

## ON THE TORC OF THE CELTS.

IN returning to the subject of the torques, which want of space compelled me to abridge in the preceding number of the Journal, I would add to the funicular types there mentioned the following: a small torques of gold, fabricated of a thin lamina of metal rudely twisted, the ends terminating cylindrically, with a conical apex. This weighs 169. 3 grs. and is  $5\frac{1}{8}$  in diameter. A singular bronze funicular torques, the ends terminating in points, and each having a kind of elastic springing ring over them, with two elastic armlets, and two circlets nearly of the same type, and a hatchet blade, were all found in a low tumulus at Hollingbury<sup>a</sup>, and were formerly in Dr. Mantell's collection. The German graves have also occasionally offered specimens of this type, found at Braunfels, and Wiesbaden<sup>b</sup>. Others from the Siebenburgen resembling those on the necks of the Pannonian reguli, Pinnes, and Bato, on the celebrated cameo of Vienna, exist in the collections at the same place<sup>c</sup>.

Another funicular torques of sufficient diameter to have probably been a girdle, was found in a tumulus<sup>d</sup> two miles eastward of Com Bots, weighing 2oz. 1dwt. I learn from the obliging information of Sir Philip Egerton, that another, similar to this and the Harlech torc, was found at Fridd Gilfachwydd, a turbary, near the Black Rock, under Cader Idris, in Merionethshire, and is now in the possession of Sir Watkyn Williams Wynn, at Wynnstay; and that a monster torc of this description was found at Yscieviog near Holywell, in Flintshire, lying on the limestone rock when the superficies had been removed. This latter was not so deeply grooved in the twist<sup>e</sup>; it contained gold to the value of one hundred guineas; and is now in the possession of the Marquess of Westminster. The girdle, or lumbar size, is generally funicular. The British Celts, it will be remembered, according to the description of Herodian, wore iron torcs round their necks or loins, which they prized as much as other barbarians did gold; and these may be very probably the *annuli ferrei ad certum pondus*

<sup>a</sup> Formerly in the possession of Dr. Mantell. See Descript. of his collection, 8vo. London, 1836, p. 39, where a woodcut of all the objects found is given.

<sup>b</sup> Wagener, Handbuch, p. 147. fig. 171.

<sup>c</sup> Das K. K. Münz-und Antiken, Cabi-

net beschrieben von Joseph Arneth, 8vo. Wien. 1845, s. 47, cf. s. 92.

<sup>d</sup> Described by Mr. Jabez Allies, Archæologia, vol. xxx. p. 460.

<sup>e</sup> Archæologia, vol. xxx. p. 459, 490.

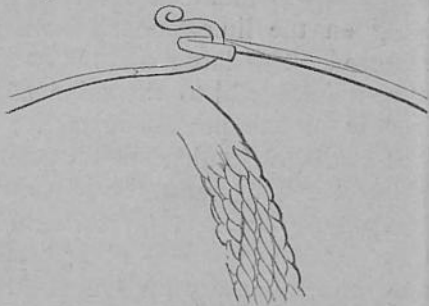
examinati, "iron rings adjusted to a given weight," of Cæsar. The evidence of the tumuli and kistvaens indeed goes far to prove the excessive rarity of iron among the Celts anterior to the Roman dominion. The lumbar or girdle torques may possibly be the torques major<sup>f</sup>, which was bestowed as a particular military honour under the Empire, when, as I have already observed, those wearing torcs were classed as *simples*, or those who had been only once thus decorated, and *duples*, or those who had twice received the honour, sometimes conferred on the whole division, which was then called *bis torquata*<sup>g</sup>. Now it is far from improbable that the torques major was large enough for the girdle, while the torques minor was that for the neck. All these torcs are of the same epoch and style, and have the usual Celtic peculiarity of terminating in projecting ends.



Another funicular ornament was found at the so-called Danes' Forts at Connemara<sup>h</sup>, probably twisted out of its proper form; and I would refer to this type, the straight funicular wire described and engraved in the *Archæologia*<sup>i</sup>, perhaps intended as a fibula or pin to secure the garment.



The funicular type probably continued for a long time in Britain, and was the last extinct; for the Saxons seem to have adopted it from the Celto-Romans. One of silver, slightly differing from the Roman torques, but distinguished by the body being composed of many small chains, and having the upper part ornamented with



Saxon Torques, of Silver, from Halton Moor.

