

THE CIRCLE AND THE CROSS.¹

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CHAPTER IX.

THE CIRCUS IN BRITAIN.

Native life little affected by Roman conquest—Roman 'amphitheatres' in Britain—Maumbury Ring—Other examples—Charterhouse-on-Mendip—Size no criterion—Borcovicium, Llanidan—Cheney Longville—Y Gaer Ddu, Tomen-y-Mur—The 'Frying Pan' on Ham Hill—Buckland Bank and Chapman's Pit—Church Barrow at Woodcuts—Provision for keeping the Moot dry—'Circi' in Cranborne Chase—Views of Colt Hoare, Warne, Colley March, etc.—Winfrith, Curknel Pit, Old Rothbury, etc.—Castlestead Ring—Mayburgh—Park Brow, in Sompting—Theatral 'circus' in Arundel Park—General features—The Dorset stone circles—The 'Ring' at Carmarthen—'Pond Barrows'—'Circi' and mazes—Vinogradoff and Festus on 'vici'—'Compita'—Business of the Moot—Alfred on 'anfiteatra'²—Why no finds in the 'circi'—Sanctity of the Moot.

The Roman occupation of Britain, a matter of some 400 years,² did not affect the purely Celtic character of the population. In the larger towns it introduced a good deal of Roman culture, but there is abundant evidence that the *pagani* and those who filled the smaller towns and villages, and these were far the larger part of the *infinita multitudo*,³ felt but little material change. For the most part they lived exactly the same lives as before, save that they were compelled to recognise the *Pax Romana*, and to pay taxes to Roman instead of to native masters. Even politically there was no violent change: the communities remained com-

¹ Previous chapters of this paper have appeared in *Arch. Journ.* lxxvii, 229, and lxxviii, 299.

² Prof. J. B. Bury has lately shown

in *Antiquaries' Journal* for 1920 (actually 1922) reason to believe that the final departure of the legions occurred only in 442.

³ Caesar, *B.G.* v, xii, 3.

munities as before, and each, therefore, had its own moot ; and for the most part the new *régime* would make no difference to the business or to the use and methods of such moots. Druidism itself was left untouched¹ until misuse of its wonderful organisation compelled the Romans to break it (A.D. 61) for good and all ; but that event, if it broke up the nation's unity, left still untouched the individual communities. The Roman policy was to proselytise by tact rather than by force :² Roman colonies in Camalodunum, in Eboracum and in Lindum, served as models for what was to be imitated, and the Celt, always receptive, took the hint according to his degree of culture and of proximity or otherwise, more or less readily. What had been native *oppida* came in the course of years to be Roman *urbes* ; what had been 'villages' grew into *castella* ;³ and all over the southern half of Britain were the villas of the wealthier folk—sometimes genuine Romans, but more often denationalised Celts—each a centre of Roman culture. But round all these lay hundreds of nameless native settlements where the native life ran as it had always run, save for the change of masters. Roman Britain presented much the same phenomena and much the same contrasts as does British India. The Britanni never ceased to be a nation,⁴ and when left to their own resources rallied valiantly as one people to maintain a more obstinate resistance against the barbarians than did any other part of the Empire.⁵ Whatever harm might come of the rivalries of various aspirants to the kingship, there is no trace in tradition of any disunity amongst the people ; and apparently the four centuries of Roman rule had made possible a British nation by destroying British tribalism—at any rate over the main part of Britain proper as distinct from Wales. Proof of the fact is provided by the slow course of the Saxon conquest : Old Sarum did not fall (552) until fifty-seven years after the landing of Cerdic on the coast of Hampshire, only thirty miles away.

Each *colonia* of necessity had its moot, which was, of

¹ In Gaul Druidism was suppressed in part by successive decrees of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius ; but Mela could write of it (*circa* A.D. 50) as still a system. Things in Britain, it is to be presumed, would take much the same course.

² Tacitus, *Agricola*, 21.

³ Bede, *H.E.* i, i, § 5.

⁴ Rev. G. Wade-Evans in *Y Cymmrodor*, xxxi (1921), pp. 68-9.

⁵ J. R. Green, *Making of England* (1881), p. 24.

course, a *forum* of the Roman plan ; and each of the twenty-eight ' noble cities ' ¹ would in due course provide itself with the like, according to its ability, as at Calleva, Londinium and Viroconium. Some of the smaller towns in which the Roman element came to predominate would replace their native moots by *circi* of the correct Italian form. In the upshot the new fashion would prevail even in many communities where there was no genuinely Roman population, and either the native moot, of whatever form, would be remodelled on the Roman plan, or there would be built a moot of that plan beside the older one. Fashioned by native hands, such *circi* would be of varying degrees of merit : some would be excellent copies, some bad copies, and some again obvious botches. There are examples of each kind still surviving.

A limited number of such British earthworks, because of their large proportions, have long been recognised as due to Roman influence, but, the true nature of the *circus* not being understood, they have been interpreted as ' amphitheatres ' intended solely for games and spectacles ; and this obsession as to their purpose has prevented archaeologists from recognising that the country is strewn with a multitude of works of exactly the same construction, but of sizes varying from the bigness of that of Richborough to as little as 40 ft. in diameter. It was felt to be absurd to call by the name of ' amphitheatre ' an arena which is obviously too small for anything but a boxing-match or a village dance. But even Richborough's ' amphitheatre '—and it is not the biggest of its kind in England : its arena measures 200 ft. by 166 ft. ²—is not too big for a moot, and though it may possibly be an example of the occurrence of the genuine *amphitheatrum* in Britain, it is also possible that it was originally built only to serve as the *circus* of Rutupiae.

Maumbury Ring at Dorchester has been proved to be a Roman work, and its dimensions may justify the name of ' amphitheatre,' for its arena measures 192 ft. by 158 ft. and it is estimated to have accommodated 10,000 persons. The floor was sunk to a depth of 10 ft. below the natural surface, the banks rose as much as 35 ft. in vertical height ;

¹ Bede, *H.E.* 1, 1, § 5.

² Roach Smith, *Antiqs. of Richboro'* (1850), p. 162. Its two entrances were unusually

placed in the centres of the two sides, instead of at the ends.

their external slope is still 35 ft. and the internal as much as 55 ft. The *cavea*, therefore, had an over-all measurement of some 275 ft. by 240 ft. Something of its present shape it owes to the Cromwellians, who modified it to serve the purpose of a fort. But certain recent discoveries have raised the question whether the Romans' work here was not a re-conditioning of an older work, a circular 'island' like that of Avebury, enclosed within a large fosse and an external vallum. This theory is based upon the finding of 'shafts,' which, it is suggested, represent this prehistoric fosse; and this, it is supposed, was either left unfinished because of the builders' lack of skill, or interrupted before it could be completed.¹ The shafts, of funnel-like shape, are sunk into the solid chalk along the curve of the ellipse forming the Roman arena, to a depth of 30 ft. below the original surface. They had been filled in with loose rubble, amongst which were found deer-horn picks. As the Roman arena was 10 ft. below the original surface, it must have been converted into a pond in wet weather unless some means of drainage were devised; and this may very well have been the purpose of the so-called 'prehistoric shafts.' They are precisely like what the modern builder calls 'soak-aways' or blind drains. The deer-horn picks do not necessarily imply any immense antiquity.² The shafts are set out with perfect regularity, they are fairly uniform in size, and they are neatly finished off at the bottom, giving small suggestion of a task which was for whatever reason interrupted. They were not flint-mines, and the suggestion that they represent the ancient Britons' way of going about to make a big trench is a ludicrous libel on that race. On the other hand, the catchment-basin afforded by this immense ringwork has a superficial area of 2.44 acres, or some twenty-five times as large as that of a *circus* of average size, so that it is impossible to believe that there was no provision for hastening the escape of rain-water, and for this purpose the most

¹ See the various *Reports of the Excavation Committee*, 1-v (1909-1913), and especially no. v.

² They were in ordinary use in Romano-British times; see Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations*, II, 135. Greenwell frequently found them

in barrows in Yorkshire (*British Barrows*, pp. 5, 201, 231, 432), and comments upon their utility in working chalk. One was found in a barrow of second or third century at Middleton-on-the-Wolds (Yorks.) associated with Romano-British remains (*Museums' Journal*, Oct. 1921, p. 93).

practicable means would be the construction of blind drains.¹ The arrangement at Maumbury finds its analogue in the drainage-gutter (the 'canal') surrounding the orchestras of Greek theatres (e.g. Epidaurus, Zea, and Athens), and that constructed by Julius round the arena of the *Circus Maximus*.

A much more suggestive, but insufficient, piece of evidence for the existence of some sort of *locus consecratus* on the spot in pre-Roman times is the great stone which appears once to have stood upright near the north-eastern entrance of the present amphitheatre,² and suggests at once a comparison with such a stone as the 'Friar's Heel' at Stonehenge; but as the matter stands at present, there is no proof that any of the work at Maumbury is other than of Romano-British date.

Other accepted 'amphitheatres' are that of Caerleon (204 ft. by 156 ft.),³ the Bull Ring at Cirencester (148 ft. by 134 ft.),⁴ and those of Silchester (150 ft. by 120 ft.)⁵ and Caerwent (145 ft. by 121 ft.).⁶ As only those of Richborough, Caerleon and Caerwent shew any traces of masonry, and in no instance is this more than a retaining wall to hold up the mass of soil forming the vallum, it is plain that nothing beyond a mere earthwork need be looked for.⁷ Excepting in the case of Cirencester, and possibly also Silchester,⁸ there is not even a tradition of

¹ Lt.-Col. Hawley found 'soak-aways' within the depressed enclosures of Romano-British villages in Wilts. which were shown by the evidence of pottery and coins to belong to the third-fourth centuries; *Wilts. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Mag.* vol. xlii (1923), p. 227.

² Roger Gale described this stone as still visible in his time (1719). In 1846 it was found *in situ*, upright, its top a foot below the turf, its base 13 ft. below. It was 'a conglomerate of flint, iron, sand, and calcareous matter,' without any marks of tooling. It was pulled up and left lying for a time, then broken up and removed piecemeal. In 1879 all memory of its fate was lost. See *Proc. Dorset Field Club*, vii, 66.

³ Ward, *Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks*, pp. 228-230.

⁴ Buckman and Newmarch, *Corinium*, p. 12. It seems at one time to have borne the name of the Quern, doubtless in reference to its shape.

⁵ *Archaeol.* xlvii (1881), p. 345; 1 (1885),

p. 266. It had originally two entrances (see Stukeley's plate in *Itin. Curiosum*, and Joyce's plan in *Archaeol.* xlvii, p. 345), one of which is now blocked.

⁶ *Archaeol.* lix (1904).

⁷ Colt Hoare remarked (*Anc. Wilts.* ii, p. 85) on the rarity of the occurrence of any masonry on Romano-British sites, though wattle-and-daub, stucco, rough pavements and hypocausts are common enough. Pitt-Rivers (*Excavations, passim*) found the same thing at Woodcuts, Woodyates, etc. Professor Vinogradoff (*Growth of the Manor*, p. 39) cites the last-named as proof of the rude character of the civilisation of the Romano-British *vici* of Cranborne Chase. 'The excavated villages,' he writes, 'are of the same type as that of Standlake in Oxfordshire, where only stone implements were found.'

⁸ In the eighteenth century it is said (*Philosophical Transactions*, no. 490) that five ranges of seats were still discernible in the clay and gravel of the vallum at Silchester.

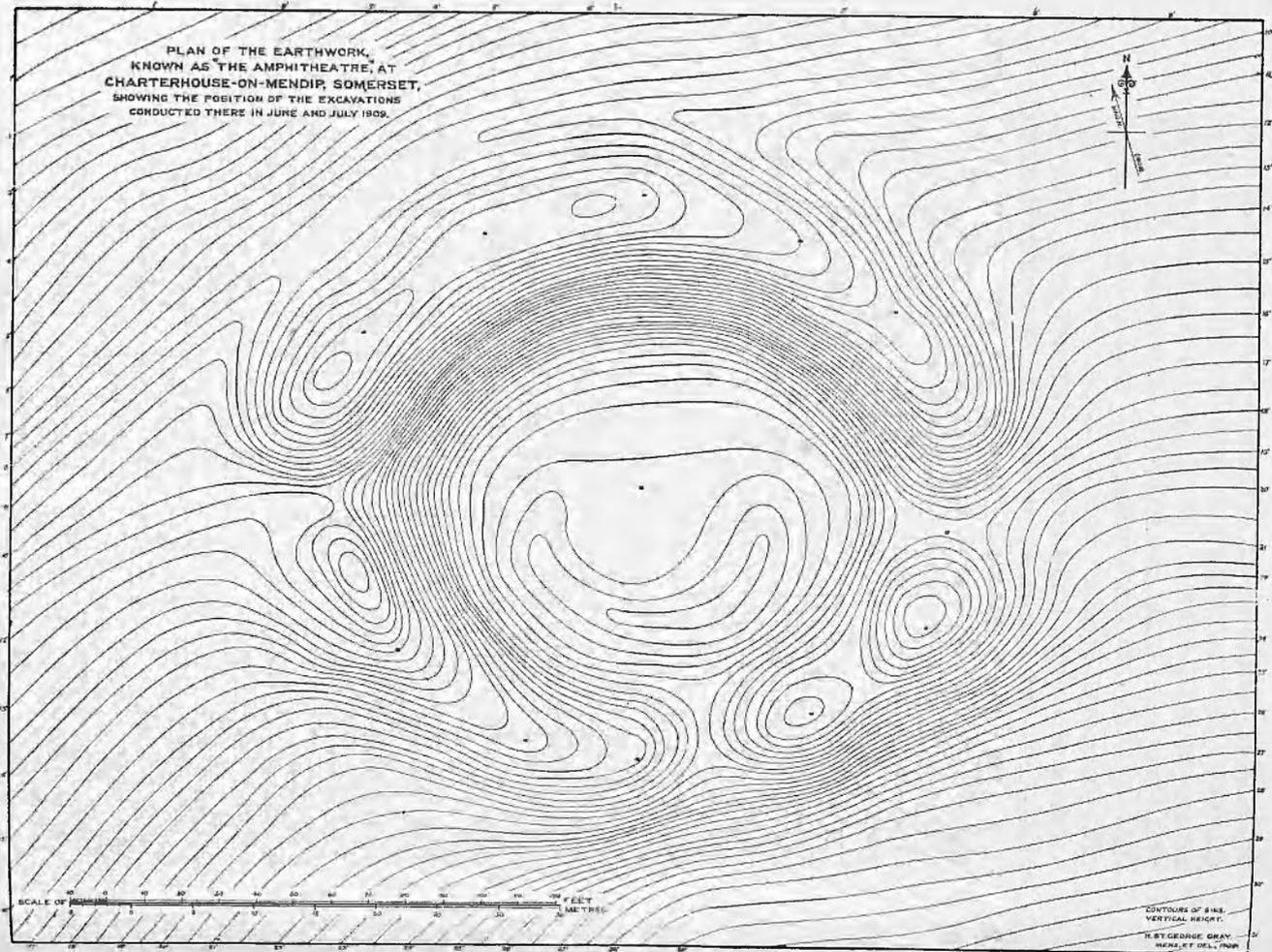


FIG. I. CIRCUS, CHARTERHOUSE-ON-MENDIP, SOMERSET.

the existence of any stone seating, and even in Italy no seating was provided until the days of the Empire.¹ All shew the peculiar sunken floor, excepting only Caerwent, but there is evidence that this was a work of late construction and possibly was never finished.² Amongst the larger *circi* it stands alone also at the time of writing, in being situated within the walls of its city.

Very hesitantly Prebendary Scarth extended the name of 'amphitheatre' to a perfect example of the kind (fig. 1) at Charterhouse-on-Mendip (arena 105 ft. by 80 ft.), which has been explored by H. St. George Gray and proved to have been built at a date subsequent to the arrival of the Romans. Under plough as late as 1858 it had been considerably reduced, but still retained every essential feature of the true Italian *circus*, with vallum rising in places 15 ft. above the floor; and being built upon the sloping side of a hill, it was provided on the uphill (north) side with a shallow catch-water trench to prevent flooding. It yielded no finds beyond a few worked flints and Romano-British shards.³ There is some evidence that there once existed a similar work about half a mile to the south.

This is an interesting case, for Charterhouse was the seat of a considerable mining settlement in Romano-British times, and apparently in times yet earlier, for Rutter⁴ says that the locality was in his day (1829) 'covered with squares, circles, and irregular earthworks,' the usual vestiges of ancient settlements, while Phelps⁵ explicitly mentions two circles in the vicinity, one of which (diam. 50 ft.) bore the name of Gorse-Bigbury. The mention of *two* circles and the presence of two *circi* suggest that under Roman influence the British population built for themselves new moots after the Roman plan.⁶ Interesting also is the name of Gorse-(Bigbury), which may possibly represent the Celtic *Gorsedd*. It occurs again applied to a stone circle in the Prescelly mountains.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* xiv, 20; Val. Max. xi, 4; Cic. *de Amicit.* 7: cf. John Strange in *Archaeol.* v (1779), 68: 'The people must have stood on the grassy declivity' of the *cavea*. But when the assembly was a moot the city fathers would certainly be seated, presumably round the *podium*.

² *Archaeol.* lix (1904), p. 104. The late date is shewn by the irregularity of its plan, the cheap character of the masonry, and the

fact that a number of earlier buildings had been pulled down to make room for it.

³ *Proc. Somerset Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc.* lv (1909), pt. ii, pp. 118-137.

⁴ *N.-W. Somerset* (1829).

⁵ *Hist. Somersetsbire*.

⁶ Caesar remarked (*B.G.* iii, 23, 6) that the Gallic Celts were very quick to learn the methods of Roman earthwork.

On Chettle Down in Cranborne Chase is a *circus* (*cavea* 176 ft. by 146 ft.) which in size is almost the duplicate of that of Charterhouse. It lies in the very gate of a large Romano-British settlement, approached by a noticeable sunken road.¹ Much smaller than these is an as yet unnoticed work of identical construction outside the eastern lines of the original² Roman station (? Magos) at Castell Collen near Llandrindod Wells, which measures but 60 ft. by 50 ft. across the *cavea*. As it lies, like that at Charterhouse, on sloping ground, the vallum on the uphill side is no longer discernible, but that on the downhill side is well developed, and the two entrances open direct upon two ancient roads which here converge to the east gate of the station.

It is clear that mere size is no criterion of a *circus*, which, as is to be expected if once its real character of a town-hall is understood, would be larger or smaller according to the means and ambitions of the community which built it. Nor would it be surprising to find that in some cases the work lacks the geometrical perfection of the true Roman plan. Natural irregularities of the ground may explain the irregularity of plan in the case of Borcovicium (Housesteads) on the Roman Wall, where the *cavea* measures 120 ft. by 78 ft. Whether or no this work was an 'amphitheatre' has been matter of debate amongst antiquaries from the day when it was first noticed. In view of its obvious affinity to similar works which were indisputably *circi*, there can be no longer any doubt that this too was of the number; and the matter is clinched by the finding (1882) on Chapel Hill, just south of Borcovicium, of the two remarkable altars dedicated to Mars Thingsus, 'Woden the Councillor.'³ Very significant is the fact that here the great wall is breached by an original gate, so that a community dwelling south of the wall might still have access to its *circus* on the further side. That the wall should be so weakened for the sake of a mere place of games is unthinkable; that it was done for the sake of a pre-existing moot is significant alike of the

¹ It was apparently covered with brush-wood when Warne wrote, for he does not notice it.

² i.e. the fortress of which the faint out-

lines cover the hill-top to the immediate south of the later fortress recently excavated.

³ *Arch. Aeliana*, 2nd. ser. vol. x, pp. 148-172; and below, p. 293.

importance of the moot and of its sacred character. Finally the work is conclusive evidence that near this spot there existed, before the wall was built, a self-governing community, probably absorbed in later years by the adjoining Roman station¹; and if the altars were found at another spot and south of the wall, this probably bespeaks a time when the earlier position was no longer felt to be safe.

Apart from some small irregularities, all the works thus

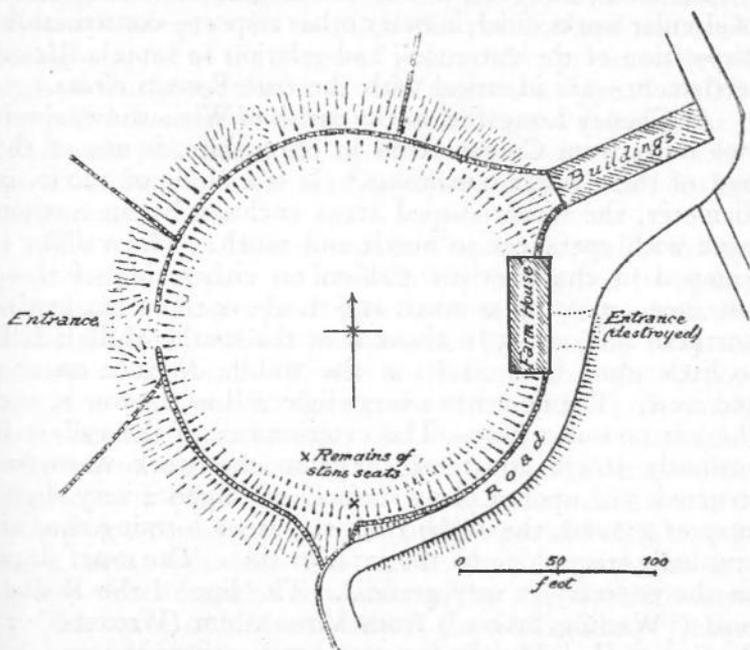


FIG. 2. CASTELL, LLANIDAN, ANGLESEY.

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far discussed show the correct Roman elliptical plan with entrance at either end, but there are considerable differences in the proportions, that of Cirencester closely approximating to a true circle. There is, therefore, little reason to doubt the character of the strictly circular work (fig. 2) at Llanidan in Anglesey (arena 165 ft. diam.), with its two entrances at east and west, the less so as there were found on the inner

¹ It is usually held on other grounds that Borcovicium, as a settlement, antedated the wall.

face of the 10 ft. vallum the remains of three or four tiers of stone seats.¹ Rowlands, who repeatedly speaks of it as 'a cirque of the Britons,' says that in his time (1766) it was still called Bryn (or Brein) Gwyn, which he translates by 'Royal Court,' adding that Welsh poets applied the very same name to the houses of parliament in Westminster.² This suggests that until 150 years ago local tradition remembered this particular *circus* to have been used as a moot. Its present-day name is *Castell*.

Llanidan, however, is but the largest of a long series of circular works which in every other respect—construction, disposition of the entrances, and relation to some adjacent settlement—are identical with the true Roman *circus*.

At Cheney Longville, in the parish of Wistanstow, about two miles from Craven Arms in Shropshire, is one of the best of these works remaining.³ It is a circle of 120 ft. in diameter, the saucer-shaped arena enclosed by an earthen bank with entrances to north and south. The vallum is humped in characteristic fashion on either side of these entrances, standing as much as 6 ft. above the arena at the northern side, and 5 ft. above it at the south, while it falls to little more than 2½ ft. at the middle distance on east and west. The floor has a very slight fall to the south, and there is no outer fosse. The exterior face of the vallum is curiously steep, apparently because the work was constructed, not upon a plane surface, but upon a very slight knap of ground, the *deblai* from the arena forming thus an unusually steep slope on the exterior side. The inner slope on the contrary is very gradual. The line of the Roman road ('Watling Street') from Viroconium (Wroxeter) to Bravinium (Leintwardine) passes ¼ mile east of the spot.⁴

Precisely similar in construction is the work known as Y Gaer Ddu, in the parish of Howey near Llandrindod Wells, less than a mile east of the Roman road which runs from Builth northward to the Roman station at Castell Collen, and so to Caersws. As long ago as 1814 it was

¹ *Arch. Journ.* xxxi (1874).

² *Mona Antiqua* : see further below, p. 250.

³ J. C. Wall came very near to discovering its real character when he wrote in 1908 (*V.C.H. Shropshire*, i, 380) that it 'might almost be taken for an amphitheatre.'

⁴ O.S. Shropshire, lxiii, s.e. The *circus*

is locally known as 'the Green,' and believed to have been constructed by those who besieged and destroyed the adjacent castle in Cromwellian times. It may possibly have been used at that date for some military purpose, but to any recognised form of Cromwellian earthwork it has no resemblance whatever.

described as 'a circle about 50 yds. in diameter, formed of one pretty strong breastwork . . . which, if it was not a Druidical *something*, I take to be a Roman *circus* or amphitheatre.'¹ The writer of the above, who was vicar of the neighbouring parish of Llanyre, said it had 'an entrance' and 'a trench on the outside,' but a later writer,² who found it (1843) still 'tolerably perfect,' says correctly that it has two entrances, and—correctly again—mentions no exterior fosse. He quarrels with the suggestion that it was a 'circus or amphitheatre' on the ground that 'the area is quite inadequate in size, and the position and construction ill adapted to the purpose.'³ It would appear, however, that on this point the vicar of Llanyre was right, for while the position—it is situated on the brow of a rising ground, about 100 yds. from the actual summit—is exactly what was to be expected, the area is very considerably larger than the average.⁴

The works at Howey and at Cheney Longville do not at first sight appear to have sunken floors, but in reality they have. They stand each on a small knap, and the material for the vallum was obtained by scraping away the summit of the knap. Reason for this method of construction is to be found in the nature of the soil, which would have made impracticable the method of construction followed on the porous chalk areas. Even in Sussex the alternative method is followed in a nameless earthwork, to all appearance a *circus*, lying in the low ground of Warning-camp near Arundel. In works thus constructed any surface-water found a ready escape by the entrance-ways.

The name of Y Gaer Ddu ('the Black Camp') raises the suspicion that other earthworks in this country which have hitherto passed as small 'camps' or the remains of

¹ Thos. Price in *Archaeologia*, xvii, p. 171.

² Lewis, *Topog. Dict. Wales*, s.v. LLAN-DRINDOD.

³ The work was until lately covered with a plantation, which made accurate observation difficult. This has been felled, and the work presents itself as a regular oval, the two entrances (as at Richborough) at the ends of the *minor* axis, which lies SE.-NW. The vallum of earth is very regular, nowhere rising more than $2\frac{1}{4}$ ft. above the interior, though in places as much as 6 ft. above the ground without. In construction it is precisely analogous to the *circus* at Cheney

Longville. There has never been any exterior fosse, but recent drainage trenches have been made round the exterior, which might easily give the impression that a fosse once existed. A portion of the vallum just east of the southernmost point has lately been destroyed.

⁴ In *Inventory Radnorshire*, nos. 317, 318, no opinion is expressed as to the age or purpose of the work, save that 'as a defensive position it is weak.' It is compared with 'Castle Ring' in Evenjobb (*ibid.* no. 162), which, however, is much larger (diam. 160 yds.), and unmistakably fossed.

such, may on closer examination turn out to be *circi*. The sunken area and the absence of exterior fosse are useful, though not decisive, criteria.

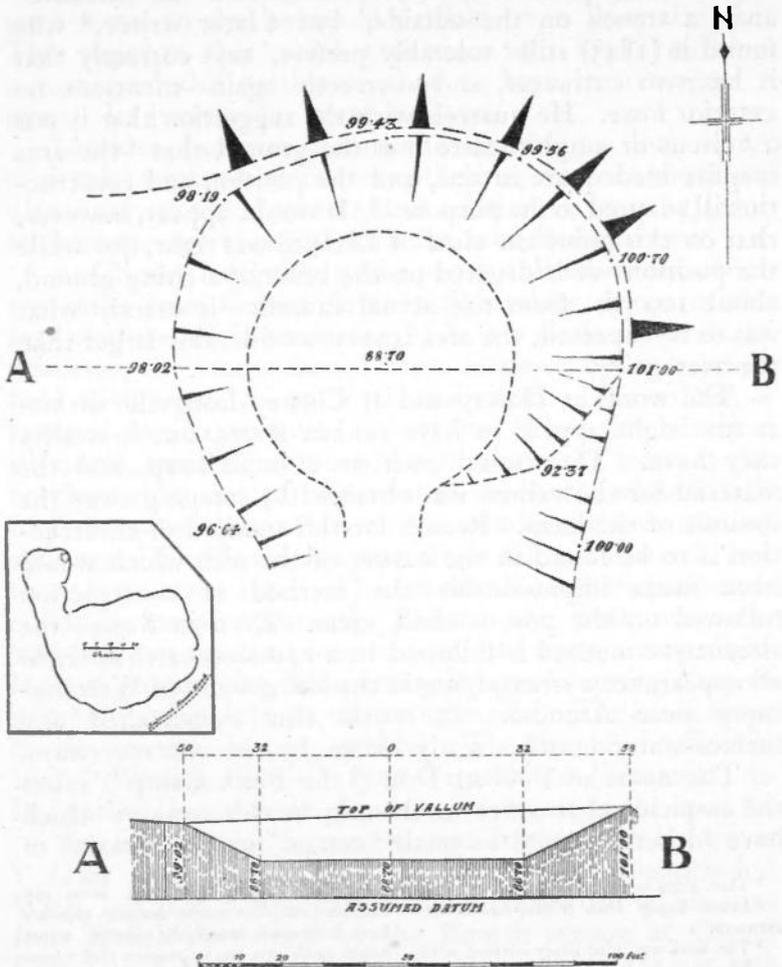


FIG. 3. 'CIRCUS' ON HAM HILL, SOMERSET.

The mutilated condition of the work attached to the Roman station at Tomen-y-Mur, Merioneth, scarcely admits of a correct determination of the number and position of

its entrances, but there can be no possible doubt of its character. Yet it is not merely of strictly circular plan, enclosed within a 10-12 foot vallum, but very small, its inner diameter being but 81 ft.¹

These various examples throw light upon the ancient enigma of the so-called 'Frying Pan' (fig. 3), which occupies the north-eastern angle of the northward extension of the great pre-Roman camp on Ham Hill, Somerset. There is no room for doubt that this, too, was a *circus*, in spite of certain peculiarities arising from the unusual position of it.² Its apparent smallness is an illusion due to the immensity of the earthworks which surround and overhang it, for it is actually larger than many of the Dorsetshire examples.³ The floor has a diameter of 64 ft. and the span from crest to crest of the vallum is 104 ft. The exceptional flatness of the floor is probably to be explained by the geology of the spot: the stone of Ham Hill is of the hardest, and denudation would act upon the vallum here in a much less degree than upon sand and chalk, while the peculiar position chosen has effectively preserved the work from the plough. It is in fact one of the very few examples of its kind which has not been interfered with, and, therefore, of particular interest. The vallum rises above the floor 10 ft. on the western, 12 ft. on the eastern side. The slope of the *cavea* measures 20 ft. on the west, 28 ft. on the east. The periphery of the slope is 170 ft. at the foot, and at the top 230 ft. It would easily accommodate 1,000 people, if all were seated, and a very much larger number if some stood up.⁴ The *Lex Ursonensis* provides for a quorum in the *curia* of not less than 50, 40, or even 20 only, according to the business to be dealt with,⁵ and the requirements of a

¹ *Arch. Cambr.* 5th ser. v, 267.

² *Archaeologia*, xxi; *Arch. Journal*, xxxi, 320; *Proc. S.A.* xxi, 128; Allcroft, *Earthwork of England*, pp. 91-94. The position did not allow of more than one entrance way.

³ It is larger than the circus at Borcovium, very considerably larger than that at Tomen-y-Mur, and almost identical in size with the Greek theatre of Delos (diam. of floor, 65 ft.).

⁴ A *cavea* of these dimensions, if completely annular, would provide a seating-space of 587 square yards. Allowance has to be made for the space occupied by the

entrance-way. At Shoreham, Sussex, was built in 1915-6, an amphitheatre of horse-shoe plan for the use of the camp there. The circular portion of the area had a diameter of 62 ft. on the floor, and the 'legs' of the horseshoe had a mean length of 60 ft. There were nine tiers of seats all round, with four extra tiers at the apsidal end, where the rise of the ground allowed it. The total length of the *podium* was 215 ft. This amphitheatre easily accommodated 2,000 men upon its benches alone. On occasion it would accommodate 6,000.

⁵ Bruns, *Fontes Iuris Romani Antiqui* (pars. xcvi, clxix).

little Romano-British town would certainly be no larger than those of the Spanish *municipium*.

Ham Hill has yielded evidence of continuous occupation from earlier times down to Roman days, and the bulk of the Roman finds coming from the immediate vicinity of the 'Frying Pan,' it is probable that the Romano-British town lay in this northward extension of the camp. Here, therefore, we should look for the *circus*, and such the 'Frying Pan' almost certainly is.

This case is proof that two entrances and an elliptical plan were not essential in the eyes of a Romanised British community. On occasion they could make shift with a strictly circular moot having but one entrance. Now works of this plan, but otherwise strictly accordant to the type, are to be found in every part of the British Isles where cultivation has spared them. They have the same sunken floor, the same broad and widely-spread vallum, and no discernible external fosse. Commonly they are associated with British 'villages' or with British 'camps.' Again there can be no doubt of their purpose; they represent a purely Celtic type of moot before it was modified by Roman influence.

A third type is exemplified by an earthwork on Buckland Bank in Falmer, Sussex (fig. 4), where a circular arena (diam. 34 ft.) is enveloped on the one side by a massive semicircular vallum,¹ on the other by a second and minor vallum, very much less massive and to all intents rectilinear, which is so disposed as to allow of the passage of a roadway through the arena. The arena is sunk below the natural surface-line, the valla now rising above it to a mean height of five feet. There is no external fosse, and the major vallum is markedly humped at either end in a fashion which shews the two entrance-ways to be part of the original design. The roadway, which is plainly traceable for some distance in either direction, is unquestionably of pre-Roman origin, subsequently adopted and in places reconstructed by Roman engineers. Of the actual settlement to which this *circus* belonged remains now no superficial trace, but the locality abounds in the customary con-

¹ The term vallum is not strictly correct in this case, for, as the plan shews, the *cavea* is in part carved out of the natural soil.

comitants of such a settlement, and at a spot 500 yards to the west—the statutory minimum distance permitted by Roman law—was found in 1849 its circular cemetery.¹

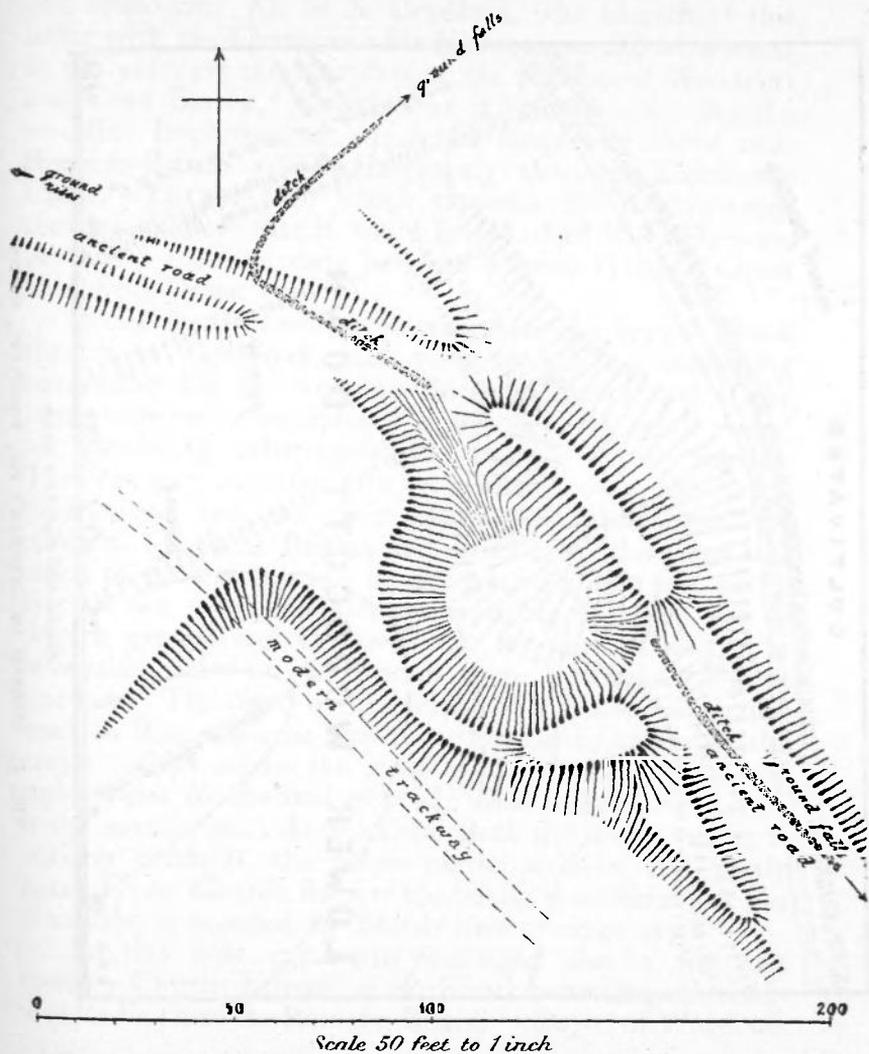
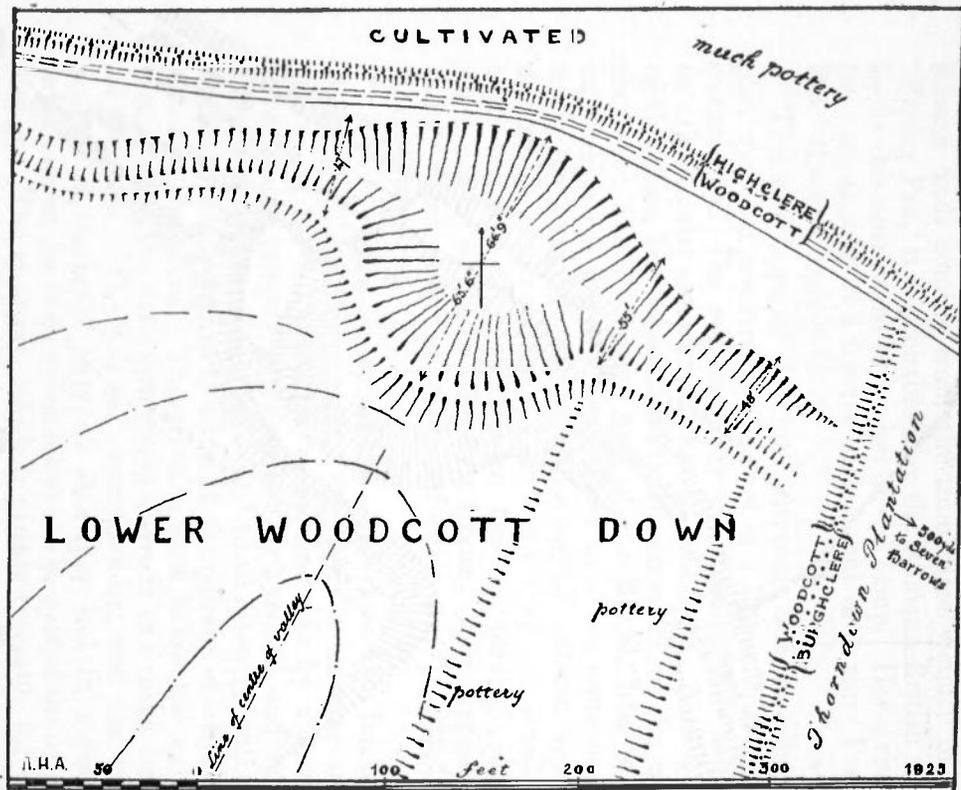


FIG. 4. 'CIRCUS' ON BUCKLAND BANK, FALMER, SUSSEX.²

¹ *Sussex Arch. Collections*, xviii, 65. By the Lex Ursonensis of 45 B.C. it is ordained (par. lxxiii) *ne quis ustrinam novam ubi homo mortuus combustus non erit, propius oppidum passus D facito* (Bruns, *Fontes Iuris Romani Antiqui*, 4th ed. [1909], p. 115).

² The plan here given, the work of a qualified surveyor (Mr. Robt. Gurd), must supersede the writer's field-diagram as given in *Arch. Journal*, lxxvi (1919), p. 103.



Scale 100 feet to 1 inch.

FIG. 5. DIAGRAM OF CHAPMAN'S PIT, WOODCOTE, HANTS.

This type reappears in a work in the Wiltshire parish of Winterbourne Earls, and again in Hampshire at the spot where meet the three parishes of Highclere, Burghclere and Woodcott. O. G. S. Crawford, who identifies¹ this latter with the Chapman's Pit (*Ceapmanna-del*) mentioned in 961 amongst the bounders of the parishes of Woodcott and Crux Easton,² remarks that it 'closely resembles the so-called amphitheatres which are frequently found near Romano-British villages, especially those in Cranborne Chase.' Of the road which traverses the work enough remains to shew that it was a loopline³ of the Ridgeway, providing a direct route between Sidown Hill and Great Litchfield Down (fig. 5).

If one should attempt to reproduce the typical Greek theatre in earthwork, the result would be something remarkably like the work on Buckland Bank; and if the latter were to be interpreted in masonry, the result would be something indistinguishable from a Greek theatre. The circular *orchestra*, the rectilinear *scena*, the semi-lunar *cavea*, and the twin *πάροδοι*, are the constituents of each. Both in Britain and in Greece advantage was taken of natural features of the ground; but whereas in Greece the *cavea* was almost invariably hollowed out of sloping ground and the *scena* was for obvious reasons as invariably built up, in Britain there was much greater freedom. The *circus* of Chapman's Pit, as also the similar work in Winterbourne Earls, was formed by throwing the major vallum across the apex of a combe which lies at right-angles to the line of road, while the minor vallum is the natural soil. At Buckland Bank the minor vallum is entirely artificial, the other partly artificial and partly natural. At Church Barrow the whole is artificial. A like discretion is revealed by British *circi* of other types.

To this type apparently belonged also in the first instance Church Barrow, an earthwork bestriding the roadway leading into the Romano-British 'village' of Woodcuts

¹ *The Andover District* (1922), p. 67. A responsible native, familiar with the spot for some thirty-six years, has assured me that he had known it 'many years ago' by the name of Chapman's Hole.

² *Cart. Sax.* iii, 1080. Crux Easton perpetuates the name of the *Domesday* lord, one Croc.

³ It is sufficiently old to have served as a boundary between the parishes of Highclere and Woodcott; and it went out of use so long ago that the bank which demarcates the parishes of Woodcott and Burghclere cuts it at right-angles. It was a made road, i.e. deliberately hollowed out, and not merely the accidental result of treading.

in Dorset, which lay about 100 yards away to the north-west. It was partially explored in 1884-5 by Pitt-Rivers,¹ whose plan of it is here reproduced (fig. 6). In this case

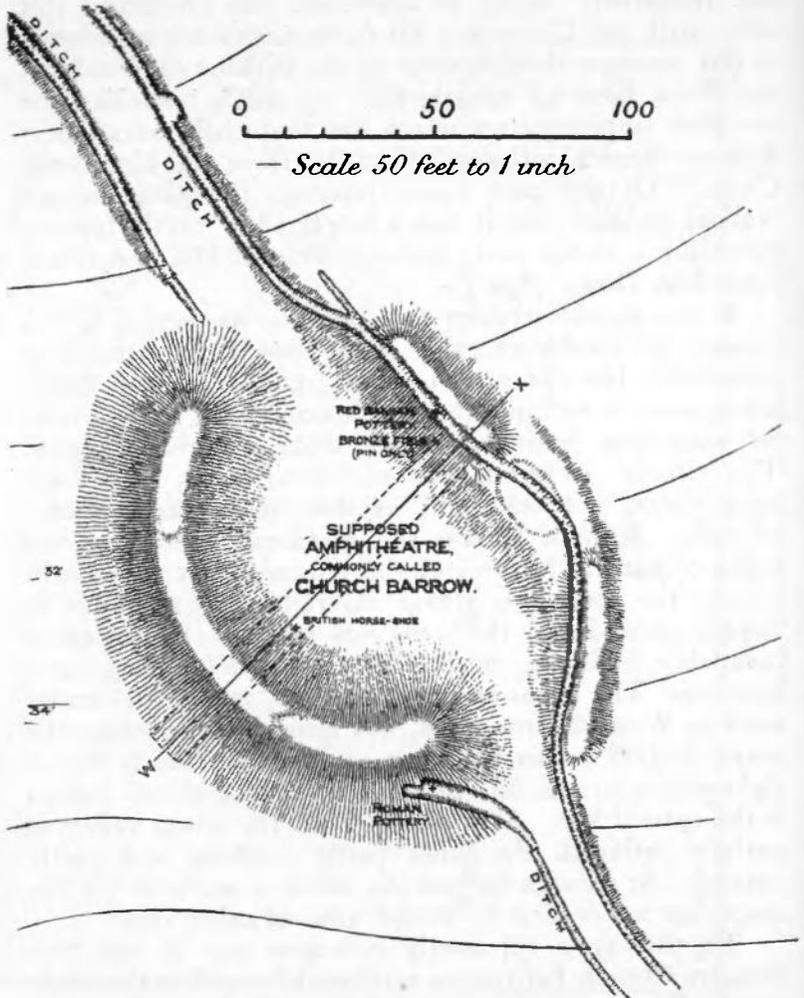


FIG. 6. CHURCH BARROW, WOODCUTS, DORSET.

(Reproduced by permission from Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations in Cranborne Chase*, vol. i, pl. iii).

the arena and the enveloping vallum are markedly elliptical, the former measuring about 66 ft.² by 45 ft. In the

¹ *Excavations*, i, pp. 23-4, and plate iii.

² In *Arch. Journal*, lxxvi (1919), p. 118,

the diameter of the entire *cavea* was inadvertently given as 66 ft.

complete absence of anything to indicate the purpose of the work, the excavator accepted without reserve the term 'amphitheatre,' which seems to have been first applied to it by Rev. J. H. Austin in 1867.¹

In the trench which he drove across the *cavea* of Church Barrow (w-x of fig. 6) Pitt-Rivers found, excepting a British horse-shoe, nothing which he thought worth mention.² At the centre of the *circus* on Buckland Bank, lying at the bottom of the 14 inches of brown mould³ which covered the smoothed chalk floor, was found a quantity of Roman and pre-Roman pottery,⁴ to all appearance deliberately broken into small fragments. Two days' digging at Chapman's Pit produced only a dozen scraps of pottery: again all were very small, and all without exception were found about the centre. Two fragments were of British make, the remainder Roman.

Remarkable precautions were taken to keep dry some of these depressed arenas. At Church Barrow the roadway was flanked by ditches: that on the up-hill side was continuous, the vallum overlying it (see fig. 6); that on the down-hill side was interrupted, stopping considerably short of the depressed floor. Clearly the ditches, which were of no great size,⁵ were intended for catch-waters to prevent any surface-drainage from making its way into the *circus* by way of the roadway.⁶ At Buckland Bank were discovered two similar ditches (see fig. 4), shewing precisely the same abrupt intromission, and in each case stopping short at a point *outside* the arena; and both were so constructed as to lead any water *away from* the arena.⁷ A similar provision was found again in the case of a *circus*

¹ In *Arch. Journal*, xxiv (1867), p. 167.

² This silence must not be pressed. Pottery littered the adjacent areas, and commonly he says nothing about it. He found Samian ware in the ditch which underlies the minor vallum.

³ Identically the same depth of soil as was found to overlie the chalk floor of Church Barrow. In both cases the soil was perfectly free from anything which could legitimately be called clay.

⁴ Of a total of 75 fragments, 67 were Roman, and, so far as it was possible to date specimens so fragmentary, about A.D. 150. All lay at the bottom of the mould

within a radius of 4 feet from the centre. Elsewhere the arena where opened—and some 80 square yards of it were uncovered down to the chalk—yielded but three fragments, and these *not* on the floor.

⁵ 'About three feet in width and two feet deep' (*Excavations*, i, p. 23).

⁶ The road was a holloway, with a slight and steady fall from NW. to SE. It was about 10 ft. wide, and innocent of all metal, as was also that at Buckland Bank and that at Binderton.

⁷ The south-eastern ditch terminated at a depth level with the lowest point of the arena, thence falling rapidly downhill.

of the circular type in Binderton, Sussex (fig. 7), explored by Drs. Eliot and Cecil Curwen in 1924.¹

In none of these instances was the peculiar arrangement of the ditches discoverable from superficial evidences, and it is more than possible that other *circi* may conceal a like provision for their drainage. If the exploration of any work of this character—*circus* or stone circle—be confined,

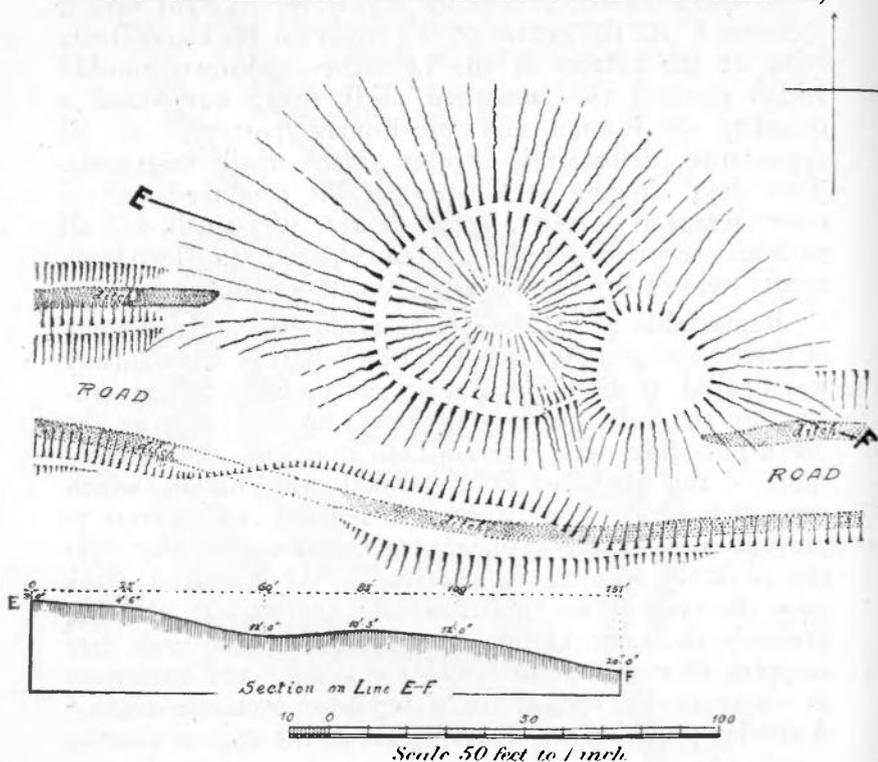


FIG. 7. 'CIRCUS' IN BINDERTON, SUSSEX.

