Ford & West, Lith^rs.

East end of the Chambered Tumulus, near Uley, Gloucestershire,
shewing the Entrance.

The Archaeological Journal.

DECEMBER, 1854.

DESCRIPTION OF A CHAMBERED TUMULUS, NEAR ULEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

THE remarkable chambered tumulus or cairn, near Uley in Gloucestershire, has not attracted much notice; and we search in vain the pages of Camden and later topographical and antiquarian writers, for any reference to it. Its situation, about a quarter of a mile to the east of the well-known camp of Uleybury, is remarkably conspicuous on the brow of the Cotswold hills, here called the "Freeze." It is close to the point selected by a celebrated writer,[1] for its "strikingly sublime" view, over "the deep and shaded vale of Severn, with all its towers, forests, and streams," with the Brecknock Beacons seen in one direction, and the Malvern hills and Titterstone in the other.

This tumulus, locally termed a "tump,"[2] is a long barrow or cairn of stones, covered with a thin layer of vegetable earth. It had been planted with beechwood, which was cut

[1] The Rev. Sydney Smith.—"Sketches of Moral Philosophy," p. 235.

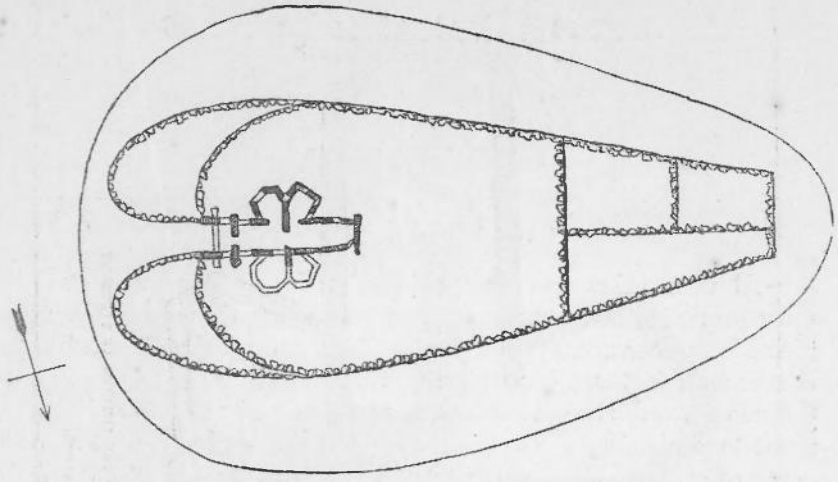
[2] Tump, from the Welsh *Twmp*, or *Twmpath*, a mound. "Hetty Pegler's tump" is the name by which this cairn is known to the peasantry. "Pegler" is a common surname in this part of Gloucestershire, and the villagers of Uley, on being asked as to its application to this spot, whisper an opprobrious story, in regard to a person of the name, formerly living at the adjacent village of Nympsfield. The name, however, doubtless commemorated a no less worthy action than a deed of charity. On visiting the church at Uley, the writer found, on the wall of the chancel, a tablet of the seventeenth century, with the following inscription:—"Near this place lieth interred the body of Henry Pegler of this parish, Gent. Who died on the 12th day of August, 1695, aged 85. (He gave a parcel of land and ten shillings in money to the use of the poor of this parish for ever.)" "Also the body of '*Hester*' his wife, who died the 26th day of Nov., 1694, aged 69." On a list of benefactors, in another part of the church, is as follows:—"Captain Henry Pegler gave 10 shillings per ann. to be paid out of Broadstone field in Uley, 5*s*. to be given away in bread to the poor, and 5*s*. to the minister for a sermon on the 17th day of February." This bequest is at the present time in dispute. There exists a tumulus in Westmoreland, near Great Asby, known by the name of Hollin Stump, a corruption probably of Tump. It was opened in 1837, and three skeletons discovered, with the bones of a horse's head.

