

BRITISH BARROWS

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BRITISH BARROWS

A RECORD

OF THE

EXAMINATION OF SEPULCHRAL MOUNDS

IN VARIOUS PARTS OF ENGLAND

BY

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TOGETHER WITH

DESCRIPTION OF FIGURES OF SKULLS
GENERAL REMARKS ON PREHISTORIC CRANIA
AND AN APPENDIX

BY

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PREFACE.

THE work now offered to the public will be found to contain a record of the examination of above two hundred and thirty sepulchral mounds, belonging to a period before the occupation of Britain by the Romans. A considerable part of many years has been devoted to this examination; and, I trust I may say with confidence, the facts collected during this process have been carefully and minutely observed and accurately recorded.

Though numerous barrows have been opened throughout Britain, but few accounts have been given of what has thus, from time to time, been brought to light. Many have been destroyed by shepherds and others, from motives of a mere idle curiosity, or in the delusive hope of finding treasure; still more have been destroyed, under the influence of a curiosity almost as idle, by persons indeed of better education, but who have thought that enough was gained if they found an urn to occupy a vacant place in the entrance hall, or a jet necklace or a flint arrow-point for the lady of the house to show, with other trifles, to her guests requiring amusement. Naturally in none of such cases has any record of these openings been preserved, and hence what otherwise might have grown into an almost invaluable collection of facts has been entirely lost to archæological science.

Notwithstanding this, however, some extensive series of barrow examinations have happily been undertaken and the results given to the public. Sir Richard Colt Hoare in his magnificent volumes 'Ancient Wilts' was the first systematically to explore and publish a most valuable amount of discoveries in that county and some adjoining districts. Mr. Bateman also in Derbyshire, supplemented by Mr. Carrington in Staffordshire and Mr. Ruddock in the North Riding of Yorkshire, prosecuted a large number of investigations

in the barrows of those counties, a full account of which will be found in his 'Vestiges of the Antiquities of Derbyshire' and 'Ten Years' Diggings.' For Dorsetshire Mr. Warne has published, in his 'Celtic Tumuli of Dorset,' a record of many barrow-openings conducted by himself as well as by others in that county; and the same has been done for Cornwall by Mr. W. C. Borlase in 'Nenia Cornubiæ.' Besides these larger works, many notices of the examination of barrows will be found in various Archæological Journals, local as well as national. Nor would it be just to omit, though the places of sepulture there treated of belong to a period posterior to that with which my own researches have been connected, Douglas's 'Nenia Britannica,' and that most admirable account of his examination of Kentish cemeteries given by the Rev. Bryan Faussett in the 'Inventorium Sepulchrale;' a work which it is much to be regretted remained in manuscript for nearly a century after the death of its author.

The barrow-openings recorded in this book have principally been made in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a district which possesses in the Wolds a locality abundant in such remains, and where the greater part fortunately had been left uninjured, except in so far as the cultivation of the land during a comparatively short period had to some extent destroyed the surface of the mounds. In the same district a large series of barrows has been most carefully and exhaustively examined by Messrs. J. R. and R. Mortimer, of Driffild and Fimber, the results of whose labours will I hope before long be published.

Accounts of a few of the barrows more fully described in this work have already been given by me in the Journal of the Archæological Institute and in the Transactions of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Field Club, but it has been thought desirable to include these in order to render the series in each case more complete.

To this history of the opening of British barrows are appended two essays by George Rolleston, M.D., F.R.S., Linacre Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the University of Oxford, under whose charge, in the New Museum of that body, are deposited the skulls obtained from the various sepulchral mounds herein described. One of these essays gives a minute 'Description of Figures of the Skulls,'