

## House-Burial, with Examples in Derbyshire.

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### INTRODUCTION.

MANY years ago when reading Thomas Bateman's *Vestiges of the Antiquities of Derbyshire* and his *Ten Years' Diggings*, the writer was impressed by various problems which appeared to call for solution. The most important of these was house-burial. Nowhere did this diligent explorer give a hint that in unearthing the remains of the dead he was possibly sometimes digging up the remains of human dwellings; he was looking for urns, food vessels, drinking vessels, "incense cups," bronze weapons, jewels, and other ornaments. It did not strike him that the clay floors of barrows might be the floors of houses. It did not occur to him that trenches which surrounded barrows might have been drains to keep those houses dry. He found what he was looking for, and he was not looking for dwellings or huts. Nor were later explorers, such as Greenwell, and Mortimer in Yorkshire, looking for them. But they found them now and then, and were puzzled.

Our scanty knowledge of the prehistoric house is in a large measure derived from the remains found in barrows; indeed a barrow often covers the remains of a dwelling. In the great majority of cases, however, we merely have the traces of temporary huts in which the sick, the wounded, or the aged were exposed to die. It was the fear of the pollution of a house by a death within its walls which led to this practice. The slight materials of which these temporary abodes were constructed have

for the most part perished, and little is left but the bones of the dead, the cups from which they drank, or the vessels from which they ate in their last hours.

The presence of household utensils, ornaments, and jewels in barrows, as well as of remains of permanent or of abandoned or burnt dwellings, ought not to be a matter for wonder. They can be in any case accounted for by ignorance of the nature of infection and contagion, leading to a general belief that all a man's personal belongings were polluted by his death, and therefore should never be used again. It could not have escaped the notice of early man that a death was often followed quickly by other deaths in the same house, and that sometimes whole villages were decimated. Nor could it have escaped his notice that the wearing of a dead man's clothes was fraught with the utmost danger. Hence a not unfounded belief that such clothes were polluted would readily be extended to every object which the dead man had used or touched, including his weapons, the dishes out of which he had eaten, the pots out of which he had drunk, the quern by which he had ground his wheat, and the very dwelling in which he had lived. In this way a belief arose that all such things should be burnt, broken, or destroyed, and, in some parts of the world, the belief was so strong as to lead to the abandonment of whole villages, or neighbourhoods. These people were only doing in a different way what we are doing now. Whereas we isolate the sick, they forsook them altogether; they put them into distant hovels with a little food and drink, and left them there to die. And whereas we merely disinfect a house, they burnt it, and covered it beneath a mound of earth. They did not know that disease was spread by invisible organisms.

Archaeologists usually speak of the contents of barrows as "grave goods," and say that such goods were deposited with the dead in order to be of use to them in another

world. Whatever may be thought of articles of personal use or ornament deposited in barrows, it is impossible to believe that human beings were buried or burnt in the houses, or the temporary huts, in which they had died to the intent that such abodes might be of use to them hereafter. The statements of ancient writers, and the evidence collected by many travellers from every part of the world prove that men were buried in their houses for a very different reason—the fear of pollution or contagion. The imitations of house-burial found in many countries; burial-urns constructed in the form of houses; stone tombs with gables and tiled roofs—these things point back to an earlier practice of burying or burning the dead in the house itself. Long after the original custom had died out, it survived in memory, and we may trace it in the old roofed stone coffins and graves of our English churchyards.

In the statements of modern travellers we have conclusive evidence that men are buried in their dwellings to this day, and we have also the evidence of Greek and Roman authors. In order that we may understand the reason for this strange practice we must try to understand the beliefs, or state of mind, of early man. This will involve some examination of old literature, and of the funeral customs of savages in various parts of the world.

#### FEAR OF THE UNBURIED CORPSE.

Between death and burial, or cremation, a corpse was regarded as a danger to the living. Thus when Thorolf Haltfoot was found dead one morning as he sat in his chair, Arnkel, his son, went to the back of the chair, and “bade everybody beware of facing him until body-service (*nábjargir*) had been given to him. Then Arnkel grasped Thorolf by the shoulders, and exerted his strength to the utmost to bring him under. After that he wrapped a cloth round Thorolf’s head, and made him ready according

to the custom. Then he caused a breach to be made in the wall behind him, and drew him through it." <sup>1</sup>

Arnkel approached the corpse from behind because he believed that the unclosed eyes of the dead exercised a pernicious glamour. But when the eyes had been closed or covered, as they are covered by pennies in England to this day, it was thought that the danger was averted. Body-service consisted not only in avoiding the evil eyes of the deceased, but in preventing the souls of the bystanders from entering into the corpse. This was done by closing the mouth and nostrils. "The soul," says Frazer, "is commonly supposed to escape by the natural openings of the body. The Itonamas in South America seal up the eyes, nose, and mouth of a dying person, in case his ghost should get out and carry off others, and for a similar reason the people of Nias, who fear the spirits of the recently deceased, and identify them with the breath, seek to confine the vagrant soul in its earthly tabernacle by bunging up the nose or tying up the jaws of the corpse." The departure of the soul, says the same authority, "is not always voluntary. It may be extracted from the body against its will by ghosts, demons, or sorcerers. Hence, when a funeral is passing the house, the Karens of Burma tie their children with a special kind of string to a particular part of the house. The children are kept tied in this way until the corpse is out of sight." <sup>2</sup> To this day English nurses stop up the natural apertures of their dead patients. There is an English folk-tale about "The sons who salted their father's corpse," and stopped up his ears and nostrils "to keep the flies out." <sup>3</sup> Here the flies represent the souls of the living which might enter the corpse.

The Icelandic sagas contain other instances of the sup-

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<sup>1</sup> *Eyrbyggja Saga*, c. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed. i, pp. 251, 263. English undertakers still tie up the jaws.

<sup>3</sup> *Addy's Household Tales*, 1895, p. 41.

posed protection of the living from the evil eyes of the dead or dying. Thus when the enemies of Stigandi the outlaw were about to kill him, they took precautions lest his glance should do injury. So they drew a bag over his head, forgetting that there was a slit in it through which Stigandi could see. The effect was that the land which fell under his eyes through the opening was blasted, so that grass never grew there again.<sup>1</sup> Before Katla, the witch, in *Eyrbyggja Saga*, was stoned to death, a sealskin bag was tied over her head, in order, says the latest editor of the story, "to avert the danger of the evil eye."<sup>2</sup> The bag tied over the head survived in England as the face-cloth. Strutt tells us that after the closing of the eyes a linen cloth was put over the face of the deceased.<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere the bag or face-cloth seems to have taken the form of a mask. Aleutian "whalers are laid at full length, or set upright, clad in wooden armour, the head concealed by a mask which protects the living from the fearful eyes of the dead: those eyes, those fatal eyes—it does not suffice to close them, they must also be blind-folded. Was it from this motive that the Assyrians, Egyptians, and some of the Greeks—at least those of ancient Mycenæ—masked their dead?"<sup>4</sup> Schliemann found masks of gold-plate covering the faces of bodies in the tombs of Mycenæ. He gives a figure of a mask of gold in which the eyes are shut, and he mentions other masks with shut eyes. He also found a plain round leaf of gold lying on the right eye of a skull.<sup>5</sup> Nordenskiöld found two masks carved in wood and smeared with blood in an Esquimaux grave.<sup>6</sup>

The fear of the unburied or unburnt dead was not con-

<sup>1</sup> *Laxdœla Saga*, c. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Eyrbyggja Saga*, ed. Gering, Halle, 1897, c. 20. Other references are given in the notes.

<sup>3</sup> Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, 1849, ii, p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> *Mycenæ*, pp. xxxvi, xlvi, 222, 220, 289, 296, 312.

<sup>6</sup> *Voyage of the Vega*, 1881, ii, p. 238.

fined to their eyes, or to the danger lest the soul of a living man should escape into the corpse. Among the Samoans of the Western Pacific, for instance, "when a dead body was in the house no food was eaten under the same roof; the family had their meals outside, or in another house. Those who attended the deceased were most careful not to handle food, and for days were fed by others as if they were helpless infants. The fifth day was a day of "purification." They bathed the face and hands with hot water, and then they were "clean" and resumed the usual time and mode of eating."<sup>1</sup> In ancient Greece all who visited a house where a corpse lay were purified by water on issuing out of it; it was sprinkled upon them out of an earthen vessel brought from another house. In certain districts of France "people on returning from a funeral wash their hands, and the towel used to wipe them is summarily disposed of." Among certain African tribes "all those who have touched the corpse go and wash in the river."<sup>2</sup>

In Lapland, before 1674, the body was put into the coffin by a man hired or appointed for the purpose. He wore a brass ring on his arm "as a preservative against any harm which might otherwise be done to him by the Manes of the deceased," the ring being presented to him by the deceased's next of kin. Probably the finger-rings given to English mourners were originally intended for the same purpose. "It is no easie matter," we are told, "to find a grave-digger among the Laplanders, unless it be a miserable poor fellow, who must be hired to this work. After they are come to the churchyard, the difficulty is how to have the grave dug, for no Laplander that is worth anything will do it, so that they are forced to hire a Swede, if they can meet with one, or else some very poor Laplander. Then they bury the dead body according

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<sup>1</sup> Turner's *Samoa*, 1884, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Anthropological Journal*, xxiii, p. 33.

to the Christian rite, conducted thither by the mourners who appear all in their worst cloths." <sup>1</sup>

But the greatest fear relating to a corpse was the dread that it might come back and be a torment to the living. We have just seen that Thorolf, instead of removing his father's body through the door of the house, made a breach in the wall for that purpose. He did this as a precaution lest his father should return to the house after death. The Samoyedes, a Ural-Altai race widely spread over the extreme north of Europe and Asia, take care not to remove the corpse through the door of the hut; they make a special opening for this purpose, and carefully paste it up again, so that the soul cannot find its way back.<sup>2</sup> When Greenlanders, says Nansen, are dead, if it be in a house, they are carried out through the window; if in a tent through an opening cut in the skins of the back wall. This corresponds remarkably with the common custom in our own country (Norway) of carrying a dead body out through an opening in the wall made for the purpose."<sup>3</sup> At Hawkshead, the most northern parish of Lancashire, there was formerly a custom to make a door opposite the front door of a farm-house. These doors were often at the head of a short flight of steps, and an old workman told Mr. Swainson Cowper that they were originally made for taking coffins out. Many of them are now walled up. In Pembrokeshire it was once the custom to drag the corpse in a shift to the top of the chimney, and then let it down outside, and Mr. Cowper thinks that this practice was a survival from a time when the dead were hoisted through a hole in the roof.<sup>4</sup> It was doubtless intended to deceive the ghost, so that it could not find its way back again. In Bechuanaland the corpse

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<sup>1</sup> Scheffer's *History of Lapland*, ed. 1704, pp. 311, 314.

<sup>2</sup> Sonntag, *Die Todtenbestattung*, 1878, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Eskimo Life*, 1893, p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> H. S. Cowper, *Hawkshead*, 1899, p. 324, referring to Williams, *Pembrokeshire Antiquities*

is carried through a hole which has been broken in the fence of the kraal.<sup>1</sup>

After a funeral grave-diggers in Kamchatka creep through a plaited ring to prevent the dead from following them. In Germany it was the custom, when a death took place, to wake all the sleepers in the house, or they too would sleep in death. If the head of the house died, all the cattle in the stall must be touched and awoken.<sup>2</sup> In England the bees must be told of their master's death, or they too, it is said, will die.

But the practice of deceiving the ghost by taking him through a hole in the wall was a mild remedy compared with burning his body to ashes and destroying his house.

#### CREMATION.

Cremation was one of the methods by which, in ancient belief, the living could be protected from the attacks of the dead. This belief still exists among savage races. "A bushman having put a woman to death, who was a magician, dashed the head of the corpse to pieces with large stones, buried her, and made a large fire over the grave, for fear she should rise again and trouble him."<sup>3</sup> The belief involved in this rite prevailed in England and in Iceland as late as the twelfth century.

A manuscript in the British Museum contains a story which relates that the ghosts of two rustics appeared at Drakelow in Derbyshire, and continued to haunt their graves until their bodies were burnt. The cremation is said to have occurred between the years 1083-93, the author of the story being Galfrid, abbot of Burton.<sup>4</sup>

William of Newburgh, a native of Bridlington, who lived from 1135 to 1200 and wrote a history of England

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *Natural History of Man*, i, p. 336.

<sup>2</sup> Sonntag, *op. cit.* pp. 52, 173.

<sup>3</sup> Lubbock (Lord Avebury) *Origin of Civilization*, 5th ed. p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, xvii, p. 57.



extending from 1066 to 1198, tells us that a remarkable thing happened in those days in Buckinghamshire. A man who had been buried in the usual way came to his wife's bed at night, and frightened her terribly. He afterwards appeared to others, and in the end so terrified the whole village by his actions that a general watch had to be kept. Frightened above measure, the inhabitants sought advice from the Church, and the matter was brought before the Bishop of Lincoln, who had just then been translated to London. The astonished bishop inquired minutely into the circumstances, and was told that "there were men who said that such things often happened in England, and that the people would get no rest until the wretched man's body was dug up and burnt." But the bishop thought that would be too indecorous, so he wrote out a grant of absolution, and ordered it to be laid on the man's breast. Accordingly the tomb was opened, the body was found just where it had been laid, and the grant of absolution was put in. Thereafter the tomb was closed, and the man never wandered or frightened the neighbours again. The historian tells us that he learnt the account of these things from the Archdeacon of Buckingham, and he goes on to relate two other similar cases.