(By permission of Dr. Eliot Curwen).

as it usually is, to the arena, any external catch-water drains are likely to pass undetected. Clearly it was held to be of prime importance that the area of a moot should be dry, and the fact throws light upon the catchwater ditches at Charterhouse-on-Mendip (p. 179) and possibly at Castlestead (p. 198), and upon the peculiar external fosse

¹ *Sussex Arch. Collections*, lxvi (1925), p. 163.

at the Stripple Stones on Bodmin Moor (ch. x). But it would seem that, then as now, local conditions guided the builders. At Chapman's Pit, for example, there seem to have been no ditches, although the *cavea* is larger than the average, the roadways wider and much deeper, and the lie of the ground such that in either direction there is a fall of 100 yards towards the *cavea*. Hereabouts, however, the chalk is peculiarly porous, and not even in the wettest conditions is water to be seen either on the roadway or in the *circus* itself.

The evidence in the case of the *circus* at Binderton went to shew that that earthwork is of Roman date, and that the ditches, while they may be contemporary with the earthwork, cannot be earlier; for they are introrrupted to make room for an earthwork which was at any rate designed, if not already constructed, when the ditches were laid out. At Buckland Bank the evidence of the pottery shewed that ditches and earthwork were alike pre-Roman. The same is probably true of Church Barrow.¹

The Saxon name of Chapman's Pit (*Ceapmanna-del*) suggests that in or before the tenth century that earthwork was in familiar use as a market-place. Quite possibly the Saxons were led to put it to this use solely by its convenient situation with reference to the adjacent villages and the Ridgeway²; but in view of the fashion in which commerce everywhere tended to overshadow other and more essential functions of the moot, it may be that we have here a genuine survival of the memory of the earthwork's use in pre-Saxon times.

¹ His own evidence, as published in *Excavations* (*loc. cit.*), makes it impossible to accept Pitt-Rivers' conclusion that the ditches in this case were of a date so remote as to have been already filled up and forgotten when the 'amphitheatre' was constructed in Roman days. The ditches were certainly open in the earlier Roman period; the minor vallum was as certainly constructed in its present form at a later time. Church Barrow seems to be a case of reconstruction: there was here an earlier British *circus*, probably of the type seen at Buckland Bank, which was later enlarged into something more accordant with the Roman type. This was done by setting back the *valla* from their original centre, and the minor vallum, thus reconstructed, unavoidably buried the pre-existing ditch

on that side (which would, however, continue to function as a drain). With this view agrees Pitt-Rivers' own observation (*Excavations*, i, p. 23) that the distorted course of the roadway suggests 'that the [continuous] drain was curved out to avoid some place which existed here before the bank [i.e. the minor vallum as now existing] was thrown up.' As it now stands Church Barrow appears to be a compromise between the type seen at Buckland Bank and the strictly elliptical, strictly symmetrical, Roman type.

² Its peculiar position at the junction of three parishes recalls the remark of Sir H. Maine (*Village Communities*, p. 192), that in India markets frequently arose at points where converged the domains of two or three villages.

Church Barrow was the solitary work of its kind which Pitt-Rivers examined, yet it is very far from being the best of its kind in the vicinity. Romano-British villages were so thickly strewn hereabouts, that the sites of no less than nine are marked upon the ordnance map within an area five miles square.¹ On eight out of these nine sites is to be found an amphitheatral work of one or other of the types described.

The list of sites is as follows :—

- | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|
| 1. Church Barrow, Woodcuts | .. | diam. 66 ft. |
| 2. Oakley Lane, 1 m. south of no. 1 | | 75 ft. |
| 3. Berwick Down, 2 m. NW. of no. 1 | | 70 by 60 ft. |
| 4. Gussage Down, 3 m. SE. of no. 1 | | 65 ft. |
| 5. Chettle Down, 2 m. SSW. of no. 1 | | 176 by 146 ft. |
| 6. Tarrant Hinton Down, 1½ m. south
of no. 5 | | 85 by 75 ft. |
| 7. South Tarrant Hinton Down, 1½ m.
SSW. of no. 5 | | 100 by 120 ft. |
| 8. Oakley Down, 3½ m. east of no. 1 | | |

All of these are pronounced and unmistakable examples with the exception of the last, now reduced by ploughing to a mere circular depression. Beyond the ploughland remain, however, a few yards away, some of the banks and fosses of the 'village' to which it belonged.

The site which, alone of those marked upon the ordnance survey of this area, shews no *circus* is that on Rotherley Down. Here the 'village' includes two circular enclosures,² measuring 150 ft. by 115 ft. and 90 ft. respectively, but neither is amphitheatral: their floors are the natural surface of the ground, the vallum is of the slightest, and they are both fossed. Pitt-Rivers, having excavated it, concluded that the village belonged to but a poor community.³ Probably its *circus*, which cannot have been a large one, has been obliterated by the plough.

Something more than half of another *circus* (diam. 120 ft.) remains on the southern edge of the 'village' on

¹ 'A census of Cranborne Chase in British times might be rather surprising to us nowadays,' says Heywood Sumner, *Earthworks of Cranborne Chase*, p. 68, and the list which he gives of 'British villages' in that area alone fully justifies the remark.

² The 'village' on South Tarrant Hinton Down (no. 7) also shews two independent oval enclosures (8 acres) with an interspace of 200 yards, representing what were perhaps two independent villages.

³ *Excavations*, vol. ii.

Swallowcliffe Down, still shewing a flat depressed floor of 75 ft. in diameter. It seems to have been of the semi-circular plan, and the Old Sarum-Shaftesbury road probably passed through the two entrances. Of the 'village' itself scarce anything remains visible on the surface,¹ but as frequently happens, the *circus* has proved more stubborn.

The little that Colt Hoare has to say of works of this class is confused with observations about things entirely different, such as ring-barrows of various forms. Something of the kind, however, he had noticed as 'generally to be found placed near a British settlement, and in some instances within it and forming a part thereof.'² In such positions they can hardly have been barrows, and as he says in the same passage that 'some of them had entrances,' we may suspect that he had in his mind examples of the *circus*. His plans are too sketchy to be taken as evidence for their including *circi* or not. He mentions 'a circular earthen work with one entrance to the south-east, and apparently another, but not so decisive, towards the west. Its diameter from the entrance is about 280 ft.'³ This was near Battlesbury Camp, Warminster. His description is too vague to be of use, for he does not say whether the arena was or was not sunk, or how his measurement was taken. He was very much alive to the possibility that some at any rate of such circular works in Wiltshire may have been 'religious or juridical,' but seemingly so regarded only earthworks very much bigger than is the average *circus* of the 'villages.'

Warne provides further examples.⁴ He elected to call them 'sacred circles of earth,' a name which was endorsed by the late Dr. Colley March. There was one 'little more than half the size of Church Barrow,'⁵ adjoining the *oppidum*

¹ Dr. R. C. C. Clay has lately (1924) opened a large number of pits representing the huts of the village, and a report of his work is promised for a forthcoming issue of the *Wils. Arch. Magazine*.

² *Ancient Wils.* ii, p. 80. Fosbroke (*Encyclopaedia of Antiquities*, p. 569) quotes this, and continues with the suggestive words: 'as in modern days the church is considered as a feature of the village.'

³ *Ancient Wils.* ii, p. 66. There is nothing now in the locality to answer to this description unless it be the work on Mancombe

Down, one mile due north from Battlesbury; but this was certainly not a *circus*.

⁴ *Ancient Dorset* (1872), p. 43, etc.: *Dorsetshire, its Celtic, Roman, Saxon and Danish Vestiges* (1865), pp. 46-8.

⁵ i.e. it was small. So much, and no more, is to be got from so careless a pronouncement. The *cavea* of Church Barrow had a radius of something under 60 ft. and the *circus* of the settlement on Gussage Down, which was one of the most extensive settlements known in southern Britain, was only some 65 ft. over. One of the Aberdeenshire circles (Esslie, no. 2) had a diameter of 35 ft. only (ch. viii).

of Buzbury near Blandford. His plan shews it adjacent to the eastern wall of the settlement and immediately outside the gate, its two entrances facing north and south. One mile only to the north of this was another. A third had stood on Winterbourne Came Down, and a fourth on Broad Mayne Down, but both of these were already destroyed when Warne wrote (1865). The last-mentioned, he says, was 'rectangular, with three tiers of benches.'¹ He figures what would seem to be another on his plan of the village-site at Turnworth, remarking that 'we have noticed on other sites the peculiarity of a small circle adjoining the entrance' of the village.² He suggested that these may have 'served as places of rustic sports and games in connexion with the settlements which they adjoined,' but 'yielding to the opinion of a friend,' ventured to call one of them—that which lay a mile north of Buzbury—'a *gorseddau* (*sic*), or Celtic place of council.'³ He also mentions a 'circle of earth and other ancient vestiges' as then existing (1865) just outside the western entrance of the great 18-acre 'camp' of Badbury Rings near Wimborne.⁴

Another work of the same class (diam. 117 ft.) crowns a small knoll at Slight in Winfrith Newburgh in the same county. It is not far from the small stone circle in Pokeswell which gives a name to Ringstead Bay. It used to be known as the 'Round Pound,' and seems to be identical with the work listed by Warne⁵ amongst 'uncertain remains' under the name of the 'Roundy Pounding.' Dr. Colley March remarked⁶ the occurrence of similar works 'all over Britain,' and specifies three further examples from

¹ *Vestiges*, p. 48. Unfortunately there is no plan or drawing of it. Possibly the rectangular appearance was an optical illusion; the proven *circus* of Charterhouse-on-Mendip has a squarish look when viewed from certain points and in certain lights. On Lea Moor, beside the road from Ivy-bridge towards Tavistock, is a rectangular earthwork (150 ft. by 86 ft.) of which the bank (26 ft.—40 ft. high) is formed of the material removed in sinking the floor after the fashion of an amphitheatre. It is described by Rowe (*Perambulation of Dartmoor*, pp. 155-6), who thought it 'might have been for the purpose of exhibiting games, or for other large assemblies of people.' Works of this type were constructed by the miners of Devon and Corn-

wall. There is a smaller example on the north slope of Castell-an-Dinas in Gulval.

² *Ancient Dorset*, p. 21. In *Vestiges* (p. 32) the diameter is given as 166 ft. and the work is classed with those on Tarrant Hinton Downs as a 'sacred circle.'

³ *Vestiges*, pp. 15, 55.

⁴ *Ancient Dorset*, p. 36. Old drawings shew that a good many have disappeared. Thus the plate in *Arch.* ix, 200, shews 'a circular vallum about 40 yds. in diameter' as then standing (1788) just north of the camp on Combs Farm in Farnsfield, Notts. (*V.C.H. Notts.* ii, 26).

⁵ *Vestiges*, p. 25. Details of this example I owe to Mr. H. S. Toms.

⁶ *Proc. Dorset N.H. and Ant. Field Club*, xxix (1908), p. 243.

the western end of Dorset, at Bridehead (diam. 93 ft.), at Askerswell (diam. 83 ft.), and near Compton Valence (diam. 66 ft.).

Upon the Berkshire downs, parish of Blewbury, is an odd concavity known as Curknel (Cucknel or Curnel) Pit, at the south-western foot of Churn Hill. 'Carefully formed' and markedly sunk, it has a diameter of upwards of 150 ft. with a pronounced vallum and no fosse. The suggestion was made many years ago that this was a Roman amphitheatre,¹ and the *vestigia* of Romano-British settlement are abundant all around. Its peculiar interest lies in the fact that conceivably it still retains a name derived from its original appellation, for Curknel may conceivably represent *Circanhill*.² It is probable that a great many *circi* yet await recognition in this part of England, where it has been remarked that there frequently occur curious pits, which cannot be explained as made in the search for chalk, flint, or other material.³

Similar circles are to be found as far north as the Cheviots. Within the lines of Old Rothbury, a large camp adjacent to Rothbury in Northumberland, is one (diam. 60 ft.) which Captain Hedley some years ago suggested might have been used as a place of meeting.⁴ Digging within it in 1921, D. D. Dixon found at the centre a rudely steined pit some 6 ft. across, with made soil and much charcoal in the filling, and a large shard of extremely coarse pottery of 'early Iron age' character.

On the high moorland (825 ft.) half a mile west of Cullingsworth railway station, between Halifax and Keighley, lie the scanty remains of Castlestead Ring. When complete this was an oval enclosure of 103 yards (N.-S.) by about 80 yds. (E.-W.). Something more than half of it was long since obliterated by cultivation, and much of what was then spared has since vanished; so that when Dr. Francis Villy examined the site in 1910 there remained of the whole the north-western quadrant only. He found that the

¹ *Trans. Newbury Field Club* (1895), iv, 40.

² See below, ch. xxiv. The otherwise inexplicable name of Churn Hill may be a rationalisation of Curnel, aided by the superficial resemblance of the circular pit to a gigantic quern, just as the name of 'the Quern' likewise attaches to the greater

and admittedly Roman *circus* at Cirencester. Dr. G. B. Grundy tells me that 'there is another Churn Hill in Martyr Worthy, Hants, represented in a charter by the Saxon *Cyrringe*, "churn."'

³ H. T. E. Peake in *V.C.H. Berks.* (1906), i, 283.

⁴ D. D. Dixon, *Upper Coquetdale*.

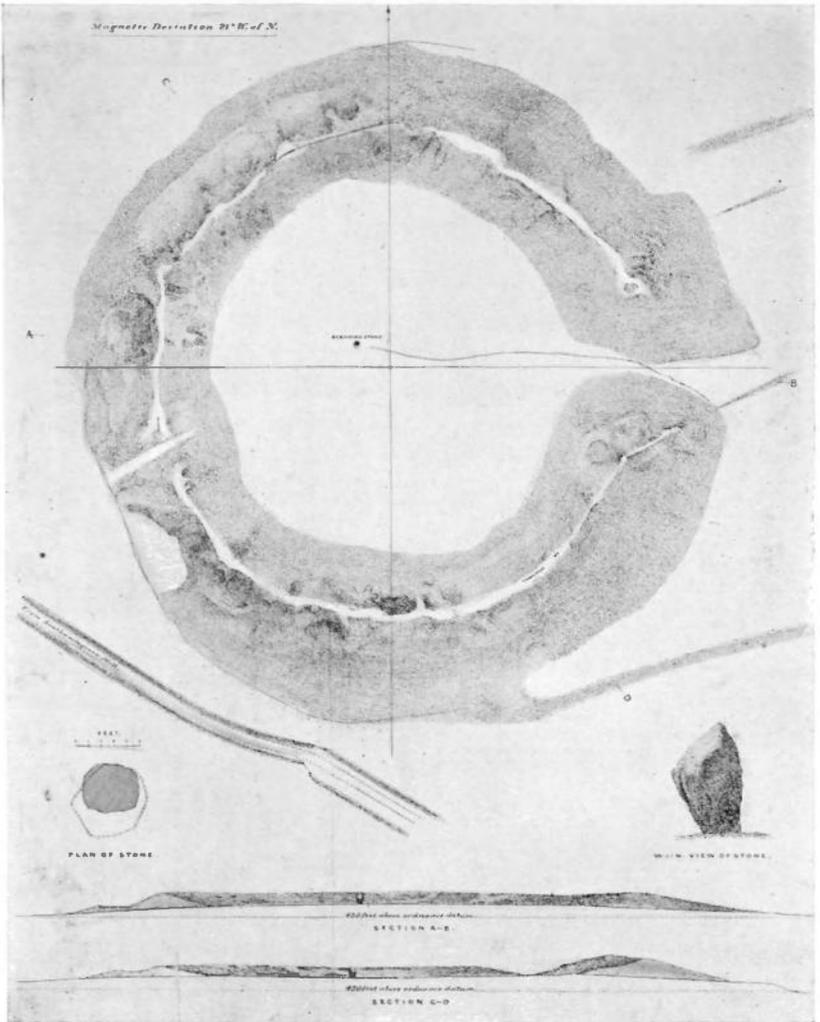
external fosse, though 11 ft. wide at the top, was of but superficial character, cut in the surface soil only, and in depth varying from 1½ ft. to 4 ft. with a flattened floor. Seemingly it was a catchment-drain, and very possibly extended round the upper side only of the enclosure, exactly like that covering the *circus* at Charterhouse-on-Mendip. The vallum had a vertical height of 4½ ft. above the area, with a width of 17 ft. at the base. A section made across this vallum shewed that the whole work was originally constructed like a modern hippodrome. Round the arena ran a rough paving of boulders 7 ft. in width, ramped up to a vertical height of 2 ft.-3 ft. and round the upper edge of this was a level unpaved terrace 3 ft. wide. In three further sections the pavement and the level terrace were unmistakable, and in one case it was found that 'the upper stones of the ramp were set horizontally and continued as a sort of flooring' across the terrace. Behind the terrace the vallum rose like a breastwork with an internal face of unusual steepness. The original entrance was not determined.¹ There were no finds of a character to throw light upon the date or the purpose of the work, which lies on a broad plateau having a slight fall from west to east, and is overlooked by a small hillock at some 20 yards to the north-west. The excavator remarks upon the weakness of the site, and of the fosse, from a military point of view, and observes that 'the work is one of a considerable series of apparently similar character in the surrounding district.'² Castlestead lies within the lands of the Brythonic Brigantes.

Such a work as this cannot be explained as intended for purposes military, pastoral, or residential, and of sepulchral purpose there is no evidence at all. On the other hand it is in all but size exactly like the works at Cheney Longville and at Howey, and the suspicion that it belongs to the same class is supported by the name of Moothill Farm still attaching to an adjacent homestead. Within certain explicable limits mere size, as has been said, is no criterion, and it remains to describe a conclusive example of a moot-circle of even greater size, viz. Mayburgh (plate 1).

¹ Dr. Villy surmises that there may have been an entrance at the NE. To judge from analogy, there would be an entrance at one or both extremities of the major axis; and

in that case their disappearance is explained. This work may be compared with that at Howey, described above, p. 182.

² *Bradford Antiquary*, 1911.



MAYBURGH, EAMONT BRIDGE, WESTMORLAND.
Surveyed by C. W. Dymond, F.S.A. October, 1889.
(Scale 150 feet to one inch).
(By permission of the *Cumb. and Westm. Antiq. Society.*)

This, the finest of all the *circi* in Britain, lies on the bank of the Eamont river at its confluence with the Lowther, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Penrith. Larger in area than even Maumbury Ring, Mayburgh's arena has a mean diameter of 287 ft. and covers all but $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of ground, while the *cavea* measures 372 ft. (N.-S.) by 363 ft. (E.-W.). The vallum has a mean height of some 10 ft. above the area, rising to as much as 18 ft. at the southern side of the single entrance, which faces due east and is 25 ft. wide at the ground-level, 120 ft. wide at the top. On its northern side the vallum appears to have been greatly spread, so that its present height, though still above the mean, is much less than that of the other side. The vallum has at the base an average width of 120 ft., rising to 140 ft. at the entrance. The work crowns the summit of a knap (O.D. 430), the ground falling sharply away on every side. The interior slope of the vallum is markedly more gentle than that of the exterior. The vallum is abundantly littered over with smallish water-rolled stones, and of a fosse there is no trace whatever.¹ It is these last facts that have led observers, at a loss to account for the immense vallum, to suggest that it is built entirely of stones brought from one or both of the neighbouring rivers.

The knap is a mass of glacial drift, and it was long ago surmised that the vallum had been built up of stones removed in levelling the arena.² It seems to have been taken for granted that it is wholly built of stone. The strong growth of old trees,³ chiefly oak and ash, which covers it, makes it very doubtful whether it be not in reality made chiefly of soil with but a thin covering of stone.⁴ The marked rise of the vallum on either side of the entrance is a characteristic, and indeed necessary, feature of a *circus*, and Mayburgh seems to have been constructed exactly as were the *circi* at Cheney Longville and Howey (p. 182). With this view agrees also the different slope of the inner and the outer sides of the vallum. Whence comes the litter of rolled stones which covers it, may be hinted by the Aberdeenshire circles of North Fold and Castle

¹ Description and plan by C. W. Dymond in *Cumb. and Westm. Trans.* xi (1891), 191-200. The work has suffered a good deal of damage since his survey was made in 1889.

² *Cumb. and Westm. Trans.* vi, 451.

³ They are shewn covering the whole enceinte in the plan in Pennant's *First Tour in Scotland* (1769).

⁴ The vallum has never been cut through.

Fraser, and that of Culdoich in Inverness-shire (ch. viii) : the stones may represent what was once the paving of a part or the whole of the arena. It is known from Stukeley¹ that on 15th August, 1725, the arena was a corn-field, and supposing it to have been originally paved in any part, whoever ploughed it must have collected most of this mass of stone and dumped it at the nearest convenient spot, that is, on the surrounding bank. It is a fact that at the present day (1921) there is more stone visible upon the inner than upon the outer side of the vallum,² and it is also a fact that the stones are not evenly distributed about the slope, but are massed chiefly at some five or six points, just as they might be dumped. Stukeley's evidence as to the ploughing makes it needless to discuss further the solitary menhir (9 ft. 6 in. high) which still stands some 40 ft. west of the centre. It was his belief that the arena had once carried two concentric peristalithic circles. From C. W. Dymond's plan it would appear that the earthwork has been thrown up over ancient lynchets.

Gomme conjectured³ this to be ' a British court for the administration of justice and for other civil purposes.' He did not notice that the name of Mayburgh points very clearly to the fact that the Saxons, whether or no they so used it themselves, understood this to have been its purpose ; for *maeg-burb* denoted ' the whole family of blood-relations belonging to a *burh*,'⁴ and the name appears to furnish another instance of genuine folk-memory. That the work is Celtic has never been seriously questioned. Stukeley records⁵ the finding of a brass celt when the area was ploughed, and another (of stone) has been found in the entrance-way.⁶ Bishop Gibson confidently identified the work with the place called Eamotum or Eamotun, at which

¹ *Itin. Curiosum*, ii, 44.

² The majority of the stones are no bigger than a man's fist, but here and there are larger ones, up to 30 in. long. The subsoil of the district is generally stony, and precisely the same kind of water-rolled stones may be seen wherever the ground is opened ; but had the stones in Mayburgh been merely part of the material excavated to form the *circus*, (a suggestion mentioned in *Cumb. and Westm. Trans.* vi, 451), they would not to-day be found collected into obvious heaps at specific points of the periphery.

³ *Primitive Folkmoths*, p. 242.

⁴ This was pointed out 300 years ago ; see Gibson's *Camden*, p. 997. *Maegburb* occurs in *Beowulf* (ed. Heyne), p. 218 ; cf. *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 131. The current explanation of the name of Mayburgh as ' Great Fort,' would connect it with such names as Maiden Castle and Maiden Bower, frequently attaching to an-historic earthworks, which again seems to be connected with O.W. *meda*, ' stone' ; cf. Maiden Way, the paved Roman road southward from Magna (Carvoran).

⁵ *Itin. Curiosum*, ii, 44.

⁶ *Cumb. and Westm. Trans.* iv, 545.

in 926 king Athelstan held a conference with the kings of Scotland, Bamburgh, the West Britons (Strathclyde) and Gwent,¹ and there is every probability that he was right. Eamotum means 'the moot by the waters,' and exactly describes the peculiar position of the work. This, rather than Mayburgh, is the correct name of it, and from this the river, called Eimot as late as Camden's time,² has taken its name. Here therefore is a historical instance of the use of a British *circus* as a moot so late as the first half of the tenth century. It is highly probable that a Roman cross-road ran within a quarter of a mile to the south, connecting the station of Brocavum (Brougham) with the High Street, the main Roman road from Penrith to the south.

It has been said that the *circi* shew certain irregularities, to be explained as due to the lack of resource or skill in those who made them.³ One instance may be cited from Park Brow in Sompting, Sussex. Only with great hesitation did the writer at last accept this (fig. 8) as a possible *circus*, and on that ground infer the presence of a lost settlement in the vicinity. A month or two later (1921) excavation brought to light the abundant proof of the presence of such a settlement.⁴ What remained of a shallow pit at the central point of the *circus* was found to be filled with darker soil, in which—for the most part at the bottom—were quantities of blackened and comminuted pottery and fragments of bone. The pottery—some 80 fragments were recovered from an area of no more than two feet in diameter—was pronounced to be not earlier than A.D. 43, nor later than the third century, the bones probably those of *bos longifrons*. Colt Hoare mentions⁵ that his explora-

¹ Gibson's *Camden* (1773), ii, 162, citing Richard of Hoveden (*Chronica*, ed. Stubbs, i, 53-4), who got it from the pseudo-Florence of Worcester and Simeon of Durham: cp. *A.-S. Chronicle*, sub anno 926. The position is admirably suited for the conference, easily accessible by Roman trunk-roads, and the identification of Mayburgh with Eamotum is clinched by the remark of Simeon that it was 'near Dacor'; for it is but five miles distant from Dacre Castle, where was a stronghold of the Cumbrian kings. Others, however, prefer to identify it with Emmet in Yorks. (Plummer, *A.-S. Chronicle*; Robertson, *Scotland under her*

Early Kings). There is an Emmet Bridge in Bradfield, near Sheffield, and an Emmott near Nelson, Lancs. Emmotland near Beverley was Elmotland in 1822 (Langdale, *Topog. Dict. Yorks.*).

² The *n*, not found in old forms, is parasitic, as in Willimontswick (for Willimotswick). Wordsworth wrote Emont. Another interpretation of the name is 'Water's-meet.'

³ Possibly in some cases to later interference.

⁴ *Sussex Daily News*, Jan. 20, 25, Nov. 27, 1922; May 7, 1924.

⁵ *Ancient Wilts.* ii, 108.

tion of the areas of works of this type resulted only in the finding of 'black earth with the fragments of bones.'

Lastly must be mentioned another remarkable example, also in Sussex. At the northern end of Arundel Park, half a mile south of Whiteways Cross, commences a narrow combe—Pughdene—which threads the park to Swanbourne lake. Along the floor of this combe runs an ancient greenway,

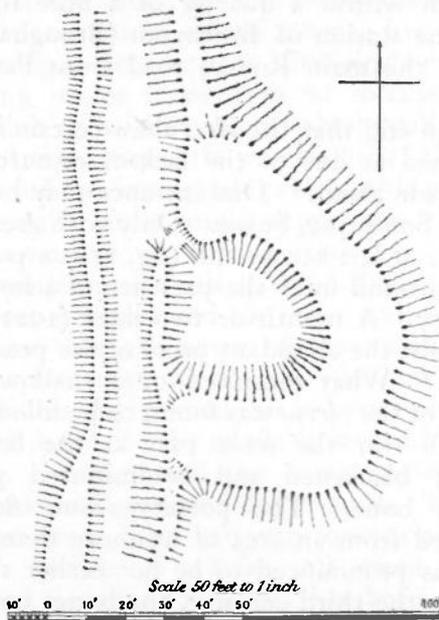


FIG. 8. CIRCUS ON PARK BROW, SOMPTING, SUSSEX.
(By permission of Dr. Eliot Curwen.)

which suddenly assumes the character of a Roman terrace-way to climb the hill towards Whiteways. Along the line of the road for a distance of half a mile the adjacent rabbit-scratchings are full of Romano-British pottery, and on the level plateau to the east of the combe the quantity of such *roba* is enormous, with here and there fragments of iron implements, spindle-whorls, and scraps of Niedermendig lava. These and other indications leave no doubt that

here stood a very considerable Romano-British town.¹ If so, our theory requires that it should have its *circus*.

Some 200 yards south of the lower end of the terrace-way, at a point exactly east of the Duchess' Lodge, the floor of the combe is so narrow that the 8 ft. greenway fills the whole width of it; and just here, carved out of the western slope of the valley, its single entrance opening direct upon the greenway, is an earthwork which is nothing but a Greek theatre in miniature. The *cavea* measures some 42 ft. only in diameter, the floor is sunk below the natural level, and the chalk removed in its excavation has been carefully thrown out to form two perfectly regular banks which complete the eastward side of the theatre. So symmetrical are they that they cannot be explained as the *deblai* from any chance pit, such as might be made in digging for flints or chalk. Moreover, there are scraps of Romano-British pottery to be found where the rabbits have broken the surface. The circumstances are such as to leave no reasonable doubt that this too is a *circus*. Its resemblance to a Greek theatre² is all in favour of this view, for as has been shewn, the Greek theatre was itself a development from the moot circle of the Brythonic Achæans, and although specialised for the particular requirements of the drama, remained throughout a moot. Elsewhere upon the chalk-downs are other works of the same plan, always directly associated with evidences of settlements of the Romano-British time and earlier, as for example at Eastwick Bottom, three miles north of Brighton, and near Knook Castle in Wiltshire.

In all these works the most noticeable features are the sunken floor and the character of the unfossed encircling vallum,³ which is broad and purposely finished with a very gentle interior slope⁴ so as to afford the utmost accommoda-

¹ Less than a mile to the west, on Rewell Hill, stood a very extensive town—80 acres or more in extent—from which have come fragments of pottery pronounced to date *circa* 150 B.C.; *Sussex Arch. Collections*, lxi (1920), pp. 20-39. At Whiteways converge roads, Roman and Romano-British, from Rewell Hill, Pughdean and other points.

² See for example Blouet's drawings in *Expedition de Moree* of the theatres at Sicyon (iii, pl. 82), Megalopolis (ii, pl. 39), and Delos (iii, pl. 10), and compare also the peculiar features of the 'theatre' at Sanxay (below, ch. xiii.).

³ This fact at once distinguishes the *circus* from the *mardelles*, the habitation-circles of the Pays Messin near Metz, of which it is explicitly said that the soil removed in making the *mardelle* has been carted wholly away, or purposely spread over the ground about (Grenier, *Habitations Gauloises*, p. 32).

⁴ Statius (*Theb.* vi, 258-60) lays stress upon this feature: *Campum . . . longo quem tramite planum Gramineae frondes sinuataque cespite vivo Mollia non subitis augeat fastigia clivis.*

tion for the spectators. The floor at the present day is usually concave rather than flat.¹ The vallum rises from 6 to 10 ft. above the floor, reaching its highest on either side of the entrances.² The work usually stands close to the road or roads which give access to the settlement, and outside its defences, but in some cases it is actually within the settlement.³ The floor and vallum are usually littered with precisely the same fragments of pottery as are strewn over the whole settlement. As most of them have been ploughed over at some period of time, the vallum is commonly very much spread—to as much as 40 ft. or more—and the arena is largely filled up, so that the whole might easily be mistaken for the site of a recent pond⁴ or of a 'swallet,'⁵ or for the site of a chalk-, gravel-, or flint-pit. Frequently the remains are so much wasted as to make accurate measurements impossible.

Speaking of one of the works at Buzbury, Warne says⁶ that it had the appearance of a 'ransacked tumulus,' and it is probable that this is another reason why such *circi* have been overlooked.

On Trows Down, above Broad Chalke, the ordnance survey marks as 'tumulus' an amphitheatral work measuring 50 ft. from bank to bank. The vallum rises 3 ft.-4 ft. above the surrounding ground, but the floor is sunk $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. lower, and there is no visible external fosse. It is associated with numerous vestiges of a possible settlement, and was possibly constructed for a *circus*, but left unfinished. A second example is to be seen on the brow of Kingston Hill, 2 miles sw. of Lewes, Sussex. It measures 42 ft. across the *cavea*, and the banks rise at the highest some 6 ft. above the floor. There are two entrances, but no fosse. A Roman terrace-way climbs to the crest of the hill at this point,⁷ but there are no discoverable traces of

¹ The natural result of denudation. On the other hand the floor of the *circus* at Charterhouse-on-Mendip, for no obvious reason, is slightly convex.

² This is because here had to be thrown up all that additional soil which would otherwise have blocked the entrance-ways. The feature is a fairly safe criterion of a genuine old entrance-way.

³ This was the case at Oakley Lane, between Tollard Royal and Farnham, and

at Oakley Down near Handley, and apparently also in one of the two on Tarrant Hinton Down.

⁴ At Berwick Down, Tollard Royal, a modern dew-pond stands some 60 yds. away from the *circus*, giving excellent opportunity to compare the characteristics of both.

⁵ cf. the circle on Pwll Mountain (ch. x), and the case of Tyrebaggar (ch. viii).

⁶ *Ancient Dorset*, p. 43.

⁷ *Arch. Journ.* 1915, p. 220.

any settlement near by. This also is marked 'tumulus' on the ordnance survey.

Amidst the irregular and often indefinite aggregates of mounds and banks and fosses which are the outward and visible sign of British villages, the outstanding fact is the general lack of anything which can be called design. By contrast with such surroundings the works now under consideration at once attract attention: they are definite, uniform, and so to say standardised, the details varying only very slightly. The mere fact that they are so shapely, where all else is shapeless, suggests that they had a special purpose. Defensive they cannot have been. For pastoral purposes they are commonly far too small,¹ apart from the unsuitability of their sunken floors and gently graded banks. They yield nothing to show that they were residential or sepulchral, and their position in relation to their settlements adjoining is wholly against either of these explanations of their purpose. On the other hand they are placed exactly as Homer implies a moot should be placed; they answer the requirements of a moot alike in plan and position; and from their likeness on the one hand to the *circus* which was the original Italian moot, on the other hand to the Greek theatre, there can be little doubt that they had a similar purpose. The constant, but otherwise inexplicable, feature of the sunken floor is a ritual survival of the digging of an actual grave, that altar-tomb of Consus, or his Celtic equivalent, to whom all such *circi* were consecrated.

Where there is no discoverable provision for any drainage, these works must have been purposely and carefully turfed when first constructed, for otherwise they would at once become mere mud-holes in wet weather. A good turf overlying a chalk subsoil dries with extraordinary rapidity.²

Evidence has been adduced to shew that alike in Homeric Greece and in Aberdeenshire the Brythonic Celts

¹ Heywood Sumner (*Earthworks of Cranborne Chase*) suggests that they were intended to shelter cattle in wild weather.

² Even the natives of New Guinea, though living in a very different climate from that of Britain, 'realise the danger of sitting on damp ground,' and therefore provide

'stone circles' as places where they may lounge and talk. These, however, are mere rickles of stones and very small, and they seem to have little or no connexion with either religion or administration. See Seligman, *Melanesians of British New Guinea* (1910), pp. 464-6.

had moots of circular plan. These works are likewise of circular plan, the one striking difference being that these are of earth whereas the others are stone circles. But the earthen circles are most abundant where there is no stone, and therefore no stone circles. In Cranborne Chase, for example, where there is no stone, the earthen *circi* are common, stone circles unknown; whereas in the south and west of Dorset, where there is stone in plenty, the stone circles reappear side by side with the earthen *circi*. The extant remains of stone circles in Dorset are one at Rempstone (87 ft.) near Corfe Castle, and three in the parish of Portesham, viz. Gorwell circle (90ft. by 79 ft.), one in the Valley of Stones (77 ft.), and a third on Hampton Hill (46½ ft. by 30½ ft.).¹ Homer is witness that in any case the stone peristalith was no essential of the moot, and in Italy one finds no trace of it. On the other hand, we find in ancient Italy earthen moots which are obviously akin to those of England. The inference that the latter, therefore, are themselves moots is unavoidable. And not merely are these earthen *circi* parallel with the *ἱερός κύκλος* of the Achæans and of the Picts in plan and in position, and in that total absence of any fosse which stamps them as *loca publica*; they are parallel also in point of size. The largest and the smallest of the earthen *circi* are pretty much of the same size as the largest and smallest of the stone circles, while the mean size of each is the same (70 ft.—80 ft.).

As the limits of the Greek theatre were those imposed by the physical capacity of the actors to make themselves heard, so the moot-circle's size was limited and by exactly the same consideration—audibility. Of the two, the moot-circle would, at its largest, be the smaller, for it knew nothing of those masks and ingenious sound-reflectors which were familiar to the theatre.

This view of their purpose is peculiarly borne out by their position, almost always at the gate of the community to which they belonged. As with the ancient Hebrews, so

¹ H. Colley March in *Proc. Dorset N.H. and Antiq. Field Club*, 1908; *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Antiq. Soc.* 1888. A fifth circle at Pokeswell, with diam. of 14 ft. only, is

presumably sepulchral; and our theory presumes the presence of the sepulchral stone circle wherever the stone moot-circle appears.

in ancient Britain the elders were accustomed to take their seats, for purposes of judgment and administration and debate, literally 'in the gate.'

Geoffrey of Monmouth relates¹ how Vortigern's messengers, when in search of 'the boy without a father (Merlin),' came 'to the city which men later called Kaermodin (Carmarthen). Outside the city's gate they saw some youngsters at their games,² so they drew near to watch the play, and sat them down in the circus,³ for they were travel-weary.' The passage proves that the Romano-British community⁴ commonly had a *circus*, that it was *inter alia* a place for games, that it offered convenient seats for those who watched such games, and that normally it stood before the gate of the community.

Similarly in Saxon times the right of *burhgeatsetl*, that is, of taking one's seat at the gate of the *burh* to assist in the business of the moot, one of the rights which qualified a man for the dignity of thane.⁵ The burgomote was the Saxon equivalent of something which equally belonged to the political system of the Celts, and grew up of itself amongst a people who, when they arrived in Britain, seem to have had little that can be styled a political system at all, and certainly no *burhs*.

Stukeley noticed⁶ under the name of 'inverted barrows' a class of earthworks to which Colt Hoare⁷ gave the equally misleading, if more descriptive, name of 'pond barrows.' He illustrates one in his plate of the various types of barrows, shewing it as a circular work with a saucer-like area and slight continuous vallum all round; and as there is no fosse, the vallum must have been formed of the soil removed from

¹ *History*, vi, 17. Geoffrey's book was completed in 1139, and this portion of it is taken from older Welsh originals.

² It was a game of ball, says the *Brut Tysilio*, and Nennius (§ 41) had said so even earlier: cf. the ball-play before Ulysses in the moot of Scheria (*Odys.* viii, 370).

³ 'In the Ring' in Aaron Thompson's English translation (1718), without any attempt to explain what 'the Ring' might be.

⁴ Carmarthen was the Roman station of Maridunum of *Anton. Iter* xii.

⁵ So Thorpe, *Leges Vetustae*, p. 81. Maitland (*Domesday and Beyond*, p. 190) would prefer to explain it as 'just a house in the "gate," the street of the *burh*,' but admits that it is not certain that *geat* can mean 'street,' and that the other explanation may be correct. In other passages (e.g. p. 209) he allows that the Burgomote was a fact predating the feudal system, 'a unit in a national system of moots.'

⁶ *Abury*, p. 12; *Stonebenge*, p. 45.

⁷ *Ancient Wilts.* ii, pp. 22, 121, 207. The 'pond-barrow' is no. 6 amongst his list of types.

the area. He gives no clue to the size. Like Stukeley,¹ he remarks upon the regularity and finish of such works, and while he owns that he knew of no example which had yielded sepulchral remains, he noticed that they were often associated with barrows of the usual types. Stukeley himself had dug into one or two with no better success,² and yet another on Ballard Down, Panfield, Dorset, is mentioned by Warne³ as having yielded no 'finds.' Dr. Thurnam declared⁴ that they were not barrows at all: he had dug into two or three, finding a burial in one instance only, and this he pronounced to be 'long subsequent to the formation' of the earthwork.⁵ Stukeley had suggested that they had been intended as places 'of feasting and sacrificing in memory of the dead.' Colt Hoare suggested that they were perhaps originally roofed-in like huts, and Wilson⁶ took the same view. Thurnam, apparently finding an objection to this view in their large size, fell back on Stukeley's notion, adding the further guess that they may have served as shelters during the time occupied by the funeral ceremonies and in the formation of the barrows. Similarly the Rev. A. C. Smith,⁷ who mentions some three or four examples, notably one near Beckhampton, 36 yds. in diameter and 'beautifully shaped,' and another on Colston Down near Shepherd's Shore.

The resemblance between the 'pond barrow'⁸ and the *circus* is too close to be accidental. The two things are identical in construction, and differ only in this, that whereas the *circus* is obviously attached to the dwelling-place of the living, the 'pond barrow' is alleged to be associated rather with the barrows of the dead. This observation of Colt Hoare may possibly be mistaken⁹: it

¹ He describes an example lying a mile or so west of Stonehenge as 'a circular dish-like cavity dug in the chalk' and 'extremely well turned,' 90 ft. in diam. and 7 ft. deep in the middle. There were barrows near it (*Stonebenge*, p. 45).

² *Stonebenge*, p. 45.

³ *Celtic Tumuli of Dorset* (1866).

⁴ *Archaeologia*, xlii, 166-7.

⁵ He mentions, however (*loc. cit.*), that Rev. E. Duke and Sir R. Hoare found in one case 'in a hole in the chalk . . . a deposit of burnt bones.'

⁶ *Pre-Hist. Annals of Scotland*, p. 43.

⁷ *Guide to British and Roman Antiquities of the North Wiltsire Downs* (1884).

⁸ It is certain that Colt Hoare in some

cases applied the name of 'pond barrow' to *circi* of the Romano-British type, as for example, one on Steepleton Down and another on Winterbourne Abbas Down. Warne, who corrected Hoare's nomenclature (*Celtic Tumuli of Dorset*, p. 8; *Vestiges*, p. 42, note), himself made the mistake of calling some of them tumuli, misled, perhaps, by their small dimensions. Mere dimensions are no safe criterion either of a barrow or of a *circus*.

⁹ There was a work of this kind outside the Roman lines at Hardham, Sussex (destroyed before 1836). It has been interpreted as a 'pond barrow' (*Suss. Arch. Coll.* ix, 116), but was most probably the *circus* of the station.

is a common fact for all traces of the dwellings of the living to vanish while the barrows of the dead abide, obvious if not intact. Barrows are to be found within short distances of many indubitable *circi* in the Dorsetshire 'villages,' notably at Berwick Down, Gussage Down, and Woodcuts; and always it remains to be proved that the barrows in question are contemporary with the so-called 'pond barrow.' The finding of one interment, and that a late one, within a 'pond barrow' by Dr. Thurnam is readily accounted for on the sufficient ground that the earthwork's circular and circumvallated form misled some later native, as indeed it misled Stukeley and Colt Hoare, into the belief that it was actually a barrow, and therefore a proper place for an interment. Similarly, the persistent knowledge that the *circus*, as its plan declared, was a *locus consecratus*, will explain the clustering of *later* barrows near it. In Binderton, Sussex, a mound has overflowed the entrance of the *circus* (fig. 7), as similarly a barrow has overflowed the stone circle at Boskednan, Cornwall (p. 247, n.).

Some of these works have been preserved by the accident of their having been converted into mazes, or 'Julian's Bowers,' to which they readily lent themselves. Analogy would suggest that when their more serious purposes were forgotten, their use as places of amusement, games and dancing would continue, and it is quite likely that some of the larger examples had in the days of their greatness been the scenes of formal military rides,¹ or of those informal maze-games which, as Pliny tells us, were familiar to the Italian youngsters of his own day.² The maze, as we know it, is believed to have been penitential in

¹ The *Ludus Troiae* was the feature of the opening day of the *Ludi Apollinares* in the *Circus Maximus* (Dio Cassius, *xlviii*, 20; Smith, *Dict. Class. Antiqs.* ii, 89b). It was the original of Vergil's well-known description of the ride of Iulus in *Aen.* v, 545 *sqq.* and the original also of the periodical review-rides of the Roman cavalry regiments, for which see Curle, *A Roman Frontier Post* (1911), p. 170-3. Only the largest *circi* would suffice for such performances, which Arrian (*Ars Tactica*, c. xxxiii) expressly declares to have been of Celtic origin. In Arrian's time (A.D. 136) the evolutions took place on a square field which had been previously dug over and smoothed (*op. cit.* c. xxxiv; cf. *Odys.* viii, 260, *λείψαν δὲ χορόν*); but Vergil explicitly speaks of

the scene of Iulus' ride as a *circus* (v, 551). Geoffrey of Monmouth (ix, 14) speaks of a military ride at Caerleon on the occasion of King Arthur's marriage to Guinevere: it took place, he says, 'in the fields without the city,' which correctly describes the position of the *circus* of Caerleon in Bear-House Field. W. E. Ball, in *Proc. Lewisbam Antiq. Soc.* 1899-1901, cites one Troppius as asserting that there once existed at Upsala in Sweden a 'royal circus' still bearing the marks of the evolutions of the horses.

² *Non, ut in pavimentis puerorumve ludicris campestribus videmus, brevi lacinia milia passuum plura ambulationis continentur* (*Hist. Nat.* xxxiv, § 90).

its purpose, and there would be an obvious fitness in turning to such a use these scenes of traditional 'devil-worship,' precisely as happened with the Colosseum in Rome. This, after being long used as the scene of miracle-plays on Good Fridays, was formally consecrated by Benedict XIII in 1728, and a chapel built in one of its archways. A cross was erected in the centre of its arena in 1749, and fourteen 'stations,' arranged around the *podium*, remained there until 1874.¹ Most surviving mazes are on spots unquestionably once the sites of Romano-British settlements,² and they frequently recall by their construction the characteristic features of the *circi*. Stukeley,³ speaking of the 'Julian's Bower'⁴ at Alkborough in Lincolnshire, notices 'these bowers or burroughs . . . where there was no ditch behind' the presumed circle of spectators, i.e. no external fosse. This particular example still preserves some part of its enclosing vallum. So did that of Comberton—the name be it noted, is said to mean 'Town of the Cymru'—until, a church-school being built beside it, the trampling of the children's feet destroyed it in a few years, although it had stood 3 ft. high. The maze at Asenby, N.R., 'sunk in a hollow at the top of an oval hillock . . . looks very like a damaged replica of the "amphitheatre" at Charterhouse-on-Mendip.'⁵ No objection to this view can be found in the small size of many of them. At Alkborough the actual maze, which fills the whole of the depressed floor, has a

¹ J. H. Parker, *Archæology of Rome* (1876), pt. vii, pp. 29–30.

² For example, those of Comberton, Cambs. and Alkborough, Lincs. Rev. F. G. Walker goes so far as to assert that they are invariably found close to Roman roads and in Roman settlements, the one case where no such Roman road is known to exist being in the Scilly Isles; and even there there have been found Roman remains. The traditional maze-patterns occur also in Roman mosaic pavements in this country; see *Proc. S.A.* xx (1904–5). In Wright's *Hist. Essex*, ii. 124, it is said that there used to be a triennial feast at Eastertide about the maze at Comberton; 'it would seem probable that such works originally served for some religious ceremony among the Britons, to whom they are generally attributed.' The feast, its intermittent recurrence, and its coincidence with Easter, all point to a very remote origin. That the penitential purpose of the maze was some-

times forgotten is suggested by the name of 'Maze-Sunday,' some particular Sunday set apart in Devonshire *circa* 1700 for festival purposes.

³ *Itin. Curiosum* (1772), v, 98.

⁴ This name is still used, corrupted to 'Jullinbore' or 'Jellinbore.' That at Alkborough was also called 'Roslin' (i.e. Rosamond's) Bower.' Stukeley particularly noticed the position of this example immediately outside the gate of the small entrenchment, of which the memory remains in the name of Walcot Hall. The Roman origin of this entrenchment has been questioned needlessly. It is a few miles from the indubitable Roman station of Winteringham.

⁵ Allcroft, *Earthwork of England*, p. 602. The words were written nearly twenty years ago. This maze was 51 ft. in diam. and was apparently perfect in 1866 (E. Trollope in *Proc. Mon. and Caerleon Antiq. Soc.* 1866).

diameter of 44 ft. ; that at Wing¹ in Rutlandshire, 40 ft. ; that at Boughton Green, Northants, 37 ft. These figures appear very small, but they are not smaller than must have been the actual floors of such indubitable *circi* as those of Buckland Bank and Gussage Down.²

Sir Paul Vinogradoff has given good reasons for his belief that the free self-governing communities of the Celtic time, far from being extinguished by the Roman occupation, preserved their existence and to some extent their autonomy throughout that occupation, and actually far down into the Saxon period.³ 'There existed all over the Empire rural communities with a modest but definite measure of self-government . . . managing their concerns mostly by means of elective officers and meetings of the more important villagers, and capable on many occasions of seeking redress for grievances and affording protection to those of their numbers who suffered wrong.'⁴ As communities they must have had their own communal moots, and all analogy tells us that these must have been in the open air. Such was the *circus* in Latin Italy, and if we find much the same *circus* here in Britain, we may safely believe that its purpose was the same. It was the moot of the community to which it belonged, and these small rural communities were the *pagi* and the *vici* of the Empire. 'Festus speaks distinctly (*s.v.* VICUS) of villages which form commonwealths and unities of jurisdiction, and of others which, though not so city-like, have still to be considered as economic bodies, and e.g. hold their own fairs (*nundinae*) and enjoy a special administrative organisation (*magistri vici quotannis fiunt*).'⁵ The *magistri vicorum* and *pagorum* are known to have been the officials who managed the festival of the *Compitalia*,

¹ This was 'perfect and well looked-after' in 1903 (Murray, *Handbook to Rutland*).

² See further Trollope, *Arch. Journal*, xv (1858). It does not seem possible to explain the name of 'Julian's Bower' save by reference to Iulus and the Troy-game. Mazes are, or till lately were, cut in the turf by the shepherds of Wales and Strathclyde, who called them *Caer-droia* and 'Troy-Towns' (Roberts, *Cambrian Popular Antiqs.* p. 212). All the evidence points to a connexion with Roman times. The not uncommon name of Troy Town, applied to farmsteads, etc. probably points to the presence of mazes now destroyed.

³ *Growth of the Manor*, 1905.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 51.

