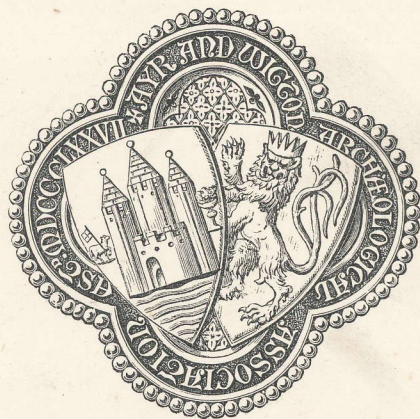


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#### IV.

### ILLUSTRATED NOTICES OF THE ANCIENT STONE IMPLEMENTS OF AYRSHIRE.

#### (FIRST SERIES.)

OBJECTS of antiquity, when merely looked upon as curiosities, and carefully guarded as such, are deprived of more than half their value. The light they throw on the early condition and civilisation of mankind, in the countries in which they occur, alone gives them a real interest. It cannot, however, be too widely known among those likely to be their first discoverers that this light will seldom be got unless we have trustworthy particulars as to the objects themselves and the circumstances under which they came into the finder's hands. If, therefore, specimens are not placed in a public collection, like the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh, so as to be within easy reach of the scientific observer, they ought at least to be available for his purposes by being described and illustrated in some publication such as the present.

Lists of animals and plants have long been recognised as valuable guides in studying the history and distribution of the various forms of life, recent as well as extinct. Certain types and species are thus ascertained to be confined to particular geographical regions, while others are shown to have been characteristic of areas and periods in the remote past of the world's existence. Owing largely to the knowledge thus acquired and the inferences plainly deducible, zoology and botany rest on a wide and solid basis; and now that archæology has vindicated for itself a place among the sciences of observation, corresponding results may be expected from use being made in its service of similar lists. Traces of the presence of former generations



and tribes of mankind in a country or a province cannot, it is true, be so exhaustively examined and tabulated as its fauna and flora, or even as the fossils embedded in the strata beneath its surface. Unfortunately, much that would have been of the highest interest was perishable in texture, and much has been ignorantly or wantonly destroyed. But many relics of the past are still left us; and every collection of facts regarding them that can be depended upon is an addition to the materials out of which the science has to be built up.

In view of their strictly local character and the purpose they are intended to serve, it would be out of place to preface these "Notices" with almost any remarks of a general nature. Their only aim is to preserve an authentic record of the examples of ancient stone implements and weapons that have occurred within the limits they embrace, as well as the facts of the discovery, so far as these can now be ascertained. In addition to descriptions, figures will also be given in every case where it seems desirable to do so. But beyond this nothing will be attempted. Whatever be the story the objects themselves have to tell regarding their makers and first possessors, no attempt should be made to unfold it till the evidence to be extracted from them has been heard,—nor, indeed, till that evidence has been compared with what is obtained from the stone antiquities of other districts of Scotland, as well as of a still wider area. Those who wish to learn what is known as to the manufacture, the probable uses, the range in time, and the superstitions that have come to be attached to them, must consult Mr. Evans's great work,<sup>1</sup> to which frequent reference will be made.

There are, however, three points on which some information is perhaps due to readers of the "Collections" that have not given special attention to this branch of antiquarian research.

1. Ancient stone relics are not to be looked upon as all belonging to a fixed period of time, during which that material was the only one employed in the fabrication of domestic tools, weapons of war, and implements of the chase. It is not improbable that Ayrshire passed through this stage; for there is every reason to conclude that in Scotland, like other parts of Western Europe, the use of bronze and iron was preceded by an age of stone. But a little reflection will show that, in a state of society so unfavourable to the rapid spread of new ideas and inventions as existed in those bygone times, the one could not have suddenly supplanted the other,

<sup>1</sup> *The Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain.* London, 1872.



in the same fashion as ironclads have already superseded the "wooden walls" of only twenty years ago. The celt and the knife would be made of stone by some men long after others of superior resources or culture in the same district had begun to cast them of bronze, or even to forge them of iron. The quern, one of the most venerable of domestic utensils, is an example of this. Pennant, when visiting Skye in 1772, saw it in use, though there were then water mills in the island;<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Arthur Mitchell states, as the result of his own observation, that at the present day querns are numerous in Shetland, and common in the Orkney and Hebridean islands, and that, "in the west coast parishes of Sutherland, Ross, and Inverness, they can scarcely be called rare."<sup>2</sup> Considerations of this sort ought sufficiently to dispose of the question that of all others is most frequently asked about antiquities of every class by the curious, "What is their age?" In examining the traces that are still left of the different phases of human progress towards the existing state of culture in a country, sequence is all, in relation to time, that the archæologist seeks to discover and prove. "His science," as has been justly remarked by one of the most accurate of its living investigators, "has no dates of its own, gives no periods that can be expressed in chronological terms. These belong exclusively to history. . . . By itself and on its own ground, it never deals with periods of time that are measurable by any known method of science. . . . And, if it be true that it does not give measurements to its periods, it is equally true that it does not give dates to its specimens."<sup>3</sup>

