

Schellenberg's discovery of the casts of chaff of wheat and barley, which was used always in mixing the clay for the thick pots shown on plates 20 (fig. 1) and 21 (fig. 1).

At first, besides cultivating the soil, they hunted wild animals, and while the bones of these, as well as those of the animals which they domesticated later, show that they ate the flesh of these, including the pig and probably also the fox and wolf, these bones are not sufficiently abundant to prove that meat formed by any means the chief part of their diet. Awls, and doubtless some other implements, were made of bone, and straight-edged flakes* from flint; but, excepting mace-heads, there was not found any weapon, either offensive or defensive or for the chase—neither celt, point of arrow or of spear, nor artificially formed slingstone. It would seem that such weapons as they had must have been of wood with fire-hardened points or points of bone, or unformed slingstones or bolos of naturally formed stones, or lastly lassos. Towards confirmation of this is the statement by Dr. Duerst that the bones he examined of the wild animals were of individuals of such ages as were easily killed.

In the lowest strata of this culture we find the practice of the peculiar mortuary custom of burying children, and only children, under the earthen floor of the dwelling. We were continually coming upon these little skeletons during our excavations. They lay generally on a fire-hardened bed of earth of about the size and shape of the hearths that occur everywhere in the floors of the dwellings, or in places on only a layer of ashes. Many of these burials contained beads or other burial gifts, and the intention was so evident that it seems probable that in those cases where no gifts were found, objects of perishable materials had disappeared, for no trace of animal or vegetable substance, excepting bones and charcoal, has been able to survive through eighty to one hundred centuries of Time's destroying agents. The remarkable preservation of the bones seems to be due to the niter with which they are saturated. This burial custom was followed so generally throughout the life of the kurgan that it would form the basis of a proximate estimate of the density of population of the kurgan and of its rate of growth, if we knew that all children dying under a given age were buried in this manner. Of this, however, we have no knowledge, and it is equally possible that they represent sacrifices. The existence of this custom through not only this earliest culture but through the two succeeding ones as well—through many thousand years—is a remarkable ethnological fact which, considered together with the associated custom of burial in a contracted position, may prove to be very useful in comparative ethnology when our knowledge of Eurasiatic and African burials shall have increased. At present there is little mention of the custom in ancient or modern literature. But this is perhaps due to a lack of observation during the process of excavating. The layers of débris that accumulate slowly during long periods of occupation are so full of bones of animals that these little skeletons might easily escape special notice, while in the deeper culture layers

*Such as were used in sickles in early Egypt and Susa.