down about the end of the year 1820. About that time, some workmen digging for stone discovered the character of the tumulus, by laying open a chamber on the north side, which is stated to have contained two skeletons. This chamber appears to have been completely broken up on this occasion. Mrs. Purnell, who preceded Colonel Kingscote as the owner of the tumulus, gave directions for its being properly examined, which was done on the 22nd and 23rd of February, 1821. Notes of the examination, the existence of which had been almost forgotten, and which appear to have been made by the late T. J. L. Baker, Esq., F.S.A., have been kindly placed at the disposal of the writer, by the son of that gentleman. It is from these notes and a further memorandum by the late Dr. Fry of Dursley, now preserved in the museum of Guy's Hospital, that this account has been drawn up. Its accuracy has been, as far as possible, corroborated, and the details made more complete, by a further examination, in July of the present year, under the direction of Mr. E. A. Freeman and the writer; on which occasion several members of the Institute and a numerous party of their friends were present.[3]

The tumulus is about 120 feet in length, 85 feet in greatest breadth, and about 10 feet in height. Like many other long barrows, it is both higher and broader at the east end than elsewhere. The form of its ground-plan bears much resemblance to the so-called *vesica piscis* of mediæval architects. At the east end, and about twenty-five feet within the area of the cairn, the entrance to a chamber was found, in front of which the stones on each side are built into a neat wall of dry masonry, faced only on one side, the space between being filled up with loose stones. The entrance is a trilithon, formed by a large flat stone, upwards of eight feet in length, and four and a half feet in depth, and supported by two upright stones which face each other, so as to leave a space of about two and a half feet between the lower edge of the large stone and the natural ground. On passing this entrance, a chamber or gallery appears, running from east to west, about twenty-two feet in length, four and a half feet

[3] In compliance with a wish expressed on this occasion, a door has been placed at the entrance of the chamber, which precludes the necessity for its being closed up, and permits its examination at any time by those interested in such remains.

in average width, and five feet in height. The walls of this gallery are formed of large slabs of stone, of irregular shape, set into the ground on their edges. Most of these are about five feet high, and from three to five feet broad. They are

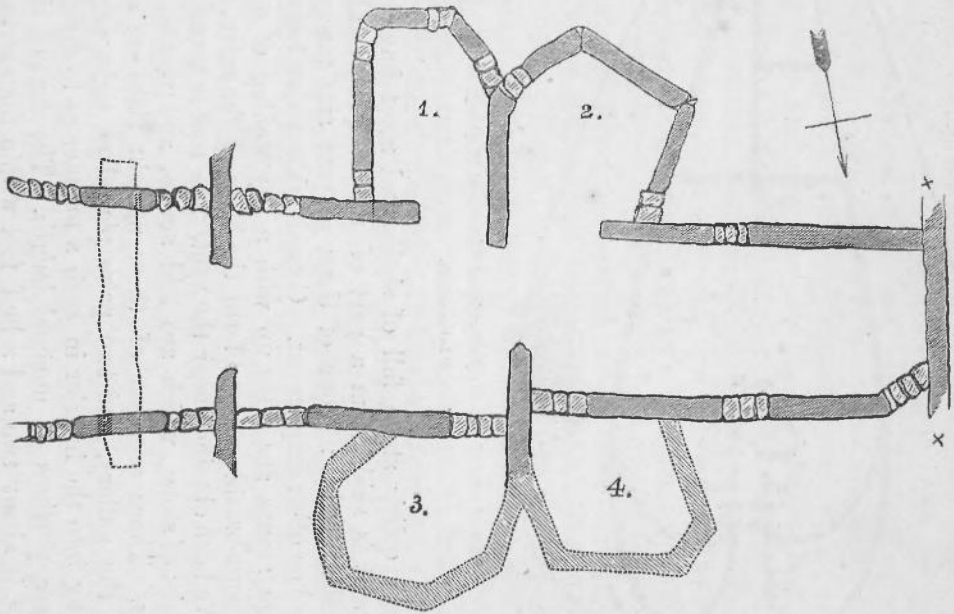


General Ground-plan of the Chambered Tumulus at Uleybury.