One of these happened at Berwick-on-Tweed. There a rich, but, as it afterwards appeared, bad man had died. He walked by night from his tomb, struck terror into the hearts of the neighbours, and returned to his grave before daylight. This happened for many days, and nobody dare go out after sunset. The neighbours deliberated as to what they ought to do, the more ignorant thinking that unless they aroused themselves their blood would soon be sucked by the lifeless monster, and the wiser ones believing that the air would be corrupted by the pestilent corpse, so that many deaths would follow. But the precaution they ought to take appeared clear to them from

many previous examples in such a case. "Accordingly they hired ten bold young men to dig up the corpse, and after cutting it up limb by limb, to burn it, and make it the food of fire." This was done, and the people got rest.

Similar troubles, says the historian, occurred elsewhere in Great Britain, and he is led to moralize about them. "It could not," he says, "be readily believed that the bodies of the dead, walking by I know not what inspiration from their tombs, would frighten and endanger the living, and then return to these same tombs, which opened of their own accord, had not frequent examples in our own time supplied abundant testimony of the fact." To the numerous instances which might have been recorded the historian adds two other cases. He tells us that a few years before his time the chaplain of a certain illustrious woman was buried at Melrose Abbey. The chaplain, we are told, had so little respect for his sacred order, and was so much addicted to hunting, that he went by the name of Hound-priest. Wandering from his tomb he could do no harm within the precincts of the monastery, for the merits of its holy inmates prevented that. But the dead chaplain wandered outside the monastery, and visited and terrified his former mistress as she lay in bed. This he did so often that she implored the aid of one of the monks. The monk promised a speedy remedy, and returning to the monastery got one of the brethren and two strong young men to help him to keep watch at the cemetery where the unhappy priest was buried. Midnight had already gone, and no monster appeared, whereupon three of the company went to warm themselves in an adjoining building. So the monk who had promised help to the lady was left alone, when the monster attacked him furiously. But with an axe that he carried in his hand he cut a deep wound in the monster's body: the monster fled; the tomb opened, and received its occupant. But when the monk's companions had heard what had

happened they felt impelled to dig up and destroy the accursed body. "When they had cleared away the earth that had been thrown up over the body they found a huge wound which it had received, and much blood which had flowed from the wound in the tomb. Taking the body therefore outside the precincts of the monastery, they burnt it, and scattered the ashes."

At Annan Castle a man of bad life died before he had made confession, or received the Eucharist. Unworthy though he was, Christian burial was permitted to him. But that was of no advantage to him, for he walked by night from his grave, accompanied by a horrible barking of dogs. Consequently no man dare be out of doors between sunset and sunrise, lest he should meet the monster and have his blood sucked. Hence the village, which had been populous before, seemed almost empty, the survivors migrating to other neighbourhoods, lest they also should die. In this emergency the village priest, from whose lips the historian had heard of this desolation, made it his business on Palm Sunday to summon wise and religious men who could advise in such a crisis. Accordingly, a sermon having been addressed to the people, and the rites of the sacred day performed, the priest invited his religious friends and certain other honoured guests to dinner. Whilst they were eating two young men said: "Let us dig up that pest and burn it with fire." So they took a hoe which was blunt enough, went to the cemetery, and began to dig. When they thought they had dug deep enough, they suddenly laid bare the corpse, which was not covered with much earth, and found it swollen to an enormous size, the face being red and turgid. The young men inflicted a wound on the lifeless body, from which so much blood flowed that the dead man was believed to have sucked the blood of many. "Dragging him therefore outside the village they quickly built up a funeral pile (*rogum*). And when one

of their number said that the pestiferous corpse would not burn unless the heart was pulled out, another, by frequent strokes of the blunt hoe, opened his side, and putting his hand in, removed the accursed heart. When the heart had been torn to pieces, and the corpse had begun to burn, what had been done was told to the guests, and they became witnesses of the occurrence.”<sup>1</sup>

Similar occurrences are related in Iceland. We are told that one night Thorolf Haltfoot, already mentioned in the previous chapter, sat down in his high seat, and died there. Oxen were yoked to a sledge, and he was removed to Thorswater-dale, where, being unworthy of burial in a howe, he was laid strongly in a cairn. After his death many people dare not go out when the sun was getting low. The herdsman was found dead, and was laid in a cairn beside Thorolf. Cattle which came near Thorolf's cairn went mad; fowls which settled thereon dropt down dead; men dared not feed their flocks in the dale; the hall was ridden; and the housewife was so much hurt that she died. Some men died, and others fled. Then Arnkel, Thorolf's son, determined to find another abode for his dead father. So two oxen were yoked, and digging tools taken to the cairn. Thorolf was then removed from his cairn, and laid on a sledge. But the oxen went mad, and ran out to sea. So they could carry Thorolf no further, but bore him to a little headland, and laid him in the earth there. Across the headland Arnkel raised such a high wall that only birds could fly over it. After that Thorolf was quiet as long as Arnkel lived. But as soon as he was dead Thorolf began to walk again, and to slay both man and beast. So one morning Thorod and his neighbours broke up the cairn, and found that Thorolf was still unrotten, and most fiendish to look at; “he was as blue as Hel, and as big as an ox.” So they put a sledge of felled trees under him,

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<sup>1</sup> *Cronicon de Newburgh*, ed. H. C. Hamilton, 1856, ii, pp. 182 seqq.

and pushed him down to the sea-coast. Then they cut wood for a large fire, made it burn, and rolled Thorolf into it. "They burned all up together to cold coals, but it was long ere the fire laid hold on Thorolf. There was a strong breeze which scattered the ashes far and wide, as soon as the fire began to burn, and they raked as many ashes as they could into the sea. But a cow often went to the sea-shore, where the fire had been made, and licked the stones on which the ashes had been driven. She bore a calf which grew up to be a bull called Glossy. This bull killed Thorod."<sup>1</sup>

The Laxdale Saga gives an account of a man called Viga Hrapp, a strong and unjust man, who was much disliked, and had been obliged to fly from the British Isles. Perceiving that his end was near, he expressed a wish to be buried in the doorway of his hall, so that he might keep a searching eye on his dwelling. His wife, not daring to disobey him, buried him there. But after his death he walked again, and was even harder to deal with than he had been in his lifetime. The house was deserted, the neighbours were sorely harassed, and he killed most of his servants. So the neighbours told Hoskuld of their troubles, and he had Hrapp "dug up, and taken to a place where cattle were least likely to roam, or men to go about. After that Hrapp's walkings abated somewhat." We are not told that the corpse was burned, but its removal to a lonely spot did not put an end to the haunting, for the next tenant of Hrappstead, where Hrapp had lived, was seized of a frenzy and died, and Thurstan Swart, who succeeded him, was drowned.<sup>2</sup>

In Grettis Saga we are told that the farm of a goodman named Thorhall was haunted, and that he could not get a shepherd to work for him. Thorhall took counsel

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<sup>1</sup> *Eyrbyggja Saga*, cc. 33, 34, 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Laxdœla Saga*, cc. 10, 17. In British East Africa the dead elder is buried at the door of his hut.

about this, and was advised to hire a big uncouth Swede called Glam. Now Glam attended well to the sheep, but he would not go to church, and on Yule Eve, when men should fast, he insisted on having plenty of food. On that night he went out to watch the sheep, but a great snowstorm came on, and he did not come back. Search was made for him, and high up in the valley they discovered marks of men who had been wrestling, and upturned earth and stones. A little way off they found Glam, who was dead. They could not get him to church, for the horses would not move him, even on level ground, so they buried him where they had found him in a cairn. But Glam did not lie quiet. He rode the house-tops, killed the new shepherd, and the goodman's daughter, and did much mischief. When things had come to this pass the strong Grettir offered to deal with Glam, and after a fearful struggle overcame him in Thorhall's house, cut his head off, and laid it at his thigh. Then Grettir and Thorhall "burned Glam to cold coals. After that they put his ashes into a leathern bag (*hít*) and dug it down in a place where sheep-pastures or roads were fewest." <sup>1</sup>

We have seen that the practice of cremating the dead had not been forgotten in England in the twelfth century. As regards Iceland, Vigfusson is inclined to fix the date of Eyrbyggja Saga as between 1230-60, Laxdœla Saga about 1230-40, and Grettis Saga about 1300-10.<sup>2</sup> These sagas relate events which extend back to the ninth century. There are two passages in Hávamál, and in the Song of the Saws, in which the word "burnt" (*brendr*) is synonymous with "dead." One of these is the saying "It is better to be blind than burnt" (*Blindr es betri an brendr sé*). The other is "Praise the day at eventide; a woman at her burning" (*At kveldi skal dag leyfa; kono es brend*

<sup>1</sup> *Grettis Saga*, cc. 32-35.

<sup>2</sup> *Sturlunga Saga*, i. p. xlv, seqq.

es).<sup>1</sup> The Eddic Poems, to which *Hávamál* and the Song of the Saws belong, are said to have been collected about 1150; their date may be from the ninth to the eleventh century. These poems, according to Vigfusson, with very few exceptions, were written in the British Isles.<sup>2</sup> One of the poems gives details of cremation as practised in the North. Brynhild and her dead lover are burnt on the pyre, with hawks, hounds, and captive slaves, and a ring-fitted sword is laid between them.<sup>3</sup>

The burial-urn, like the leathern bag, was intended to protect cows or other animals who might lick the ashes of the dead, if they were scattered about the land. Bateman, during his researches in the Derbyshire burial-mounds, found "large urns containing calcined bones covered with skins or cloth, which have been fastened by brass pins."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the urn is very frequently reversed over the bones. When the urn is found in an upright position it is sometimes covered by a flat stone; and the mouth is now and then found to have been closed with clay.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes a larger urn is found inverted over a smaller one, as if to answer the purpose of a covering. An urn at Kongstrup, Zealand, was fastened with a resin-like substance. At Bornholm, an island in the Baltic sea, the top of a clay urn was found to have been covered by the bottom of another urn. A cinerary urn found in Holstein is shaped like a pear with a rectangular opening cut in the side. Into this opening a door fits exactly, and there is a slot on two opposite sides of the door into which a bolt was once fitted to secure the contents within.<sup>6</sup> In the *Svarfdala Saga* the ashes are put

<sup>1</sup> *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i, pp. 7, 14; Cleasby and Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, s.v. *bruni*.

<sup>2</sup> York Powell in *Folklore*, x, p. 451; *C.P.B.* i, p. lxiii; Bugge, *Home of the Eddic Poems*, trans. by Schofield, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i, pp. 302-3, 421.

<sup>4</sup> *Vestiges of the Antiquities of Derbyshire*, 1848, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Greenwell, *British Barrows*, 1877, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age*, 1889, i, pp. 94, 95, 138.

into a case of lead, and the case thrown into a hot spring.

Cremation could be partial, as well as complete, and it was evidently believed that if the head were burnt the corpse would be harmless. In a French tumulus M. Lalande found "an unburnt body associated with bronze armlets (probably of the early iron age) where the head had been burnt, the bones of which had been enclosed in an urn, placed where the head should have been." In the great cemetery of Hallstat in Austria, discovered in 1846, "numerous instances were discovered where parts of the body were burnt, whilst others were left unburnt; nor does any rule seem to apply there; sometimes the head is burnt, at other times the body had passed through the fire, and in other cases the head with some portions of the body, as the hands and feet."<sup>1</sup>

#### SUBSTITUTES FOR CREMATION.

We have just seen that according to the legend in Grettis Saga the head of a corpse was cut off, and laid near the thigh, the intention being to put an end to the dead man's wanderings, and the harm which he did to his neighbours. "In West Prussia a method of preventing a dead member of a family from inflicting disease on the living is to open the coffin and cut off the head."<sup>2</sup> Headless corpses, belonging to an early time, have been found in barrows. Thus at Pickering, in Yorkshire, "a skeleton was found, lying east and west, with a very delicately chipped leaf-shaped lance of grey flint, upwards of three inches long, at the right hand, but, strange to say, wanting the skull, which had evidently never been buried with it."<sup>3</sup> In the barrows of Derbyshire "headless skeletons are not very unusual."<sup>4</sup> In East Yorkshire Mortimer

<sup>1</sup> Greenwell, *op. cit.* p. 29 n.

<sup>2</sup> N. W. Thomas in *Folklore*, xi, p. 249, referring to *Globus*, xix, p. 214. See also xii, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> Bateman, *Ten Years Diggings*, 1861, p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 186.



found in one case the head and other parts of the body placed close to the pelvis. In another case he found the lower jaws absent. In two cases he found that the foot had been removed. In another case he found the skull missing, and the lower jaw at the feet.<sup>1</sup> The late Professor York Powell said that he remembered the case of a priest in Sardinia who was killed for a social offence, and his head laid between his knees. He also said that "when Marin Falier's tomb was discovered and opened, his head was found laid between his knees."<sup>2</sup> Marino Faliero, of Venice, was beheaded in 1355. Not many years ago a stone coffin, of ancient date, was found under the floor of Royston Church, near Barnsley, "The skeleton was perfect, but the head had been removed from its natural position, and lay between the thighs."<sup>3</sup> In the Saga of Egil and Asmund it is said that Aran, being in a cairn with his dead brother Asmund, cut Asmund's head off, and then took fire and burned him to ashes. In a barrow which he opened in East Yorkshire, in 1864, Mortimer found that "the calvarium, crown upwards, but without the lower jaw, was placed at the pelvis. Neither could any of the teeth belonging to it be found. Their absence could not be attributed to decay, as the skull was in good preservation. Possibly the head had been severed at the time of interment."<sup>4</sup> The stories about headless ghosts which are said to appear in Great Britain,<sup>5</sup> some with their heads in their hands, or tucked under their arms, must have been derived from an ancient custom of decapitating the dead. The belief no doubt was that a headless ghost could do no harm.