⁵ *ibid.* pp. 49, 104. For possible archaeological evidence for the existence of the latter class ('not so city-like') and their moots in Britain, see the next chapter. The passage in Festus runs: *Sed ex vicis partim habent rempublicam et ius dicitur, partim nihil eorum et tamen ibi nundinae aguntur, negoti gerendi causa, et magistri pagi quotannis fiunt* (ed. W. M. Lindsay, Teubner, 1913). The date of Festus is thought to be circa 150. For the survival of *pagi* in Italy, see J. S. Reid, *Municipalities of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 32-33.

and *compita* were places 'wherein the *pagani* met to debate definite matters,' i.e. they were the moots of *pagi* and *vici*; for the *vici* had its own *curiales*,¹ which means that it had its own *curia* and its own moot. Like the meetings of the old *comitia curiata*, that of the *Compitalia* was summoned by trumpet,² for it was not determined by any fixed date³; the ceremonies included the sacrifice of young pigs⁴; and the sacrifice was made not so much to the *di superi* as to 'heroes,' i.e. the spirits of departed mortals.⁵ In short, the whole was a humble replica of the *Consualia* and the festival of the Roman *curiae*. Every *vici* appears to have had its own *compitum*.⁶

It is not impossible that some amongst the many Comptons which figure upon the map of southern England may go back to an original in the Roman *compitum*; as, for example, Compton Valence, where still survives a noteworthy *circus* (above, p. 197). Doubtless in many cases the name stands for Coombe-tun, and denotes a place lying in a hollow amongst hills, but there are many cases in which such a description does not apply, and some other derivation remains to be found. In Sussex the name of the Comp or Compt⁷ still frequently attaches to spots beside the meeting-points of roads; and this is the radical meaning of the word *compita*.⁸ There is some reason to suppose that the *compitum* was uniformly circular.

Some hint of the kind of business which might be conducted in these moots of the *pagani* may be found in the village committees (*panchayats*) of India, whose activities

¹ So Vinogradoff (*op. cit.* p. 104), citing the *Codex Theod.* and Salviianus *De Gubern. Dei*.

² Philargyrius on Verg. *Georg.* ii, 382: *Ubi pagani agrestes buccina convocati solem certa inire consilia*. The same method of summons is illustrated by the moot-horns of many English communities, such as Canterbury and Dover.

³ It was one of the *feriae conceptivae* (Ausonius, *De Feriis*, 17: *Non certis redeuntia festa diebus*), though later fixed (*feriae stativae*) to Jan. 3-5.

⁴ Propertius, iv, 1, 23.

⁵ Dion. Hal. iv, 14.

⁶ Ausonius, *de Feriis*, 18: *Compita per vicos cum sua quisque colit*.

⁷ The form Compt is found in legal documents of the seventeenth century as an alternative to Comp, e.g. at Seaford.

⁸ Schol. on Persius, iv, 28: *loca in quad-rivis . . . viae publicae ac diverticulae aliquorum confinium*. In the rural districts, he adds, they were marked by little open shrines (*aediculae patentes*), but in towns they were *quasi turres*. Possibly the lack of space had led to the substitution in the towns of smaller enclosures—*sacella*—of some sort in circular form. The word *turris* does not necessarily imply any great height. On the other hand it seems to have commonly implied a circular plan. It is possibly connected with Lat. *tor-nus*, Eng. *turn*; cf. the meanings of the French *tour* (masc. 'a tour,' fem. 'a tower'). It is said that *turris* is in medieval Latin never used of an engaged tower (*πυργος*). My authority for the statement (if my memory serve me) is Dr. H. J. Round.

are chiefly concerned with education, watch and ward, sanitation, public works, and the administration of justice.¹

At the present day the smooth green floor of the 'Frying Pan' on Ham Hill is a favourite dancing-ground of west-country holiday-makers.² This looks like a genuine survival from the past into the present, perhaps one of the most remarkable in this country. Some Italian archaeologists believe that the *circus* was evolved from the sepulchral barrow, just as was the Greek theatre with its *ὄρχήστρα*. When, therefore, the *circus* replaced the older circle-moots of Celtic Britain, themselves a development from the barrow and the sepulchral cromlech, it easily and naturally inherited the function of a dancing-floor. And to-day that is the solitary *raison d'être* of the 'Frying-Pan' in the minds of many of those who dwell within reach of it. Certainly no structure could be better adapted for the convenience both of the performers and of the onlookers, the 'throng that stood all round enjoying the charming dance.'³

Repeating Livy's well-known story that theatrical performances were first introduced into Rome in 363 B.C. in consequence of a violent plague, Orosius takes occasion to remark⁴ that the Romans 'to rid them of a passing plague of the body, introduced an abiding disease of the soul.' Alfred enlarges upon Orosius' comment: he says that the *anftheatra* then introduced became prime centres of devil-worship and blasphemy, and that in Britain their number was countless.⁵

Orosius was a Spanish monk who lived in the first half of the fifth century. He had known Spain while it was

¹ See Matthai, *Village Government in British India* (1915). He says little of religion, but makes the remark that the village schoolmaster acts also sometimes as astrologer, to tell the lucky seasons for sowing, etc.

² As one of the principal occasions for such holiday-making is (or used to be) Shrove Tuesday, it has been thought that the name of the 'Frying Pan' is an allusion to this date; and as cock-fights were peculiarly associated with Shrove-tide sports, it has further been argued that the *circus* was built—in relatively recent times—for a cock-pit. Cock-fighting does not require any such laborious apparatus or any such large arena. Most likely it has been so used

often enough, but assuredly it was never built for such a purpose. The largest authenticated cock-pit known to the writer, that in the churchyard of Llanfechain, Montgomery, had a diameter of 27 ft. only.

³ *Iliad*, xviii, 603.

⁴ Orosius, *Hist.* III, 3, *pro depellenda temporali peste corporum, accessit est perpetuus morbus animorum.*

⁵ *pa waeron unarimede.* The original Latin of Orosius and Alfred's Saxon version are printed side by side in E.E.T.S. no. 79. *Amphitheatrum* does not occur in Hessels' *Eighth-Century Latin-A.-S. Glossary*, and excepting as a literary loan-word, it never passed into Saxon speech.

still a Roman province, and did not confuse his account of the matter by anachronistic references to theatres and amphitheatres. Alfred was born more than four centuries after Britain had ceased to be Roman, and at times he gravely misuses Roman terminology, but it is plain that to his mind 'amphitheatres' were first extremely numerous in his England, and secondly were specially identified with paganism. *Circus* and *amphitheatrum* being convertible terms (ch. vi), there is no reason to doubt that Alfred was thinking of all and any works of amphitheatral plan; and as every community seems to have possessed its own, his statement that they were 'countless' is justified. Bede himself asserts that, beside the eight-and-twenty 'noble cities' of Roman Britain, there were 'countless' other fortified towns and villages (*castella*) of smaller size, using the identically same epithet. For what reason Alfred preferred to speak of such earthworks as amphitheatres rather than as *circi*, will appear in the sequel.

The peculiar absence of any 'finds' in the *circi*, excepting only scraps of pottery, is exactly what was to be expected, for Roman law did not permit the bringing of arms into the moot, whether that was *forum*, *curia*, or *circus*. The armed riots of Gracchus and his opponents in the *comitium*, the military terrorism of the forum in the sullan time, were outrages only to be equalled by Catilina's coming armed into the Senate, and by the actual murder of Julius within the walls of the *Curia Pompeia*.¹ Something of this feeling the Celt would seem to have known even in the remote Homeric time; under Roman influence he would naturally adopt it *in toto*; and this may be the sufficient reason for its reappearance in the ancient laws of Wales and Ireland, and thereafter in the Saxon codes. It underlay the fierce outburst of horror against the Gunpowder Treason, against the arrest of the 'five members,' and against the outrage of 'Pride's Purge,' for one and all were violations of that sacrosanctity which the administrative moot shared with the sepulchral precinct whence it was derived. The 'Mother of Parliaments' is an ancient institution, but infinitely more ancient is that 'privilege' whereof it is so jealous. That inviola-

¹ cf. Tacitus, writing his *Agricola* nearly a century and a half later: *obsessam curiam, clausum armis senatum* (c. 45).

bility of the *curia* of which Cicero made so much in Rome, came with the Roman to Britain, and there amongst a people *toto divisos orbe* was a sentiment strong enough to debar even the uncivilised Saxon from desecrating its holy places, though he seems to have desecrated all things else. So one finds in the *circi*, as in the stone circles, little but the fragments of those rude *ficilia* which we know to have been the customary ritual vessels even in provincial Italy.¹

CHAPTER X.

MOOT CIRCLES OF THE BRITISH ISLES, ETC.

Torhousekie in Wigtownshire—Barrows and Circles of Strathclyde—Circles of Cumberland—Gunnerkeld, etc.—The Circus in Strathclyde—Borcovicium, Hugill, and Gunnar Peak—Why no Camps, etc. in S. Northumberland, etc.—Grassington Circle—Stone-Circles in Derbyshire—Peculiar Features and Distribution—Analogies between Circles and Churches—Welsh Circles: Penmaenmawr—Circles in Montgomeryshire—The θῶκος in Wales—Gyffylliog—So-called Cairn-Circles—Circles of Radnorshire—Circles of Breconshire—Circles of Glamorganshire—Circles of Carmarthenshire—Pwll Mountain and Bannside—Circles of Pembrokeshire—Cornish Circles: Stripple Stones—Boscawen Un and the Dawns Men—The Number '19'—Tredinnek and Trevorrian Round—Llanidan—The Hurlers and Stanton Drew—Devonshire Circles: The Greywethers—Free-standing and Contiguous Circles—Fernworthy—Circle in Ireland—Mons Killaraüs—Cruc Mag Slecht—Other Examples—The Cromlech as Sepulchral Monument.

We have arrived at two fixed points: one is the highly elaborated variety of circle seen in Aberdeenshire; the

¹ Tibullus, i, i, 38. The correct vessel was a *patera* (*patella*), and from one or other Roman writer one gathers that it was usually small (Varro, Juvenal), of a black colour (Festus, Juvenal), and easily broken (Juvenal); but Ovid (*Fasti* ii, 540, 615) is evidence that it was common to make

shift with a broken household crock or even a scrap of tile. The 'sacrifice' was probably proportionate: at the *Feralia* (a festival of the dead, as was the *Consualia*) it might consist merely of a little fruit, a little salt, a little grain steeped in wine, and a few common flowers (*Fasti*, ii, 538-540).

other is the simple turf-ed *circus* of Dorsetshire. The next step is to trace and identify forms intermediate between these two. With any questions of chronology we are not yet concerned, nor must it be assumed that an Aberdeenshire circle, because of its practical identity with the Achean moot of 1000 B.C., is therefore of the same age, or indeed of any remote antiquity. It is clear, however, that some of the British Celts used the Achean form of moot, while others used the Latin form, and both were circular. It is a probable inference that the national moot of the Celts was invariably circular, and if there can be shewn to exist a series of works of that form, otherwise inexplicable, which fall into place in a probable sequence of evolution, it will be a legitimate conclusion that these also were Celtic moots.

Evidently there was much variety among the moots not merely of different tribes, but even of the same tribe. We are therefore prepared to find yet other forms, and the varying details of the Romano-British *circi* warn us that we may also expect to find hybrid forms. Lastly, we may expect an overlap of one type with another; for this is known to have occurred with successive barrow-forms, and moots were modelled upon barrows.

It has been repeatedly asserted that there does not exist elsewhere in the British Isles anything resembling the peculiar circles of the Aberdeenshire type.¹ The case next to be described raises a doubt whether such a statement is justifiable.

On the farm of Torhousekie, 4 miles out of Wigtown on the road to Kilcowan, is a 'very fine and complete' circle of 19 stones set on the periphery of an oval measuring 66 ft. by 61 ft. A few feet short of the centre of the arena, set in a line pointing NE.—SW. is a row of three blocks, the middle one of smaller size (3 ft. wide and 2 ft. 10 ins. high), the other two much larger; and 'with its extremities resting on the outer ends of the two terminal boulders of the row, and containing the centre of the circle, is a penannular ring of loose stones in form of the letter C, measuring interiorly some 25 ft. by 16 ft. There are no visible signs of structure, but the details have been much

¹ So A. L. Lewis in 1900 (*Journal Anthropol. Inst.*): 'All enquiries I have made have failed to discover a case of this type anywhere except in this district (Aberdeenshire).'

obscured by the interior of the circle's having been made a dumping-ground for stones gathered from the adjacent field. The area within the ring is not so stony as to suggest that this is the site of a cairn which has been removed.¹

On comparing the plan of this circle (fig. 9) with those of Garrol Wood and Auchquhorthies (ch. viii, figs. 12 and



FIG. 9. CIRCLE OF TORHOUSEKIE.

Scale 25 feet to one inch.

(Reproduced by permission of H.M. Stationery Office from *Royal Commission of Hist. Monuments, Scotland*, vol. 1).

15) it is impossible to doubt that all belong to one and the same class, the three boulders at Torhousekie representing the remains of what was once a $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ of construction similar to, if not identical with, that of the Aberdeen-

¹ *Royal Commission on Anct. and Hist. Monts. Scotland, Co. of Wigton* (1912), no. 531.

shire type¹; and this conclusion is borne out by the further facts that the Torhousekie circle, like the others, is so built that the $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ faces to the gradually rising ground in front of it, and that of the 19 stones of the peristalith the larger are those adjoining the $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\varsigma$, the smaller those on the opposite side. As at Auchquhorthies, the $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ is pushed inwards towards the centre of the whole. It is a further point of resemblance that the circles of Torhousekie and of Garrol Wood are in point of area to all intents identical. When once it is realised that the $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ was nothing more than the presidential chair of its moot, there ceases to be anything odd in slight occasional differences in its position. Nothing can be argued to the contrary from the present condition of the medial boulder at Torhousekie; it is probably a mere fragment of what was originally a horizontal stone of 8 ft. 6 ins. in length.² It is tolerably safe to prophesy that excavation within the penannular ring of stones would at once reveal the usual mass of burnt matter, if not more substantial evidence of an actual *bothros*.

Wigtownshire has few other remains of circles.³ In Kirkcudbrightshire they are more numerous: one at Cauldside (diam. 70 ft.) in Anwoth may have had 19 stones,⁴ but nothing is said of any trace of medial rings, or indeed of any feature except sometimes a central monolith.⁵ Dumfriesshire has a number of circles, some of great size, as *e.g.* the 'Twelve Apostles,' an oval (longer diam. 291 ft.) of 12 stones,⁶ in the parish of Holywood, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles nw. of Dumfries. One of them is a 'foreign' stone (porphyry), but of any horizontal stone there is no trace.

Torhousekie circle lies in the northern portion of what was once Strathclyde, in a region occupied in the seventh

¹ It may be compared with that at Ardlair (figured in Bp. Browne's *Antiquities of Duncebt*, plate xxvi) which is known to have been greatly reduced in size within the last 70 years (*ibid.* pp. 81-3).

² F. R. Coles asserts (*Proc. S.A.S.* xxxi, pp. 92-94) that this 'stone' has been moved.

³ There is said to have been one at Eldrig; *op. cit.* p. xxxix and no. 230. Allusion is also made to possible remains at Glassenton (nos. 12, 13), Boreland (no. 110), and Wigtown (nos. 532, 534).

⁴ *Royal Commission, etc. Kirkcudbrightshire*, no. 16.

⁵ *op. cit.* no. 292 (Glenquicken) and no. 293 (Claghreid), both in Kirkmabreck: cp. no. 446 (Lairdmanoch in Toryland). This (diam. 22 ft.) was probably sepulchral. At Drannandow in Minnigaff was one of 90 ft. diam., of which remain seven stones only (no. 366). In *Proc. S.A.S.* xxix, pp. 301 *sqq.* is given a list of 22 circles in the county.

⁶ There remain eleven at the present day, some of them unusually large. *Proc. S.A.S.* xxviii (1894), pp. 84-90.

century by the southern Picts. Much of Strathclyde remained Celtic until the twelfth century. It was Brythonic, and to this day its western verge retains a name—Cumberland—derived from the Brythonic Cymru whom the Saxons found in possession. The Cumbrian Celts retained their independence until the great fight at Dunmail Raise (945). Moreover, there is so singularly little trace of any occupation of the region in pre-Roman times¹ that one is led to think that it was merely a sort of no-man's land until the Roman conquest drove the retreating Brythons into its uninviting fastnesses. Yet Strathclyde, and more particularly Cumberland, is famous for the number, size, and good preservation of its great circles. It is not absurd to surmise firstly that these circles were the handiwork of the Brythons, and secondly that as Strathclyde is remarkable also for the number and elaboration of its peristalithic barrows, this type of grave-monument was a favourite with the same people. Nor is there as yet forthcoming any certain evidence that in Cumberland such barrows are of earlier date. As the circle-moot was developed from the peristalithic barrow, this second conclusion is in accord with the first. And the circles and the peristalithic barrows being proportionately more numerous in the western² than in the eastern parts of Strathclyde, one infers that, thirdly, this peculiar distribution is directly related to the fact that in Cumberland the Celts longest retained their national traditions.

In Cumberland alone are known upwards of a score of great circles, and it is probable that others yet remain to be recorded upon the remoter fells. Only that known as Sunkenkirk (diam. 92 ft.) has been scientifically explored, and it yielded no evidence whatever that it was sepulchral.³ That on Castlerigg near Keswick (diam. 107 ft. by 96 ft. 8 ins.) has or had within it a low mound and the ruins of a

¹ R. S. Ferguson remarked (*V.C.H. Cumberland*, i, 249) upon the odd fact that, while there was in existence plenty of sepulchral pottery from the local barrows, there was not to be found in any public or private collection any domestic pottery recognisable as of pre-Roman date. He clearly held the usual view that the sepulchral pottery is pre-Roman, and if it were so, the fact of there being no contemporary

domestic pottery would be truly remarkable. Not so, however, if the sepulchral pottery itself be not pre-Roman; and there is no evidence that it is.

² In the sw. extremity of Cumberland, between Whitbeck and Kirksanton, is, or was, a group of not less than seven of the circles.

³ Below, ch. xxiv.

rectangular enclosure (26 ft. by 13 ft.) abutting upon the periphery on the south-east; but as the whole area is known to have been under plough in 1769, neither of these features can well be original.¹ There are said to have been two mounds within the circle at Salkeld² (diam. 360 ft. by 305 ft.), in point of area the largest remaining peristalithic circle in England, but as this also has been under cultivation it cannot be shewn that the mounds were sepulchral.³ Eskdale circle (103 ft. by 95 ft.), on Burnmoor near Wastwater, includes five separate proven cup-barrows each with its own peristalith, but it has yet to be shewn that these, or any of them, are of the same age as the circle rather than later and intrusive.⁴

Each of these four circles retains its entrance-way, and this is in each case directed to a different point of the compass.⁵ That of the Salkeld circle faces towards the British and Roman highway from Penrith to Carlisle. That of Keswick circle faces similarly to the road from Penrith to Keswick.⁶ The Roman road from Hardknot to Ravenglass passes near the Eskdale circle and continues along the coast to Dalton-in-Furness, and beside it, between Whitbeck and Kirksanton, are or were seven other circles. Tall menhirs stand a short distance away opposite the entrances of the circles of Salkeld and Eskdale.

Of a circle (diam. 156 ft.) of 88 stones which stood 7 miles south-east of Carlisle on King Harry Common in Cumwhitton, under Carrock Fell, there remain but a few stones known as 'The Grey Yauds.'⁷

On Moor Divock⁸ in Askham, Westmorland, on the crest of the fells east of Ullswater, scattered on either side

¹ *V.C.H. Cumberland*, i, p. 246. There remained in 1877 thirty-eight stones, of which all but five were erect.

² The menhir called Long Meg stands 60 ft. away to sw. and the whole group of megaliths is popularly known as 'Long Meg and her Daughters.'

³ Gibson's *Camden* (1773) explicitly says that 'they are no part of the monument, but have been gathered off the plowed lands adjoining' (ii. 176). A woodcut in *Genus Mag.* for 1752, p. 310, shows a low stone fence crossing the area, part of which is under cultivation.

⁴ Canon Simpson (*P.S.A.S.* iv, 447) suggested such intrusive occupation of pre-existing circles. Another case is the

Pembrokeshire circle of Eithbed in Prescelly (p. 245).

⁵ They face thus:—Sunkenkirk, south-east; Keswick, north; Salkeld, south-west; Eskdale, north-west.

⁶ As both Penrith and Keswick were Roman stations, this road is certainly as old as the Roman time, if not older.

⁷ 'Yaud' is said to be identical with 'jade': cp. the name of 'The Grey mare and her Colts' in Dorsetshire.

⁸ Also written Duvoek and Doveack. Hereabouts are one or two of the so-called 'star-fish' barrows, from one of which, cruciform in plan, the spot was locally known as 'Druids' Cross.'

of the Roman road from Penrith to the south, is a very extensive group of remains chiefly sepulchral, which speak plainly of a once dense population long vanished. Here, amongst many smaller cromlechs, is the circle called the 'Cockpit' (diam. 297 ft. by 270 ft.), formed of thick stones of irregular shapes, most of them still erect. It crowns a knoll in a *col* between Moor Divock and Swarth Fell, close beside the Roman road. It has no fosse. The area is covered with bracken, while outside the circle grow only heather and coarse grasses.¹ A smaller circle on Swarth Fell (diam. 57 ft. by 42 ft.) had lost one third of its periphery in 1920. It was formed of thin slabs 3—4 ft. in height and nearly contiguous, though all but one had been overthrown and seemingly on purpose.² The number now visible is 65, which means that the complete circle contained 100 more or less. Here the area is clothed with short bright grass, while without the grass is long and coarse.³

Amongst the other remains on Moor Divock, Dr. Greenwell mentions⁴ a circular work (diam. 68 ft.) surrounded by a low vallum and having its entire area paved with smooth water-rolled stones. He believed it to be sepulchral, but offers no proof thereof, he does not specify its precise whereabouts, and it is not clear that he had examined the 'entire' area. In dimensions it agrees with the so-called Copstone circle, which has the plan of a peristalithic ring-barrow, but is not described as paved by other recent observers.⁵ Whether sepulchral or not, its alleged paving provides a valuable parallel to the Scottish circles of Castle Frazer and North Stone and Culdoich (ch. viii) on the

¹ M. Waistell Taylor described it in 1886 (*Trans. Cumb. and West.* viii, 323) as consisting of two concentric circles and having within it the ruins of four cairns. In 1920 there remained no trace of any inner circle, and the four cairns were reduced to two irregular heaps of stone lying on the periphery to se. and nw. It is quite possible that such heaps, sometimes mistaken for cairns, may occasionally have been formed by tearing up the stones which once constituted inner circles or pieces of pavement, or both. These, being smaller than the stones of the peristalith, would naturally be removed first.

² All seem to have been overthrown so that their tops fell inwards. I owe this

detail, and the details of the circle last mentioned, to Dr. Eliot Curwen.

³ cf. *Proc. S.A.S.* xl (1906), p. 186: a report made in 1853 upon a now destroyed circle at Gingomyres, Hill of Milleath, Banffshire, mentions that, while the ground about was moor-like, 'the interior of the circle was of a rich green colour, which induced the Rev. Mr. Cowie, the minister of the parish, to dig downwards, when he found a layer of charcoal and bones of animals.' Possibly the peculiar colour of the grass is to be explained by the presence of the 'charcoal.' See further *Sussex Arch. Coll.* lxiv (1923), p. 39.

⁴ *British Barrows*, p. 400.

⁵ *Cumb. and West. Trans.* vi, 180, vii, 325

one hand, and to Mayburgh (p. 199) on the other, and it prepares us to find paving of some kind in other moot-circles.

On Knipe Scar and in Oddendale, in Crosby Ravensworth, are two pairs of circles. Of those on Knipe Scar one consisted of three concentric rings of stones with diameters of 7, 21 and 63 ft. respectively.¹ Within the inner ring, 18 ins. below the surface, was a rough flattish stone (2 ft. 6 ins. by 1 ft. 3 ins.), and under it 'evident traces of charcoal and burnt earth.' In the centre of the second circle of this pair, at the same depth, was 'a rude pavement of cobbles, about 6 ft. long and 4 ft. wide, and under this again a similar deposit of charcoal.' Of the two circles in Oddendale, there was 'the same kind of deposit within each central ring, but no trace of pavement'; but the ground here had been previously disturbed.² In none of the four cases was there found any indubitable interment. In all four cases, and more particularly at Knipe Scar, the finds may very well represent the remains of *bothroi*.

Waistell Taylor speaks³ of the '100-foot circle at Gunnerkeld' as shewing the same features as those in Oddendale, and in particular he mentions that it 'has within its inner belt a segmental chamber.' He notes other circles 'of considerable dimensions' in the vicinity, one lying beside the railway $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south of Shap,⁴ a second on Karl Lofts, and others at Brackenber⁵ and Rosgill.

Sunbrick Circle, on Birkrigg in the parish of Bardsey, peninsula of Furness, still shews the remains of two rings: the inner (10 stones) was a regular circle of 27 ft. in diameter, and the outer (13 stones) a decided oval measuring 88 ft. from east to west by 75 ft. from north-west to south-east.⁶ The two rings are not concentric, the interspace on the south side (26 ft.) being nearly double that on the north

¹ The ratio of the figures (1, 3, 9) is noteworthy. The centres of these two circles were 96 ft. apart only, so that, if the circles were of equal size, the interspace was but 33 ft.

² Canon Simpson in *P.S.A.S.* iv (1863), 444-7.

³ *Cumb. and West. Trans.* viii (1886), 341.

⁴ In J. B. Waring's *Stone Mounds and Tumuli and Ornament of Remote Ages* is a drawing of a circle 'on Shap Moor,' in which an outer circle (diam. 63 ft.) surrounds

an inner ring (diam. 21 ft.), and at the centre is a circular pit in which were found ashes. The measurements are precisely the same as in the case of the two circles on Knipe Scar, suggesting a local standard of size for the moot.

⁵ Canon Simpson believed this to have had a diameter of 400 ft. (*Arch. Journ.* xviii, 29). It is now all but destroyed.

⁶ Swainson Cowper in *Archaeologia*, liii (1893), p. 418.

(15 ft.).¹ The ground slopes gently to the south-east. The entire area is roughly paved with undressed cobbles, for the most part water-borne, lying at a depth of from 2 to 6 inches only below the present surface of the turf. Immediately beneath this was a second pavement of the same kind laid on the undisturbed marl, in which also the limestone boulders of the two rings were so set as to prove that they were fixed in position before the pavement was laid. At the centre of the area both pavements 'were slightly depressed, forming a saucer-shaped cavity about 3 ft. in diameter.'² Here was found nothing beyond an exceptionally large stone which formed the centre of the lower pavement; but beneath the paving elsewhere, were as many as four separate deposits indicative of burials, and at a fifth point a small and rude urn in an inverted position. This was 20 inches below the surface. None of these finds was at the actual centre, and in most cases the pavement appeared to have been removed to receive the deposit and again replaced. In the space between the two rings had been found to date (1922) a few stone implements, but no metal.

Parallels for the external features of this circle—the non-concentric plan, the regularity of the inner as contrasted with the outer ring, the paved area—have been already furnished; and the arrangement of the centre, if at the time of writing exceptional, is not so much so as to preclude its having been a *bothros*. As for the interments, the fact that the pavement had been broken to admit them, and their entire lack of symmetrical relation to the circle, strongly suggest that they were intrusive; and the complete absence of any grave-furniture points to their being of late date and possibly of surreptitious character. The urn may be paralleled from those found in the circles at Cadster (p. 229) and at Pwll Mountain, (p. 242) and was to all appearance in the nature of a consecration deposit.

There is evidence enough that the people of Strathclyde constructed circles of types closely analogous to those found in Aberdeenshire and the surrounding areas; but there is evidence that they also constructed moots of simpler types.

¹ Jopling, in *Archaeologia*, xxxi (1846), p. 450, has a wood-cut showing them as concentric, with respectively 12 and 20

stones. He gives the diameters as respectively 30 ft. and 90 ft.

² *Cumb. and West. Trans.* xii (1912), p. 265.

Mayburgh has been described above (p. 199), as also the small *circus* at Borcovicium (p. 180). The latter so nearly resembles other *circi* of South Britain as to leave no doubt about its purpose. It is, nevertheless, so far removed from the standard Roman plan as to leave little question that it is not Roman work.

A circular area (diam. 56 ft.), with surrounding vallum and a single entrance, was a feature of the settlement at Hugill in Cumberland.¹ It lay within the *enceinte* of the 'village,' and appears to be the precise counterpart of such a *circus* as that on South Tarrant Hinton Down in Dorsetshire (p. 194). There are many analogous works associated with the forts and villages of the shires of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright. At Ringheel, parish of Mochrum, Wigtown, a 'small circular fort' (diam. 80 ft. by 70 ft.) without fosse, was found to have a clay floor which had been subjected to the action of fire, and the overlying soil was black and full of fragments of charcoal.² It is the same in Berwickshire and in Northumberland: in both counties stone circles are extremely scarce, whereas works of the correct *circus* form are numerous. That within the *enceinte* of Old Rothbury (p. 197) may be regarded as a proven case.

Fifteen yards away from the gate of the fortified settlement on Gunnar Peak, near Gunnerton in Northumberland, was a low, oval, barrow-like mound. It was composed of burnt stuff 'intermingled with many animal bones,' amongst them part of a human jaw. Beneath it, a little west of the central point, was 'a circular or nearly circular pit, about 16 ins. in diameter and nearly 3 ft. in depth. Charcoal and ashes lay on the bottom, and the inner surface of the lining sandstone-slabs, set upright, bore marks of the long-continued action of fire.' Dr. Greenwell seems, with some hesitation, to have approved the excavator's view that this represented the cooking-place of the settlement, but the pit was too deep and too narrow to serve any such purpose, and analogy suggests a different use. This

¹ *Cumb. and West. Trans.* xii, p. 6. The observer (C. W. Dymond), unwilling to regard it as a hut-circle because of its size, seems to scoff at its being called a circle at all, but mentions that it had been so termed by earlier observers and so represented in their plan of the settlement.

² *Royal Commission Anct. Hist. Monts. Scot. Wigtownshire*, no. 198. In the same parish are (no. 232) the remains of another unfossed 'fort' bearing the suggestive name of Cornwall.

suggestion is borne out by the observation that, of the stones found in the mound, many were 'flat and smooth, and may have served for seats.'¹ The settlement was extremely small, yet it had, it would seem, the inevitable moot.

Works of the class under consideration have up to the present been noticed chiefly in the northern part of Northumberland amongst the Cheviot Hills, where 'camps' in profusion bespeak a large population; but in south Northumberland, and in the county of Durham, circles are entirely unknown, 'camps' strangely few, and even barrows are rare. The contrast, for which Dr. Greenwell² confessed himself unable to account, may be found to admit of easy explanation. The building of the Roman Wall, as it was designed to do, completely sundered the northern Celts. The country immediately to the south of the Wall, previously occupied by the troublesome Brigantes, seems to have been cleared of its inhabitants over wide areas, these including south Northumberland and Durham, through which ran the chief line of communication between the Wall and the administrative capital at Eboracum (York). On the other hand the lands to the north of the Wall and right up to it are crowded with the vestiges of a dense native population. The plain inference is that to the south the Romans systematically carried out that policy whereof Tacitus³ makes Galgacus speak so bitterly—'they make a wilderness and they call it "peace"'; and many of the evicted population, escaping beyond the Wall, and obstinately maintaining themselves there with the aid of the Scottish Celts, built up in northern Northumberland a Brythonic kingdom which held its ground against Roman and Saxon successively until the ninth century. This simple explanation of the facts might long since have been recognised but for the unhappy preconceptions which underlie and result from a mistaken chronology of anhistoric remains.

¹ Rev. G. Rome Hall in *Arch. Aeliana*, x (1895), pp. 34-5. Unhappily the article is accompanied by no adequate plans and gives few details. There were found fragments of Roman and Romano-British pottery within the settlement.

² *British Barrows*, p. 400.

³ *Agricola*, 30. *Agricola* (*ibid.* 24) is made to speak of these northern tribes as *Britannorum fugacissimi*. Tacitus himself uniformly terms the northern tribes *Britanni* (never *Caledones*), and mentions by an individual name the *Boresti* (*ibid.* 38) only, a tribe of which the locality is quite unknown.

The whole wide area of Yorkshire can shew the remains of no more than half a dozen great circles, and these for the most part clustered along its eastern fringe—the ‘Bride Stones’ of Bilsdale, Doedale, Sleights Moor, and Grosmont. Clearly the Brythonic population of most of the county was left in a condition too poor and feeble to

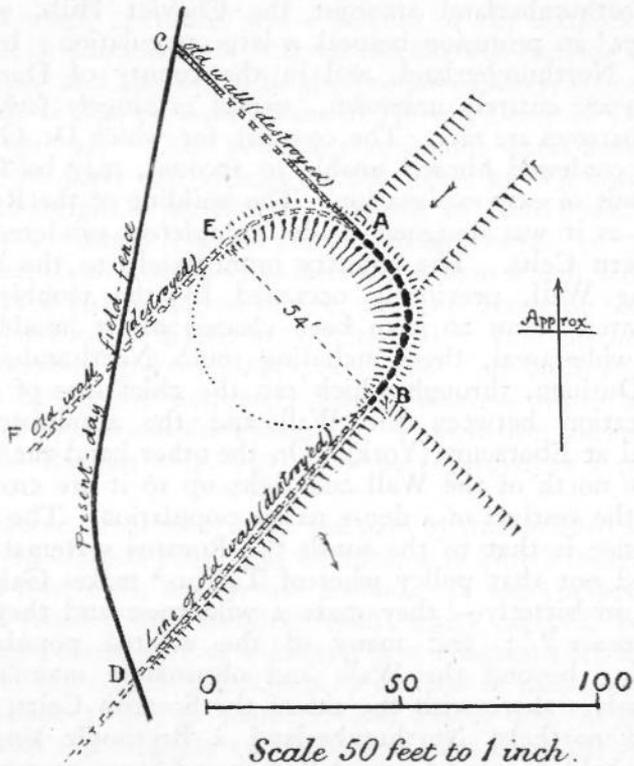


FIG. 10. GRASSINGTON: THE ‘DRUIDS’ CIRCLE’ AT BORRANS.¹

aspire to the building of such pretentious works—possibly had never been in a position to do so. But—and consistently enough, in other parts of the county—there are cases of equal significance, if less pretentious. That called Castlestead Ring has been described (p. 197), and it is said to be but one amongst a series of similar works in that region.

¹ The figure is from a field-plan kindly made for me by Dr. Villy, M.D. in June, 1923. For the interpretation of the plan he

is in no wise responsible. The dotted line suggests what may have been the original form of the work.

Another case is that of Grassington in Wharfedale (fig. 10). Here, at a spot known by the significant name of Borrans, were identified some 30 years ago the remains of one of the most extensive native settlements in the county, although no satisfactory account of it seems to have been published; and amongst the most remarkable of these remains 'a large circular, or rather oval, enclosure formed by a bank of earth and stone, upon which is a double row of raised stones—I have counted nearly 60 in all—not a little suggestive of the so-called Druids' Circles. The enclosure is 54 ft. in diameter.'¹ The measurement, it will be noticed, is almost the same as that of the circle at Hugill (p. 224).

Lying on ground which falls gently to the south-west, the work is carved out of the slope in the fashion of a Greek theatre. Of the probable ring of stones there remain some 45 feet only, and this portion seems to have been broadened and filled in to serve as part of a field-wall (CABD).² The residue was probably torn up and utilised to build this wall, which was in its turn demolished to make the existing wall CD. The vallum enveloping the area EAB is quite unmistakable, and the floor of the area, noticeably depressed, is 5 feet below the vallum at A. The other half of the vallum has been levelled. The whole stands amongst a series of rectangular lynchets of the Iron-age type. The wall BD followed the line of one these lynchets, and there are signs that a similar and parallel wall once ran along EF. The features suggest that here, as in other less dubious cases, the circle was at one period adapted to the requirements of a shepherd or stock-farmer.

The settlement at Grassington was a large one, covering more than 100 acres, and ancient roads—some of them certainly Roman and some possibly earlier—are evidence that it had a continuous existence down into the days of the Roman occupation. It must, therefore, have had its own moot. The work at Borrans answers the requirements of such a moot: it is circular, and while it has the depressed floor and the broad unfossed vallum which were characteristic of one type of moot, it has apparently had also the peris-

¹ H. Speight, *Upper Wharfedale*, p. 430. The spot is now known locally as the 'Druids' Circle,' but the earlier and very suggestive name of the locality is Borrans.

a fairly reliable index to antiquity: see *Earibwork of England*, p. 327, n.

² Possibly the circle was of the kind called contiguous; see below, p. 254.

talith which was characteristic of the other type. That the features of the two types should occasionally be combined in one and the same moot-circle is not surprising, for they were frequently so blended in sepulchral circles. Even of the Aberdeenshire circles some shew a tendency in this direction, and in the circles of Derbyshire it may be said to be the rule.

Amongst English counties Derbyshire is easily foremost in regard to the number of stone circles there surviving. So says W. J. Andrew,¹ who has made a special study of them. They lie scattered over the high moors of the north-western portion of the county, where, within an area of less than 400 square miles, there yet remain some 20 circles more or less complete, while there is record of at least a dozen others which have been destroyed, 'and no doubt as many more lie hidden by the heather of our little-frequented moors.' Derbyshire was included within the territories of the Ordovices, the Brythonic tribe who subsequently made themselves paramount over a great part of North Wales.² Through the heart of the circle-area of the county runs the Roman road from Buxton northward to Chapel-en-le-Frith.

In diameter the Derbyshire circles range from as little as 10 ft. to as much as 150 ft. In the cases of Arbor Low and the closely analogous work at Chapel-en-le-Frith (the 'Bull Ring'), the size of the fosse and vallum preclude the idea that these circles were intended for moots. The rest of the circles are smaller in area, and the fosse and vallum, if present at all, are of the feeblest and most perfunctory description. There seem to have been always two entrances, usually to the north and south, but never exactly opposite to each other.³ The stones of the peristaliths, though varying greatly in size, are in no case large. But amongst much diversity there is again an underlying uniformity which stamps the whole series as the outcome of one same culture. With the exception of the diminutive

¹ In *Memorials of Old Derbysbire*, pp. 79-88. For another opinion upon the matter, see *V. C. H. Derbysbire*, i, pp. 183-4.

² Lloyd, *Hist. Wales*, i, p. 41.

³ So says W. J. Andrew, who explains this as indicating the presence of some central features—dolmen or pillar or cairn

—in the original plan. A thoroughfare of which the gates were not exactly opposite would just pass this without needing to be deflected. From the evidence of the Aberdeenshire circles and others one would infer that the central feature was rather the *βοθρός* or other provision for the ceremonial fire.

10-ft. circle Mr. Andrew is confident that they were not sepulchral, regarding the few interments which they have yielded as either consecration-graves or intrusive. He notices that the circles are never situated upon the actual summits of the hills, but invariably upon gentle slopes near the summits,¹ exactly as has been observed to be the case in so many other areas. The pottery found within them is exclusively of 'Bronze-age' types, while of metal they have produced absolutely none; and again the parallelism with Aberdeenshire is remarkable. There does not, however, appear to have been noticed in the Derbyshire circles anything in any way resembling the Aberdeenshire dais. The circle on Eyam Moor is typical of the whole series. It lies on a gentle slope, so that the upper side is some 7 ft. higher than the lower, and the stones are set upon a very slight annular vallum giving a diameter of 98 ft.² Within the Cadster circle Mr. Andrew found an inverted and empty urn, placed near the centre, but eccentrically.³

The characteristic of the Derbyshire type is the presence of a similar slight, but decided vallum, usually 2 ft.—2½ ft. only in height, on the inner face of which are ranged the stones of the peristalith. These are never large, and in the case of Wet Withens (diam. 120 ft.) they are only some 9 ins. above the soil. None of the circles has a fosse worth calling such. They suggest a compromise between a newer and an older way. Thus that called the 'Nine Ladies,' on Stanton Moor, slightly elliptical, has an area of 50 ft. by 45 ft. enclosed within a vallum of 2 ft. vertical height, but of the disproportionate breadth of 10 ft. There are two entrances, and along the inner slope of the vallum are set 9 stones, the tallest rising but 3 ft. above the heather which covers the site.⁴ The slight elevation of the vallum—as if designed not to keep any one out of the circle, but to give the greatest possible seating-space for an assembly—and the standing-stones, all agree with the view that circles

¹ They face in various directions. That at Cadster, Whaley Bridge (diameter 35 ft. by 40 ft.), was provided with a level floor by building up the lower side with a dry stone revetment. Like the rest this produced 'not a single human relic.'

² J. S. Wilson and G. A. Garfitt in *Man*, March, 1920, where are elaborate drawings of it.

³ His experience had led him to expect such a find, and in this precise part of the circle, and a very few minutes' digging brought it to light.

⁴ W. J. Andrew, *Memorials of Old Derbyshire*, p. 82. The same arrangement of the stones is found in the circle of Wet Withens, and in that of Cadster near Whaley Bridge.

of this type are modifications of the non-vallated circle, possibly produced under the influence of the Roman *circus*. With a diameter of 50 ft. and a bank giving an interior slope of 5 ft. such a circle would provide some 600 superficial feet of space, or as much as is afforded by a building 40 ft. by 15 ft. There are a good many ancient town halls, a multitude of ancient churches, which even at the present day are no larger.

While claiming for the circles of Derbyshire an immense antiquity in point of type, W. J. Andrew is careful to say¹ that he believes many of them to have been actually constructed at a very late period, and he remarks that 'there is evidence that the great circles of the country were centres of native population at the time of the coming of the Romans, for the roads of the invaders were driven straight for them.'

In regard to the Derbyshire circles Mr. Andrew has remarked a fact which overbears anything that can be adduced in support of the theory that they were erected as places of burial: they are distributed over the map at regular intervals of 8 miles. So uniform is this relation of each circle to its neighbours that, finding upon the map one or two *lacunae* where a circle might be expected but was not recorded, he went to the spot and immediately found what he sought. This occurred in more than one case. Obviously the 8-mile interval was an intentional feature in the plan of those who built the circles, and it was, moreover, carried out with an accuracy which, in view of the broken character of the country, is astonishing.

Now it is scarcely conceivable that mere burial-places should have been thus methodically distributed over the surface of the country, even if this theory of the purpose of the circles could be reconciled with the uniform presence of the two entrance-ways, and the almost uniform absence of any trace of burials such as the theory assumes. But if the circles were in reality built for some totally different purpose, their peculiar distribution, equally with other features, becomes not so much inexplicable as reasonable.

The evidence suggests that their purpose was that of moots. In the light of what is known of the thoroughness of the organisation of the Celts in the days when Druidism

¹ *op. cit.* p. 87.

was paramount, it is in no wise unlikely that a whole area may have been regularly mapped out into sections and each section provided with its own moot, especially in a district such as the Derbyshire hills, where there have been discovered few signs of any such well-developed town-life as prevailed, for example, in Dorsetshire. To this day in many of the Dales the parish church stands to all intents alone, and the dalesmen come thither from miles around, riding or driving to the occasional services.¹ There is no reason why there should not have prevailed in some parts of Celtic Britain a state of things precisely similar. If there are to be found upon the wild fells and moors of the northern counties circles remote from any discoverable traces of contemporary habitation, revealing even to the excavator either no trace whatever of interments, or only such insignificant interments as are found in the Derbyshire circles, is there not a curious parallel between these circles and the solitary churches of those very same areas to-day?

The fact that no settlement has yet been discovered at a given spot is no proof that it never existed. Those *vici* of which Festus speaks (p. 211) must have represented parishes rather than villages enclosed each within its own walls. They must have possessed their own moots, and if there were no 'town' at the gates whereof the moot could be set, its position must have been arbitrarily determined on some other principle. The whole of this thinly-peopled area of Derbyshire may have been so parcelled out, the unit being area rather than population.² Whether the authority which introduced the system was Roman or Celtic is of no particular moment to the present enquiry. If it was Celtic, the moot would be the Brythonic circle-moot, and this may have been subsequently modified in some cases, as has been suggested, to bring it more into accord with the Roman *circus*. If it was Roman, the peristaliths must be the work of a native population who could not wholly wean themselves from their Celtic traditions.

¹ Exactly the same state of things prevails in many parts of Scotland to this day. The occasion is commonly a 'Communion Sunday,' and it is possibly not wholly fortuitous that such 'Communion Sunday' is usually the first in May.

² As was the case in old Wales (Seebohm, *Engl. Village Community*, p. 205). One is strongly tempted to see a connexion between the old Venedotian land-system (described *op. cit.*) and the distribution of the Derbyshire circles, both seeming to be based upon the numeral 4 and its multiples.

The probabilities are decidedly in favour of the former view, viz. that the circles represent the native organisation of this area in Celtic times. It is quite possible that certain tribes may have habitually followed such a system.¹ There are sound reasons for thinking that the Ordovices, albeit Brythonic, were on a plane of culture far below that of south Britain.

Those who believed that the Druids were adepts in geodesy will find no difficulty in the suggestion that they thus mapped and distributed the circles of Derbyshire. Those who do *not* hold that belief must explain, if they can, how the circles come to be so distributed in a rugged country where correct measurement of horizontal distances is very difficult. Whoever so arranged the circles, they were capable mathematicians and surveyors, as Caesar seems to say the Druids were. And if the builders were not the Druids, who were they? We have no tradition of any other class or of any individual competent to do such a thing—unless indeed it were Merlin; and Merlin himself was a Druid. It has been remarked that the names of Brown Willy and High Wilhayze, both derived from the Celtic word² meaning ‘highest,’ show that the Brythons were aware of the fact that these two hills are the highest in their respective localities; yet for a long number of years the guide-books mistakenly gave the credit of highest elevation on Dartmoor to Yes Tor rather than to High Wilhayze, until corrected by the trained observers of H.M. Ordnance Survey.

It would be unreasonable to expect that a mathematical distribution like that apparent in north-west Derbyshire, should be capable of proof in every part of Celtic Britain. With the Derbyshire moors the passage of 2,000 years or so has interfered but little, whereas over most of the island agriculture and other developments have made away with all or most of the evidence. Nevertheless, there are traces of something similar in other localities.³

That the intervals should vary is to be expected.

¹ Welsh tradition avers that Dyfnwal Moelmud (p. 276) who was particularly concerned with the introduction and elaboration of the moot-system, ‘measured out Britain.’ The implied connexion between that system and some kind of ‘measuring’ is significant.

² (*Bryn Uchella*, or *Ubella*).

³ Notably in Aberdeenshire. Thus the circle of Tyrebaggar (ch. viii) is 10 miles distant from those of Fiddes (NE.), Aquhorties in Inverurie (sw.) and Sinhenny (sw.); and there seems to be a similar relation between others.

A rigid uniformity of distribution extending over the whole of the British Isles from Land's End to Inverness would presume a unity of dominion for the builders, whoever they were, for which we have no warrant; and even supposing such a dominion existed—and after all there is no proving that it did not¹—no authority sufficiently intelligent to carry out the scheme would have been so unpractical as to ignore all considerations of actuality. Allowance must have been made for varying density of population, for example. Why build moots where none were needed? Why build more than were needed? We do not know what was the density of the population of any part of Britain at any period more remote than a century ago, but we do know that populations fluctuate in a most extraordinary way; so that the moors of Derbyshire may well have been as populous in the days of Druidism as were the lands we now call Aberdeenshire, and the fells of Strathclyde may have outdone both in point of population. At the present day Cranborne Chase is amongst the least thickly peopled areas in the southern counties, yet in Late-Celtic and Roman times it was crowded with towns and villages. Much of Cornwall is to-day a desolation, but there is evidence that in earlier days it teemed with people. The same is true of the wide area of Dartmoor, whereas it is to be doubted whether a modern Caesar would feel himself justified in speaking of the 'measureless multitudes' of the weald of Sussex and of Kent. The South Downs to-day are all but tenantless, but in the Roman time they were the home of a people whose lynchets climbed to their very loneliest crests.

Again, one may find an analogy in our parish churches. In the middle ages those churches were the normal moots of their parishes; but one parish differed from another in

¹ Even if the same *political* system of the druidical time extended over the major part of the country, there must still have been very wide differences in its forms, as there were in the culture of different areas. So far as the evidence goes the headquarters of the system was in the *ora maritima*, and specifically in Wilts. and Dorset. At the present day the same political and social systems prevail in Middlesex and the Yorkshire dales, but the facts of life in the two regions are widely different. As Prof. Anwyl remarks (*Celtic Religion*, pp. 17, 33), much

of the seeming contradiction to be found in the various ancient accounts of Druidism may be due to differences of date and of locality. What Caesar saw and faithfully described in the Belgica of his own day was probably very different from the state of things described in another part of Gaul and at another date by another writer equally trustworthy. Modern conditions are apt to blind one to the importance attaching in ancient days to an interval of a few score miles; and the same is probably true of a few score years.

point of area and of numbers in the same kind as now, if in less degree. Big or little, populous or otherwise, the parish foregathered to its church as the centre and the symbol of communal existence and communal freedom, regardless of whether it was near or far, little more concerned whether it was large or small. That it was their place of worship was much, but that it was also their moot was vastly more. It is a place of worship still, but it is no longer a moot, and for that reason it is no longer *the* place of worship. This is the fundamental reason for the perfectly justifiable complaint that 'the Church has lost its hold upon the people.' Paradoxically, but truly, it is because the people have lost their hold upon their Church :

τοῖσιν δ' οὐτ' ἀγοραὶ βουλευφόροι

The Ordovices were possibly the builders of the circle (the 'Bride Stones') which stood on the borders of Staffordshire and Cheshire between Congleton and Bidulph, and the Cornavii of others in the neighbourhood of the Longmynd in Salop. One of these, known as Mitchell's Fold, is in good preservation. The westward advance of the Brythonic peoples into North Wales appears to be marked in the same fashion. Just as the circle of Pendine (ch. viii) stands at the very gate of its community, so at the gates of the great Iron-age fortress on Penmaenmawr, Carnarvon, stands the circle called the Meini Hirion or 'Long Stones,' 81 ft. in diameter. The pillar-stones, perhaps originally 12 in number, are unusually lofty, rising to 8 ft. in height, as befitted the moot of an unusually formidable community. There seems to have been originally an inner circle, which was destroyed to provide materials for blocking up the interspaces of the peristalith¹ to make it serviceable as a sheep-fold. A small cist is said to have been found at the foot of the most easterly pillar. An ancient roadway leads from the fortress close past the circle,² and in the vicinity are many lesser circles, apparently sepulchral, between 20 and 30 in number, the diameters varying from 12 ft. to 22 ft.

In Flintshire remain 5 stones only of a circle (diam. 87 ft.) in Penbedw Park, parish of Cilcain, a so-called 'pointer' standing 237 yards away to the south of west.³

¹ As shewn in the woodcut in Jewitt, *Grave-Mounds*, p. 81: cf. *Arch. Cambr.* 1, 71; Pennant, *Tour in Wales*, ii, p. 308.

² *Arch. Cambr. loc. cit.*

³ *Inventory, Flintshire*, no. 47.

