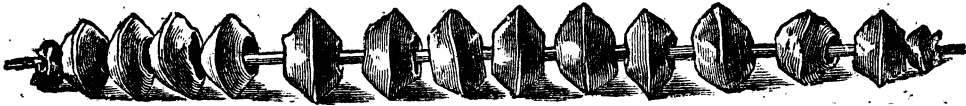


ARCHAEOLOGIA ÆLIANA.



Some Account of a Set of Gold Beads, presented to the Antiquarian Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, by HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND, in a Letter to THOS. DAVIDSON, ESQ. O. M. from the REV. JOHN HODGSON, Secretary.

DATA.—“THESE 15 beads were found under a cairn in Chesterhope Common, in the Manor of Ridsdale, in July, 1814.

“What has been the use of these I cannot tell, though I remember to have seen an ancient sword, that had some gold beads, somewhat similar to these, which were placed loosely upon the bar at the back of the pommel of the sword, as an ornament.”—*Extract from His Grace's letter to Mr. T. Davidson, 14th May, 1815.*

“I shall be curious to know the use formerly made of that piece of antiquity I took the liberty of sending the Society, as well as of the æra to which it belonged. I confess the shape and length of the bar of metal on which the beads are placed, and in which condition I

understand they were found, puzzles me to conceive how it could be adapted to the human body as an ornament, and I mentioned the possibility of its having served as the bar or guard behind the handle of the sword, from having seen something similar, so affixed to an old Saxon sword, at the Society of Antiquaries in London, several years ago, which was exhibited there.”—*Extract from His Grace's letter to Mr. T. Davidson, June 19, 1815.*

The Common of Chesterhope, in the county of Northumberland, is crossed by that branch of Watling-street, which traverses Redesdale into Scotland; and the Roman station *Habitancum*, or Risingham, is contiguous to it. Numerous remains of antiquity have been discovered in this station and its environs: and were it not for the circumstance that Roman antiquities are never, as far as I am acquainted with the subject, found under cairns, I should without hesitation have pronounced these beads to have belonged to that people, both from their contiguity to Roman works, and from the excellence of their workmanship.

I would not, however, advance the circumstance of their being found under a cairn, as an exclusive evidence against their Roman origin; for cairn burial has been in use from the earliest ages of the world. Joshua “burned” the body of Achan “with fire,” and then raised over him a great heap of stones, which remain to this day,”—“And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide; and as soon as the sun was gone down, Joshua commanded that they should take his body down from the tree, and cast it at the entering in of the gate of the city; and raise thereon, a great heap of stones, that remaineth to this day.”*—Sometimes they buried the body, and immediately after threw a cairn over it: “and they took Absalom and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him.”† And the following quotation from Ezekiel ‡: “The passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set

* Joshua, vii. 26; and viii. 29.

† 11 Sam. xviii. 17.

‡ xxxix. 15.

up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in Hamon-gog," probably refers to the practice, which in some parts of the Highlands of Scotland prevails to this day, of persons, as they pass by a cairn, adding a stone to it: indeed, in that country, it is not uncommon for persons attending a funeral, to take each a stone with them to throw upon the grave of the deceased; and, if he was a person of considerable respect, of adding another, each time they come near his grave. Shaw, too, in the preface to his travels, says, that he often met with heaps of stones in Barbary, Arabia, and in the Holy Land, which have from time to time been raised over murdered travellers, for the Arabs, from a superstitious reverence for the dead, have a custom of casting a stone upon them every time they pass by them; on the contrary, according to Sandys, the pillar of Absalom, which "in his life time he had taken and reared for himself in the king's dale,"* is still standing, and the Turks, from motives of abhorrence to his memory, throw a stone at it each time they pass it, so that it is now more than half buried amongst stones.

Diodorus says, that the Baleares, a people of Minorca, threw heaps of stones over their dead; and Armstrong, in his history of that island, notices certain cairns there, from 80 to 90 feet high. Pausanias relates, that when Laius was slain by his son *Ædipus*, stones were heaped up over him and his companions. The Bogri of the Russians, which are both circles and heaps of stones, are abundant in Siberia † and Tartary.

Torphœus tells us that Odin introduced into Scandinavia the custom of burning the dead; and cairns are exceedingly numerous in that district, especially in Norway.

King, in his *Munimenta Antiqua*, strongly contends that all the barrows and cairns, so numerous scattered over the different parts of this island, are of British or Celtic origin; and escapes the difficulty of attributing those *barrows*, in which evident Roman antiquities are found, to Roman origin, by ascribing them to British officers in the

* ii Sam. xviii. 18.

† Strahlenberg's Description, &c.

Roman service, for there are very many instances of coins, armour, jewelry, &c. bearing Latin legends and inscriptions, being found in these *artificial mounds of earth thrown up over the dead*.

