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**Notes on Bones, Concrete, Charcoal, &c**

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## NOTES ON BONES, CONCRETE, CHARCOAL, &amp;c.,

Found in the Round Barrow, near Cranham, and received from  
J. E. Dorington, Esq., October 8th, 1880,

By PROFESSOR ROLLESTON.

I received, October 8th, 1880, when at Cranham Lodge, a box containing a quantity of more or less perfectly calcined bones, more or less in connexion with masses of more or less perfectly concreted masses of clay, carbonate of lime, iron oxide, and wood, some of which was petrified, some of which was carbonized. This box came from a round barrow near Cranham Lodge, and, with its contents, was presented to the Oxford University Museum, by J. E. Dorington, Esq., of Lypiatt Park. On the surface of one of the masses of clay was, and is, a child's jaw; a child, or baby rather, who had not cut its teeth, and which, therefore, though calcined by the Britons, have been considered *minor igne rogo* by the Romans who came after them.

In connexion with this lower jaw, were, or had been, according to a letter of Mr. Dorington's of October 8th, 1880, and also according to another of September 2, 1880, some other bones of larger size. Some other bones in brown paper also came into my hands. Now, in two words, all the human bones belonged either to the baby or to an adult woman; and, as far as the evidence furnished to me by the bones, which were (as per letter referred to) moved bodily *in situ* with the box, goes, I should say we have in this block of concreted bones and clay, the remains, probably enough, such is human nature, of a mother and child.

Woman and baby I am sure of; but the bent and twisted, and fragmentary character of the bones, all of which had been thoroughly burnt, renders any identification of the type an impossibility. The burning had been very perfect, and very little of the baby's bones had escaped destruction beyond the lower jaw,

which here, as so often in geological formations, manifested a characteristic persistency. The thoroughness of the burning had been such as to have calcined, or de-carbonated, much of the surrounding oolitic limestone. This had been re-carbonated by rainfall, dissolved, and re-deposited interstitially, concreting fragments of charred wood, &c., &c., in its porous, sponge-like mass.

Woody fibre is distinguishable, even to the naked eye, in both a charred and a "petrified" state; but the microscope does not enable one to assign it to one set of trees, say coniferæ, or broad leaved trees, rather than another. The "petrified" wood dissolved entirely, with much effervescence, on treatment with hydrochloric acid. Some of the petrified matter was, apparently, casts of leaves, rather than of wood; "travertines"<sup>1</sup> furnish an analogy, and an explanation of this.

The description of the walls, and the concrete forming two ends of the cist, and the mixture of the lumps of the oolitic limestone and of the concrete resulting from the calcination with charcoal, &c., remind me of the arrangements I have met with in cremation long barrows, and incline me to suspect that in this barrow we have an instance of the combination of the practices of the Long Barrow People with those of the Round Barrow Folk. Such fusions are not unparalleled, and as utter extermination of a conquered by a conquering people is all but impossible, and as the survivors of the conquered people would be women, the sex which has the greatest influence in such matters as burial, and other such rites, it is in tumuli that we should expect to find marks of such combinations.

<sup>1</sup> A whitish concretionary limestone deposited from the water of springs holding lime in solution.—ED.