

CHAPTER XXIV.

‘ CIRIC.’

Anhistoric Burials under Churches—Cases of Ludlow, Fimber, Pytchley, Passenham, Studland — St. Wigstan and Repton—St. Guthlac at Crowland—Churches on Barrows: Brockenhurst—Place-Names in -low, -how, -bury—The Burial of Ophelia—Kildale, Kingswear, etc.—Tell-tale Barrow-Names—The term ‘ Church’ applied to Earthworks—Place-Names containing the word ‘ Ecclesia’—Falkirk, Chirk, etc.—‘ Llan’ usually translated by ‘ -stow’—Meaning of ‘ Stow’—Saint-names rare on English Map—Few Rathes in England—‘ Church’ and ‘ Kirk’ applied to Stone Circles—‘ The Kirk’ in Furness—‘ Towtop Kirk’—Sunkenkirk, etc.—Kirkby—Kirkabost, Kirkdale, Kirkheaton—Church-names in England—Pucklechurch, Baschurch, etc.—Chirk and Chirbury—Lost Kirk-names—How the name Ciric arose—Why church-names are few.

That burials of seemingly pre-Christian date have been found again and again actually under churches of great antiquity is one of the facts which have long puzzled antiquaries. Some have supposed that such churches had been by accident built over a forgotten grave or graves. Some have hinted at consecration-burials. Others have

¹ Thorpe, pp. 111, 112, 157.

seen in such cases a deliberate usurpation by Christianity of a site known to be pagan. Probably each of these views is in some cases correct, but no one seems yet to have propounded the one theory which includes all the others and covers also the cases which they leave unexplained—the theory that the early Christian ‘churches’ were barrows pure and simple. If that was so, then any structural church will, if it be a genuinely old foundation, stand either on the barrow, or immediately beside it. In the first instance the humble little wooden oratory was doubtless invariably upon the barrow, as to this day are all churches within original circular churchyards. The ambition of later ages, desirous of building on a larger scale, might either level the whole or part of the barrow, or might be satisfied to build the new church beside it. The archaeological journals abound in examples of both kinds, of which only one or two need be quoted.

When the people of Ludlow began to extend their church westward in the twelfth century, they removed a great barrow—possibly the *blaw* which gave name to the town—and in so doing brought to light three interments each within its own *mausoleum* (presumably a cist). Whether or no they had any evidence for the character or date of these interments, they had wit enough to claim the bones as those of ‘Irish saints,’ and solemnly to translate them to their church; whereby the church of St. Laurence became the richer by so many relics the more.¹

There is a long list of churches standing beside barrows larger or smaller, which have been proved by actual exploration to be sepulchral and have been written down as of pre-Christian age. Whether they were so in all cases is doubtful. In the first place there is no reason to suppose that early Christian converts would in all cases construct their barrows at spots remote from those of their pagan forbears, but rather the contrary; so that a church, though surrounded by pagan barrows, may none the less itself stand upon, or on the site of, yet another which was Christian. And secondly we know from excavation, and

¹ Leland, *Collectanea*, iii, 407. W. Johnson (*Byways*, p. 82) calls it a ‘ludicrous ecclesiastical fiction’ that the bones were those of ‘Irish saints.’ On the contrary it was very possibly the fact. It is remarkable

that any one of the date named should have asserted them to be Irish at all, unless there was a local tradition of a Celtic monastery here.

from documentary evidence like the Capitularies, that Christians long continued to lay their dead within barrows of pagan origin; so that a pagan barrow might in time come to be hallowed as a Christian churchyard.

This is what actually happened in the famous case of Fimber, near Sledmere (E.R.) where excavation revealed successive interments extending apparently over the Bronze age, the Roman period, and that of early Saxondom. Upon these was later built a Christian church (St. Mary); and since 1877 the ground around it, i.e. the barrow of Bronze age and of Roman and Saxon times, has been a Christian churchyard. Continuity could scarcely desire a more conclusive illustration.¹ It is asserted that the church of Speeton, near Bridlington, is built upon a British barrow,² and that ‘at Garton and Kirby Grindalyth the present churches occupy Saxon sites.’³

The early Norman church of Pytchley near Kettering stands upon a spot which has been the burial-ground of the district certainly from Romano-British, possibly from pre-Roman times, to the present day. The oldest interments had been made in cists, and there was evidence of the ground’s having been raised at least six feet.⁴

At Passenham, Northamptonshire, ‘church and vicarage seem to occupy the site of a considerable ancient cemetery. Skeletons in great numbers and much pottery and glass, Roman and Romano-British, have been found here.’⁵

In Studland churchyard, Dorset, were found (1881) burials of three distinct types: uppermost were those of modern type; below these were burials in cists formed of rough unhewn Swanage stones; and yet lower, ‘lying in a line approaching north-east and south-west, were cists formed of rough local flints and some stones.’⁶ Commenting upon this P. M. Johnston remarks that ‘the second layer would seem to represent the Christian Saxon graves, while the lowest were clearly pre-Christian.’⁷ If so, Studland

¹ Mortimer, *Forty Years’ Researches*, pp. 189-192; *V.C.H. Yorks.*, i, 79. Mortimer speaks of ‘the barrow on which the church stands.’

² Mortimer, *loc cit.*

³ T. Sheppard, *Guide to Hull and East Yorks.* (1923), p. 222.

⁴ *Arch. Journ.* iii (1846), pp. 105-115.

⁵ Murray’s *Handbook to Northamptonshire*, p. 147.

⁶ W. M. Hardy, *Old Swanage and Purbeck*. Amongst other finds were the two stones of a large quern.

⁷ *Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, N.S. xxiv (1918), p. 43.

churchyard is a clear case of the reconsecration of a pagan Saxon burial-ground, and of its continuity as a burial-place through a period of at least 1,300 years.

The evidence shows that Celtic Christianity inherited and long acted upon the pagan belief that a human burial was necessary to hallow the site of any new settlement. When the primitive practice was modified there yet remained the belief that the presence of an interment was an added guarantee of any hallowing. The barrow reared to the latest of the faithful dead was itself a new *ciric*, a place of Christian assembly and worship, and might in time come to boast its own church. The sites of some at any rate of the greater monasteries were determined by the presence of cemeteries, and it seems their founders did not always enquire too closely into the age, race, or faith, of the dead there buried. St. Mary's at Fimber was a Christian church for long centuries before it boasted a consecrated graveyard, yet it was built upon a barrow which in the first instance was most certainly non-Christian. The great Scotie double monastery of Repton, said to date back to 660, was immediately associated with, and probably actually included, a cemetery of the royal line of Mercia. Here were buried Ethelbald (*ob.* 757) and Wiglaf, kings of Mercia, and the latter's murdered grandson St. Wigstan (*ob.* 850). Destroyed by the Danes in 875, the abbey lay desolate for a century, when at last was built a church of St. Wigstan. But the saint's relics were translated in Canute's reign to the great abbey of Evesham, and in consequence, when the monastery of Repton was refounded in 1150, it 'had no root,' for the relics which ought to have been its *raison d'être* were no longer there. So, an accident at Evesham furnishing excuse, the canons of Repton recovered the relics and laid them 'not as beforetime in the mausoleum of Wigstan's grandfather Wiglaf, but in a shrine' in the chapel of their priory.

There is no reason to think that the Mercian kings before 850 had anything which would nowadays be called a mausoleum. Like others of their race they would be laid in an urnfield or a barrow. On that spot would be built first the Scotie monastery, and next St. Wigstan's church, when at last structural churches were becoming usual. Some of the Mercian blood-royal who were there interred

were unquestionably Christian, but the case next to be cited will suggest that the Scotie mind did not enquire too narrowly into the faith of the dead man if his barrow offered a desirable site for a settlement.

The Saxon Guthlac selected (699) for the site of his *mansio* in the Fens a barrow (*tumulus*) and thereon he built his cell.¹ The barrow was a flattened mound some 3 ft. in height and 60 ft. in diameter, surrounded by the usual fosse, in which was found (1880) 'an abundance of rude pottery of native manufacture; and near the sides of the mound were several cinerary urns and vases, including some very good specimens of lathe-turned Roman ware.'² The evidence showed that the barrow long antedated the Roman period: it was another of the many instances in which successive ages and races have used the same barrow for the same purpose. Here Guthlac lived and died (714), and here in 716 Ethelbald founded in his honour a monastery which grew to be the famous mitred abbey of Crowland.³

This is an important case. Guthlac, who cannot have been ignorant of the mound's real character, deliberately chose for the site of his *mansio* a burial-place, and that a pagan one⁴; for Felix explicitly says that 'no Christian had so far been able to live' there. Little more than a century before this St. Columba had hallowed his new settlement in Hy by the burial of his disciple Odhrain. Such procedure was already out of date in Guthlac's day, but not so the feeling that some sort of interment was needful to the hallowing of the site, and apparently the fact that the interments here were pagan made no difference to the saint or to Ethelbald and the world at large. Felix, who wrote the story from information furnished by Guthlac's actual companions, saw in it nothing to call for comment. So Crowland is an authentic instance of the

¹ Felix of Jarrow, *Vita S. Guthlaci* (written before 750). In the later A.-S. version the mound is called a *blaw*, the saint's building a *bus*, a *cyte*, a *cell*, and a *ciric*. The Latin *Life* explicitly mentions that the mound had been long previously rifled by treasure-seekers, which is proof that its character was well understood.