Near Festiniog, Merionethshire, there remained in 1842 as many as 41 stones of a fine circle on Bwlch Craigwen in Penmorfa.¹ It was oval, measuring 44 by 36 cubits (66 ft. by 54 ft.). It appears to have vanished within the next 7 years.² Another, of exactly the same dimensions, is said to have stood at Cefn Coch.³ At Cilgwyn, on the road to Nant Nantlle, was 'a very complete cirque, 16 paces each way, having 24 pillars.'⁴

In Montgomeryshire, on Kerry Hill, parish of Kerry, survives a complete peristalith of 8 stones (diam. 85 ft.) with a ninth at the centre.⁵ On Newydd Fynyddog in the same county, in the hamlet of Tir y Myneich (*Terra Monachorum*) and parish of Llanbryn-mair, are the remains of two circles, respectively 72 ft. and 81 ft. in diameter, separated by an interspace of 140 yards. Much ruined now, both were 'nearly perfect' in 1866.⁶ The larger bears the curious name of Lled Croen yr Ych, 'Breadth of an oxhide.'⁷ Of the 8 remaining stones of the other, Cerrig Gaerau, seven lie as if purposely overthrown, their axes in line with the centre of the circle. The eighth stone, which is at the northern point of the periphery, is likewise prostrate, but its axis is tangential to the circle, and it is remarked that, whereas the others are shapely stones, well adapted for use as pillars, the tangential stone, a drift boulder, is not only much larger than the rest, but is of an awkward shape.⁸ Was it perhaps the horizontal stone of a circle of the Aberdeenshire type?

The possibility of this theory is not lessened by the existence, so late as 1842, in the parish of Llandrillo, Merioneth, of a 'circle of stones 12 yards in diameter, *within which was formerly a circular cell* six feet in diameter.'⁹ It stood close beside a circular 'camp,' of whose occupants it was probably the moot.

¹ Lewis, *Topog. Dict.* Stukeley has a drawing (*Itin. Curiosum*, ii, plate 80) of a single circle of 11 stones 'by Mawnog Grigog, parish of Penmorfa, Carnarvonshire.'

² *Arch. Camb.* 1849, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *op. cit.* p. 6.

⁵ *Montgom. Collections*, xxiii (1889), p. 82; *Inventory, Montgomeryshire*, no. 282.

⁶ *Arch. Camb.* 1866, p. 540.

⁷ *Inventory, Montgomeryshire*, no. 308. D. H. Haigh (*Conquest of Britain by the*

Saxons, p. 215) refers to the ceremonial furrow drawn by an ox-team about the site of a proposed settlement. Such was certainly the proto-Latin way (above, ch. iv) and some such forgotten ceremony may underlie this odd name. The Danish duelling-ring was also determined by the extent of an ox-hide (Hibbert in *Archaeol. Scotica*, iii, p. 125), and the *bide* was the Saxon unit of land-measure.

⁸ *Inventory, Montgomeryshire*, loc. cit.

⁹ Lewis, *Topog. Dict.*

Two circles in the adjoining county of Denbighshire certainly possessed $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\iota$, albeit of less ambitious fashion than was usual in Aberdeenshire. One of these is the small ring-work (diam. 22 ft.) in the parish of Gyffylliog, known of late years as Llys y Frenhines, the 'Queen's Court'; whence was brought (*circa* 1804) 'the boulder somewhat resembling an armchair' which is called Cader y Frenhines, the 'Queen's Chair,' and is now in Pool Park, Ruthin.¹ The other, on Clocaenog Moor, is also small (diam. 26 ft.), surrounded by a penannular bank of earth 12—18 inches high, in which are embedded a few stones. The largest lies at the south-western side: it has the form of a rude chair, 2 ft. in height at the back, and faces to the centre of the circle. A 'pointer,' now fallen, lies on the moor 47 yards away behind it.² Some 50 yards east of this circle is another and larger one (diam. 45 ft.), of exactly the same construction, comprising at least 16 stones.³

A peculiar circle in Gyffylliog is to all appearance a capital example of the fusion of the Celtic stone-built circle-moot with the Roman *circus*. It shows a sunken floor (diam. 30 ft.) surrounded by a low and disproportionately broad vallum 17 ft. in width, in which the peristalith is largely buried. The stones stand 3 ft. in height, and the over-all diameter of the work is 64 ft.⁴ It lies near Ruthin, and somewhere hereabouts must have run Roman roads, one along the valley of the Alwen, the other connecting Caer Gae with Ffrith. Even in Aberdeenshire the otherwise unusual feature of the depressed floor is still visible in the circle of Greystones near Alford (ch. viii), and was present in those of Crookmore (Tullynessle) and Tyrebaggar; and there was permanent Roman occupation of that region during a number of years (ch. viii).

A circle (diam. 43 ft.) of 31 stones, of an average height

¹ *Inventory, Denbighshire*, nos. 209, 374. There is a wood-cut of it in *Arch. Camb.* 1855, p. 155. It is not suggested that the stone has been artificially shaped. It appears to be entirely natural, but not the *ess* convenient.

² *op. cit.* no. 116. On the analogy of the Aberdeenshire type the entrance to this circle would be beside where stands the

'chair'; and the position of the 'pointer'—if such it was—is explained. See below, p. 267.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *Inventory, Denbighshire*, no. 208. The general appearance of the whole is suggested by the local tradition that it was long used as a cock-pit.

of 18 inches, crowns the Eglwysegl Rocks near Llangollen.¹ It is associated, like that of Meini Hirion, with a number of smaller circles (average diam. 11 ft.), either sepulchral or residential, and all alike have been surmised to be the kerbs of vanished cairns.

This method of explaining away all stone circles of less impressive proportions is on a par with that which dismisses all earthen *circi* as 'pastoral' enclosures. Of a certainty a multitude of cairns has been destroyed, and the process is still going on; but unless there be conclusive evidence of the erstwhile existence of a cairn upon the spot, to write down a ring of stones as the kerb of a dismantled cairn is mere guess-work. It has not even probability to recommend it. Cairns have been destroyed for one or other of two reasons: either the ground or the material was required for another purpose. If the ground was wanted, obviously the theory will not apply so long as the ring of stones is there; and if the material was what was sought, why were the assumed kerb-stones left? The circle on Pendine Head has been thus lightly accounted for, but no one conversant with the facts can be satisfied with the explanation. It is more than likely that a number of the so-called cairn-circles are genuine moot-circles, of the same type as that of Pendine, which have passed unrecognised because the observers have not known what to look for.

Some 500 yards west of the circle of Cerrig Gaerau (p. 235) are the remains of a circle (diam. 28 ft.) comprising 12 stones, 'well shaped' and 'unusually accurately placed,' which, it is said,² 'must' have been the kerb of a cairn. Some excavations which are known to have been made at the spot some half-century ago, albeit no details of the matter are forthcoming, are held to account sufficiently for an obvious pit which marks the centre of the circle. The pit is written down as the site of a cistvaen, over which the cairn is assumed to have been reared; and three isolated stones, which lie within the arena, 'may,' we are told, 'be regarded as the remains of an inner circle, perhaps removed when the cistvaen was destroyed.' There is no

¹ *op. cit.* no. 408. The name of Eglwysegl (less correctly Eglwyseg) is as yet unexplained, but there can be little doubt that it has some connexion, if only by assimilation,

with *eglwys*, 'church,' and refers to the presence of these circles. See below, ch. xx.

² *Inventory, Montgomeryshire*, no. 310.

smallest evidence adduced for either cairn or cistvaen. Both are pure assumptions, and it is at least as justifiable to maintain that the pit, the peristalith, and the admitted 'remains of an inner circle.' are all good evidence that here too stood a moot-circle of a recognised type. Such a conclusion is certainly not weakened by the peculiar name of Yr Allor, 'the Altar,' which attaches to the spot, as it attached also to the site of the indisputable moot circle of Carn Llwyd (p. 240).

A second route of the Brythons into Wales is indicated by the circles of Radnorshire, of which there are five known.¹ One of these, the 'Druid's Circle' in Nantmel, has a diameter of 36 ft. only, and traces of a possible inner circle of 10 ft. diameter.² Of the remaining four, that on Gelli Hill in Bettws Diserth has some 12 stones set on a circle of 68 ft. in diameter³; Fedw Circle in Glascwm had about 40 stones and a diameter of 79 ft.⁴; the 'Six Stones'—they were originally 12—in Bryngwyn have a diameter of 87 ft.⁵; and that called Banc-du, the 'Black Chair,' in Llanbadarn Fynydd had originally some 17 or 19 stones on a diameter of 88 ft.⁶ The last-named seems at one time to have had a central menhir like some of the Cornish circles. There is no record of any sepulchral finds in any of them, and four out of the five are of the normal proportions of the British moot-circles. The *Inventory* expressly notes that the stones of the Fedw Circle stand only 'about 18 ins. in height.'

In southern Breconshire are four circles. That of Carreg Ddu (diam. 56 ft.) is very perfect. Another, a quarter of a mile only from the Roman station of Pigwn on the summit of Trecastle Mountain, is 75 ft. in diameter, and at the north-western foot of the Van Mountain are two others, 100 yards apart, with diameters of 56 ft. and 56 ft. by 75 ft. respectively.⁷ All are built of small stones and all are remarkably well preserved, and with that of Carreg Ddu is associated a stone avenue, a feature very unusual in

¹ Excluding the tiny 7-foot circle of 11 stones called Beddau Folau, in Llansantffraid Cwnteuddwr, presumably sepulchral.

² *Inventory, Radnorsbire*, no. 478.

³ *ibid.* no. 41 B.

⁴ *ibid.* no. 189.

⁵ *ibid.* no. 65. Bryngwyn, according to Rowland (*Mona Antiqua*), means 'Royal

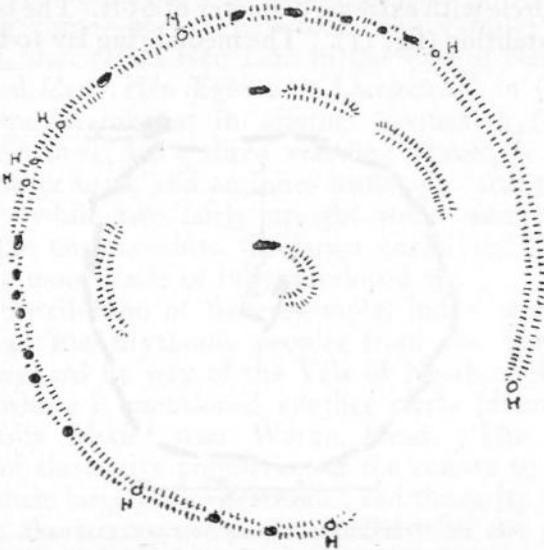
Court.' There is another parish of Bryngwyn in Monmouthshire, and several other places of the name in Wales.

⁶ *ibid.* no. 240.

⁷ Plans are given by Lt.-Col. W. Ll. Morgan in *Three Days with the Swansea Scientific Society*.

Wales though common enough on Dartmoor. In the centre of the circle on Trecastle Mountain is something described as 'a slightly raised platform,' 10 ft. in diameter and 4-6 inches high. A greatly ruined circle (diam. 27 ft.) some 90 ft. to the south-west is probably sepulchral.¹

This group lies on the upper waters of the Usk and probably represents a Belgic thrust up that river-valley



Scale 25 feet to 1 inch

FIG. II. MOOT CIRCLE OF CARN LLWYD.

(After the original survey made in 1893 by Lt.-Col. W. Ll. Morgan, F.S.A.)

H.H.H.=holes from which stones had been removed.

from the direction of Caerleon. There are signs that each locality was once thickly peopled, although the region is now one of the loneliest. Lt.-Col. W. Llewelyn Morgan thinks that the Trecastle circle, from its close proximity to

¹ So Lt.-Col. Morgan, *op. cit.*

the Roman *castra*, must be either contemporary therewith or later, arguing that any such monument, if older and already *déclassé*, would be destroyed for the sake of its component stones by those who built the *castra*. But even if it was older one may conceive that it might be spared because it was still used for its original purpose.

Further south, on Mynydd y Gwryd, was Carn Llwyd (or Carn Pryfod), described in 1842 as a triple concentric circle with extreme diameter of 65 ft. The outer ring was peristalithic (fig. 11). The medial ring lay 10 ft. within



FIG. 12. SEPULCHRAL CIRCLE OF CARN LLECHART.
(After the original survey of Lt.-Col. W. Ll. Morgan, in 1893.)

this, and at the centre was a circular something, 7 ft.—8 ft. in diameter, which was held to be a *cistvaen*. There is no proof that it was such, and *cistvaens* are not usually circular. It was much more probably the *bothros*, i.e. the altar, of a circle which, in everything but the recorded presence of the horizontal stone, was precisely like those of Aberdeenshire; and it is significant that the circle was locally known as *Yr Allor*, 'the Altar.' It is now unhappily quite destroyed. Two miles to the west is the circle of Carn Llechart (fig. 12). It is a simple circle (diam. 40 ft.) of contiguous stones set lengthwise on their edges about an unmistakable *cistvaen*, 8 ft. in length and rectangular in plan. It was certainly sepulchral, and its close contiguity to Carn Llwyd, which was as certainly a moot-circle, is a

valuable confirmation of the view that in Celtic Britain, as in Celtic Greece and in ancient Italy, the form of the moot-circle was determined by that of a grave.

In Glamorganshire stone circles are 'very rare indeed,'¹ but the Rev. John Griffith could in 1912 adduce a list of five² examples. Of these that called Hèn Dre'r Gelli in the Rhondda Valley, nearly complete, had a 'pointer'; while another at Tythegston, 2 miles west of Bridgend, shewed traces of an avenue like that of Carreg Ddu (p. 238). The remaining three—one at Lalestone, also 2 miles west of Bridgend, that called Hèn Llan in the Vale of Neath, and that called Cae'r Hèn Eglwys at Llangenydd in Gower—are of special interest in another connexion (ch. xx). The last-named had 'three standing stones, a roughly circular outer bank, and an inner bank-ring 'still traceable in 1912, 'while two fairly upright stones seem to have formed the entrance into the larger enclosure.'³ Clearly this was a moot-circle of fully developed type.

The distribution of these examples indicates a further advance of the Brythonic peoples from the Upper Usk south-westward by way of the Vale of Neath, and so into Gower, where is mentioned another circle (diam. 60 ft.) on Rhossily Moor⁴ near Worms Head. The physical features of the native population of the county to this day bespeak them largely non-Brythonic, and the rarity of moot-circles in the county is exactly parallel with the rarity of all peculiarly Brythonic forms of sepulchral barrows in the same region. Hereabouts even reveted barrows are very rare.⁵ The main current of the Brythonic advance ran on westward through Carmarthenshire into Pembrokeshire.

In Carmarthenshire, besides the little non-peristalithic circle of Pendine already described (ch. viii), four other circles are known.⁶ That of Garnfawr, in Newchurch, has a diameter of 150 ft. and is said to have been once surrounded by a ring-wall of small stone 6 ft. in width and 5 ft. high.⁷ That called Meini Gwyr or Buarth Arthur ('Arthur's Cow-garth') in Llandysilio East, close to the

¹ *Royal Commission Anct. Hist. Monts. Wales and Mon.: Minutes of Evidence*, vol. i (1912), no. 1898.

² *op. cit.* appendix ii, L.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *op. cit.* no. 1898.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Of the elaborate triple circle figured by Stukeley (*Itin. Curiosum*, ii, pl. 80), nothing now appears to remain. He shews it with a peristalith of 21 stones, 'the highest not 3 ft.,' set on a diameter of 'about 10 yards.'

⁷ *Inventory, Carmarthenshire*, no. 658.

borders of Cilymaenllwyd, has a diameter of 70 ft. and was once peristalithic.¹ A circle in Llandybie, called Y Naw Cerrig ('the Nine Stones') was 60 ft. in diameter.² The fourth example, which has never been fully described,³ is of extreme interest (fig. 13).

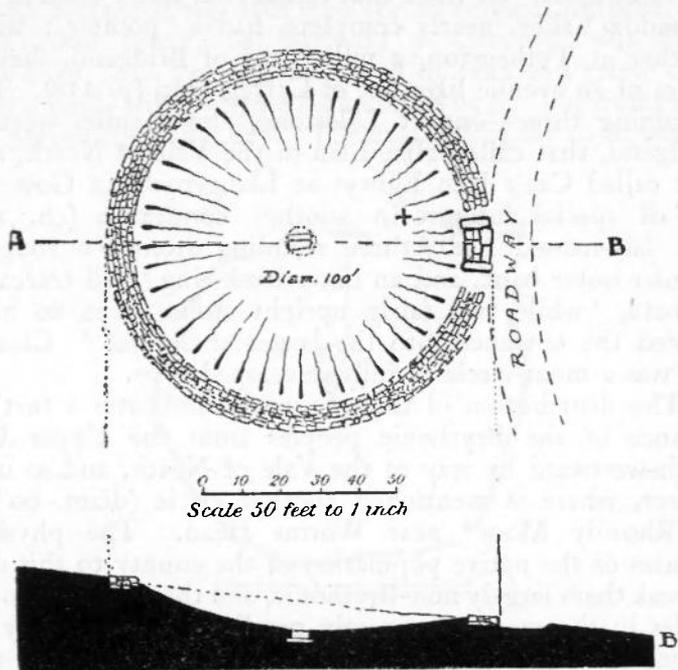


FIG. 13. CIRCLE ON PWLL MOUNTAIN, MARROS, CARMARTHEN.

(After a survey made by the late John Ward, F.S.A.)

The sign + shows the position of the consecration-deposit.

It lies in the parish of Marros, some 3 miles from Pendine, near the foot of the northern slope of the hill (600 ft.) known by the somewhat misleading name of Pwll Mountain. The area, which is markedly concave,⁴ is

¹ *op. cit.* no. 321. Stukeley shews it (*Itin. Curiosum*, ii, pl. 83) with a peristalith of 15 stones and an elaborate entrance-way.

² *op. cit.* no. 292. Destroyed quite recently, it had in the centre a mound, thought to have been thrown up half a century ago that it might be planted with trees.

³ This work, which is wholly nameless,

seems to have been first noticed by Mr. W. Clarke, of Wenvoe. It was explored by him in 1915, in collaboration with the late G. G. T. Treherne and John Ward, F.S.A.

⁴ John Ward inclined to think it was originally a swallet, of which there are many in the district. Writing of the circle at Tyrebaggar, Jas. Logan (*Archaeologia*, xxii,

surrounded by the remains of a broad stone terrace, dry-built, 9 ft. in width. This terrace, built up of two or three courses of the undressed boulders of the locality, with larger stones as a kerb, might easily be mistaken for the ruins of a wall.¹ There is no exterior fosse, and the area is markedly free from any litter of stone. Owing to the slope of the hill the south side of the circle is some few feet higher than the north, the lowest point. At first sight the work is precisely like scores of other circular works which commonly pass for 'pastoral' enclosures and are frequently written down as sheepfolds of no great antiquity. Clearly it was never intended as a military work. Excavation revealed the remains of a solid rectangular platform, slightly raised and about 10 ft. in length, interrupting the inner face of the terrace at the lowest (north) side, and projecting into the arena. Some 6 ft. in front of this, and 12 ft. west of a line drawn from the centre of the circle to this platform, were found the remains of an urn of the type assigned to the Late Bronze age²; and in the precise centre of the circle, resting upon two flat slabs of stone 3 ft. below the surface, a mass of black stuff, apparently the residuum of many fires. There seems to have been an approach to the circle from the lower side, with a narrow entrance at one or both sides of the platform.³ Nothing else was discovered, although much of the area was turned up by a series of trenches.

The only superficial difference between this work and such a circle as Tyrebaggar is that, whereas the latter once had a peristalith, the former seems to have had none. In position each is exactly like the other; each has the same sunken floor and each also has the dais, and that at the same (lowest) point of the circle. The broad annular

410, and plate) remarked that its area had been 'hollowed beneath the level of the surrounding soil.' This he believed to be a recent modification, designed to make the circle more suitable for a cattle-fold, for which it was used when he saw it. The case of this circle at Marros, and certain features of Romano-British *circi* already described, raise a doubt whether the sunk floor be not original.

¹ John Ward was emphatically of the opinion that it never was a wall.

² Now in the Cardiff Museum. It was about 2½ ft. below the surface. W.J. Andrew has found similar deposits, in positions precisely analogous, in more than one of the Derbyshire circles.

³ At this point the circle abuts upon a very ancient road which, coming up the valley from the direction of the circle on Pendine Head (ch. viii), is traceable past the farmstead of West Pwll northwards to Llandowror and the ancient (? Roman) ford of the river Taff at Dolgam, leading towards Carmarthen (Maridunum).

terrace of the Welsh circle has its parallel in the medial ring still traceable in some of the Scottish examples,¹ and the central deposit of ashes is common to both. At Pwll Mountain was found indeed a seemingly sepulchral urn. But this was not such, or so disposed, as to suggest that the whole elaborate work had been constructed merely to serve as barrow to this burial. The urn was accompanied by no grave furniture, it was not a remarkable specimen of its kind, and—most significant of all—it was not deposited in or near the centre of the circle, but eccentrically, at the lower side of the circle and near the dais. It was perhaps the consecration-token of the whole *locus consecratus*. In the corresponding position within the Scottish circle at Castle Frazer were found two deposits of black mould mixed with fragments of urns of coarse thick paste.²

There are no discoverable signs of permanent occupation of this circle. Some 600 yards higher up the hill, however, are two, possibly three, smaller circles of totally different character, simple enclosures of piled stone shewing nothing like the peculiar flat and purposed terrace of the larger circle; while one of them (diam. 70 ft.) contains the very visible remains of a number of circular huts. The smaller circles probably represent the homes of the community whose *gorseddfa* (place of meeting) was the large circle.

A definite sepulchral analogue to the proven non-sepulchral circle on Pwll Mountain is provided by the ring-work (diam. 65 ft.) on Banniside Moor in Coniston (Lancs.), where an annular terrace 9½ ft.—12 ft. in width, faced on the inner side with thin upright slabs, enclosed the urns and ashes of several interments.³ The chief external difference was that the Banniside circle, being sepulchral, had no entrance-way.

Still further west, among the Prescelly⁴ Mountains of Pembrokeshire, was a number of great circles, many of them destroyed only within the last few years. One (diam. 78 ft.) in Dyffryn Syfynwy shewed (1911) an inner ring

¹ Notably in Auchquorthies and Tom-nagorn. F. R. Coles remarks that in the Scottish circles this paving or kerb starts from, and is connected with, the sets which bound the small paved area in front of the horizontal stone.

² *Proc. Soc. Antiqs. Scot.* xxxv, 199.

³ W. G. Collingwood in *Cumb. and West. Trans.* 1910, p. 342.

⁴ A moot at 'Preseleu in Dyfed' is mentioned in *Mabinogion, Story of Pwyll Prince of Dyfed*.

(diam. 40 ft.), 'a sort of [annular] platform from 1½ to 2 ft. high . . . much obscured by vegetation.' Not far off, at Eithbed, parish of Maenclochog, were two others. One of them, an oval (mean diam. 150 ft.) stood 330 ft. distant from the second (diam. 120 ft.), and like that of Dyffryn Syfrynwy, surrounded a circular litter of stones 'which may have formed a central cromlech, or perhaps an inner ring.' When this was removed (1909) there was found 'a very definite circle of ashes of a red colour, 10 ins. thick,' which can scarcely have marked anything but the site of a *bothros*. Three, or possibly four, other circles at Maenllwyd, Clynsaithmaen, and Bedd Arthur (diam. 70 ft.), have wholly disappeared, but that called Gors Fawr, 2 miles east of Clynsaithmaen, still keeps intact its peristalith of 15 stones set on an exact circle of 60 ft. in diameter at regular intervals of 24°. Done Bushell, from whom¹ these details are borrowed, remarks upon the abounding evidences of human occupation in the vicinity of these circles, but being himself concerned only with their possible astronomical significance, he failed to make any further examination of their still existing remains.

The circle called the Stripple Stones, on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall, was explored (1905) by H. St. George Gray.² Of its pillars only four remain erect, but they are the tallest in Cornwall, and they represent a circle of 135 ft. diameter, set out upon a very gentle southward slope. The unique feature here is a perfunctory fosse which covers the three higher quadrants of the circle and at three points throws out small loops or 'demilunes.' The excavator satisfied himself that the fosse was merely a catchwater designed to keep the arena dry; the purpose of the demilunes he leaves undetermined. Possibly they marked the sites of three isolated stones belonging to an earlier circle, for there is evidence to shew that here, as at Stonehenge, there has been reconstruction. In the case of Stonehenge there were preserved of the earlier work only the three stones commonly regarded as 'pointers,' viz. two small blocks upon the outer edge of the circular arena, and that called the 'Friar's

¹ *Arch. Cambr.* ser. 6, xi (1911), pp. 220 sqq.

² *Archaeologia*, lxi (1908), p. 1. The name is possibly related to that of Stiper Stones,

the ridge of hills running through Shropshire from Church Stoke (sw.) to Church Pulverbatch (NE.), from ? *A.-S. stipere*, 'pillar.'

Heel' which stands in the entrance-way. These three stones being untooled, whereas all the rest of the stones employed have been dressed, one is justified in regarding them as portions of an older structure which were for some reason reverently conserved; and their disposition being suitable, it is not unlikely that they were actually the solstitial and equinoctial 'pointers' of the original circle. Similarly the three demilunes of the Stripple Stones may have marked the positions of the three 'pointers' of an earlier circle, and if their disposition is not so obviously agreeable to the surmise, the probable explanation is that, as there is otherwise reason to think, the reconstructed circle was not in this case concentric with that destroyed. But neither here nor at Stonehenge were such 'pointers' preserved for any purely utilitarian purpose, for they stood too near the new circles to be of practical use.

The circle at Boscawen-Ūn in St. Buryan—it is in reality an ellipse measuring 81 ft. 3 ins. by 72 ft. 6 ins.—is to this day the most perfect of its kind in Great Britain. When Dr. Borlase¹ made his drawing of it in 1754 only one stone had become displaced, and seventy years later only one other had fallen.² The stones, which are of no great size—they vary from 3 ft. 2 ins. to 4 ft. 7 ins. in height—are all of granite with one exception, a block of quartz which stands opposite to what would seem to have been the original entrance on the north-east side. Their number is 19. In the entrance-way are the two halves of another block which in Cotton's time (1826) lay outside the circle and at right angles to it. Within the arena is a menhir 9 ft. in height.³

The circle called the Dawns Mēn ('Stones of Dancing'), 2 miles away,⁴ is only second to that of Boscawen-Ūn in point of preservation. It is an almost exact circle (diam. 76 ft.) of 19 stones, with an entrance slightly to the north of the eastern point. The stones are of much the same average size as those of Boscawen-Ūn, but there is no 'foreign' stone among them. This circle was perfect as

¹ *Antiqs. of Cornwall.*

² W. Cotton, *Illustrations of Stone Circles, etc. in West Cornwall* (1826). The fallen stones are now replaced.

³ Shewn in Stukeley's drawing, *Iiin.*

Curiosum, ii, pl. 83, but not certainly original.

⁴ On Rosmoadress Farm, hamlet of Boleit, parish of St. Buryan.

late as 1801,¹ but lost two stones (both now replaced) within the next 25 years.² There are known to have been a large number of barrows in the vicinity.

To all appearance these two circles—Boscawen-Ūn and the Dawns Mèn—are the most recent of all those in Cornwall, and they belong to that part of the county in which the old Celtic kingdom of West Wales or Dyfnaint maintained itself longest. Nothing sepulchral has ever been found in them.³ There is nothing known of them which in any way conflicts with the theory that they were moots of the West Welsh, and that, if not actually constructed at so late a date, they were used as such down to the close of that people's existence as an independent kingdom.⁴ The ruins of the dwellings of the people who may have so used them are strewn broadcast about them.

As 19 happens to be the cardinal number of the Metonic cycle, much capital has been made of the fact that it is also the number of the pillar-stones at Boscawen-Ūn and the Dawns Mèn of a circle on Whitemoorstone Down on Dartmoor, at Torhousekie, etc.⁵; and it is paralleled with the assertions that 'the god (Apollo) comes into the island once in every 19 years,'⁶ and that 19 was the number of the priestesses of the fane of St. Bridget in Kildare (ch. xvii). These are coincidences only and have their parallels in other lands: Nieburh⁷ long ago remarked the constant occurrence of 'astronomical' numbers in the constitutions of Athens, Rome, and Carthage; and, were it worth while, as much might be made of the frequent recurrence of the numbers 8, 10, 12, and 60, in various circles. The number

¹ Britton and Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales*, ii. 496.

² H. St. George Gray remarks (*Archæologia*, lxi, p. 8) upon the rapidity with which the circle of the Stripple Stones has been mutilated 'within the last three decades.'

³ A small barrow has 'overflowed and invaded' a portion (se.) of the periphery of the great circle of Boskednan in Gulval (diam. 69 ft.). J. T. Blight (*Gents' Magazine*, 1868, pt. 1, pp. 308-19) says that urns had been taken from the barrow. W. C. Borlase (*Nenia Cornubiæ*, p. 281) reopened it and found a rifled cistvaen, much burnt wood, and some shards of an urn of very coarse fabric; but there was nothing to establish the age of the barrow. Cistvaens were used for Christian burials almost into

the last century, and urns have been found accompanying interments to all appearances Christian. Assuredly the barrow was later than the circle, and that is all one can say.

⁴ According to the *A.-S. Chronicle*, the kingdom ended in 926.

⁵ Stukeley figures (*Itin. Curiosum*, ii, pl. 83) a circle of 19 stones 'in the parish of Maddern (Madron), Cornwall.' According to R. N. Worth (*Cornwall Royal Inst. Journal*, xii, 78) the circle in Boleit (the Dawns Men) is the only Cornish example in which it is certain that the number of stones was originally 19 and no more.

⁶ So Diodorus Siculus, after Hecataeus. See below, ch. xiv.

⁷ *Hist. Rome* (1838), i, p. 291.

of the stones may have had a meaning in ritual or symbolism without its following that the circles were themselves used as observatories.

If there is no record of the erstwhile presence in any Cornish circle of the inner ring of smaller stones or of a central *bothros*, the fact merely means that no observer has hitherto looked for such things. Dr. Borlase seems to have seen a true *ἱερός κύκλος* at Tredinek, for he illustrates a circle of contiguous blocks of the required size, and opposite to the entrance something which at once recalls the horizontal stone of the Aberdeenshire circles.¹ Unluckily he gives neither scale nor other details, and the circle has now wholly disappeared.

Great circles are less numerous and less well-preserved in the north of Cornwall than in the south. Yet the northern portion of the county is far less thickly peopled than is the southern, so that one might have expected just the reverse. The facts accord with the theory that the people who built the circles were gradually retreating towards the Land's End, and there maintained themselves longest. Such were the West Welsh.

Roman influence in Cornwall was small,² yet there seems to be some evidence to suggest that the native Celtic villages were provided with circular moots analogous to the Roman *circus*. There was something of the kind³ at Trevorrian in St. Buryan, in the extreme south of the county. This, noticed⁴ for the first time in 1876, was described as 'a stone circle or roundago' of elliptical plan, with a single

¹ *Antiqs. of Cornwall* (1754), pl. xiii, fig. 1.

² The earthwork at Bossens ('House of the Saints') in St. Erth, not many miles from Penzance, is unquestionably Roman. In Subsidy Rolls it appears as Car-Sens (*Castra Sanctorum*), so C. H. Henderson tells me, and the name probably has reference to its occupation by some Scotie missionary, as St. Fursey occupied the site of Garianonum (Burgh Castle, Suffolk), and St. Ebb appropriated that of Ebchester. There is a summary of the Roman *vestigia* in Cornwall in *Antiquaries' Journal*, iii, 3 (July, 1923), p. 235.

³ The Cornish 'rounds' are considered below, ch. xxi.

⁴ *Proc. Soc. Antiqs. Lond.* 2nd ser. vi, 500. It was traceable still in 1914, but is now completely destroyed, and unhappily there

is no other record of its form [on the O.M. of 1860 it is marked as a circle]. Nevertheless its discoverer, Corporal Norgate, R.E. a trained member of the Ordnance Survey, must have known what he was talking about. The illustration which accompanies his description shews no scale, and one is left to infer the size of the work from the Ordnance Map. W. C. Borlase suggested that it belonged to a class usually associated with groups of British huts, and (like Warne and others with the Dorsetshire *circi*) looked upon them as 'defensible enclosures for agricultural and domestic purposes,' comparing a large ring-work at Castallack, which appears to have nothing in common with this and to be very much larger. In any event one fails to understand the presence and peculiar disposition of the peristalith in a 'defensible enclosure.'

entrance at the east end. As at Charterhouse (ch. ix) topographical conditions had made necessary an external fosse on one side only. The oddity was the presence of a continuous peristalith, the stones of which were set, not on the crest of the vallum but upon its inner slope, and seem to have had a slight eastward extension suggestive of an incipient avenue of approach to the entrance.¹ A short distance away to the north stood the menhir known as the Pridden Stone. It was this stone indeed led to the discovery of the earthwork, for, says Corporal Norgate, 'I took particular notice that the Kerris roundago, parish of Paul, . . . is about half a mile south of the Tresvennack Stone, and when I saw the Pridden Stone in the parish of Buryan, it struck me that there might be a roundago similarly situated in respect of it, half a mile to the south.' He went, looked, and found it. The village of Paul is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of that of Buryan.

The description of this work suggests that it was the outcome of an effort to transform an older stone circle into a *circus*: the interior was hollowed out, the *deblai* thrown up as a vallum along the line of the peristalith, which in consequence was almost buried. But the compromise was half-hearted, for the single Celtic entrance was retained, although it would have been easy to substitute the usual two entrances of the true *circus*, and the old approach by an avenue was not entirely removed. But there can be little doubt that it served the same purpose after remodelling as before; and there being no doubt that the *circus* was a moot, the inference is that the stone circle was likewise a moot.

Other cases of such possible compromise have been noticed at Gvffylliog in Denbighshire, in Derbyshire, and even in Aberdeenshire itself.

Some adaptation of the older to the newer fashion is what was to be expected. Sentiment, or the lack of means, might well prevent here and there a community from wholly making away with its older moot and building one entirely new. Yet some alterations must be made if the community would keep abreast with the times. Modern life has its parallels in plenty. Some of our English boroughs

¹ cf. the prolongation of the surrounding earthwork of Stonehenge, and the constant occurrence of stone avenues in connexion with the cromlechs of Dartmoor.

are still content with the town-halls which sufficed in the seventeenth century; some have built wholly new ones and entirely demolished the old; and yet others have contrived to preserve the old side by side with the new. So with our churches. It is not often that a parish, especially an old parish, will go so far as to pull down *in toto* the church in which its forbears worshipped, whereas there are few will not alter the old fabric to any extent short of this.¹

Doubtless in some instances there was a complete break with the old order, and the community would even pride itself on possessing a brand-new moot of the very latest type, whatever that might be. In such cases there could be little chance of the survival to the present time of any trace of the older moot. One such case, however, would prove that the thing happened, and the case is perhaps provided at Llanidan in Anglesey (p. 181). Here on the one hand was one of the most complete examples of the newer *circus*—it is almost identical in area with the *Amphitheatrum Castrense* in Rome, and was almost the last of such works in Britain to preserve part of its stone seating—and on the other hand, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away is said to have stood a great stone circle.² A parallel case at Charterhouse-on-Mendip has been mentioned above (p. 179).

In this light there ceases to be anything mysterious in cases like those of the Hurlers, the Greywethers, Botallack, and Erlanic in Gavr'inis, Morbihan, where are or were several great circles either immediately contiguous or actually intersecting. These represent so many re-constructions. We know so little of the feelings of that age that we cannot guess under what circumstances, or with what reservations, a community would remodel its place

¹ cf. what occurred when the old moot-hall of Corfe was reconstructed (ch. xxvi).

² *Arch. Journal*, xxxi (1874); *Earthwork of England*, pp. 593-4. The probable significance of the close neighbourhood of these two monuments was suggested by Owen Stanley in *Arch. Journal* (*loc. cit.*). At the present time there is nothing either here or elsewhere in Anglesey that is recognisable as a stone circle (E. Neil Baynes, *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, 1910-11), but this may be sufficiently accounted for by modern vandalism fol-

lowing upon the possible ordered destruction of all such *loca consecrata* of Celtism. E. Nicholson (*Cambrian Travellers' Guide*, p. 161) explicitly says that it was (1840) a circle of upright stones with a diam. of 52 yds. cf. Pennant, *Tour in Wales* (1770), ii, 229-30, who speaks of 'a great copped heap of stones' near by, and 'the reliques of a circle of stones, with the cromlech in the midst.' In *Cumb. and Westm. Trans.* xi (1891), p. 200, C. W. Dymond (citing Camden's *Britannia*, ii, 199) speaks of 'the circle of stones, 8 or 9 in number,' which was called Bryngwyn.

of meeting,¹ but obviously this would have to be done if the community had outgrown the capacity of an earlier moot, or if the earlier moot had been damaged or desecrated by hostile act or by the inevitable accidents of time. Nothing would be more likely than that it would be reconstructed; nothing would be more unlikely than that it would be removed to a wholly different site. If it were a

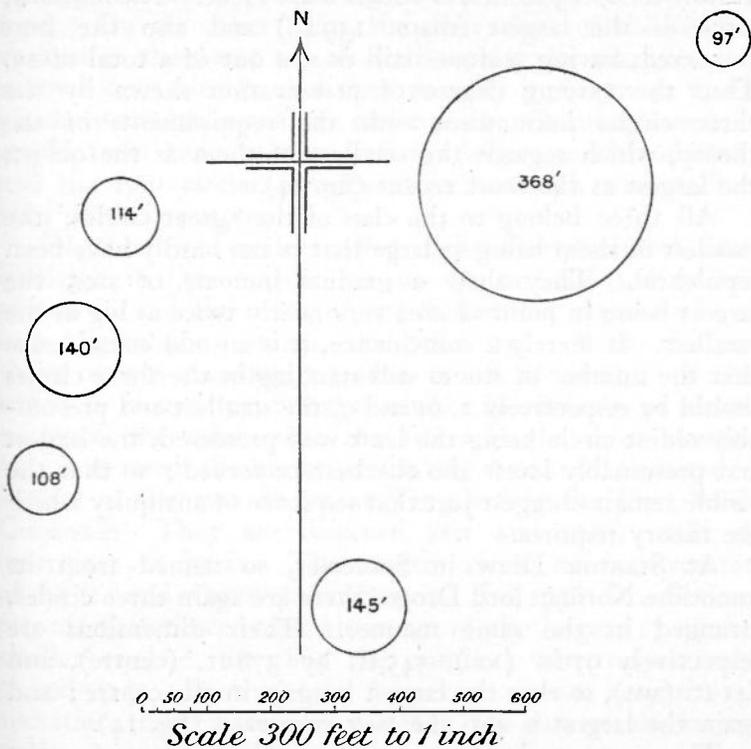


FIG. 14. THE HURLERS IN ST. CLEER, CORNWALL (LEFT), AND THE CIRCLES OF STANTON DREW, SOMERSET (RIGHT), COMPARED.

question of enlargement only, there was no alternative but to make an entirely new moot, supposing the moot were a circle and it were intended to keep it a circle. To enlarge a circle is a geometrical impossibility.

¹ There is evidence that in Iceland the shedding of blood within the moot-circle might entail its disuse. There is some

reason for the belief that the same rule prevailed amongst the British Celts.

'The Hurlers' are three associated circles in the parish of St. Cleer, North Cornwall. The three lie roughly in line north and south, the most southerly having a minor diameter—for all are slightly elliptical—of 108 ft.¹ This is the smallest of the three: its constituents were 10 stones, of which only two remain standing. The most northerly circle is next in size, having a minor diameter of 115¹ ft. It now shews 13 stones, of which 6 are erect. The midmost circle is the largest (diam. 139 ft.) and also the best preserved, having 9 stones still *in situ* out of a total of 13. Thus the varying degree of preservation shewn by the three circles harmonises with the requirements of the theory, which regards the smallest of them as the oldest, the largest as the most recent (fig. 14).

All three belong to the class of the 'great circles,' the smallest of them being so large that it can hardly have been sepulchral. They shew a gradual increase of size, the largest being in point of area very nearly twice as big as the smallest. If merely a coincidence, it is an odd coincidence that the number of stones still standing in the three circles should be respectively 2, 6, and 9, the smallest and presumably oldest circle being the least well preserved, the largest and presumably latest also the best preserved; so that the visible remains suggest just that sequence of antiquity which the theory requires.

At Stanton Drew in Somerset, so named from its sometime Norman lord Drogo, there are again three circles, arranged in the same manner. Their dimensions are respectively 97 ft. (NE.), 345 ft. by 378 ft. (centre), and 145 ft. (sw.), so that the largest is again in the centre; and again the largest is also the best preserved (fig. 14).

The same explanation may possibly account for the group of three circles in Llanbrynmair (p. 235), though these are not so closely clustered. The recurrence of the number 3 in such cases is accidental, for Dr. Borlase figures² a group of four intersecting circles at Botallack in

¹ There is a plan by C. W. Dymond in *Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.* 1879, but his measurements (108 ft. 114 ft. 140 ft.) are slightly different. According to Lukis (writing in 1885) there probably remained in each circle, erect or fallen, half the original number of stones. The numbers,

therefore, were originally 20, 26, and 26, and the percentage of these still standing is respectively 10, 23, and 34.

² *Antiquities of Cornwall*, plate xvi; Fergusson, *Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 161. The group appears to have been totally destroyed very soon after Borlase made his

St. Just in Penwith. Their diameters he gives as 50, 55, 62 and 75 feet respectively, and it has been suggested that they were sepulchral. It is highly improbable that the *sepulchral* circle of one generation would be deliberately desecrated to make room for another, the more so as those who may be assumed to have done it were no race with alien ideas, but obviously expressed their religious feelings (*ex hypothesi* in respect to sepulture) in precisely the same form. On the other hand, the dimensions of the circles, various as they are, are all well within the mean of the normal moot-circle; and they possibly represent so many phases in the history of one community. Growing numbers would from time to time call for larger accommodation, and the four circles correspond well enough with such a view of their purpose.¹

Of the two circles called the 'Greywethers,' near Gidleigh in Devon (plate II, no. 3), one has a diameter of 100 ft. and the other of 105 ft. but one seems to have had originally 25 stones, the other 15. Of the former there remain standing 7 stones, or 28 per cent.; of the latter 9 stones, or 60 per cent. In default of other evidence one infers that the latter is the more recent, as it is so much the better preserved. Yet another instance is that of the two circles at Tregaseal in St. Just, West Cornwall. They are disposed east and west, with an interspace of 75 ft. The eastern circle has a diameter of 65 ft. and the western 72½ ft. In 1738 Dr. Borlase records that there stood 10 stones of the larger, 17 of the smaller circle.² In 1885 the numbers were respectively 5 and 9.³ In this case, however, recent agricultural operations have materially hastened the ruin of the larger circle.

The summer of 1924 was exceptionally rainy. Visiting the Greywethers in June of that year, Dr. Eliot Curwen found the area of the northern circle to be extremely wet, whereas that of the southern circle, though only

plan (see W. C. Borlase, *Nenia Cornubiae*, p. 123), and it has been roundly said that he was mistaken, and took a litter of natural boulders for the ruins of circles. There is no warrant for any such charge.

¹ Taking 100 as the area of the smallest circle, the others will be represented

severally by 125, 150, and 266 (approximately).

² *Antiquities of Cornwall*.

³ Lukis, *Prehistoric Monuments of Cornwall*. He estimated the original number to have been 25 in the larger, 28 in the smaller circle.

21 ft. away, was quite dry. In this case, then, the presence of two circles may be explained by nothing more abstruse than the question of drainage—a question which was shewn above (ch. ix) to be of prime importance. Those who built the northern circle selected a site which was presently found to be unsuitable, and to redeem the error was presently erected the second circle as near to the first as the circumstances allowed. In both these circles occur stones of which the heads have obviously been squared,¹ a fact which militates against any very great antiquity; and the further fact that this dressing is more noticeable in the southern than in the northern circle accords with the view that the southern is the later of the two. Finally, the fact that the number of the constituent stones is not in each case the same, confirms the previous conclusion that their number was of no particular significance.²

Dr. Borlase wished to draw a distinction between the great circles of free-standing stones and those in which the stones, commonly of very much smaller size, are to all intents contiguous. The former he regarded as places for some sort of ceremonial, the latter he believed to be sepulchral. In Cornwall there are contiguous circles at Fernacre (146 ft.) and on Stannon Down (138 ft.), both in the parish of Breward in the eastern portion of the county. St. George Gray places in the same category the Cumberland circles of Salkeld, Keswick, Sunkenkirk, and Eskdale, as also that lately observed at Withypool (119½ ft.) on Exmoor.³ E. F. Tregelles notes the presence, in the close vicinity of the Cornish examples, of great numbers of anhistoric huts and other evidences of settlements, asking suggestively ‘Did the people who lived in these huts put up and use the circles?’⁴ St. George Gray notices the like fact in regard to all the circles of East Cornwall, whether free-standing or contiguous, and writes ‘it seems highly probable that these (huts) were the dwellings of the people who constructed the neighbouring stone circles’⁵; and,

¹ Rowe, *Perambulation of Dartmoor*, p. 30.

² The fallen stones of both circles have been re-erected by command of H.M. the King.

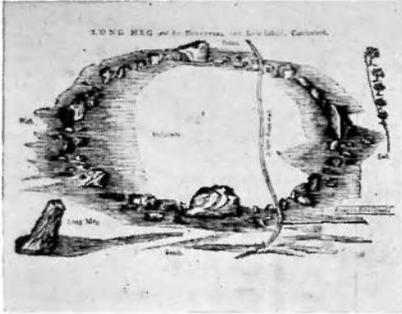
³ *Archaeologia*, lxi, 40; *Proc. Somerset*

Arcb. and N. H. Soc. lii (1907), pt. ii, p. 42.

⁴ ‘No stone exceeds 2 ft. in height, and the average height is 1·03 ft.’

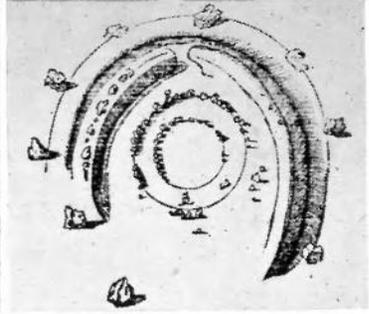
⁵ *V. C. H. Cornwall*, i.

⁵ *Archaeologia*, lxi, p. 3.



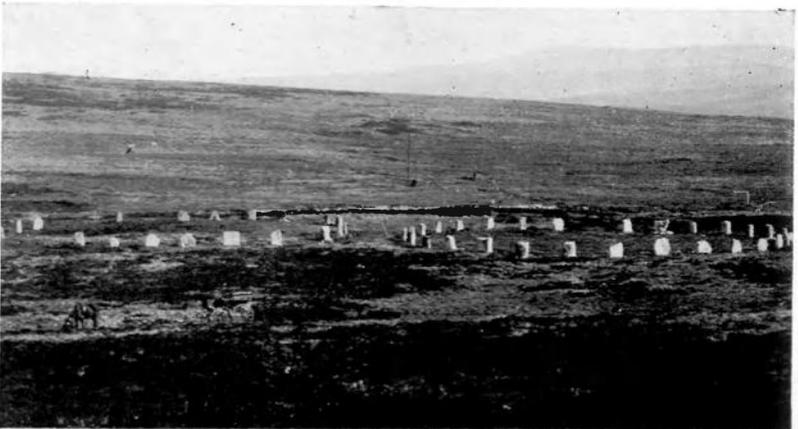
NO. 1. LITTLE SALKELD CIRCLE,
CUMBERLAND, IN 1752.

From *Genis. Mag.* 1752, p. 310.



NO. 2. TRIPLE CIRCLE AT
BALLYNAHATNA, DUNDALK.

From Wright's *Lowthiana*, 1746.



[Chapman, Dawlish, phot.]

NO. 3. THE GREYWETHERS, NEAR SITTAFFORD TOR, DEVON.

admitting the proof to be as yet lacking, he thinks it probable that the huts and the circles are contemporaneous.¹ That the circles were sepulchral he does not believe: 'In England no *ancient* burials are recorded to have been discovered in stone circles, with, perhaps, the exception of the little Duloe circle.'²

There is no evidence whatever that the contiguous and the free-standing circles were different either in age or in purpose. Communities, then as now, must build according to their means and according to the materials available; a circle such as that of Fernacre probably represents much less cost and labour than does a free-standing circle even of smaller diameter. The peristalith being in any case a mere ornament, as Homer testifies, it was open to the builders to exercise their own discretion in the fashion of it, as they seem to have done also in the number of stones employed.

At the same time it is more than possible that the contiguous circles are in many cases the result of later efforts to adapt free-standing peristaliths to some utilitarian purpose: smaller stones which had formed the circle of seats, the central *bothros*, or possibly the pavement, would naturally be cleared away from the area and as naturally utilised to build a continuous wall between the pillars of the peristalith. This certainly happened at Garrol Wood in Aberdeenshire. According to Jewitt's woodcut it happened also with the Meini Hirion by Penmaenmawr (p. 234). It may have occurred also at Grassington (p. 227), and the cut of the Salkeld circle (1752) here reproduced (plate II, no. I) strongly suggests a similar happening: it will be noticed that the four stones answering to the cardinal points are greatly larger

¹ *ibid.* p. 40. The huts appear to be much of an age with those of Dartmoor, and according to one view (*Journal Antibropol. Inst.* xxv, 4) they are very early, according to another (W. C. Borlase in *Nenia Cornubiae*) they are relatively late. In the lack of evidence one may remark that, topographical conditions being fairly permanent, there is no reason to suppose that the standard of life in Cornwall was not always, as now, far behind that of the south-eastern counties; and therefore rudeness of culture in that county need not of

necessity imply immense antiquity. These huts may very well be the leavings of the Celts of the last days of Cornish independence. The Celts made themselves at home in Cornwall, not because they liked it, but because they had to do so; and all said, the kingdom of Geraint was a kingdom of refugees.

² *ibid.* p. 24. Duloe circle (30 ft.) was unquestionably sepulchral, and no relation to the great circles. W. C. Borlase mentions other Cornish examples in *Nenia Cornubiae*.

than the rest,¹ and that further the four stones intermediate between these are larger than the residue ; as if the peristalith had originally consisted of these eight stones only. When it is further remembered that the stones of free-standing peristaliths are frequently of insignificant height, it will be realised that such peristaliths might very easily be converted into 'contiguous' circles by the activities of any one wishful to make them into gardens or cattle-folds.

