

D-E, site of partition wall.

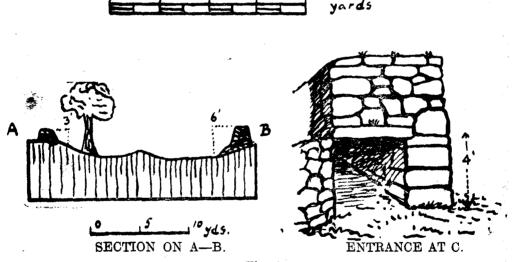


Fig. 1.

Example of a stone enclosure, of type No. 1, on farm 906, Elgeyo border. G.H., March 31st, 1921.

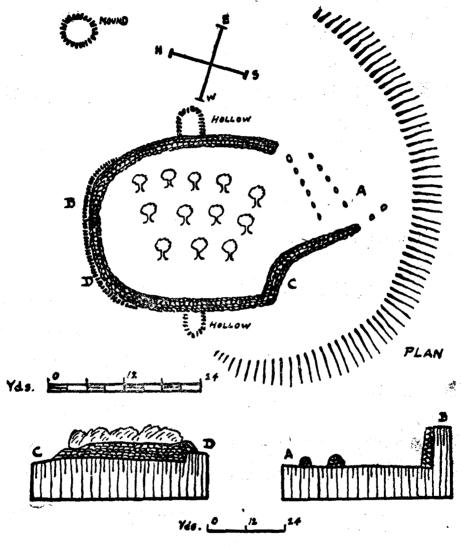


Fig. 2. SECTIONS ON A—B, C—D.

Example of stone enclosures of type No. 2, on farm 307, Elgeyo border. G.H., March 29th, 1921.

## By G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD.

The study of local archæology in this country does not seem to have received the attention due to it; and while it is true that antiquities exist only in certain areas, the remains found therein provide material for a considerable amount of investigation, and it is to these remains that I wish to draw attention in this paper. The greater number of antiquities occur in the districts of Uasin-Gishu and Nandi, and extend south of Nandi into Kipsikis country, and, I believe, to the Tanganyika border. I have found no traces of monumental antiquities on or near Mount Elgon, nor have I observed any in Western Trans-Nzoia. The antiquities may be classed as:—

(1) Enclosures of stone or earth; (2) Tumuli; (3) meini hirion or monoliths; (4) Roads; (5) Irrigation canals; (6) Graves. Those of the first class are by far the most numerous. It will be advisable to examine these remains separately.

#### (1). Enclosures of Stone or Earth.

These may be further sub-divided into (a) large stone enclosures; (b) hut-circles; (c) pit-villages.

(a) Large stone enclosures are most abundant on the Elgeyo border, the eastern side of the Uasin-Gishu plateau; they are also found sparingly on the central parts of the plateau, but are entirely Those in Elgeyo consist, roughly, of a more or absent in Nandi. less circular stone wall surrounding a slight hollow. They consist of three types: 1. Single enclosures with entrance passage; 2. Single enclosures without entrance passage; 3. Double enclosures. following examples are situated on two farms not far apart. No. 1: On farm 906 is an enclosure with a continuous stone wall, still standing to a height of 6 ft. in one place, which encloses an area of about 150 square yards, the interior being divided into two equal parts by a ridge running across it from north to south, which appears from a small portion of wall projecting from the main wall at the north end, to be the remains of a partition wall. At the S.W. corner is a well-built and well preserved entrance passage, some 6ft. in length, with a passage way 4 ft. high; this passage is roofed with stone slabs, a super-structure in the form of partially bonded masonry being carried another 4 ft. above the roof of the passage. The whole circuit of the wall is free-standing. In the interior are