² *Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.* xlvii (1891), p. 288. There were found also flint implements, a large quantity of flakes, a bronze celt, and light-strikers.

³ Crudeland, i.e. *terra caenosa*. It is curious that Felix of Jarrow calls it Cruglond, as if conscious of a derivation from *crug* (*cruc*) 'barrow.' So late as 1843 part of the ruins were locally known as the 'Anchor-church House.'

⁴ He had spent some years in exile in Wales, which would accentuate his Celtic way of thought, and his training had been received in the Scotie monastery of Repton.

deliberate planting of a Christian settlement upon a pagan burial-site. The monks of Crowland continued to bury their dead close beside it for generations, and close beside it are still laid the dead of the parish. So here, as at Fimber, lie the successive dead of four epochs, Celtic, Roman, Saxon, and modern English. The only difference is that, whereas Guthlac's foundation rapidly outgrew the limits of the saint's first settlement, there was no such overgrowth in the case of the little church upon the Yorkshire Wolds.

The ruins of a chapel stand in the centre of one of a group of earthworks of remarkable type at Knowlton, parish of Gussage All Saints, Dorsetshire. The earthworks are apparently barrows and almost certainly of pre-Christian date. Again the facts point to the deliberate usurpation of a pagan burial-site by the Church, and that too at a date long after Guthlac's time.¹

It has often been remarked that this or that English church stands upon a seemingly artificial mound, but rarely has a writer ventured to suggest that such mounds were in reality barrows. T. W. Shore accounted for this curious feature of many Hampshire churches by the supposition that the Saxons utilised sacred Celtic mounds for Christian purposes, adding that 'it is of course possible that these mounds were first adapted to Christian uses by early British Christians.'² He instances the churches of Burton, Cheriton, Corhampton and Sopley, but that of Bramshaw (St. Peter) and the old parish church of Brockenhurst (St. Nicholas) are as good examples as could be desired. Of the last-named, which ranks as one of the 'five ancient churches of the Forest,' the oldest portion is the nave (34 ft. by 17 ft. 2 ins.), said to date from the latter part of the eleventh century, while the chancel (26 ft. by 13 ft.) is attributed to a date about 1260. It will be noticed that in each case the proportions are those of the Scotie rule. The building stands upon the flat summit³ of a large

¹ The barrows are described in Allcroft, *Earthwork of England*, p. 564. The garth surrounding the chapel (which ignores the east-and-west position) is rectilinear, and if it be contemporary with the buildings, the fact shows that, when the chapel was built, the circular churchyard had already lost its old significance. But the nave is said to contain Norman work. See

Hutchins, *Hist. Dorset*, iii, 150; *Trans. Dorset N.H. and Antiq. Field Club*, xvii (1896).

² *Hist. Hampshire* (London, 1892), p. 32. He says that the mound on which stands the church of Burton (St. Martin) used to be known as St. Martin's Hill.

³ A large number of the recognised barrows of this part of the New Forest are

barrow (diam. 150 ft.), its chancel occupying the central point, and its tower, an addition of about 1750, standing upon the western edge of the mound.

A main road loops round the barrow on the west and the south, and a small lane until lately skirted it on the north and east. Extensions of the burial-ground have been made to the north, but these have not interfered with the form of the original garth, the scarp whereof, falling steep and unbroken, is especially well marked on this side, rising some seven feet in vertical height. Owing to the scarcity of suitable stone in the district there is no revetment, and on three sides the *limes* is to this day the slope of the original barrow, reinforced with a ragged hedge and a few old wooden rails. At Bramshaw the garth retains its original form unspoilt. So does that of the Norfolk churchyard of Cranwich (plate ii, no. 1), where the barrow, demarcated by nothing more than a ring of short posts and a connecting line of wire rope, heaves up some five or six feet from a green meadow. Its diameter is fifty yards or so, and here and there along the periphery one might fancy there are traces of an old-time fosse. An incomplete circle of nine large trees further defines the circle.

At Mareham-on-the-Hill (All Saints), near Horncastle, Lincs. the western half of the circular garth has been secularised, but round most of the remainder still runs a fosse some twelve feet in width, a feature unfortunately omitted in the ordnance survey.

In districts where large masses of stone abound, they are sometimes used to fence the garth, though it is not suggested that this practice is a survival from the peristalith of some pagan barrows. There is a good example at Frilsham in Berkshire, where the garth, still largely original, shows three-quarters of a circle and is mounded three feet above the ground about. Another is at Lambourne in the same county, where the garth is obviously not original. In this practice is to be found in some cases the probable origin of the tradition that this or that church stands upon the site of a druidical circle, as for example the old parish church (St. Nicholas) at Brighton.

of the flat-topped 'table' type, but some particularly fine disc barrows on Setley Plain, near by, suggest that the locality was

the seat of a thriving population in the last years of the Celtic period.

Many ancient churches occupy precisely those sites which would naturally be selected for barrows, and in very many cases it is yet possible to see beneath them the swell of an original barrow. The words *blaw* and *howe*, elements in a long list of English parish-names,¹ point to the fact that the churches of these parishes are actually reared on barrows. Names like Kirkbergh,² Kirkbarrow,³ and Chapel-le-How⁴ tell the same story, as probably do many names in *-bury*, and *-borough* (*beorh*, 'a barrow'). These are the southern equivalents for the multitude of northern Kirkhills.

There are upon the English map a multitude of places containing the suffix *-borough* or *-bury* in the sense of 'hill,' where none the less there is no natural feature to which the word can well be applied. Such names are to be found all over the map of East Anglia and equally in other districts remarkable for the absence of any hills. It is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that the 'hill' in some of such cases was none other than the barrow which became the churchyard of the village. As examples may be cited Tewkesbury (Theocesberie, *D.B.*) in Gloucestershire, Willesboro'⁵ in Kent, Wisborough in Sussex, and Marlborough⁶ in Wiltshire. Such a name as Havochesberie (*D.B.* Glouces.; now Hawkesbury) is in form, as apparently in meaning also, exactly parallel with Hawkchurch (Devon), as Prestbury (Ches.) with the Derbyshire barrow called Priest's Low; and the name of Felborough (A.-S. *Feld-beorh*) in Kent is precisely parallel with Felchurch (for *Feld-ciric*) in Suffolk.

The church of Edlesborough—Eadwulf's *beorh*—stands upon a small hillock, an outlier of the Dunstable Downs, as to the origin and purpose of which speculation has been rife: 'either an ancient barrow or perhaps a Roman summer encampment,' suggested Lipscomb.⁷ Eadwulf's *beorh*⁸—the *ciric* which yet bears his name—is there to

¹ e.g. Marlow, Taplow, Thriplow, Aslaoe, Aynho. Earwaker (*East Cheshire*, i, 42) remarked the 'curious fact' that the parish of Wilmslow ('Wilhelm's Low') 'consists exclusively of the church and adjacent churchyard.' The meaning of *howe* was early forgotten, whence arose such doublets as Howbery (*D.B.* Hov') in Kent and Hawhill (p. 172, n. 1) near Normanton, Yorks. W.R.

² In parish of Normanton, Westmorland, where was anciently a church.

³ Three miles ssw. of Penrith.

⁴ Bardsley, *Dict. Eng. and Welsh Surnames*, s.v. Chappelow.

⁵ A.-S. *Wifelesbeorge*, 'Wivel's Barrow.'

⁶ Earlier Maerlbeorh.

⁷ *Hist. and Antiq. Bucks.* (1847), iii, 349.

⁸ *Place-Names of Bucks*, p. 93.

this day, an oval depressed mound crowning the hillock and in turn crowned by the noble church of St. Mary. Once all the graveyard the village needed, it has of late years been enlarged, but without damage to the original barrow (plate iii, no. 2).

A series of names such as Ashow, Ashbury and Ashchurch, or Ludlow, Ludborough and Ludchurch, suggests at once the question whether they be not identical in meaning as they are in formation; and in the light of the accumulated evidence that 'church' might upon occasion denote a barrow, and so be identical in meaning with 'low,' 'how,' 'borough' and 'bury,' the question is in no way absurd. One finds a direct parallel in such names as Martin's Hill (p. 252, n. 2) and Lightning Hill (ch. xxv), where the 'hill' in question is or was merely the graveyard of the parish, and in the multitude of barrows distinguished as 'hills.' The suffix *-dun* was similarly used, as in Malden (*D.B.* Maldune, 'Cross-hill') in Surrey, and Maldon in Essex. William of Malmesbury must have been aware that 'church' and 'barrow' had once been interchangeable when he wrote that Theokesberia (Tewkesbury) represents 'Theotokos-beria, id est, Dei Genitricis curia, vocabulo et Graeco et Anglico composito.'¹ English himself, he knew *beria* to represent the English *beorh*, and he declares that it might mean *curia*, that is, a circular place of assembly (ch. vi). In Orkney churchyards were called *burghs* so late as 1703.²

If the primitive church was a barrow, the strange finds recorded from a multitude of churchyards cease to be strange at all—the shards which are rarely absent from any really ancient graveyard, the rounded white pebbles, the quantities of charcoal sometimes observable,³ the flakes and implements of flint, pot-boilers, shells, coins, and even urns.⁴

When the suicide Ophelia is to be interred with Chris-

¹ *Gesta Pont.* iv, 157. Tewkesbury actually signifies 'Teodec's Barrow,' says Prof. F. M. Stenton.