2. For such an extent of country as Ayrshire, the number of stone relics known to be in public collections or in the possession of private persons is meagre and incomplete. But it should be remembered that only of late years has attention been bestowed upon them, even by professed students of antiquity. With the exception of passing references to the quern and the "elf-arrow," no notice of their occurrence will, it is believed, be found in the whole of Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, completed in 1799, though the attention of the writers was specially directed to the antiquities of their respective parishes. Even in the more recent *New Statistical Account* only a single Ayrshire stone or flint imple-

<sup>1</sup> *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides*, pp. 222, 228. Second Edition. London, 1776.

<sup>3</sup> Mr Joseph Anderson: *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, First Series, p. 20. Edinburgh,

<sup>2</sup> *The Past in the Present*, p. 33. Edinburgh, 1881.



ment is described.<sup>1</sup> When this indifference to their value long prevailed even among the educated, we need not be surprised that those engaged in manual labour, into whose hands they would, as a rule, first come, treated them with neglect. Many specimens are ascertained to have been thus unfortunately either destroyed or lost beyond recovery. On the other \* hand, some very probably exist that have not yet been brought within the scope of the inquiries made on behalf of the "Notices," and many still lie where accident or design has hidden them. It is to be hoped, now that a more intelligent interest has been awakened regarding them, due care will be taken of all Ayrshire examples. To possessors of them in our country parishes and villages it may be of some advantage, apart altogether from any benefit done to science, to have these relics brought by means of the "Collections" under the notice of archæologists throughout the kingdom, competent to judge of the value that attaches to each. Proprietors and occupiers of land have it in their power greatly to aid in rendering the "Notices" truly representative of this branch of the prehistoric antiquities of the county. Let the latter but encourage and advise those likely to come upon examples in the course of their daily occupation, not only to save them from destruction, but to entrust them temporarily to the Secretaries or other officials of the Association, and good results will follow. All who do this can rest assured that the objects will be returned; or, if they so wish, the publicity thus afforded may put the owners in the way of obtaining a due equivalent for their property. With the same view, it may be here added that materials are being collected for similar "Notices" on the Ancient Bronze Implements and Weapons of Ayrshire.

3. The following are the principal objects recognised by Evans as ancient stone implements:—

Celts,<sup>2</sup> i.e. hatchets, adzes, or chisels of stone, divided by him into three classes:—(1) Those merely chipped out; (2) Those ground or polished at the edge only; (3) Those ground or polished over the whole surface.

<sup>1</sup> The Brownhill celt, figured and described below. See *The [New] Statistical Account of Ayrshire*, p. 747. Edinburgh, 1842. A possible reference to another occurs on p. 337, where, in the notice of the canoes discovered in 1831 in Loch Doon, it is said, "In one of them was found an oaken war club, a battle axe, a number of large animal teeth, and a quantity of hazel nuts."

<sup>2</sup> "There can be no doubt as to the derivation of the word, it being no other than the English form of the [doubtful] Latin *celtis* or *celtes*, a chisel." Evans's *Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain*, p. 50. But see also the same author's *Ancient Bronze Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain and Ireland*, pp. 27-30. London, 1881.



Closely allied to the true celts are several forms that have been described as picks, chisels, or gouges.

Perforated axes and hammers, classified by the same authority thus:—

(1) Double-edged axes; (2) Implements with the edge at right angles to the shaft-hole; (3) Axes with the edge at one end only, the other being rounded; shading off into (4) Axe-hammers, sharp at one end and more or less hammer-like at the other.

Perforated and grooved hammers.

Hammer-stones, pestles, mortars, and querns.

Grinding-stones and whetstones, used for polishing or sharpening tools and weapons.

Flint flakes and cores, and implements of flint, such as saws, scrapers, drills, knives, and daggers.

Javelin and arrow heads, also of flint, the latter being either leaf-shaped, lozenge-shaped, stemmed, barbed, or triangular.

Sling-stones and balls, bracers, lance-heads, pins and needles of bone.

Spindle whorls, discs, slick-stones, weights, and cups.