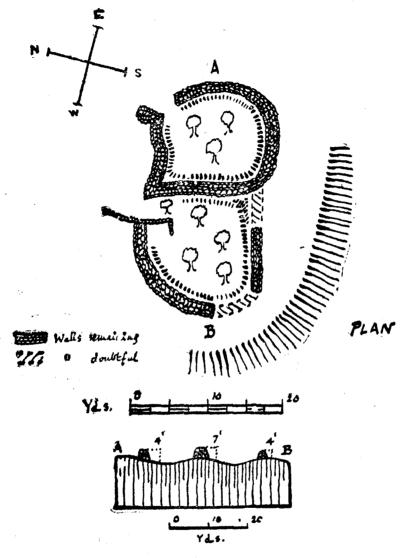
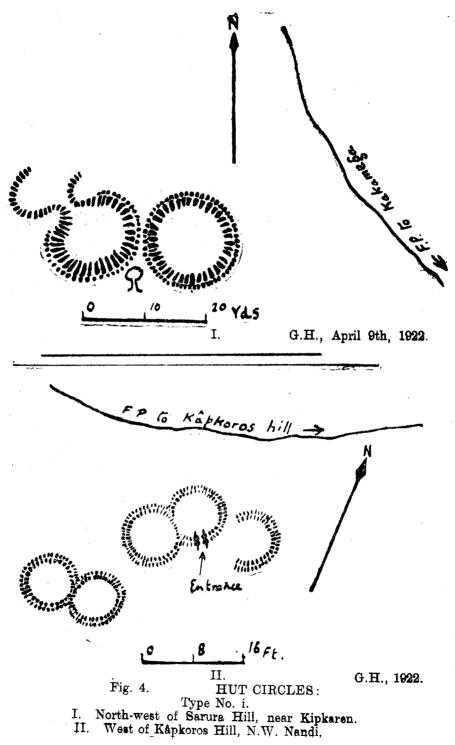


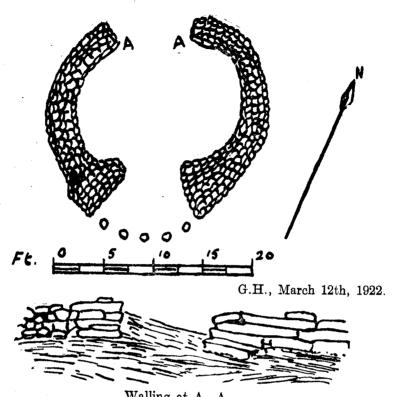
Fig. 3.

Example of stone enclosures of type No. 3, on farm 807, Elgeyo border. G.H., March 29th, 1921.



some well grown trees. Type No. 2: Some three or four miles from the foregoing, on farm 307, is a good example of this type. on a small eminence, is a wall somewhat in the shape of a calabash, the ground-level of the interior sloping from north to south, with the result that the wall on the north is built wholly against the earth; it is some 5 ft. in height. The southern end, representing the neck of the calabash, is enclosed by two low and much-ruined stone walls, which are roughly parallel. The interior is filled with trees, some Type No. 3: Within a short distance of them of considerable girth. of this last, is a double enclosure, consisting of two irregular circles of stone walling. The eastern half is walled on all sides, and has a gap on the north side for an entrance, on one side of which a wall is built out for a few feet at a right angle to the main wall. western half is now incomplete; but it seems to have had for its eastern wall the western wall of the other half. The entrance was on the north wall, one side being formed by the central wall, the other by a thin wall built at a right angle to the main wall, and extending both outwards and inwards for several feet. The floors of both halves are hollowed, and filled with trees. The central wall, at its highest, is 7 ft.; the other walls are 3-4 ft. in height; all are free-standing. The last two enclosures are at a considerable distance from a river; the first is close to, but at some height above, the Ellegirini river. It is probable that these structures were roofed—if they were roofed at all—with rafters and thatch; there are no indications visible of roofs of stone slabs, which I am told, occur on the Nandi border. informed that a Dutchman once found a "stone axe" and a clay tobacco pipe in an enclosure on his farm; but I could not trace their present location. As to the object of these enclosures, it is difficult, without excavation, to determine. Though they may, at times, have been used as forts, it is not probable that they were built for that purpose: their disposition, the nature of the ground, and the analogy of similar structures in Britain, such as Grimspound on Dartmoor, and Caer Drewyn in the parish of Corwen, North Wales seem to preclude this theory. (R. Munro, Prehistoric Britain, 218; Royal Comm. on Anc. Monuments in Wales, Inv. Co. Merioneth. No. 37). And when it is considered that many of them are situated on the edge of the forest, in a region exposed to dangers both from wild beasts and hostile people, it seems probable that they were intened as cattle folds, and that the owners lived in them as well.