<sup>f</sup> Scheffer. l. c. Gruter Corpus, Inscr. xevi.

<sup>g</sup> Orellius, Inscr. Lat. Sel. Col. 2, 8vo. Turici, 1828, p. 142, no. 516, alæ Petrianæ Milliar, c.r. *bis torquata*, cf. Hagenbuch to

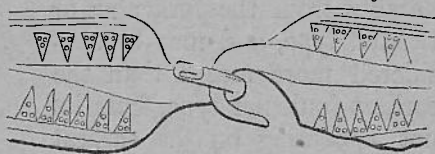
the same, and Fabretti, p. 140, 149. *Præfectus alæ Mœsiciæ Felicis torquata*.

<sup>h</sup> *Archæol.*, vol. xv. pl. xxiv. No. 5, p. 394.

<sup>i</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xvi. pl. xlii. fig. 1.

triangular stamped ornaments with pellets, was found at Halton Moor with coins of Canute<sup>k</sup>.

This torques is evidently to be referred to the Saxon or Danish period, from the character of the art, the punched ornament being unknown to Roman works of the kind, and certainly not seen on any of those solid torques or armillæ which can be decidedly referred to the Celtic races. On the Scandinavian antiquities found at Christiana<sup>l</sup>, and on the various specimens of armlets and other objects found at Cuerdale, such a mode of ornamentation is common.



Saxon Torques of Silver. Details of Clasp.

*Torques Brachialis.* In describing the ordinary funicular torques, mention has been made of some of a diameter so large as to allow of their passing round the waist; a much rarer variety of this type is when the torques was adapted for the thick of the arm, by twisting it into a spiral, with one hook at each end. It seems a later adaptation, as if by a race wearing armillæ or making their torques for the neck into a trophy. There are three examples<sup>m</sup> of this type: two found in excavating for a cottage, in 1831, between Egerton and Hampton, in the parish of Malpas, county of Chester, on the estate of Sir Philip Egerton. They are of native gold; one is perfect, and of the value of 29*l.* 5*s.*, it is engraved in the *Archæologia*; the other, which is broken, and of slighter proportions, is worth 11*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* The third is in the possession of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and was found at Trumpington.

This species of torques was given as a military honour; it is as a reward of military ambition that Aurelian speaks of it in his letters<sup>n</sup>. Similar armlets occur among the Scandinavian remains<sup>o</sup>.

*Annular torques.* I would apply the term annular torques to those in which a number of rings have been twisted or placed on a string. They are of much rarer occurrence than the solid or funicular, and generally of more recent origin.

<sup>k</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xviii. p. 202. A similar gold ornament, apparently an ear-ring, belongs to Mr. Whincopp, of Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Society of Northern Antiquaries, viii. 2, 3.

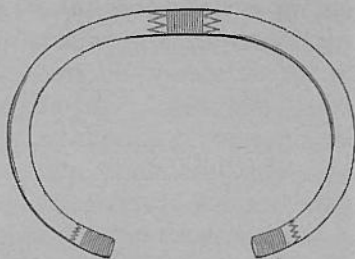
<sup>m</sup> *Archæol.*, vol. xxvi. p. 47.

<sup>n</sup> Vopiscus, vit. Aurel. c. 7.

<sup>o</sup> Cf. one engraved. Sjöberg Samlingar för Nordens fornälskare, tom. ij. 4to. Stockholm, 1824. Pl. 43, 44. fig. 146.

A torques found on the Polden hills, Somersetshire, much resembles the annular, although it is strictly funicular, consisting of an iron ring, round which were twisted five bronze wires. It was found with ornaments, probably Anglo-Saxon<sup>p</sup>.

*Solid torques.* The form of the solid torques differs considerably from the funicular or twisted type, and may be considered more recent than the earliest funicular type, from its not appearing on the earliest monuments, and its occasionally presenting traces of funicular origin, and also its decoration with ornament, which are wanting in the funicular type.



Solid Torques, Karnak.