Personal ornaments, chiefly of jet, as buttons, necklaces, beads, rings, amulets, etc.

Of most of these stone implements Ayrshire furnishes examples, some of them not without interest. As a specimen of what the "Notices" are intended to be, four celts and five perforated axes have been selected as the subjects of this the first of the series.

*Brownhill Celt.*—This fine celt, the preservation of which is due to the Rev. D. Ritchie, Tarbolton, in whose possession it has long been, was dug up about fifty years ago in cutting a drain on the farm of Brownhill, in that parish, by Mr. William Gibson, Tarbolton, whose father was then the tenant. The spot is about a mile to the north-west of the village. The celt, which was noticed and described by Mr. Ritchie in the *Statistical Account of Ayrshire*, is  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length,  $1\frac{3}{16}$  inches in breadth, at the butt-end, and 3 inches in breadth at the cutting edge. Its circumference towards the middle is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Both ends are rounded. Professor A. Geikie, of the University of Edinburgh, who has kindly given the lithological character of almost all the specimens described in this paper, so far as he could do so without breaking the surface, considers it to be a gray silicious very fine-grained stone, like a whetstone, but of greater density. It probably came from a hard silicious band in a metamorphic rock.



The Brownhill celt belongs to the third of the classes into which these implements have been divided,—the polished celts, both surfaces or faces being ground or polished over after chipping, so as to leave but two or three slight depressions on each of them. This class is further subdivided by Mr. Evans into (1) Those sharp or but slightly rounded at the sides; (2) Those with flat sides; (3) Those with an oval section; and (4) Those presenting abnormal peculiarities. At the same time, he points

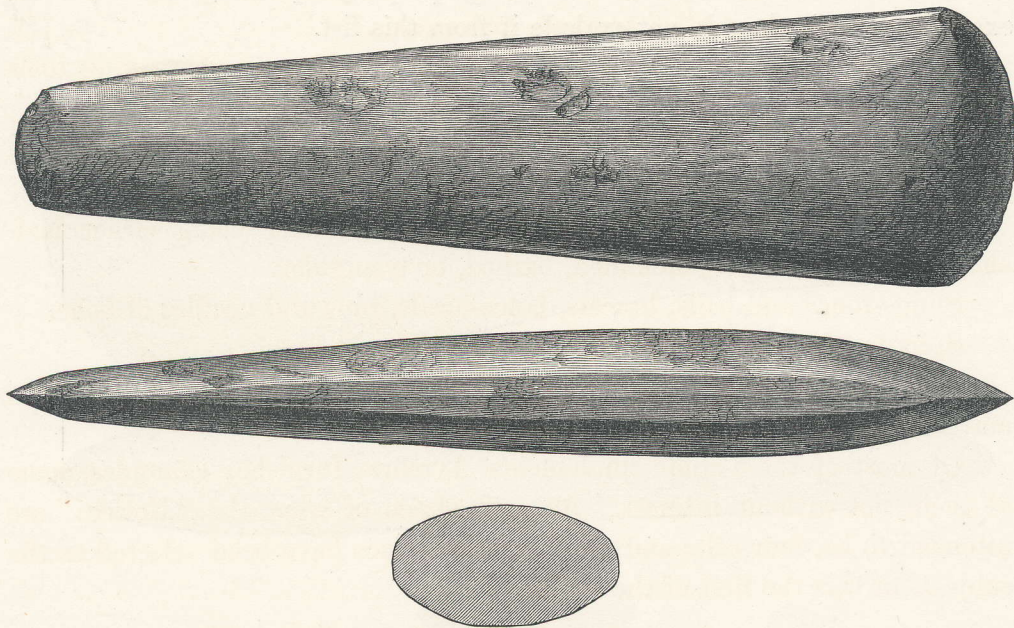


FIG. 1.—Brownhill, Tarbolton. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

out that these classes are merely arbitrary, intermediate forms sometimes occurring. Judging from the section as engraved, one would place this celt in the second of these subdivisions, and this is no doubt its proper place. But the side view shows a trace of a sharp line running along the whole of the flat portion. The same peculiarity appears, though less distinctly, on the side not engraved.

*Seabank Celt.*—For my knowledge of this celt I am indebted to John Smith, Esq., Kilwinning. It was discovered early in 1879 by Mr. John Marshall, blacksmith, Stevenston, who found it, he informs me, on the home farm of Seabank, about a quarter of a mile south of Saltcoats, and 40 yards above high-water mark. Among the sandhills on Seabank Moor adjoining,



a great number of flints and arrow-heads have lately been met with. The celt when discovered was half buried in the sand. It is said that vessels coming to Saltcoats for coal from Irish and other ports used many years ago to throw out their ballast in the sea opposite that part of the shore; and, as the high water of spring tides would reach almost if not quite as far as the place where it was lying, it is not unlikely that the celt may have been washed up by the tide. At all events, these circumstances throw considerable doubt on its being, properly speaking, an Ayrshire example, though they do not exclude it from this list.