Whether all the cairns of England belonged to the Celtic or Druidical Britons,; or some part of them are to be attributed to that race of people, and the rest to the nations that migrated out of Germany, Denmark, and Norway into this country, after its desertion by the Romans, does, however, in a great measure, depend upon the controverted point respecting the identity between the Celts and the ancient possessors of the Cimbric Chersonesus. This difficulty I shall not take upon me to remove; but certain it is that both in Norway and Britain, the contents of these tombs bear the strongest similarity: they consist of armour, beads of glass and amber; spear-heads of cast brass; axes, hammers, and other instruments of stone; a circumstance, which, if it proves nothing else, very evidently points out the common propensities and common helplessness of each nation, at the time when such implements were in use. In all the countries, from Britain to Tartary, this mode of burial has, at one æra or another, very commonly prevailed.


Any attempt to fix the æra of the antiquities in question, drawn from the use of ornaments of gold, will be liable to equal difficulties with that deduced from the history of cairns. About 1860 years before the time of Christ, we find the steward of Abraham presenting an ear-ring and bracelets of gold to Rebecca. The ear-ring weighed about $4\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. and the bracelets about $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. That the bracelet was of a flexible nature is pretty evident from its Hebrew name, *Jemid*, which implies that it was worn with a hasp or some such fastening. The same remark is applicable to the golden chains, which Moses took from the Midianites, and to that which was found upon the arm of Saul after his death. All these appear to have been either chains or beads of solid gold, especially the princely gift presented to Rebecca. It was not, however, from any ignorance of the ductile properties of gold that the ancients often formed it into such massive ornaments.—

Moses, in many instances, speaks about overlaying wood with gold. Homer describes the manner of gilding the horns of a bull, destined for sacrifice, with gold-leaf; and Pliny remarks that Homer's men plaited gold into their hair, a custom, which he could not determine, whether or not they had derived from women: He also tells us that cloth, interwoven with gold, was called *attalicus*, from Attalus king of Pergamus, the inventor of that species of splendid attire. The kind of rolled gold, which most resembled that of which the beads of Chesterhope cairn were made, was called *Prænestina bractea* at Rome, from an image of fortune being overlaid with it at Præneste.

The custom of burying valuable articles with the body of their proprietor, is also very ancient. Ezekiel speaks of "the mighty that are fallen among the uncircumcised, which are gone down to Hades with their weapons of war, and that have laid their swords under their heads." The *νεκίερων αγαλματια* of Euripides, were probably the favourite arms or ornaments that were buried with the bodies of their owners.—Herodotus says, that the old Scythians had such plenty of gold, that other metals were not in esteem among them, and that they interred vessels of it with their dead. And Torphæus says, that Odin, with the custom of burying the dead, taught the people of Scandinavia to bury with them the most costly things they possessed at the time of their decease. Agreeably with these historical notices, we find the cairns and barrows, through almost all parts of the world, abounding with jewelry, armour, implements of war, and domestic utensils. The celebrated barrows in Tartary are in all probability the tombs of the Scythian Kings*; though a modern writer in the *Archæologia* has with great plausibility contended, that they belong to the latter end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. In one of these, a golden chain of several links, set with rubies, and bracelets of gold, were found upon the body of a queen, which was partly covered with a robe, and laid between two plates of fine gold. The king's body was also laid between sheets of gold,

* See Herodotus, *Melp.* chap. 73.

and was folded in a robe embroidered with gold, rubies, and emeralds. The four sheets of gold weighed 40 lbs. The Bogri in Siberia and Tartary also contain plates and trinkets of gold, and weapons of cast brass of that kind, which are commonly called Celts. In Norway, where the agriculturalist has not been tempted to remove them, cairns are still exceedingly numerous; and when opened, are found to contain ashes and bones, sometimes in urns, at others in kisvaens, and generally accompanied with armour, trinkets, drinking vessels, and even with axes and hammers of stone. The trinkets consist of beads of glass and amber, and a great variety of ornaments of gold. Drinking vessels of that metal, in the form of horns, are not unfrequently discovered; there are several of them in the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen; and in that of the Military School, in Christiania, there is a great variety of smaller articles in gold, collected from various parts of Norway, but chiefly from the cairns in the neighbourhood of North Bergen: indeed, as far back as records reach, gold has been in high estimation among the inhabitants of Norway. The gilded and jewelled helmet of king Hagen Athelstan, in his great battle with the sons of Eric Bloodax (about A. D. 939), gave occasion to a very remarkable proof of his valour*; and, even to this day, the country people in the dales of Norway, whose language bears a very strong affinity to the dialects of the northern counties of England, have a strong passion for ornaments made of thin gold and silver.

By a reference to the Indexes of the Archæologia, it will be found that the cairns and tumuli of Great Britain abound with as great a variety of the works of art, as those of the countries already enumerated; but *beads of gold* have been rarely taken notice of amongst British sepulchral antiquities. Thirteen were found in a tumulus, in the parish of Upton Lovel, in Wiltshire, in 1803: they were in the shape of a drum,  having two ends to screw off, and perforated in the middle. Several other articles of pure thin gold, beads of amber, a lance head, &c. were found with them. The circumstance of amber

* Sn. Sterlsen's Norse Krönike.

beads being so plentifully found in the old tombs in England, I think, evinces a correspondence to have existed between the people of this country and those of the shores of the Baltic, where amber is principally found, at the time when these tombs were constructed.