Scale, 30 feet to an inch.

of a rough oolitic stone, full of shells, and must have been brought, it is said, from a part of the Cotswolds, about three miles distant: none of them present any traces of the chisel or other implement. Considerable spaces between the large stones are filled up with a dry walling of small stones (corn-brash), such as form the body of the cairn, and may have been obtained near the spot. The roof is formed of large slabs of stone, which are laid across, and rest on the uprights. There are four of these upright slabs on each side of the gallery, and two pairs placed at right angles, projecting into the interior in such a manner as to divide it into three portions of unequal length. The first of these divisions is about two and a half feet within the entrance; the second, about eight feet further to the west, and about ten feet from the upright stone which closes in the gallery at this end. On each hand of the second projecting stone, on the south side of the gallery, are the entrances to two chambers, the first being about two, and the second two and a half feet wide. These side chambers are of an irregular

TUMULUS AT ULEYBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.



GROUND-PLAN OF THE CHAMBERS IN THE TUMULUS AT ULEYBURY.

Scale, 5 feet to an inch.

Ford & West Lith.rs.

Chambered Tumulus near Uley. Longitudmal section, shewing the South side of the Gallery, with the two remaining lateral chambers.
Scale 5 feet to an inch.

quadrilateral form, (see Ground-plan, Numbers 1 and 2), with an average diameter of four and a half feet, and are constructed of upright stones and dry walling, roofed in with flat stones, in the same manner as the central gallery. In each of the chambers are three upright stones, in addition to that already referred to as projecting into the gallery, which is so placed as to form part of the walls of both chambers.

There were, no doubt, originally two chambers on the north side of the gallery, corresponding with those on the south; but which no longer exist, and their entrances are now filled up with dry walling. One of these (No. 3) is that accidentally discovered by workmen, about 1820, as already described. Of the fourth we have no other description than that, on account of its very imperfect state, it was not inserted in the plan made in 1821. Dr. Fry was of opinion that it had been injured at some very remote period, when the cairn had been opened. Its probable position, with that of Number 3, is laid down on the ground-plan in dotted lines.

It appears to have been the custom to close up the entrances of these side chambers with dry walling, after interments had been made in them. Such at least was the condition of chamber 2, when opened in 1821; and, on clearing it out at that time, the lower courses of a second dry wall were found, in a somewhat different direction, just within the other, so that it seemed to have been doubly closed up. The roof of this chamber differed materially from that of any other part of the structure. Near the top of the side walls, a course of stones was made to overhang the course below it, the next to overhang this again, and so on, thus giving a domed form to the roof, which was closed in with a single flat stone at the top: the construction in this respect being the same as that of the chambered tumulus at Stoney Littleton, those of New Grange and Dowth in Ireland, and a few others hereafter to be pointed out. Possibly, indeed, the whole structure had originally this character; as when opened in 1821, there was distinct evidence of the greater part having been more or less disturbed and ransacked, at some much earlier period: and it is not improbable that, as in the examination of 1821, this was effected by removing the cap-stones

forming the roof, which were afterwards replaced, and in the course of which more or less disarrangement cannot but have occurred.

Over the gallery and chambers, a heap of stones, or cairn, was raised, which had been neatly finished on the outside with a facing of dry wall, carried up to a height of from two to three feet, in continuation of that observed on each side of the approach to the entrance. At this end, the cairn appears to have been lengthened after its original formation, by an extension of the dry walling, as shown on the general plan. At the west end of the tumulus, are dry walls intersecting the others at right angles, the object of which it is difficult to understand; possibly, it was intended to construct chambers at this end of the cairn, similar to those at the east, should the occasion have arisen. On the outside of the enclosing wall, the cairn was again piled up, so as to cover and protect this dry walling; and, over the whole, appears to have been laid a thin covering of vegetable mould.