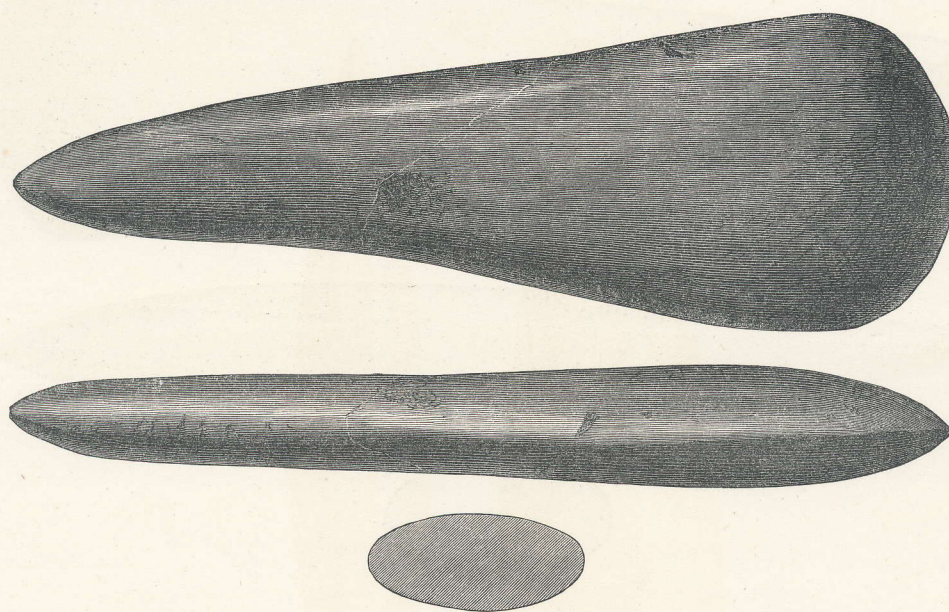


FIG. 2.—Seabank, Saltcoats. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

The Seabank celt is, according to Mr. Smith, of dark gray slate. It is beautifully polished. Its length is 10 inches, and its breadth at the cutting edge  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches. The section of its sides is oval, and towards the butt-end it tapers to a point. The cutting edge is symmetrically formed, but the one side is slightly rounded and the other hollowed, so as to give the celt a somewhat twisted appearance. It is thin in proportion to its length.

Writing of a celt of this type, but smaller and more regularly shaped, said to have been found in Caithness, Mr. Evans says:—"It is so thoroughly Carib in character, and so closely resembles specimens I possess from the West Indian islands, that for some time I hesitated to engrave it. There are, however, sufficiently numerous instances of other implements of the same



form having been found in this country for the type to be accepted as British. The celt found at Glasgow, in a canoe, at a depth of 25 feet below the surface, was of this kind. . . . . I have specimens of the same type from various parts of France."<sup>1</sup> He adds that the bulk of the celts found in Ireland, and formed of other materials than flint, approximate in form to this type, though they are usually rather thinner in their proportions.

*Dalry Station Celt.*—The specimen shown in Fig. 3 was found by

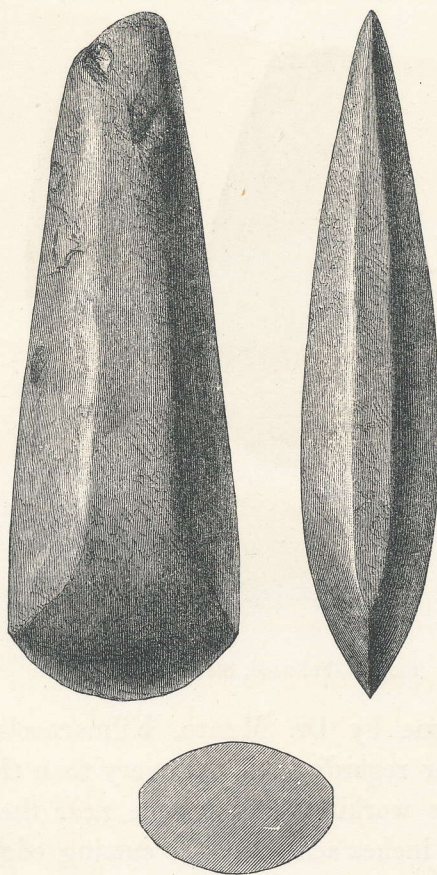


FIG. 3.—Dalry Station. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Mr. James Smith, Dalry, near Dalry railway station, 26 inches below the surface, in stratified undisturbed yellow clay mixed with vegetable matter, and is now in the collection of Mr. Smith, Kilwinning. It is a polished