R. Burnard, F.S.A. partially explored the Fernworthy circle (60 ft. diam.) on Dartmoor, two miles east of Gidleigh. He found the floor of it to be as deliberately formed as that of a pit-dwelling, but wherever the surface was opened the mould, right down to the subsoil, was full of fragments of wood-charcoal. The circle being closely associated with a large group of sepulchral remains, he formed the opinion that his discovery of so much charcoal was 'interesting and important,' as possibly solving the riddle of all the 'so-called sacred circles,' for 'it is very probable that we can now see in this the crematorium or the site of the funeral feasts, or both.'² He found no trace of any interment within it, but wood-ash, it is said, was found in most, if not in all, of the great circles of Dartmoor which have been investigated.

With the exception of *busta* of the Roman period there is not known anything to suggest that crematories were ever used in Britain, still less that they were constructed in a form so elaborate and so large as the Fernworthy circle. On the other hand, the evidence has led us to expect a considerable deposit of ashes at or near the centre of such a circle. That the circle was sepulchral, or in the remotest way connected with matters sepulchral, there is no jot of evidence to shew.³ The entrance to this circle remains

¹ This is not merely a bit of imagination on the part of the artist, for the fact is explicitly noticed in the text accompanying the cut.

² In *V.C.H. Devonshire*, vol. 1, 359-60 (1906). Some two miles west of this is another circle (Scorhill circle, or the 'Long Stones') with a diam. of 85 ft., and under Sittaford Tor, about a mile sw. of Fernworthy Circle, are the two circles called the 'Greywethers.' Other great circles on the Moor are those of Throwleigh (two, with

diam. of 90 ft. and 60 ft. respectively), Ringmore (75 ft.) and Raybarrow (60 ft.). See *Cornwall Royal Inst. Journal*, xii (1896).

³ It was the common Gallic custom to build up the captured spoils of war into heaps within *loca consecrata* and there leave them (Caesar, *B.G.* vi, 17) or burn them (Florus, II, iv, 4). The Romans followed precisely the same practice (Florus, iv, xii, 9, *arma victorum ex more belli cremata* : cf. Livy, viii, 30, 9 ; xxxviii, 23, 11 ; xli, 12, 4. So Appian).

intact, and the stones which flank it, as in the circles of the Aberdeenshire type, are markedly larger than the rest.

If no structural *bothros* has been found in the circles of the south-western counties thus far explored, the fact is not surprising, for these circles probably belong to the last days of Celtic independence in these areas. Convincing evidence that they are of any remoter antiquity there is none at all, while on the other hand the extraordinary preservation of many of them, the striking exactitude of their lay-out, and the presence in some cases of stones which have unquestionably been tool-dressed, all suggest a date relatively late. It is not at all unlikely that some of them were erected after the Edict of Milan, and one consequence of that Edict would be the speedy disappearance of the *bothros*, just as in Iceland it disappeared so soon as the Northmen became Christian, while there might still continue some kind of formal fire-ritual to account for the features observed at Fernworthy and elsewhere. The evidence shews that even in pre-Christian times there was a tendency to minimise the *bothros*: prominent in Achean Greece, it is hardly traceable in Greek moots of the post-Homeric times; in the Circus Maximus of Rome it is reduced to a survival to be remembered only thrice in the year, while in the multitude of local *circi* the primitive ritual may well have been replaced by a merely formal fire kindled upon a makeshift altar of sods (*caespite vivo*)¹; and in Aberdeenshire, though now and again it takes such elaborate shape as is seen at Old Rayne and Garrol Wood, in other cases it appears to have been nothing but a makeshift hole, without recognisable structural features of any kind.

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth,² when Aurelius Ambrosius had resolved to rear in memory of the British nobles massacred by Hengist's Saxons a suitable memorial, he was bidden consult the prophet Merlin. The latter bade the king 'send for the Giants' Dance, which is in the mountain of Killaraus in Ireland'; and this he did,

¹Is it possible that the much-debated *prunae batillum* of the 'crazy town-clerk' of Fundi (Horace, *Sat.* I, v, 36) was the symbol of such a formality? Some of the commentators on the passage seem to have guessed as much. If so, the *batillum*

answered to the *thuribulum* of prosaic phraseology.

²*Hist.* viii, 9-2. Giraldus Cambrensis (*Topog. Hiberniae*, ii, 18) tells precisely the same story.

removing and setting up the stones of it at Stonehenge by aid of Merlin's arts. The story proves, as Sir John Rhys remarked, 'that formerly a circle of stones like that of Stonehenge,¹ or like a portion of it, was well known to exist in Ireland; and its site can hardly have been other than the Hill of Usnach (Usny), which plays a great rôle in Irish legend. It stood in the parish of Killare, barony of Rathconrath, in county Westmeath.' Giraldus Cambrensis mentions as standing at the same spot the great stone *qui umbilicus Hiberniae dicitur, quasi in medio et medietullio terrae positus*.² 'The stone is described as a very large one, and it was believed to have been cursed by St. Patrick on account of the pagan worship there.'³

Obviously non-sepulchral was the stone circle of Mag Slecht, the 'Plain of Adoration,' at Ballymagauran, barony of Tullyhaw, co. Cavan. Here, one is told, was for central feature a monstrous 'idol' covered with gold and silver, known as Cenn Cruaich or Cromm Cruaich, 'the chief idol of Ireland.' Around it were ranged twelve lesser 'idols' decorated with bronze. Here the Irish were accustomed to immolate their children, as well as lesser victims, to secure plentiful harvests of corn, honey, and milk, until St. Patrick again interfered, disfiguring Cenn Cruaich with his crozier and causing all the lesser idols to sink into the ground, so that only the tops of their heads remained visible.⁴ 'Idols' means, as in the Psalms and Bede, merely false gods, and the story is a transparent effort on the part of some monkish chronicler to account for the presence at the spot of a circle of stones which a long-Christianised populace still continued to regard with veneration. It is clear that this circle was not formed of very tall stones.

The finest remains of a great circle at present to be seen in Ireland are said to be those at Wattle Bridge, near Newtownbutler, in the extreme south of co. Fermanagh. 'It actually claims state with that of the famous Avebury in

¹ See the very explicit remarks of Giraldus Cambrensis, *loc. cit.*

² *Topog. Hiberniae*, iii, 4. It marked the point where the several provinces met, i.e. its position with reference to Ireland as a whole was analogous to that of the

other great meeting-places of the Celtic peoples (ch. xii).

³ *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (1888), pp. 188 sqq.; Girald. *Topog. Hiberniae*, Dist. iii, 4.

⁴ Rhys, *op. cit.* p. 202; *Life of S. Patrick, Books of Ballymote, of Leinster, and of Lecan.*

England,' wrote W. F. Wakeman in 1881, 'some of the stones being over 16 ft. in length.'¹ Its diameter was, however, but 126 ft. and it shews no trace of outer works.² In co. Down, near Downpatrick, are others. That of Leggamaddy, near Ballynoe Station, is double: the inner ring (22 stones) is peculiarly oval (90 ft. by 40 ft.), while the outer (45 stones) is 100 ft. in diameter, and the two rings are not concentric. At Ballynahatna, near Dundalk in co. Lowth, are the remains of an elaborate triple circle (plate II, no. 2). a medial circle of small stones surrounded an inner ring of half the diameter; the whole was completed by a peristalith of 10 great stones, and in the medial ring was something which might represent the remains of a $\theta\omega\kappa\omicron\varsigma$. At some recent period has been built a wall between the medial ring and the peristalith, apparently no part of the original plan.³ The circle called Beltany at Raphoe in Donegal has been mentioned above (ch. viii). On the battlefield of South Moytura at Cong are the remains of a number of circles, mostly perhaps sepulchral, but if Stukeley's drawing of 'four circles near Ballinrope, co. Mayow,'⁴ refers to these and is good evidence, one of the number (diam. 30 paces) contained an inner ring of smaller stones, and something remarkably like the recumbent stone of the Aberdeenshire type. But speaking generally, Ireland is singularly poor in 'great circles,' while on the other hand it abounds in sepulchral cromlechs.⁵ The latter are scattered over the whole island, whereas the few 'great circles' are almost confined to those regions which are known to have been Brythonised, and that at a very recent date. The facts, therefore, support the view that the smaller sepulchral⁶ circles are derived from the

¹ *Journal Roy. Soc. Antiqs. Ireland*, 1881, p. 538.

² Wakeman, *Handbook of Irish Antiquities* (3rd ed. 1893), p. 125. At that date the largest remaining stone measured slightly over 10 ft. The circle is popularly known as the 'Druid's Temple.'

³ It is not clear that it ever surrounded the whole, it is not concentric with the three original members of the circle, and in the drawing (made not later than 1746) it is shewn as having an almost perpendicular face, which suggests that it was of very recent construction. Old Dundalk was the traditional stronghold of the Brythonic hero Cuchulain.

⁴ *Itin. Curiosum*, ii, plate 84.

⁵ As, for example, at Lough Gur near Kilmallock, co. Limerick. The measurements of five circles in co. Cork (*Journal Roy. Soc. Antiqs. Ireland*, xlv) are as follows:—

Loughatooma ..	33 ft. × 28 ft.
Annaganihy 19 ft.
Rylane 12 ft. × 10 ft.
Keel Cross 9 ft.
Oughtihery 8½ ft.

⁶ Some of the smaller circles seem to have had a votive or commemorative purpose only, without reference to any interment. Thus W. C. Borlase (*Dolmens of Ireland*, p. 906), speaking of the cairn called *Leacht*

Goidelic tradition, whereas the free-standing larger circles are Brythonic and not sepulchral.

The characteristic sepulchral monument of the Irish Brythons appears to have been the ring-barrow, a mere circle of piled earth or stone with the customary fosse, merging by imperceptible stages into the outward semblance of the ubiquitous *rath* and *lis*. One of them is the famous royal cemetery of Cruachan, now Rathcrogan, co. Roscommon, 5 miles west of Carrick-on-Shannon. When Petrie described it, it was already greatly ruined, but had once been a regular circular enclosure 300 ft. in diameter, ringed with a vallum of dry stone. The area was covered with a number of small circular mounds each marking a grave. The bodies had been laid unburnt in rudely-built cists of unmortared stone.¹ Ireland has numberless other striking forms of grave-monuments, but the simple ring-work, usually without peristalith, seems to have been the standard type all over the Brythonised portion of the island when Christianity at last made its appearance.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DATE OF THE STONE CIRCLES.

Absence of Finds no Proof of Date—Submerged Circles—Peat no Proof of Age—Slight Emplacement of the Stones—The Astronomical Theory—Limitations of Applied Astronomy—‘Pointers’: their Real Purpose—Rollright Circle—Stonehenge a proof that Astronomical ‘Pointers’ were out of Date—Clocks in Town Halls and Churches—

Fhinn, ‘Finn’s Grave,’ on Mt. Nephin, co. Mayo: ‘In various places on the mountain, as one approaches the cairn, (are) little circles very contiguous to one another, not exceeding 3 ft. in diameter, and formed with very small stones set in the surface of the ground. The centres are filled with small stones in little heaps, and these are very numerous near the cairn.’ He gives other examples, some apparently of quite recent formation, illustrating the stubborn survival of the sacred figure of the circle.

¹ According to MacFirbis the place was known as Reilig-na-Righ, the ‘Graveyard of the Kings’ (Petrie, *Round Towers*, p. 107). It was ‘the burial place of the kings of the race of Heremon until the time of Crimthann, who was the first to be buried at Brugh’ on the Boyne, 5 miles west of Drogheda. ‘Eochaid Feidlech, of the race of Heremon, built it to be the burial-place of his daughter Medb, queen of Connaught’ (Fergusson, *Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 190).

Clocks v. Applied Astronomy—Churches as Almanacks—No Folk-lore of Circles—Attitude of the Saxons to the Circles—Evidence of their Names: Bride Stones—The ‘Triads’—Dyfnwal Moelmud—Distribution of the Circles—Circles used as Moots up to Seventeenth Century—The Northmen not responsible for all of them—The Cimbri as Circle-Builders.

What is the age of the great stone circles? With very few exceptions archaeologists maintain them to be at latest as early as the Bronze age. If they be really so old it is odd that they should be so largely confined to the Brythonic areas, for the Brythons are commonly held to have introduced iron into the British Isles about 450 B.C. Such a view seems to be based mainly upon the fact that the peristaliths are built of unhewn stones, and upon the negative evidence of the absence of any well-attested finds of iron within the circles. It has been shewn from Homer (ch. v), and from the construction of some of the Aberdeenshire circles,¹ that the former argument is untenable, and negative evidence, always of dubious value, is in this case more than usually so; for in the first place the great circles have yielded few traces of bronze also, or indeed of any relics whatever, and in the second place it is probable that metal of any sort was *tabu* within the circles. In Greece, in Rome, and in the Celtic lands it was forbidden to bring arms into the moot, and exactly the same feeling forbade the Northumbrian priest (and *a fortiori* any one else) to bring arms into his ‘church.’ The *Laws of Howel Dda* contain the same proviso, as also do the Icelandic laws, and it may be paralleled from other sources.

At Erlanic in Gavr’inis, an islet of the Morbihan in Brittany, the remains of two circles, juxtaposed in the form of the figure 8, are now partially submerged by the sea. This is no proof of any staggering antiquity. The first Christian church of Selsey has been entirely submerged for many centuries, albeit only founded at the very earliest in 681. Off Cromarty, at the other end of Britain, is a sand bank still called the ‘Old Kirk,’² where once stood the

¹ As for example Old Rayne and Garrol Wood (ch. viii). So also with the Greywethers (ch. x).

² Similarly ‘Church Rock,’ now a mile off the coast of Hayling Island, preserves the memory of the original parish church of

church of the place, which cannot under any circumstances have been founded much more than a century earlier than was Selsey. An undated stone tablet in the wall of the churchyard of Abergele, Denbighshire, recorded the burial of a man who lived three miles to the north; but at the present day the sea comes within half-a-mile of the town on that side.¹ There is evidence in abundance for very great alterations of the sea-level on all the western and southern coasts of Europe within the most recent times.

The famous Stones of Callernish in the island of Lewes were overlaid by peat to the depth of 6 ft. and W. G. Wood-Martin gives² instances of Irish cromlechs in Sligo, Tyrone, and Fermanagh, which were similarly concealed beneath as much as 7 ft. of peat. Such facts do not imply any immense antiquity, for peat had formed to a depth of 'several feet' over the surface of the well-known Roman road on Blackstone Edge near Rochdale.³ Peat again covered the floor of the Fernworthy circle (ch. x), but to a depth of 1 ft. 6 ins. only; whence it might be argued that this circle was considerably less old than the Roman road. But the question at what rate peat is formed has not yet been answered: it depends upon a variety of local conditions—temperature, elevation, saturation, etc.—which must of necessity vary infinitely.⁴ In itself it cannot be taken as any proof of great antiquity, even when found to the depth of 'several feet.'

No sufficient weight has been given to the fact that, with few exceptions, the pillars of the great circles are not planted to any great depth in the soil, so that purely natural forces, unless measures were taken to prevent it,

South Hayling, submerged in 1066; and the sandbank known as 'the Park' is said to recall the demesnes of the original episcopal residence of Old Selsey. In Sirodot, *Etudes critiques d'Archeologie pre-historique*, is cited a MS. now at Avranches, which declares that Mont Saint-Michel, long since an island, was once surrounded by forests to a distance of 6 miles; while a thirteenth-century map of the Cotentin shows the Mount still a long way inland and the island of Jersey united with the Continent. See Quenault, *Recherches archeol. sur le Cotentin* (Coutances, 1863).

¹ I.ewis, *Topog. Dict.* (1842).

² *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (Dublin, 1888), pp. 216-8.

³ Codrington, *Roman Roads in Britain*, p. 105.

⁴ Wood-Martin, *op. cit.* p. 219, cites a writer in *Proc. Royal Irish Acad.* 1870-9, as remarking that this question is one 'about which nothing definite is known.' Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 726, has some remarks on the matter, and gives references to various opinions. One estimate accepts a growth of 8 ft. in 1,500 years, or 6'4 in. in a century; another reduces it to three centimetres in a century, or less than 18 in. in 1,500 years. See also *Antiquity of Man not Proven* (London, 1882), pp. 121-135.

would certainly overthrow them within a comparatively short time. The pillars of the Stripples Stones are the loftiest in Cornwall, yet they were set only about 30 ins. into the ground, and H. St. George Gray remarks that 'it is surprising that even four stones remain standing, considering the nature of the surface deposits and the subsoil.'¹ Of the pillars of the Garrol Wood circle (ch. viii) not one was set more than 16 ins. in the subsoil, yet amongst them are stones rising 5 ft. 10 ins. and 6 ft. 10 ins. above the surface.² Bishop Browne remarks of the circle of Balquhain, Chapel of Garioch, Aberdeenshire, that 'the stones are not in general very deeply planted in the ground.'³ One of the stones of the circle of Stenness, 18 ft. 6 ins. in length and 5 ft. in width, had been bedded but 2 ft. in the ground.⁴ The tallest pillar standing in 1850 in the circle of Brogar was 13 ft. 9 ins. high, and Wilson judged it to be set but 18 ins. in the soil.⁵ Of the two pillars of the great trilithon of Stonehenge, both rising 21 ft. above the surface, the one was bedded to a depth of 4 ft. only, while its taller companion was sunk to the quite exceptional depth of 8 ft. 3 ins. simply to bring its summit to the same level with the other⁶; and the facts shew that, given a stone of the total length of 25 feet, the builders deemed 4 ft. sufficient depth to hold it secure, and this in the most ambitious building ever reared by anhistoric hands in Britain.⁷ That so many circles notwithstanding still remain recognisably complete is in itself enough to suggest that either they are not of any immense antiquity, or the solicitude which kept them in being did not cease until a very recent epoch. The stability of a megalith naturally depends largely upon its breadth and general shape, but it is a fact that many of those making up the circles, and notably those of Stenness,

¹ *Archaeologia*, lxi, pp. 13-14.

² *Proc. S. A. S.* xxxix, p. 191.

³ *Antiqs. of Duncebt*, p. 94.

⁴ Hibbert in *Archaeol. Scotica*, iii, p. 107, citing Traill, *Edinboro' Encyclopaedia*, xvi, p. 5. In 1901 there remained standing 13 stones only, but in 1847 Hugh Miller could count 16.

⁵ *Prehist. Annals Scotland*, p. 108.

⁶ *Archaeologia*, lviii (1902), p. 80.

⁷ It is the same with menhirs: the great menhir at Rudstone (Yorks.) rises 26 ft. above ground and goes 12 ft. below; but the

Men Pern, parish of Constantine, Cornwall, was 20 ft. above and only 4 ft. below ground (Dr. Borlase's MSS.); the Pridden Stone is 11 ft. 6 ins. above and only 6 ins. below the surface (*Nenia Cornubiae*, p. 100); a menhir at Trelew stands 13 ft. 6 ins. above, 3 ft. below; and another, a mile distant, is 10 ft. 9 ins. above and 4 ft. below (*ibid.* pp. 101-2). The Tresvenack stone is 11 ft. 6 ins. above, 4 ft. below the ground (*ibid.* p. 103), and of 'The Pipers' the one is 15 ft. above and 5 ft. below, the other 13 ft. 6 ins. above and only 1 ft. 3 ins. below the ground (*ibid.* p. 106).

were of a size and shape little calculated to retain their position for many hundreds, let alone several thousands, of years. Yet the few archaeologists who have noticed the fact, so far from drawing therefrom the obvious inference, have commonly treated it as an additional reason for wonderment that the stones should have stood so long as they would believe. Their attitude, in fact, is as little accordant with reason as when, from an assumed fantastic antiquity of all megalithic structures, they would infer the existence of a prehistoric race possessing physical and mechanical powers never since equalled, certainly never since exercised. Experience telling us that the progress of humanity has been always towards greater powers, it is common sense to believe, when we meet with the evidence of some great achievement of date unknown, that it is rather late than early. They prefer to take exactly the opposite view, which, whatever other merits it may have, is certainly not common sense. The choice being between common sense and an assumption which contradicts normal experience, it were surely better to abandon the assumption.

Those who maintain the astronomical purpose of the circles find their chief allies in this *licentia vetustatis*¹ and in the popular admiration of the learning and the language with which the theory is asserted, things as esoteric as anything to which Druidism itself can have pretended. That they have carried with them few archaeologists of any distinction is the best proof of the weakness of their case, but as, unfortunately, they have made a number of disciples amongst those less qualified to sift the arguments, the theory must be examined a little more closely.

It is odd that, if Druidism was really so much concerned with astronomy, there should remain so little tradition of the fact. Early Christian legend indeed quite understandably represents the Druids as able to control the elements, but it does not call them astronomers, any more than the Scriptures apply that term to the 'magicians' of Egypt. Caesar asserts² that they paid much attention to the movements of the stars, and the same might—and possibly with as much truth—be said of the educated classes of our own day, who devote much time to such matters under the

¹ Tacitus, *Germ.* 2.

² *B.G.* vi, 14, 6.

name of 'physical geography'; but there is nothing to shew that druidical star-study amounted to more than that very simple and very useful applied astronomy which meets us on every page of Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Vergil's *Georgics*, and with which every Greek and Latin farmer seems to have been conversant. An elementary knowledge of the sun's yearly course, of the moon's changes, and of the rising and setting of the greater constellations, is a simple matter of obvious value to any people not possessed of other calendars and almanacks; but it is a misuse of language to call it by the high-sounding name of astronomy. Nor is there evidence that Druidism pretended to use the stars for the purposes of astrology. Cicero, himself an augur and deeply interested in every form of divination, expressly mentions¹ the claim of the Druids to forecast the future, and Pliny also speaks of it; but neither writer has much to say of druidical star-gazing, and Cicero explicitly says² that his friend the professed Druid Diviciacus used other means to read the future. Apparently the modern belief that Druidism included astronomy or astrology, or both, is a growth of the last two centuries or so.³

In the next place, any more abstruse form of star-study would, with the appliances then known, be an impossibility in a country such as this, where Caesar⁴ and Tacitus⁵ alike remark the general prevalence of fog and cloud, a country so aptly answering to Homer's picture of the land of the 'warrior Cimmerians, lapped in mist and cloud.' Even in Etruria, says Cicero,⁶ astronomy was little cultivated because the atmosphere was not sufficiently clear. If that was so, not even Gaul could offer many facilities for a study requiring the most favourable conditions celestial and terrestrial. When Sir Norman Lockyer and his disciples postulate a probable Egyptian origin for that druidical astronomy which they advocate, they are tacitly admitting that the science could not possibly have been developed here unaided.

A dial in the form of a circle, large or small, has no

¹ *de Divin.* i, 41, 90.

² *loc. cit.*—*partim auguriis, partim conjectura, quae futura essent dicebat.*

³ Bonwick (*Irish Druids and Old Irish Religion*, p. 214) asserts that 'John Aubrey introduced the druidical theory.' Rev. G. H. Engleheart, speaking of Stonehenge,

says 'the first invention of the solar theory was by Dr. John Smith in 1740' (*Wiltshire Gazette*, Aug. 11, 1921).

⁴ *B.G.* v, 13, 3.

⁵ *Agricola*, 12.

⁶ *de Divin.* i, 42, 93.

further astronomical utility than has any other dial. Weather permitting it can be used to tell the time of day by the sun's shadow, and from such a shadow a practised eye can also read the seasons and determine equinox and solstice. There the matter ends, and just as much could be done with the help of a single pillar-stone. But of those circles which are sufficiently well preserved to admit of precise measurement, only a few are truly circular, while many are styled circles by courtesy only; there is no demonstrable orientation even in the case of many of the Aberdeenshire circles,¹ which have the most claim to be regarded as of one date and as representing one phase of culture; the number, size, and height of the constituent stones are all variable; and to insist that with apparatus so rude there could be any accurate determination of the movement of the stars, even were the climate less unfavourable, offends the intelligence of any one who knows with what difficulty and hesitancy the trained observers of to-day, for all their accurate instruments and costly equipment, forecast the position of the most familiar star at any given day and hour.

The advocates of the astronomical theory further confess the inadequacy of the circles for the purposes claimed when they proceed to talk of 'pointers,' that is, some mark, by preference a menhir or other prominent stone, which they assert to have been set up by the assumed observer to provide him with a fixed point. It is a fact that with some few circles are associated menhirs, that is to say, pillar-stones extraneous to the circles, undoubtedly erected with a purpose; but there is nothing to prove that circle and menhir were erected at one same date, and as little to shew that the purpose of the menhirs was astronomical. The theory assumes both these important matters, and thereafter proceeds from the alignment of circle and menhir to determine to its own satisfaction the particular star they were erected to observe. The obvious difficulty that such a 'pointer' would be useless in the dark, precisely when *ex hypothesi* it was required, the theorist gets over by assuming

¹ *Proc. S.A.S.* xxxiv, 197. 'The most enthusiastic advocates are forced to admit that many circles shew no trace of orientation, and the evidence upon which they rely is sometimes of the flimsiest kind.' So wrote

Dr. Rice Holmes (*Ancient Britain in Caesar's Time*, p. 210), and the lapse of years has not added to the strength of their case, but rather the contrary.

that an acolyte attended with a candle or other such illuminant. But many circles are not, so far as one can see, provided with any 'pointer' at all. It is not permissible to argue that they were never so provided, for the 'pointer' was all too easily removed; but the pointers are not there now. The theorist, in no wise disconcerted, makes shift with any substitute he fancies—a gap on the sky-line or a salient hill-top.

A much less recondite, and much more practical, purpose for such 'pointers' is suggested by that associated with Rollright circle in Oxfordshire. This circle (diam. 105 ft.) lies on the north-west edge of the county in the parish of Long Compton, so close to the border that its 'pointer,' the so-called King Stone, 8 ft. in height and 84 yards distant to the north-east, stands actually in Warwickshire (fig. 15). Circle and 'pointer' stand upon a ridge of high ground along which runs an ancient trackway. Coming out of Northamptonshire this trackway passes near the Early Iron age camp of Hunsbury, and traverses the camp at Tadmarton. Leaving Rollright circle a few yards to its left it continues past the camp called Chastleton Barrow three miles further on, and dropping thereafter into the lower ground, so reaches the Roman Fosse road and ultimately Corinium (Cirencester). Relics found in the exploration of Chastleton Barrow are attributed to the Roman era,¹ and it is clear that the district was at that date populous. A clutter of stones ('The Whispering Knights') that lie $\frac{3}{4}$ mile east of the circle Stukeley believed to be the ruins of a cistvaen; and there are disc-barrows in the vicinity,² the date whereof is less dubious.

Like some of those in Devon and Cornwall, the circle consists of smallish stones set contiguously. That at the north point stands 7 ft. 4 ins. in height, but of the rest none exceeds 4 ft. and many are now lost. There is no fosse. The area³ has long been planted with firs and so much disturbed that it is unlikely ever to yield evidence of its original features. Had Ralph Sheldon, who dug into it 'for bones' 300 years ago—he failed to find any—known

¹ *Journal Antrop. Inst.* x (1881), p. 124; *V.C.H. Oxon.* ii (1907), p. 312.

² Thurnam in *Archaeologia*, xliii (1871), p. 302.

³ It is expressly said to have contained no barrow.

what to look for, he might have done a service to archaeology. As it is, there is nothing to disprove the theory that this too, like its congeners, was a moot-circle; and the name of Rollright, i.e. Roland's Right, is somewhat corroborative of such a theory.¹

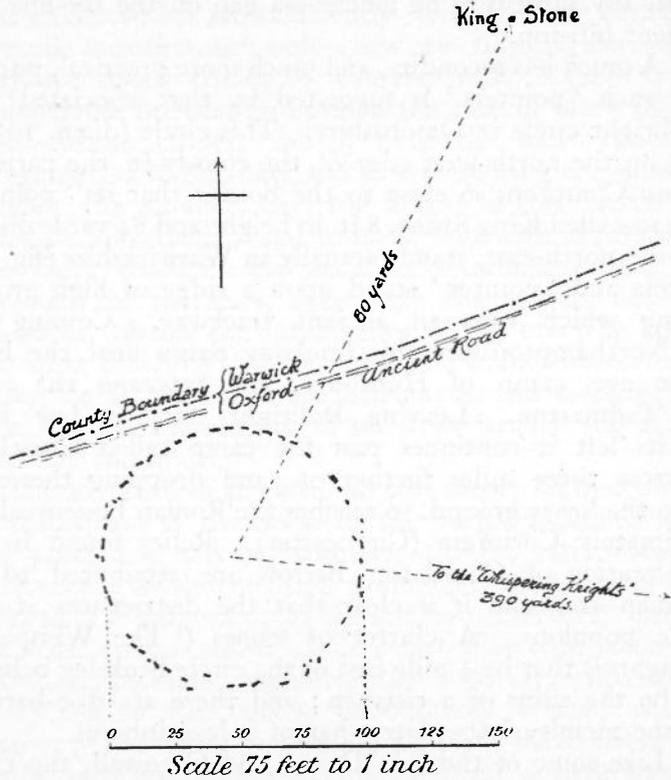


FIG. 15. ROLLRIGHT CIRCLE, OXON, AND ITS ' POINTER,' THE KING STONE.

Now as the ancient trackway passes between the circle and the King Stone, it is to be inferred that on this side

¹ See Sir Arthur Evans in *Folklore*, vi (1895), pp. 6 *sqq.* He points out that Roland came, in certain areas, and particularly in Lower Saxony and the Mark of Brandenburg, to be 'regarded as a symbol of independent power,' and his statue or his emblem was 'set up in places where moots were held and capital cases decided.'

He further finds reason to think that something of the British speech survived in the neighbourhood of Rollright until a very late date. If so, it is not in the least impossible that the name of Roland's Right (i.e. jurisdiction) may preserve a genuine folk-memory of the significance of the stone-circle as a moot.

was the entrance. If so, the King Stone stood opposite to the entrance—there is a pronounced gap in the circle's periphery at this point—and the secret of the 'pointer' is out. It pointed to nothing more remote than the entrance to the circle.¹

A similar coincidence of 'pointer,' entrance, and adjacent roadway, is to be seen in the case of the circles of Salkeld and on Burnmoor in Eskdale (ch. x), and examples could be multiplied easily. The story of the part played by the Tresvennack and the Pridden Stones in the discovery of Trevorrian Round (p. 249) supports this very unromantic explanation of their purpose. They were guide-posts.

As the periphery of every circle was a sacred figure, to cross it save by the entrances expressly provided was an act of sacrilege (ch. iv). It was desirable, therefore, to provide some means whereby strangers² might know where was the entrance. Circles like those of Aberdeenshire, with their conspicuous horizontal stones flanked by pillars of extra height,³ required no such guide-posts, and apparently have mostly no 'pointers.'⁴ It was different with other circles, many of which presented exactly the same appearance from whatever point of view. With these a 'pointer' was desirable, and it is with these that the 'pointers' are chiefly found.⁵ Some of the contiguous circles, e.g. that at Withypool (ch. x), are formed of stones so inconspicuous that a guide-post was doubly needful, for the circles might very easily be passed unseen at a short distance, or mistaken for structures of another purpose.

Martin makes repeated mention⁶ of pillar-stones in the

¹ In the plan accompanying Sir Arthur Evans' paper the entrance is marked at the southern point of the circle, but no reason is given for this. There being no evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to suppose that the road ran to and past the entrance; in which case the entrance was opposite to the King Stone. There is no trace of the road's continuing across the area of the circle, and as its eastward course is here identical with the county boundary, it is probable that it ran west also along what is now the county boundary.

² Homer (in the story of the public introduction of Ulysses in the moot of Scheria) and Caesar (in the remark that no 'news' was allowed to be disseminated without previous discussion in the Gallic moot) are evidence that strangers would

require to know where was the entrance to the moot of any community to which they came.

³ Bishop Browne has suggested (*Antiqs. of Duneechi*) that the extra height of the 'flankers' in these circles had just this purpose.

⁴ There are isolated menhirs close beside the circles of Balquhain and Druid-stones. That of Balquhain is some 30 ft. away from the southernmost pillar of its circle and therefore near the entrance thereto.

⁵ There is a so-called 'pointer' behind the 'chair' in the circle on Clocaenog Moor (ch. x), but in this case the 'chair' itself is of inconspicuous size.

⁶ Martin, *Description of the Western Isles*, pp. 88, 97, etc.

western isles of Scotland, of which the only purpose was to indicate the vicinity of a church or churchyard. Some of these stood close to the kirk, others as much as a mile away, or even four miles. In the Isle of Eigg a line of such stones formed 'a chain of stations from sea to sea . . . all leading to the emphatically holy point of the island, the burial-place' of St. Donan (a cairn).¹ As will be shewn in the sequel, the 'kirk' was originally in appearance often identical with a stone circle. It was also for many centuries the moot of its community. The parallel is therefore remarkably close.

The 'pointer' again is so frequent a concomitant of the stone-rows and smaller sepulchral circles of Dartmoor that 'in its typical and complete form the Dartmoor row begins with a circle and ends with a menhir.'² As the stone-row, whether of one or more lines, almost indubitably marks the road of approach to the circle, the terminal menhir again stands opposite to the entrance of such circle. The case of Tullynessle (ch. viii) shews that in Aberdeenshire also great pains were sometimes expended upon the approach to the circle, though the method was different from that prevailing on Dartmoor.

Consistent with this view of the 'pointer's' function is the fact that, so far as the writer is aware, it is very rarely found in connexion with the earthen *circus*. The gaps in the otherwise uniform vallum which served as entrances to such *circi*, and the characteristic rise of the vallum on either hand of those gaps, were in themselves sufficiently noticeable.

The most convincing case of the existence of astronomical 'pointers' is provided by Stonehenge, where two outlying stones mark respectively the points of winter's solstitial sunrise and summer's solstitial sunset. But these, it may be, were but survivals from an older time and an earlier structure: as both are sarsens, and both are un-tooled, both clearly belong to the older Stonehenge, which was perhaps merely a moot-circle of exceptional dimensions.

¹ Hugh Miller, *Cruise of the Betsey* (1857), c. iv.

² Windle, *Remains of the Prebistoric Age in England* (1904), p. 102. Bp. Browne also remarks (*Antiqs. of Dunecbt*, p. 23) the frequent occurrence of menhirs in conjunction with circles in Devonshire and Cornwall, adding that they are often placed to

the south-west of their circles. Of 38 stone-rows on Dartmoor 25 are associated with circles for the most part indubitably sepulchral, but the larger circles (Gidleigh, Throwleigh, etc.) shew no stone-rows (*Cornwall Royal Inst. Journal*, xii, 76 foll.); nor are there any in connexion with the great Cornish circles.

The 'Friar's Heel' may have been no more than the customary guide-post to the original circle, for it is a sarsen, it is untooled, and it stands in the required position.¹ That it was ever used as an astronomical 'pointer' cannot be proved, nor can anything be inferred from the conjecture that its popular name implies the recognition of its peculiar position²; for that position might have been recognised, and that name therefore given, at any date after its erection. The tradition that the Stonehenge, of which we now see the ruin, was built only in the fifth century A.D. is too consistent and too reasonable to be set aside without much stronger evidence than is yet forthcoming.³

There being the best of evidence that the circles were constructed for use as moots, it is not reasonable to thrust aside this evidence in favour of any theory which would attribute to them an astronomical purpose or an Egyptian origin. At the same time, their functions doubtless provided in some sort a substitute for the almanack. Such an admission does not, however, involve as a necessary consequence the generalisation that every circle must have been constructed for use as an observatory, and still less that the astronomical was the most important purpose of the circles. The Roman *comitium* was an augural *templum*, and so too was any *bidental* where had fallen a thunderbolt; yet no one would maintain that the primary purpose of *comitium* or of *bidental* was astronomical. The modern Welsh *gorsedd* is constructed with rigid regard to certain astronomical facts, yet it is in no sense an astronomical contrivance. Those who built the first stone circles, whenever that was,

¹ For, there being no evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to think that the approach to the earlier Stonehenge was at the same point as now it is, viz. from the north-east, in which direction lie also the nearest 'camps' (i.e. Vespasian's Camp and Durrington Walls) or native towns.

² Its name—the Friar's Heel or the Hele Stone—is usually derived from A. S. *belan*, 'to hide,' in reference to its apparently 'hiding' the solstitial sunrise from the eye of an observer stationed beside the 'altar-stone.' It might equally well be connected with the Celtic *baul*, Greek *ἥλιος*, 'sun.' There is a Hele Hill some three miles away, where was once a stone circle. If the so-called 'Slaughtering Stone' was ever erect—and there is a direct conflict of opinion on

this point—the Hele Stone must have been itself invisible to the supposed observer.

³ According to the revised calculations of astronomers of the Draysonian school, the position of the Hele Stone, if regarded as a 'pointer' in the astronomical sense, betokens a date no earlier than A.D. 450—to all intents the date asserted by tradition. On the other hand a writer in *Wilt. Arch. Mag.* xlii (1925), p. 610, asserts that 'viewed from a point on the axis just behind the great trilithon the midsummer sun has never risen over the peak of the Hele Stone yet, and will not do so till A.D. 3260. That at least is certain.' While astronomers differ so entirely in their pronouncements little weight can be attached thereto.

may very well have constructed them with careful regard to solstice and equinox, and with the express (but subsidiary) purpose of using them as dials to read the seasons ; but this method may have lost all practical value in later years, while nevertheless new circles may have been built strictly in accordance with the original tradition. Our churches offer an exact parallel: it is nowadays felt to be proper that a church should stand east and west, but it is in no wise necessary that it should do so, and no one can say how or when the feeling arose. Almost every town-hall in the kingdom has a public clock, but it would be wrong to infer that a clock is therefore a necessary essential of a town-hall and time-keeping the most important function of such a building. The primary purpose of a town-hall is that of a moot for the 'City Fathers,' and such was the primary purpose of many of the stone circles, even though it may be demonstrable that some of them possessed 'pointers.'

In the *agora* at Athens stood the so-called 'Temple of the Winds,' combining the functions of a clock and of a weather-vane ; in the Pnyx there is said to have been a sundial ; and Rome's first sundials were erected beside the *Rostra* and the *Comitium*. Our earliest structural churches were frequently, perhaps habitually, provided with sundials,¹ and there is great probability that this is itself a survival from the age of the stone circles. Neither circle nor church was built primarily to serve as a dial, but as a knowledge of the times and the seasons was very necessary to the proper conduct of their respective rituals, some machinery for that end came to be a natural part of their equipment.

It is the habitual use of time-pieces which has robbed us moderns of that knowledge of applied astronomy which was part of every one's equipment in days when reading and writing were accomplishments as exceptional as now is astronomy. So late as Chaucer's time the landlord of a London inn could tell by the shadow of a tree what was the hour, and tell it correctly within a few minutes.² Two

¹ See Johnson, *Byways*, pp. 162-3, 255-7. For Saxon examples, see Romilly Allen, *Monumental Hist. Brit. Church*, pp. 201-2. The need of such parochial dials lasted into the last century. In the registers of Llan-ddeiniol church (Card.) there are at least

six references to the maintenance of the church dial between 1766 and 1809 (*Arch. Camb.* 1918, p. 135).

² See the *Foreword* to Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*, vv. 1-14, with Skeats' notes thereon.

centuries later this was the practical use of pillar-stones in Denmark.¹ It is doubtful whether nowadays one could find even a shepherd who could do it, and not at all doubtful that the trained modern astronomer would be very much longer in arriving at Harry Bailly's prompt conclusion, with probably no closer approximation to exactitude. Harry Bailly and his fellows of the fourteenth century used the garnered experience of perhaps 2,000 years, the whole of which is now lost again to the world at large, or survives only with those who have recovered some of its elementary fragments in the course of a life at sea or in the wilderness. Five hundred years ago it was yet to be found in every man of sound mind. It had nothing to do with astrological quackery, and it was of greater practical value in the life of the average man than all the astronomy which has been taught since.

The parish church, though it has now lost most of its earlier functions, was for centuries the moot of its community: it was court of justice, council-chamber, scene of market and fair, school, and place of merry-making. It was also the parish almanack, for people knew the times and seasons only by the recurrence of festivals and saints'-days, fasts and vigils.² To this day the agricultural peasantry in certain of the remoter parts of England count thereby: such and such a thing occurred 'last Lammas,' such and such will be done 'come Michaelmas'; and the English people at large still remember—and dislike—Lady-day. Is there any reason why, in another age and under another creed, the like multifarious functions should not have attached to one spot? There is none whatever. All analogy is in favour of the belief that they did so, and all the evidence goes to show that the spots in question were the moots of their time, the circles and the *circi* amongst them.

If it be argued that the great variety of such monuments points to a corresponding variety of uses, the reply is that, while this is demonstrably true of certain special forms, it is not true of all. The very small circles, free-standing or contiguous, are admittedly sepulchral, and fossed circles, of whatever size, were not intended as moots; but with a very

¹ Olaus Magnus, i, 19.

² Witness the dating of the larger number of the *Paston Letters* (mid-fifteenth century),

'Written on Relic Sunday,' 'Written on Hallowmass,' etc.

few reservations of this kind it is probably correct to say that a circle which is not obviously something else—residential or defensive, religious or sepulchral—was built to serve as a moot, irrespective of minor variations of detail. Could there easily be found structures more bewilderingly various than are the churches of this England? One church may differ from the next quite as much as does the circle on Fiddes Hill from that on Pwll Mountain, and both from that of Boscawen-Ūn, merely because there are so many details admitting variation. What answer would the person of average intelligence, not being an architect or an antiquary, give to the question, were he asked to say by what *criteria* he knows a building to be a church? Nothing in the country is more diverse than are its churches, yet beneath this infinite diversity is an abiding and recognisable uniformity. So it is with the circles. They present, as Dr. Munro remarked, their local peculiarities; and so too do our churches, their lineal successors in point alike of time and function.

It is an incontestable fact that no ancient tradition attaches to any of the great circles.¹ Even about Stonehenge there is discoverable no older story than that it was built by Aurelius Ambrosius to be the memorial of the Britons murdered by Hengist,² nor, indeed, is there any alternative story about it. Yet as the Saxons and the English have constantly fathered upon one or other great figure—Cromwell, King Arthur, Caesar, the Devil and Grim—anything in their surroundings which they could not explain, the inference is that the great circles were not felt to require any explanation—that their purpose was no mystery. The fact is on a par with the further fact that the Saxon seems rarely, if ever, to have misused such circles for the purposes of burial; it would seem to be a safe conclusion that not only did he know that they were not built as burial-places, but that further he knew what was their real purpose. He regarded them as part of the regular order of things in this island and they were no novelty to him. He had assuredly seen them previously in or near his earlier home in Anglia Cimbrica. He did

¹ The name of the Rollright Stones (p. 268)—'Roland's Right'—is no exception, for this too is a Norman name.

² The story, told at large in Geoff. Monmouth's *History* (viii, 9-12), comes from earlier Welsh sources, the *Brut Tysilio*, etc.

not fear them, for he would set his villages close beside them, as at Avebury and at Stanton Drew¹; but he did not trespass upon them to make them the homes either of his living or of his dead, although he had no compunction about using the genuine *sepulchral* monuments of the Celt for the burial of his own kindred. It is hardly credible that any memory of their true character could have survived at all unless the Saxons had learnt it by actual experience; and on the other hand, if the Saxons had so learnt it, the comparative security which the circles unquestionably enjoyed until later times becomes at once understandable. Only in this way can be explained the names still associated with individual examples, e.g. Moothill at Castlestead, Mayborough at Eamont Bridge, Bryn Gwyn at Llanidan and in Radnorshire, and above all the name of Crookmore at Tullynessle. The oft-recurring name of Bride Stones²—‘Stones of the Brythons’—possibly points in the same direction.

In the Welsh *Triads* the Cornish circle of Beisgawen, i.e. Boscawen-Ūn in St. Buryan, is specifically named as one of the ‘three great *gorseddau*’ of Britain.³ This particular circle is in no way notable amongst its fellows except for its remarkable state of preservation, and *ergo* its apparently recent date. It may well have been the moot of the kingdom

¹ At both places the position of the church shews that the site of the original Saxon village was *outside* the precinct, not within it.

² There are remains of four circles so called in Yorks. (ch. x), and of a fifth on the borders of Staffs. between Congleton and Biddulph. The name may very well signify ‘Stones of the Britons.’ Brytland was still the A.-S. name for South Wales as late as 1062 (*A.-S. Chronicle*), as was Bretland for Strathclyde in the *Sagas*; and the Saxon royal style of Bretwalda reflects the Saxons’ pride as overlords of a conquered British population. The change of *i* to *d*, if unusual, is not unparalleled: Modbury in Devon represents Moteberia of *D.B.*; Mud Hill in Yorks. represents Moot Hill; *strud* is the modern Sussex equivalent of *strut*; and Stroud, Strood, Strode derive from Latin *stratum* (cp. Stroat in Glouces.). Those who explain ‘Bride Stones’ as a corruption of *Brauta-steiner* (‘Road Stones’) assume a form not to be found in any extant Norse literature. The name of the Cornish Pridden Stone (ch. x) possibly goes back in the same way to the Welsh *Prydain*.

³ The identity of Beisgawen with Boscawen-Ūn cannot reasonably be doubted. The others named are ‘the *Gorsedd* of Meriw Hill’ and ‘the *Gorsedd* of Bryn Gwyddon.’ Meriw is said to be Caerleon, and its ‘amphitheatre’ has been identified with the *Gorsedd* in question; but there is a variant *Efwr*, supposed to be Avebury (*D.B. Avereberie*). Bryn Gwyddon has been supposed to be either Silbury Hill or Stonehenge. *Gwyddfa*, *gwyddgrug* (from *gwydd*, ‘burial’) are Welsh terms for ‘place of burial’ and ‘tumulus’; and in Carmarthenshire occurs *Gwyddfa Gattw*, ‘Cattw’s Grave.’ But as Silbury was apparently not a sepulchral mound, the name of Bryn Gwyddon (‘Hill of the Tombs’) would better fit Stonehenge—Geoffrey of Monmouth’s ‘Mountain of Ambrius’—with its vast surrounding barrow-field. Peter Roberts cites (*Chronicle of the Kings of Britain*, p. 126) from the Wynnstay MS. the explicit assertion that Caer Caradoc, which was certainly at or near Old Sarum, was the place ‘where the *gwyddfa* of the princes was.’

of West Wales down to the days of that kingdom's extinction in 926.¹

In Welsh tradition a large place is occupied by one Dyfnwal Moelmud. He is said to have been 'the first to establish good laws in this island,' to have 'established laws and ordinances for mutual protection,' to have 'measured the island,' to have made roads, to have been one of the three rulers mainly responsible for the monarchic constitution, and to have been the author of certain *Triads* concerning 'motes and carmotes.' His capital is said to have been at Caerleon-upon-Usk, and his date about 400 B.C.² Modern critics have made light of him and his alleged achievements, mostly treating him as a myth; but without insisting too greatly upon his historical reality, it may be permissible to believe that some shreds of fact underlie his name. Dyfnwal means the 'West Welshman,' suggesting that he came from Dyfnaint, and his genealogy consistently makes him the son of the king of Cernyw (Cornwall); and it is certainly curious that he should be named as the first sovereign to set up an organised sovereignty in Caerleon³ and to have been peculiarly interested in moots. The word used for 'moot' is *cyrch* and *cylch*,⁴ and there can be little question that *cyrch* is merely a Welsh transcription of the Latin *circus*.

Opinions differ as to the value of the *Triads* as evidence, but there can be no question that they preserve some scraps of very ancient folk-memory,⁵ and the figure of Dyfnwal

¹ The *Triad* does not suggest that the three *gorseddau* were necessarily contemporaneous. Possibly they were so many successive seats of sovereignty, of which Boscawen-Ūn was the latest, that of Meriw (? Avebury) possibly the first, and that of Bryn Gwyddon (? Stonehenge) the other.

² See Williams, *Tradit. Hist. of the Cymry*, c. 8, where the traditional evidence is collected. The so-called Laws of Dyfnwal Moelmud are printed in *Myvyrian Archaeology* (1870), pp. 921 *sqq.* See also Lloyd, *Hist. Wales*, i, 318; Rhys, *Welsh People*, p. 184; *Trans. Cymmrodorion Soc.* 1916-17, pp. 16-17.

³ From the neighbouring Caerwent comes a fragmentary inscription (Haverfield in *Aibenaecum*, 26 Sept. 1903) drawn up *ex decreto ordinis reipubl(icae) civitatis Silurum*, which proves 'that the tribe of the Silures continued its life as a *civitas* and was administered by an *ordo*—probably by

sessions of the chief men of the tribe held in Caerwent.' See Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, p. 103, and for the 'amphitheatre' at Caerwent, ch. ix above.

⁴ e.g. *Triads*, 19, 84, 86, 114.

⁵ The substance of them, at any rate as regards Dyfnwal, was in being before the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who calls him Dunwallo Molmutius, and seems to place him *circa* 650 B.C. The 'Molmutine laws,' he says (ii, 17), were 'famous amongst the English' to his own day (1147); and he declares (iii, 5) that Gildas had translated them into Latin, Alfred into English: cp. Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, III, i. The laws, says Geoffrey, dealt chiefly with sanctuary, while it was Dunwallo's son Belinus who 'established throughout the island a settled administration of justice' and built the four great roads. The father of Dunwallo was, he says, Cloten, King of Cornwall.

Moelmud may very well represent the historical fact of the first permanent entry of Belgic Celts from West Wales into the lands beyond the Severn. If Dr. Guest be right in identifying the Lawgiver with another Dyfnwal of Welsh tradition, whose date is about the Christian era, this suggestion becomes the more probable.¹ Be that as it may, the *Triad* concerning Boscawen-Ūn not only tells us the precise purpose of that circle as understood by folk-memory, but also suggests that its use as a living institution cannot have been long discontinued when the *Triad* was framed.² Speaking generally the tendency of archaeology has certainly been to antedate all such monuments by many years.

