

A very extensive cemetery has been discovered in Bracken county, Kentucky, occupying nearly the whole of the "bottom" or plain, on the south bank of the Ohio, between Bracken and Turtle creeks. The village of Augusta has been built upon it in latter times. The following account of this cemetery was communicated to the author by Gen. John Payne, of Augusta. It will be observed that iron was discovered in some of the graves; which demonstrates that a portion of the burials took place since communication was established between the whites and Indians, and very likely within the 18th century.

"The beautiful bottom upon which it stands, extends from one creek to the other, about a mile and a half, and averaging about 800 yards wide. The town is laid off at the upper end of the bottom. The hill back of it is high, but not precipitous; and upon arriving at the summit, it almost immediately falls towards the south with a gentle but deep descent, and immediately there rises another hill. I am thus particular, that you may have a knowledge of the ground where now rest the skeletons of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of an ancient race, as well as of the surrounding localities. The soil of the bottom-land is alluvial.

"The village rests upon one vast cemetery: indeed, the whole bottom appears to have been a great burying-ground; for a post-hole can hardly be dug in any part of it without turning up human bones, particularly within three or four hundred yards of the river bank. The ground appears to have been thrown up into ridges, one end resting on the river bank, and the other extending out some two, others three hundred yards, with depressions between of about one hundred feet, the ridges rising to an elevation of about three feet, and are about fifty or sixty yards wide. These ridges are full of human skeletons, *regularly buried*. My house, at the lower end of the village, stands upon one of these ridges: and in excavating a

* Accounts of a number of these ancient cemeteries are given by Gen. Lewis Collins, in his recently published History of Kentucky, from which the following notices are condensed. Six miles N. E. of Bowling Green, Warren county, there is a cave which has a perpendicular descent of about thirty or forty feet. At the bottom are vast quantities of human bones.—(p. 541.) On the north bank of Green River, in the vicinity of Bowling Green, are a great many ancient graves; some of which are formed of stones set edgewise. A similar cemetery occurs near the mouth of Peter's creek, on Big Barren River; the bones are enclosed in stone coffins, which are about three feet long, and from one to one and a half wide. On the same river, three miles above Glasgow, and on Skegg's creek, five miles S. W. of the same place, are caves containing human bones; those in the last named cavern seem to be exclusively the bones of small children.—(p. 177.) Similar caverns are found in Union and Meade counties, all of which are said to contain human bones in abundance.

foundation for the basement story, seventy by sixty feet, and four feet deep, we exhumed one hundred and ten skeletons, numbered by the skulls; but there were several more, the skulls of which were so much decayed and intermingled with others that I did not take them into the calculation. I have no doubt that there were at least one hundred and forty bodies buried within the bounds above mentioned; and then on every side the skeletons had been severed, a part taken away while the remains were left sticking in the wall. My garden, extending one hundred and fifty feet back from my house, is manured with human bones, and is very productive. I cannot turn up a spadefull of earth without disturbing the remains of the ancient dead.

“Those exhumed by me, I have said, appeared to have been regularly buried; they were about two feet below the surface generally, but some not more than a foot or eighteen inches, invariably with their heads toward the river—the river at this point running south 70° west; some had rough unhammered stones extending on both sides the full length, with a head and foot stone, and a stone covering the head; others, again, would have only a stone on each side of the head, a head and foot stone, and a stone covering the head; others, only a head and foot stone; and others, and much the greatest number, had ‘nothing to mark the ground where they were laid.’ Most of the bones were entire; but when exposed to the atmosphere, many soon crumbled into dust, though others remained quite firm. Several of the skulls, in a good state of preservation, I had in my house for months, until they were broken up. The teeth appeared sound: I do not recollect an instance of defective teeth; there were many absent teeth, but this evidently arose from their dropping out after burial. There were some skeletons of children: the bones of those mouldered into dust almost immediately.

“Many articles of Indian ornament, use, and warfare were excavated, such as arrow-heads of flint and bone, glass beads, and that peculiar kind of ancient Indian pottery, formed of clay and pulverized or pounded muscle-shells, which had evidently received the action of heat to harden it. Some of the specimens of the latter were very perfect, with well formed ears, like our pottery ware; some well formed, handsome stone pipes, glass beads, both black and blue, ornaments of bone, etc. The other ridges, where they have been opened, have exhibited like results: they are full of human bones, apparently regularly buried; but the skeletons have not been always found to lie at right angles with the river, but sometimes parallel, and at other times diagonally. Upon this bottom, and covering these remains in 1792, when the bottom was first settled, stood some of the largest trees of the forest. We have sycamores now standing on the bank, between these remains and the river, five feet in diameter at the stump.

“There is another fact which perhaps I should mention. Maj. Davis, who owned a farm on the Augusta bottom, about half a mile below the village, passing opposite his lands where a part of the bank had fallen into the river, discovered a bone sticking out of the bank; and upon drawing it out, it proved to be the bone of the right arm, and upon the wrist there were *three hammered iron rings*. They were evidently of manufactured iron, round and formed to fit the wrist: the ends brought together but not welded or closed; the iron was destroyed,—it had been so

completely oxydized as to break very easily ; the workmanship was rough, and the print of the hammer was upon them.

“A full cart-load of bones, taken from the basement story of my house, I had wheeled off into my garden : over them I erected a mound, and crowned it with a summer-house ; and there they shall rest for the future.

“About forty years ago, Dr. Overton, then of Lexington, was upon a visit to Augusta. I had heard of a large pile of stones upon the spur of a hill overlooking the Ohio, about three miles above. We went to visit it, worked hard nearly all day, and, at the depth of about five feet in the centre of the pile, found about a half bushel of charcoal and ashes ; this was all that we could discover.

“I know of no fortifications, nor of any mounds or tumuli, in the county of Bracken. At Claysville, near the bank of Licking River, there is a very large mound ; but I have not been informed that either curiosity or scientific research has induced the citizens to open it.”