<sup>1</sup> Evans, *Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain*, p. 118.



celt with flat edges,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches long,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide at the cutting edge, and  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches wide at the slanting butt-end. The faces, instead of being flat—or but slightly rounded, slope distinctly towards each of the sides, leaving in the middle a ridge of rather less breadth than the sloping portions. From the appearance it is difficult to say whether this is intentional or whether the grinding of the sides has been left unfinished. The stone is of the same character as the Brownhill celt, but not quite so dense.

*Fullwood Celt.*—Fig. 4 shows a well-shaped, small, polished celt, with flat sides. It was found on the farm of Fullwood, Stewarton, and has been

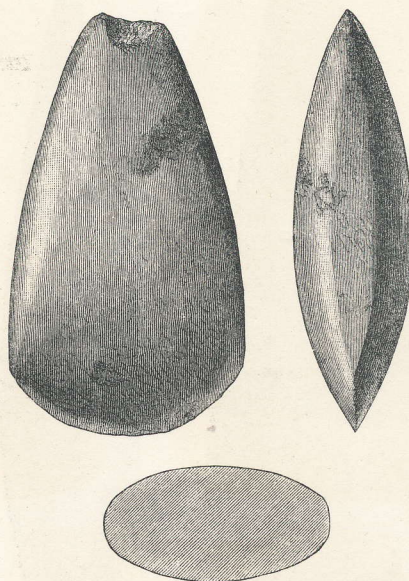


FIG. 4.—Fullwood, Stewarton. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

kindly forwarded to me by Dr. Munro, Kilmarnock, who is unable to gather anything further regarding its discovery than that it was picked up by a servant who was working at the time near the farm-steading. It is  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches long,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across at the cutting edge, but narrowing to less than 1 inch at the butt, which is slightly broken. It is formed of a rock not unlike the two former specimens, but more distinctly granular and more finely micaceous.

*Lochlands Axe.*—Fig. 5 represents an implement of a different class—the perforated axes. It is the property of John Rankine, Esq., of Beoch,



near Maybole, through whose courtesy I am enabled to describe it here. It was discovered, he states, in the spring of 1857, on the adjoining farm of Lochlands, and near the O loch.