The solid torque is generally an incomplete ring, and seems to be the type alluded to by Polybius<sup>a</sup> under the name of *μανιάκης*, who aptly designates it a *ψέλλιον χρυσοῦν*, or golden armlet, and by Diodorus<sup>r</sup> as *κρίκοι παχεῖς ὀλόχρυσοι*, "the thick solid gold circlets" of the Gauls. It is the *mun-torc* of the Celts. Its earliest appearance in art is upon the uncertain Gaulish coins, but it has been always found amidst remains of an unequivocally Celtic origin, both in this country and elsewhere. It is generally elliptical. The open part was placed towards the neck in front. The ornaments are of the simplest description, engraved on the body and edges in outline, and generally consisting of lines concentric to the axis of the ornament, and vandyked lines at the edge. They have been occasionally found with dots, and the ends occasionally with a kind of cross and pellet in each quarter.

They do not appear to have been found in this country, but occasionally occur in the sister kingdom. The greatest discovery made of them was at St. Quentin, near Karnak<sup>s</sup>, in Bretagne, under an upright stone of a semicircular druidical temple, where torques and bracelets to the amount of above a thousand pounds were obtained. From the immense amount found they are supposed to have been the national religious or sepulchral deposit of some tribe, for one alone, as Mr. Deane

<sup>p</sup> Archæol., vol. xiv. pl. xix. b.

<sup>a</sup> Lib. ii. Cf. Suid. voce *μανιάκης*. Schol. adv. Theocr. xi. *μάννος*. Hesych. voce *ορμοί*. The *μανιάκης* was used as the border

of a garment.

<sup>r</sup> V. 17.

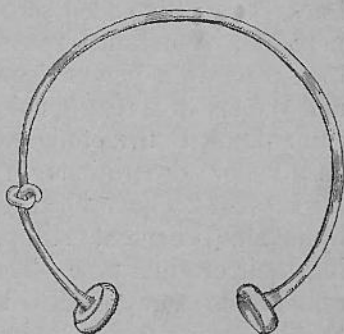
<sup>s</sup> Deane in Archæol., vol. xxii. pl. ii. p. 1—7; vol. xxviii. p. 31.

remarks in his elaborate description, was double the weight of that presented by the Gauls to Augustus.

The heaviest there found was plain, open at each end, on which was engraved a cross and pellet in each quarter, weighed 4 lb. 10 oz. 16 dwts. = 209*l*. 5*s*. 6*d*. Another, more elliptical and decorated at its centre, with concentric and vandyked pattern, weighed 1 lb. 6 oz. 1 dwt. 9.89 grs. = 75*l*. 17*s*. 8*d*.

Some varieties have been also found in Germany<sup>t</sup>: a thin torques, with circular ornaments; another, not cylindrical throughout, but flat inside, to fit better to the arm, with concentric and vandyked engraved lines on the exterior edge, and another with circular ornaments on the same place. A solid torques of this type, of gold, and another with a quadruple row of pellets, were found near the castle of Trimleston, county Meath, Ireland<sup>u</sup>. A singular object, resembling a solid torc, but in its ornamental decoration bearing much resemblance to Anglo-Saxon ornaments<sup>x</sup>, probably one of the very latest of the class, was found on the Polden hills, Somersetshire.

A second variety of the solid torc, but decidedly of the earlier age, is in the collection of the British Museum. The body is plain but thin, the bulbs oblong, slightly concave, and decorated at the side with an engrailing. This has been anciently twisted into a knot, probably in order to fit a younger or female wearer, or perhaps intended for an armilla, since two more of these were found with it.



1096. GUTHRIE.

So much conjecture has prevailed with respect to the bulbous termination of the torques, that some observations seem due here to this part of the subject. The earliest torques are undoubtedly penannular and bulbous: in Persian, Greek, and Roman art, these bulbs were fashioned into the heads of serpents, probably from their shape artistically suggesting the idea. In an inscription relative to a torques dedicated to

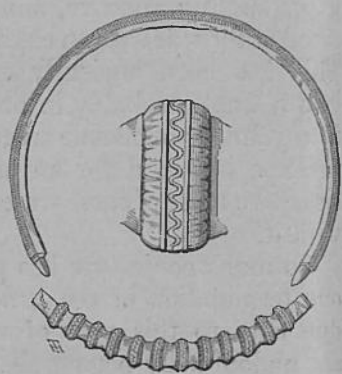
<sup>t</sup> Emele, Dr. Joseph, Beschreibung Römischer und Deutsche Alterthümer, long fo. Mainz, 1825. pl. xx. fig. 1—4.

<sup>u</sup> Dublin Penny Journal.