In several English churches bodies have been found in

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<sup>1</sup> Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches* (1905), pp. 216, 230, 238, 240, 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Folklore*, xi, p. 413.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* xiii, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> *Folklore*, i, p. 131, xi, p. 347, xii, p. 73, xiii, p. 94, xiv, pp. 69, 73, 98, 182; Addy's *Household Tales*, pp. 137-8.

which the bones were filled with lead. In the north aisle of the church of Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire there was found in 1619 "the body of a man, whole and perfect, laid down, or rather leaning down, north and south; all the hollow parts of the body, and of every bone, as well ribs as others, were filled up with solid lead." Similar things have been found in the chancel of Badwell Ash, near Wallsham in the Willows, in Suffolk, and at Axminster, in Devonshire.<sup>1</sup> These burials were possibly of the heathen age, for pre-Christian interments have sometimes been found in the floors of churches, as for instance at Kildale in Yorkshire. The lead in these cases must have been intended to prevent the corpse from walking again; it can hardly have been intended to preserve the bones from decay.

Another way of making the dead body harmless was to bind it in such a way that it could not walk or move. The native tribes of Tasmania bend the legs of the corpse back, and bind them round with twisted grass. Each arm was also bent together, and bound above the elbow. The body is placed on the funeral pile in a sitting posture.<sup>2</sup> On Huggate Wold, in East Yorkshire, Mr. Mortimer found the skeleton of a large man of middle age, lying on its back; the arms were doubled up, and the hands on each side of the head. The legs were closely bent back, with the heels to the hips.<sup>3</sup> The limbs and hands of Hottentots are firmly tied together.<sup>4</sup> "The ancient Peruvians buried their dead in a sitting posture, with the legs drawn up, and the arms across the chest." They were bound up in cotton cloth, and tied with ropes. In Fiji, "the elbows are drawn in to the sides with the hands uplifted, and the whole body is then securely bound in that posture. This is done to prevent the ghost of the dead man from

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<sup>1</sup> W. Bray, *Tour into Derbyshire, etc.*, 1783, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Anthropological Inst.* iii, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *Natural History of Man*, 1874, i, p. 264.

“walking” by night, and doing injury to the living. The skeletons found in the so-called Danes’ Graves at Driffield were “markedly flexed, the knees being situated close to the chin—so flexed are they found that Canon Greenwell considers it likely that they were tightly swathed so as to be brought into that position.”<sup>1</sup> In Patagonia the corpse was bound with his knees to the breast; the legs of the corpse were bound by the Caribees.<sup>2</sup> In the Torres Straits, which lie between the northernmost part of Australia and New Guinea, “the thumbs and great toes of the corpse were tied together, and it was sewn up in a mat. It was then carried out of the camp feet foremost, so that the ghost might not come back to trouble the survivors.”<sup>3</sup> In Nottinghamshire a corpse must be carried to the churchyard with the feet foremost.<sup>4</sup> In Basutoland, in South Africa, when a man is dying, two old women place him “in the recognisably correct position with the knees drawn up towards the chin and the arms bent from the elbow, the hands resting under the chin. They then bind him securely so that he cannot move his limbs. In cases where the patient is becoming stiff before he is bound up, hot water is poured constantly over the joints to keep them supple. Thus bound and sitting up he is wrapped in a skin, and laid in his grave.”<sup>5</sup> The late Canon Atkinson mentioned an English legend of a woman who “walked,” with her hands chained and her lower limbs fettered, sobbing and crying, and jingling her chains. In England survivals of the practice of tying the limbs seem to have continued to a late time. Leonard Wheatcroft of Ashover, Derbyshire, who was born in

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Anthropological Inst.* iii, p. 17, 323, iv, pp. 3, 456, x.p. 145, xi, p. 423, xxxiii, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *op. cit.* ii, 565; Muret, *Rites of Funeral* (Eng. trans. 1683) p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> *Folklore*, xv, p. 357.

<sup>4</sup> Addy, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> *Folklore*, xv, p. 256.

1627 and died in 1706, thus versified the dying words of his wife in 1688 :<sup>1</sup>

“ Instead of virgins young  
 My bride bed for to see,  
 Goe cause some curious Carpenter  
 To make a Chist for mee.  
 My bride-laces of silke  
 Bestow'd on maidens meet  
 May fitly serue when I am dead  
 To tye my hands and feet.”

About 1690 M. Misson who wrote an account of his travels in England refers to the English method of dressing a corpse thus : “ The Shirt shou'd be at least half a Foot longer than the Body, that the Feet of the Deceas'd may be wrapped in it, as in a Bag. When they have thus folded the End of this Shirt close to the Feet, they tie the Part that is folded down with a Piece of Woollen Thread.”<sup>2</sup> The natives of the Andaman Islands fold and wrap up the limbs of dead adults. The limbs of dead children are also folded “ so as to occupy the least possible space, the knees being brought up to the chin, and the fists close to the shoulders.” Writing of an Australian tribe Mr. Hewitt says : “ The corpse, with its hands crossed, was corded tightly so that the knees were drawn up towards the head, and the body was usually laid on its side, as if in sleep.” “ It seems to me,” says this author, “ not only that these aborigines believed that the ghost would follow the survivors, but also that the dead man himself, unless tightly bound and buried under tightly-rammed logs and earth, might likewise follow them in the body.”<sup>3</sup> Some of the Troglodytes inhabiting the Arabian Gulf bound the body from the neck to the

<sup>1</sup> *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, 1891, p. 216 ; MS. penes Rev. J. B. Nodder, Ashover Rectory.

<sup>2</sup> Misson, *Travels over England*, Eng. trans. 1719, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Anthropological Inst.* xii, 141 ; xiii, 189, 190.

legs with twigs of buckthorn.<sup>1</sup> The Damaras, an African tribe, lash the body of a chief together with a long rope, and it is buried in a sitting posture, the head being bent over the knees. It is buried with its face to the north.<sup>2</sup> Of the Troglodytes near the Dead Sea Diodorus says: "they mock at all manner of sepulture, for as soon as any of them is dead, they tie his head between his legs with a withe of hawthorne or willow."<sup>3</sup> The legs of dying Greenlanders "are often bent together, so that the feet come up under the back, and in this position they are sewed or swathed in skins." The Apaches, a tribe of North America, bind up the corpse in strips of skins.<sup>4</sup> Some of these gruesome customs remind us of the English winding-sheet.

According to Diodorus Siculus, the people of the Balearic Isles pounded or mashed the body of the deceased with wooden clubs, and so forced it into some sort of trough or receptacle; after which they raised over it a great pile of stones.<sup>5</sup> In other places the ashes of the dead were carried out to sea; or the body was taken to a considerable distance, such as fifty miles; or it was taken to a running stream, which was diverted.<sup>6</sup>

The whole object of piling great stones and monuments on a dead man was to make him lie quiet. They were piled, says Professor Frazer, on his grave to keep him down, on the principle of "sit tibi terra *gravis*." This, he says, is the origin of funeral cairns and tombstones.<sup>7</sup> In 1848 Mr. Thomas Bateman examined a barrow called Shuttlestone on Parwich Moor, Derbyshire. In the centre he found "a large collection of immense limestones, the

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xvi, cc. 4, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *op. cit.* i, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iv, c. 15 (done into English by H. C. Gent); Stevens, *Flint Chips*, 1870, p. 380.

<sup>4</sup> Nansen, *op. cit.*, p. 245; Reclus, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus, vi, c. 5; Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

<sup>6</sup> Wood, *op. cit.* i, pp. 540, 580.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, xv, p. 65.

two uppermost being placed on edge, and all below being laid flat." Underneath the large stones lay the skeleton of a man in the prime of life, and of fine proportions.<sup>1</sup> Here, instead of cremating the body, the inhabitants of the district had tried to protect themselves by piling huge stones upon it, and it is worth noting that the first element of the word Shuttlestone is the O.E. *scytels*, a bolt, or bar, as if the stones were intended to *shut* the dead man in. In the Friendly Islands, or Tonga Group, "all great families bury their dead, not merely in the ground, but in a solid vault, about eight feet long by six wide, and eight deep. It is made of six enormous stones, the upper one, which forms the cover, being necessarily larger than the others." On one occasion, when a king had to be buried in the vault, it required the united force of nearly two hundred men to raise the cover.<sup>2</sup>

For the same reason sticks, stones, and hot coals were thrown after the corpse; they never wanted to see it again. Kristensen, the well-known collector of Danish folklore, says: "in my young days I have seen an open pair of scissors laid upon the stomach of a dead person: I have since been told that it is done with all common people, to prevent them from 'going again.'"<sup>3</sup> The Ostyaks of Siberia wave an axe three times up and down the corpse.<sup>4</sup> For what reason were potsherds and sharp flints thrown on a man's grave if not to make him cut himself, and keep him still in his last home? Canon Greenwell says that the flint implements of British graves are so sharp and finely pointed that they cannot have been subjected to use. In Sweden they had various methods of preventing unruly and sinful men from "going again after death." They cast live coals after the corpse on its removal from the dwelling. They strewed ashes,

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<sup>1</sup> Bateman, *Ten Years Diggings*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *op. cit.* ii, p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> *Folklore*, ix, p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> H. Seebold, *Siberia in Asia*, 1882, p. 122.

salt, linseed, or the seed of the water-hemlock around the homestead, or across the approach to the house. They drove an axe or some other sharp-edged tool above the door of the house-place. They tied the feet of the corpse together. They stuck pins into the shroud in such wise that the points were opposed to the feet. They placed hooks and eyes in the coffin.<sup>1</sup> The horse-shoes nailed over the doors of English farm-houses and buildings "to keep the witch out" are probably a survival of a similar practice. In Norwegian villages fir twigs are scattered from the house to the church.<sup>2</sup>

#### GOODS DEPOSITED IN TOMBS.

The practice of burying dead men's goods with their owners, or of burning them on a funeral pyre, has been common to many ages and peoples, and there is evidence that it arose from the fear of contamination by them. Mr. Whympster stated at the Norwich meeting of the British Association in 1868 that the Greenlander has a great objection to use the property of the dead, and that, in accordance with this feeling, his goods are deposited in his grave.<sup>3</sup> Hans Egede, who was a missionary in Greenland for twenty-five years, says that "when any person dies, they take what belongs to him, and throw it all out into the field, that by touching any of them they may not become unclean, or any misfortune befall them on that account." They bury the man "dressed in his best clothes, and well wrapped in skins of reindeer or seals, with his legs bent under his back. Near the burying place they lay his utensils, viz.—his boat, bows, and arrows, and the like; and if it be a woman, her needles, thimbles and the like."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greenwell, *British Barrows*, 1877, p. 60; Hylten Cavallius, *Wärend och Wirdane*, in Atkinson's *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Du Chaillu, *Land of the Midnight Sun*, ii, p. 436.

<sup>3</sup> Greenwell, *op. cit.*, p. 59 n.

<sup>4</sup> Egede's *Description of Greenland*, 1818, pp. 150-3. The first English translation appeared in 1745.

Savages taboo persons who have been in contact with the dead. If that contact made the living mourner unclean, and caused him to live for a time in seclusion, is it not likely that the clothes and personal ornaments of the dead would be regarded as a danger to the living? In Nottinghamshire it is said that a wedding-ring must not be worn twice,

“ For a twice-used ring  
Is a fatal thing ;  
Her griefs who wore it are partaken.”

This is no doubt an ancient belief, because all rhymed traditions are now known to be old. There is much English folklore to the same effect. Thus they say in Yorkshire that if you wear a widow's bonnet you will be dead within a year. Many English people will on no account wear clothes which have belonged to the dead, and to put on the clothes of a dead man before his burial is regarded as most dangerous. In Samoa they deposit “ several things which may have been used during the person's illness, such as his clothing, his drinking cup, and his bamboo pillow. The sticks used to answer the purpose of a pick-axe in digging the grave are also carefully buried with the body. Not that they thought these things of use to the dead ; but it was supposed that if they were left and handled by others further disease and death would be the consequence.”<sup>1</sup>

There is an interesting account in the Eyrbyggja Saga of a woman called Thorgunna who migrated from the Hebrides to Iceland. The goodwife Thurid, hearing that Thorgunna had some fine raiment, tried to buy it, but she refused to sell. Nevertheless Thorgunna came to live in Thurid's house, where a berth was found for her.

<sup>1</sup> Turner's *Samoa*, 1884, p. 147. Du Chailu gives a figure of a Scandinavian gold ring of three spirals, ornamented with heads of animals, which was found still adhering to the bone of the hand. See *The Viking Age*, i, p. 254 ; other figures of gold rings on finger bones are given on p. 256.



There " she opened her big chest, and took out her bed-clothes, which were all exceedingly well made ; she spread English coloured shirts and a silk quilt over her bed, and also took her bed-curtains and other precious hangings out of the chest." One evening Thorgunna became ill. Thereupon she summoned Thorod, Thurid's husband, to her bedside, and made a verbal will instructing him how to dispose of her goods. She wished to be taken to Skalholt, where priests would sing over her, and she desired that Thorod, after paying all expenses, would hand over her scarlet cloak to Thurid. She also desired that her gold ring should go to church with her,<sup>1</sup> but " my best bed and hangings," she said, " I wish to be burnt up with fire." She concluded by saying that trouble would follow unless this was done. She died, and " Thorod caused the bed-clothes to be taken into the open air, and he heaped up wood, and caused a funeral pyre (*bál*) to be built." But Thurid put her arms round his neck, and implored him not to burn them, so that Thorod " burnt the feather bed and the bolster, but she took for herself the quilt, the coloured sheets, and the precious hangings." The effect was, as the story says, that Thorgunna walked again, and deaths and other troubles followed. In the end Snorri the Gode advised that her bed-gear should be burnt, and that the priest should sing the hours, consecrate water, and hear confession. This was done, and the troubles ceased.<sup>2</sup>

The story has survived from a time when heathenism had not yet been fully supplanted by Christianity. Although Thorgunna expressed a wish to be buried according to the rites of the new faith, she was so far a heathen that she did not wholly forget the ancient custom. She was buried in consecrated earth, so that it was unnecessary to burn her body. But it was still considered necessary

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<sup>1</sup> That is, to be buried with her.