² Martin, *Description of the Western Isles*, p. 389. He adds that *burgh* was 'from the Saxon word "burying".' As etymology this statement is wrong, but it is

conclusive proof that he was not confusing burial-places with 'brochs.'

³ As at Danby in Cleveland; J. C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, pp. 213, 220.

⁴ For a long list of such funeral apparatus, see W. Johnson, *Byways*, ch. vii.

tian obsequies the indignant priest protests that her burial ought rather to be that of a person outside the pale of the Church—

‘ Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.’
Hamlet, V, i, 254.

As an intelligent understanding of barrows and their sepulchral concomitants did not begin to show itself in England until some years after the play of *Hamlet* was written, in the days of Sir Thos. Browne and Richard Verstegen, it seems reasonably certain that Shakespeare, when he wrote this line, was voicing a general English feeling in regard to such as ‘ wilfully seek their own salvation ’; that is to say, that down to the opening years of the seventeenth century there survived a vigorous memory of the rites which had attended pagan burial in days when Christianity was paganism’s struggling rival. If so, there is very great reason to doubt that such pagan customs as the casting of ‘ shards, flints, and pebbles ’ upon the grave had ceased out of the land at so early a date as is commonly believed.

When the church of Kildale, Yorks., was rebuilt in 1867 a number of skeletons, some of them accompanied by articles of bronze and weapons of iron, were found beneath the nave and the north wall of the fabric.¹ Under the tower of the church of East Blatchington in Sussex were found ‘ two pots or urns containing charred bones.’² Under the chancel of Sutton church near Bignor, in the same county, were found sepulchral urns of the Romano-British period³; and in the churchyard of Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, had been found up to 1861 ‘ so many coins and so large a quantity of pottery . . . as to give rise to the conjecture that it may have been the site of a Roman temple.’⁴ In a cavity hewn out of the rock beneath the church at Kingswear, Devon, were found the bones of an infant buried in quicklime. Similar finds have been made at Holsworthy in Devon and at Wickersley near Rotherham in Yorkshire.⁵ Carefully placed within the south-west angle of the walls of the

¹ Atkinson, *Glossary of the Cleveland Dialect* (1868), p. xx.

² *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, xiii, 309.

³ *ibid.* xv, 242.

⁴ *ibid.* xiv, 178.

⁵ Baring-Gould, *Book of Devon*.

church of Arlington in Sussex was found an urn of unusual size, still preserved in the church.¹

The church of Alphamstone, Essex, appears to have been built over a (sepulchral ?) stone circle, of which two stones were found under the tower and two beneath the chancel. Urns and other sepulchral remains have come from the immediate vicinity.² Implements of stone and bronze have been found in many churchyards, and in some cases cannot be dismissed as mere strays, but are clearly genuine grave-deposits. Some such finds have been already mentioned; others are a bronze celt found at Whittlebury, Northants,³ and a buckle of bronze found in Cadney churchyard, Lincs.⁴ The list of churchyards which have yielded shards and urns of Roman and Romano-British make, especially in Kent and Essex and Suffolk, is a long one. If in some cases this points only to the accidental usurpation of the site of some forgotten cemetery or habitation, in others it is impossible to question that the usurpation was intentional and the site sepulchral.

Here too is a reasonable explanation of the presence of monoliths, whether in churchyards or even actually within churches. The cases of Alphamstone, Rudstone and Constantine have been mentioned,⁵ with others in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. Probably most of these monoliths were nothing but the monuments of the dead, and in most cases of Christian dead; but that now and again a pagan monument should come to be christianised in after years is not only possible, but extremely probable. All that was needful to that end was apparently the burial of a Christian’s body within the same barrow.

Kemble believed it ‘ very possible that in England the new churchyards were intentionally placed upon the sites of old (i.e. pre-Christian) cemeteries.’⁶ The evidence shows that in some cases it was so: neither St. Guthlac at

¹ There was found at the same time evidence that there had stood here two successive churches of wattle and daub, both of which had been destroyed by fire. There are Roman bricks in the present fabric (chiefly of decorated style).

² Walter Johnson, *Byways*, pp. 84-6.

³ *V.C.H. Northants*, i, p. 215.

⁴ Woodruffe-Peacock, *Notes on Cadney Church* (Louth, 1912), p. 2.

⁵ For many further English instances, see Johnson, *Byways*, pp. 38, *sqq.*

⁶ *Saxons in England* (1876) ii, c. 9; *Horae Ferales*, p. 99. Prof. Baldwin Brown (*Arts*, i, pp. 257 *sqq.*) traverses Kemble’s view, adding that it is contradicted by monumental evidence. Doubtless in many cases it is so contradicted, but with as little doubt in many other cases it is confirmed, while in the vast majority of cases there is no evidence either way.

Crowland nor the unknown saint who made his oratory upon Carnbrea (ch. xx) can have been ignorant of what lay beneath. There are to-day people who do not recognise a barrow when they see it. There are none, save the physically sightless, who fail to recognise a churchyard. And in the days of early Christianity a barrow was a thing as unmistakable as is a churchyard to-day.

An explanation is now forthcoming for some of the odd names attaching to barrows or the vicinity of barrows. If the original 'church' was a barrow, and if this is what the word *ciric* originally signified,¹ it would be strange if the name of 'church' did not still attach to here and there a mound, whether actually sepulchral or merely resembling a barrow. Such a case is provided by 'The Kirk' at Kirkby Ireleth, to be described below (p. 275). A barrow at Tideswell in Derbyshire is called Kirklow.² 'Gun's Church' is the name of a barrow in the parish of Hill Deverill, near Warminster, Wilts.³ 'In Stowe Wood' in the parish of Kilkhampton (Cornwall) 'is an earthwork, circular and rocky, known as Ruberchurch.'⁴ In the parish of Cotherstone (Yorks. N.R.) was 'a cairn of loose stone named Kirk (or Kyr) Arran,' within which was found 'a round stone urn resembling a small mortar, but containing nothing.'⁵ In the parish of Monzie, Perthshire, 'a pile of large stones,' locally reputed to be the grave of Fingal's father, was known in the last century as 'The Kirk of the Grove.'⁶ Here is a plain identification of the word 'kirk' with a *pagan* place of burial. Heywood Sumner describes three localities in Hampshire, all more or less unbroken forest-land, which bear the names of 'Church

¹ Warne (*Ancient Dorset*, p. 103) mentions that in the vicinity of Knowlton (p. 266) 'the peasantry have a legend relating how a large number of churches in ancient times stood in the neighbourhood.' Knowlton was—indeed still is—a considerable barrow-field (*Hutchins, Hist. Dorset*, iii, 150), and the prominent type of barrow seems to have been that still surrounding the ruined chapel there, i.e. in a literal sense a *circus*. When the local tradition speaks of many 'churches,' one is strongly moved to think that it had originally meant merely many 'barrows.' Knowlton gave its name to a Hundred, and a large number of Hundreds are named from 'churches' (e.g. Newchurch in Kent, Whitchurch in

Dorset, Pucklechurch in Glouce.) exactly as others (and a still larger number) are named from *beorhs*, *bowes*, and *lows*. Five of the pre-Domesday Hundreds of Dorset were named after 'barrows of which the names are now lost' (R. W. Eyton, *Key to Domesday of Dorset*).

² Bateman, *Ten Years' Digging*.

³ *Folklore*, xii (1901), p. 74; *Wilts. Arch. and N.H. Mag.* xxxiii (1904), p. 128. It is a 'bowl' barrow lying at the extreme south point of the parish.

⁴ Dew, *Hist. of Church and Parish of Kilkhampton* (1926), p. 5.

⁵ Whitaker, *Richmondshire* (1823), i, 142.

⁶ Lewis, *Topog. Dict.*

Green' and 'Church Moor' (*bis*), and in each case the solitary feature which can conceivably have given rise to the name is a barrow.¹

'Friday's Church' is one of a small group of barrows on Barpham Hill (469 O.D.), a mile west of Harrow Hill, parish of Burpham, Sussex; and local tradition asserts that here was 'the burial mound of queen Fridias.'² Excavation has failed to find here any trace of a structural church.