(b) Hut-circles occur in great numbers throughout the Eldoret area, and still more frequently in Nandi. They consist of three types: (1) a pit excavated in the ground; (2) a pit having its sides built up with stones; (3) a pit similar to No. 1, but with one or more small annexes. Type No. 1 is, on the whole, the commonest. It consists of a circular hollow excavated almost always on a slope, the floor being nearly level, and the entrance on the lower side, where on



Walling at A—A.

Fig. 5. Hut-circles: type No. ii., on S.E. slope of Chepesas Hill,
Kipkaren.

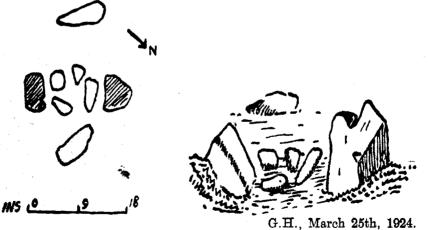
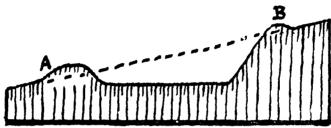


Fig. 6. Hearth excavated in a hut-circle on farm 1726, on left bank of R. Kipkaren.

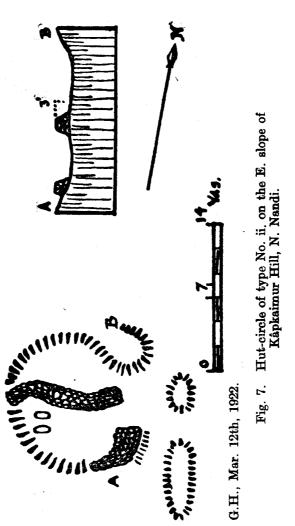
each side of the entrance, are frequently well-defined banks formed by the upcast from the excavation, and laid on either side of the entrance to form a low wall, thus:

A=Bank. A-B=Original ground level.



This type of circle varies in diameter from 30 to 8 feet; and in depth from 4 to 5 feet. Some trial excavations made last year in a hut-circle on the left bank of the Kipkaren river resulted in the discovery of a number of fragments of pottery, which were found in the floor of the circle at depths varying from 12 to 24 inches. pieces in all were found, being in colour, grey, grey-brown, reddish, reddish brown and reddish-grey. The ornamentation on one piece consisted of parallel straight lines. Three other pieces were also picked up outside this circle, on the surface; the ornamentation on them showing none of the characteristics of Nandi work. The texture, too, and the degree of burning, is different from any Nandi work that I have examined. Of course, till more pottery has been found, and the varieties examined and classified it is impossible to form any definite opinion of these fragments; but I am convinced that they are not Nandi work. One feature of Nandi pottery is that in most cases it is only burnt half-way through, whereas these fragments were well burnt. At the same time as the discovery of the foregoing, a stone hearth was exposed in a neighbouring circle; it consisted of two main upright stones, about 12 inches high and the same distance apart, the intervening space being occupied by smaller stones laid flat on the ground.

A group of circles such as I have not seen elsewhere, is to be found near a rocky hill called Kâpkoros (=place of bonfires), which is incorrectly called Kimoror on the maps, some eight miles west of Sarura bridge. Here, on a neck of high ground, between the heads of two deep valleys, about 300 yards west of the summit of Kâpkoros, are five circular earth banks, each about one foot high, and with an internal diameter of 8 feet.



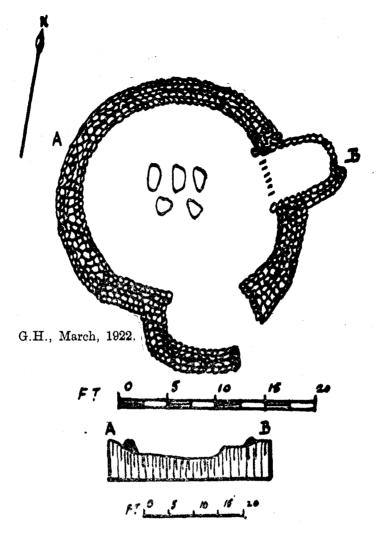


Fig. 8. Hut-circle of type No. iii. on the S.E. slope of Chepesas Hill, Kipkaren.



Fig. 8a. Walling in a hut-circle of type No. iii. on the W. side of Tuktuk Hill, Kipkaren. G.H., 1922.