The map of the geographical distribution of the great circles shews them to be confined almost exclusively to Brythonic areas. If Avebury and Stonehenge, as it is reasonable to believe, mark the headquarters of the system which built them, that system clearly belonged to a people who entered Britain by way of the south coast,³ and thence pushed, mostly along the high ground, south-west into Devon and Cornwall, and northward by way of Cotswolds and Pennines into Wales, Derbyshire and Strathclyde. It is chiefly along these lines that the great circles lie. Markedly wanting in Goidelic Ireland, they reappear in that part of the island which is known to have been Brythonized; and precisely the same is true of Scotland. They are most remarkable, and most remarkably preserved, just where it is known that the Brythonic Celts longest maintained their independence, i.e. in Cornwall, in Strath-

¹ It is generally held that the civilisation of south-western Britain about the Christian era, from Southampton Water to the Severn, was Belgic; and if Welsh tradition classes the *cor* of Llanilltyd with those of Glastonbury and Amesbury, the *gorsedd* of Caerleon with that of Boscawen-Ūn, this points to the presence of Belgae in South Wales in very early days. So does the presence of disc-barrows at Pendoylan, close to Llanilltyd (Llantwit Major) and at Llanellwedd in Radnorshire (ch. iii). Prof. W. M. Flinders Petrie argues that, from internal evidence, the *Triads* of Dyfnwal belong in substance to a period at which the Welsh were still pagans (*Proc. Britisb Acad.* 1917-18, p. 712).

² G. F. Tregelles (in *V.C.H. Cornwall*, i, 400) inclines to the view that Boscawen-Ūn was 'a traditional meeting-place for secular

and religious ceremonies, perhaps both,' citing Dr. Borlase (*Antiqs. of Cornwall*) that very probably these circles 'having been for the most part dedicated to religion, naturally became afterwards the *curiae* and *fora* of the same communities.' W. C. Borlase (*Nenia Cornubiae*, p. 125) preferred to regard them as rather civil than religious places of assembly. See further Rev. J. Williams ab Ithel, *Barddas* (1862), ii, 76, 77.

³ See a paper by O. G. S. Crawford in *Geogr. Review*, xii (April, 1922), pp. 258-9. The West Saxons followed a similar route along the Itchen valley some centuries later. The distribution of the Roman stations and roads about Regnum (Chichester), Clausentum (Bitterne) and Durnovaria (Dorchester) is proof that the Romans had read history profitably.

clyde, and in Aberdeenshire. Those Brythonic portions of England in which they are lacking are chiefly those in which is to be found no suitable stone.¹

Upon the Continent the great circles, as distinct from the small sepulchral cromlechs, are scarcely to be found except in Brittany and in the area thence northward to Jutland, with outlying examples in southern Sweden and Norway. Elsewhere the stone circle, if found at all, is of the small sepulchral form, down to the tiny rings, grouped by twelve or twenty together, such as the Hondaas de las Hadas, 'Fairies' Wells' in Béarn, of which the largest are said to be no more than 4 ft. or 5 ft. in diameter.² There are circles of various dimensions and various degrees of elaboration in Algeria and other parts of North Africa, in the country beyond Jordan, in Arabia, in India, as far away as Japan, and even in Central America; but all these appear to be sepulchral,³ and few of them approach the grandeur and dimensions of those which lie between Jutland and Fermanagh, between Brittany and the Moray Firth.

The survival of the great circles in Brittany,⁴ more particularly in the south and west of that peninsula, is parallel with their survival in Cornwall and Cumberland. In each of these regions the Celts, driven to the land's verge, maintained their independence far down into the historic period,⁵ and there is evidence, both documentary and traditional, for their having maintained also close relations one with another. For centuries after the introduction of Christianity the Breton circles were continuously used as moots,⁶ and were it not for the total loss of anything in the

¹ O. G. S. Crawford declares that there are no stone circles in Kent, the so-called example at Addington being in reality the remains of a long barrow.

² Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, p. 581.

³ Always excepting some in N. Africa, which have been found to be merely the remains of ancient oil-presses.

⁴ The largest of the Breton circles is that of which part still remains at Kergonan in the Ile des Moines, Morbihan. It appears to have been, when complete, a pronounced ellipse of some 420 ft. by 330 ft. Remains of a considerable Gallo-Roman town have been discovered upon the mainland close by.

⁵ The Roman occupation of Western Brittany seems to have been little more effective than that of Cornwall, and after the withdrawal of the Romans the country became more than ever Celtic under the influence of British Celts seeking in 'Lesser Britain' asylum from the Saxons. Two of the four counties into which it was then divided bore names which are as much British as Breton, and, moreover, British of the south-west, viz. Cornouaille, and Domnonee (Cornwall and Dumnonia).

⁶ Michelet, *Origines du Droit Français*, iv, 2.

shape of a Cornish literature we should probably have documentary evidence for the same practice in Cornwall. As it is, the Welsh *Triads* (ch. x) clearly point to this conclusion.

When the first of the great circles was set up in Britain we may know when we know in what year came the first of the Brythonic tribes to these islands. That was certainly not at any very remote period as archaeology counts. There is reason to think that some of the more notable of the sepulchral circles, those of Stenness and Brogar, were erected as late as the ninth or tenth century, and there is no means of shewing that the construction or reconstruction of moot-circles ceased at all throughout the intervening years.¹

There is abundant evidence that circles of one or other type were, even in Britain, habitually used as moots. The *tings* of the Orkneys continued to be so used as late as 1602; in Iceland the *Althing* was so used until 1800; and in the Isle of Man the Tynwald Hill is in similar use at the present day. All these are Norse areas, but precisely the same use was made of circles upon the Scottish mainland in regions to which the Norsemen never came. The case of the bishop's court held in the Ring of Fiddes has been mentioned (ch. viii). 'In 1349 William de Saint Michael was summoned to attend a court held *apud stantes lapides de Rane* in Garioch, to answer for the forcible detention of certain ecclesiastical property; and in 1380 Alexander, lord of the Regality of Badenoch, son of Robert II, held a court *apud le standand stanys de la Rathe de Kingucy estir*, to enquire into the title by which the bishop of Moray held certain of his lands.'² All these,

¹ Fergusson (*Rude Stone Monuments*) confidently affirmed the great circles to be Arthurian. 'I do not recollect,' he writes (p. 152), 'a single tradition that ascribes any stone circle to the Roman period.' Herbert (*Cyclops Christianus*) took much the same view. One of his remarks (p. 235) is worth quoting: 'Nor am I at all prepared to say that such an use of rough stones (i.e. as sepulchral and comital circles) must have come to an immediate end upon the Arian or Catholic baptism of these nations, especially those which marked the place of some chieftain's sepulture. For, even

supposing that the converted hordes were turned upon the sudden into exact and normal Christians, cherishing no remnants of their former ideas, I cannot see what canon or precept of the Church such an erection could have infringed. The change would more properly belong to the adoption of Latin arts and manners.'

² Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals Scot.* p. 111; Lubbock, *Prehist. Man*, p. 117. In the latter case the bishop, as defendant, had to stand *extra circum*, and the use of the term *circus* is interesting.

it will be noticed, were ecclesiastical cases. The king's steward's court at Crieff was held within a circle¹; so was another 'at the Standand Staines de Huntly,'² and still another at Covington in Lanarkshire.³ 'The spot is still pointed out where the steward of the king's estate of Strathearn (Perthshire) was in the habit of holding his court after the earldom was forfeited to the Crown in 1320.' It is 'a circle about 12 yards in diameter, surrounded by a low wall of earth and stone.'⁴

It is remarkable that so many of these cases belong just to that part of Scotland in which the stone circles are most remarkable. In the eighteenth century, it is said, the common Scottish name for what are now called 'druidical' circles was Temple Stones or Law Stones,⁵ and in the sixteenth century 'stone' was convertible with 'court' or *ting*.⁶

Lord Avebury remarked⁷ that the recent use of stone circles as courts of law does not prove that this was their original purpose; but remembering that this was the use of such circles even in the days of Homer's Achæans, one may well doubt whether there be anything here but direct tradition. Doubtless in some cases circles which had been built for other purposes, e.g. sepulchral, may have come by imitation to be used as courts of law; but it is easier to believe that this happened than to believe that a custom peculiar to the alien Norsemen should have been adopted in parts of Scotland where the Norsemen never came, and should have survived the passing of the Norsemen from even the Orkneys for some 350 years. And if we find, as we do, the same circles put to the same uses as far away as Brittany and Picardy, it will be yet more difficult to use the Norsemen as a means of explaining the fact.

Raiders from the Baltic lands were active about the Scottish coasts at least as early as 800,⁸ but the Norse earldom of the Orkneys was not established until 875. In

¹ *Byways*, p. 183. Lewis (*Topog. Dict.*) says the spot was 'until lately (1842) surrounded by a low bank of earth and stone' with a 'Gallow's Hill' close by.

² *Byways*, p. 192.

³ *ibid.* p. 267.

⁴ Gomme, *Primitive Folk-moots*, p. 182.

⁵ *Archæologia*, i, 339.

⁶ 'Ane staine halden at Tankarnes'

(? 1553); 'at tyng and stein . . . in the Burgh of Kirkwall' (1550). See Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoots*, p. 163.

⁷ *Prehistoric Times*, p. 117.

⁸ Albany Major (*Early Wars of Wessex*, pp. 96-7) would put their appearance there two or three centuries earlier, and he¹⁵ probably right. See below, ch. xiv.

894 occurred their first occupation of the mainland under Thorstein the Red, which lasted only half a dozen years. The second and more lasting occupation began in 986 and ended with the death of Thorfinn in 1064; but it extended no further south than the Moray Firth and endured for three quarters of a century only. The Northern Isles did not revert to Scotland until 1468. Daniel Wilson remarked¹ upon the slight traces left by the Norsemen even in those parts where they stayed longest, e.g. in the Western Isles. The circles of Inverness and Nairn cannot therefore be explained as owing anything to Norse influence, and still less those of Aberdeenshire with their marked peculiarities of construction.

As little can the Derbyshire circles owe to Norse influence. Something might be said for Norse influence in Strathclyde,² where the name of Sunbrick on the edge of Morecambe Bay at once recalls that of Sunburgh, one of the admitted Orcadian *tings*; but even here there may be nothing Norse beyond the name, and the Tynwald Hill, modern though it is, shows that the Norsemen of the eighth-ninth centuries preferred something more nearly resembling the Orcadian type of moot, as they did also in Dublin (ch. vii).

Excepting the small colony in Strathclyde, and one still smaller in the Wirral of Cheshire,³ of which the village of Thingwall preserves the memory, there was no known Norse occupation of the western coasts of England of a date or a character to account for the presence of the circle-moots—nothing, for example, to explain the circle on Pwll Mountain (p. 242)⁴—where again appears the *bema*, as in the circles of remote Aberdeenshire—or those of Prescelly.

There is evidence for the use of circular stone-marked moots for purposes of law, religion, administration and debate, continuously down to the seventeenth century. Proof also has been given of their distribution along two main lines both radiating from that part of north-western

¹ *Prehist. Annals of Scotland*, pp. 493-4.

² F. York Powell (*Social England*, i, p. 310) says that the Norse colony here came from Ireland and the Isle of Man, probably in the ninth century.

³ Likewise said to be Irish, and of the tenth century (York Powell, *op. cit.*).

⁴ There is evidence that Norse pirates were active along the shores of South Wales in the ninth-tenth centuries, but little evidence of their having made any permanent settlement of importance.

Europe once known as Gallia Belgica. Thence they extend on the one hand and in their greatest development westward into Brittany, into Britain as far as Strathclyde,¹ and over the water to central Ireland ; on the other hand, and for the most part in less remarkable dimensions, northward along the coast of Scandinavia to the Orkneys and Iceland. It has never been doubted that this second and feebler line was that of the Northmen who, in historical times, moved along this route from Jutland. The more important alternative line covers those districts, continental and insular, which are known to have been occupied between the fourth century B.C. and the ninth century A.D. by Brythonic tribes. Of the whole number of these monuments the great majority are found in Brittany and Britain, and the best preserved are found in precisely those parts of Britain which are known to have longest retained an independent Brythonic population. The inference is that they were erected by one or other of the Brythonic peoples who in successive waves entered Britain.

It remains to seek more precise indications of any people, known from historical records to have once occupied the region whence both lines of development appear to spring, who may conceivably have had the genius to erect such monuments and the power which such works bespeak, and whose known geographical path in any degree corresponds to the distribution of the circles. History makes no secret of the matter at all : it mentions the people more than once, remarks upon their extraordinary achievements in building, and explicitly names them the Cimbri.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NORDIC PEOPLES.

The North-west Racial Current—Extent of Celtica—Celtic Migrations—Invasions of Britain—Effect of Closing of Rhine-Frontier—Gauls and Germans racially identical—Ethnic Names no Guide—Political Identity of Gauls and Germans—‘Civitas’ and ‘Pagus’—‘Oppidum,’ ‘Castellum,’ and ‘Viculus’—The Representative System

¹ The ‘Pictish’ circles of Aberdeenshire are dealt with in ch. xiv.

—*Kingship—Government by the Moot—The Moot originally fixed by 'Time'—Form of the Moot—'Cives Tuihanti'—Later Forms of the Moot, German and Gallic—Sanxay—Consecration of the Moot: Dis and Consus—The Felderich of Corbey—Procedure in the Moot—'Concilia' in Gaul—The Grand Assize 'in finibus Carnutum'—Drynemetus of the Galatians—The Celts in Spain—The Celts in Italy: Campi Macri—The Modern Welsh 'Gorsedd'—Moots of various Grades—'Loca Designata'—German and Gallic Religion and Ritual—Human Sacrifices—Both Religions Aniconic—Celtic Divinities—Mercurius Woden—No roofed Temples in Gaul or Germany—Sepulchral Ritual.*

As far back as history goes it bears witness to a racial current setting steadily from Central Europe towards the West and the British Isles. Swarm after swarm of invaders has

'The populous North
poured from her frozen loins'

towards and across the Rhine, each in its turn to give place to yet another. For the most part they have made their passage by way of the lower Rhine, where the force and depth of the river are lost in the flats of Belgium, always the Achilles' heel of France; and when the Germans of 1914 hacked their way through by this route they were but repeating the exploits of other predatory peoples, their forbears, from a date long centuries prior to any written history. Even when the Rhine-frontier itself was too strongly held to allow of a break-through, the invaders could yet turn it by water from the mouth of the Elbe and from the Baltic. History is familiar with the act as rehearsed by Northmen, Danes, Vikings, and Franks, and we have glimpses of it as far back as the days of Julius Caesar. Still further back, history keeps no record of individual peoples, but all are blurred into one continuous movement for which the evidence grows always vaguer, yet remains always convincing. It is the march of the Nordic men.

There was a remote period, it is supposed, when a totally different current had set to the same quarter from the Mediterranean, and a race known to English science as the Iberians had spread over all that is now called France

and as far as Ireland. To this race are attributed the long barrows and the long skulls mostly found therein. They were small of stature and of dark complexion. This is the sum of what is really known of them, though it is supposed they had no knowledge of bronze and iron.

The Nordic men were fair, tall, and well-built. They were also better armed, because more familiar with metals.¹ At a date unknown the vanguard of the race, crossing the Rhine, carved out for themselves a settlement in the Lowlands. A second horde of their kindred expropriated the first and pushed it farther south. A third swarm did the like by the second, and so the process went on, the prior occupants of the land falling back towards the Pyrenees and Spain. But inevitably there was some intermingling, and naturally, while the proportion of Nordic blood was always greater in the north, that of other blood was always greater in the south.² It is so at the present day: the Picard and the Fleming are types wholly unlike the Bearnais and the Gascon, and as the traveller crosses the intervening region he sees the one type merging imperceptibly into the other. It was so when Caesar wrote his *Commentaries*: the Aquitani of the south were a different race from the Belgae of the north, and between them he could—or fancied he could—discriminate the Celts, who were not quite like either of the others. His three-fold division of Gaul amongst these three peoples has led to the mistaken belief that the Celts were a third race in the same sense in which the Iberians and the Nordics were races. The Celt is merely the result of the mixture of the other two, and he is 'red' or 'black' according as there is more of Nordic or of Iberian blood in his veins.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Nordic race was its extraordinary fecundity. This com-

¹ But even in Tacitus' time the Germans had 'none too much iron' (*Germ.* 6), although the Acheans had known and used it a thousand years earlier. This helps to explain why the south-east of Britain with its iron ore had so great an attraction for invaders (*B.G.* v, 12, 5). Both the true Gauls and the Belgae also made use of stone weapons (*B.G.* ii, 6, 2-3; iii, 4, 1) in Caesar's time, as Giraldus Cambrensis found the

Irish using their *lapides pugillares* (*Topog. Hiberniae*, iii, x) ten centuries later.

² For the sake of brevity no mention is here made of the 'Alpine' race, which at the present day is predominant in southern and central France. In physical features, as in geography, it occupied a middle position between the Nordics and the Iberians but superficially much more resembled the latter than the former.

pelled it incessantly to overflow towards the south. It passed beyond the Pyrenees as far as Cadiz,¹ but in Spain the earlier Iberian race so far held its own that the Romans knew part of the population by the general name of Celtiberi. At what date this thrust occurred is not known, but as early as 600 B.C. Gaul was already so choked by the steady influx of new peoples from the north that the tribe of the Senones, whose name remains in that of Sens, 60 miles south of Paris, threw off a swarm of its numbers, who crossed into northern Italy.² Other tribes followed suit, and within two centuries had filled the whole plain of Lombardy and the adjacent lands as far south as Sinigaglia. In 391 they sacked Rome, and continued to raid peninsular Italy for 50 years more. In 280 B.C. other tribes, migrating from localities as far apart as Trèves and the Pyrenees, fought their way into the Balkan peninsula, sacked Delphi in the ensuing year, and thence drifting always further east in search of loot and lands, finally formed in central Asia Minor a Celtic nation known to history as the Galatians. At the close of the fourth century A.D. St. Jerome, who spoke from personal knowledge, declared that they still kept their native tongue. Yet even in this far raid they were only repeating history: a thousand years before this (c. 1300 B.C.) their distant kinsmen, the Achæans, starting indeed from another point, had reached as far, making themselves famous for ever by the conquest of Argos, Mycenæ and Troy; and yet others, before and after, had crossed swords with the Pharaohs and with the kings of Assyria.

The British Isles did not escape their all-searching *wanderlust*. Tribe after tribe had already crossed the Channel to escape the ceaseless pressure behind, and driving the Iberians before them, had occupied every inch of soil. The foreloppers were of the speech known as Goidelic. But others of the blood presently followed at an interval sufficient to allow of so much change of speech as distinguished the Brython from the Goidel. It is supposed that the Brythonic Celts began to arrive

¹ Ephorus *ap.* Strabo, § 199. The fact is confessed in the names of Galicia and the Gallegos of the present day. Neither the Rhine nor the Pyrenees formed an ethnic

frontier: cp. the relations of Aquitani with Cantabri and others, *B.G.* iii, 23, 3; 26, 6.

² Either this, or a yet earlier swarm, broke the power of the Etruscans.

in this island *circa* 400 B.C.; the Goidel as early as 1000 B.C.¹

Naturally the majority of the newcomers would cross by the shortest sea-passage that was open, that is, to the southern and south-eastern coasts. Settling where they could first make a landing, they pressed the Goidels back to the north and the west. In the upshot the latter were pent up in the Scottish Highlands, the Isle of Man, and Ireland, where they still are, but for long centuries they kept a footing in South Wales and in Anglesey. Elsewhere the usurping Brythons overran Great Britain from sea to sea, to be in turn driven by later comers—Belgae, Romans, and Saxons—into the western fringes of the island, into Cornwall, Wales, and Strathclyde. But racially Goidels and Brythons were the same, except that the former had somewhat more of the Iberian blood in his veins, the latter somewhat more of the Nordic. The Belgae, who began to intrude about 150 B.C., were in effect purely Nordic, for by that date the Gallic peoples had become too settled, too numerous, and too well organised to be readily absorbed. Yet the eternal westward thrust never ceased. It was to stem it that Julius Caesar conquered Gaul (58-52 B.C.), and closed the Rhine-frontier.² The fact was unfortunate for Britain because, so long as that frontier was closed, the current must flow westward direct by way of the sea, instead of filtering through the less barbaric medium of Gaul. When a century later the Romans occupied Britain itself they prevented any further landings in that quarter,³ and those who hazarded the sea-passage

¹ So *Brit. Museum Guide*, according to which authority the Brythons had reached Yorkshire by the fourth century B.C. But there is nothing to show by what route they got there. They may have crossed direct.

² When Caesar arrived in Gaul some of the Belgic Menapii were still living east of the Rhine. They were driven west of the river by the Suebi in 55 B.C. (*B.G.* iv, 4, 2). Tacitus mentions (*German.* 28) four tribes which had moved across the Rhine since Caesar's time, and Caesar (*B.G.* ii, 4, 10) names four others which, though members of the Belgic league, were still collectively styled *Germani*.

³ Their occupation of Britain was certainly due as much to policy as to commercial interests. So it had been with Caesar,

whose aim was to put an end to the constant intercourse between the Britons and the continental Gauls, for the former 'abetted in every way Rome's enemies in Gaul' (*B.G.* iv, 20, 1); e.g. the Veneti summoned help from Britain (iii, 9, 10), and Britain harboured the refugee notables of the Bellovaci (ii, 14, 4). Caesar has little to say of any trade between Britain and the Continent, but half a century later Strabo (§§ 199-201) speaks of the Britons as exporting corn, cattle and hides, slaves, hunting-dogs, gold, silver and iron, in exchange for articles of luxury, such as jewellery and glass and ornaments of ivory. They had become rich. J. R. Green (*Making of England*, edit. 1881, pp. 6-8) very strongly insisted upon the purely military

had perforce to content themselves with Ireland and northern Scotland. Some certainly made the venture and succeeded, but generally speaking the Romans held up or diverted the westward current of migration for four centuries, and being so held up, it but gathered the greater head; so that, when at last the Roman power collapsed, everything was swept away before the irresistible flood of Franks, Burgundians, West Goths, Vandals, Alemans, and the miscellaneous tribes whom history collectively knows as Saxons. But, though the Saxon would have been the last to admit it, he was after all the brother of the Belgian, the Brython and the Goidel, who had come hither before him. The lapse of some intervening centuries and their happenings had made superficial differences, but the greatest of these was in the matter of speech.¹ Speech changes with extraordinary rapidity amongst peoples in a savage state of culture; and before they crossed the Rhine the Nordic men were for the most part savages. The Rhine was the dividing line between barbarism and something better.² Roaming east of it Nordic man was a savage; settled west of it he began to become civilised. So long as he was a savage he was known to the generality as a German; appreciably civilised he was known as a Celt or a Gaul.

There is indisputable evidence in the Classics to support this view. Caesar³ says that the Belgae were mostly German in blood. Strabo is insistent upon the point: Celts and Germans, he declares, were of the same blood,⁴ and elsewhere he says that in physical features and manner of life the two peoples were alike, save that the Germans were a little taller, a little fairer, a little more savage.⁵ In this affinity he found the explanation of the name of Germani, *scilicet* 'kinsmen' of the Celts who used it. To the

character of the Roman occupation of the island.

¹ cp. Prof. Sir A. Keith in *Observer*, Feb. 22, 1920: 'What then is the relation of Celt and Saxon? The Saxon is also from the north-west of Europe—the home-land of the Nordic stock. The only conclusion which can be drawn is that Celt and Saxon represent different waves of the same stock, but waves which came to England at different times and brought with them a different speech and a different set of customs

and manners. . . . British Saxon and Celt are of the same stock.'

² Caesar, *B.G.* iv, 3, 3. Tacitus and Strabo make the same remark. The latter further emphasises the relatively civilised character of southern as compared with northern Gaul, just as Caesar emphasises that of the *Ora Mariitima* of Britain in comparison with its remoter parts.

³ *B.G.* ii, 4, 1.

⁴ § 196.

⁵ § 290.

Germans themselves the name was unknown, and they ignored also the name of *Celtae*, using instead thereof the term *Walab*, which on Anglo-Saxon lips became *Wealba*, and yet survives in our 'Wales' and 'Welsh.' According to Déchelette¹ *Walab* is merely *Volcae*, the name of one amongst the sixty-odd tribes of Gaul, and that one not of any great prominence in history.² There is nothing more seemingly irrational than the chance which selects this or that name for a mighty people, frequently without regard to geography, blood, or historical importance. 'Greeks,' 'Scots,' 'English' are familiar instances. The Germans' alternative name of 'Teutons' is another: originally meaning merely 'the tribes,' it was apparently a somewhat derogatory term for all and sundry of the lesser tribes who had followed the lead, and presumably acknowledged the superiority, of the *Cimbri* (ch. xiv). It is the Goidelic *tuatha*,³ the Brythonic *teuta*,⁴ and through the Anglo-Saxon *theotisc* it has returned to Germany in the form *Deutsch*.

For both peoples our earliest reliable authority is Caesar. Tacitus wrote his *Germania* nearly 150 years later, and if he represents the Germans as being still for the most part in a state of semi-nomadic savagery, we might safely assume that they were at least as little civilised in Caesar's time, before they had made acquaintance with either Gaul or Rome, even if we had not Caesar's own brief notes (*B.G.* vi, 21-24) to say so. The testimony of the two shews conclusively that both in polity and in religion the German and the Celt resembled one another as closely as in physical features.⁵ If the Celt was a little darker than the German, it was because of a certain admixture of Iberian blood. If he was more of a 'political animal,' if his religion was more systematised, these facts were the outcome of a more settled life and of Iberian influence respectively. Both had the same provision of 'kings' who did not govern, and of

¹ *Manuel d'Archeologie*, ii, 561.

² *B.G.* vi, 24, 3-4. In Caesar's time they had left Gaul, and settling in the *Hercynia Silva* had become entirely German.

³ As e.g. in *Tuatha DeDannan*, pp. 333 foll.

⁴ Seen in the name of the god *Teutates* and that of *Teutomatus*, king of the *Nitiobriges* (*B.G.* vii, 31, 5). *Diod. Siculus*, who was born before Caesar died, calls

(v, 25 and 32) by the name of Gauls (*Γαλδραί*) all the peoples dwelling east of the Rhine 'as far as Scythia.' On this matter of tribal and ethnic names, cf. *Early Age of Greece*, i, p. 351.

⁵ See *Fustel de Coulanges, La Gaule Romaine* (Paris, 1891); *Stubbs' Constitutional Hist.* vol. i; J. R. Green, *Making of England*, c. 5.

'war-lords.' Both shew in different stages of development the same 'elementary feudalism.' The government of both was essentially aristocratic. With both peoples the moot was all-important, its procedure and powers much the same. The religion of both was essentially identical: it was aniconic, it had no roofed temples, and its chief deity was the same. Both counted time by the moon instead of by the sun. The two seem to have spoken much the same language. The differences between them are to be explained as due merely to difference of degree of culture.

The majority of the German tribes, even in the time of Tacitus, were living much in the fashion of the Kalmuk Tartars of a century ago. The Kalmuks had no towns. Their only 'villages' were mere temporary encampments, whose duration depended upon the necessity of growing a little grain, or other questions of food-supply; for of horticulture they knew nothing, nor had any use for vegetables. The huts could be taken down and set up again within an hour. Each village had its own priests with their own place of worship, a circular group of huts rather larger and neater than the rest; but there was no set liturgy and no sort of religious instruction, and the people at large had no share in the ritual.¹

Each *civitas* or tribe, German or Gallic, comprised a number of sub-divisions varying with its size. In Caesar's time the German Suebi counted a hundred of these,² and in Tacitus' day the Semnones had as many.³ These sub-divisions, usually known by the Latin name of *pagi*, were in some loose way based upon the group of 100 families. Tacitus elsewhere⁴ alludes to the importance of this number in the German polity. Similarly Caesar⁵ tells us that the Belgic Bellovaci mustered 100,000 warriors, and as the levy of each *pagus* was nominally 1,000 men,⁶ this tribe also must have had 100 *pagi*. The Gallic *pagus* survives everywhere in modern France as the *pays*. In old Wales it reappears as the *cantref*, in Saxon England as the hundred; and just as in England one meets with half-

¹ Parrot, *Journey to Ararat*, Eng. Transl. (London, N.D.), pp. 14 *sqq*; cp. Strabo, § 291.

² *B.G.* iv, 1, 4.

³ *Germ.* 39.

⁴ *Germ.* 6 and 12.

⁵ *B.G.* ii, 4, 5.

⁶ *B.G.* iv, 1, 4. So in Rome the word *miles* (soldier) implies that the muster was originally by companies of 1,000 men; and Italy also had its *pagi*. The *pagus* was as jealous of its individuality as any modern regiment (*B.G.* i, 51, 2, *generatim*).

hundreds, so in Wales the *cantref* was commonly split into two halves called *commots*.

In Germany the majority of the people being still nomadic,¹ knowing little of agriculture,² and therefore building nothing which could be called a town,³ further sub-division of the *pagus* is hardly traceable there: but both Caesar⁴ and Tacitus⁵ speak as if it existed. In Gaul, on the other hand, where agricultural life and permanent settlements had become the general rule, there had grown up *communes* (*vici*). Each *civitas* had its own capital *oppidum*—in one or two cases it is called by the name of *urbs*⁶—and the various *pagi* had each its own *oppidum* or *castellum*; while the *pagus* again embraced a varying number of *vici*⁷; and just as each *civitas* and each *pagus* had its own moot, so had each *vicus*, those who had a voice in the communal moot being the occupants of the farmsteads (*aedificia*) which dotted the communal territory. Even the savage Menapii of the fens of Flanders had their *vici*⁸. Again the parallelism with the Anglo-Saxon order is exact: that, too, had its several moots of the *folc*, hundred, *burh*, and *tun*, and the mootmen of the *tun* were those who farmed the *tun*-land.

Even in Germany the representative system was in active operation. The moot claimed sovereignty in all matters, but delegated minor business to certain *principes*, i.e. elders, of its own choice,⁹ who naturally came to be a quasi-permanent *senatus* or council, and as naturally tended always to usurp more authority. The same polity is recognisable in Caesar's Gaul, where, for example, the Nervii, with a muster of 60,000 warriors, i.e. 60 *pagi*, had 600 'senators,' or 10 for each *pagus* of 1,000 warriors, or one senator to each 100 warriors. It was much the same in Saxon England, and alike in Germany, in Gaul,¹⁰ and

¹ *B.G.* iv, 17, vi, 22, 1; Strabo, § 291.

² *Tac. Germ.* 26.

³ *op. cit.* 16: cp. Strabo, § 291.

⁴ *B.G.* vi, 23, 5.

⁵ *Germ.* 12.

⁶ Thus Caesar, though he elsewhere repeatedly terms it an *oppidum*, calls Avaricum (Bourges), the capital of the Bituriges, 'almost the fairest *urbs* in Gaul' (*B.G.* vii, 15, 4), and Strabo (§ 192) calls the Aeduan Cabullinum (the Cabillonum of Caesar—now Chalons-sur-Marne) a *πόλις*.

⁷ In Cicero (*de Repub.*) *viculus*, *castellum*, and *urbs* are the three stages in the development of a 'city.' Bede (*H.E.* i, 1) uses *castellum* of the smaller fortified towns of Roman Britain. As early as Cicero's time it was used for 'village.'

⁸ *B.G.* iv, 4, 2 and 6.

⁹ *Tac. Germ.* 11: cp. *ibid.* 39, of the *legationes* of the *pagi* of the *Semnones*. Caesar (*B.G.* vi, 23, 5) says the same thing.

¹⁰ Strabo, § 197.

in England, the polity was in reality aristocratic. In each country individuals who, on whatever ground, took a prominent position in the tribe, drew to themselves numbers of retainers of lesser degree, who looked to their 'lord' for protection. The like was the case in Saxon England, and the *Sagas* shew that the same practice prevailed amongst the Scandinavian peoples generally. Caesar mentions¹ that the Gallic name for such retainers was the German *ambacti*. This is one of many hints that even in speech the Germans and the Gauls were much the same. Caesar nowhere speaks of any great difference in their languages.²

Principes were elected in the tribal moot to act as presidents of the moots of *pagi* and *vici*, assisted by a court of 100,³ presumably freeholders of the *pagus* and the *vicus*, who acted both as jurors and as interpreters of the law.

Kingship in Gaul, says Fustel de Coulanges,⁴ was a form of democracy. In Germany, says Stubbs, the king 'reigned, but did not govern.'⁵ In both lands he was commonly an annual magistrate appointed to do the behest of the tribe. He was the choice of his people assembled in their tribal moot, and the sovereignty lay not with him, but with the moot. The same word for 'king' appears both in Celtic and in German: it is the word which in Latin appears as *rex*, 'director,' and the old Roman king was in the main an Italian equivalent of the German or Celtic *dux*, *princeps*, or *rix*. The 'king' of the Gallic Eburones told Caesar that he had less control of his tribe than his tribe had of its king.⁶ But inevitably the 'king's' position would vary with the circumstances of the tribe. It might even become permanent, but it seems rarely to have become hereditary.⁷ When the Saxons invaded England their 'kings' appear to have been in exactly the same position as those of Tacitus' Germans.

The real government of the German tribe was vested in the assembly of the free tribesmen assembled in the tribal moot. With these lay the decision upon any question

¹ *B.G.* vi, 15, 2; i, 47, 4.

² Tacitus (*Germ.* 45) remarks that the dialect of the Aestii of the Lithuanian region more nearly resembled that of Britain than did the Suebic speech.

³ *Germ.* 12; *B.G.* vi, 23, 5.

⁴ *La Gaule Romaine* (Paris, 1891), p. 13.

⁵ *Const. Hist. England*, i, 38.

⁶ *B.G.* v, 27, 3.

⁷ As a matter of policy the Romans set up 'kings' amongst the tribes which fell under their influence, it being easier to deal with one submissive tool than with the multitude.

of policy, the making of any of those precedents which in due course would pass into law, the election of all needful persons to put policy or precedent into effect. They elected the war lord, and appointed those who should act as justices in the *pagi* and *vici*. The primary function, therefore, of these inferior moots, as of that of the little *πόλις* figured on the shield of Achilles, was judicial.

The moots of the nomadic Germans would of necessity change with each movement of the tribe. As the Gauls were in the main a settled people, their moots were as naturally at fixed spots. Those of the *vicus*, *castellum* and *oppidum* would be immediately beside the communities which they represented: that of the tribe at large would tend to become associated with the tribal capital; that of the *pagus* would similarly tend to be associated with the *oppidum* or *castellum* of the *pagus*; but so long as there was no settled community, the moot of *pagus* and of *civitas* would, of necessity, remain unfixed.

Tacitus,¹ in speaking of the summoning of the German moot, uses the legal Latin term *condicere*. In Caesar the usual expression is (*concilium*) *indicere*. Tacitus tells us² also that the German moots were convened at stated phases of the moon, at the new and the full; and amongst a nomad people as yet possessing no structural *places* of assembly, one would expect the summons to be expressed in terms of *time* rather than of *place*.

What was the form of the place of meeting? In Achean Greece, in Latin Italy, amongst the Danish peoples, and in Britain, it was a circular place demarcated either by a circle of standing stones or by a circular bank of earth. In all these cases it was a *locus consecratus* and a *locus publicus*, as it was also in Gaul. Analogy would suggest that in Germany, too, it was sacred, public, and circular; but, the German being for the most part still nomadic, it would not present the same permanent form as is found amongst more settled peoples.³

¹ *Germ.* 11.

² *ibid.*

³ A picture of the moot in a yet earlier stage of evolution is to be found so late as 1878 in St. Kilda. 'The men of St. Kilda are in the habit of congregating in front of one of the houses every morning for the

discussion of business. . . . When the subject is exciting the members talk with loud voices and all at one time. You may hear them half a mile off. . . . Shall we go to catch solan geese, or ling, or mend the boat, or hunt sheep? are examples of the subjects that occupy the "house." Although

Tacitus says as little about the shape of the moot in Germany as Caesar says about its shape in Gaul; yet as both writers make repeated allusions to its existence, one naturally wonders why it is not described. The reason is probably that it was so very like the moots familiar to every Roman in every provincial town and village of Italy, so like the Celtic moots to be seen anywhere in Cisalpina, that there was nothing in it to call for remark. It was just like any other moot, that is, circular.

This view is confirmed by language. The name of the Germanic moot was the 'ring,' that is, the circular place. This is sufficiently proved by the simple fact that into all the principal languages of western Europe, into French, Spanish, Italian, and English, has passed the same word, *arringere*, *arringar*, *haranguer*, 'to harangue,' in the same sense—'to deliver a public speech,' that is, 'to address the ring or moot.'¹ Etymologically indeed *ring*, Low Dutch *krink*, is the same word as the Latin *circus*, and cognate with the Greek κύκλος, which are the respective terms in those languages for the place of meeting.

Another Teutonic term for the 'moot' was *thing*, which came to be the usual name amongst the Danes and the associated peoples. But the name of *thing* is older than any documentary mention of the Danes, for it was in use amongst the *cives Tuihanti* who formed the garrison, or part of the garrison, of the Roman fortress of Borcovicium (Housesteads) on the Northumbrian Wall in the third century. In the ruins of the Mithraeum, beside that fortress, have been found two altars dedicated by the *cives Tuihanti* to Mars Thingsus, 'Mars who presided over the moot'²; which proves again that the *thing* was sacred. The Tuihanti came from Over Yssel in Holland, where their name yet remains in that of the district of Twenthe (or Twente). They are called *cives*, which means they were a *civitas*; and being a *civitas* they must have had a *circus*. They had, but they did not

exceedingly disputatious, they work in perfect harmony when once the question is settled.—J. Sands, *Out of the World, or Life in St. Kilda* (1878). Similarly the people of Elgol, in Skye, meet in a natural hollow of an adjacent hill, so Dr. Eliot Curwen tells me.

¹ See *N.E.D.*

² *Arch. Aeliana*, x, 148-172. Now in the Museum at Chesters. The wording of the inscription is proof that further the moot-system was at that early date already highly formalised.

call it by that Roman name ; which again means that they had their moot, and their Teutonic name for it, before they came under Roman influence. Had they borrowed the institution from Rome, they would have borrowed also its Roman name.

Such details of the form of the Germanic moot as it is possible to recover belong to later times, but there is no reason to think them other than legitimate survivals from earlier days. Some of these moots were circular mounds ; the name of Malberg, ' Council Hill,' is of frequent occurrence in Germany¹ ; and in Holland the moot-hills still exist at Heldermaalenfeld and at Spoolderberg near Zwolle.² At other times it was a flat circular area : the men of the Helvetic canton of Uri met in a circle in a green meadow at Bözlingen.³ The common feature of all these moots is the circular plan.

Under Roman domination every tribe of Gaul retained its identity and its native organisation. It retained, therefore, its moot or moots. In the so-called ' theatre ' at Herbord,⁴ in the commune of Sanxay in Vienne, anciently the territory of the Pictavi whose name remains in Poitiers, Camille de la Croix believed that he had found an example of the tribal moot of the Gallo-Roman era. Here is a perfectly circular arena (diam. 38 m.) excavated in the rocky slope of a hill facing to the north-west, and enveloped by a broad horse-shoe *cavea* 27 m. in width. The *cavea* was carried on six concentric lines of stone footings, but the seating, if any, must have been of wood. At the north-west of the arena—and therefore at the lowest point of the circular area—was a small rectangular platform and the vomitories were arranged in unusual fashion (fig. 16). Its construction resembling that of a true Greek theatre, its plan recalling rather a Roman amphitheatre or a *circus*, the excavator was driven to describe it as a combination of all three, though unable to offer any explanation for such

¹ Grimm, *Deutsche Reichsalterthümer.*

² Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoors*, p. 12. *Mal* being an alternative Germanic name for the moot, Malberg is in formation and in meaning identical with the familiar English ' moot-hill.'

³ Freeman, *Growth of Eng. Const.* pp. 3-7.

⁴ Herbord is compared with *herberg*, which, according to Le Gonidec and De la Villemarqué (*Dictionnaire Breton*), signifies a ' place of meeting.' It is possibly to be seen in some of the many English earthworks called Arbury, Harborough (Banks), etc. and even in Arbor (earlier Harbor) Low.

a combination.¹ In the preceding chapters some light has been thrown upon this seeming eccentricity, and it would appear that the 'theatre' at Sanxay is the normal Gallic moot-circle improved under influences Roman and Graeco-Roman. It is only one of many still to be seen in France.²

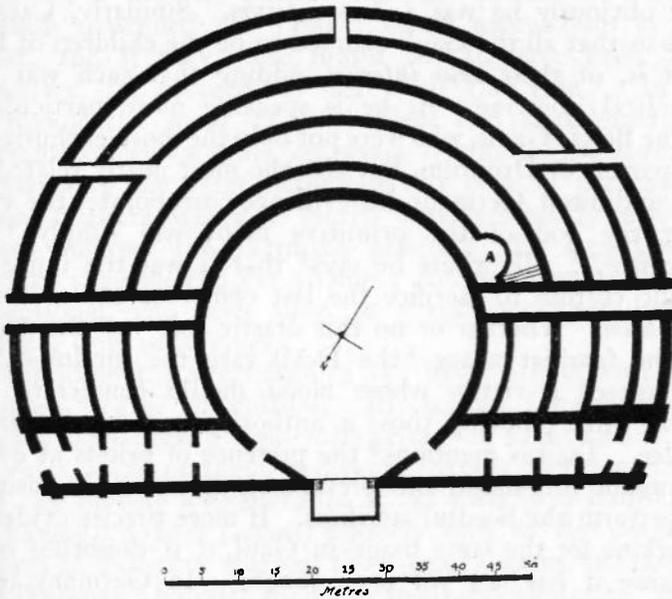


FIG. 16. GALLO-ROMAN MOOT-THEATRE OF SANXAY.

Ground plan. A = Tribunal.

(After Camille de la Croix.)

Moots of this fashion belong to a Gaul which had been effectively Romanised. Analogy and language provide evidence enough that the circular plan was traditional. Analogy tells us further that as a *locus consecratus* every moot required its consecration-grave, actual or symbolical.

¹ C. de la Croix, *Memoire Archeologique sur les decouvertes d'Herbord* (Niort, 1883). Excavation failing to bring to light anything which could be regarded as the remains of a town, he concluded that this was the traditional tribal meeting-place when the Pictavi were a free people, that it had been retained as such under Roman

domination, and that Roman influence had brought to the spot its curious structural temple, the inevitable *ibermae*, and the needful *hospitia* for those who attended the moot. He estimated the 'theatre' to have held at least 8,000 persons.

² There are others of similar design at Valognes, Lillebonne, and Vieux.

There are hints both in Tacitus and in Caesar to bear this out. The Semnones, says Tacitus,¹ the paramount tribe of the Suebic League of his time, sacrificed a human victim at their yearly assembly; but the *Semnones*, he adds, affected to maintain a certain archaism in such matters. The presiding god they regarded *tanquam initia gentis*, i.e. as the *conditor* of their race. His name is not mentioned, but obviously he was a *deus inferum*. Similarly, Caesar² tells us that all the Gauls claimed to be the children of Dis, that is, of their *deus inferum*, adding that such was the druidical doctrine. As he is speaking more particularly of the Belgic Gauls, who were not only the most enthusiastic supporters of Druidism, but also the most nearly related to the undiluted Germans, his evidence corroborates the view that the god of the primitive moot was simply 'the Ancestor.'³ Elsewhere he says⁴ that it was the universal Gallic custom to sacrifice the last comer at any *armatum concilium*. Whether or no this drastic rule was the origin of the familiar adage 'the Devil take the hindmost,' it guaranteed a victim whose blood should consecrate the moot, while relieving those in authority from any invidious choice. Tacitus mentions⁵ the presence of priests at every Germanic folk-moot, and presumably it was their business to perform the needful sacrifices. If more precise evidence is lacking for the same usage in Gaul, it is doubtless only because it has not yet been sought. In Germany, says Tacitus,⁶ there was little cost or labour spent on the graves of the dead. Therefore there would be little expended on the moot. It was the other way about in Gaul, says Caesar⁷: graves were elaborate; *ergo* the moot would be elaborate too. And it would necessarily be like the grave, i.e. circular. The moots of Old Greece, of Old Italy, of the Danes, of the Goidels and the Brythons in Britain, of the pagan Saxons, and of the Saxons when converted to Christianity, were one and all graves, or modelled upon graves. There are traces of the same fact in Germany. The form of the name of *Malberg* suggests it.

¹ *Germ.* 39.

² *B.G.* vi, 18, 1.

³ cp. *Germ.* 2, where Tacitus says that all the German peoples worshipped *Tuis-tonem deum terra editum et filium Mannum, originem gentis conditoresque*.

⁴ *B.G.* vi, 56, 2.

⁵ *Germ.* 11.

⁶ *Germ.* 27.

⁷ *B.G.* vi, 19, 4.

That some, at any rate, of the Germanic *loca consecrata* were originally hallowed by the burial of a human victim is proved by the symbolical survivals of the ritual in Old Saxony, where the open-air tribunal of the Felderich of Corbey was consecrated by digging a pit into which were thrown ashes, a coal, and a tile. The tile symbolised the urn, the coal a funeral fire, and the ashes represented those of a human body. On the presence of these symbols depended the validity of all proceedings in the moot, and if they were found not to have been duly deposited, its proceedings were null and void.¹ In all likelihood the more civilised Gaul had abandoned the human sacrifice for some less savage symbolical act of ritual, maintaining the older barbarous way only in the case of armed musters, where its merits were sufficiently obvious. Even amongst the Germans generally the language of Tacitus suggests the like change; for the Semnones were exceptional, and even they, as a rule, practised human sacrifice only once a year.

Similarly the procedure in the moot varied with each people's degree of culture. In Achean Greece it had already developed a rigid formalism. In Gaul also it had its rules, some of them stringent. Strabo mentions² that any one making a disturbance at the moot was punishable by having his cloak (*sagum*) publicly torn by the ὑπηρετής, a form of indignity whereof the memory seems to linger in the Irishman's familiar challenge to all and sundry to 'tread upon the tail of his coat.' If, as was the case in Greece,³ it was customary to attend the moot in one's best, the punishment was costly to the victim. Tacitus, Caesar and Strabo all testify that the mootmen, German or Gallic, were invariably seated⁴; and all are witness that the moot-men went by some name equivalent to the Greek γέροντες and the Latin *senatores*, i.e. elders, as they did in Saxon times, and as they still do in modern England (aldermen). In Germany, as in Homeric Greece, the

¹ Grimm, *ut supra*; Palgrave, *Hist. Eng. Commonwealth*; Gomme, *Primitive Folk-moots*, pp. 36-7.

² § 197.

³ *Od.* vi, 60-1. In *Iliad*, ii, 265, Ulysses strikes the brawler Thersites with the

σκήπτρον, threatening to *strip* him, if the offence is repeated.

⁴ Caesar (*B.G.* vi, 13, 10) and Tacitus (*Germ.* 11) both use the verb *considunt*, which implies a formal assembly. Strabo (§ 197) calls the Gallic moots *συνέδρια* 'sessions.'

dignity of a moot-man was acquired by various qualifications of age, birth, prowess, and eloquence.¹ In Germany, as in Greece and in Rome, no resolution could be adopted save by daylight,² and Caesar implies the same of the Gallic moots.³ Order was kept in the latter by the ὑπηρέτης,⁴ who answers to the Roman *licitor* and the Homeric κῆρυξ. In Germany, so far as it was kept at all, it was kept by the priests⁵; for in the moot, and apparently not elsewhere, the priests had to be obeyed. This was consistent with the fact that every German moot was an *armatum concilium*, and in matters of war the powers of their priests were least trammelled. Tacitus more than once⁶ comments upon the fact that all came armed to the German moot, a practice which in Italy had long passed out of memory; but unquestionably the folk-moot of all peoples was originally the muster of the tribe in arms.⁷ Clearly the pure Germans were far behind the Gauls in political development. Another proof thereof is to be seen in Tacitus' remark that a day or two might elapse before the muster was complete,⁸ probably because of the great distances to be covered, and that the moot-men sat down 'as they pleased.'⁹ Formality was notably absent here.

Caesar makes repeated reference¹⁰ to the *concilia* of the Gauls, both tribal and national, and to the *senatores* or *principes* who participated; and his narrative makes it certain that rarely or never was any important step taken without the co-operation of the moot. It was a Gallic law that no man who had any news of public interest should bruit it abroad before reporting it to the moot¹¹; which implies that every community possessed its own moot, and *ergo* its own accustomed place of meeting. If he definitely avers that the lower classes 'had no share whatever in any

¹ *Germ.* 11.

² *ibid.* 22.

³ *B.G.* v, 53, 4.

⁴ The term used by Strabo, § 197.

⁵ *Germ.* 11.

⁶ *Germ.* 11 and 37.

⁷ Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* i, 33; Green, *Making of England*, p. 172.

⁸ *Germ.* 11.

⁹ *ibid.* *ut turbae placuit*. It is not clear whether the conjunction means 'when,' 'where,' or 'in what order.'

¹⁰ *Commune Belgarum concilium* : *B.G.* 11,

4, 4; of the Suebi, *more suo*, iv, 19, 2, customary spring (*primo vere*) meetings of the *concilia Gallica*, vi, 3, 4; *concilium totius Galliae (liberae)*, i, 30, 4.

¹¹ *De republica nisi per concilium loqui non conceditur*, *B.G.* vi, 20, 3. Whether he has anything of public moment (*δημιῶν τι*) to report is the question asked by Aegyptius when Telemachus after long disuse summons a moot in Ithaca (*Odys.* ii, 32, 44). An anecdote in Cicero, *de Nat. Deorum*, ii, 2, 6, suggests that until 168 B.C. exactly the same rule prevailed in Rome as in Gaul.

debate',¹ this merely means that the privilege of speaking in the more important moots had been wholly usurped by the upper classes, as it had in Homeric Greece, while the rest were still compelled to 'assist' by their presence. For there are hints that any omission to attend the moot when summoned was sternly punished.

Once a year the Gauls held a Grand Assize. It was, it is clear, a very formal and solemn assembly indeed. There was no appeal from the verdict of the court, which was held in a *locus consecratus* in the territories of the Carnutes,² but seemingly not at a town. It was constituted, thinks Quicherat, by the chosen delegates from each tribe, elected in the tribal moot.³ As all primitive peoples, and many peoples who have advanced far beyond the primitive stage, have held their assemblies *sub divo*, the *locus consecratus* can have been nothing but an open-air precinct, a *templum*⁴ in the original sense of that word. It must have been equally a *focus religionis*,⁵ and the solemnity of the meeting, its rarity, the number and dignity of those attending it, the presence of the Archdruid in person and in effect the full 'chapter' of the druidical hierarchy, all point to its being a most emphatically 'holy' place.⁶ We must suppose the proceedings to have been marked by an elaborate ceremonial and ritual, and the place would show whatever were the external tokens of sanctity, but there would be none of those accessories of ornament which the word 'temple' suggests to modern minds. The altar would probably be a *bothros*. The moot-men were seated.⁷

Strabo says⁸ that the Celtic tribes of the Italian Cisalpina, mostly immigrants from Gaul, held an annual

¹ *B.G.* vi, 13, 1.