In Parwich, Derbyshire, is a barrow called 'Cross Low,' another at Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, Notts., called 'Cross Hill.' In Prinknash Park, Glouces. is an 'Idol's Barrow'³ (Barrow of the False God?), while 'Saint Low' occurs on the Derbyshire border.⁴ The famous Mote-hill of Scone was known as *Collis Credulitatis*, 'Believer's Hill.'⁵ Names like these are in a different class from those of 'The Five Maries' near East Chaldon, Dorset, and 'Gospel Hillock' in Cowdale near Buxton, which admit of other explanation.⁶

Church Barrow in Cranborne Chase (ch. ix) was once known as Church-hayes,⁷ i.e. 'the churchyard,' and the name must have been given at a time when the normal form of all churchyards was circular. 'Church-haye(s)' has frequently been rationalised to 'Churchway(s),' which is common on the English map, and occurs also in Wales at Warren (ch. xx) applied to a proven barrow. The northern

¹ *Earthworks of the New Forest*, p. 65. These barrows possibly represent so many of the large number of 'churches' alleged to have been destroyed by William I when he enclosed the forest. Such a case as that of Brockenhurst (p. 252) suggests that there would remain only a barrow after such 'destruction,' i.e. after the *tūn* was evicted and its *tūn-cyrc* closed.

² *Sussex Arch. Coll.* lxiii (1922), pp. 26-7. The name seems to be parallel with those of Wanbarrow (Woden's Barrow) in Hurstpierpoint and Thundersbarrow (Thunor's Barrow) behind Shoreham, both in Sussex. At Handcross, Sussex, occurs also Puckchurch. In an eighth-century charter (*Cart. Sax.* no. 197) the term *Frige daes*, the 'Friday,' figures amongst the determinants of a boundary-line in the parish of Wivelsfield, Sussex.

³ A Hünebed near Sleen in Holland is known by the strange name of 'The Parsonless Church' (Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, p. 562).

⁴ Jewitt, *Grave-Mounds*, p. 4. Saintbury, a parish of Glouce., is Sweyn's Barrow.

⁵ Skene (*Celtic Scotland*, i, 280) thinks that it was probably here that king Nectan accepted Christianity and founded the 'Church of the Holy Trinity' mentioned by Bede (*H.E.* V, xxi).

⁶ 'Maries' represents A.-S. *maere*, 'boundary-mark' (*Hutchins, Dorsetshire*, i, p. 346); cf. 'Mare Hill,' a barrow at Throwley in Derbyshire (Bateman, *Ten Years' Digging*). 'Gospel Hillock' is probably parallel with 'Gospel Oak,' referring to the custom of reading a portion of scripture at certain points in the course of beating the bounds of the parish. Herrick alludes to 'the holy oak, the Gospel-tree.'

⁷ Warne, *Anc. Dorset*, p. 43. At the present time circular churchyards are few in the district. That of Pentridge is still sub-circular; that of Gussage St. Michael yet more markedly so; and those of Farnham and Tollard Royal both show evidence of their having been originally circular.

form 'Kirkway' is recorded from the Norse area of Wirral, Cheshire.¹

A manor in the parish of Hemington, six miles south-west of Bath, bore the name of Highchurch. It is now represented by a solitary farm-house on high ground (Highchurch Knap, 500 ft.) commanding a wide outlook. Collinson was doubtless correct in saying² that this was 'said to be the spot where the original parish church stood,' but such 'church' was probably nothing but a burial-ground, a *ciric*. There are several noticeable barrows in the locality, if there be none now discoverable on Highchurch Knap.³ Roman remains are frequent in the vicinity.

'Wild Church Bottom,' in Verwood, Dorset, seems to take its name from the peculiar knolls, curiously like barrows, which are the most striking features in the scene⁴; but another 'Church Bottom' near Ebbesborne Wake, Wiltshire, contains a small rectangular earthwork of about $\frac{3}{4}$ acre,⁵ and yet another in the parish of Broad Chalk once showed 'a small square work'⁶ now vanished. Heywood Sumner describes⁷ four square works in the New Forest, all precisely similar in their small area (about $\frac{1}{3}$ acre), and their feeble defences; and to three out of the four attaches the name of 'church.'⁸ In Wiltshire again 'a small square entrenchment with a regular entrance to the east,' on the site of the British settlement near Ell Barrow (Willesford), 'is vulgarly called Church Ditches.'⁹ Stukeley mentions three different sites in Wiltshire to which attached the

¹ Near Meols (anciently Kirkby Meols, i.e. Kirkby in the Sandhills). Gastrell's *Notitia Cestriensis* is quoted as asserting (1718) that there had formerly been a church there called 'Lee's Kirk, near a narrow land called Kirkway.' The name had disappeared in 1859, and Lee's Kirk, it was then suggested (*Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc.* xi, 228), was a blunder for Liscard, said to be written Liscark in old records. There is no reason to impugn Gastrell's specific assertion.

² *Hist. Somersetshire* (1791), ii, 454. He mentions another manor in the parish by name of Huntminster, 'which seems to imply a church there in Saxon times.' Here he is probably right, for *minster* and *ciric* were different things.

³ 'Knap,' the modern 'knob,' suggests a barrow. Near Corsham, Wilts. is Chapel

Knap, where once stood a chapel (Editor's note to Aubrey, *Topog. Collections for Wilts.* p. 80).

⁴ For another explanation, see *Arch. Journ.* xxiv (1867), 169.

⁵ Figured by Heywood Sumner, *Earthworks of Cranborne Chase*, pl. xxxvi.

⁶ Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wilts, South*, p. 247.

⁷ *Earthworks of the New Forest*, p. 61.

⁸ One is 'The Churchyard' in Sloden Wood; the other two, at Denny Wait and Ashurst, bear the name of 'Church Place.' The writer tells me that he has heard a shepherd speak of the rectangular (Bronze age?) work on Martin Down (Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations*, Vol. iv) as 'The Church' or 'Church Place.'

⁹ Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wilts, South*, p. 175.

name of 'Old Chapel.' One of them was 'an entrenched square work' near Balmore Pond, near which were several barrows.¹ A small and feeble rectangular earthwork at Chelwood Gate in Ashdown Forest, Sussex, goes by the name of the 'Danes' Churchyard.' The vulgar error which sees a church in all and any remains of ancient masonry will not explain these names, for there is no visible sign of masonry about any of the sites, nor any tradition thereof. The explanation must be found in the supposition of the peasantry that all these works were burial-places and therefore 'churches.'

In Scotland the generic term for the early Christian burial-places was *kil*, which is still general in the Western Isles. As one goes east or south it becomes increasingly rarer, displaced either by the Gaelic *cladh* or by the Saxon *kirk*. Neither *kil* nor *cladh* has made good on the English side of the border.² Occasionally, and chiefly in the west, is found the term *teampul*, as in Ireland, for the structural church, and still more rarely *tigh*, 'house' (Irish *teach*). In England the term 'temple,' not rare in place-names, usually has reference to the order of knights templars. The Latin *ecclesia* is found sparsely in both Scotland and England, but whereas in England it can scarcely be shown to date from the period preceding the confessed domination of the Latin Church,³ in Scotland it may go back to the Scotie time.⁴ In both countries the majority of the few *ecclesia*-names are unquestionably of late origin, referring to this or that great monastic church to which the ground belonged. In not a few cases the substitution of the Saxon *kirk* for older terms can be verified from documents. Thus the ancient chapelries of Kilbride and Kilblane are now absorbed into

¹ *Abury* (1723), pp. 47-8.

² Kilpeck in Herefordshire (*D.B.* Kilpeete; 1130, Cil Pedec) is almost the only certain instance outside Cornwall, and this is less English than Welsh. Killforge in the same county is probably for Kilnforge. Most English place-names in *kil*-, if the modern spelling has any connexion with the original forms, derive either from personal names such as Ceolric and Ceolfa, or from Scandinavian *kill*, *kell*, 'chill,' 'cold'; but Kilkhampton (N. Cornwall) is referred (Dew, *Hist. of Church and Parish of Kilkhampton*, p. 2) to Killock, a diminutive of *kil*, still the name of a farm in the parish.

³ English names deriving from *ecclesia* are Eccles (Lancs., Hereford, Norfolk, Kent), Ecclesall (Yorks.), Ecclesbourne (Derby, Sussex), Ecclesfield (Yorks.), Eccleshall (Staff.), Eccleshill (Lancs., Yorks.), Eccleston (Lancs., Ches.). Eccleshall was long the residence of the bishops of Lichfield. With this cf. Chrishall (Essex), once Cristeshala, Dewsall near Dewchurch (Hereford), and Birdsall (Yorks.), once Brideschala (*D.B.*). In Norfolk was a manor of Kirkhale (*Paston Letters*, no. 962).