In 1856 the water had been run off this loch, and the land around

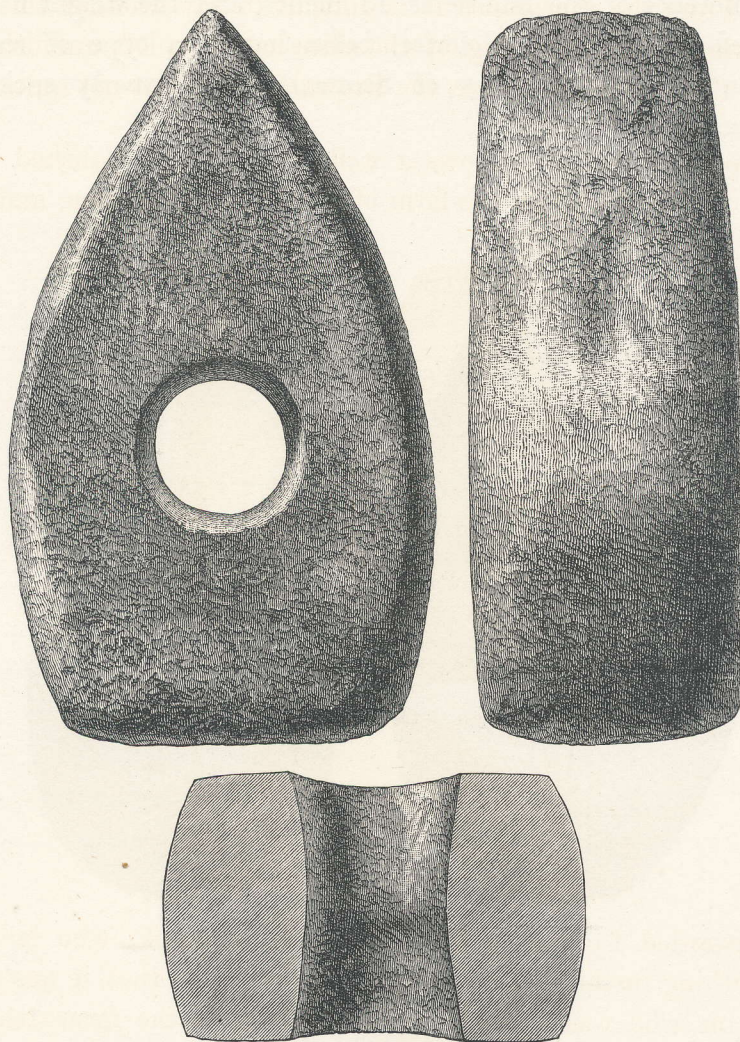


FIG. 5.—Lochlands, Maybole. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

drained with tiles. Whether the axe had been thrown up unobserved on the surface during the draining operations, or whether it had been lying at no great depth and been disturbed at the time by the plough, cannot now be ascertained. But there is no doubt that the spot was more or less under water previous to 1856.



The axe, which may be regarded as belonging to the third of the subdivisions given above, is about 8 inches in length and  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide at the butt, which is  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches thick and almost straight. The shaft-hole is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter, and tapers inward from the faces, though very slightly. The circumference of the middle is 13 inches, and the weight 6 lbs. 3 oz. It is formed of diabase or dolerite, belonging to a type of rock found intrusive in the central valley of Scotland, and formerly spoken of as "greenstone."

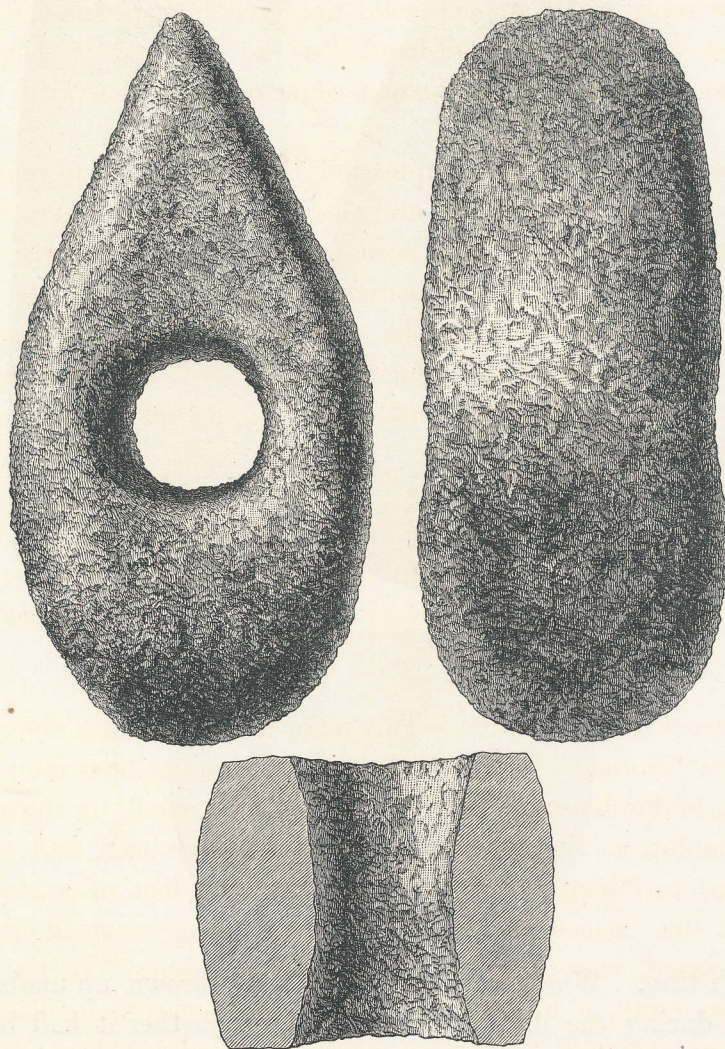


FIG. 6.—Moat, Ochiltree. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

*Moat Axe.*—The axe shown in Fig. 6 is of a similar type to the last, but somewhat different in form. It has been kindly lent me by Miss Sloan,



and was in the small collection of Ayrshire antiquities formed by her brother, the late Dr. Chas. F. Sloan, Ayr, some of which were described in a former Volume of the "Collections."<sup>1</sup> In the course of professional visits that he had occasion to make a good many years ago to Ochiltree, he observed it lying on the window-sill of a cottage near the Moat toll, a short distance west of the village. After passing it several times, as he used humorously to tell, he could "thole" no longer, and one day made bold to stop and ask the mistress of the house if he might be allowed to carry it off. Her reply was that she could not give him permission to do so without first consulting her husband, "as he had put it there." Next time he was at Ochiltree the woman came out and cheerfully presented it to him.