Type No. 2 is not so common as the first type; nevertheless, there are a fair number of examples of it in north Nandi. The construction resembles that of No. 1, except that the sloping earth walls are faced with very rough stone walling, and the earth banks in front are, in some cases, replaced by stone ones. In some examples of this and the next type, the masonry is put together with considerable care, and some attempt is made at coursing and bonding. This type sometimes occurs divided into two parts by a wall of earth or stones, or of earth and stones mixed. Circles of this and the next type are similar in size, on the whole, to those of type No. 1, though a few are deeper.

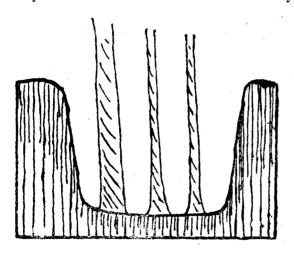
Type No. 3 as has already been said, has one or more annexes, which appear as semi-circular hollows at the side or back of a hut, sometimes lined with stone, sometimes not, and generally having their floors at a higher level than the hut floor.

(c) Pit-villages. These consist of groups of hut-circles, usually earthen, some of which are double and even treble. I have seen groups containing 60 or 70 huts. They often occur in woods of the thorny acacia or 'umbrella tree' (Acacia robusta), and the growth of the trees seems to indicate considerable age for the villages.

There can, I think, be little doubt that these smaller enclosures Similar constructions are found in were actually dwelling-places. large numbers in parts of Britain, which have been shown by excavation to be habitations; and when it is considered that to this day some tribes in eastern Africa live in similarly constructed places, it will appear that excavation is not necessary to convince us of this fact, but to throw light on the people who built them. It is probable that the circles were roofed with rafters and thatch. Distance from water at the present day is not necessarily a proof that they are not dwelling-places; for springs may have existed when they were inhabited that have now disappeared; and a great many circles are close to streams. These circles are, in general, easily distinguished from deserted Nandi bomas; in the latter the hollows are less pronounced, and the surrounding bank has the appearance of being formed by other methods than digging; the Nandi bomas become surrounded in course of time by a bank of earth and dung from the daily sweeping of the interior; modern Nandi pottery may generally be picked up on the surface, and the character of the vegetation differs from that on virgin or long-deserted ground, the following being some of the characteristic growth; solanum campylanthum, bidens pilosa, ricinus communis, nicotiana tabacum and a thick matted growth of couch-grass.

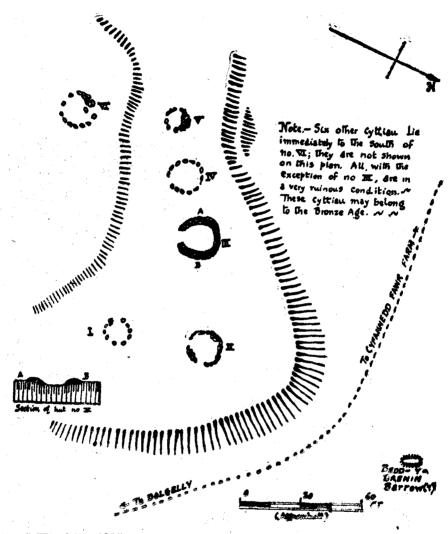
I add here, by way of comparison, a short description of such types of ancient dwelling-places in Britain as resemble the foregoing.

The two main forms in Britain are: 1. The pit-dwelling: 2. The hut-(1) The pit is a fairly early form of habitation, and appears to have originated in the Neolithic Age; several groups of pits may be attributed to this era, as, for instance, the Hayes Common pits (R. Munro, Preh. Britain, 221, investigated by Mr. George Clinch. The use of the pit however, extended into the succeeding ages of Bronze and Iron, (Lord Avebury, Prehist. Times, ed. 7., 60), and even to Roman times in some localities, e.g., at Woodcutts Common in Cranbourne Chace, as storehouses (Ward, Rom.-Brit. Buildings, 186), and at Hod Hill Dorset, as dwellings (Brit. Mus. Iron Age These pit dwellings seldom if ever occur singly—as in Guide, 123). this country they are generally in groups. As a good instance of a pit-village I may mention that Coles Pits, near little Coxwell, in Berkshire. Here, in a larch copse, are some 200 pits, varying in depth from 10-15 ft., and in diameter from 15-20 ft. (Lysons, Berkshire, 215; V.C.H. Berks; and personal observation). may be of Neolithic date. Annexed is a typical section of one of



the pits. The pits on Hayes Common referred to above, vary in diameter from 3-10 metres, and in depth from 15-90 cm., and are "surrounded by a well-defined mound' (Munro, 1.c.); others are similar to these, "a low but have conical mound in the centre, supposed to be for a central pillar to support a roof." (ib.). The use of pits as dwellings was not confined to Britain. Tacitus savs of the

