base of which winds the ancient road called "Kingsway," are two beautiful springs of water, the upper one known to the country people as "Ewelme Pill," the stream uniting with that which has its source at Filkins just above the junction of the two villages.

OBJECTS FOUND AT FAIRFORD.

I exhibit a few objects obtained by me from the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Fairford, five miles west of Filkins, of which the following is a list:—

1. A bronze ring resembling an armlet, but probably the hoop of a pail-shaped box or casket, having three loops, the object of which must be left to conjecture.

Actual Size.

2. A very rudely ornamented dish-shaped fibula, the gilding in a remarkable state of preservation.

3. A quoit-shaped fibula plated with white metal, and ornamented with a pattern of circles stamped with a punch.

4. A pair of circular fibulæ of bronze, having the ornament stamped on thin foil,

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

laid over the surface, and attached by means of some material which has perished, similar to those previously found at Fairford, Harnham, and the pair already described, found at Broughton. See *Archæologia*, vol. XXXIV. pl. x., fig. 4, and vol. XXXV. pl. xii. fig. 9.

Fig. 6.—Actual Size.

5. Tweezers and pair of ear-rings of bronze.

6. Bronze object, apparently a terminal fitting of a girdle-strap, ornamented with circles and lines executed with a punch.

7. Ring-shaped object of bronze, probably the armlet of a child.

8. Nails found at the feet of a skeleton. Their heads are very prominent and resemble those found in Roman tombs.

9. A plain button-like fibula plated with white metal, and the bronze tag of probably a girdle-strap.

10. Beads of amber and glass, the former being of the ordinary kind, and one of the latter bugle-shaped, about an inch long.

It only remains for me to add that these objects, together with those found at Kemble, have been deposited in the British Museum, where they may be seen and studied by the student of our national antiquities, and not be exposed to the accidents which threaten all private collections.

J. Y. A.