² Caesar, *B.G.* vi, 13, 5. The Carnutes significantly led the last grand native revolt of the Gauls in 52 B.C. (*B.G.* vii, 3).

³ *Bulletin Antiquaire de France*, 1882, p. 172. Caesar says simply that it was composed of Druids.

⁴ This fact has no more recondate origin than that such assemblies antedate the construction of any building large enough to hold them. The Greeks and the Romans followed the same rule to the end. So with religious matters: *ναός* and *templum* were merely the depositories of the ornaments and treasures of the particular divinity; the ritual went on always in the *τέμενος* and in the open air.

⁵ 'There can be little doubt that the church and temple of primitive society was the selfsame spot as the assembly-place of the people and the court of justice. The whole history of ancient law and early institutions tells us that this must be so.'—Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoors*, p. 59.

⁶ We are not explicitly told that the spot was each year the same, but such is the commonsense supposition. It was a characteristic of all paganism strictly to localize its religious sentiment; and this tendency is by no means confined to paganism.

⁷ *B.G.* vi, 13, 10, *considunt*.

⁸ § 216.

panegyris at Campi Macri between Rhegium Lepidi and Claterna, some six miles west of Mutina in the territories of the Boii. Again the scene of the gathering is not a town. The Gallo-Greeks, i.e. the Asiatic Celts of Galatia, held annual synods at a particular spot. This was so far fixed as to have its own name, Drynemetus, but was apparently not a town.¹ The synod was what modern Welshmen would call an *Eisteddfod*. Here 'in ancient times' assembled the council of the twelve tetrarchies of Galatia.² As we do not hear of Druidism in Galatia,³ we must conclude that the habit of holding such meetings was independent of Druidism, which elsewhere seized upon the habit to its own profit. In later times the great gathering of the Galatians was held at Ancyra, where were reproduced all the features of an Irish 'fair'—spectacles, athletic contests, religious ceremonies, feasting, all mixed up together.⁴ Of these Irish 'fairs' more will be said presently.⁵ In Gaul itself occurred a change exactly parallel to that in Galatia: the great gathering was transferred to Lugdunum (Lyons), and, its administrative functions largely or wholly lost, the lighter side of the proceedings took the greater prominence. There were few ordeals more severe to be faced by an aspirant to honours in literature or rhetoric than that of competing before this ancient *Eisteddfod*.⁶

The centrality of these three places of national assembly is very remarkable. That of the Gauls in the territory of the Carnutes, says Caesar,⁷ 'was accounted the centre of

¹ Strabo, § 567, *συνήγαγον δὲ εἰς τὸν καλούμενον Δρυνέμετον*. The latter part of the name is the Celtic *nemet*, *nemidb*, cognate with Latin *nemus* and meaning 'forest' in the sense in which the Normans used that word, 'unenclosed land not under cultivation,' 'pasture' (cf. *νομεύς*, *νέμειν*). Labbe has (anno 743) an edict *De sacris silvarum quas nimidas vocant*, and the form *nemet* occurs in a Breton charter as late as 1031. It enters into place-names in Britain, Gaul, Spain and Germany (Borlase, *Age of the Saints*, p. 76). The prefix *Dry-* has usually been connected with Gk. *δρῦς*, Welsh *derw*, 'oak,' but others interpret it as intensive, so that the name would denote 'moot of moots.'

² Its number was 300, i.e. 24 representatives of each tetrarchy, and the 12 tetrarchs in addition.

³ But the Celtic tendency to religious fanaticism was recalled in the name of *Galli* applied to the priests of Cybele: cf. Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, i, 386.

⁴ Boeckh, *Corpus Insc. Graec.*, no. 4039: Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Cb.* pp. 62-4.

⁵ Below, ch. xvii.

⁶ Juvenal, *Sat.* i, 43. *Palleat . . . ut Lugdunensem rhetor dicturus ad aram*: cf. Strabo, § 192. Here, too, was the characteristic admixture of religious with secular matters. The old Provençal 'Courts of Love' and contests of the Troubadours were the yet later representatives of this great annual meeting at Lyons; and these in turn have their representatives in the gatherings of the Felibridge and the 'Gay Company of Toulouse.'

⁷ *B.G.* vi, 13, 5.

Gaul.' It was at or near Chartres,¹ and if the Roman *provincia* be excluded, Chartres is in effect as central as the conditions admit. It is a probable inference that the practice of holding the moot at that spot arose at a date subsequent to the conquest of the *provincia* by Rome (c. 118 B.C.).² If, as Professor Lloyd remarks,³ the choice of the spot seems to have been made in the interests of some political object, this can scarcely have been other than the supremacy of the Belgae, who were at the time the paramount people of Gaul.

Similarly Campi Macri is to all intents central to Cisalpine Gaul, being almost equidistant from Turin, from Ancona, and from the Carnic Alps; and Drynemetus was in all likelihood similarly situated in regard to the three constituent tribes of the Galatae.⁴ A like centrality is still more remarkable in Stonehenge, of which the site, all but exactly equidistant from Land's End, from Holyhead, and from the north-east extremity of the Norfolk coast, can hardly be altogether a matter of accident.⁵ The greatest of the Irish stone circles, that of Mons Killaraus, 8 miles west of Mullingar, was likewise reputed to be *umbilicus Hiberniae, quasi in medio et meditullio terrae positus*.⁶

Strabo mentions⁷ precisely similar meetings amongst the half-Celtic peoples of Spain, in particular the Lusitani. He mentions⁸ also the all-night festivals of the Celtiberi and others at full moon.

To this day the Celts of Wales retain their annual *Eisteddfod*, with all the pomp and circumstance of Bards, Druids and Archdruids, and much ceremony which, if not

¹ So Kiepert. Others would place it at or near Dreux, 35 kil. to the north, where it is said, 'traces of these assemblies may still be found.'

² If the *Provincia* is included, the approximate centre of Gaul must be sought for more than 120 miles S. by E. from Chartres.

³ *Hist. Wales*, i, 44.

⁴ It is generally believed that Drynemetus was in the near vicinity of Ancyra, which lay in the *fines* of the Tectosages, equidistant from the furthest borders of the Trocmi, and of the Tolistoboi. Prof. Ramsay has now abandoned the view that the name survived in that of the monastery called (in

Acta S. Theodori) Μονή των Δρυινων, a few miles S. of Ancyra. See *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor*, p. 245; Pauly-Wissowa, V^a, 1746. According to Appian and Diod. Siculus, the three Galatian tribes were Cimbric.

⁵ Recent excavation in the 'Aubrey Holes' has proved that there once stood there a stone circle, seemingly of normal plan, but of exceptional size and regularity—precisely what was to be expected if it was the national moot of the Belgic Britons.

⁶ Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topog. Hiberniae*, iii, 4. See above, ch. x.

⁷ § 155.

⁸ § 164.

actually descended from ancient times, at any rate claims to be so. The *Eisteddfod* is the session¹ of the assembly for whatever purpose ; the place of assembly is *Eisteddfa* ; and no such assembly is strictly in order without its *Gorsedd*. Modern Druidism and the modern *gorsedd* may be artificial resuscitations, but that they reflect to some extent and in some of their details the immemorial customs of the Celts is beyond all doubt.

In the early laws and other writings of Wales, the *gorsedd* was a level space of *strictly circular plan*—the *Cylch Cynghrair*, ‘Circle of Federation’—demarcated by a ring of standing-stones. It must be in an entirely public situation, ‘in the face of the sun and in the eye of light.’ There was a ‘throne’ for the president, and the lesser members were seated in a circle around the *gorsedd*. At the present day there is constructed for each occasion a new and temporary *gorsedd* which has no seats,² the ceremony performed in it being but a brief and formal preliminary to the real business of the meeting, which is conducted in some convenient building near by ; for the business of the modern *eisteddfod* being no longer that of government, it is not tied to one particular spot, while many considerations commend a constant change of *rendezvous*.³ But in earlier times, the ceremonial and the business would be transacted at one or other of certain accustomed *loca consecrata*, and these would be no make-shifts, but permanent constructions. There is nothing to suggest that these were not prepared in much the same way.⁴ The plan would certainly be circular, but the construction being permanent, we should expect it to be somewhat more impressive in the details. There would be provision for seating the elders. The stones of its

¹ ‘Session’ is the literal meaning of *eisteddfod*.

² The Archdruid stands in the centre, beside the *maen-llog* (‘altar-stone’), theoretically a solid block, but actually in many cases built up. The lesser druids stand each beside one of the stones forming the circle. The *maen-llog* represents a stone altar, itself again replacing the still earlier *βωβός*. Where suitable stones are not available, the meeting may be held upon a circular mound or in a circular depression.

³ In modern times the scene of the next year’s *Eisteddfod* must be announced at the last preceding *Gorsedd*. There is but one *Eisteddfod* in the year, just as Gallic Druidism held but one Grand Assize, and the Cisalpine but one *πανηγυρίς*.

⁴ Gomme, *Primitive Folkmoths*, p. 98, transcribes from Owen Pugh’s translation of *Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces of Llywarch Hen* a detailed account of the correct construction of a *gorsedd* and the procedure thereat.

peristalith, if it had one, would be large. Fosse or vallum there would be none, for it was of the essence of the primitive court that it should be open to all. To this day a court of justice is a public place, and so it has always been save where abuse has made it a court of injustice. Quite consistently, therefore, the *gorsedd* must be situated in open ground, and in earlier times commonly stood on a site sufficiently raised to afford an outlook over the surrounding land.¹ A precinct so situated and so demarcated would be equally suited for the purposes of ritual and of justice, for the promulgation of laws, for debate, for every kind of public business; and it would not be surprising if the scene of the Grand Assize of Druidism amongst the Carnutes should turn out to have been just such a construction.

If there remains to-day no known trace of any such monument at or near Chartres,² that again is not surprising. Chartres is the capital of La Beauce, the widest and most fertile of all the 'cornfields green' of the 'pleasant land of France,' and cultivation may long ago have completed there such damage as is still going on upon Salisbury Plain. The Chartrois maintain that their superb cathedral stands upon the site of a Celtic temple, where was worshipped 'a maiden goddess who should bear a child,' the Black Virgin of Chartres, a figure of whom, now in the crypt, is still the most venerated object in the church.³ This figure is a modern substitute for an original which was destroyed by iconoclasts of the Revolution, itself quite possibly a veritable relic of the later days of Celtic paganism, when Roman example had introduced *signa* in lieu of *simulacra*. It may have represented some tutelary of the spot, whom Christianity adopted and christened by another name.

No man summoned before the Grand Assize might

¹ See the *Story of Pryll Prince of Dyfed* (one of the oldest in the collection called the *Mabinogion*) and what befell him at the Gorsedd yn Arberth (Narberth in Pembroke-shire). It is described as 'a mound above the palace.' The term *gorsedd* occurs in the *Cynddelw* of Aneurin, commonly attributed to the sixth century. The word is common in Welsh place-names, and usually attaches to a mound, whether artificial or natural. See *Inventory, Flintshire*, nos. 40, 182, 269 (two tumuli called

Gorseddau), 328 ('a raised elliptical earth-work').

² At Chartres, wrote Fergusson (*Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 5), 'megalithic remains are few and far between.' The fact that he was not aware of anything there which answers to the requirements of the case is not proof that it does not exist, and still less is it proof that nothing of the sort ever existed.

³ Baedeker's *Northern France*.

disobey the summons. As no single court could well deal with the mass of cases arising in the course of twelve months in a country so extensive as was Gaul, the court can have concerned itself only with cases of certain kinds and of a certain dignity. The bulk of minor cases must have been dealt with locally by the Druids of the particular district ; and if so, there must have been provision for such minor courts all over the country.

An edict of the Council of Tours (567) mentions the *loca designata gentilium*, which so long ago as 1769 Dr. Borlase interpreted to mean 'ancient accustomed places where the remains of Druidism were practised for many years after Christianity had become the national religion of Gaul.'¹ The phrase certainly denotes definite places of a definite purpose, and that purpose in part religious.

The religion and ritual of the Gauls and of the Germans were much the same.² Neither people built roofed temples, until led to do so by foreign (Roman) influence, yet both had definite holy places. Neither made statues of its deities, and both employed symbols such as trees and stones. The holy places of the Gauls, and the symbols of their favourite divinity, were to be seen everywhere, says Caesar. As in Germany the priests seem to have exercised in the moot an authority which they did not elsewhere enjoy, one infers that the moot was in a special sense a *locus consecratus*. So it certainly was with the Carnutes,³ and one is reminded of the position of the *gode* in the Icelandic *ting* (ch. vii). Tacitus says little of any priests in Germany. They existed, but were of small importance.⁴ Caesar has even less to say of any priests in Gaul, although the Gauls in general were 'given over to superstitious observances.'⁵ In Germany the women-folk acted as diviners,⁶ and Gaul also had its women priests in the Isle of Sena (p. 307). Under druidical

¹ *Antiquities of Cornwall* (2nd ed.), p. 121. Tours is not remote from Chartres. Borlase cites also a similar edict of the Council of Nantes (Labbe, ix, 474, and other references).

² Prof. Rhys was led towards the same conclusion in his *Lectures* (1888), though hesitating to grasp its significance. After contrasting the systematised Celtic Druidism with the unorganised religion of the Germans, he remarks (p. 226) that 'this

manner of reasoning would presuppose the Celts and Teutons to be of the same race.' Borlase (*Antiqs. of Cornwall*) had, a century earlier, surmised the religions of the two peoples to be essentially the same.

³ *B.G.* vi, 13, 10.

⁴ *Germ.* 10, 11, 40, 43.

⁵ *B.G.* i, 16, 1.

⁶ *B.G.* i, 50, 4 ; Strabo, § 294 ; Tacitus, *Germ.* 8.

control ritual in Gaul had become elaborate. In the Britain of his time, says Tacitus,¹ the religion and the ritual of the people at large were so much like those of the Gauls as to bear out the view that the Britons were themselves immigrant from Gaul. Human sacrifice was part of the recognized order of things in Germany. The Gauls also practised it, but they so far tempered religion with justice as preferably to sacrifice the undesirables of the community, thieves and others, but failing these they would make shift with innocent lives.² Some of the tribes caged their human victims within huge figures of wattle and burnt the whole.³ Such ritual was probably reserved for exceptional occasions and grave crises, though the practice would vary with the different tribes. In any case it is a proof of cruelty only, not of savagery, and it had nothing whatever to do with Druidism as such. Druidism indeed, with the amplest opportunities to indulge in bloodshed, preferably contented itself with outlawry.⁴

The favourite Gallic divinities were 'Mercury' and 'Mars,'⁵ and representations (*simulacra*) of Mercury were very common.⁶ The names here used by Caesar are, of course, those of the Roman divinities most nearly corresponding. The resemblance, which need not have been very exact, must have been found either in the iconic representations of these deities, or in their attributes. Caesar says the Gauls had many representations of their favourite god, using for these the same word (*simulacra*) as he used for the wattled figures in which were sacrificed the holocausts previously described. Such wattled figures could scarcely be portrait-statues (*signa*⁷); they must have been 'something representing' one or other of the gods; and the word presumably has the same force when used of those representations of Mercury. In this sense the *simulacrum* might be anything from a tree-trunk to a stone.⁸

¹ *Agricola*, 11.

² *B.G.* vi, 16, 5.

³ *B.G.* vi, 16, 4; Strabo (§ 198) calls the figure 'a colossus of timber and grass.' It has been argued that the reference cannot be to wattled figures because it was impossible to make them large enough. The Gauls, familiar with wicker huts, would have no difficulty in making a wicker cage big enough to hold a large number of victims.

⁴ *B.G.* vi, 13, 6. This so-called 'excommunication' survived long in the ceremonial cursing of the Irish Druids. There was something similar in Germany; see Tacitus, *Germ.* 6, *ad fin.*

⁵ *B.G.* vi, 17, 1.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ This is the word used by Caesar's purist contemporary Cicero for a portrait-statue.

⁸ The chief deity of the Boeotian Chaeroneans was simply a spear (Paus. ix, iv, 11-12)

Celtic paganism was in its native form aniconic, representing its divinities not in the shape of statues but symbolically only, as, we are told, the Celts saw in the oak-tree the greatest of all their deities.¹ When Cormac MacArt, king of all Ireland, died in 254, an apostate from Druidism, he desired his people not to bury him in the accustomed cemetery of his line at Brugh na Boinne, for 'he did not adore stones and trees, and did not worship the same god' as did his forbears.² As the line of Cormac is believed to have been Belgic, the inference is that the Belgic Gauls, in Caesar's time the foremost exponents of Druidism, still represented their gods by the *simulacra* of stocks and stones at a date three centuries later. Any fancied resemblance between the Gaulish and the Roman divinities must therefore have been found in their respective attributes. There is a general agreement that the Gaulish 'Mercury' was identical with the Germanic Othin (Odin, Woden, Wotan). Tacitus³ equates with Mercury the great god of the trans-Rhenish Germans; and Paulus Diaconus some eight centuries later says that the Teutonic Wotan was the same as the Roman Mercury.⁴ It is clear that the great god of the Gauls and the great god of the Germans were very much alike. As Tacitus explicitly says that the German tribes made no images of their gods, and as no such thing is known as a possible German idol of that date, there is the more reason to believe that the resemblance to Mercurius must have been found in their several attributes alone, and that the Celt, like the German, saw his divinity in symbols only. Woden was the Germanic god of boundaries, as Mercurius was the Roman god thereof; and as Mercurius' presentment might be a herm, or a mere unhewn stone, the *plurima simulacra* of the Gaulish god may have been nothing but so many stones, *menhirs* for example, and exactly parallel with the Greek *hermae*,

and the Three Graces at Orchomenus were represented by three shapeless stones (*ibid.* ix, 38, 1).

¹ Maximus Tyrius, *Dissert.* xxxviii, ἀγαλμα δὲ Διὸς Κελτικὸν ὑψηλῆ ὄρου.

² *Leabhar na l'Uidhre*; see Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 72. There is not sufficient evidence to justify the assertion that Cormac had become a Christian, and such a thing is unlikely. He had, perhaps, adopted an iconic form of

religion picked up from his considerable acquaintance with Roman Britain, where he is said to have spent three years of his life (*Annals of Ulster, anno 222*).

³ *Germ.* 9.

⁴ *de Gestis Langobardorum*, i, 9: *Wotan . . . ipse est qui apud Romanos Mercurius dicitur*. So Geoffrey of Monmouth (vi, 10) makes Hengist speak of 'Mercury, whom in our language we call Woden.'

which, according to Herodotus, were a 'Pelasgian' (i.e. non-Greek) invention, and in Arcadia represented not Hermes, but Zeus, who was a Celtic divinity.¹

Caesar, who knew Gaul from end to end, makes no mention of any temples whatever. Strabo twice speaks of them (ἱερά). He says² that the Gauls habitually crucified human victims 'in their temples.' There is little to go upon, but one would suppose the victims to be exposed to the public view, and that, therefore, a *temenos* is here meant rather than a roofed building; and the Greek word (ἱερόν) means no more than a 'holy place,' not necessarily a building. In the same passage he speaks of a 'temple' in the Isle of the Women-Priests off the mouth of the Loire, which was once a year ceremonially unroofed and again roofed within the same day before sundown. In this case he is repeating a traveller's tale, which he did not himself believe³; but if the facts were as told him, they suggest only a very small building, or perhaps rather a βοθρός, and a ceremony analogous to the solemn opening and closing of the *Mundus* and of the *Ara Consi* in Rome. The Germanic tribes in general, Tacitus says, 'build no temples, nor make any idols in human form. They consecrate certain clearings amid their pasture-grounds to this or that divinity, whose presence they see with the eye of faith only.'⁴ Elsewhere he specifies

¹ Under Roman influence the Celt, both in Gaul and in Britain, speedily came to make images of his deities, and there seems to have been an intermediate stage in which the gods were represented in the forms of animals such as the bear, the horse, and particularly the boar. Moccus, a title of the Gaulish Mercury, is the Welsh *mocbyn*, 'pig'; and that animal, says Prof. Anwyl (*Celtic Religion*, p. 31), holds a place of honour in Celtic legend even in historical times: St. Cadoc is guided to the site of his monastery by a wild boar (*Vita S. Cadoci*, 5), and Walafrid Strabo (*Vita S. Galli*) relates how St. Gall made alliance with a bear for the protection of his oratory near Bregenz. Other seemingly sacred creatures were the mule, the raven, and possibly the horned serpent. Such facts lend point to the remark of Gildas (*Hist. Brit.* § 4) that the gods of the British Celts were 'almost more numerous than those of Egypt.' Figures of some of them, he says, were still to be seen in his own time (sixth century), mouldering in their forsaken temples.

² § 198.

³ For he goes on to tell another story with the remark that it is 'still more like a fairy-tale (ἐπι μυθωδέστερον).' The tale about the Isle of the Women-Priests comes also in Pomponius Mela (iii, 6). The island was that of Sena (Sein), off the Point du Raz in Lower Brittany, which is in reality 140 m. distant from the outfall of the Loire. Sir John Rhys (*Lectures*, pp. 1967) wrote that this annual unroofing of the sanctuary 'clearly implies that originally it had no roof but the sky.' There is no analogy with the fact that many Greek temples remained closed the year through, excepting upon the single feast-day of the patronal divinity, as e.g. the Thesmophorion, Eleusinion and Lenaion in Athens, and the Theban temples of Dionysus the Deliverer (Pausanias, ix, 16, 6) and Mother Dindymene (ibid. ix, 25, 3).

⁴ *Germ.* 9. The word here translated 'clearing' is *lucus*, that rendered 'pasture-grounds' is *nemus*, for which cp. *nemed*, p. 300, n. 1, above. It follows that such *loca*

a *silva Herculi sacra*¹ near the Weser, a *lucus quem Baduhennae vocant*² among the Frisians, a sacred *silva* of the Semnones,³ and a *castum nemus* consecrated to Nerthus.⁴ To the *silva* of the Semnones he refers again in the same passage as *templum*, and elsewhere, in speaking of the Marsi, he talks of a *templum quod Tanfanae vocabant*,⁵ which Germanicus 'levelled with the ground.' If he used the word *templum* here in the common acceptation of that term, we must suppose that the Marsi had 'copied from Roman models during a familiarity of 80 years'⁶; but it is quite as likely that he used it in its proper sense of 'precinct.' The scene of the massacre of Varus' legions⁷ was in the immediate neighbourhood of a *locus consecratus*: near by were *luci et barbarae arae*, 'altars of these barbarians set up in clearings,' and all about them were to be seen the bones of the legionaries who had been crucified or buried alive, while the heads of others had been nailed to the trunks of the trees. Nothing is said of any *templum* here, yet the spot was indubitably such to the Germans.⁸ The Hermunduri, he says,⁹ having conquered the Chatti in battle, sacrificed their entire army—horses and men and all—to the gods Mars and Mercury, precisely as Cæsar tells us was the custom¹⁰ of the Gauls; and Arminius would seem to have dealt in the same way with Varus' men. When Tacitus wrote that 'the temple of Tanfana was levelled to the ground,' he probably meant that the trees of the *lucus*, and the *barbarae arae* therein, were destroyed. That some at least of these *luci ac nemora* were such in the literal sense, is proved by his assertion that studs of white horses which were never broken to harness were kept there¹¹; and this further suggests that some sort of fence surrounded the place.

The Germans, says Tacitus, went into battle with certain *effigies et signa*¹² brought from their holy places

consecrata were not to be looked for in the towns.

¹ *Annales*, ii, 12.

² *Ann.* iv, 73. Grimm connects with *Badu*, 'battle.'

³ *Germ.* 39.

⁴ *Germ.* 40.

⁵ *Ann.* i, 50-51. It was somewhere near Dortmund, says Fumeaux *ad loc.*

⁶ Keysler, *Northern Antiquities*, p. 80.

⁷ *Ann.* i, 61.

⁸ Of the use of masonry of any kind, or even of tiles, in their domestic buildings the Germans knew nothing (*Germ.* 16). So far as these were buildings at all they were of timber, but often they were mere *souterrains* heaped over with a roof of litter (*ibid.*).

⁹ *Ann.* xiii, 57.

¹⁰ *B.G.* vi, 17, 3-4.

¹¹ *Germ.* 10.

¹² *Germ.* 7.

(*luci*). As he had previously said that they had no anthropomorphic idols, these must have been symbols only.

To the various divinities were offered *animalia conce-sa*, that is, the kind of animal appointed for each, while to Wotan were sacrificed human victims also.¹ H. M. Chadwick (*Religion of Odin*) shews that the sacrifice of human victims by hanging was the principal feature in Wotan's worship. So one understands why trees were desirable adjuncts to the 'temple,' and why the Saxon saw in Stonehenge nothing more romantic than 'Stone Gallows,' for such appears to be the meaning of the name.

The most remarkable difference between the two peoples was in their attitude towards death: to waste wealth and labour upon 'monuments,' i.e. barrows and their accessories, the Germans regarded as derogatory to the dead,² whereas the Gauls took precisely the opposite view.³ With the Gauls cremation was the general practice; among the Germans, as in Scandinavia, it was mainly reserved for the upper classes.⁴ The German grave was merely a mound of turf⁵; the barrows of the Celts, as has been shewn,⁶ tended always to become more and more imposing. This 'luxury of grief' was probably Iberian, for it is not discoverable east of the Rhine. The fact helps to explain the difference between the moots of the Germans and those of the Gauls, for the moot was modelled upon the grave.

CHAPTER XIII.

DRUIDISM.

Druidism not a Religion—Of Belgic Origin—Its Headquarters in Britain—Its Educational Syllabus—The Three Orders—Kano—Caesar's Estimate of Druidism—Prof. Lloyd's Views—Derivation of 'Druid'—'Drycraeft' and 'Circolcraeft'—Stone Circles as associated with Druidism.

About Druidism there has been written so much nonsense that even Science has of late become afraid to

¹ *Germ.* 9.

² *Germ.* 27.

³ *B.G.* vi, 19, 4.

⁴ O. Montelius, *Civilization of Sweden in*

Heathen Times; Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, i, 536.

⁵ *Germ.* 27. *Sepulchrum caespes erigit.*

⁶ Above, chap. iii.

approach the subject,¹ and the mere mention of it mostly excites only mistrust. There are, however, two totally distinct Druidisms : the one is that of popular imagination, a *farrago* of morbidity and theatricality blended of misunderstandings, misquotations, and unwarrantable assumptions ; the other is that of which Caesar wrote, the system prevalent in Gaul as he knew it. Caesar may now and again have been misled, but no one could justifiably accuse him of a general lack of understanding. He wrote his all too brief notes upon the subject partly from the first-hand observations of eight strenuous years, partly perhaps from the information of his friend Diviciacus the Aeduan, himself apparently a Druid.² If this be so, Diviciacus evidently did not think Caesar a man to be impressed by the morbid, for Caesar lays no stress upon that side of the matter. On the other hand, Diviciacus could scarcely hope to deceive Caesar by any wilful *suppressio veri*. It may be that, as some think, he was concerned to make out the best possible case for his own people, and with that object erred, perhaps, by way of *suggestio falsi*. But again, Caesar was no fool ; he was not more likely to be misled by ' false philosophy ' than by the rattling of bones. He thought the matter of sufficient importance to be considered at some length in his *Commentaries*,³ and his account of it may be accepted as substantially correct.

Druidism was not a religion,⁴ but an organisation (*disciplina*), which made of religion a means to political power, a trick familiar to most ancient peoples and to not a few modern ones. Caesar carefully distinguished between the two.⁵ There is no trace of Druidism amongst the Celts of Spain, of Italy, or of Galatia⁶ ; and as the last-named migrated from cis-Rhenish Gaul as late as 280, Druidism must have been of later introduction⁷ in Gaul.

¹ Dr. Borlase could make the same complaint a century and a half ago (*Antiqs. of Cornwall*, preface, p. vi).

² See Cicero, *de Divinatione*, i, 10, where he is spoken of as the companion and fellow-guest of Cicero in the house of a mutual friend. It is clear that he was no barbarian, and there is nothing in Cicero's language to suggest that the Roman augur regarded him as a charlatan.

³ *B.C.* vi, 13-14.

⁴ Fustel de Coulanges, *La Gaule Romaine*, p. 111. But even so early as Lucan's time it had become confused with religion (*Pharsalia*, i, 450).

⁵ The *Commentaries* treat of Druidism in vi, 13-14, of religion in vi, 16-17. So de Coulanges, remarking that the Gaulish religion went on when Druidism was dead.

⁶ Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, i, p. 386.

⁷ cp. de Coulanges, *op. cit.* p. 27.

Even in Caesar's time it seems to have had small influence in Aquitania and the Narbonnaise, and E. Desjardins¹ denies that it ever reached so far. The Aquitani were still predominantly Iberian,² the Narbonnaise had long been under Roman influence. As one went northward it grew always more actual, but was unknown amongst the trans-Rhenane Germans.³ These facts point to an origin amongst the latest of the Germanic invaders, the Belgae; and with this accords the fact that Caesar found the Belgae, and specifically the paramount tribe of the Bellovaci, to be the most stubborn element in the resistance to the Roman arms. Consistent with this view is the choice of Autricum Carnutum as the meeting-place of the annual Grand Assize, for Autricum is in fact, as Caesar was asked to believe, 'pretty well the centre of Gaul,' if the Roman Provincia (Narbonensis) be excluded: it is almost equidistant from the Rhine on the east, from the extremity of Brittany on the west, from the outfall of the Rhine on the north, and from the frontiers of Narbonensis on the south. It is central, therefore, to so much of Gaul as is known to have come under Belgic hegemony, whereas, if it had represented a power co-extensive with Gaul as far as the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees, the site selected would have been 100 miles further southward in the neighbourhood of Bourges. Consistent also is the indisputable fact that, the Belgae once conquered, Druidism as a power disappears from Gaul. It was apparently a purely political organisation, and as purely Belgic in origin. Organisation is to this day a strong point with the Germans, as religion is not. Where Druidism prevailed it had usurped equally the powers of the priests and the prerogatives of kings: there was never a sacrifice without its assistance,⁴ and it monopolised the sovereign prerogative of justice; and it had influence enough to secure immunity both from military service and from taxation.⁵

Caesar was given to understand that it first took shape

¹ *Geographie de la Gaule Romaine*, ii, 519. But Strabo (§ 197) says it was ubiquitous more or less (*παρά πᾶσιν ὡς ἐπιταύ*).

² The view that Druidism was of Iberian origin arises from the confusion of Druidism with religion. Celtic religion was perhaps

in great part Iberian, especially in the exaggerated importance attached to death and the dead. Druidism was not Iberian.

³ *B.G.* vi, 21, 1.

⁴ Strabo, § 198.

⁵ *B.G.* vi, 14, 1.

in Britain.¹ He was in a position to know the truth, and there is no evidence to contradict him. It arose, therefore, amongst the Belgae of southern Britain, and there in its isolation it continued to flourish while in Gaul it lost ground before Roman influence. When Gaul was conquered British Druidism remained to nurse the spirit of contumacy until (A.D. 43) Claudius undertook the conquest of the island expressly to break the system.² Falling back to Anglesey, it was there wiped out by Suetonius Paulinus (A.D. 61). Thereafter one hears of it only in the remote north (Aberdeenshire) and in Ireland. In Pictish Aberdeenshire it seems to have been well organised, if not of far-reaching power, as also amongst the Firbolgs of Tara; but in neither area did it ever become really great. The Goidelic and Iberian peoples did not readily submit to it.

In Caesar's time its headquarters were certainly in Britain—in what precise part of Britain we are not told—for the disciples of the system mostly went from Gaul thither to be trained for their work. These disciples were numerous. The education was entirely oral, the system setting its face against books, partly as likely to divulge esoteric doctrines, partly as being destructive to the memory.³ Of the educational syllabus we have only a sketch that is tantalising in its vagueness. It taught the immortality of the soul,⁴ the doctrine of transmigration, a good deal of astronomy, geodesy⁵ and physics,⁶ and, of course, theology, poetry and music. As the Druids had usurped the judiciary, the curriculum must have included also law and jurisprudence. Augury and divination were

¹ *B.G.* vi, 13, 11.

² So W. T. Arnold, *Roman Provincial Administration* (Oxford, 1906), p. 152, who speaks of Claudius as 'persecuting' Druidism because of its 'political significance,' and refers to Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.

³ The former was the real reason. Druidism took up the same position as the Athenian and Roman oligarchies when they refused to have the law put into writing, and as the Roman Catholic Church when it forbade the rendering of the Scriptures into the vernacular: cp. Wills Bund, *Celtic Church of Wales*, p. 121. The same secretiveness is illustrated by the ignorance of the Gauls about Britain (*B.G.* iv, 20, 2-4).

⁴ So say Strabo, Caesar, Diodorus Siculus, Lucan, and Pomponius Mela.

⁵ Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* vi, 14, 6, *de mundi ac terrarum magnitudine*. So Pomponius Mela, ii, 2. This certainly does not mean geography. Geodesy is defined as 'that part of geometry and trigonometry which applies to the measuring of whole countries or very large tracts of land, and to the admeasurement of a degree of the meridian.' Caesar, perhaps, meant to suggest that the druidical astronomy was chiefly applied astronomy, and that they made a special study of land-surveying. As has been seen, there is evidence to bear this out.

⁶ Caesar (*loc. cit.*) *de rerum natura*. The precise meaning is again doubtful. Cicero (*de Divin.* i, 10) says of the Druid Diviciacus that *naturae rationem, quam physiologiam Graeci appellant, notam esse sibi profitebatur*.

likewise taught: Cicero says¹ that Diviciacus claimed the power to foretell the future, and Pliny says² that the Druids were 'so much given over to magic that they might well pass for the teachers of the Persian *magi*.'

There were three orders in the druidical hierarchy. Of these the Bards were concerned only with production; they were 'composers—particularly composers of hymns, ὕμνηται καὶ ποιηταί.³ The Vates were the officiating priesthood (ἱεροποιοί) and also masters of 'physics'. The fully-qualified Druids added to physics the study of moral philosophy, and acted as judges. So says Strabo,⁴ and the statement is in no wise unreasonable. The system, it would seem, was the forerunner, if not the direct ancestor, of the present-day system of graduation in law, theology, medicine, science and letters.

The educational system of druidism was as thoroughly organised as the administrative and the political system. That numbers of young Gauls, many of them of high birth, flocked to Britain to study—they were the university men of their day, and their education was sometimes a matter of some 20 years—implies necessarily the existence of systematic schools, with all the needful concomitants. Druidism must have had its equivalents for professors, lectures, class-rooms, courses, examinations and degrees. The students must have required lodgings also, and if their numbers were really so large, this means that each educational centre was a community in itself, a 'college.'⁵ The druidical educational system must have been something very closely resembling monasticism, that is, the form of monasticism which became presently so remarkable a feature in the early Christianity of Ireland and Wales. In fact, wherever Druidism was established, there appeared in succession thereto the Celtic form of monasticism.⁶

¹ *de Divin.* i, 10.

² *Nat. Hist.* xxx, 1.

³ Tacitus, *Germ.* 3, mentions a form of battle-chanting called *barditus*, which must be related to the term 'Bard.'

⁴ § 197. Pre-eminence in 'justice' seems to have been the Druid's practical ideal.

⁵ Ammianus quotes Timagenes as saying that the Druids lived in confraternities like those of the Pythagoreans. Pomponius Mela adds that they carried on their educational

work 'in caves or in secluded groves.' In a rainy and cold climate such rudimentary shelter was distinctly desirable.

⁶ Baring Gould in *Arch. Cambr.* 5th ser. xvii (1900). One very prominent feature of early Celtic Christianity was the 'mixed' monastery of monks and nuns, and another was the persistence of marriage among the clergy. The latter held its ground in England until the very eve of the Reformation, after which event it was at once re-established—only

Those who question the likelihood of the coexistence of any such intellectual activity with an otherwise backward and even barbarous civilisation, may find parallels in history both ancient and modern. One is that provided by the Ireland of the sixth to ninth centuries, when a people, who in morals and economy were unqualified savages, carried to an amazing height letters and certain of the applied arts. The other is furnished by West Africa: when the first white entered the Fulah city of Kano in Nigeria towards the close of the nineteenth century, he found a naked black professor in his class-room expounding to a throng of naked black pupils the philosophy of Aristotle.

Caesar, himself an augur and Pontifex Maximus, might have been expected to be the first to sneer at the quackeries of rival diviners, but in fact he speaks of Druidism with respect only, and like Cicero, who was also an augur, he counted the Druid Diviciacus amongst his personal friends. Of its alleged barbarities he says never a word. As a politician he admired its amazing political efficiency, and it appealed to him also as an aristocrat and as a man of extraordinary intellectual powers. If he does not frequently mention it in his narrative of the conquest of Gaul that is because it was no part of the normal Gallic polity, as were 'senate,' 'people,' and *rex*, but an adventitious growth. It was a larger and infinitely more powerful form of those political clubs which were familiar in old Greece and in old Rome. Like those it owed much of its power to its secrecy, but the more real sources of its strength were two-fold: it admitted only picked men, and it educated them most thoroughly. Probably there was never so thorough a system, even in the greatest days of Roman Catholic supremacy, and the fall of Druidism was in its day an event as cataclysmic as the dissolution of the monasteries.

To hold with Professor Lloyd¹ that Roman imagination was chiefly impressed by the grim theatricalities of the Druidism of vulgar imagination is impossible: the Romans were not the men to be impressed by human sacrifices, things by no means unknown in their own history. The

one of many points in which the Anglican has reverted to its true ancestor the Celtic Church. Irish Druids were allowed to marry, although we do not hear much of

female Druids. The women-priests of Sena (Strabo, § 198) are not styled 'druidesses.'

¹ *Hist. Wales*, i, pp. 42-46.

cause of attraction must have been something different, and nothing is more likely than that it was primarily the complete organisation and consequent political power of Druidism. Nor can one well agree with Professor Lloyd that 'Druidism represents, not the high-water mark of early British civilisation, but a survival from the less civilised past¹'; and when he contrasts² 'the enlightened and philosophical form of Druidism' described by Caesar, with the 'true and unadulterated' variety as presented by Tacitus.³ The Druidism of the refugees in Mona can scarcely have been more like Druidism at its best than was that which Caesar described in the days of its power a century earlier.

Mention has been made (p. 306) of Maximus Tyrius' assertion that the oak-tree was the Celtic symbol of Zeus, as it was also a Roman symbol of Jupiter.⁴ There is no question that the Celts regarded the tree with veneration: Pliny gives⁵ at some length details of the ceremony of cutting the mistletoe-bough from the parent oak, and Strabo mentions⁶ the 'Field of Oaks,' Drynemetus, which was the meeting-place of the Asiatic Gauls. Sir Arthur Evans was at one time prepared to believe that a sacred oak was the central object within the *limes* of Stonehenge. The matter bears upon the vexed question of the origin of the name of Druid. The modern view, which works exclusively upon the principle *placet difficillima lectio*, would explain the word as meaning 'exceeding wise, learned men,'⁷ yet in view of the admitted prominence of the oak-tree in Celtic ritual, it would be sheer affectation to brush aside the suggestion of any connexion between *Druid* and *derw*, 'oak.' Sir John Rhys accepted it,⁸ H. Munro Chadwick approves it,⁹ and Macbain flatly says¹⁰ that the derivation of *druid* from *derw* is still 'the only one worth consideration.' Probably the confusion

¹ *ibid.* p. 46.

² *ibid.* p. 44.

³ *Annals*, xiv, 30.

⁴ Plutarch, *Romulus*: cp. Vergil, *Georg.* iii, 332, *magna Iovis antiquo robore quercus*, and in Achean Greece the famous oaks of Dodona.

⁵ *Hist. Nat.* xii, v. 1.

⁶ § 567.

⁷ Whitley Stokes connected 'druid' with Welsh *dryw* 'wren'—one of the augural birds of Celtism—and these with the German *treu*, Eng. 'true.' Thus 'druid' would mean 'man of truth,' a meaning quite accordant with their claim to be above all 'seekers after justice.'

⁸ *Lectures*, p. 221.

⁹ *Journal Anthropol. Inst.* 1900, p. 34.

¹⁰ *Celtic Mythology*, p. 154.

between the two is almost as old as Druidism itself, even if the correct derivation be other.¹ It is not a matter which in the least affects the argument of this book, but it is pertinent to remark that the thing which we call popular etymology is not peculiar to modern times, and that, therefore, it is in the highest degree likely that the confusion between 'wise man' and 'man of the oak-tree' may go back to a very remote period indeed. It may be that philology is correct in asserting that Druid really means 'wise man,' but it may be equally true that as early as the days of Pliny the mass of even the Celts themselves had come to find another meaning in the name. Popular etymology being still so active in these days of universal education, it is absurd to pretend that it was not active in the days when Druidism kept knowledge strictly to itself.²

As St. Columba, so late as the sixth century, could still call the Almighty 'my Druid,' that is, my wonder-worker, it is plain that no derogatory sense as yet attached to the word; and if in subsequent times it came to bear a wholly bad sense, such was the necessary consequence of the identification of Druidism with paganism, and with knowledge and powers not to be commanded by common men. It is the fate of those whose intelligence is in advance of their times that less intelligent folk should associate them with the Devil and black magic, this being, in fact, the highest tribute that ignorance can pay to knowledge. In this perverted form the memory of the intellectual abilities of the Druids lingered on for centuries amongst the Saxons, and *dry-craeft* is found not merely in the *Orosius* of the enlightened Alfred, but even three centuries later in the Saxon *Exodus*³ (circa 1250).

Caesar is witness that in the last days of Gallic paganism

¹ E. C. Quiggin in *Encycl. Britann.* asserts that no ancient form of the word for Druid is known in Welsh, and that the Welsh *derwydd* and *dryw*, Breton *drouiz* and *druz*, are 'all probably of modern coinage.' Prof. Lloyd (*Hist. Wales*, i, 42) declares that no connexion can be established with *derwa*, the Celtic original of *derw* 'oak,' or its congeners *dari*, *darik*, *daru*, of the same meaning. How the sacred tree and the sacred stones might be associated in one *limes* is sufficiently indicated by the story (Rhys, *Lectures*, p. 191) of Diarmait's

coming to 'a great tree, laden with fruit, over-topping all the other trees of the plain. It was surrounded at a little distance by a circle of pillar-stones, and one stone, taller than the others, stood in the centre near the tree.'

² 'Modern linguistic research,' writes Sir W. Ridgeway, 'has too often worked much mischief to historical enquiries' (*Early Age of Greece*, i, 352).

³ vii, 11, rendering the 'enchantments' of the Egyptian priests.

the Druids controlled the moot; and as the moot itself was frequently a stone circle, it was inevitable that folk-memory should associate the two. In this way *circol-craeft* might come to be a synonym for *dry-craeft*.

The ultimate virtue aimed at by the druidical *disciplina* was justice. The Druids were the justices of their time. As nothing was done without their intervention they must have been accessible. Further, as the one immemorial court of justice was the moot, the Druids must have been as ubiquitous as the moot, and there must have been Druids in every community where the system was prevalent; for every community of necessity had its own moot. The moot was also the scene of all communal ritual, and the Druids had usurped the position of the priests, making profit of that superstition to which 'all the Celtic peoples were given over.' We have learnt what was the form of the moot, and may therefore recognise in the constant attribution of the stone circles to the Druids a genuine folk-memory that the stone circles were moots.¹ As the other evidence has led to precisely the same conclusion, one may believe the conclusion to be correct. If tradition does not so consistently associate the Druids with other forms of the moot, with the *circus* and the mound-moot, the reason is that these are not as a rule so striking as are the gaunt stones of the great circles. As other forms attract little notice now, so probably they mostly went unnoticed in earlier times, and in any case they were not, as were the stone circles, the characteristic moots of the Belgic tribes from whom Druidism came.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CIMBRI AND THEIR KINDRED.

Homeric Acheans identical with the Cimmerii—And with the Hyperboreans—Hecataeus' 'Isle of Hyperboreans' = Britain—Cimmerii = Cimbri—'Debacle' of the Cimbri—Their 'sedes' in Jutland—Intercourse between Jutland and Ancient Greece—Later History of the Cimbri—The

¹ For the moot was the traditional scene of that justice whereof the Druids were the recognised interpreters. Father Smiddy asserts (*Essay on the Druids*, p. 265) that

the popular Irish name for the stone circles is *cuaírt an Droí*, 'circles of the Druids.'

Belgae a Cimbric People—The Empire of the Cimbri—Caesar's 'Belgica'—The 'Belgae' and Britain—The Cimbri as Builders—The 'Spatia' of the Cimbri—Cimbri in Britain—The Verterae Inscription—Ethnology of the Picts—Painting and Tattooing—Language of the Picts—The Picts late-comers to Scotland—Picts in Ireland—The Firbolgs and the Tuatha De Danann—Picts and Picards—Stone-circle of Pays de Lalloeu—The Danes in Procopius—Danes, Danaans, and De Danann—Picts the builders of the Aberdeenshire Circles—Their Civilisation—Extent of their Power—Pictish and Mycenaean Art—A Nation of Builders—The Legendary Empire of King Arthur.

In Homer's *Odyssey*¹ the Cimmerians are spoken of as a martial race, ἄνδρες Κυμμέριοι, dwelling on the shores of the River of Ocean,² in a land of mist and cloud, beyond which is that of darkness and the dead. In later Greek mythology the dead dwell *beneath* the earth, and to represent them as gathered into some land of *outer* darkness is a Nordic way of thinking.³ The incongruity of the appearance of such a trait in the *Odyssey* is not the least of the difficulties resolved by Sir W. Ridgeway's brilliant identification of the Homeric Achæans as a Nordic race who had brought with them into Greece much of their own mythology. The *Odyssey*, in fact, is 'a fragment of a northern saga transplanted to Greek soil,' and it is evidence that the temper of its sailor hero, who is

'become a name

For ever roaming with a hungry heart,'

was nothing strange to the Achæans. They had learnt it on the shores of some other sea—a sea of icebergs⁴ and of

¹ *Odys.* xi, 14.

² cp. Tacitus, *Germ.* 37, *proximi Oceano Cimbri.*

³ Prof. J. B. Bury challenges (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xlii, p. 5) the popular view that Homer's Cimmerians were conceived of as dwelling in the West. Ulysses, he points out, sailed to the Cimmerians' land before a north wind (*Odys.* x, 507). Nevertheless, he sailed back eastward to Aëaea (*Odys.* xii, 3-4). More conclusive is the emphasis laid on the fact that on the Cimmerians 'the sun never looks, neither

when he marches up the starry heavens nor when he turns back thence to earth, but dreadful night broods over the miserable people.' Homeric thought could hardly apply such language to the East or to the South, so the choice lies between the North and the West. Sir W. Ridgeway argues in favour of the N. (*Early Age of Greece*, i, pp. 359, 390). The Cimmerians' land was *terra firma*, for Ulysses disembarks and walks along its shore (*Odys.* xi, 20-1) to the appointed spot.

⁴ *Odys.* x, 1-4.

midnight suns¹—long before they saw the Mediterranean and sailed with all the pirate-folk of the Aegean to the assault of Egypt; and that other sea can only have been the Baltic and the adjoining waters of the North Sea.

When all memory of the Homeric Achæans as a people had disappeared from historical Greece, that of the 'Warrior Cimmerians' lingered on, growing always vaguer and more remote. Herodotus had heard it said, and was himself inclined to believe, that the Cimmerians had once occupied the vast and vague region beyond the Danube which in his own century was known as Scythia²; and he cites Aristæas of Proconnesus as speaking of other Cimmerians 'dwelling on the shores of the southern sea (Mediterranean).'³ Pliny asserts⁴ that they had once dwelt near Lake Avernus by Cumæ in southern Italy. They were better remembered as having given a name to the Cimmerian Bosphorus, and as having ravaged all Western Asia in the seventh century B.C.; the records of Assyria name them as Gimirri; the Biblical ethnographers knew them by the eponym of Gomer; and their name abides to this day in those of the Crimea and the Crim Tartars. But the larger body of which these were merely raiding offsets came in classical Greece to be spoken of as Hyperboreans, the people dwelling 'at the back of the North Wind,' in a land of 'Cimmerian darkness' and eternal snow. The Hyperboreans long sent yearly offerings to Delos: they were doing so in the fifth century B.C. and so great was then their prestige that it could guarantee the safe transmission of such gifts 'from people to people' across large part of Europe without escort.⁵

Five hundred years later Pausanias found the same gifts still coming, although they came by a different route.⁶

¹ *Odys.* x, 86.

² Herod. iv, 11.

³ *ibid.* iv, 13.

⁴ *H.N.* iii, 5: cp. Silius, *Punica*, xii, 132.

Festus gives a rationalising explanation of the name: it denoted, he says, the people of a deep and secluded valley into which the sun never penetrated.

⁵ Herod. i, 163; iv, 33.

⁶ Pausanias, I, xxxi, 2. In Herodotus' time the route was from 'Scythia' to the head of the Adriatic, thence *via* Dodona and the Maliac Gulf to Carystus in Eubœa, and

so by sea to Delos. In Pausanias' time the offerings came from Sinope by sea to Prasiac in Attica, and were thence forwarded by the Athenians to Delos. There is more in this matter than the mere change of trade-route suggested by the commentators on Herod. iv, 33. Clearly the place of origin had changed. Sinope was the nearest seaport to the Asiatic Gauls (Galatians), whom both Appian and Diodorus Siculus style Cimbri; and these in their new home kept up the annual offering in which they had doubtless shared while living in 'Scythia,' i.e. some

The Delians paid high honours to five *Perpheres*, reputed to have been Hyperboreans who came with the maidens Hyperoche and Laodice to bring the first of these offerings¹; and on the maidens' tomb—it was apparently a barrow, for an olive-tree grew upon it—within the precinct of Artemis the Delian youths and girls made offerings of their hair.² Behind the same precinct was a second tomb of the Hyperboreans, said to be the grave of a yet earlier pair of maidens, Opis and Arge, who came 'by the same route' to Delos 'with the divinities themselves.'³ These facts plainly import that some part of the sanctity of Delos was directly due to a northern people who had there introduced the worship of some goddess later identified with Artemis, and a similar connexion of Apollo with the North was confessed in divers ways: in every nineteenth year the god left Greece to visit the Hyperboreans, and in their land was the 'Garden of Apollo.'⁴ Abaris the priest of Apollo was a Hyperborean,⁵ and that nation are 'the henchmen of Apollo,'⁶ in whose feasts and hymns the god 'takes exceptional delight.'⁷ Cicero mentions⁸ the tradition that 'Apollo came to Delphi from the Hyperboreans.' Hecataeus of Abdera⁹ wrote a *History of the Hyperboreans*, from which Diodorus Siculus quotes at some length. There was, said Hecataeus, a wondrous circular temple of Apollo in the Isle of the Hyperboreans, which lay 'over against Celtica,' i.e. off the coast of Gaul. Whether or no Stonehenge was meant, there is no reason to doubt that the 'Isle of the Hyperboreans' was Britain, and Hecataeus is therefore evidence that so early as 300 B.C. the Cimmerians were the dominant people of Britain, for they had given a name to the island. So some of them had already moved westward from the continent. But nearly two centuries later the main body was still on the mainland and still ranked as chief amongst the powers of the north-west under the Roman name of Cimbri. 'Cimmerians is the Greek name for the Cimbri,' declared Posidonius¹⁰ (c. 90 B.C.). 'Those

part of Central Europe. There were 'Cimmerian' elements in Sinope. Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, i, 388; Herod. iv, 12.

