

Ancient Burial-Ground in Currower

**Written by Rita Cunney. Currower,
Attymass, Ballina, Co. Mayo**

In Currower, Attymass there was an ancient burial-ground discovered recently. I am now about to relate the story of its discovery.

In the lands of Francis Doherty of Currower in the parish of Attymass, there is a little mound, raised about six feet above the level of the surrounding ground. It is circular, and about thirty-six feet in diameter. It is situated on the left-hand side of the road leading from Attymass to Ballina.

This year as the mound interfered with the ploughing operations in the field, the owner of the lands in which it is situated determined to remove it having found that it contained gravel, he offered it to Thomas Flannelly the road contractor. The latter began to remove it.

On the eleventh of November when Thomas had dug about twelve feet from the edge he discovered a little cell, about twelve inches high covered on top by two feet of clay. It was constructed of five stones, four as walls and roofed by a medium sized flag. He removed one of the sides and saw to his great astonishment a little urn. He took it out and saw that it contained a white lime-like substance. This he emptied out, and in doing so, broke about half of the urn. He took a piece, to show it to Francis Doherty who was digging in an adjoining field. When Francis took it, it broke between his fingers. He kept some pieces to show to the master after he came from school. One of his children who was playing near the mound when the urn was found, told the master. He went to the place and gathered all he could find of the urn and bone for the white substance was bone. He communicated with Dr. Mahr, the keeper of the National Museum, and he, replying told the Master if it were possible, to prevent any further interference with the mound until he could come to investigate.

Owing to the fact that the urn was not found in the centre of the mound, the Master thinks that perhaps there are other urns or a vault in the middle.

What was found is certainly very old. It was buried before St. Patrick came to Ireland because the white substance was ashes of a cremated body, and even in the oldest books, the chroniclers do not mention cremation. If cremation were practised after St. Patrick's time it would take its place in Irish Folklore and it would be mentioned in the old stories.

Standing on top of the mound you look down on the country around. You see most of the forts from it. In one village near there are twenty-four forts. One of them whose door faces the little mound in very large. Perhaps the mound was a burial place for a family of kings or princes who lived there long ago. This big fort is surrounded by a very deep dyke. Inside it is very high and spacious, and outside of it covers more than a rood of land, which shows that some person of high rank lived

there long ago. The entrance into the cave was closed in recently, to prevent cattle and sheep from going in.

The Master, from all of the urn that was saved made a drawing of it and sent it to Dr. Mahr. He found it to be seven inches across the mouth, three inches across the bottom and four and a half inches high. It was beautifully and regularly decorated, showing that the person who made it had a love for beauty, and the person who buried the corpse had respect for the dead. The Master examined all the stones to see if there was an inscription on any one, but he found none.

Early this year when Francis's brother took the scraws off the mound, the Master noticed a line of stones all round about a yard from the bottom.