<sup>2</sup> *Eyrbyggja Saga*, cc. 50-55.

to destroy her bed-clothes on the funeral pyre, because it was feared that deaths and other troubles would follow the omission of this precaution. It was not infection or contagion but wandering ghosts and vampires that were dreaded.

In Central Africa when a man dies his bedding and clothes are buried with him.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century we are told that "when an Irish man or woman dies, the straw which composed the bed, whether it has been contained in a bag to form a mattress, or simply spread upon the earthen floors, is immediately taken out of the house, and burned before the cabin door."<sup>2</sup> In the Malay Peninsula the clothes worn during the life of the deceased were burned in a fire which is lighted near the grave.<sup>3</sup> At Withernsea, near Hull, in 1894, a gipsy named John Young, otherwise "Fidler Jack," was "interred in the parish graveyard, and owing to rumours afloat as to the after-proceedings many persons gathered to witness the event, and there was much excitement. It is stated that some of the personal effects of the dead were burnt on the night before the funeral, but the principal destruction of his property took place on Saturday afternoon near the camp, a short time after the return from the burial. The waggon that had belonged to Young, and which was said to have cost £40, was set on fire, and the clothes, bedding, and other effects of the deceased, including a set of china and a fiddle, were thrown into the flames and consumed."<sup>4</sup> At Higworth, in Wiltshire, the whole of a dead gipsy woman's clothes were burnt; a knife, fork, and plate were put into her coffin, and her donkey and dog were

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<sup>1</sup> Macdonald's *Africana*, i, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Brand's *Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, 1849, ii, 227, referring to Miss Edgeworth's Glossary to *Castle Rackrent*, 1810, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> W. W. Skeat in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, xxxii, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, September 18th, 1894, in Mortimer's *Forty Years Researches*, p. xxxi.

slaughtered. No date or authority is given.<sup>1</sup> The gipsies still carry these practices on. A year or two ago, as Mr. Walter Johnson tells us, a daily newspaper had an account of the burial of a gipsy woman and her son at Tiverton. "All the woman's jewellery was deposited in her coffin, and, by the side of her son, the mourners laid his watch and chain. All the other personal effects were burned. A short time previously the same journal had recorded the funeral of an old mountain hermit at Carnarvon. The dead man was buried in his ordinary clothes, and with him were placed his pipe, his tobacco pouch and walking-stick."<sup>2</sup>

In New Zealand "none of the objects used by the dead during his last illness were ever employed again; they were generally broken or buried with the deceased."<sup>3</sup> Along with a dead African, says the Rev. Duff Macdonald, is buried a considerable part of his property. His bed and all his clothes are buried with him. If the deceased owned several slaves an enormous hole is dug for a grave. The slaves, which were caught immediately on his death, are now brought forward. They may be either cast into the pit alive, or the undertakers may cut all their throats. The body of their master or mistress is then laid down to rest above them, and the grave is covered in.<sup>4</sup> It seems as if the very slaves which had belonged to the deceased were regarded as tainted by intimacy with him. The Toarifi tribe in New Guinea bury all things of value belonging to the dead. "Some things are placed by the grave, a man's bow with string cut and some broken arrows, and his net bag containing a broken spoon, a few areca nuts, betel peppers, and broken lime calabash, and an earthen dish, broken. The dish is the one last used

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<sup>1</sup> W. Tegg, *Funeral Rites*, 1876, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Byways in British Archaeology*, 1912, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Lubbock, *Pre-historic Times*, 1865, referring to D'Urville, ii, p. 536.

<sup>4</sup> Macdonald, *Africana*, i, p. 107.

by him. Beside a woman's grave may be seen broken cooking dishes and pots." <sup>1</sup>

The aborigines dwelling near the junction of the rivers Page and Isis, not far from the town of Aberdeen, in Australia, dig a round hole like a well when they bury their dead. They make a fire in this hole, and when it is burnt out, they carefully sweep up the ashes on a piece of bark, and throw them out. They put the corpse into the hole in a sitting posture, with his spears, boomerangs, and opossum rugs, and whatever belongs to him is buried with him. They lay large logs across the top of the grave, and upon them they raise a mound of earth.<sup>2</sup> The Laplanders who followed a corpse to the grave "put their worst clothes on. What is most worth taking notice of is that they leave the sledge in which the deceased has been carried and all his cloths in the churchyard." <sup>3</sup>

In many cases the goods deposited in tombs seem to have included the whole of a man's armour, his weapons, and his objects of personal use or ornament. In 1869 a singular and most interesting sarcophagus was disinterred at Corneto. It contained the skeleton of a warrior dressed in his armour, with his weapons by his side, and the various implements of his daily life around him. His breastplate was covered with a sheet of gold, decorated with bands of ducks and other figures in relief; and the handles of his dagger and knife were encased in ivory and amber. Among other objects was a travelling flask, and *fibulae* of gold, silver, or bronze. All these articles, which are now in the Berlin Museum, were of the most archaic character.<sup>4</sup> Schliemann says that this sepulchre contained not only the armour and weapons, but also the whole household furniture, copper kettles, drinking vessels, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, xxvii, p. 330.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vii, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> Scheffer, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> Dennis, *Etruria*, 1883, i, p. 413.

so forth, of a rich warrior.<sup>1</sup> The bodies in the "fourth tomb" at Mycenae, says Schliemann, "were literally smothered in jewels," all showing unequivocal marks of the funeral fires.<sup>2</sup> It is recorded that Egil, the Norseman, had a mound made near the end of a ness, or promontory, and in this he was laid with his horse, his weapons, and smithying tools.<sup>3</sup> Among the Patagonians, "when a man dies his body is wrapped in his best mantle, placed on his favourite horse, and conveyed to the place of burial, where a square pit has already been dug, some six feet in depth and two or three in width. In this pit the body of the deceased is placed in a sitting position, his bolas, spears, and other property laid beside him, and the pit is then covered with branches, on which a quantity of earth is thrown."<sup>4</sup> Another account of the races of Patagonia says: "On the death of a Tehuelche all his horses, dogs, and other animals are killed; his ponchos, if he possesses any ornaments, bolas, and other belongings, are placed in a heap and burned . . . . The body, sown up in a mantle, poncho, or coat of mail, if the deceased possessed one, is taken away by some of the relations, and buried in a sitting posture with its face to the east, a cairn of stones being generally erected over the place."<sup>5</sup> This Patagonian custom had its counterpart in ancient Scandinavia. Thus when Hrafnkell died he was put into a how, or burial-mound, and near him were laid many valuable things, his armour, and his good spear. And the noble-hearted Gunnar was made to sit upright in his cairn.<sup>6</sup> Writing of the aboriginal races of the North-Western Provinces of South America, Mr. R. B. White said: "If the old chroniclers are to be believed, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Mycenae*, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Egils Saga*, c. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 542.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, i, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> *Hrafnkels Saga*, ad finem; *Nials Saga*, c. 77.

Indians were buried with absolutely all their belongings, so that in some instances a rich chief's grave contains quite a fortune. I have known cases of graves containing gold ornaments to the amount of £4,000, £8,000, and £13,000 respectively."<sup>1</sup>

The belief has long been entertained that the goods, animals, and other belongings of the dead were buried in their tombs that they might be of service to their late owners in another world. Thus Lucian, a Greek writer who flourished in the second century, says that their horses and concubines were sometimes slain at the funeral pile, and clothes cast on it, or buried with them, as though they would use such things in the other world as they had been accustomed to enjoy in this.<sup>2</sup> And we have only to read Virgil's description of the lower world, in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, inconsistent and confused as it is, to see a trace of this belief, as when, for example, he says, that whatever care men had for their weapons and sleek steeds in this life the same care followed them beyond the grave:—

“ Quae gratia currum  
 Armorumque fuit vivis, quae cura nitentes  
 Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos.”  
 line 653.

The existence, however, of this belief among modern savages has been doubted, and when modern anthropologists, such as Dr. Michael Haberlandt, speak of “grave goods,” or the “accompanying gifts” of the dead, they are usually careful to put such terms in quotation marks, in order to impugn their accuracy. Virgil is here describing a kind of heaven—the common abode of departed spirits.

“Often,” says Dr. Rice Holmes, “as we learn not only from historians, such as Caesar and Tacitus, but also

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiii (1884), p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De Luctu*, ed. Bourd, p. 810.

from the evidence that has been collected respecting the customs of savage tribes, objects have been deposited with the dead in the full expectation that their souls would be of use to the souls of their owners in another life." <sup>1</sup> But Caesar and Tacitus do not say this. "According to their means," says Caesar, the funerals of the Gauls are magnificent and costly: and they bring to the pyre everything which, in their opinion, was dear to them in life, even animals: and a little beyond living memory slaves and clients who were known to have been beloved by them were burnt with them as the funeral ceremony was preformed in due course." <sup>2</sup> Of the Germans Tacitus says: "They have no splendid funerals. They only observe this custom, viz.: that the bodies of distinguished men should be burnt with wood appropriated to this purpose. They heap up the funeral pile neither with coverings nor perfumes; every man's weapons are burnt with him, and in some cases also his horse. The tomb is built of turf." <sup>3</sup> A man's armour, a woman's beloved jewels, were laid on the pyre because they could not again be used by the living. And slaves were burnt because they had been polluted by contact with their dead owner. M. Salomon Reinach is right when he says that they buried the warrior with his arms, the woman with her personal ornaments, because they were taboo. It is not indeed easy to see why Hildeburh, consort of Finn the Frisian king, should have ordered her son to be burnt on the funeral pyre of Hnæf, a captain of the Half-Danes, wailing on his shoulder, and uttering her grief in

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<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Britain*, 1907, pp. 201-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Funera sunt pro cultu Gallorum magna et sumtuosa; omniaque quae vivis cordi fuisse arbitrantur in ignem inferunt, etiam animalia: ac paullo supra hanc memoriam servi et clienteles, quos ab iis dilectos esse constabat, iustis funeribus confectis una cremabantur—B.G., vi, 19.*

<sup>3</sup> *Funerum nulla ambitio. Id solum observatur, ut corpora clarorum virorum certis lignis crementur. Struem rogi nec vestibus nec odoribus cumulant; sua cuique arma, quorundam igni et equus adjicitur. Sepulcrum caespes erit—Germania, xxvii.*

lamentations.<sup>1</sup> But when Thorr kicks the dwarf Littr into the funeral pyre of Baldr<sup>2</sup> we are reminded of what Caesar says about the Gauls bringing slaves to the pyre.

#### BREAKING THE GOODS OF THE DEAD.

The points of a number of flint arrow heads found by Mortimer in a Yorkshire barrow opened by him in 1892 had been purposely broken. It is quite clear, he says, that the breakage had occurred before they were deposited with the bodies, "and probably in compliance with some superstition." He also found arrow heads in other barrows similarly broken.<sup>3</sup>

In the ancient cemetery of Villanova, near Bologna, plates of bronze, shaped like a hatchet, were found to have been purposely injured. "Eight of the plates were broken into two or three pieces, which were found laid one upon the other, showing the breakage to have been intentional, and in obedience to some custom or rite." In the same neighbourhood investigators have found "axes, purposely broken when placed in the tomb, for they would be bent, not fractured, by any accidental injury."<sup>4</sup>

Of the Norsemen Mr. Du Chaillu says: "Connected with the burning of the dead was the intentional damage done to objects which were exposed to the heat of the funeral pyre. Special care seems to have been taken to render swords and other weapons thoroughly useless. Swords are cut on the edges, bent, and twisted; shield bosses dented or flattened; and jewels or other objects are entirely ruined." The illustrations which Mr. Du Chaillu gives in his work show how thorough the destruction was.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Beowulf*, line 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Edda*, c. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Dennis, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 516, 531.

<sup>5</sup> *The Viking Age*, i, p. 129.



In Boeotia, and other parts of Greece, small terra cotta figures are found in tombs, and they are sometimes intentionally broken before being placed there. Lord Avebury collected from India, Siberia, and other parts of the world, instances of the practice of breaking knives and other things deposited in graves. "It is possible," he says, "that in some cases the destruction of the property of the deceased may have simply arisen from a dislike to use articles which have belonged to the dead."<sup>1</sup>

We may well believe that the cups from which the dead once drank, or the clothes and jewels which they wore, were considered as fraught with death to those who used them again. But how can we account for the intentional breaking of the goods of the deceased? Those who contend that goods were placed in tombs for the purpose of supplying the dead with the customary apparatus of life can hardly maintain this view with regard to articles burnt on the pyre. And of what use would broken implements and weapons have been to the dead? It has been supposed that the goods were destroyed in order that their souls might be set free and sent to the spirit-land, and in one part of Africa they "kill" the things placed in the grave, as if they were possessed of life.<sup>2</sup> But to "kill" or destroy them is one thing, and to transmit their spirits to their dead owners is another. If we believe this theory we must, to be consistent, also believe that their houses were destroyed in order that their spirits too might be sent to the spirit-land. It would be hard to believe this, and the destruction or abandonment of the house, with which we shall deal in the next chapter, seems to be only one of the numerous efforts of the living to destroy for ever things which had been polluted by association with the dead.