¹ Herod. iv, 33.

² *ibid.* iv, 34. French excavators claim to have discovered (1923) these 'Tombs of the Hyperboreans.'

³ *ibid.* iv, 35.

⁴ Sophocles, *fragm. ap.* Strabo, § 295.

⁵ Herod. iv, 36.

⁶ Pindar, *Ol.* iii, 16.

⁷ Pindar, *Pyth.* x, 29.

⁸ *de Nat. Deor.* iii, xxiii, 57.

⁹ *Circa* 300 B.C.

¹⁰ *Apud* Strabo, § 293.

who were anciently called Cimmericians,' says Plutarch,¹ 'were afterwards known as Cimbri.' 'The evidence both historical and philological makes it as certain as the nature of the case will allow, that the Cimmericii and the Cimbri were identical.'² Posidonius³ calls the Cimmericians 'roamers and rievvers,' and both Plutarch⁴ and Festus assert that 'Cimbri is a general German name for robbers.' This does not imply that etymologically the name had that meaning, but it illustrates the light in which their neighbours regarded these wreckers of three continents. That position they lost only in 113 B.C. when a vast horde of them abandoned their homes along the east bank of the middle and lower Rhine to seek new lands in the south.⁵ With them went a number of other tribes whom the Romans knew collectively as Teutones and Ambrones, and many of the Helvetii presently joined them. The host swept across southern Gaul and thence passed into Spain, but returning attempted (103 B.C.) to march by way of the western coast into Belgic Gaul. Checked on the Seine by the warlike Belgae,⁶ they wheeled about and made for Italy. The dread of such an issue had haunted the Romans for years, growing with every new collision between the legions and these huge-limbed fair-haired northerners⁷; so that of late, overriding the provisions of the *Lex Annalis*, they had for four successive years returned C. Marius as consul solely that he might deal with the expected peril. He justified their choice by annihilating the Cimbri and their Helvetic allies on the plains of Vercellae (101 B.C.). In the previous year (102 B.C.) he had dealt in like fashion at Aquae Sextiae (Aix-en-Provence) with the Teutones and Ambrones.

Marius had done more than save Italy: he had shattered the empire of the Cimbri. Plutarch asserts that, besides 60,000 taken prisoners, there died at Vercellae

¹ *Marius*, 11.

² *Early Age of Greece*, i, 391.

³ *Apud* Strabo, § 293, Ἀθηναϊκοὶ καὶ πλεονηγῆες οἱ Κίμβριοι

⁴ *Marius*, 11: cp. Cicero's pun, in speaking of C. Annius Cimber, who was accused of fratricide: *nisi forte iure (Cimber) Germanum occidit*. 'But possibly it was legitimate for a Cimbrian to kill his own cousin-german.' Cimber was an old cognomen of at least three Roman *gentes*

(*Annia*, *Gabinia*, *Tillia*), an agnomen of the *gens Metella*.

⁵ There was a story, at which Strabo (§§ 292-3) scoffs, that their migration was due to the encroachments of the sea. But recent researches make it very probable that the story is founded on fact.

⁶ *Caesar*, *B.G.* ii, 4, 2.

⁷ Plutarch is emphatic on this matter (*Marius* 11): cf. Tacitus, *Germ.* 4.

120,000 fighting men and the whole of their women and children. None remained to return to the lands they had vacated,¹ which were henceforth occupied by a new power, that of the Suebic League, which in its turn presently began thrusting westward across the Rhine.² On the east bank of the river there remained only a remnant, apparently those Cimbri whom Strabo (§ 291) mentions as still living west of the Elbe beside the Bructeri and the Chauci. Later still in the time of Pliny and Tacitus they had withdrawn into the peninsula now known as Denmark, which ancient authorities declare to have been their original *sedes*. Archaeology supplies abundant evidence for the existence of an ancient and active intercourse between Denmark and the Balkan peninsula by way of the Rhine and the Danube,³ or by the 'Amber route' from the Adriatic through Noricum to the shores of the Baltic.⁴ All the evidence suggests that as early as the sixth century B.C. the Cimmerii or Cimbri were the dominant power in central and NW. Europe. Du Chaillu quotes⁵ from the *Annals* of Witikind the assertion that he had heard it said that the Saxons were derived from the Greeks, and that the Saxons themselves had a tradition that they were a remnant of the Macedonian army which followed Alexander to the east. Such a story finds a parallel in the tradition that the Milesians of Ireland came thither from Greece, and both tales conceal the historical truth that the Nordic tribes had come and gone by *La Voie du Danube*⁶ for long years before they left the continent to find more settled homes over-seas. Indeed the route was only closed after the sixth century A.D. by the inflow of the Slav races into the Danube region.⁷

For centuries the Danish peninsula was known as the Promontorium Cimbrorum, the Cimbric Chersonese, and the name has been traced in that of Himmerland long applied to North Jutland. But the power of the Cimbri

¹ Paulus Diaconus mentions (iii, 30) a town of Cimbra, *oppidum Italiae superioris a Francis dirutum*, which may have owed its name and part of its population to some of those captured in the fight.

² In Strabo's time (§ 290) they occupied all between Rhine and Elbe, and part of the land beyond the Elbe. In the time of Tacitus (*Germ.* 38) they held 'most of Germany' (*maiores Germaniae partem obtinent*).

³ Dognee, *Bulletin des Commissions Royales*, Brussels, 1870.

⁴ One of the results of this traffic is to be seen in the Northern runes, which derive direct from the Greek alphabet.

⁵ *Viking Age*, i, 18.

⁶ Bertrand, *La Gaule avant les Gaulois*.

⁷ For this view of the part played by the Cimbri in pre-history, cf. Marcellin Boule, *Fossil Men*, Eng. trans. (1923), pp. 344-5.

was now gone, and Caesar, who had much to do in securing the Rhine frontier against the Suebi, had no dealings with the Cimbri. It is with surprise that one finds Augustus taking the trouble to put it on record, in the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, that they had sent envoys and gifts to him¹ in the year 5. Clearly he felt it something to be proud of.

A century later, in the days of Plutarch and Tacitus, they were *magni nominis umbra*. Plutarch could gather no satisfactory account of them: some regarded them as Celts, while others held them to be a fraction of the greater Cimmerian people, a warlike race who dwelt 'in the extremities of the earth near the Northern Sea, in a land that is dark and woody, where the sun is seldom seen.' The language at once recalls Homer's words about the 'Warrior Cimmerians' and their home. Tacitus is more definite: 'the proofs of their old-time power and multitude' were still to be seen, he says,² 'broadcast on either bank of the river.' The river intended being without question the Rhine, his brief comment is evidence that at one period the Cimbri had been masters of all the Rhinelands east and west. They had been masters equally of the adjoining seas, to which Claudian as late as the fourth century could still give the name of the 'Cimbric³ Sea.' So they were at one time as much at home in those waters as had been their kindred the Akaiwasha or Achæans in the Mediterranean (*circa* 1220 B.C.).

When setting out upon their fatal march in 113 B.C. the Cimbri and Teutones had deposited on the west bank of the Rhine such of their belongings as they could not carry with them, leaving a small force to guard them.⁴ At that date then their power was actually more secure in Belgica than in Germany, and the Belgæ were their friends,

¹ Strabo, § 293. The gifts included 'their most sacred cauldron,' mention of which at once recalls the prominence given to such 'cauldrons' alike in Homer, in the *Sagas*, and in the *Mabinogion*. They were, in fact, the rude originals of the artistic 'tripods' of Greek art. In Strabo, § 294, the Cimbric women-priests are described as sacrificing human victims over cauldrons of the capacity of 20 *amphoræ*, precisely as such victims were sacrificed over the blood-bowl to Thor and Woden. If Strabo's *amphora* was of the Roman measure, the content of such a cauldron was 106 gallons;

if it was Greek measure, the content was 170 gallons.

² *Germ.* 39.

³ *Cimbrica Tethys* (*De Bell. Getico*, 355). A Greek writer of the fourth century B.C. (Philemon, *apud* Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* iv, 3) says the Cimbri themselves called it *Morimarus*, '*hoc est, mortuum mare*.' If this name represents the modern Welsh *mor marwaidd*, as is asserted (H. Martin, *Études d'Archéologie Celtique*, p. 140), it follows that the Cimbri used the Brythonic speech in Philemon's time.

⁴ *B.G.* ii, 29, 4.

if not members of the Cimbric League. From this small force, 6,000 in all, were directly descended¹ the Belgic tribe of the Aduatuci, who only 55 years later could put into the field 19,000 warriors. The figures illustrate the amazing fecundity of the breed, for before they could win for themselves an acknowledged territory (about Tongres to the north of Liège) the tribe had 'for many years been hounded about by their neighbours.'² Caesar names them³ amongst the fifteen Belgic tribes, whence Sir W. Ridgeway legitimately infers that all the Belgae were of the same Cimbric stock.⁴

Caesar again remarks⁵ that, whereas in his own day the Gauls at large confessed themselves no match for the Germans, there had been a time when the relative positions of the two peoples were so far reversed that the Gauls held undisputed sway over all Germany up to the Hercynian Forest. Plutarch⁶ had seen or heard the same supremacy attributed to the Cimbri: they had been paramount from the Hercynian Forest to the outer sea (Atlantic). He had also⁷ seen it maintained that the name of Celtica rightfully embraced all Europe from the Atlantic and the north to the Lacus Maeotis. The terms 'Gaul' and 'German' having, as has been shown, little more than a topographical significance, these various statements bear out the view that the name of the Cimbri represents a great league of Nordic peoples which, long paramount in central and western Germany, the Rhine-lands and northern France, was gradually forced to give ground before the thrust of a new power, probably that of the Suebic League, upon its eastern borders. In the long run this pressure forced the Cimbri to evacuate most of what remained to them on the east bank of the Rhine. Such an evacuation was in itself a confession of weakness which must have proved fatal to their prestige. Their league at once broke up, the Belgae stepping into the foremost place; and when the Cimbri themselves sought to find new homes in Belgica, they were beaten off by force. The fight at Vercellae completed their ruin. For the next fifty years the Belgae represented all of

¹ *ibid.*

² *ibid.* ii, 4, 9.

³ *ibid.* ii, 29, 5.

⁴ *ibid.* ii, 4, 9.

⁵ *Early Age of Greece*, i, 392.

⁶ *B.G.* vi, 24; cf. Tacitus, *German.* 28.

⁷ *Marius*, 11.

⁸ *ibid.*

importance that remained of the lost continental empire of the Cimbri.¹

In Caesar's time the Belgae extended as far as the Seine,² and the most formidable of their fifteen tribes³ were the Bellovaci. Somewhat earlier this position had belonged to the Suessiones, some of whom had pushed across the Channel to carve out for themselves a kingdom in Britain.⁴ There is otherwise abundant evidence for the presence of Belgic, i.e. Germanic, invaders here before his time, and their inflow certainly went on after him and in spite of all that Rome could do to prevent it. The Roman frontier on the Rhine held good more or less until 412, but when the Franks and others then burst through it, the fact made no difference to the residue of the Nordic stream, for the Franks invited no further new-comers into their heritage. During all these centuries the westward thrust still continued: no longer free to pass by way of Gaul, it passed by way of the North Sea, and in consequence those new colonists who reached Great Britain and Ireland between the years 50 B.C.—A.D. 500 came for the most part in the unqualified savagery of 'Germans.' This, and the difference of idiom, were the essential differences between the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts who had been before them, the Jutes perhaps excepted. But all alike would pass through or near to Denmark, the ancient *sedes* of the Cimbri, and all alike would pick up something of the peculiar culture of the Cimbri, according as they dwelt for a longer or a shorter period in that vicinity, and according as they sojourned there while the memory of the Cimbri was more or less green; and one of the most notable characteristics of the Cimbri was their capacity in building.

Certain 'Cimmerian forts' to be seen in the Crimea in his day attracted the notice of Herodotus⁵: they must have been remarkable to arouse the interest of a cultivated

¹ One Belgius or Bolgius (cf. the Irish Firbolgs) was leader of the Gallic horde which raided Macedonia in 280 B.C. (Pausanias, x, 19, 4; Justinus, xxiv, 5), while one Cimmerius captained a Suebic swarm who tried to enter the Treviran territories in 57 B.C. (*B.G.* ii, 37, 3). There is a village of Cairnbulg near Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, and a ruined fort in St. Kilda bore the name of Dun-Firvolg (Martin, *Description of Western Isles*, p. 281).

² *B.G.* i, 1, 2.

³ Strabo, § 197; *B.G.* ii, 4.

⁴ *B.G.* ii, 4, 7.

⁵ Κιμμέρια τείχεα, Herod. iv, 2. In *Earthwork of England* (1908), p. 213, the present writer some years ago pointed out the close similarity between the fort of the Achæans before Troy, as described by Homer, and some of the numerous 'British camps' of England.

Greek who has little to say of the Cyclopean walls of Tiryns and Mycenae. More than a century after Herodotus, Hecataeus of Abdera¹ (*circa* 300 B.C.) wrote of the wonderful circular temple of Apollo in the 'Isle of the Hyperboreans.' The attempt has been made to show that the Hyperboreans, their island, and its temple, are alike mythical; but it is difficult to prove a negative, and the balance of probability is with Hecataeus, whose description of the 'Isle of the Hyperboreans' can apply only to Britain.

The Hyperboreans being identical with the Cimmerii, and both with the Cimbri, here are two independent testimonies to the remarkable achievements of the Cimbri as builders. There is a yet better testimony in the matter-of-fact language of Tacitus: he saw 'the proofs of their old time power and numbers' in the *castra ac spatia* which they had left over a wide area on either bank of the Rhine. Of the meaning of the former term there can be no doubt: it means 'fortified camps' such as that which the Achæans had wrought before Troy, and such as Caesar found their descendants the Aduatuci still building in the Lowlands. The second term (*spatia*) has baffled the commentators. It probably means 'places of assembly,' and is so used by Cicero² when he defines an *urbs* as a settlement 'provided with ordered communal shrines and ordered communal *spatia*.' Even if this interpretation be disputed, there remains the fact that Tacitus, like Herodotus 500 years before him, was struck by the capacity of the Cimbri as builders; and both witnesses therefore confirm the conclusion of Sir W. Ridgeway, derived from wholly different evidence, that the Achæans who built the stone circle-moot in Scheria were themselves Cimbric. Caesar makes frequent mention of the capacity of the Belgæ as military builders, and in particular of that of the Aduatuci³ and the Suessiones.⁴

Hecataeus is evidence that at his date there had already been established a Cimbric, i.e. Belgic power. Authority is agreed that the Brythonic invasion of Britain commenced *circa* 400 B.C. and if it gives a later date for the coming of the first of the Belgic tribes, such a date is purely arbitrary:

¹ *Apud* Diodorus Siculus.

² *de Repub.* i, 26, 41, *urbem . . . delubris distinctam spatiisque communibus.*

³ *B.G.* ii, 30, 2.

⁴ *op. cit.* ii, 12, 2.

they were coming hither before Caesar's time, possibly for many years before his time, and they were one and all Cimbric. Whether or no any of them were lineal descendants of the original mighty tribe, like the Gaulish Aduatuci, is of no great moment: Welsh tradition¹ declares that the Brythons, the first to colonise this island, were 'of the original stock of the Cymru,' and indubitably the Brythonic Celts of the island at an early date adopted the collective name of Cymru.² Professor Skeat saw their name in such place-names as Cemmerwood in Bradford-on-Avon, and others have recognised it in the term *Kimberlin* by which natives of the isle of Portland designate all strangers. The forged eighteenth-century treatise of Richard of Cirencester boldly places the Cimbri in the south-west of Britain beyond the Parrett,³ the same region which even so late as Alfred's time was styled 'land of the Wealhcyning.' There is earlier and better evidence of their presence in Britain in the famous inscription, found at Verterae (Brough under Stainmore, Westmorland), to the memory of one Hermes of Commagene, a legionary who died fighting against the Cimmerians. As he died in Britain, it is to be presumed that those who killed him were living in Britain; and they can be no other than the Celts of Strathclyde or Cumbria.⁴ In the face of these facts it is absurd for the philologists to deny the identity of Cimbri with Cymru. Cumbria is precisely the form which the name would assume on other lips, and it remains with us still in that of Cumberland, where men still spoke the Cymric tongue until the twelfth century.⁵ The Cumbrians survived the passing of the Romans, to endure as the independent Celtic kingdom of Strathclyde until the middle of the tenth century. Clearly they were an indomitable breed with a marked individuality; one suspects that they retreated into the waste places of Cumberland only as refugees who refused to submit to

¹ *Triads*.

² According to Sir John Rhys, in the seventh century, but Sir W. Ridgeway thinks it was at a date much earlier (*Early Age of Greece*, i, 392).

³ *Ancient State of Britain*, i, vi, 16.

⁴ The inscription (*Inscript. Graecae*, 1890, p. 671; *Athenaeum*, Nov. 22, 1884) cannot

be later than A.D. 400, and is probably 200 years earlier. It is usually supposed to refer to the Caledones, and to date from the time of Septimius Severus (209).

⁵ In *Saga of Olaf Tryggvison*, 31, Strathclyde is 'the land which is called of the Cymry.' Sir John Rhys maintained that the Cymru were established in Strathclyde before they made their way into Wales.

Roman domination. They were closely akin to the Welsh and to the Celts of south-west Scotland, who are known as the South Picts¹; and these latter again were kinsmen of the North Picts of Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire was the headquarters of a Pictish kingdom, which reached its zenith in the eighth century and in 843 was merged in the rival kingdom of the Scots under Kenneth MacAlpin.

To Tacitus the northern portion of Scotland is Caledonia, a Brythonic name, but he makes no mention of any Caledones nor of any Picts. His general name for all the natives, at least as far north as the Grampians, is Britanni. The Welsh called them Prydyn. As Prydyn was also the Welsh name for the southern Britons, the inference is that the populations of southern and northern Britain were generally Brythonic and of one blood. The northern Britons, says Tacitus,² were wholly unlike the dark Silures: they had the fair complexions and large limbs of the Germans—were merely a little more Germanic in type than were the southern Britons. Strabo³ makes the same remark of the Germans as compared with the Celts; and Tacitus⁴ remarking that South Britons and Gauls were much the same in appearance, it is reasonable to suppose that there had crossed into northern Britain a number of settlers who came thither direct from the 'German' lands without passing through any 'Gallic' medium. So soon as the Romans had occupied Gaul and secured the Rhine-frontier, such immigrants would naturally start from points to the north and east of the Rhine's mouth, from Frisia, from the Cimbric Chersonese and the adjacent shores of southern Scandinavia, or from the Baltic shores of Germany; and they would as naturally make for those remoter parts of the British Isles which were not yet occupied in force whether by Gallic tribes or by the Romans, that is, northern Britain and Ireland.

Two hundred and fifty years after Agricola's time Ammianus Marcellinus asserts that in 368 the term *Picti* denoted two distinct *gentes*, whose respective proper

¹ Skene notes that the earliest appearance of the name is in *Aethelweard's Chronicle*, anno 875, where the Cumbri are coupled with the Picts (of Strathclyde).

² *Agricola*, 11.

³ § 290.

⁴ *Agricola*, 11, *proximi Gallis et similes sunt*.

appellations were Dicalidonae and Vecturiones.¹ At that date then the term *Picti* was less an ethnic than a descriptive name. This may be the explanation of the otherwise puzzling language of Eumenius, who writes some sixty years earlier of 'the fens and forests of the Caledones and other Picts.'²

Picti is apparently a Latinisation of some native term unknown.³ According to one view its real meaning is 'robbers,' in which case *Picti* would be merely a synonym for *Cimbri*. To Roman ears it naturally suggested those practices of painting and tattooing which the Picts undoubtedly affected⁴; and Eumenius may have meant nothing more than 'Caledonians and other such painted savages (*picti*).'⁵ Claudian could still (369) play upon the double meaning of the name.⁵

The Gaelic equivalent of Prydyn is Cruithnig. Cruithnig therefore means merely Brythons, and is no synonym for *Picti*; and there is nothing odd in the appearance of Cruithnig at various points in Ireland such as Antrim and Down, Meath and Roscommon, precisely the regions where there is otherwise evidence of the intrusion of Brythonic peoples (Firbolgs). The Irish transliteration of *Picti* is Ffichti; the Welsh is Peithwyr, 'Pict-men.'

The term *Brython* is sometimes explained as meaning 'painted,' with an assumed reference to the old habit of dyeing the skin with woad; and some writers have endeavoured to stress the difference between painting and tattooing, contrasting the ugliness of the former with the beauty of the latter style of ornament, and insisting that tattooing was a peculiarly Pictish art.⁶ But Déchelette has remarked⁷ that the one practice is rarely to be distinguished from the other; Herodian explicitly says⁸

¹ Amm. Marcell. xxvii, 8-9. Sir John Rhys, amending *Vecturiones* to *Verturiones*, found the name surviving in that of Fortrenn, a known Pictish stronghold in after years.

² *Paneg. Constant.* c. 7 (*ante* A.D. 306).

³ The *c* of the Latin form evidently represents a guttural, seen equally in the A.-S. forms *Pihta*, *Pehta*, *Peahta*, *Peohta*, and in the modern Scottish *Pecht*. The Norse form was *Pettr*.

⁴ Claudian, *Bell. Getico*, 417, etc.

⁵ *Cons. Hon.* iii, 43, *nec falso nomine Pictos Edomuit* (Theodosius). Nothing can be gathered from the mention of a victory of Constantius 'over the Picts' (in *Mon. Hist. Brit.* i, lxxv) before 306, as the name and date of the writer are unknown.

⁶ As e.g. does Bishop Browne, *Antiqs. of Duneecht*, p. 127, etc.

⁷ *Manuel d'Archeologie Prehistorique* (1908), p. 202.

⁸ *Hist.* iii, 14, 7, speaking of the Scottish tribes.

that the 'Britons' tattooed their bodies with figures of all sorts of animals; and Claudian himself represents Britannia as coming 'with tattooed cheeks'¹ to do homage for her deliverance from the Picts, and this in a passage where the poet certainly did not intend to represent Britannia as unbeautiful. Probably the precise way in which the decoration was applied varied with different tribes, much as did that of dressing the hair; for Tacitus tells us² that a peculiarity of *coiffure* was the distinctive badge of the members of the Suebic League. Tattooing was no peculiarity of the Picts, for the Anglo-Saxons continued to tattoo themselves until the practice was condemned as pagan in 787³; and the evidence on the whole suggests that the name of *Picti*, like that of the German *Suebi*, the Gallic *Belgae*, the Latin (*Gallia*) *Comata* and *Braccata*, and our own 'Saxons,' was not so much ethnic as collective, denoting the various members of a league whose sign visible was a rather unusually elaborate use of tattooing or painting.

The speech of the Picts was certainly Brythonic, of the same family as that of the Cymru, but widely different.⁴ The difference is to be explained partly as due to Gaelic surroundings, but possibly more to the rapidity with which any speech will change amongst a people by whom writing, if known at all, is little used. Under such circumstances a century may suffice to produce what is to all intents a new language. The Scottish Britons were more or less effectively sundered from their southern kinsmen by the Roman Wall from the year 120 onward.

If St. Columba, himself of Brythonic descent, sometimes required an interpreter in his dealings with Brude, king of the Picts,⁵ this assertion of Adamnan presents no difficulty, for on the one hand the speech of the Irish Brythons must have been all but lost by that date, and on the other the Brythonic idiom of the Picts must have suffered almost as much change.⁶ Standardisation of speech is a doubtful blessing: the educated Englishman is lost outside Britain,

¹ *Laud. Stilicbonis*, ii, 247, *ferro picta genas*.

² *Germania*, 38: cp. the κρωβύλος of the thorough-bred Athenians (Thuc. i, 6).

³ Haddan and Stubbs, *Concilia*, iii, 447.

⁴ The point has been hotly disputed, but the evidence appears to be conclusive.

⁵ Archibald Scott, *Pictish Nation*, p. 20.

⁶ This is explanation sufficient of Bede's assertion (*E.H.* i, i), that the speech of the Picts was different alike from that of the Britons, the Scoti, the Saxons, and Latin.

but an uneducated east-coast sailor can still make himself understood in the Lowland ports, and Wilfrid and Boniface needed no interpreter in Friesland.

There is an entire absence of evidence to support the view that the Picts were a people of immense antiquity in Britain, descendants—so it is assumed—of some tribe¹ which had entered the island from the south in the van of the Celtic invasion, and, driven gradually northward before later swarms of invaders, had at last found a secure retreat betwixt Don and Dee. Such a view is in direct conflict with all that is recorded of them by ancient writers, and also with the historical fact that from their first appearance in history the Picts are mostly hand and glove with those other pirate tribes of Baltic origin who harried South Britain from the fourth to the sixth centuries, and more particularly with the Scoti.² Picts and Scots, says Gildas,³ differed in manners, but were alike in their ferocity and in their dress or the lack of it; and Nennius preserves⁴ the tradition of their victims that, whereas the Britons had come into Britain in the third age of the world, the Scots occupied Ireland only in the succeeding (fourth) age.

Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of the Picts as ravaging the regions next to the Roman borders in conjunction with the Scots,⁵ here mentioned for the first time. This was in 360. Four years later (364), reinforced by Baltic Saxons and Scottish Attacotti, they 'worried Britain incessantly'⁶; and yet four years later still, when (368) Theodosius landed at Rutupiae and marched thence to Londinium, he seems to have engaged some of their raiding bands on the way.⁷ If Claudian is to be believed, Theodosius reduced them to a temporary inactivity,⁸ but in 382 it was again necessary for the usurper Maximus to take strong measures against them and their accustomed allies the Scots.⁹

¹ Often identified with the Pictones (Pectones) or Pictavi, whose name remains in that of Poitou.

² As, for example, in Claudian, *Laud. Stilichonis*, ii, 254; *Bell. Getico*, 417; *Cons. Hon.* iii, 54-5, iv, 31.

³ *History*, § 19.

⁴ § 16.

⁵ *Amm. Marcell.* xx, 1, *cum Scotorum*

Pictorumque gentium ferarum excursus . . . loca limitibus vicina vastarent.

⁶ *ibid.* xxvi, 4, *Picti Saxonesque et Scoti et Attacotti Britannos aerumnis vexavere continuis.*

⁷ *ibid.* xxvii, 8. Franks and Saxons, he adds, were doing the same thing in Gaul at the same date.

⁸ *Cons. Hon.* iii, 54, *edomuit.*

⁹ Prosper Tyro, in *Mon. Hist. Brit.* i, lxxxii, *strenue superavit.*

Giraldus Cambrensis says¹ that he had read that the Picts, who thus far seem to have been merely sporadic pirates, were first settled in Northern Britain in the brief reign of this same Maximus : when the usurper had crossed to the Continent² to embark upon an aggressive war against the joint emperors Valentinian II and Gratian, these latter prompted the Picts to invade Britain and supplied them with ships, in the hope that their attack would compel Maximus to return. In this account, as in so many others, Giraldus explicitly endorses the narrative of Geoffrey of Monmouth, whom he repeatedly condemns as a liar ; for Geoffrey tells³ precisely the same story, merely adding that the leaders of the invading forces were Guanius the Hun and Melga, king of the Picts. Both writers seem to have made use of the *Brut Tysilio*, or similar Welsh chronicles, which record⁴ that Gwnwas the Hun and Melwas king of the Pictavians came 'in ships from Germany' to the support of Gratianus, and after the deaths of Maximus (388) and the short-lived Gratianus Munciceps, 'ravaged Britain from sea to sea' with a mixed force of 'Norwegians, Danes, Scots and Picts.' Even Gildas⁵ makes the coming of the Picts and the Scots to coincide with the departure of Maximus from Britain. The *Brut Tysilio* again declares that the Saxons of Hengist, thwarted by Constantine in their first effort to occupy Kent, retreated northward to Alclwyd (Dumbarton) in Southern Pictland.⁶

These various accounts all imply that there were Picts upon the Continent, and apparently in the trans-Rhenane area or near it, who, after harrying Britain for many years, found opportunity towards the close of the fourth century to make permanent settlements in the northern part of the island. It was, in fact, a rehearsal of the later performance of the Saxons.

Tradition is a thing to be respected, particularly when it is so demonstrably old and consistent as in this case. Moreover the reason alleged for the actual settlement of

¹ *de Instruct. Princ.* c. 18.

² He took with him the bulk of the troops then in Britain, thereby denuding the northern *limites* (the Roman Wall), and making the easier any aggression in that quarter.

³ *Hist. Brit.* v, 16.

⁴ Peter Roberts, *Chronicle of the Kings of Britain* (1811), p. 101.

⁵ *History*, § 14.

⁶ Peter Roberts, p. 124.

the Picts upon British soil is singularly convincing. Skene is quite justified in his remark that the natural inference from the language of Gildas—and Gildas was in the best position to know the facts—is that he considered them to be a foreign people who had first obtained a footing in the island at the beginning of the fifth century.¹

Bede distinguishes between the northern and the southern Picts, placing the dividing line at the Grampians. This means that the Celts of the area between the Grampians and the Wall had fallen under the control of the others. But the Lowland Celts were unquestionably Brythonic. Bede therefore knew nothing but a geographical distinction between the peoples north and south of the Grampians, and must have felt all alike to be Brythonic.

According to Bede² the Picts by all accounts came 'from Scythia,' by which it is usual to understand north-western Europe. Gildas says³ that they came 'from the North.' So does Nennius,⁴ adding that they had previously made a temporary settlement in the Orkneys. According to the Welsh *Triads* they came from Llychlyn (Lochlin, Lochlann), i.e. the coast-lands of southern Scandinavia; whence Giraldus Cambrensis⁵ identifies them with the Goths, i.e. the Geats of Scania.

Bede asserts positively⁶ that, finding South Britain already occupied by British tribes from Armorica (i.e. Belgic Gauls), the Picts attempted to make a settlement in the north of Ireland, and finally turned to Scotland. If this happened, as seems likely, in the fourth century, Ireland was at the time ruled by the Brythonic Firbolgs, whose name bespeaks them a Belgic people.

According to Irish tradition the Firbolgs were attacked, and for a time worsted, by another swarm of invaders called the Tuatha Dé Danann.⁷ This name is supposed to mean 'tribes of the god (or goddess) Danu.' It is a suggestive name: *tuatha*, a word in regular use in Erse, is the same as the Germanic *Deutsch* (= *theotisc*). The Firbolgs not having reached Ireland much before the first

¹ *Celtic Scotland*, ii, 123.

² *E.H.* i, i.

³ *History*, § 14.

⁴ § 12.

⁵ *de Instruct. Princ.* c. 18.

⁶ *E.H.* i, i.

⁷ It appears occasionally in the shorter form of *Tuatba De*, e.g. in the *Book of Ballymote*.

century A.D. the invasion of the Tuatha Dé Danann must have fallen well within the historical period, possibly as late as the fourth century A.D. and as they landed in the *north* of the island, it is likely that they came by way of the north of Scotland; and one account says explicitly that they had been for seven years settled in Dobhar, i.e. in the extreme north of Scotland. They must have come thither from the Continent, and one cannot but suspect that *Danann* in reality represents the famous name of the Danes. If so, they were merely an earlier swarm of the same people who harried and colonised Ireland during the eighth to the eleventh centuries.¹ Quite consistent with this view is the tradition that they also came, as did the Picts, from the land of Lychlyn. The description of them as being 'fair-haired, vengeful, large, plunderers, with a great aptitude for music, and great proficiency in magical arts,' might serve *verbatim* for the Picts. Even the legend of their ultimate disappearance into the mounds of the *Sidh* may but disguise the fact that the bulk of them voluntarily moved back to Scotland, and their Welsh name, Gwyddel Ffichti, may preserve the record of their migration from Ireland to Caledonia. It is noticeable that Irish tradition represents them as being of the same race as the Firbolgs and speaking a tongue which the Firbolgs could understand.² It is noticeable also that amongst the sepulchral monuments which cover the field of North Moytura (Carrowmore in NW. Mayo), the scene of their second triumph over the Firbolgs, are some of types scarcely to be found elsewhere except in Scandinavian lands.³ On the other hand the monuments of the fight at South Moytura (near Cong in S. Mayo) are of types which appear to be entirely Belgic, notably the immense Carn of Killower, the grave of the Firbolg king Eochy Mac Erc, which is merely an exaggerated disc-barrow.

¹ The first mention of their appearance in Ireland under the name of Danes is said to be *anno 790 (rectius 795)* of *Annals of the Four Masters* (Dublin, 1851), vol. i, p. 397. Thereafter the references to their activities are abundant. But *anno 683* the same chronicle asserts that the churches and territories of Magbreagh (East Meath) were devastated by 'Saxons.'

² Fergusson, *Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 176.

The tradition that they 'set up in Tara the Cauldron of the Dagda' possibly contains a reference to the stone circle-moot: see the note on Banchory, ch. viii.

³ W. P. Wood-Martin, *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland*, p. 176. Sir W. R. Wilde (*Lough Corrib*, 1872) was amongst those who have emphatically identified the T. De Danann with Scandinavians, the Firbolgs with the Belgae.

It is not impossible also that the name of the Picts is related to that of the people whose name survives in that of Picardy. French ethnologists are agreed that Picardy derives from Picard, and that the Picards were in manners and in idiom distinct from the rest of the Frankish people, but the origin of the people and of their name remains to this day a problem.¹ A possible light on the matter is to be found in the mention (*anno* 729) of certain Piccardach or Piccardaig as making a piratical descent upon the Irish coast.² They kept their reputation as pirates (of Dunquerque, etc.) until at least Chaucer's time, and *picard* was in familiar use more than two centuries later for a large type of sailing ship.³ It is even possible that the Spanish *picaro*, 'thief,' Italian *piccaro*, may derive from the name of the same tribe,⁴ just as the term *Cimber* came in Latin to denote a 'robber' in general. Whatever the origin of the Picards, they inherited a large portion of the lands of Caesar's Belgica, and that portion in particular which had in his day been occupied by the paramount Belgic tribes of the Bellovaci and the Suessiones⁵; and the Belgae as has been shewn, were Cimbric. Some such ethnological connexion between Scotland and northern France would go a long way to explain the intimate relations between the two countries, so prominent a feature up to the fifteenth century.

If the Picards were verily of Cimbric blood⁶ we ought

¹ Du Cange discusses numerous suggested derivations, of which only that connecting it with *pike*, 'a pike,' is even plausible; for the Picards may as well have been named from their favourite weapon as were the Saxons and the Langobardi. Du Cange cites Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i, 423, *longisque levis Suessiones in armis*, to shew that the use of the pike in the Picard area was an ancient peculiarity; as Homer tells us it was with the Achaeans. According to Matthew Paris the name was in common use in the thirteenth century, but it is gravely asserted by some that the name is not older than the twelfth century and arose from an academical joke, the reference being to the hot temper of the people of that region. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (edit. Prof. J. B. Bury, 1898), vi, p. 259, note. The first syllable is long (*Picardi*).

² *Annals of the Four Masters*.

³ *N.E.D.* Bede (*E.H.* i, i) mentions the *longae naves* of the Picts.

⁴ *N.E.D.* cites, under date 1626, the phrase 'any lousy Spanish Picardo (*sic*).'

⁵ E. Chantriot in *Grande Encyclopédie* (Paris). Fergusson was mistaken when he argued (*Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 92) that 'no stone monuments are found' in Gallia Belgica, and that therefore 'it is unlikely that the Belgians should have done here [in Britain] what they did not do at home.'

⁶ The French archaeologist, H. Martin, was struck by the similarity of the Welsh and Picard characters (*Études d'Arch. Celtique*, p. 41). Pliny mentions (*N.H.* iv, 31) a tribe of Britanni living in his day between the Morini and the Ambiani (Amiens), 'probably between the Canche and the Authie' in Artois, says De Sueur (*Praef. to Du Cange, Hist. des Comtes de Pontbieu*, p. v): cf. Sidon. Apoll. i, 7; ix, 9.

to find in Picardy some traces of the use of the stone circle-moot. Such is the fact (fig. 17). At La Gorgue in the Pas de Calais between Armentières (NE.), Neuve Chapelle (S.) and Estaires (SW.), 'se trouve le lieu où se tenaient au moyen-âge les *Plaids Généraux* du pays de Lalloeu. On l'appelait *Esmals* ou *Esmaux*; on le nomme aujourd'hui

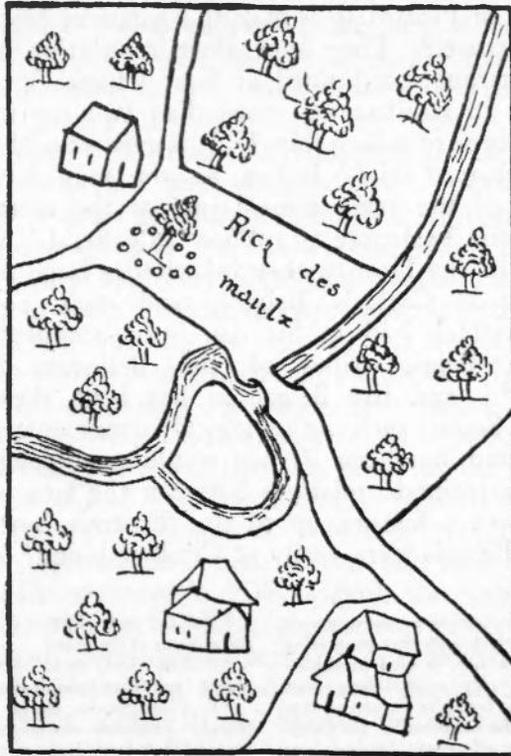


FIG. 17. STONE CIRCLE OF LA GORGUE.
(From Depotter, *Le Pay de Lalloeu*.)

le *Rietz des Maux*, et plus ordinairement *Les Dix Cailloux*. C'était un champ de la contenance d'une mesure environ, en forme de motte de moulin [mill-ball], avec un tilleul au milieu, entouré de dix grosses pierres ou perrons que le peuple appelle *Les Dix Cailloux*. Ces cailloux sont d'une grosseur considérable; chaque échevin était assis sur sa pierre, et le greffier criminel sur la pierre en-dedans.'

Pendant longtemps on rendit en cet endroit les sentences portées dans les causes criminelles.¹ The Pays de Lalloeu (i.e. *allodium*) was demesne of the abbey of St. Vaast, Arras, and retained until a very late date its communal autonomy. The moot of that authority was a circle of stones, some 40 yards in diameter,² and we are told that it was used precisely as was used the *ἱερὸς κύκλος* in the *Shield of Achilles*. Its name bespoke its purpose, for *Esmals*, *Esmaux*, *Maulx* and *Maux* are derived all from the Teutonic *mal*, 'assembly,' with the Old French preposition *ès*. One of the stones yet survives, though no longer in its original position. It measures 2 m. 90 in length, 0 m. 36 in width, and 0 m. 25 in thickness, dimensions which correspond closely to those of the stones remaining at Pendine and in some of the medial circles in Aberdeenshire. Finally be it noticed that the Pays de Lalloeu was in the most Belgic area of Gaul, in the territories of the Atrebrates, and that the Gallo-Roman town of Minariacum stood at or close beside the *Rietz des Maux*.

Be this as it may, there is evidence enough for a ceaseless flow of raiding or invading tribes, all of one Nordic blood, from the mouth of the Baltic to the British Isles. According as this or that tribe, or coalition of tribes, took prominence, the intervening waters bore now this name, now that; but the *Tethys Cimbrica* of Claudian, the *mare Friesicum* of Nennius,³ both preserve the same historical truth, and the close affinity of all these various peoples is confirmed by the undeniable fact that from the outset Saxons and Picts appear to have been cordial allies.⁴ This may explain why Procopius does not mention the Dani amongst the three peoples of the Britain of his day, including them under the general term of Frisians (Phrissones). The other two were the Saxons and the Britons. The Saxons having occupied the east coast from the Border southwards, the Britons still retaining the west with much the same limits, his Frisians must have been in

¹ Depotter, *Le Pays de Lalloeu* (Lille and Arras, 1910), p. 223, citing *Archives du Pas de Calais*, H. 1803, 60; *Coutumes Locales*, *op. cit.* p. 268.

² The area of the *mesure* in this region is 35 *ares 46 centiares*, or approximately 490 square yards (Depotter, *op. cit.*).

³ *Hist.* 38.

⁴ So Skene, *Celtic Scotland*. It is curious that Geoff. of Monmouth (v, 16; viii, 6, 14, 23; xii, 15) constantly calls the Saxons by the name of Ambrones (p. 321, above), as also does the *Brut Tysilio* (p. 137).

the north and probably on the east coast, precisely where are found the headquarters of the Picts.¹

The name of the Danes is first mentioned by Procopius,² who says that the Heruli, passing (*circa* 500) from the lands about the Elbe to Thule (Sweden), traversed the country occupied by the Warni *and the Dani*. As the Warni (Varini) were already in or near north Schleswig in Tacitus' time,³ and the Danes regarded as their original home the isles of Zealand, Laaland, Falster and Moen, Procopius' account seems to suggest that they were already settled there, immediately next to the last *piéd-à-terre* of the now fast-failing Cimbri, which they presently occupied, as also the southern extremity (Scania) of Sweden. Zealand remained the centre of government, Leire in Zealand the national sanctuary⁴; but it was the immemorial custom to inaugurate the Danish kings at the three several moots of Zealand (Ringsted), Jutland (Viborg), and Scania (Lund). About 810 the district of Westfold in Norway was part of their acknowledged kingdom, and before the end of the same century they were busy with the attempt to conquer Scotland and the Orkneys. Their royal house traced its descent from Skioldr, identical with the Scyld of some of the Anglo-Saxon tribes.

Unable to expand in other directions the Dani turned more and more to the sea, and under the successive names of Vikings, Northmen, Danes and Normans, fully maintained the Cimbric reputation for 'roving and rieving.' Caesar had found the Belgic Veneti to be amongst the most capable seafarers of their age,⁵ and Saxons were already harrying the coasts of Britain in the fourth century.⁶

Is it only a strange coincidence that just as Danausha

¹ The Picts 'seized the regions on the left-hand (east) side of Britain, where they still remain' (Nennius, *Hist.* 12, writing in 858).

² *Bell. Goth.* 11, 15. Procopius wrote, *circa* 560, but there is evidence that the name is much older. Dannus, Dannius, Danius, Dannicus, and Dannicius occur in inscriptions. 'Dannicus cives Rauric(us)' occurs on a fine *cippus* found at Corinium (Cirencester) and now in the museum there. The Raurici dwelt SW. of Basel, about Augst (Augusta Rauricorum).

³ *Germ.* 40.

⁴ Until the eleventh century (Thietmar of Merseburg, i, 9).

⁵ *B.G.* III, xii-xvi, and especially the chapter describing the build of their vessels (xiii).

⁶ Claudian, *Laud. Stilichonis*, ii, 255; Amm. Marcell. xxvi, 4; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* vii; *Epist.* viii, 6. They were raiding Gaul half a century earlier (287); see Eutropius ix, 21.

and Danai were the companions in arms of Akaiwasha and Achaei in their raids upon Egypt (1220 B.C.) and upon Greece (1300 B.C.), so the Dani are historically known to have been the intimate neighbours of the Cimbri in Jutland some 1,500 years later? If so, it is surely one of the oddest coincidences in ethnology. Writers of the seventeenth century regarded the Danes as identical with the Cimbri.¹

The Danes were heirs to the Cimbric habit of building circle-moots. They continued to build and use such moot-circles down to the year 1800. Some of these circles were so closely like those of Aberdeenshire that one is constrained to believe the two to be the work of kindred peoples; and the evidence shews that there is much reason to regard Picts, Tuatha Dé Danann, Picards and Danes as all of one stock, and all more or less closely associated with the Cimbric headquarters. The most complete of all the circles are found in that part of Scotland which is particularly associated with the Pictish power. The inference is irresistible that the Picts built these circles of Aberdeenshire, and the circles have yielded no solitary scrap of evidence to conflict with this view. They have yielded nothing whatever to contradict a comparatively late date in time. On the other hand there is no tradition of any other people in that part of the world who could be regarded as capable of raising such circles for the purpose for which it has been shewn they were raised—the moots of powerful and well-to-do communities. The Aberdeenshire circles, lying for the most part between Don and Dee, must be the work of the Picts, and must at earliest belong to a date little before A.D. 400.

If Roman writers represent the Picts as unredeemed savages, the libel, which is completely refuted by the evidence of archaeology, is easily explained by the ceaseless trouble they gave to the Caesars, who strove in vain to break their resistance, even occupying the heart of Pictland beyond the Grampians.² The occupation was short-lived, and in the fourth century the Picts had completely turned the tables and were ravaging Britain as far south as the *ora maritima* and up to the very gates of Augusta

¹ 'Cimbri, iidem qui Dani, Danes' Cambridge Dictionary of 1694).

² Above, ch. viii.

(London). Their inherited familiarity with the sea enabled them to turn the futile fortifications of the Wall. It enabled them also to extend their power to the North ; in the sixth century, so it is said, they took tribute of the Orkneys. When, at the close of that century, Columba essayed their conversion he found himself at issue with a powerful Druidism,¹ of which the last refuge was among the Picts. There is nothing in these facts which does not support the view that the so-called Picts were pure-bred Brythons, and specifically Cimmerians. When further it is found that their *sedes* is the particular home of a form of moot-circle which answers in every detail to those by Homer attributed to the Cimmerian Acheans, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that, if not actually of the same stock as the Acheans, the Picts had at any rate for a long period lived in close contact with the Cimmerian polity, in Jutland and its vicinity. The strangely carved stones of the Pictish area can hardly be other than Pictish work, and shew that the Picts, like the Brythons elsewhere, had a high artistic sense, a gift by no means incompatible with a standard of life otherwise low. We shall meet with the same phenomenon in the Brythonised area of Ireland.² Amongst the motives carved upon a stone at Aberlemno, Forfar, are two discs shewing a spiral ornament hardly to be paralleled except by the famous golden discs of Mycenae, which, declares Bishop Brown, 'no one could distinguish' therefrom.³ Such close similarity is explicable in one of two ways only: either the artists of the Aberlemno stone and of the Mycenaean discs were of the same race, or those who carved the stone had learnt the Mycenaean style, whether by loot or by commerce. To maintain that an artistry so intricate, and yet so closely similar, could have been separately evolved at spots so many hundreds of leagues apart, is to maintain the improbable. And the same argument applies with even greater force to the stone circles of Aberdeenshire.

The Picts, like the Cimbri elsewhere, were mighty builders ; it is to the Picts that, to this day, Scottish

¹ Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, ii, 35.

² Below, ch. xviii.

³ *Antiqs. of Duneebt*, p. 28. He remarks

further the finding at Mycenae of 'the very stag-hunts which the Picts sculptured on so many of the stones in Caledonia.'

tradition, from the Shetlands to the Border, attributes alike stone-circles, brochs, 'earth-houses,' and indeed every form of megalithic structure. It may be but a coincidence that the Mycenaeans displayed such an ability in building as to have given a name to a certain style of megalithic construction. It may be again another coincidence that the Mycenaeans practised the art of tattooing. But such coincidences are strange.

In the language of the Scots, says Bede,¹ the word *daal*² signified 'portion'; which means that so early that language contained words of recognised Germanic origin. At Borcovicium we have evidence that the characteristically Danish term *ting* was in use amongst the 'southern Picts' some six centuries before Bede's time.

The evidence all points to one and the same conclusion. 'Picts' was the collective name of a number of Nordic tribes, of whom the majority, and certainly the most important, were of Cimbric blood and culture. The coast about the estuaries of the rivers Don and Dee offered a convenient landfall,³ and here therefore were the headquarters of the new league, precisely as others of the breed found their way into Ireland up the valley of the Boyne, and made their headquarters in Roscommon and Meath. In this way was the stone moot-circle introduced into Aberdeenshire, and there it is still found in greatest frequency and in most stereotyped form. If, as one goes further away from Aberdeenshire, the circles diminish in number and decline from the type, this is exactly what was to be expected.⁴

Whether the name of Picts ever belonged to any individual tribe is of no great moment. Tribal names have ever had a trick of passing into ethnic names with little regard to any reason now discoverable,⁵ and it is very possible that one small tribe of exceptional ferocity or vigour did bequeath to the various kindred peoples of North Britain the name which was destined to loom through history vague and great as those of Acheans and of Cimmerians.

¹ *E.H.* 1, i.

² Familiar to modern ears in the form 'dole.'

³ As they did to other Norwegian raiders in historical times.

⁴ It is noteworthy that the Torhousekie

circle, near Wigtown (ch. ix), which is the nearest analogue at present known to those of Aberdeenshire type, lies in just that part of Scotland in which Bede asserts that the Scoti gave to the Picti their first footing.

⁵ Above, p. 288: cp. Sir W. Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, 1, 351.

In Early English romance king Arthur figures as a mighty conqueror, whose empire embraces not only England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, but the Shetlands, the Orkneys, Iceland, Scandinavia, Denmark, and even France. It is usual to dismiss the matter as idle fiction, but another explanation is possible. Arthur was unquestionably a Brythonic hero, probably in particular a Cimbric hero, for the scenes of his chiefest activities are laid in Cumbria, in Cambria, and in Cornwall. It is arguable that his fabled empire is a faithful reflection of the actual distribution of the Cimbric peoples, who can be shewn to have been, at one or other date, paramount in all the areas assigned to king Arthur's crown, and *nowhere else* in the world-map as it was known to the Early English romancers.