⁴ For Scottish *ecclesia*-names see Mackinlay, pp. 65 sqq.

the parishes of Kirkmabreck (Kirkcudbrightshire) and Kirkmahoe (Dumfriesshire). There are still an Ecclesmachan in Linlithgow and an Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire, both ancient names,¹ but as a rule the word *ecclesia* has been translated by the Saxon. The most familiar instance is Falkirk, of which the older name was Eaglais-breac. *Breac* is Pictish for 'speckled,' and *fal* is Anglo-Saxon for the same. The Saxon found existing a structural something, and translated—or fancied he translated—its name.² There is another and more obvious instance of the same kind in the case of Chirk. The old Welsh name of the place was Eglwys y Waen, 'the Church in the Water-meadow.' The Saxon contented himself with translating the word *eglwys*,³ and dropped the rest. If there was here any structural church at the time of the change, it was not of a kind to attract remark, for otherwise the Saxon would have called the place *mynstre*. As it is, the number of *minster*-names is singularly small, the *Gazetteer* showing only two which are parallel with such *Domesday* names as Ecclesfield and Eccleston, viz. Minsterley in Salop and Minsterworth in Glouce., together with the small group of three Mistertons (for Minsterton) respectively in Notts., Leicestershire and Somerset. Clearly the Saxon was determined to have his own way, and got it. He would have either *mynstre* or *ciric*, or he would ignore the Church altogether.⁴

¹ St. Machan was a disciple of St. Cadoc. St. Fechan was abbat of Fother in West Meath in the time of St. Kentigern (sixth century).

² *Ecclesia de Egges-brec, quae Varia Capella dicitur* (1166). See Johnston, *Place-Names of Scotland*. Unquestionably *Varia Capella* translates the name of Falkirk, but that Falkirk is actually a translation of Eaglais-breac is not so certain, although it was meant to be. Quite possibly the suffix refers in reality to a lost saint: there was a St. Bricius, a nephew of St. Martin of Tours, who died 444, and whose name may survive in that of Kirkmabreck, which occurs twice in Scotland. See Mackinlay, p. 138; McClure, *British Place-Names*, p. 208. In Cornwall again is a parish and church of Breage (St. Breage or Breaca), and Brize Norton, Oxon., preserves the name of St. Brice or Britius. Prof. Allen Mawer suggests that possibly the 'church' was of black-and-white (half-

timber) work, and finds the same meaning in the Herefordshire Vowchurch; but we do not know that at the date in question *kirk* had come to denote a building of any kind. Perhaps the reference in 'speckled,' if that be the original word, was to some peculiarity in the construction of the wall surrounding the *eaglais*, e.g. a mixture of quartz with darker stone, such as is found in the Keeilchurches of Man, and in some of the Scottish stone circles.

³ This was the view of Sir John Rhys, and in *Pipe Rolls* of 1166 occurs the form (Castle of) Chirch. Others connect Chirk with Ceiriog, the name of its river.

⁴ As Latin was the Church's *lingua franca*, there is no reason why *ecclesia* should not have made its way into Saxon place-nomenclature at any time after 600. None the less there is no showing that it did so at a date prior to the supremacy of the Latin Church.

As with *eglwys*, so with *llan* and *kil*. Of the latter there is but one certain English instance outside Cornwall, viz. Kilpeck. *Llan* occurs once or twice on the northern border, in Lanercost and in Lamplugh¹ near Whitehaven; beyond the border it is rare and usually disguised,² though it was once common. In Cornwall it is very common, and it is traceable here and there throughout the adjacent area as far as the Parrett and along the Welsh border into Cheshire. Street, near Glastonbury, was anciently Lantocai,³ but the name remains in Lana⁴ in Pancrasweek, three miles north-west of Holsworthy in Devon, and rationalised to Land-⁵ in Landrake (Llan-Indrauc), Landcross (*D.B.* Lanchers, later Lancars), and Landkey (Llan-Kea). Possibly it appears also in Langport in Somerset. Lancut in Glouce. preserves it, as does Landican in Cheshire; but it is not easily traced at any point remote from the 'Celtic Fringe.'

Where the Saxon found *llan*, chiefly along the Welsh marshes and in Dyfnaint, he commonly translated it. Occasionally he wrote 'church' for *llan*, as is Kentchurch (*Lib. Landav.* 1130, Lann Cein; 1205, Ecclesia S. Keyne) and Kinderchurch (*Lib. Landav.* 1130 Lann Cinitr; 1291, Ecclesia S. Kenedri; both representing an original Llangynidr). Much oftener he wrote 'stow,' as in Peterstow, Hereford (*Lib. Landav.* 1130, Llanbedr), and in Bridstow, Hereford (*Lib. Landav.* Llan Sanfreit, Lann San Bregit).⁶ Doublets are not rare: thus we have Felixkirk, Yorks. and Felixstowe, Suffolk; Peterchurch and Peterstow, both in Herefordshire; Chadkirk, Ches., and Chadstowe, Staffs.; Dewchurch, Hereford, and Davidstow,

¹ Apparently for Llan-plwyf; cf. the Breton Ploulan (for Ploelan, i.e. Plwyf-llan). The catena gives Lamploch, Landploc, Lamplo, Lamplou, Landplou and Lamplow (Sedgefield, *Place-Names of Cumb. and Westmor.*).

² Lanark is Old Welsh Llanerch, 'clearing,' and Lamlash is the 'llan of Molaise.' Lumphanan stands for Llan-Finan; cf. Lumphinans in Fifeshire. Others are Langmorn (Llan-Morgan) and Langcote (Llan-coit). Scotland has also a Lanbride (Llan-bryd).

³ From the circular churchyard has come Roman pottery.

⁴ The site of an ancient chapel.

⁵ According to Joyce (*Irish Place-Names*) the older Irish form of *llan* was *land*; cf. Elmham Sandcroft, the popular pronunciation of Elmham St. Cross, Norfolk. Hentland in Herefordshire represents an original Hên-llan. Flann in Herefordshire may stand for Llan.

⁶ The examples from Herefordshire are cited from W. St. Clair Baddeley in *Trans. Bristol and Glouce. Arch. Soc.* xxxix (1916). Wonastow (St. Wonnow or Wynwaloe), Mon., appears in early records as Llanwarrow (W. J. Rees in *C.B.S. Supplementary Notes*, p. 11), with intermediate forms Walwari-stow, Wonewalstow, and Owenstow.

Cornwall¹; and perhaps Marhamchurch, Cornwall, beside Morwenstow in the same county.² There are two places named Michaelchurch and a Michaelstow, many Kirkbrides and Bridekirks along with Bridestow, Bridstow, and Bristol.³

The absolute Stow occurs in Cambs., Glouces., Hunts., Lincs., Norfolk and Radnor; and Stowe absolute is found in Bucks., Lincs. and Staffs.; just as in Lancs. we have the absolute Church.

Stow-names are common in North Cornwall, Devon,⁴ and Herefordshire; fairly common in Mercia and East Anglia; they grow rare beyond the Humber, and Scotland has but one example.⁵ In south-eastern England, except in the compound Plaistow and its cognates, they seem to be almost unknown.

The assertion that the word *stow* was applied to places where were stored things for sale is based upon the solitary case of Chepstow, Mon., representing Ceapstowe,⁶ 'the stow of the chapmen (merchants),' which is taken to mean 'the place where the merchants stowed their goods.' The name in almost every other instance having obvious reference to relics,⁷ or at any rate to religion, there is a presumption that the same is true of Chepstow, and that the more correct rendering would be 'the stow where the merchants met.' As fairs and markets were customarily associated

¹ The form Dewchurch preserves the Welsh Dewi (David), and the pronunciation of the Cornish Davidstow is locally Dewstow. St. David's in Pembrokeshire is similarly styled in *Shires England* 5, circa 1300 (cited in N.E.D. from O.E. Miscell.: 'Tha breade of Englelonde is threo hundred myle brod from Dewyessteowe to Doueran'), and the neighbouring district is still called Dewsland. St. David's cathedral is the traditional scene of the saint's burial.

² But Miss Arnold-Forster (*Studies*, ii, 250) refers Marhamchurch (Marwenekerche, 1275) to a St. Merewenna or Marvenna, said to have been an abbess.

³ McClure (*Brit. Place-Names*, p. 294) would explain Bristol rather as 'Bridge-stow,' comparing the Bricg-stowe of A.-S. *Chron.* 1051. Bricg is almost certainly Bridgit (Bride) originally, though a later confusion with 'bridge' is not unlikely; cf. Bridgewater for Burh-Walter. One Bricstouard held land in Somerset in D.B.

⁴ The Somersetshire Stowey has a different origin, says J. S. Hill (*Place-Names of Somerset*), viz. Stealh-weg, 'steep way.'

Stow was liable to be confused with *stall*; cf. Plemondstall beside Plegmundstow, Plaxtol beside Plaistow, Laistowe beside Laystall. *Stow*, *stall*, and *stool*, all go back ultimately to the same root. See N.E.D.

⁵ In Wedale, on the borders of Selkirk and Edinburghshire.

⁶ 'Commercium, *ceapstou,' in Hessel's *Eighth-Century Latin and A.-S. Glossary*. It is so used in S.V. of Bede, H.E. II, i, and in a charter of earldorman Aethelred (886-899) printed in *Diplomatarium*, p. 137. There is no catena for the name of Chepstow, which is usually called by its Norman-Welsh name of Striguil (Estrighoel, Strigulia). It is said to have once borne the name of Casgwent.