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<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiq.*, 3rd ed., ii, p. 646; *Origin of Civilization*, 5th ed., p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Sir H. H. Johnston, *The Congo*, 1884, p. 246.

## THE DESTRUCTION OR ABANDONMENT OF THE HOUSE.

If the "portable property," as Mr. Wemmick called it, of a dead man was everywhere regarded as contaminated by contact with his corpse, we may be sure that his dwelling would also be regarded as contaminated, if he died therein. And this is what we actually find in most parts of the world, including Great Britain.

In south-west Africa "the Fjort either destroys the house in which his late relative dwelt after burial, or else dismantles it and sells the material to some other family. He plants mandioca in the ground where the deceased's bed rested, so that people shall not build there again."<sup>1</sup> In Azimba and Chipitaland "on the return of the funeral party from the grave, the deceased's house is pulled down, his pots broken and pieces of cloth hung on sticks over the ruins; but this frequently does not occur till some time after the burial."<sup>2</sup> In the Paraguayan Chaco "when one member of a family dies, the house is demolished and another is built, often at a distance of some miles, by the survivors."<sup>3</sup> Among the Baganda of East Central Africa "when the chief wife of a peasant dies, he usually builds a new house near the old one; the *masiga* (stones used to place the cooking pots upon) are left in the old house; the relations spit upon them and then destroy the house."<sup>4</sup>

Whenever a Laplander dies, "let the distemper be what it will, they all forsake the hut where the dead carcase lies. No sooner does anybody die, but they leave the place the same day."<sup>5</sup> The Todas, a people of Southern India, burn the hut of the deceased at his funeral.<sup>6</sup> When a Musquakie Indian dies his wigwam

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Dennett, *Folklore of the Fjort*, 1897, p. 156. On p. 114 a photograph of one of the destroyed houses is given.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvii, p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, xxxi, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, xxxii, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Scheffer, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

<sup>6</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., ii, p. 26.

is never entered again, but a temporary shelter of mats and poles is set up pending the erection of a new wigwam.<sup>1</sup> In Russia even yet people are unwilling to live in the houses of dead relatives from fear of family spirits; accordingly many houses become desolate, and fall into other hands.<sup>2</sup> In England, up to the end of the eighteenth century, it was a common practice to shut up a room in which a member of the family had died. Amongst the Ainos of Japan if a man dies within his house, or if any one dies suddenly opposite or close to a house, the house in either case is burnt. These people are also said to burn the whole of the household goods of the dead.<sup>3</sup> The Macas Indians of the Equador place their dead on a bed of split bamboo, the door is fastened up, and the hut deserted.<sup>4</sup> In New Zealand whole villages were deserted on the death of the chief. In 1844 Mr. Angas noticed that the tomb of the late chief was a conspicuous object in the village of Huriwenua. "Although everything was in a state of perfect preservation, not a living soul was to be seen; the village, with its neat houses made of raupo, and its courtyards and provision boxes, was entirely deserted . . . The whole village became strictly tapu, or sacred, and not a native, on pain of death, was permitted to trespass near the spot." The same writer tells us that as soon as the body of a certain chief's daughter was deposited in a wonderful tomb at one of the largest and finest villages in New Zealand the chief pronounced the whole village to be tapu. "It was at once deserted: old and young quitted the place, leaving everything behind them, the provisions to moulder and the weapons to decay. Solid houses that had occupied many years in building and carving were allowed to fall into mere shapeless heaps of ruins; and even in 1844 the rank vegetation had so

<sup>1</sup> M. A. Owen, *Folklore of the Musquakie Indians*, 1904, pp. 80 seqq.

<sup>2</sup> Sonntag, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, ii, p. 253; iii, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, iii, p. 31.

completely overrun the place that many of the best pieces of native work were covered by the foliage." <sup>1</sup>

In New Guinea the houses in which death took place were pulled down, and nothing but the piles and platform left standing. Among the Sakais the house in which a person dies is invariably burnt down and the place entirely forsaken, even at the possible loss of a coming crop of tapioca or sugar-cane. Among certain tribes of South Africa "after the funeral rites are completed, and the mourners have dispersed, the house occupied by the deceased at the time of his death is burned with all that it contains; even articles of value, grain, utensils, arms, as well as furniture, beds, and bedding must be destroyed by fire. They are polluted by the presence of the dead body in the house, and cannot be cleansed." It may be observed, as we go on, that the Penitential of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, forbade the burning of grain where a dead man was, for the health of the living and the house (*pro sanitate viventium et domus*).<sup>2</sup> Evidently it was believed that grain was polluted by the presence of a corpse. Among the inhabitants of Perak, a Malay state on the west side of the Peninsula of Malacca, "not only the house in which the death takes place, but the clearings, often of some acres in extent, planted with crops, are also abandoned." <sup>4</sup>

Certain tribes of Zambesia close and abandon the house; if the dead man was a chief the whole village is abandoned. Among the Nagas of Eastern Assam, if a man is killed by a tiger, his house and all his belongings are burned, and his whole family must go through elaborate purification. The Ahts of Vancouver's Island bury a man's personal effects with him, and burn his house.

To this day there are people in Great Britain who will

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 192, 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix, p. 276.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe's *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, 1840, ii, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvi, p. 45.

not occupy a house in which a person has recently died, and this is especially so if suicide or murder has occurred therein. The belief is that such a house is haunted or frequented by the ghost of the deceased. It need hardly be said that tales of haunted houses are common everywhere in this country, and we find cases where the belief in them is profound. Thus we were told in 1913 that a ghost had haunted the Rectory of Asfordby in Leicestershire for thirty years past, and had troubled the household by doing such things as pulling bedclothes off the beds of visitors in the night. After many fruitless attempts to get rid of it, the Rector "in desperation resorted to the expedient of a solemn exorcism. Putting on a cassock and surplice, he went into the affected parts of the house, and with stern mien commanded the spirit to depart 'in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'" <sup>1</sup> The late Canon Atkinson, of Danby, says that an old woman in that parish once sent for him to "lay some spirits which troubled her." <sup>2</sup>

#### BURIAL IN THE HOUSE.

In some parts of New Zealand "the grave was dug in the house of the deceased, in which the body was placed in a sitting posture, the limbs being retained in that position by bandages, still dressed in the best garments, adorned with the family ornaments of green-stone and sharks' teeth; it was then wrapped up in a fine sleeping mat, and the grave covered over with planks and a little soil; it is still usual to inter the property of the chief with him, especially all things which have touched his person during his illness, such as garments &c." Moreover, it was thought to be extremely dangerous for the living to enter "the houses where the dead were buried; in almost every *pa* half the houses belonged to the dead;

<sup>1</sup> *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 23rd August, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, p. 59.

these being in every stage of decay had a very unsightly appearance.”<sup>1</sup> House-burial is practised at the present day by multitudes among the inferior races. It exists among tribes of South America. It is also found among the Fantees, the Dahomans, the Assins, and other tribes of Western Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In ancient Scandinavia, said Lord Avebury, “they buried the house with its owner, and the grave was literally the dwelling of the dead.”<sup>3</sup> Lord Avebury is here adopting the views of Professor Nilsson. In South-eastern Spain, during the Bronze Age, “interment was effected in the floor of dwellings.”<sup>4</sup> Among certain tribes of the Zambezi, near Tete,” “a hole is dug in the house, and the corpse, after being wrapped three times in a mat of reeds, is lowered into its grave; thorn bushes are first thrown over it, and then the hole is filled with earth and carefully levelled . . . . The house is closed and abandoned. If the dead man was a chief the whole village is abandoned.”<sup>5</sup> In some parts of Fiji the dead chief is buried in his own house.<sup>6</sup>

The dead were sometimes burnt in their houses. In Hispaniola native chiefs were burnt in the house where they died; they were strangled when they were at the last gasp. In China, instead of burning the house, they burn a paper imitation of it, and this almost certainly points to the conclusion that they burnt the house itself at an earlier time. When Dido, as the story goes, was forsaken by Aeneas she sought advice from a priestess, who advised her to burn an effigy of her faithless lover, together with his weapons and clothes, and their marriage bed; the object of this magical proceeding being so to

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *New Zealand*, 2nd ed. 1870, pp. 218, 220.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Hearn, *The Aryan Household*, 1879, p. 53; Gomme, *Folk-lore Relics of Village Life*, pp. 113 seqq; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., ii, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Lubbock, *Pre-historic Times*, 1865, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xviii, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiii, p. 420.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, xvi, p. 277.

torture Aeneas by burning an image made to resemble him that, rather than endure the pain, he would return to her. Accordingly she asked her sister to raise up a funeral pile in the inner part of the house under the smoke-hole (*compluvium*), and there destroy every trace or remembrance of him. But Aeneas escaped, and Dido threw herself on the pile, and ended her life.<sup>1</sup> This story in Virgil has been cited as one of the proofs that the Romans at an early time were buried in their own houses. It also seems to afford evidence that they were burnt in their houses.

According to Plato the Greeks in the earliest times buried the dead in their houses, and traces of graves inside houses have been found at Athens.<sup>2</sup> Servius, who lived at Rome about A.D. 400, says: "among our ancestors all persons used to be buried in their respective houses." Elsewhere he says: "among our ancestors, whensoever any one died, he used to be carried back to his own house, and there he remained seven days; on the eighth he was burned, and on the ninth he was buried. It is to be known that they were buried in their own houses."<sup>3</sup> Isidore of Seville, who lived at the beginning of the seventh century, says: "at first every man was buried in his own house, afterwards it was forbidden by the laws."<sup>4</sup>

In Old English poetry the grave is called the death-house (*dēaþ-ræced*), the death-hall (*dēaþ-sele*), and the death-dwelling (*dēaþ-wic*). In the poem called the Phoenix we are told of "the coming of the funeral pile, the doom of the Lord, then the death-house (*bæles cyme*, *Dryhtnes dōmes*, *ðonne deaðreced*)." Further, in Cædmon's Metrical Paraphrase of the Holy Scriptures the tomb is called the

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid*, iv, 494 seqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Minos*, 315 D.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad. Aen.*, vi, 151; v, 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Origines*, xv, 11.

grave-house (græf-hūs). But these phrases may be no more than poetic licence.

#### IMITATIVE HOUSE-BURIAL.

As man slowly progressed towards civilization, a time came when he no longer considered it necessary to destroy or abandon a house because somebody had died in it. He began to make miniature houses over graves, "spirit-dwellings," hut-urns, or tombs resembling houses. When the Chinese burn a paper house at a funeral instead of a real house they are practising imitative magic. They are acting on the belief that like things produce like ; that if they imitate the burning of a house they will produce the same effect, or, in other words, obtain the same protection from the attacks of the dead, as if they had burnt the house itself. And when men erect houses over graves they are acting, consciously or unconsciously, on the same belief.

The Niam-niam, a South African tribe, cover their graves with clay which is thoroughly stamped down. Over the spot a hut is erected, in no respect differing externally from the huts of the living, and equally perishable in its construction. Small houses, from two to six feet high, are built over the graves of Fijian chiefs. The burial-places of the Soumoo Indians of the Mosquito territory in Central America are marked by a large thatched shed, similar in construction to the lodges inhabited during life. It is built over the spot of interment.<sup>1</sup> In Tonga the body of a dead king is laid in a small house. In Siam the funeral pile is in fact a temple, though made of combustible materials. In some parts of China the body was transferred to a portable house. In the Malay Peninsula a small three-cornered hutch, not unlike a doll's house, is erected near the foot of the grave ; it

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<sup>1</sup> Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, 1874, ii, p. 85 ; Lubbock, *Pre-historic Times*, 3rd ed., p. 457 ; *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv, p. 207.



contains diminutive knives, hatchets, and other things. The Wahas of East Africa, and also the Wanyamwesis make diminutive huts, in all respects resembling the huts of the living, for their dead, and these are said to be spirit-dwellings. Some of the New Zealanders, instead of burying the dead in the houses where they had died, made special dwellings for them. These were very pretty and fanciful buildings, ornamented with red ochre and feathers. In them they placed the corpse, locking the doors, and throwing the keys inside the fences which encircled them. Thatched roofs are erected over the graves of the Dory people of New Guinea.<sup>1</sup>

Old Lycian rock-graves display a minute imitation of architecture. A grave at Xanthos resembles the frontage of a house solidly built of timber, with a ceiling of unhewn trunks of trees such as the huts of Lycian peasants have at the present day. Similar graves are frequently found on the Greek continent, some of them forming complete imitations of wooden houses. In some of these the roof, instead of being flat, has a pointed arch.<sup>2</sup> Splendid tombs in the shape of houses are found in ancient Etruria, and some of these have been described by Mr. Dennis.<sup>3</sup> The most important is the so-called Tomb of the Reliefs at Caere, now Cerevetri. It is entered by a long flight of steps sunk deep in the rock, and is about twenty-five feet in length by twenty-nine in width, the height from the floor being about nine feet. The roof, which is nearly flat, is carved into a broad beam and rafters. A series of thirteen recesses, or alcoves, are hollowed in its walls, each for a body, reminding us of the bed-closets of a Scandinavian hall. The benches which surround this wonderful chamber are remarkable. These "are not the

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, ii, 344, 860, 241; *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv, p. 207; M. Haberlandt's *Ethnology*, 1900, pp. 26, 28; Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> Guhl and Kohner, *Life of the Greeks and Romans*, 1875, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, 3rd ed. (1883), i, pp. 249 *seqq.*

usual narrow ledges projecting from the walls, but broad terraces of tufo, on which the dead were laid at right angles to the walls, the beds, of which there are thirty-two, being separated by narrow ridges left in the rock." From this habitation of the dead we can draw a picture of a contemporary house, divided lengthwise into nave and aisles, in which the chief occupants slept in the bed-closets of the aisles, the servants lying in the nave at right angles to them. In the central alcove, which appears to be the post of honour at one end of the nave, "the skeleton of the warrior who occupied it still lay, when the tomb was opened, stretched in his metal shroud." On the walls, pillars, and pilasters are many representations of weapons, shields, and other implements, both sculptured and painted. Here we are reminded of the shields and weapons hung round the hall in *Beowulf*.