<sup>x</sup> Archæol., vol. xvi. pl. xix.

Æsculapius this form is particularly mentioned; in this case probably adopted because the serpent was the living emblem of the god. Among the Celts, who never adopted animal forms for their ornamentation, the bulbous termination undergoes several changes. It is found solid and massive, probably to act as a counterpoise, and retain the torques on the neck. Now it is peculiar to the progress of all art, that massive forms, either for the sake of structural beauty or economy of material, are gradually succeeded by lighter ones retaining all the essentials of the type. Hence the bulb became either reduced in size to a mere termination, or else, when preserved, exhibited a form varying from a concave hemisphere to a hollow cone<sup>y</sup>. I would propose this explanation of the motives of a simple people with due deference to the more recondite and learned hypotheses hitherto given. The hollow conical termination is Celtic, but not peculiar to the torques.

*Beaded torques.* Some of the torques found in England and Ireland are evidently imitations of a row of coarse or large beads threaded upon a thick string and tied round the neck. It will be remembered that the most primeval barrows occasionally contain rude beads of opaque glass with undulating lines, commonly called serpents' eggs, or else of a thick rough porcelain, sometimes reeded externally. When a transition took place to a higher degree of civilization among the Celts, and the art of smelting metals became known, the stone weapons and ruder decorations of those races seem to have been replaced by metallic ornaments, still preserving their original type. The most remarkable torc of this kind is that belonging to Mr. Sedgwick of Skipton, and found lying upon two upright stones under a horizontal stone at the side of the hills between Embsay and Barden. This torc, which was exhibited on the



Bronze-headed Torques, found near Embsay.

<sup>y</sup> Some varieties of the solid torques exist on the consular coins; see those of the Manlian family already cited; on a reverse of the Papian family, inscribed LPAPI, with the type of a Gryphon, and on another of the Calpurnian family, inscribed L.PISO FRVGI, we find a solid and penan-

nular torques. All these differ much from the solid Celtic torques hitherto found, and indeed rather resemble ear-rings. Denarii of these types exist in the collection of the British Museum, as well as in that of Mr. Nightingale, who has forwarded me impressions of his coins.



10th November last, before the Archæological Institute, consisted of twelve globular beads, the part representing the string being slightly elastic, and capable of being detached by two conical pins inserted into corresponding sockets at the beaded ends. Like other Celtic decorations, it was ornamented with a rude pattern of hatched marks and an undulating line: this was of bronze. Another torc of the same class was found at Rochdale, in Lancashire, in 1831<sup>z</sup>. The beaded portion consisted of eleven wreathed globular beads united by a cord, while the string or hinder portion which went behind the neck represented a squared cord, ornamented with a double vandyked line. This measured  $4\frac{2}{3}$  by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. dr., was like the preceding of bronze, and weighed 4.75. oz.

The solid torques, although rare in this country, is not uncommon in the Celtic graves, and tumuli in France, and in the district of the Lower Rhine. The specimens found by M. de Ring of this class<sup>a</sup> on the necks of skeletons exhibit some peculiarities not found in Bretagne or Ireland. The terminations become more bell-shaped, and the wire of the body is engraved with a spiral groove, crossed by double bands at equal distances,



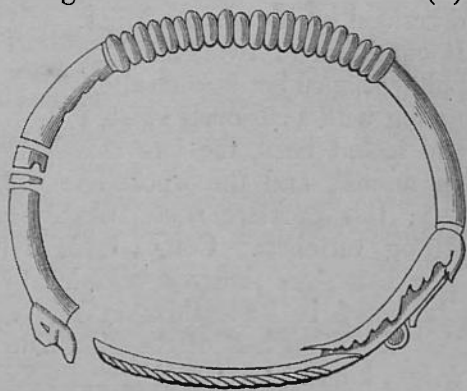
a. Bronze Torquis, France

b. Valley of the Rhine.

a. Torquis, France.

b. Valley of the Rhine.

the whole intended to represent a twisted funicular band secured in its place by crossing bands. These are bronze (A). Other specimens are without the crossing bands (B). A bronze ring of this class, found at Hehnstadt in Brunswick<sup>b</sup>, Germany, is evidently referable to the same class, partly imitating beaded work: the leaf ornament at one side much resembles the workmanship of some bronze



Beaded Ring, Hehnstadt.