⁷ See Appendix D. The most notable exception (?) is Plaistow(e), on which see below, ch. xxvi, but others are Cotstow (now Costowe) and Wicstow (now Wistow). 'In charters *stow* is often applied to a place to which some real or fancied sanctity attached,' says G. B. Grundy in *Wilts. Arch. and N.S. Mag.* 1921, p. 353: cf. Allen Mawer, *Place-Names and History*, pp. 16-17.

with holy places, whether pagan or Christian, this interpretation is consistent with facts and finds a parallel in Suffolk, where the place at one period known simply as Stow has come to be qualified as Stowmarket, because of the business which gathered there.¹

Used at one period generically of any 'place,' the word came to bear the special sense of the 'place of a holy man,' and finally the 'place of (his) relics' or 'place of burial.'² The growth of the special meaning can be seen in the S.V. of Bede, where *stow* renders the *mansio* of the Latin original or denotes the cell of a Scotie monk.³ Next it is used of the common ossuary to which were translated the bones of the dead in the monastery of Barking (p. 214); and finally of the spot where were enshrined the bones of St. Chad⁴ at Lichfield (ch. iv). It will be remembered that *halgastow*⁵ was one Anglo-Saxon term for a cemetery or churchyard. *Stow* was also long in use to denote the 'shaft' or 'adit' sunk by a miner,⁶ and the transition to that sense from that of 'grave' would be easy and natural. In the West Country such forms as Stowborough

¹ Where the name of the differentiating saint has been lost, there has usually been added some distinctive epithet, just as happened with the multitude of Kirkbys (p. 280); and this epithet is either topographical (as in Long Stow, West Stow, Stow Upland, Stow-on-the-Wold) or proprietary (as in Stow Bedon and Stow Maries, from the family of Mares or de Marys). Stow-Nine-Churches, Northants. is difficult to explain. Bridges (*Hist. Northants.* i, p. 87) asserted that it alluded to 'nine churches to which the lord of the manor had a right of presentation,' referring to *Registrum Ric. Gravesend Ep. Linc.*; but Prof. Hamilton Thompson assures me that that prelate's *Institution Roll* for the archdeaconry of Northampton fails to justify this assertion. Possibly there were once nine townships in the parish, which is a large one. Or the name may in reality refer to the river Nene (anciently Nyne). The church was the depository of the relics of St. Alnoth (Aelfnoth; cf. Alstoe), a servitor of St. Werburgh (seventh century), who was here murdered.

² cf. J. W. Blight, *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiqs. of West Cornwall* (1872), p. 113: 'The piece of ground, or the Acre of God, which in those days was wont to be set apart and hallowed for the site of a future

church, was called . . . the *Stowe* of the martyr or saint who gave name or origin to the altar-stone.'

³ e.g. the cell (*aancorstowe*) of Dryht-helm at Old Melrose (p. 241, n. 3) and the *desertum* of Wihtberht in Ireland (*ad locum peregrinationis; to thaere leofan stowe*) in H.E. V, ix, § 379.

⁴ *Ofer his byrgenne stowe*, Bede, H.E. IV, iii, § 265. The Benedictine abbey of SS. Mary and Helen at Elstow was founded towards the end of the eleventh century by Judith, a niece of the Conqueror. The abbey church did duty for a long time as the parish church, until (c. 1350) a chapel of St. Helen, which stood in the churchyard, was made to serve the purpose, 'to avoid the inconvenience caused by the chanting of psalms in the nave of the monastery' (*V.C.H. Beds.* i, 353). So there evidently existed a building of some sort on the site of the original *stow*, but seemingly not of sufficient size, as it then was, to serve as the parish church. It was rebuilt, and doubtless enlarged, by one Ivota (op. cit. p. 354).

⁵ cf. *Trin. Coll. Hom.* 207, 'He haueth . . . gon . . . seldere thenne he sholde to his chirche and to othre holie stowen.' For the *chirche* also was at that date primarily the place of burial.

⁶ See citations in N.E.D.

and Stowbarrow¹ are common names of sepulchral barrows, and at Stoneleigh, Warwick, was a Mutstowehull.² The word seems always to have retained something of the implication of careful concealment of something precious for the purpose of safeguarding it, which still belongs to the modern verb 'to stow,' or 'to bestow.'

In early charters the word recurs constantly, sometimes applied to known monastic foundations, sometimes contrasted with such a known foundation as *mynstre* is contrasted with *ciric* (p. 226), but almost always with the implication of a burial-place. Aethelberht of Wessex grants (864) privileges to the *halgan stowe* at Sherborne, 'where resteth the body of king Aethelbald.'³ The great monastery in Winchester is the *halga stow in Wintanceastre*.⁴ So that of Stow in Lindsey⁵ and that of Horton.⁶ Lands are bequeathed, not to *mynstres* or to *cirics*, but to *halgan stowan*.⁷ When a member of the Abbotsbury Gild is dead, the Gild shall bring the body *to thaere stowe the he to gyrnde on his life*, 'to the place of burial which he desired in his life.'⁸ In Aelflaed's will (*circa* 972) we have 'the *halga stow* at Stoke, in which my parents rest.'⁹ Stow had in fact come to mean what to-day we call a 'shrine,'¹⁰ regarded as a place of worship. But in as much as the graves of great men were still, as they had always been, the scenes of sports and games, the rise of the name *pleg-stow* (*hodie* Plaistow, etc.) to denote other stows of less devout significance, possibly many of them in the first instance confessedly pagan places of burial, is easily understood. The identity of stow, tomb, relics, and altar, as late as the tenth century, is proved by the records of

manumissions of serfs at Bodmin (St. Petrock's), where the act is said to take place *aet Petrocys stowe, aet Petrocys wefode, or on Petrocys reliquias* (*Latine, super altare S. Petroci*). Occasionally occurs the expression *to mynstere*, or again *hie her laedan hider to mynstere and her gefreogian on Petrocys reliquias*. Once occurs *gefread on tune*, which, if it does not actually mean *on ciric-tune*, at any rate echoes the fact that the *ciric* represented the *tun*, and that the terms were correlatives (ch. xxvii). On the other hand serfs are said to be bought *aet thaere cirican dura*, 'at the gate of the *ciric* (*tun*).' There was an obvious symbolism in the distinction, for the *ciric* was itself a place of sanctuary: the serf passed into it to his freedom, out of it into bondage.¹

Stow is rarely used of a structural dwelling, except in such compound forms as *wic-stow* and *eardung-stow*, although it is one way of rendering Bede's *mansio*, 'place of abode.' When used as a place-name it denoted either the place where some saint was verily buried, or a place enshrining some relic of a saint or otherwise closely associated with his life or death. Thus Hibaldstow in Lincolnshire was probably the actual burial-place of St. Hygbeald²; Dingestow in Monmouthshire is the Saxon translation of the Welsh Merthyr³ Dingad, the place of St. Dingad's death; and the name of Redbornstoke, a hundred of Bedfordshire, probably stands for Raedburh's Stow.⁴ But of three Wistows (Hunts., Leices., Yorks. E.R.) and a Wistanstow (Salop), two at any rate had no real association with St. Wigstan.⁵ Holkham (Norfolk) was anciently called Withburgstow, as having been the place where St. Withburga passed her childhood⁶; and a place called Alftham in Lincolnshire, perhaps identical with West Halton, was anciently

¹ Stowborough in Dorset is a decayed borough, where are some notable barrows. In *D.B.* it appears as Stanberge. Stowborough occurs as a boundary mark in the old Forest of Mendip.

² Bosworth has *thingstow* and *gemotstow*, both meaning 'meeting-place'; and a goodly number of the Hundreds bear names in *stow*. The meeting-place of the Hundred of Hinckford in Essex was at Mustoe, which probably represents Moot-stow (*Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.* xviii (1927), p. 294). The *stow* in all these cases was almost certainly a barrow, so that the word might be synonymous with *beorb* in its more usual sense of 'burial-place.'

³ *Diplomatarium*, p. 125.

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 158, 226, 235.

⁵ *ibid.* p. 371.

⁶ *ibid.* p. 389.

⁷ *ibid.* p. 540.

⁸ *ibid.* p. 607.

⁹ *ibid.* p. 522.

¹⁰ *cp.* the place-name Skreen (Lat. *scrinium*, 'shrine'). There are three parishes of this name in Ireland (Meath, Sligo, and Wexford), and it occurs also in Scotland (Mackinlay, p. 10). Skreen in Meath was anciently Scrin Choluimille. The name would seem to be the exact Celtic equivalent of the Saxon *stow*.

¹ *Brit. Mus. Add. MSS.* 9087; *Diplomatarium*, pp. 623, *sqq.* Bodmin is Bodmanaccan, 'the monastery.'