Germani—the locus classicus on this subject—" solent et subterraneos specus aperire, eosque multo insuper fimo onerant, suffugium hiemi et receptaculum frugibus: quia frigorem eiusmodi locus molliunt, et si quando hostis advenit, aperta populatur, abdita autem et defossa aut ignorantur aut ipso fallunt quod quaerenda sunt." (Germania, 16). The Masai at the present day cover the roofs of their huts with dung which is spread over a thatch fastened to a framework of poles (Hollis, Masai, 292). Some sort of framework must have been made in the Germanic huts to carry the plaster of dung. There is, however, reason to think that in some cases the pits were covered



G.H., Oct., 1915.

Fig. 5a. Plan of a group of hut-circles (Cyttiau Gwyddelod), near Cyfannedd fawr farm, Parish of Llanegryn, Merionethshire.

(For comparison with Figs. 5 and 8). [Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments . . . in Wales, Inventory, Co. Merioneth, No. 248.]

with thatch or turves. (2) Hut-circles. The use of dwellings with roughly built dry stone walls began in Britain in the Bronze or late Neolithic ages; and it is to the former period that many of the remains in Wales, known as "cyttiau gwyddelod" (Irishmen's or woodmen's huts) may be referred. A group of such circles, closely resembling local examples and of a similar type, in the parish of Llanegryn, Co. Merioneth, is given in. fig 5a. (personal observation). In this group, the best preserved circle, No. 3, consists of a slight hollow surrounded by a ruined stone wall, similar to many in Nandi and Uasin-Gishu, and with an entrance on the south side. particularly fine example, from the same county, is in the parish of Llandanwg, and has an excavation some ten feet deep, the sides being built up with dry stone walling; the diameter is 60 ft. entrance are traces of a covering wall. (R. Comm. on Anc. Monts., Inv., Co. Merioneth, No. 120 and fig. 103). Similar covering walls occur elsewhere, e.g., at Grimspound (Munro, L.c., 218), and for this country, cf. figs 7 and 8. It is fairly clear that in Britain at any rate, the roofs of these circles were formed of rafters and a thatch of some In some cases, stones presumed to be the resting-places of king-posts have been found in the centre; on Dartmoor, post holes have been found in the centre; and in the Glastonbury lake village, the stumps of oaken posts have been found in position. remarks that the huts of the Britons had high pointed roofs; while on the Antonine Column, huts are represented with thatched dome-like roofs.

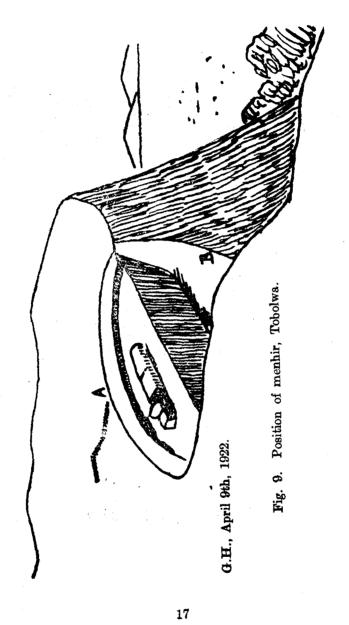
The foregoing remarks may seem to be out of place in connection with African archæology; but the remains in both countries are so similar that the one will probably throw some light on the other.

#### (2) Tumuli or Mounds.

It may be thought superfluous, in a region abounding in large ant hills, to search for artificial mounds; nevertheless, I have seen at least two mounds which have every appearance of man's handiwork. Both are near the Kipkaren in north Nandi. One is in the middle of a large pit village, and has a nearly rectangular flat top. Its dimensions are: circumference at base, 65 yards; length of east side, 15 yards; diameter at top, 8 yards; height, about 6 feet. On three sides are hollows from which the earth forming the mound seems to have been taken. It may be noted that a tumulus is not necessarily a burial mound; the one one just described may, from its position, have been intended for an observation post or watch tower.