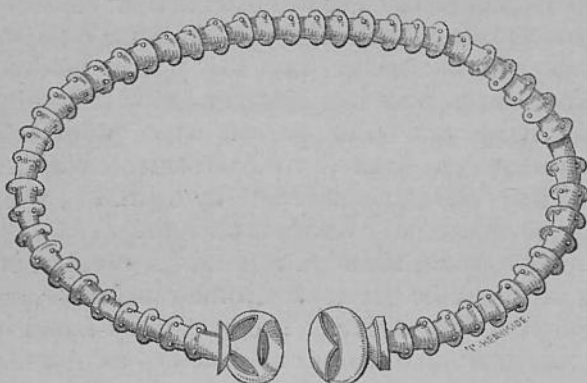
<sup>z</sup> Archæologia, vol. xxv. p. 595—597. Now in the possession of Mr. Dearden of Rochdale.

<sup>a</sup> Etablissements Celtiques. 8vo. Fribourg, 1842.

<sup>b</sup> Wagener, Handbuch, &c. No. 593, s. 819.

ornaments found on the estate of Lord Prudhoe at Stanwick, and the phaleræ and weapons discovered on the Polden Hills<sup>c</sup>.

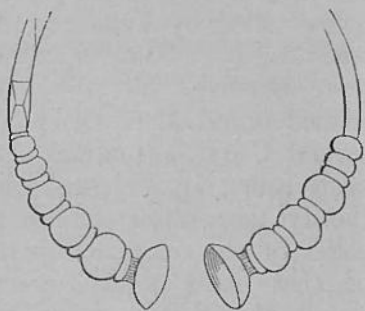
A very singular penannular beaded torques, presenting in some respects a vertebrated appearance, found at Worms, is figured in the handbook of Wagener<sup>d</sup>.



Bronze Beaded Armilla.

Another penannular object of the same class, found in the German graves at Ranis, exhibits a series of beads gradually larger towards the opening<sup>e</sup>.

I shall class with these torcs the one discovered at Perdeswell, near Worcester<sup>f</sup>, described by Mr. Jabez Allies. It consisted of twenty bronze pulley-shaped beads, each alternating with a curiously twisted



Bronze Beaded Torquis, Ranis.

and tooled bead, the two exactly resembling the vertebra of an animal, and the whole like the spine of an animal or fish: this necklace was probably copied from one made of strung vertebrae. Considerable light on the nature of the Worcestershire torc was afforded by the drawing of another discovered in Lancashire in 1831. It will be remembered that the other half of the Rochdale torques is a square band with a kind of vandyked ornament; this other half represents the cord, and passed behind the neck. Some such cord, or

<sup>c</sup> Archæologia, vol. xiv. pl. xix. b.

<sup>d</sup> Page 747, No. 328.

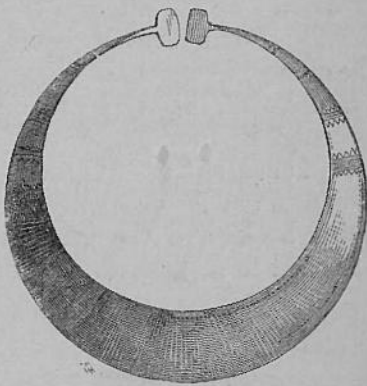
<sup>e</sup> Ibid., fig. 999.

<sup>f</sup> Archæologia, vol. xxx. p. 554.



probably the continuation of the iron wire on which the vertebrated beads are strung, must have been attached to the Perdeswell torc. That the British Celts were accustomed to wear similar decorations is evident from the testimony of Herodian, that the Britons wore the teeth of the seal or walrus strung as beaded torcs.

*Gorget.* This is a peculiarly Celtic ornament, and is almost limited to Ireland, where they are frequently found, and some have occasionally been discovered in Cornwall. It is always of gold, and consists of a thin lamina of metal, terminating at the ends in two round plates. Several notions about the adaptation of this object, more fanciful than correct, have been advanced. It has been supposed that it was worn as the Roman ladies wore the *sphen-done*<sup>g</sup>, on the top of the head, with the circular ends behind the ears; or that the ends may have been tied round the neck, so as to use them as a gorget. One with the ends not terminating in circles has been supposed to be the ornament of the Hibernian Druids, representing the moon in the first quarter, and hence called by Vallancey the *cead raire*<sup>n</sup>. Another, rather more massive, with the cup-shaped terminations visible on several Celtic decorations, has been called by the same authority<sup>i</sup> the *iodhan morain*, or collar of the celebrated judge of that name, which closed round the throat when the wearer gave wrong judgment, a virtue which would rather belong to a solid torques.