Dr. Sloan was under the impression that it had been found by its Ochiltree possessor at the Moat, and close to the house where he himself got it; but no particulars have been preserved. It is nearly  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches in length,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick, and the diameter of the shaft-hole is  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches at each face, but narrower in the centre. The circumference in the middle is about 13 inches, and the weight  $4\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. It is scarcely possible to tell what it is made of without fracturing it, but it appears to be a micaceous quartz porphyry.

Another form of axe-hammer is represented by Figs. 7, 8, and 9, all of which belong to the fourth subdivision of the class, and closely resemble each other in shape, while two of them at least have accompanied interments.

*Fardenreoch Axe-Hammer.*—This relic, which has been obligingly sent me for these "Notices" by Dr. A. Milroy, Kilwinning, was found in 1865 on the farm of Fardenreoch, in the parish of Colmonell, by the proprietor, Mr. John Dunlop, at the junction of the Linkumtry burn with the Duisk. Both streams had long washed, as they met, the foot of a mound overgrown with sloe bushes and hazel, which, on being removed in the year above mentioned, was found to be a cairn of stones. In the course of carting these away, a human skull, teeth, and bones were discovered, as well as this axe-hammer. Near the cairn was what has been described to me as "a circular pit, of considerable depth, lined with stone."

<sup>1</sup> See "Collections," Vol. I. pp. 31-54.



The axe-hammer is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across at the semicircular cutting edge. The circumference round the shaft-hole is 6 inches, the diameter of the latter being an inch at each face, though less towards the centre. The butt-end, which is rounded, measures about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across. The two

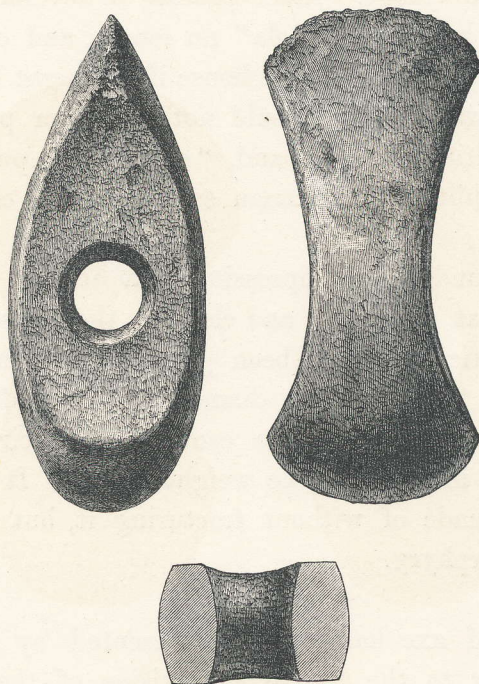


FIG. 7.—Fardenreoch, Colmonell. Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

faces are concave, and the weight is 14 oz. It is formed of diabase, slightly pyritous, which may have come from any of the igneous rocks of the south-west of Scotland. On the surface of the axe is a ferruginous incrustation.

*Chapelton Axe-Hammer.*—The axe-hammer represented by Fig. 8 was first described by R. W. Cochran-Patrick, Esq., M.P., in a *Notice of some Antiquities recently discovered in North Ayrshire*, read before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and published in their *Proceedings*, vol. ix. pp. 385-387, accompanied with a plate containing woodcuts of it and the one to be next noticed. I am unable to add anything to his account of it. “This very fine specimen,” he says, “was found on the farm of Chapelton



[in the parish of West Kilbride], occupied by Mr. David Cunninghame, in the spring of 1865. From the intelligent description given me by Mr. Cunninghame, Junior, who was present at the discovery, I am enabled to furnish the following particulars. It was found under a small inverted urn, immediately beside a larger urn containing remains of bones, etc. The plough broke the top of the larger urn, and in trying to get the