# (3) Meini Hirion or Monoliths.

Of this class of antiquity, only one example is known in this area. It is on the summit of a hill in the western Nandi Escarpment, called



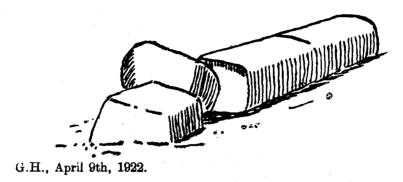


Fig. 10. Menhir, Tobolwa.

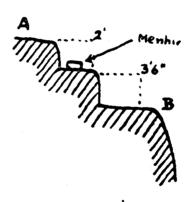
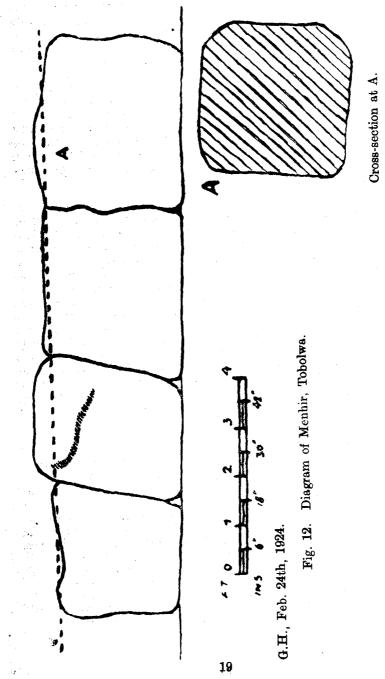


Fig. 11. Section on A-B, Fig. 10.



Cross-section at A. [Scale as above].

Tobolwa by the Nandi. The summit is a huge mass of granite some 70 feet high, with a flat top measuring approximately 25 yards by 16 yards. On the northern edge, where the rock falls sheer for some 70 feet, it has been hewn into a sort of semi-circular seat 2 feet high, and about 20 feet in length. Inside this semi-circle, and lying on its side, is a roughly shaped block of granite, square in section, 10 feet long now broken into three pieces. It tapers slightly, the breadth of the uppermost face being 36 inches at one end and 30 inches at the other. In the centre of the flat summit is a shallow depression where it may once have stood. Tobolwa is said to have been a local Nandi chief (kiruogindet) many years ago. The place is avoided by the Nandi; they say it is haunted, and that the lowing of cattle may be heard there at night.

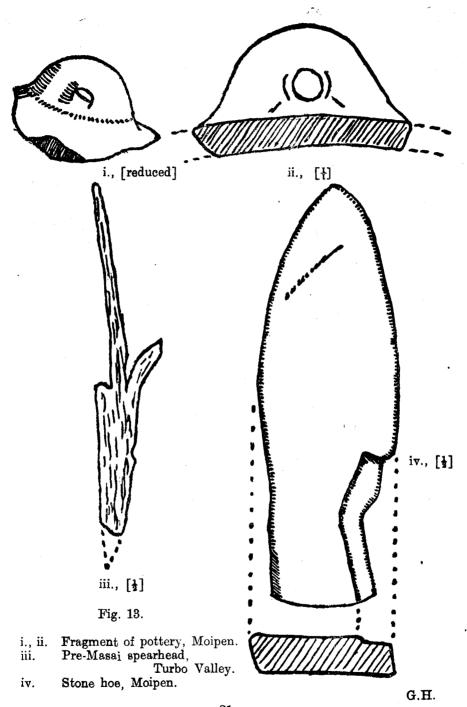
#### (4) Roads.