Gorget from Dublin.

From its greater delicacy and comparative lightness, the gorget appears to have been an article of female attire, rather than an ornament worn by Druids. They all bear marks of having been hammered, and their open shape and circular termination is evidently suggested by the bulbous torques or armilla, which would, if hammered out, produce the gorget. As the armilla and torques were worn with the bulbous ends down, and as the

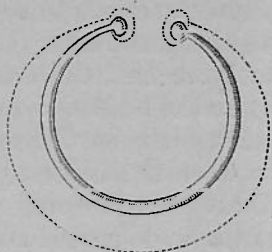
<sup>g</sup> Archæol., vol. ii. pl. ii. p. 36, 37. As on coins of Sihtric, Ethelred and others.

<sup>n</sup> Coll. Hib. Gough's Camden, vol. iv.

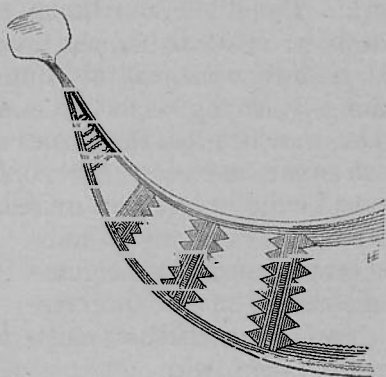
pl. x. p. 230.

<sup>i</sup> Idem in Archæol., vol. viii. p. 166.

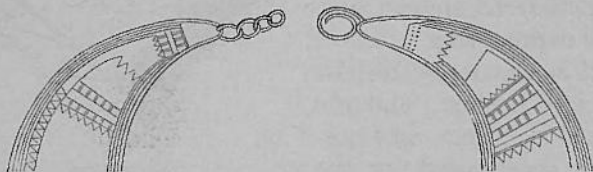
open portion was originally intended to obviate the necessity of a clasp or tie, it is probable that they would be fixed with the open part in front. The orifice is well adapted to a moderate-sized female neck, and the material is too thin and delicate to admit of being worn vertically on the head, without great liability to injury and difficulty of fitting. They are generally more ornamented towards the ends, with a single pattern slightly engraved with a point or chisel, with square compartments, lines crossing the upper surface like parts of radii vandyked, and zig-zag lines. I think that they were worn on the neck, although whether they are the actual *asn* or *asian* I do not attempt to decide. Some illustration of the manner in which the plain examples of this type were fastened is afforded by the torc found at St. Ayre, near Cotentin: one extremity terminated in a wire bent into a spiral hook, and the other had a small chain of four links attached to it, into which the hook might be fastened.



Supposed manner of making Gorget.



Details of Gorget.



Gorget from Cotentin.

Gorgets are more commonly discovered in Ireland than in England. One published by Bishop Percy was found<sup>k</sup> in that country. Three of similar shape were discovered in the townland of Cairn Lochan, parish Magheramesk, county Antrim, in digging under a fallen puldan, or so called Druid's altar, at a depth of five feet, rolled up together<sup>l</sup>; a

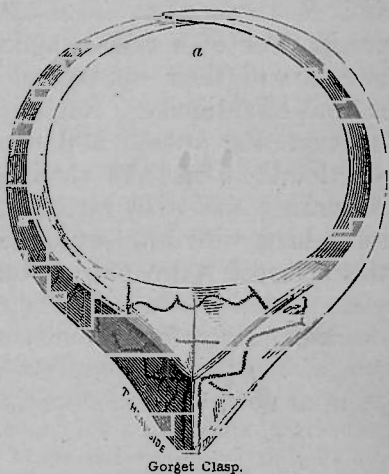
<sup>k</sup> Archæol., vol. ii. pl. ii.