Among the stones which filled up the approach to the entrance, and from two to three feet above the level of the natural ground, were two human skeletons, one of which was laid on the right side in a direction nearly east and west. The other was inadvertently displaced before its position had been observed. Near these skeletons, and close to the large upper stone of the trilith forming the entrance, were the lower jaws with the teeth and tusks of several wild boars, without, it is said, any other of the bones of these animals, even those of the skulls.[4] The condition in which these two interments were found, appears to prove that the true entrance had not been discovered, or at least opened out, by those who rifled the interior in early times. These interments were probably contemporary or nearly so with those in the interior. Of this, however, there is no actual proof; they, perhaps, indicate sacrificial rites in honour of those entombed within; or the jaws may have

[4] The tusks of these boars, some of which are preserved in the Museum of Guy's Hospital, measure from 6 to 7 inches in length, on the larger curve. This is about the length of what Sir R. C. Hoare calls an "enormous tusk" of the same animal, found by him in a barrow not far from Stonehenge, with a human skeleton and remarkable objects of both stone and bronze. (Ancient Wilts, vol. i., p. 209, pl. xxix.) The tusks of the existing wild boar of Europe do not appear frequently to exceed 5 inches in length; those of the Indian wild boar are often more than 7 inches, and there is one specimen in the Museum of the College of Surgeons in London, more than 9 inches in length.

been deposited in proof of the hunter's skill. The gallery and chamber were filled with small stones and rubbish, among which were the remains of no fewer than thirteen skeletons: nearly all of these had been more or less disturbed. In the gallery, about three feet from the entrance, and just within the first pair of projecting stones, were the remains of two skeletons, one of which had been much displaced, but the other had evidently been buried in a sitting, or rather squatting posture, and had fallen forwards in decay. The feet were found under the hips, the thighs on the legs, the vertebræ and ribs in a horizontal position between the legs; and the skull, with the summit reversed, in front of the knees. A third skeleton was found near the centre of the gallery. Among the stones and rubbish at the west end, were some bones and teeth of a graminivorous animal; and on the floor, a little more to the east, the remains of three human skeletons: one that of a male, another of a female; the third, of which the sex is not stated, had been interred on the back, with the head to the east; the bones of these had been somewhat displaced.

In the side chamber (No. 1,) were the remains of four skeletons, one at least, as was evident from the form of the pelvis, being that of a female. No mode of burial could account for the irregular position in which the bones of these skeletons were found. Above these, and mixed with the rubbish which covered them, were some pieces of earthenware and charcoal, a small vessel described as "*resembling* a Roman lachrymatory," and a few scattered bones of some animal; the remains, possibly, of a funeral sacrifice or feast. In chamber No. 2, which, as has been stated, was found closed up with dry walling, were some pieces of pottery and charcoal, and a few human bones, but not an entire skeleton.

Near the highest part of the cairn, within about six inches of the surface, and nearly over the side chamber No. 3, was a skeleton lying in a direction about N.E. and S.W., with which were three Roman coins of the third brass of the lower empire, and described as of the three sons of Constantine the Great.

When the cairn was recently re-opened, a heap of human bones, most of them much broken, was found at the west end of the gallery. Altogether there were fragments of eight or nine skulls. Among the other bones there were

two upper dorsal vertebræ united by anchylosis, and it is to be remarked that two others in the same condition, obtained in 1821, are preserved in the museum at Guy's Hospital. There were also a few bones of ruminant animals with portions of the jaws of boars, with teeth and fragments of tusks. One of the latter had been cut and perforated as if for suspension, as an amulet or trophy. There were two or three oyster shells, much decayed, a few fragments of red pottery of the coarsest kind, well-burnt, but whether of the Romano-British or Mediæval period, could not be ascertained, as no part of any rim or moulding remained. At the base of the cairn, in the approach to the entrance, two flint flakes were found, one of them darkly stained. As flint does not naturally occur in the district, these must be regarded, almost with certainty, as fragments of arrow-heads or other implements of the period, when the tumulus was erected. This is an inference still further confirmed by the discovery of two stone axe-heads in the immediate neighbourhood of the cairn. One of these axe-heads, now in the museum of Guy's Hospital, is of flint; the other of hard green stone: they measure 4 inches in length, by 2 in breadth. A groat of Edward IV. was picked up, during the recent exploration, by one of the workmen; and this may perhaps mark the time when the cairn was rifled by some mediæval treasure-diggers.[5]