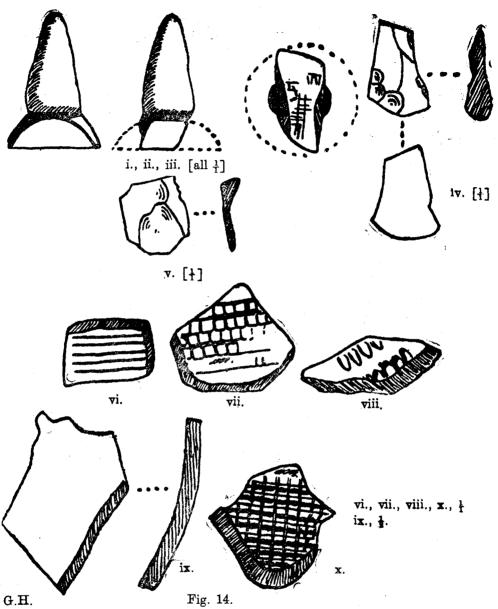
In certain parts of the country, depressions have been observed on the slopes of ridges running in a straight line for some distance. These give the impression of being the lines of ancient roadways; they do not appear to be formed by natural causes, nor do they look like an amalgamation of old cattle tracks, for cattle tracks vary in width from a few feet to many feet, and the depth is irregular, while these depressions are of an uniform width and depth. A series of such 'roads' exists close to the confluence of the Kipkaren and On the right bank of the Ain'-ap-setan rivers in north Nandi. Kipkaren, a depression comes down the ridge almost to the river, and appears again on the opposite bank, where it runs up the ridge in a south-westerly direction, being plainly discernible for 300 or 400 yards. Another depression comes up from the south bank of the Ain'-ap-setan about 600 yards away, as if to meet it. The average width of these depressions is 8 feet, and their depth, 2 to feet; faint mounds are visible on either side.\*

## (5) IRRIGATION CANALS.

Mr. Hollis records that "there exist in Nandi the remains of irrigation canals, which, although of no great age, are the workmanship of other people [than the Nandi] . . . . It is possible that the canal were cut by the Sirikwa; but it is more likely that the work must be ascribed to a former Bantu occupation." (The Nandi, 2). These canals do not seem to occur in north Nandi; but I am told by Nandi that one may be seen near the Kipire (Pire on maps) river in central Nandi. It is, I think, impossible to ascribe them to the Sirikwa, for this people, by all accounts never inhabited Nandi.

<sup>\*</sup> Some of these have lately been ploughed over, and though still plainly to be seen, the side mounds are no longer visible.





i., ii., iii. Pointed object of stone, Moipen; iii., base.
iv., v. Obsidian flakes, right bank of Ain'-ap-Setan river,
N. Nandi.
vi.—x. Fragments of pottery from hut-circle, left bank of R.

Kipkaren.

#### (6) GRAVES.

It has been reported that "in some of the valleys [on the Uasin-Gishu plateau] there are rows of low ridges that suggest graves." Mr. C. W. Hobley informs me that, as far as he can remember, the supposed graves are somewhere to the north of the Ravine-Nandi track. It appears, however, from information from Mr. W. Mayes, of Lamu (kindly sent to me by Mr. A. Bailward), that this rport is founded only upon vague native rumours, and that there is no definite proof of their existence.

#### FINDS.

The finds that have come under my notice are very few, though not without interest. Besides the pottery already described, I may mention the following objects:

- (1) A small fragment of light brown earthenware vessel, found in digging the foundations of Col. C. E. Foster's house, Moipen. It has a true handle, a lump of clay pierced by a small round hole.
- (2) A barbed spear-head found on Ollemasogai Farm near Turbo Valley. It is 7 inches long, the separate measurements being: length of blade, inches; of barb, one inch; of base or tang, 4 inches; thickness of blade, 13/16 of an inch. The point of the blade is broken, so that in its original state, it was probably an inch longer. The antiquity of this relic is shown by the base being a flat tang to be inserted into the shaft. (See Lord Avebury, Prehist. Times, 30). This example has no resemblance to any Masai or Nandi type.
- (3) A hoe made of a flat slab of grey-green micaceous stone; length,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches; breadth,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches; thickness  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. It was found in a ruined hut-circle of Type No. 2 on Col Foster's farm, Moipen. The broader end is shaped to fit the hand; the other end has been worked to a point.
- (4) Together with No. 1 was found a shall pointed object made of a green stone, 1s inches high, with a flat circular base, which is scored with a series of parallel and V-shaped lines. It has been suggested that it was a lip ornament; but it is more likely to have been intended to be worn in the lobe of the ear.
- (5) An implement of a stone resembling flint, of the 'coup-depoing' type, and resembling early Palæolithic forms from Europe (particularly early Chellean forms), was found in the Masai Reserve near Narok, and was shown to me by Capt. C. S. Brereton, Headmaster of the Narok School.
- (6) Flakes of obsidian, some seemingly worked, have been found in some parts. The AwaNyala (Kabaras) says that they fall from the

sky with the rain; as in England, neolithic axes and arrow-heads are said by the peasntry to have fallen from heaven, and which they call "thunderbolts," and "elf-shot."