<sup>l</sup> Dubl. Penny Journal, vol. iv. p. 295.

fifth in a ditch near Reyhole, county Clare<sup>m</sup>; a sixth in a bog, county Tyrone<sup>n</sup>; a seventh in a bog at Castlereagh<sup>o</sup>; another, which, through the kindness of Major Moore, I was enabled to lay before the Committee of the Institute, was procured by him in Dublin; a ninth at Ardragh, county Donegal; a tenth at Penwith, in Cornwall, weighing 2 oz. 4 dwts. 6 grs.<sup>p</sup>; and an eleventh in a circular earthwork near Penzance, in the parish of Madden, Cornwall, weighing 4 oz. 4 dwts.<sup>q</sup> Of those found in France the most remarkable is that edited by Caumont and Gerville, already noticed, found at St. Ayr, near Cotentin, in Normandy, between Alauna and the Roman camp at Montebourg<sup>r</sup>. Two others were found east of Mont Roule, in ground said to be evidently Roman; and two other plain collars of gold, without ornament, at Tourlaville<sup>s</sup>. The weight of these collars is generally about two ounces.

The varieties of this type are—1. the *iodhan morain*, which more resembles the corslet from Mold, and which weighed only 22 grs., with raised bosses in grooves, and deep grooved pattern, with radiated central cups, seven-eighths in diameter; and 2. the crescent wanting the circular ends, called the *cead raire*.

In immediate connection with these are two gold ornaments found in Ireland, and now in the British Museum, rather more heart-shaped than any of the preceding. These are about large enough to pass over a child's wrist, and the ends join at *a*. They may possibly have been used for the garment or the shoes<sup>t</sup>, both being occasionally attached by



<sup>m</sup> Gough, Camden, vol. iv. pl. x. p. 230.

<sup>n</sup> Campbell, Philosoph. Survey of Ireland.

<sup>o</sup> Dubourdieu, Survey of Down, p. 331.

<sup>p</sup> Minutes of Soc. of Antiq., 1783, Gough loc. cit., now in British Museum, Add. 9462, and a drawing, Cat. MSS. fol. 8\*.

<sup>q</sup> Now in the British Museum. Lysons' Magn. Britannia, vol. ii. pl. ccxxi. Cat.

MSS. Add. 9462. fo. 8, b, for a drawing.

<sup>r</sup> Cours d'Archeol., pl. x. p. 4. Mem. de la Societe des Antiq. de Normandie, 1827—1828, p. 275.

<sup>s</sup> Mem. de la Soc. des Antiq. de Normandie, p. 275.

<sup>t</sup> For the shoes being so fastened see Maen de Ring, Etablissements Celtiques dans la Sudouest Allemagne, 8vo. Fribourg, 1842.

this kind of brooch or buckle. Like the torques, they are not found in the primeval barrows, and are the decorations of a people more refined than the simple tribes, whose flint weapons and amber beads are discovered in the barrows. The corslet found at Mold, in Flintshire, and the remains of the northern hordes before the introduction of Christianity, bear much resemblance to them. At the same time they do not manifest any trace of Roman or Scandinavian art; and from the localities where they have been found, under the upright puldan or supposed Druids' altars, are contemporaneous with the solid *maniakæ* or collars<sup>u</sup>.

The excellency of workmanship, allied with the total absence of art, cannot fail to strike the mind of the enquirer who investigates this most important and distinctive ornament of the Celtic and Teutonic races. A few concentric or zig-zag lines, or hatched marks, constitute all the varieties of decoration; nor is there any example of the adaptation of animal forms which distinguishes the ornamental design of the Greek and Roman races. The torcs of the Celts are evidently productions of a rude, simple, and unartistic people, and are evidence of their intellectual inferiority to the other great nations of antiquity. Reserving for another occasion, when I treat on the armilla and fibula of the Celts, the question whether the torcs were circulated as money, I shall conclude by remarking that they formed the most esteemed ornaments, and along with armlets, bracelets, and shoe-rings, completed the personal attire of the warrior, and with a few beads of glass or amber, the embellishment of the female; they were much employed for presents, and are mentioned by Strabo<sup>x</sup> as one of the principal exports into Britain from Gaul, which then, as now, was the emporium of fashion.

<sup>u</sup> They are perhaps the segments of Isidor. Origin. et Gloss. ad eund. whence called Baen. Scheffer Tor. s. 18.

<sup>x</sup> Falconer, vol. i. p. 276. He calls them

*περιανθήνια*; they were imported with ivory bracelets, amber, and glass ornaments. Cf. Solin. c. 22. Strabo calls them all rubbish goods.