² A skeleton, believed to be that of the saint, accompanied by a bishop's crozier, was found in 1876 beneath the western tower of the church. Hygbeald is mentioned in Bede, *H.E.* IV, iii, § 264.

³ This term is not recorded from any of the Saxon areas. Martyr Worthy in Hants. appears to take its name from one John la Martre, who in 1251 conveyed the advowson of the church (St. Swithun) to the Priory of St. Swithun in Winchester

(*V.C.H. Hampshire*, iii, 325). It has been thought that the so-called St. Martha's Chapel, near Guildford, is in reality Martyr's Church (Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, ii, 510).

⁴ *Place-Names of Beds. and Hunts.* p. 67. Raedburh was a female.

⁵ Those in Hunts. and Yorks., both representing *Wic-stow*, are tentatively explained (*Place-Names of Beds. and Hunts.* p. 228) as meaning 'site of the royal manor-house.'

⁶ Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, ii, 371.

Etheldredstow, tradition asserting that the saint's staff had there miraculously budded.¹ Other such places which have lost their earlier names are Swaffham in Norfolk, anciently Guthlacstow,² and Netley in Hants, once Edwardstow.³ In some cases remains the name of the saint only, as in St. David's (Pemb.), once Dewistow, St. Albans (once Albanstow), and the Cornish St. Neots (anciently Neot's Stow). In the case of Elstow, Beds., the popular St. Helen has been substituted for some Saxon saint unknown,⁴ and this is no isolated case. Such places as Virginstowe and Warbstow, both in Cornwall, may conceivably have had some actual association with St. Bride and St. Werburgh respectively, but clearly such others as Marystowe (Corn.), Peterstow and Jacobstowe can have obtained their names only from the possession of reputed relics of their eponyms, unless indeed the names arose merely from the dedications of their burial-grounds. Churchstow in Devonshire owes nothing to the word *ciric*, but is derived from the favourite West-country saint Cyric.⁵ The Devonshire Christow again has nothing to do with the name of the Saviour, for it appears as Christine-stowe and Cristenestou in 1259-1280, and as Cristenestowe in the *Taxatio*, apparently 'Christian's Stow.' This last may be a proprietary name, like Fulstow and Godstow (respectively the *stows* of Fugel and of Goda) and Plemond-stall (Plegmund's *Stow*), names exactly parallel with such others as Baschurch, Ormskirk and Bedminster.⁶

Stow and Stowe enter into the names of eighteen present-day English parishes, and only in a few instances is it possible to discover in whose honour the spot was originally named, as with Stowe by Lichfield, originally Chadstowe, the actual scene of the saint's last days, at

¹ Op. cit. ii, 367. According to another story (Thomas of Ely, *Angl. Sacra*, i, 598) Stow-in-Lindsey was the scene of the miracle.

² Op. cit. iii, 365.

³ Edwardstow was also an alternative name for Shaftesbury, whither were translated the relics of king Edward the Martyr in 901. Stow-St.-Edward again was the older name of Stow-on-the-Wold, but whether the eponym here was the Martyr or rather the Confessor is not certain. In the case of Netley it was probably the

Confessor, to whom and the Blessed Virgin was dedicated the Cistercian abbey there founded in 1239.

⁴ *Place-Names of Beds. and Hunts.* p. 70.

⁵ *Ecclesia de Churicstowe, Churcstowe*, in *Taxatio*.

⁶ The word is entirely disguised in Bunsty, which is explained as Buna's Stow, but 'such compounds of *stow* with a personal name not known as a saint's name are uncommon' (*Place-Names of Bucks.* p. 5).

once his *mansio* and his grave. Most of the remainder have come to be distinguished by particular epithets, but at least five parishes are still Stow or Stowe without qualification, and at one time the name was vastly commoner. So were its compounds, such as Stowford. There is to-day a parish¹ of this name in Devonshire, but *Domesday* gives at least three Stowfords in that county alone,² while Lysons³ mentions no less than eight. It is easy to understand how the original qualifying saint-name should come to be lost. How many persons are to-day aware of the dedication of their parish church, save indeed in a town, where a plurality of rival churches has kept alive the dedication of each? It is quite possible that in some cases there was never any distinctive name, the early Christian place of burial being spoken of merely as *the Stow*. It may be added that in no case in which the dedication of a *stow*-church is known, is it anything but ancient, and that many of the *stow*-names stand upon known Roman roads or upon spots which have yielded Roman remains.⁴

It is possible that, in the early days when *ciric* still denoted merely the circular burial-ground, and before the building of any permanent 'church,' the term *stow* meant very much what in Welsh was termed the *mynwent*, the one particular grave or reliquary which gave special sanctity to this or that burial-ground. Whether it was applied to any sort of building is not clear, but it would possibly come to be applied to the wooden building which was the earliest structural church, and which, to judge from the analogy of Wales and Ireland, frequently stood upon the actual grave of the local saint. There is an approach to this usage in the Saxon Version of Bede's account of the shrine of St. Chad at Chadstowe (ch. iv). But beyond question the

¹ In its churchyard stands a pillar stone bearing in Hiberno-Saxon minuscules the name of GURGLES. It is said, however, not to occupy its original site (*Reliquary*, 1895, p. 228).

² Estaveforda (*Exeter Book*, Staveford) in Braunston Hundred; Estaforda (*Ex. Bk.* Staford) in Hundred of East Budleigh; and Estatforda (*Ex. Bk.* Staford) in Lifton Hundred. In some of these forms *stow* represents an original *stan*, 'stone' (*P.-N.* vol. i, pt. 2, p. 55) or *stoc*, 'place' (*ibid.* p. 56).

³ *Magna Britannia, Devonshire* (1822).

⁴ Thus Stow in Lindsey stands beside Till-bridge Lane (Lindum-Segelocum); Stow-Nine-Churches on Watling Street; Stow-on-the-Wold on the Fosse Way; Wistanstow on the Shropshire Watling Street; Long Stow, Cambs., on the Old North Road. Roman remains in more or less abundance have come from Stow Langtoft and Felixstowe, Suffolk, Horkstow and Hibaldstow, Lincs., and Elstow, Beds.

normal Saxon term for any such 'church' was first *bedehus* and subsequently *mynstre*. *Ciric* does not appear to have come to mean any sort of building before the time of king Alfred, and then not usually.

Very remarkable is the difference between the Saxon and the non-Saxon parts of the map in regard to the incidence of place-names recalling saints. In the Celtic areas such names meet one everywhere, but in the Brythonic eastern parts of Scotland they are noticeably fewer than in the Goidelic west, and in the Saxonised Lowlands they are rarer still. There is not in the whole of Saxon England, a single place-name recalling St. Aidan.¹ St. Chad seems to have been the most fortunate of all. But excluding the counties which border upon the Celtic areas, ancient England musters little more than a score of parishes which record a saint by his undisguised name. On the other hand Cornwall alone has more than seventy such names. Were it not for the group of *stow*-names already discussed, there would be scarce one name of Saxon hagiology surviving in a form recognisable by the layman. Of the thirty *minster*-names, more or less, not a solitary one commemorates a saint by name,² and where the name of a saint of the Saxon time occurs at all, it is usually in combination with some element of studiedly secular meaning, e.g. Ebchester³ in Durham, and Patrington⁴ in Yorks. (E.R.). The same is largely true even of the Latin saints, as witness Peterborough⁵ and Petersfield. Of the few saint-names which do occur, most are those of the Roman Calendar, such as SS. Andrew, Lawrence, Leonard, Margaret and Catherine, and are frequently late usurpations. The place now called St. Neots⁶ in Hunts. was so named only after the translation thither of the relics of the Cornish saint of that name in the tenth century, and similarly the name of St. Ives in the same county has supplanted the older name of Slepe found in *Domesday*.

¹ When Bishop Lightfoot came to Durham he could say that there was not a solitary church in his diocese dedicated to the saint who was the first bishop of the northern English (Lindisfarne). The omission has been remedied since. In Scotland used to be an Inch Aidan, now Kenmare, a parish of Perthshire (Mackinlay, p. 299).

² Unless Leominster be the exception.

³ Named after St. Ebba (abb.): cp. the Tunnaceastre of Bede (*H.E.* IV, xxii, § 318).

⁴ Said to be for 'Patrick's *tân*.'

⁵ The earlier Medeshamstede (p. 229).

⁶ The older name was Ernulfsbury.

In far the greater number of cases the saint-name has been added to distinguish one from another village of the same name, e.g. the three Gussages in Dorset and the six Elmhams clustered together in Norfolk.