Egyptian coffins in the form of houses belonging to the time of the Old Empire have been discovered. The coffin of King Menkerê, which once stood in his pyramid at Gizeh, represents a house. It had three doors in the long side, and one on the short side; above each was a latticed window. The walls are supported by pillars, and it is plain that such a house was built by a carpenter, and not by a mason.<sup>1</sup>

#### HOUSE-BURIAL IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

Discoveries have been made in the British Isles of the remains of dwellings that were abandoned or burnt on the deaths of their occupants, and converted into tombs. We are enabled by the help of such remains, and by an examination of urns made in the form of huts, to obtain at least a glimpse of the shapes and dimensions of British houses erected before the Roman Conquest. The hut-urns will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

A good example of a circular hut which seems to have

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, trans. H. M. Tirard, 1894, pp. 171-3

been abandoned on the death of its occupant, and used for his grave, was examined by Mr. Mortimer in 1868. Round the outskirts of a barrow on Calais Wold in East Yorkshire he noticed the holes into which the posts of a hut had been fixed. Into each of these he put a small upright stake to indicate their arrangement. These post-holes formed two concentric circles, with medium diameters respectively of  $21\frac{1}{2}$  feet and 28 feet. A plan shows their number and arrangement, and indicates that the inner and outer circles approach each other more nearly on the East than on the West side. It also exhibits some irregularities in the arrangement of the post-holes on the North side, where some of the holes measured from 12 to 15 inches in diameter, the others often being as little as 3 inches in diameter. They varied from 1 to 2 feet in depth, and some were observed to reach from 2 to 3 feet upwards into the mound. "With regard to the purpose of these stakes," said Mr. Mortimer, "it seems clear that they represent the upright posts of the watted walls of a circular hut, which would be bedaubed or plastered with clay," and probably had a conical roof. The plan shows four post-holes outside the two circles of post-holes surrounding the hut, and Mr. Mortimer thought that they might have held posts or strong pegs by which the exposed roof of a dwelling was stayed or kept in position by ropes. He concludes as follows: "From the evidence it would appear that at the death of its owner a grave was dug in the floor of his dwelling; that the walls and roofs were pushed inwards; and that over them the barrow was afterwards raised. A filled-up fosse 100 feet in diameter, 3 feet 9 inches deep, 9 feet wide at the top and 1 foot at the bottom, encircled this barrow, and enclosed the whole of the stake-holes." There were no remains of the animals that had been eaten or of fragments of domestic pottery. Only a vase and a whin-stone

hammer, both lying close to the body, were found.<sup>1</sup> The body lay in the centre of the dwelling, with a crushed food-vessel in front of the face.

We may compare the concentric walls of the houses in Bechuanaland. In them the posts of the inner circle are higher than those of the outer, both circles of posts being connected by beams fastened to their tops. A sufficient number of rafters are laid on the posts, so that they all meet at one point, and these are tightly lashed together. The family live in the central part of the house, whilst the servants inhabit the outer portion, just as in the old German farm house the servants slept in the aisles of the long building, suggesting that the aisles of this rectangular building correspond to the spaces between the concentric circles of the prehistoric house. The walls of these houses in Bechuanaland are of clay, and the eaves project so as to form a verandah all round. Concentric rings of upright stones are also a feature of some prehistoric circles in Great Britain, the most remarkable being those of Stonehenge, though there they enclose two ellipses. A parallel is also afforded by the remains of a broch near the sea shore in Caithness, known as the Harbour Mound, explored by Mr. Samuel Laing. At first sight it consisted of a very irregular grassy hillock, showing faint traces of a low outer circular wall or rampart. On excavating, a great mass of cyclopean building and shell-midden was disclosed, with floors or pavements at different levels. Within the rampart were two concentric circles of stone walls, one of which remained standing to the height of twelve feet. It seemed, said Mr. Laing, "as if the passages only between the circular walls had been covered in, and used as dwellings in bad weather or winter, the inner circle, which is twenty-four feet in diameter, remaining open." No vestige of timber was found, though there was abundance of wood charcoal in

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<sup>1</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-6.

the lower strata, apparently of a small scrubby underwood or birch and hazel. The diameter of the inner circle was about twenty-four feet, and the thickness of its wall was two feet. The width of the passage between the inner and the second circle was three feet, and the thickness of the wall of the second circle was four feet. The width of the space between the second wall and the rampart varied from four to fifteen feet. Thus the total diameter of the two concentric circles, including their walls, was thirty-three feet. Among the relics discovered in the mound were rude stone implements, chipped flints, rude implements of bone and horn, and coarse hand-made pottery. There was also a bronze implement resembling a pair of sugar tongs. Except the fragment of the lower jaw of a child about six years of age, no human remains were found.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Mortimer discovered the remains of another dwelling in a barrow on Rigg's Farm in the neighbourhood of that on Calais Wold. On the east side of the barrow he found vertical stake-holes nearly all round the margin of a bed of blue clay, and a few other stake-holes a little inside the margin, as if there had been two concentric circles. The holes were from 3 to 6 inches in diameter, but all that remained of the stakes themselves was decayed bark sticking in some places to the sides of the holes. It was clear that the stakes had been driven from 12 to 18 inches into the ground beneath the barrow, and that in three places they had extended upwards nearly four feet into the mound. In various parts of the bed of clay were pieces of partly decayed wood, lying horizontally, as well as impressions of others of less thickness than the vertical stakes. One piece of oak, about 2 feet in length and 3 inches in thickness, had a cross incision of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth, evidently made by a metal saw. Round the margin of the bed of clay " was a strip of

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Laing and Huxley, *Pre-historic Remains of Caithness*, 1866, pp. 22-30.

ground about 18 inches in width, stained black to a depth of several inches which, with the stake-holes, apparently marked the limits of some enclosure." Mr. Mortimer was of opinion that the vertical stake-holes, and the horizontal pieces of decayed wood dispersed in the bed of clay, were the remains of the wattled walls of a dwelling bedaubed with clay, and that the dark stains on the ground had been caused by the drippings from the decaying thatch of the circular hut, the thatch having possibly been made of heather. In this instance the body had not been interred in the centre of the dwelling, as in the case just described, but a few feet outside it. The dwelling had been crushed inwards, and covered by the mound. Its diameter is not given. The dwelling only contained some decayed portions of the antlers of red deer.<sup>1</sup>

In 1898 a most remarkable discovery was made by the late Mr. S. Jackson in the middle of an amphitheatre of moorland hills at Bleasdale near Garstang, in Lancashire. It was so important that we must describe it at length. Mr. Jackson found an outer stockade of timber, 150 feet in diameter, enclosing an inner circle with a concentric trench. The plan and sections (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4) will show their form and dimensions. The outer circle consisted, in the words of Professor Boyd Dawkins, "of round logs of oak placed closely side by side, the principals being from two to three feet in diameter at intervals of about thirteen feet, and sunk into the ground to a depth of from five to six feet, while the secondary logs are about eight inches in diameter and do not penetrate more than three feet from the surface." Both had rotted away to a depth of about two feet below the surface, but were sound and hard below, showing the marks of the axe with the greatest clearness. The entrance on the south-

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<sup>1</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 181-3.

# PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS: FAIRSNAP FARM, BLEASDALE, NEAR GARSTANG.

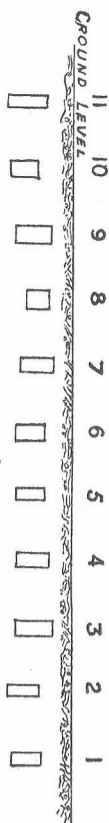


FIG. 4.  
Position of Oak Posts of Inner Circle.

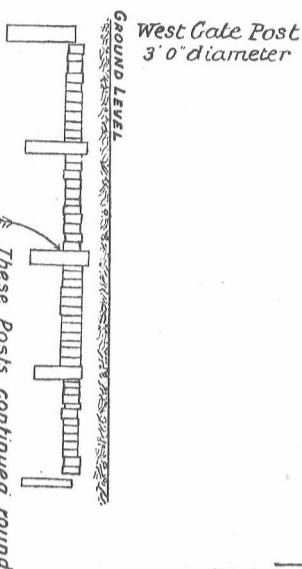
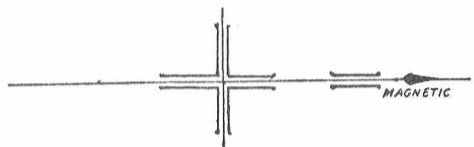


FIG. 2.  
These Posts continued round  
as shown on Plan.  
Oakens Principals and Secondaries of Outer Circle.

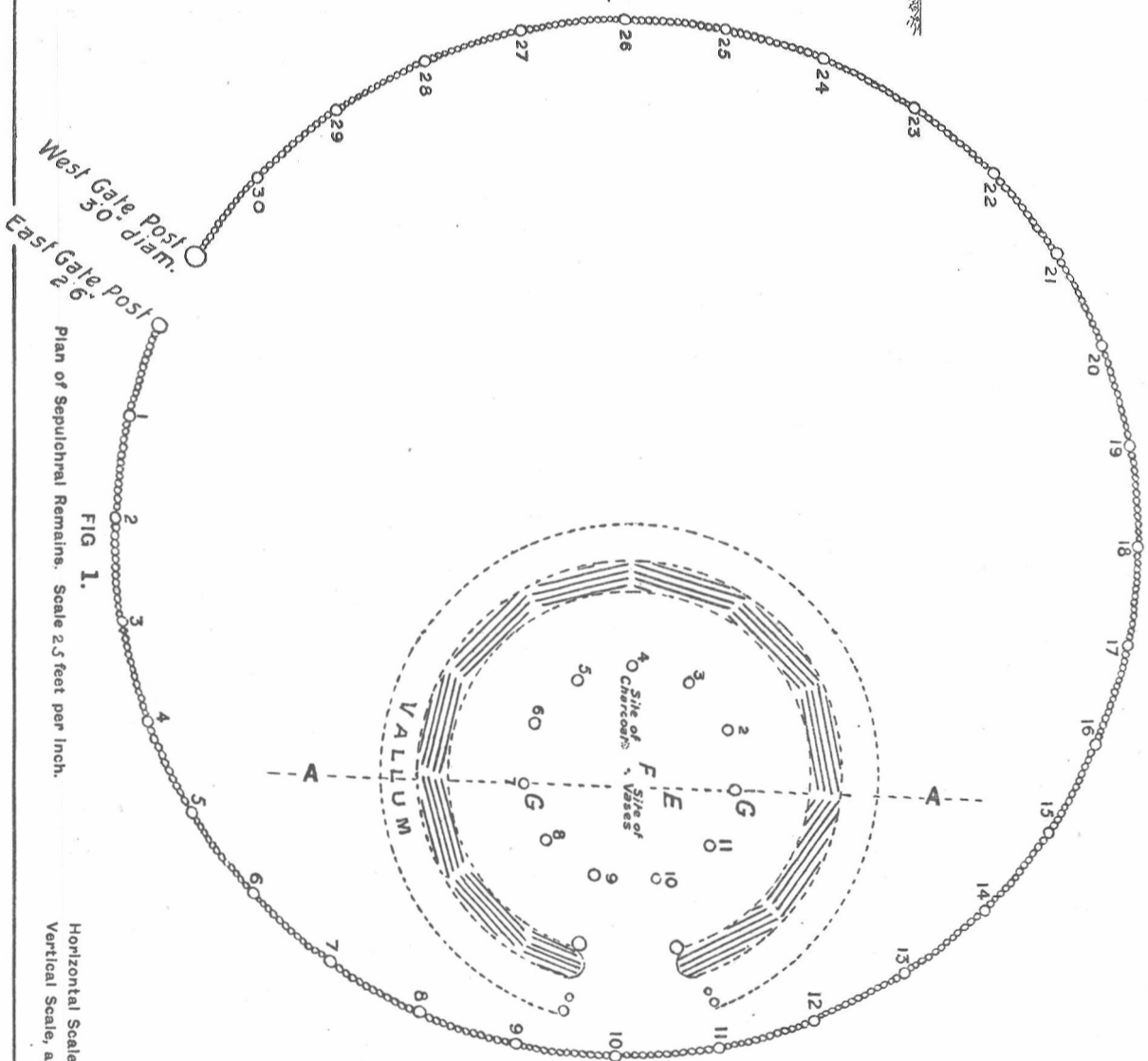


FIG. 1.  
Plan of Sepulchral Remains. Scale 2.5 feet per inch.

Horizontal Scale, about 2.5 feet to 1 inch.  
Vertical Scale, about 10 feet to 1 inch.

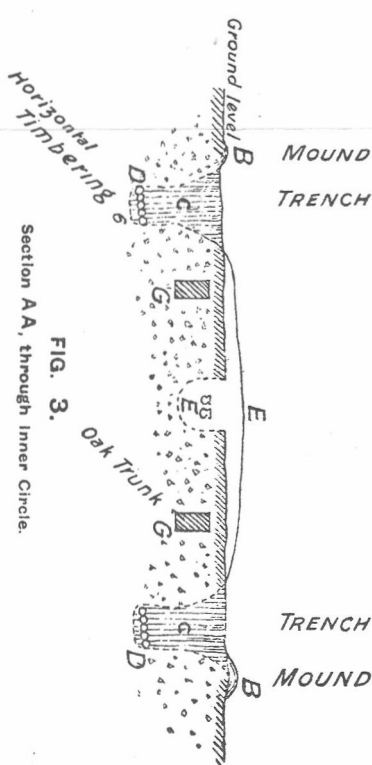


FIG. 3.  
Section A A, through Inner Circle.