It is to be regretted that only two perfect crania from this burial-place have been preserved; these were presented to the museum of Guy's Hospital by the late Dr. Fry, who had himself taken them from the tumulus. The first, a remarkable specimen of its kind, is the skull of an adult male, with the lower jaw complete. Its length is great in proportion to its breadth; the form, according to Retzius, being decidedly dolichocephalic. The forehead is small, and rather contracted, but not low; the frontal sinuses well marked; the external auditory opening is situated within the posterior

[5] There is curious proof of such searches for treasure in mediæval times, in a document on the Patent Roll of 17th Edw. II. (1324), entitled "De terrâ fodenda pro thesauro abscondito querendo;" in which the privilege of examining six barrows and some other places in Devonshire, where treasure was supposed to be concealed, is granted to one Robert Beaupel. It is prudently stipulated that the search should be made in open day, in the presence of the sheriff of the county, the *decennarius* or tithing-man, and other honest men who might be able to certify to the facts. (Sir H. Ellis's "Letters of Eminent Literary Men," published by the Camden Society, 1843, p. 32.)

half of the skull, the sutures are nearly obliterated; and there are no Wormian bones. The skull is not quite symmetrical; the lower jaw is of moderate size, with a well-formed chin. The insertion of the muscles of mastication is strongly marked. From both jaws several of the teeth are wanting, but have evidently fallen out since death; those which remain are remarkably worn by attrition, and the molars have almost entirely lost their crowns from this cause; those of the lower jaw are concave from side to side, and those of the upper are convex. In the lower jaw are two large cavities, caused by alveolar abscesses, situated about the fangs of the first molar on each side.

The other skull is remarkably well shaped, and is evidently that of a young person, apparently of the male sex. It has the same general form as the preceding, but with its characteristics less defined. The lower jaw has not been preserved; the teeth which remain in the upper jaw exhibit the incipient effects of attrition.[6]

Among the fragments of skulls obtained in July, 1854, are three or four calvaria sufficiently complete to show that the length of the skulls had been great in proportion to the breadth. In three instances at least, the thickness is remarkable, and ranges from three to four-tenths of an inch in the thicker parts of the parietal and frontal bones. There are portions of two lower jaws of great size and thickness, especially in that part of the alveolar region, corresponding to the molar teeth; and which are deeply marked for the attachment of the muscles of mastication. Another lower jaw shows that a first molar and second bicuspid had been lost during life. Such of the molar teeth as still remain exhibit great marks of attrition, and present, for the most part, a concave surface from side to side. A still more marked appearance of the same kind is presented by the teeth remaining in an upper jaw; and in both it is observable that the inner side of the teeth is that most worn away. Though the bones had, of course, lost nearly the whole of their animal matter, they were generally in a state of good preservation; and hardly a carious tooth was found. None of the bones had been burnt.

[6] See Catalogue of Museum of Guy's Hospital, No. 3200. These skulls are to be particularly described, and the more perfect of them figured of the full size, in the first Decade of the "Crania Britannica," by Messrs. Davis and Thurnam.

There can be little doubt that the Uley cairn is a monument of the ancient British population during very early times. It appears to bear the same relation to a simple barrow of the same age, as the mausoleum of a noble of the present day does to the turf-grave of a village churchyard. Altogether a finer position can hardly be conceived for the burial-place of an early British chieftain or regulus: a cairn,

> "Immense, with blind walls columnless, a tomb
> For earlier kings whose names have passed away."

Similar chambered tumuli, though of much larger proportions, still exist on the banks of the Boyne, which, from ancient Irish records, are believed to have formed the burial-places of many of the Pagan kings of Tara.

