

NOTICE OF TWO REMARKABLE GLOBULAR OBJECTS.

FOUND IN SUSSEX AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

THE advantages attending the practice adopted by the Institute, in forming a classified collection at each of their Annual Meetings, with the especial view of drawing forth such scattered remains of antiquity as may have been preserved in the locality, was strikingly shown at Bristol, in 1851. The late Dr. Mantell had, long previously, discovered in Sussex a singular and highly decorated ball, on the surface of which appear seven astroidal ornaments, formed by incrustation of hard paste of reddish-brown colour, of various shades, on a white ground.¹ This curious relic had been regarded as unique, until at the Bristol Meeting, a precisely similar ball, previously considered as an object of trivial or modern character, was offered for exhibition by the Rev. Dr. White, through Mr. Freeman. An opportunity was thus afforded for the comparison of two objects of such peculiar workmanship, found in localities so remote from each other.

The accompanying plate represents these highly curious balls. The first, found in Sussex, was dug up, as stated by Dr. Mantell, in a tumulus on the Downs near the race-course at Brighton; it was deposited with ashes in an urn of rude fabrication found in a broken state, and described as of "the coarse half-burnt British pottery." No other relics were found near the spot. A slight fracture appeared at one side, which, having been enlarged by the late Sir F. Chantrey and Dr. Buckland, enabled those distinguished authorities to pronounce that the ball consisted of a nodule of flint or chert, incrustated with a thin layer of the ornamental paste.

The second, discovered at Slymbridge, in Gloucestershire, was sent by the Rev. R. M. White, Rector of that place. It was found in 1847 by his servant, when employed in cleaning out a ditch which serves as a drain to the old moat surrounding the Rectory Garden. It lay imbedded in a

¹ Catalogue of Mantell Museum, p. 37.



A BALL DISCOVERED IN A CINERARY URN, ON THE DOWNS
NEAR THE RACE-COURSE, BRIGHTON.

In the Possession of Gideon Algernon Mantell, L.L.D. F.R.S.



A BALL FOUND IN 1847 NEAR THE OLD MOAT OF THE RECTORY GARDEN,
SLYMBRIDGE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

In the Possession of the Rev.^d R.M. White, D.D.

stratum of gravel, about three inches in thickness, beneath a deposit of mud of about the same depth. The ball, when found, was covered with a coating of dark yellow colour, which was rubbed off without much difficulty. The spot where it lay is adjacent to the churchyard. The precise weight is 2lb. 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. It must be stated that in the accompanying plate the representation of this ball is slightly larger than the original; the diameter of both specimens being nearly the same. For the beautiful drawing of the Slymbridge ball, here reproduced by Mr. Shaw, we are indebted to a lady, who kindly drew it at the request of her relative, Dr. White.

In regard to the period to which these relics belong, no precise data can be adduced. The fact recorded by Dr. Mantell may appear to bring them within the age of urn-burial, more especially as several tumuli were opened by him on the Sussex Downs. It may, however, be questionable whether the urn was properly assigned to the British period, or may have been of the rude half-burnt pottery, not made in the lathe, which characterises the early Saxon interments. Spherical objects of crystal and stone have been found repeatedly with remains of the Saxon period. They have been regarded as amulets, or as connected with divination; and such an object has been sometimes compared with the *ovum anguinum* of Pliny, or the "glain neider," (serpents of glass) of Cornwall and Wales.² In our Museum at Bristol, a fine agate ball, nearly of the same size as the objects under consideration, was exhibited by Mr. Henry C. Harford, who stated that it was "found in an Archdruid's tumulus in Cornwall," and had been presented by Sir James Hamlyn Williams to the late Mr. Charles J. Harford. It may be interesting to recall, that in the same collection a large *perforated* agate bead was shown by Mr. Augustus Smith, found singly with massive bronze armlets in a tumulus in the Scilly Islands. In reference to balls of crystal found in Saxon graves, it may suffice to refer to the *Nenia*, pp. 14, 19, plates 4, 5. Such a ball was found in the tomb near Tournai, usually assigned to Childeric, who died in 481.³ Large *perforated* beads of crystal have likewise been discovered with Saxon remains, singly, as noticed

² For information on this subject, see Mr. Nightingale's curious memoir on Ancient Beads, *Archaeol.* vol. 34, p. 46.

Wilson's *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, p. 304.

³ Chifflet, *Anastasis Childerici*, p. 240.

in this *Journal*. (See p. 179, *ante*.) Imperforated beads of unusual size, and formed of richly variegated glass, have been found in several instances.⁴

These facts may be acceptable, as connected with the two very singular balls, now published; tending to demonstrate the frequent practice of depositing some spherical ornament, possibly associated with the notion of talismanic influence, or magical virtues, in the tombs of an early period. A. W.

⁴ *Archaeol. Journ.* vol. iii., p. 354.
Beesley's *Hist. of Banbury*, pl. viii.
Archaeol. vol. 34, pl. 5. A fine specimen is

in the Museum of the Cambridge Anti-
quarian Society, and another is in the Brit.
Mus., figured by Rymdyk.