### REFERENCES TO SECTION A A.

- B. Clay Bank, 9 inches high.
- C. Ditch, filled with Peat.
- C. Ditch, 4 feet deep, last 2 feet vertical.
- D. Section of Horizontal Timbering.
- E. Clay thrown over sod (ploughed down), 12 inches thick, in centre of low mound.
- F. Excavation, with Vases, 1 foot 10 inches deep, to top of Vases.
- G. Section of Oak Trunks, 1 foot 10 inches diameter.

Sydney Wilson, Surveyor, &c.,  
Garstang, August, 1900.

west<sup>1</sup> was flanked on each side by a large principal, which formed a gate-post.

The inner circle, close to the East side of the interior of the stockade, was edged by an outer ring of earth about 5 feet wide and 9 inches high. It was composed of clay thrown out of the trench on the inside. The trench was 4 feet wide at the top and 5 feet deep, and on the inner side of it was a low mound with a diameter of 54 feet and a height of 2 feet in the centre. This had been heaped up over the old surface of the ground. Within the trench lay concealed a circle composed of eleven rounded oak logs, each measuring 30 inches across. These had been let into the ground to a depth of between 3 and 4 feet, and they formed a circle of 34 feet in diameter. In a rectangular hole in the centre two funeral urns, containing calcined human bones, were discovered; inside one of them was a smaller vase of the kind usually known by the name of "incense cup." Within this circle was a mass of charcoal 4 feet to the west of the urns. The eleven oak logs "were charred at the top, apparently by the action of fire."

The trench had been filled up with peat and when this was removed a flooring of poles placed parallel to each other, and so wedged up as to make a horizontal surface, was exposed. The poles were in lengths of from 11 to 12 feet; they were 6 inches in diameter, and were laid on branches of birch, laid crosswise. Among them were some chips of oak, apparently made in trimming the oak logs of the circles, for no oak saplings were used in the trench. The flooring had been covered by a layer of leaves. The entrance was on the East side, near to the stockade of the outer circle, and it was flanked on the inside by two great oaken posts about 13 feet apart. The

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<sup>1</sup>The entrance to the hut-circles discovered at Ty Mawr on the slopes of the Holyhead Mountain invariably face the south-west.—Rice Holmes, *Ancient Britain*, 1907, p. 154.



entrance was splayed outwardly, and the two outer posts were 24 feet apart. No other remains were discovered except a few broken slabs of sandstone, which may have been used for crushing corn or for fire-places.

Professor Boyd Dawkins thought that we might infer, from the absence of traces of occupation on the inside, that it had not been used as a place of habitation, though the entrance on the south side, the usual position in such cases, would lead to that hypothesis. And he also thought that the damp situation on the clay would forbid its use by the living. "The inner circle," he says, "was obviously intended for purposes of burial. I should therefore conclude that both belong to the same age, and that the outer circle, as well as the inner, was the habitation of the dead; in other words, that both were made for purposes of burial of the same kind as those which are met with in the tumuli enclosed in circles of stones in various parts of the British Isles, timber being used here instead of stone to mark the resting-place of the dead, although there is no scarcity of stone in the millstone grit of the adjacent fells." <sup>1</sup>

Were these remains the habitation of the dead, or were they the habitation of the living converted, on the occurrence of death therein, into a tomb? As we have seen, the object of cremation and other allied practices was to keep the dead man down, and this object would have been fully attained by the cremation of the bodies, and by enclosure in urns buried under clay. It is also true that among some nations a great wall or fence was made to keep the ghost from trespassing beyond certain bounds. We have already seen (p. 26 *supra*), that in an Icelandic saga a son is said to have restrained his wicked father's ghost by building a high wall across the headland where

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<sup>1</sup> Boyd Dawkins in *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, xviii (1900), pp. 114-24. The plan has been reproduced by his kind permission and that of the Society.

his father was laid. But then the father had not been cremated and his ashes put safely into an urn. Among the Finlanders, and also among the Dyaks of Borneo, the grave is enclosed with a fence too high, as Professor Frazer says, for the ghost to "take" it, especially without a run.<sup>1</sup> At Bleasdale we have a strong and perfect stockade, but its doorway is wide. We have also the strong posts of a circular house, but its outer doorway is still wider; it is so wide that it cannot have been made for a door. Such an enclosure can hardly have been made to imprison ghosts.

The level flooring of wooden poles at the bottom of the ditch of the inner enclosure, and the branches of birch laid crosswise beneath them are very strong evidence that we have here the remains of a habitation of the living, and Professor Dawkins says that the object of this ditch is an open question. But it was evidently a drain, intended to keep the house dry, and it is in the last degree unlikely that a drain would have been made for the use of the dead. Roman drains were usually sunk from 3 to 4 feet deep, and were 3 feet wide at top and 18 inches at bottom; one half of the depth was filled up with small stones, sharp gravel, or brushwood tied in bundles, and the earth which had been dug out was thrown in above until the surface was level. Where stones or gravel could not readily be procured, green willow poles were introduced, crossing each other in all directions (*quoquo-versus*), or a sort of rope was constructed of twigs twisted together so as to fit exactly into the bottom of the drain; above this the leaves of some of the pine tribe were trodden down, and the whole covered up with earth.<sup>2</sup> It will be seen how closely the Roman practice is followed in the drain round the house at Bleasdale, for here we have both brushwood, poles, and leaves. The authority

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1890, i, p. 57.

for the willow poles is Cato, who was born at Tusculum in 234 B.C. The circular huts of the Kaffirs are surrounded by a trench about two feet in depth and the same in breadth. The trench is about six inches from the wall of the hut, and serves to keep the floor dry.<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that the drain round the house at Bleasdale does not extend under the doorway, or place of entrance, on the East side. The break was a causeway intended to give access to the house. Many barrows, especially in Yorkshire, are surrounded by ditches and banks which are incomplete at one point, and it has been suggested that these incomplete circles, as they have been called, were intended to bar the exit of the spirits of the dead. But if this was the purpose of the builders, why, asks Dr. Holmes, did they leave the barrier imperfect? In a subsequent chapter it will be maintained that the ditches and banks which surround barrows, or are found within them, are one of the evidences of house-burial, and that the break in the circle was merely a place of entrance.

The timbers of the inner circle at Bleasdale and the principal timbers of the outer circle were very massive; indeed we have only to measure thirty inches on a wall to see how big they were. "They bear," says Professor Dawkins, "unmistakable proof that they were trimmed and cut into shape with bronze axes or adzes." The ends of the timbers were beautifully cut at right angles to their length, and the cuts were so clear that Professor Dawkins doubts whether they could have been made in better fashion by a modern steel axe. The cutting of such timbers may remind the reader of a passage in the *Odyssey* where the nymph Calypso gives to Odysseus a great double-edged axe of bronze, and also a polished adze. She shows him where the tall trees grow, alder, and poplar, and pines that reach to heaven, and he fells twenty trees in all and trims them with the axe, therewith

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<sup>1</sup> Wood, *op. cit.*, i, p. 54.

to build a ship.<sup>1</sup> The enclosure made by the outer ring of posts resembles an African kraal, in which the posts are upright and contiguous to each other, and in which cattle are protected by night. The large principal posts in the outer ring at Bleasdale may have been surmounted by imposts reaching from one to the other all round the circle, and the secondary posts may have been attached to those imposts. The inner circle is seventy-five feet in diameter, or half that of the outer stockade, so that these circles must have been laid out with geometrical accuracy.

Professor Dawkins said that its damp situation on the clay would forbid the use of this place as a habitation for the living. Yet the remains of prehistoric villages have been found in marshes; there is one, for instance, at Leachfield, or Leach Fen, near Baslow, in Derbyshire, to say nothing of the famous marsh-village at Glastonbury.

Professor Dawkins concludes that "this remarkable burial-place falls into line with the large series of burial-mounds of the Bronze Age which lie scattered not only over the area of the British Isles, but over by far the greater portion of Europe." And Dr. Rice Holmes describes it as "perhaps the most curious of all the burial grounds of the Bronze Age."<sup>2</sup> One can hardly agree. It is true that, as Professor Dawkins says, "there were no remains of the animals which had been eaten or fragments of domestic pottery, such as are usually found in prehistoric dwellings and burial-places." That is of course a difficulty. But it is a greater difficulty to believe that these remains, and above all things the drain surrounding the smaller circle, were primarily intended for the use of the dead. It may be that portable things were removed before a death in the house took place, and

<sup>1</sup> *Odys.* v. 235 *seqq.* M. Hippolyte Müller has cut down numerous trees with flint axes, which were uninjured by the experiments.—Rice Holmes, *Ancient Britain*, p. 77 n.

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient Britain*, 1907, p. 179.

moreover the remains of animals may have perished.

The drain alone seems to prove that the place was intended for a human habitation. Canon Greenwell found a trench encircling what he regarded as "the most remarkable barrow" he had ever examined on the Yorkshire wolds. The trench was about two feet wide, and was filled with chalk rubble. The interior of this so-called barrow was in fact a pit dwelling into which you descended by five successive stages or steps. "The size of this large excavation," says Canon Greenwell, "and the way in which it had been made were both peculiar, and not easily to be accounted for on the supposition that it was from the first merely intended for a grave. It is possible that it had originally been a place of habitation, and afterwards used for burial purposes. For the requirements of habitation the gradual descent by a series of steps appears to fit it to some extent; and if this explanation of its first intention is correct, then the trench may have been made with the object of keeping it dry, by acting as a drain."<sup>1</sup> Before the general use of pipes, stones, broken small, were the common materials with which drains were formed. Unlike Bleasdale, there were here, in addition to human remains, the bones of animals, such as the red deer, the ox, the pig, the bones of the pigeon and of two gallinaceous birds. These must have come from the food which the occupants had eaten.

The mass of charcoal found near the urns at Bleasdale may be all that is left of the burnt rafters of the roof of a house. A circular roof 34 feet in diameter would have required a strong central post to support the rafters, and such a post may have stood in the rectangular hole in the centre before the urns were deposited.

The entrance to the house does not face the courtyard, as one would have expected, but is close to the stockade. Such a position would have been a protection

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<sup>1</sup> *British Barrows*, p. 315.

against attack. It would also have given privacy to the house. The orientation is remarkable! In Ireland the foremost or front part of a house (*anterior pars domus*) was the eastern part; *anterior* here means "eastern" (*Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 34).

Another point remains to be mentioned. There is an obvious similarity of form between this circular wooden house, with its enclosure, and those numerous British earthworks which consist of a circular mound at one end of a circular, or oval, court. The circular wooden house corresponds to the mound, which was surmounted by a dwelling, and the stockaded enclosure to the court.

#### THE DEATH-HUT.

The wasteful practice of abandoning or destroying a house because somebody had died in it led to the removal of the dying from their dwellings, and to the erection of temporary huts in which they could end their days. If it can be shown that such death-huts, as we may call them, existed in Britain, we shall have proved the existence in this country of a belief that death in a house polluted it, and rendered it uninhabitable. We shall have learnt too the important fact that many of the barrows in which vessels containing the remains of food lay near human skeletons were death-huts, covered by mounds. Dr. Rice Holmes says that food-vessels, like drinking-cups, accompany skeletons far more frequently than burnt bones.<sup>1</sup> In the large number of Cleveland barrows examined by Canon Atkinson, where no burials by inhumation were found, no distinctive food-vessels accompanied a burnt body.<sup>2</sup> Canon Greenwell says that it is very rare to find drinking-cups associated with burial after cremation. "As in the case of 'food-vessels,' they are found," he says, "in juxtaposition with almost every

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Britain*, 1907, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 84.

part of the skeleton ; the most frequent place of deposit being near the head, either in front of it or behind. They are also, like the ' food-vessels,' sometimes placed on the side."<sup>1</sup> Food and drink for the use of the dying would naturally be placed in vessels which they could easily reach.

If anybody should doubt that in the British Isles the sick were left to die in temporary huts let him turn to Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. When the time came, says the historian, that Aidan, bishop of Lindisfarne, should die, he was sojourning in a royal manor near Bamborough. Having nothing of his own in the manor but a church and chamber (*ecclesiam et cubiculum*), with its adjacent lands, he was accustomed to stay there and go out preaching. But when he fell ill they stretched out a tent (*tentorium*) for him at the West end of the church, so that it touched the wall of the church. There, leaning against a post which had been fixed outside the church to strengthen it, he died. It is evident that the saint lived in his church, and that he was not allowed to die in the building, lest his death should pollute it, and cause it to be abandoned. Bede goes on to say that after the saint's death a new church was built and consumed by fire. But the fire did not touch the post which had been in contact with the saint's body when he died. Nor did the fire affect it when the church was burnt again. Bede was trying to teach the lesson that houses and their contents were not polluted by the death of Christian saints, and he was clearly acquainted with the practice of removing the sick to death-houses.<sup>2</sup> Indeed he tells us himself that in the neighbourhood of Whitby there was a hut (*casa*) into which the sick and those who were presently likely to die were induced to go. To that hut the dying Cædmon, Christian and poet, was taken.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iii, 17.

*Op. cit.*, iv, 24.