#### THE BUILDERS OF THE RUINS.

We now come to the difficult problem of the authorship of the enclosures described above. Without excavation, it is, perhaps, of little use to theorize; nevertheless, a few suggestions may be made, which are not mere guesswork, but are based on a careful consideration of such sources as are available, viz., native traditions, place-names, and the evidence afforded by the habits of existing tribes.

A few words may first be said about the Sirikwa, a people whose There is no doubt that importance has been somewhat exaggerated. they are the people called il-Mukwan by the Uasin-Gishu Masai (hereafter referred to as Ipkôpek, their Kony name). to have been a section of the Ipkôpek, who say that the il-Mukwan were driven out by them and fled to Tanganyika Territory, where their remnant still lives, called Sirikwa (Sirikwek) by the Nandi and the The latter have a tradition that the Sirikwa were a Kony of Elgon. section of the Ipkôpek; that the chief of the Ipkôpek joined with the Chief of the Kony and they made a powerful medicine with which they began to kill off the Sirikwa; and that the Sirikwa fled to Tanganyika Territory, where they still live. They say also that this chief of the Kony was the father of Kieptek, one of their present chiefs, who was a very old man when he died; this exodus of the Sirikwa must, therefore, have taken place before 1850. of the Ipkôpek and Kony chiefs is rather curious; but at the present day, the Kony have a considerable admixture of Ipkôpek blood, and their relationship in the past must at times have been friendly. The Ipkôpek say that the Sirikwa were originally not of the same race as themselves, and that they settled with them, and in the course of time lost their own language. The Ipkôpek say also that the ruins on the plateau were the work of the Sirikwa, and they account for the hollow floors by saying that the Sirikwa were very tall people, and that when the floors were level, there was not room for them to lie at full length, so that they hollowed the floors and lay with their feet and heads against the walls and their backs in the hollows. This points to the Sirikwa having found the circles built when they came, rather than to their having built them.

Both Nandi and Ipkôpek say that the Sirikwa never came into the Nandi country, which still retains its ancient eastern and western boundaris, though the northern and southern limits have been altered. Therefore, the Sirikwa cannot have built the ruins in Nandi and Lumbwa, of which the former has been occupied by its present holders for at least 250-200 years, and perhaps longer; and the latter for a much greater length of time. It may be said, that perhaps the Sirikwa were on the plateau before the Ipkôpek or Nandi; to which the answer is that (11) we have only the word of the Ipkôpek for the non-Masai origin of the Sirikwa, supposing that their tradition has been reported correctly—and I have only heard it at third hand; (2) the traditions of the Nandi concerning the remote past know only of the Okiek (Dorobo); (3) the Masai living near Ikoma in Tanganyika Territory are called 'Sirikwa' by the Nandi and Kony to this day. The Mbulu and other tribes of the Tanganyika highlands live in pit-dwellings; and it is possible, as Mr. Hobley has suggested, that they represent the remains of tribes driven out of the Nandi and Ipkôpek areas by the Nandi and Ipkôpek.

The Keyu (Elgeyo) say that the builders of the ruins were a 'red' people who came from beyond Mount Elgon a very long time ago; and some even say that they were 'Europeans.' This tradition may have a basis in fact. It may point to a race of Libyan origin.

It has been suggested that there is a connection between these ruins and those in Rhodesia. But between the rough primitive stone walls in this country and the well-bult, neatly coursed structures at Zimbabwe and Inyanga there is little resemblance, except that both are made of stone. It is possible that our ruins represent the earlier work of the Zimbabwe race; but even if we accept this, we are no nearer a solution of the problem. Conjecture and research have been busy for many years in Rhodesia, but no final decision has yet been made—witness the conflicting opinions of the late Mr. R. N. Hall, who, in his 'Prehistoric Rhodesia,' concludes that the ruins are of ancient date, and due to Semitic immigrants; and of Dr. D. B. MacIver, who holds that they are the work of a native race in comparatively modern times. ('Mediæval Rhodesia.').

In conclusion, I think it is not unreasonable to say that the ruins in this country are the work of a race which was driven out by the Masai and Nandi, and which has either become totally extinct, or been merged in other tribes; and that it came originally from the north, and not from the south.