“ Dr. Pocock exhibited, 1755, a drawing of a gold bracelet, found about thirty years before, in Waterford county, near Whitfiella, the seat of William Christmas, Esq. under a heap of stones, near Lisnekil church. On the top of this heap, which was removed to be employed in building, was a stone set upright, and under it a cavity, in which was the bracelet. It is very thin, two inches five-eighths long, three inches diameter, and somewhat less in the middle than at the end; and near it stood a small urn, about six inches high and four at the mouth, containing bones and ashes.”—*Archæol. vol. v. p. 41.*

Since christianity finally prevailed in England, cairn-burial has not been in use. In 1016, Canute, after a great battle with Edmund Ironside, threw up four hillocks to commemorate the event, two of which were opened, and produced great quantities of bones, and chains like bridle bits; but even in that age, we shall find no instance of individuals, who died by the common visitations of nature, being buried out of church-yards. Barrows of a later date are the tombs of slaughtered armies, or set up in memory of battles. Three mounds were raised after the battle of Culloden, in 1746.

The method of burial amongst the early Saxon christians in England, was nearly the same as that which prevails at present. The venerable Bede relates, that as soon as St. Cuthbert died on Farn Island, his body was put into a boat and taken to Lindisfarne; where it was taken up by a large concourse of people, and by companies of singers, and buried in a stone coffin, on the right side of the altar, in the church of St. Peter*. St. Benedict, the founder of the monastery of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, was buried near the altar of the church of the former place; and, sometime after his interment, the abbot Huaecberct took up the bones of St. Easterwin and St. Sigfrid, successors of St. Benedict, and deposited them near his remains†.

* Vit. S. Cudb.

† Bæd. Hist. Abb. Uuirem. & Gyrv.

We know, however, that Druidism continued to linger in England, with great obstinacy, long after the time of Bede; for a law of Canute says:—"Prohibemus etiam serio, quod quis adoret ignem vel fluvium, torrens vel saxa, vel alicujus generis arborum ligna."* And, at the latter end of the sixth century, we find that an interdict had been found necessary against similar practices in France: "Veneratores lapidum, accensores facularum, et excolentes sacra fontium et arborum admonemus."†

Had the Chesterhope cairn produced any other remains besides these beads, additional data might have been afforded to judge upon concerning their use, the people they had belonged to, and their date. At first sight, I took them for an armilla or bracelet; and have sometimes imagined them to have been a pendant, one of that sort of ornaments which are among the common deposits of tombs, and which were not uncommonly suspended upon the breasts both of men and women; and at others, worn on the fronts of helmets, and on the brow-bands of horses' bridles;—(*see Judges* viii. 21.—viii. 26.) But from the information contained in the Duke of Northumberland's letters, especially from their having been placed upon a bar of metal, and having perforations about one-fourth of an inch in diameter, &c. to receive it, I am inclined to believe that they have belonged to the sword of a chieftain; for the metallic bar, and the largeness of the perforations for receiving it, are sufficient evidence that they were ornaments to some thing in which considerable strength was required: indeed the bar of metal, which his Grace mentions, and the shape and length of which seem to have determined his judgment, would, I suppose, greatly assist in one's forming an accurate opinion as to their use. If the bar be lost, it is unfortunate that a drawing of it had not been taken, and that the kind of metal of which it was composed had not been ascertained. That the beads were ornaments of some kind of armour, may, I think, be pretty strongly decided upon; and I would rather attribute them to a Saxon, a Norwegian, or a Dane of the Teutonic family, than to a

* Wilkins' Leg. Ang. Sax. p. 134.

† Concil Turon. A. D. 567.

person of the Celtic race ; but I think it impossible to determine whether they belonged to those German tribes who had settled in Britain long prior to Cæsar's time, or to those who inundated this country after its desertion by the Romans, about A. D. 448. The instances I have given of the antiquity of the use of cairns, and of thin ornaments of gold, indeed sufficiently shew the difficulty of coming to any accurate conclusion respecting their date. If implements of brass had accompanied them, the probability would have been that they had belonged to very early settlers : iron weapons would have been an evidence of a more modern date. I repeat my persuasion, that they have been ornaments to a weapon of some kind ; and, if I were pressed for a more decided declaration of my opinion, I should say, that they had belonged to the hilt of a sword. But as I am merely a tyro in the study of antiquities, I beg that you will receive my remarks with considerable doubt and hesitation. I feel disappointed that I am unable to give a decided opinion respecting the beads ; but I am sure that in the circle of your acquaintance, you will be able to obtain an account of them from persons much better skilled in such matters than I am.

Believe me to be, dear Sir, your's, very sincerely,

JOHN HODGSON, Sec.

Extract of a letter from the Duke of Northumberland, to Thomas Davidson, Esq. of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Sion, 16th July, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter, inclosing one from Mr. Hodgson, concerning the gold beads upon the bar, and am sorry he cannot give a more decided opinion respecting them. He is perfectly correct as to the antiquity and universality of cairns. Many exist in Cornwall, by the same name, and the same custom is rigidly preserved, of the passengers, as they go by, flinging up a stone to add to the heap. Cairns,