That this was an ancient monument, during the Roman rule in Britain, seems to be proved by the secondary interment near the summit, accompanied by coins of the Constantine series; whilst the "vessel resembling a Roman lachrymatory," if indeed it should so have been described, may possibly indicate that the interior was first rifled at this period—a circumstance which may have arisen from the roof of the chamber having been discovered in making this very interment. The boar's tusks, the flint flakes, the stone axes, and the result of the examination of similar sepulchral mounds, so far as this has been carried, all seem to point to a very remote period as the date of the Uley cairn.

Whether it is in any degree to be connected, as a contemporary work, with the ancient camp of Uleybury hard by, seems doubtful. The age of hill-fortresses of this description is very uncertain; and though arguments perhaps preponderate in favour of our assigning them to a period subsequent to the arrival of the Belgæ, two or three centuries before our era; it is by no means certain that they were not in use by an earlier British population. As, however, a connection between these two ancient monuments cannot, in the present state of our knowledge, be shown to be impossible, a short notice of this remarkable earthwork seems here desirable.

The camp of Uleybury is seated on a bold peninsula of the hills, connected by a very narrow isthmus with the table land adjoining, and must have been a very strong position in ancient times. It is surrounded, on four sides,

by a double rampart and ditch, and the entrance, by the isthmus, is protected by outworks of considerable magnitude. The level area within contains thirty-two acres. Though probably of ancient British construction, it seems likely that it was appropriated, and perhaps modified, by the Roman invaders. There are not wanting, indeed, arguments for claiming it as one of the chain of camps fortified by Ostorius Scapula, A.D. 51, during his campaign against Caractacus; and which, we are told by Tacitus, extended from the Severn to the Avon, or, as some read the passage, to the Nen.[7] That Uleybury was, in later times at least, in Roman occupation, or in that of a people thoroughly Romanised, may be inferred from the number of Roman remains in its immediate neighbourhood. Among these may be named the villas at Woodchester, Cherington, Rodmarton, Withington, and other places; the "Cold Harbour" farm at Uley, and the coins so often found both within the area of the camp, and on the surrounding hills. Of about one hundred and fifty coins from this site, which have passed into my hands, the majority are third brass of the lower empire, and of those which are legible, four only are of an earlier date, and are referrible to Trajan, Hadrian, and Commodus respectively. About fifty are of emperors from Gallienus to Valens, four being of the Tetrici, three of Carausius, and twenty-nine of the Constantine family. Mr. J. Y. Akerman has been good enough to examine these coins.

The chambered tumulus of Uley, with a few others which will be referred to, has a certain affinity with the Cromlech tumuli of Wales, still best known to us through the old descriptions of Pennant,—those of Cornwall described by Borlase and others, and those, still more remarkable, of the Channel Islands and Brittany, so well illustrated by the labours of Dr. Lukis and his father.[8] Throughout the north

[7] See a paper by T. J. L. Baker, Esq., F.S.A., Archæologia, vol. xix., p. 161, in which these camps are traced through Gloucestershire, following the line of the Cotswolds. Sir Henry Dryden is of opinion, after a very careful and extended survey, which we must regret has not been published, that a continuation of this chain of camps is to be traced through the counties of Warwick and Northampton, as far as the marshes of the Isle of Ely and the banks of the Nen. Sir Richard Colt Hoare had previously taken a similar view of this subject, as may be seen by a map in his "Giraldus Cambrensis," 1806. Vol. i., p. cxviii. In the essay by Mr. Baker, above referred to, is a particular description and good ground-plan of the camp of Uleybury, the form of the area being taken from the ground-plan of the fortress given by Lysons, in his "Woodchester," Plate I.