Aidan is said to have died in A.D. 651, but in Iceland the practice of not allowing the sick and wounded to die in their houses existed in the tenth century. When the much-beloved Hauskuld was wounded to death, they laid him on a sledge and drove him home, where they put him, not in the house, but in the sheepcote, where they made him sit upright against the wall. Then they went into the house to fetch Nial, his foster father, who loved Hauskuld greatly. When Nial came into the sheepcote, he said: "I see the marks of death on him, not the marks of life. But why have not his mouth and nostrils been closed?" This was done, and then they all ran out of the sheepcote, leaving the dying man alone in the night with his mother.<sup>1</sup> The dying man was left in the sheepcote because the house would have been polluted, in the opinion of his friends, by the presence of a corpse. It is not clear why he was made to sit upright, for that position would hasten the approach of death. Herodotus tells us that the Nasamones of Lybia buried their dead in a sitting posture. They watched for the moment when the dying man was about to expire, and set him up, that he might not die supine.<sup>2</sup>

In Ireland, about 1690, when a sick man despaired of his life they exposed him in a public place, or on a great road.<sup>3</sup> The Maoris of New Zealand carried dying chiefs into a shed, as death *tapued* the house.<sup>4</sup> In Matabeleland "as a rule they get the dying person out of his house into a small hut to die there."<sup>5</sup> In Car Nicobar the dying are removed into a mortuary hut in the graveyard, in order to prevent the defilement of the dwelling-hut by death.<sup>6</sup> When the Hottentots were enfeebled by age,

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<sup>1</sup> *Nials Saga*, ed. 1772, c. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, iv, 190.

<sup>3</sup> Misson's *Travels over England*, 1719, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix, p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, xxiii, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, xxxii, p. 238.



and were no longer of any use, "they were thrust out of the society and confined to a solitary hut at a considerable distance from the kraal, there, with a small stock of provisions placed within their reach, but without any one to comfort or assist 'em, to die either of age or hunger, or be devoured by some wild beast".<sup>1</sup> Catlin has described the exposure of an aged chief in Upper Missouri. He sat trembling "by a small fire which his friends had left him, and with a few sticks of wood within his reach, and a buffalo's skin stretched upon some crotches over his head. Such was to be his only dwelling, and such the chances of his life, with only a few half picked bones that were laid within his reach, and a dish of water, without weapons or means of any kind to replenish them, or strength to move his body." Catlin goes on to say that when passing by the site of the Puncal village a few months after this, in his canoe, he went ashore with his men, and found the poles and the buffalo skin, standing as they were left, over the old man's head. The firebrands were lying exactly as he had left them, and he found a few yards distant the skull, and others of his bones, which had been picked and cleaned by the wolves.<sup>2</sup> Similar customs existed in the ancient world. Dying Persians, according to Procopius and Agathias, were carried to the next wood or forest, having with them only a piece of bread, a little water, and a stick to defend themselves against the wild beasts, and if anybody came back the people ran away from him, as if they had seen some ghost or devil.<sup>3</sup> In the *Alcestis* of Euripides a dying wife comes forth from the house accompanied by her husband,<sup>4</sup> as if her death in the house would have made it uninhabitable.

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<sup>1</sup> Kolben, *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, 1731, i, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *North American Indians*, 1841, i, pp. 216-17.

<sup>3</sup> Muret, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Alcestis*, i, 234.

If we go to the other end of the world, we find that sickness made the patient taboo. In New Zealand "the sick were removed from their own houses, and had sheds built for them in the bush, at a considerable distance from the *pa*, where they lived apart; if any remained in their houses and died there, they became tapu, were painted over with red ochre, and could not again be used, which often put a tribe to great inconvenience, as some houses were the common abode of perhaps thirty or forty persons."<sup>1</sup> In New Caledonia young women are removed to special huts when their periodical sickness comes on. When a woman is about to have a child she is removed to a hut until she is thoroughly recovered. This horrible custom causes many deaths, for often there is no hut ready, and the woman may perish in the snow, or in the cold.<sup>2</sup> In New South Wales "when a woman is near her confinement she leaves the general camp in company with another woman, and together they make a temporary camp beneath a shady tree, one or two hundred yards distant. This movement is probably made to prevent the occurrence of a death in the camp, which would cause all to move to another spot and erect fresh shelter; for after a death all desert the camp where it occurs."<sup>3</sup> Modern Egyptians, whether Christians or Moslems, will not repair a house in which the head of the family has died, and he is sometimes carried out into the field in order that the house may be safe.<sup>4</sup>

The custom of removing the sick and dying to special huts which became their tombs has lately prevailed among the Esquimaux. This people, as Nordenskiöld says, offer an intermediate type between man as he is and man as he was in the bygone ages, and when first visited they were in the very midst of the stone and bone epoch.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *New Zealand*, 1870, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vii, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, xiii, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> E. L. Butcher, *Things Seen in Egypt*, 1910, pp. 72-76.

Captain Hall has given us an account of an Esquimaux woman called Nukertoa whom he tried to rescue from her death-hut. She had been left alone in her illness, and one day when he was paying his usual visit to her he found that a new hut was being built for her. This was to be her tomb. She was removed to it on the 4th of January, 1861, and was carried in by an opening left for the purpose in the back of the hut, not by the usual entrance. The opening was then well closed by blocks of snow. Captain Hall found that it was impossible to interfere with the superstitious rites and ceremonies of these people, especially in relation to death.<sup>1</sup>

In October of the same year Captain Hall found a poor Esquimaux woman who was dying of consumption, and who on that account had been removed into the new hut which was to be her tomb. There she lived for many weeks, helpless and almost starving. Occasionally the neighbours brought her morsels of food, but everything valuable was taken away from her when she was removed to the death-hut, the reason being that the goods in a house would not be fit to be used again if a death took place in it. When the woman died, "the death-hut became her winding-sheet, and the stones were piled over her—her only monument." Captain Hall made a gallant attempt to rescue a young woman who had been left to die in a snow hut, but without success, and she was found dead on a bed-platform. Over the instrument used for containing the fire-light was hung a long iron pan in which to make snow-water. This contained ice, showing that the woman's fire had ceased to burn, that the water had become frozen, and that, in order to quench her burning thirst, she had chipped ice from the pan hung near her head by means of a knife. A tobacco pipe was also near her head, and had apparently been used just before she died. Between her body and the wall of the

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. Hall, *Life with the Esquimaux*, 1864, i, pp. 194 seqq.

hut was a tin can containing needles, reindeer sinews, which were used for thread, a knife, beads, and other things.<sup>1</sup> Now it is remarkable that in a Yorkshire barrow Mr. Mortimer found near the skeleton of an Anglo-Saxon woman a bronze box containing remains of thread and a corroded iron needle. Near the box were an iron knife and the remains of a satchel. The woman's left arm was bent over the body, and the right arm doubled back, with the hands to the face. On her chest was a circular bronze fibula, and at her neck were two beads of amethystine quartz, and nine coloured beads.<sup>2</sup> In one case Mr. Mortimer found in a food-vase the greater portions of two ribs of a small animal; in another case he discovered a highly-finished food-vase in which was the rib of a small animal, probably a rabbit.<sup>3</sup> There is evidence that in Norway the practice of exposing the sick and dying in temporary huts, or even of entombing them alive, with some food and drink, was remembered, if not continued, in the tenth century. For, according to the Lives of the Kings of Norway, King Herlaug, of Naumdale, preferred burying himself alive in a howe, with a plentiful store of victuals and drink, to giving himself into Harald Hairfair's power.<sup>4</sup> The Fijians take an affectionate farewell of their aged parents, and bury them alive. In such cases the grave is dug about four feet deep, the relatives and friends begin their lamentations, and bury the poor victim alive.<sup>5</sup> The same people, according to Mr. Fison, make graves in the form of underground chambers or vaults, approached by a shaft. "Sometimes the dying man is placed in the vault when he is supposed to be beyond hope of recovery. Food and water are lowered down the shaft, and as long as he can crawl to them and use them,

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 215 seqq.

<sup>2</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 210, 221.

<sup>4</sup> *Story of Harald Hairfair*, in the *Heimskringla*, c. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Lubbock, *Pre-historic Times*, 3rd ed., p. 457.

so long is the shaft kept open. When they remain untouched the earth is filled in." <sup>1</sup>

It is almost certain that this horrible custom of exposing the dying once prevailed in England, not only in respect of the aged, but in respect of children or of any person who seemed to be ill beyond recovery. Any book on prehistoric burials will afford evidence on this matter, and we may give two cases recorded, amongst many others, by the late Mr. Mortimer. They appear to have been graves in which the dying had been exposed, with food, and perhaps water, within their reach. In one of these Yorkshire barrows was a trough-formed grave, 3 feet deep, 7 feet long, and only two feet wide. At the bottom of the grave was a large skeleton, lying on its right side, with the knees pulled up, the right arm doubled back, and the hand under the chin. The left arm was bent, with the hand on the right humerus. Beneath the legs of the skeleton were the flexed legs of a youth, from eight to twelve years of age, lying on the left side, with the arms in the same position as those of the other skeleton. About eight inches before the face of the larger skeleton was a food-vase, and between the vase and the skull was "a mass of decayed matter of a porous texture, probably the remains of a food deposit," in which the tooth of a young ox was found. Mr. Mortimer thought that the two burials had taken place at the same time. None of the gravel excavated in forming the grave had been put back, and the bodies were covered by black mould. There was no trench round the barrow. Another barrow about 100 yards distant, in size and material, was very like the last. At the base of the mound, near the centre, about seven inches above the natural gravel, and consequently on the surface of the ancient turf line, was an adult skeleton, lying on the left side, the left arm being at full length, and the hands clenched by the side

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, x, p. 144.

of the pelvis. The right arm was bent with the hand on the lower part of the body, and the legs were pulled up so as to form a right angle with the trunk. About 5 feet east of the skeleton was an oval hole, a little deeper than the old turf line, which was filled with black, greasy-looking soil, but contained no trace of bone. In the barrow a small flint knife and a boulder of gritstone were found. Near the left shoulder of the skeleton was a food-vase.

In 1844 in a barrow on Brassington Moor, Derbyshire, Bateman found a circular cist cut in the rock to the depth of two feet "on the floor of which lay the skeleton of a child, apparently about ten years of age. Above this was deposited a drinking-cup of elegant form, and elaborately ornamented, and which when found was still in the upright position, as it had been originally placed."<sup>2</sup> At Heselton in the East Riding of Yorkshire Canon Greenwell found the body of a child about two and a half years old. "In front of the knees was placed a large quantity of round dark objects, apparently the seed of some plant bearing indeed a strong resemblance to the fruit of the juniper."<sup>3</sup> At the centre of a large Wiltshire barrow was "the skeleton of a child, apparently not more than two or three years old, accompanied by a drinking cup."<sup>4</sup>

Experts are agreed that these vessels were intended to hold food and drink, and one of them seems to have been accompanied by a spoon.<sup>5</sup> But Canon Greenwell is mistaken in saying that they were intended to hold food of some kind "for the use of the dead," and in suggesting that the food was intended as a propitiation to the dead,

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<sup>1</sup> Mortimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Vestiges of the Antiquities of Derbyshire*, 1848, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *British Barrows*, p. 141. The Derbyshire story, found at Calver, of the man who went to get a bag of nuts lying under his dead mother's head in the churchyard may be compared—Addy's *Household Tales*, 1895, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Hoare, *Ancient Wills in Greenwell*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> Greenwell, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

so that they might not injure the living.<sup>1</sup> They were intended to hold food and drink for human beings who had been laid in their tombs during life, in order to mitigate in some way the pains of death. Those tombs were often death-huts. For we are not to suppose that all the persons thus left to die were exposed to rain and snow. In some cases they may have survived their isolation, though there is no evidence that they ever did.

We must here refer once more to the fear of pollution caused by using the goods of the dead. "If," says Canon Greenwell, "it was believed to be unlucky for the survivors to make use of those things which had been the property of the deceased, and that for this reason such things were buried with them, then we must suppose that by far the greater number of persons buried in the barrows were possessed of neither weapons, implements, nor ornaments—which is quite impossible to conceive. The circumstance that a large number of the articles deposited with the dead are quite new, and to all appearance made for the occasion, is a fact which also militates very strongly against this explanation of their occurrence."<sup>2</sup>

It is highly improbable that the sick or dying would be removed to death-huts along with their jewels, weapons, or implements. For if it was believed that the dwellings of the living could thus be saved from pollution it must also have been believed that the goods of the sick or dying could be saved in like manner. And so we are justified in inferring that they were stripped of their valuable goods before they were taken to the death-hut. And if these unhappy persons needed vessels to hold the water or the mess of pottage given to them in their last hours, it is likely enough that many of such vessels would

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 102, 103. In the *Antigone* of Sophocles Antigone is taken when the path is loneliest, and hidden, living, in a stony grave "with as much food as piety prescribes, that the city may avoid a public stain."—*Antig.* 780, *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *British Barrows*, p. 59.

be new, and "made for the occasion." It is still more improbable that they would be exposed along with their valuable goods in unsheltered places.

If this inference be correct it follows that "by far the greater number of persons buried in the barrows" either ended their days in death-huts and were buried in them, or were otherwise exposed. A large proportion of these were women and children, and we never hear of any of these becoming vampires, or making themselves a nuisance to the living.

The persons who were buried with their weapons and ornaments were those who had died in their houses, or with their weapons and ornaments about their bodies. It was the pollution of those things by contact with the dead which rendered them unfit, in the belief of the survivors, to be ever used again. We may be sure that the gold chain and other beautiful things found wrapped up in a box in Cow Low, near Buxton, had not belonged to a lady who had been exposed in a death-hut. Not only did the barrow contain the lady's remains and those of many other persons, but neither food-vessel nor drinking-cup was there. Nor was the gold necklace set with garnets found in Callidge Low on Brassington Moor accompanied by such vessels.<sup>1</sup>

*(To be continued).*

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<sup>1</sup> Bateman's *Vestiges*, pp. 37, 94.