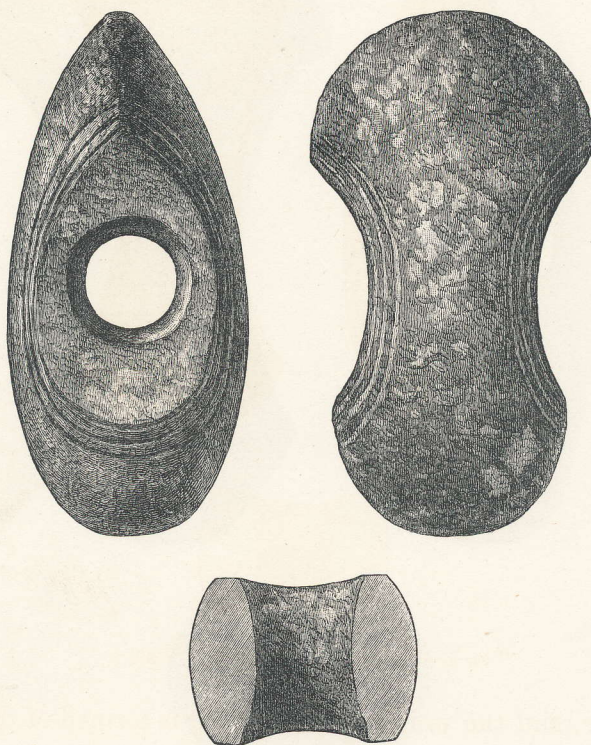


FIG. 8.—Chapelton, West Kilbride. Scale  $\frac{3}{8}$ .

remains of it out, by loosening the ground round about it, the smaller one was unluckily broken, but the hammer was noticed and preserved."

The Chapelton axe-hammer has since been presented to the Society by Mr. Cunninghame, and is now in their Museum. It is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across at the cutting edge. Round the shaft-hole, the diameter of which is 1 inch, it measures 6 inches. The butt-end, where narrowest, is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch across. The two faces are oval and concave, and round them run three parallel lines or grooves. Its weight is scarcely 11 oz. The stone



resembles some of the coarse porphyries associated with the lower old red sandstone in the central valley of Scotland.

*Montfode Axe-Hammer.*—In the same communication Mr. Cochran-Patrick gave the following account of another axe-hammer that bears in

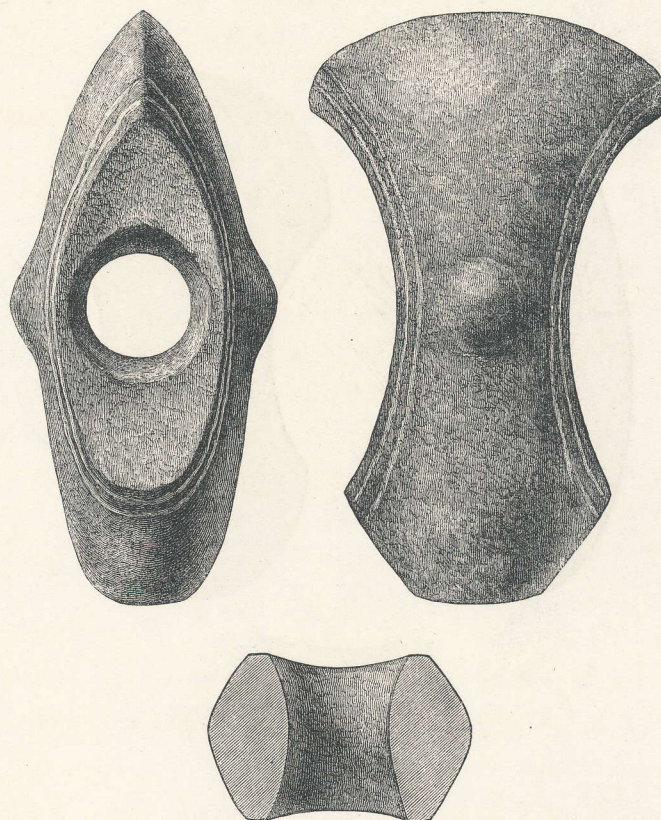


FIG. 9.—Montfode, Ardrossan. Scale  $\frac{3}{8}$ .

shape a close resemblance to the one just described:—"It was found," he states, "the year before, not a very great distance from where the first was discovered, and, like it, is in a high state of preservation. Dr. J. R. Brown, of Saltcoats, to whom the hammer belongs, informs me that it was turned up by the plough in a field on the top of Montfode Braes, a little to the north of Ardrossan, and near the remains of several ancient forts."

This elegant axe-hammer is nearly 5 inches long and 3 inches wide at the cutting edge, and its circumference in the middle is 6 inches. The



butt-end, after narrowing symmetrically, has at its abrupt termination a breadth of scarcely an inch. The diameter of the shaft-hole, the sides of which, except at the faces, are nearly parallel, is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. There is a small protuberance or knob on each side opposite the shaft-hole. Both faces are oval and concave, and encircled by two lines or grooves. Its weight is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  oz. The rock is a "greenstone," probably from some igneous mass, such as is found intruded into the carboniferous rocks of the district.

JAMES MACDONALD.

AYR, *January* 1882.