[8] See observations on the Primeval Antiquities of the Channel Islands, by F. C. Lukis, published in this Journal, vol. i., p. 142, 222; the account of the

of Europe, in Holland, North Germany, Holstein, the Danish Islands, and the south of Sweden, are sepulchral monuments, called Giants' Chambers by Worsaae and other northern antiquaries, which, from personal observation,[1] we can state are essentially the same with the cromlech tombs now referred to. Excepting, however, as regards the size of the chambers themselves, all these differ in important particulars from that rarer class of primeval sepulchral monuments to which we must refer the chambered tumulus of Uley. In these we find a much more elaborate structure, a central corridor with communicating lateral chambers, arranged in pairs with more or less of symmetry. More of art, too, is shown in the kind of vaulted roof with which the chamber is often covered in, which exhibits an approach to the character of the arch, and has indeed received the name of the "horizontal arch." We here trace a decided advance in architectural skill, as compared with the cromlech chambers, with their simple arrangement of upright stones and imposts, however remarkable these may be from their number and often gigantic proportions.

Chambered tumuli, such as those now under consideration, are of very rare occurrence in the British Islands. That of Stoney Littleton, near Wellow in Somersetshire, about five miles south of Bath, is the best preserved example in England.[2] Of that at Nemnet near Butcombe, also in Somersetshire, little evidence now remains beyond the very imperfect description in the early volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine.[3] The celebrated "Weland's Smithy," near Ashbury in Berkshire, may be a ruined monument of the same kind. There are in Gloucestershire and North Wiltshire, several long barrows or cairns, mostly in a ruinous condition, which might repay the careful investigation of the antiquary, with a view to their comparison with the more distinct examples now enumerated.

In Ireland the remarkable chambered tumuli on the banks of the Boyne, at New Grange and Dowth, with others

Cromlech du Tus, Guernsey, a gallery with small lateral chambers, Journal of the Brit. Archæol. Assoc., vol. i., p. 25; vol. iv., p. 330; and other notices in the same Journal, vol. iii., pp. 15, 269, 342; also "On Celtic Megaliths," &c. Archæologia, vol. 35, p. 232.

[1] We may allude more particularly to the Giant's Chamber at Walthausen, near Lubeck, and those at Udleire and Oelim in Denmark, near the Roeskilde Fiord.

[2] Sir R. C. Hoare, Archæologia, vol. xix., p. 43.

[3] Gent. Mag., vol. lix., lxii., and lxiii. See also Histories of the County of Somerset, by Collinson, Rutter, and Phelps.

on a smaller scale, are doubtless to be referred to the same category; and there are other less characteristic examples in that country, of which notices have been given by antiquarian and topographical writers. Very recently, Mr. A. Henry Rhind has examined several tumuli in Caithness, in which the same principle of construction is to be traced, and which satisfactorily prove the existence of this form of sepulchral monument in the most remote part of North Britain.[4]

Did the limits of the present notice permit, we might bring together the details of these several examples, with the hope of presenting a connected history of the chambered tumuli of the British Islands. We may, however, observe that we search in vain amongst the sources open to us, for any notices of such tumuli out of this country. As regards the north of Europe, at least, we find no mention of any such in the pages of Worsaae; and the statement of the Society of Antiquaries of Copenhagen is decisive as to the fact that "nothing has as yet been observed approaching to the form of an arch in the sepulchres of the North," such as is to be traced in the tumuli under consideration, and in which these writers recognise "the earliest transition to the arch."[5]

Perhaps the sepulchral monuments of Minorca, called *Talayots*, have more analogy with our chambered tumuli than any other monuments to which we can refer. As to these, however, and the apparently analogous *Nurhags* of Sardinia, we require perhaps more precise details to enable us to institute an accurate comparison, in connection with any inquiry as to the ethnological affinities of these structures. It is to be regretted that we know so little of the ancient sepulchral remains, barrows, cairns, and megalithic chambers of the south of France, the Spanish peninsula, and the shores of the Mediterranean generally; as it seems, on the whole, most probable that this is the direction in which we ought to search for the traces of chambered tumuli similar to those of Uley, Stoney Littleton, and New Grange.

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[4] Ulster Journal of Archæology, vol. ii., p. 100.

[5] Guide to Northern Archæology edited by the Earl of Ellesmere, p. 78.