Something of this is doubtless due to the studied policy of the Roman Church, which deliberately replaced the earlier saint-names, Celtic and Saxon, by names of Latin saints, and not seldom refused altogether to recognise the claims of the expropriated to saintship of any kind.¹ Theodore at the first opportunity reconsecrates in the name of St. Peter that ancient little church of Lindisfarne² which the Saxon Christians rightly regarded as the cradle of their faith; and under the same archbishop is built a new church of St. Peter at Lichfield, to supersede that older church of St. Mary near to which was first buried St. Chad.³ In somewhat less uncompromising fashion the Normans introduced their French saint-names of St. Denis, St. Devereux and others. The Saxons protested indeed, but perforce acquiesced, and this doubtless accounts for the number of *stow*-churches which have no eponym. But contrasting the stubborn persistence of Celtic names on Celtic soil one doubts whether the difference of attitude displayed by the Saxons was not mainly temperamental. St. Cedd selected for his place of retreat a 'haunt of wild beasts' near Helmsley, there lived, and there presently died (664) in the odour of sanctity, a widely known and justly loved prelate, whose relics wrought miracles about the spot and brought thereto the pilgrims of many centuries. Yet when Bede was writing, some seventy years later, its name was merely Lastingaeu,⁴ with never a reference to the saint. It would be easy to gather other examples. The facts are in part explicable by the essential difference between the social systems of the Celts and the Saxons. In Wales there were few villages until Christianity created them, and therefore the waste places (*deserta*) in which the saints made their settlements may commonly have had no individual names as yet. In Saxon England it would seem that the greater part of the soil was already blocked out

¹ For a similar policy as exercised in Wales, see Willis Bund, *Celtic Church of Wales*, p. 331.

² Bede, *H.E.* III, xxv. § 22c.

³ *ibid.* IV, iii, § 265.

⁴ *ibid.* III, xxiii, § 218. It is now Lastingham.

amongst owners, whether these were individuals or communities, so that even Cedd's 'haunt of wild beasts' was parcel of the territory of the Lastings, whose name that of the saint could not supplant nor ever has supplanted.

In lieu of *llan* or *kil* the Saxons adopted the term *ciric* (*circ*), the ancestor of our 'church.' What precisely did the term denote? As both *llan* and *kil* signified not a building, but a precinct only, it might be suspected that *ciric* had the same meaning. At the present day most people wrongly imagine *llan* to mean a structural church, and at the present day it is traditional—possibly as incorrectly—to understand *kil* in the same sense. At the present day 'church' certainly denotes a structure. But what has happened with *llan* and *kil* may equally well have happened with *ciric*. If this word was used as early as 616 for something different from *mynstre*, and continued to be so used for some three centuries; if the Saxon Translator of Bede twice uses it to render the Latin *coemeterium*; if anything in the shape of a structural church was anomalous in England until many years after the first appearance of the word *ciric*; there is reason enough to doubt whether the word originally meant a building of any sort. The evidence clearly shows that it meant a precinct only, namely the circular Christian *limes* which the Scotie missionaries introduced into England. If so, the Saxon *ciric* denoted precisely the same thing as did the Irish *kil* and the Welsh *llan*. And if there are discoverable any cases in which the word still attaches to circular precincts, these will be so much confirmatory evidence. As the original *limes*, whether monastic or otherwise, was in the first instance a burial-place, a barrow, any instance of the name's attaching to a barrow or other sepulchral monument will have the same value. One or two such cases have been mentioned already (p. 258), and a few of many others may be added.

In Scotland 'the name of *kirk* constantly attaches to circles,'¹ with or without peristaliths, which are commonly accounted prehistoric. In Aberdeenshire and Banffshire stone circles are sometimes known as 'temples' and as 'chapels'; and 'in the parish of Ellon there is a place

¹ *Archaeologia*, i, 339.

called Tohell¹ (i.e. below the chapel), from one of these monuments which stands near by on high ground.' Another circle in the parish of Aberlour, Banffshire, was called Leachell Beandick, 'Blessed Chapel.' It is now destroyed. In the parish of Peterculter, five miles from Aberdeen, 'I myself . . . sent one of our number to ask the name of another (circle), and was told it was called the "Old Chapel." ' In the parish of Gamrie, Banffshire, 'Chapel Den' was so named from an adjacent stone circle.² 'On the shore of Inverness' is said to have been 'a monument of two circles of stone' known as Chapel Piglag, 'from an old lady who worshipped there before a chapel was built in the district.'³ The circle of Greystone in Alford, Aberdeenshire, was also known as the 'Auld Kirk'⁴; a circle on the borders of the parishes of Tough, Cushnie and Cluny in the same county was called 'Kirk o' Tough.'⁵ A 'triple concentric cromlech of white stones' in the parish of Auchterless is called 'The Kirkhill,' the site of a vanished circle on Toft hills farm in Clatt is 'The Sunken Kirk,'⁶ and a similar site at Fetternear in Inverurie is 'Chapel o' Sink.'⁷ These three again are all in Aberdeenshire. The assertion that in the Highlands the term *clachan* denotes indifferently a stone circle or a church,⁸ is certainly true with limitations. In Wigtownshire also was a parish of Clayshant, i.e. Clachshant ('Holy Stone'), now embodied in that of Stoneykirk.⁹ A group of standing stones in Sandwick, Shetland, is known as 'Holy Kirk.'¹⁰ In none of these cases is it hinted that there ever existed any building which might account for the name. In other cases there are or have been buildings actually within the circle of stones, as at Bennachie, six miles north-east of Alford, and at Daviot, both in Aberdeenshire.¹¹

¹ *Chell* here, and in Leachell, is the Gaelic *cil*, Irish *kil*, and the renderings should be 'below the *kil*' and 'Blessed *kil*' respectively. Thus in Scotland, as in Ireland, *cil* denoted a circular precinct presumed to be sepulchral. 'Chapel' is a late Roman substitution for *cil* (*quasi cella*), just as *kirk* is a Saxon substitution in such names as Falkirk (p. 262).

² The foregoing are cited from *Archaeologia*, i (1779), p. 339.

³ J. K. Walker in *Gents. Mag.* 1863.

⁴ *New Statistical Account of Aberdeenshire*, pp. 449, 613.

⁵ Mackinlay, p. 130.

⁶ *Proc. S.A.Scot.* xxxi (1897), p. 93.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, p. 10; Pennant, *Tour in Scotland* (1774), i, 274.

⁹ Mackinlay, p. 405.

¹⁰ *op. cit.* p. 130.

¹¹ That at Daviot was still visible about 1817; *New Statistical Account*, xii, 822; *Proc. S.A.Scot.* xxxvi, 517.

Two of the fallen pillars of another circle are embedded in the wall of the churchyard at Kinnellar,¹ and at Culsalmond the sexton, when digging graves, used to come upon the fallen stones of a circle.² 'The map records the site of a stone-circle in the graveyard of the ruined chapel of St. James', between Inch and Leslie Castle.³ Indeed it is said that to erect churches on such sites was in Scotland 'not infrequent.'⁴ The old church of Midmar,⁵ near Echt, twelve miles west of Aberdeen, and that of Marnoch in Banffshire stood close beside cromlechs—there were three in the parish of Midmar, one of them 'remarkably large'—while the more modern churches have been set actually within the ring of stones.⁶

Hector Boece⁷ is authority that in the early part of the sixteenth century the general tradition of his country declared the 'druidical' circles to have been places of sacrifice in heathen times. Unquestionably some of them were so, but it would seem that others were not improbably places of Christian worship in the otherwise heathen times of the transition. 'These circles,' said Col. Forbes Leslie, 'were selected as places of Christian worship by the early Christians, and are often called *churches* both in Gaelic and in Lowland Scots, although no Christian church ever occupied the site.'⁸ So J. M. Mackinlay: 'There is reason to believe that our early missionaries chose the neighbourhood of groups of standing stones as sites for their places of worship. This they did probably because the inhabitants of our land assembled at such spots for ceremonial purposes.'⁹ It is clear that there was some intimate connexion between the stone circle and the kirk, and that this connexion, dating back into the earliest days of Christianity, still subsists subconsciously.

The same association of 'church' and 'circle' is found south of the Border, and notably in Strathclyde. Near

¹ *Proc. S.A.Scot.* xxxvi, 504. There were others still visible in 1846 (Lewis, *Topog. Dict.*).

² *New Statistical Account*, xxxix, 731. *Proc. S.A.Scot.* xxxvi, 577.

³ *Proc. S.A.Scot.* xxxvi, 536.

⁴ Cordines, *Antiquities and Scenery of Scotland*, p. 34.

⁵ *Old Statistical Account*. The new church was built only in 1787.

⁶ Mackinlay, p. 403, citing from Longmuir's *Madyn Stane of Bennachie*. The latter writer saw that herein was the explanation of the presence of certain pillar-stones, etc., within the precincts of churchyards or embodied in the walls and foundations of old churches.

⁷ *Chronicles* (1527).

⁸ *Proc. Brit. Association*, 1871.

⁹ Mackinlay, p. 403.

Silecroft, Whitbeck, Cumb., was a group of circles, three of which were still recognisable in 1842, counting respectively thirty, twelve, and eight stones.¹ They were known as 'The Kirkstones' or 'Gutterby Kirkstones.' Another, near Lacra, two miles north-west of Millom, Cumberland, was called the 'Old Kirk.' The site of a third near Dalton in the same county is known as 'Chapel Flat,' and the great circle at Swinside is called 'Sunkenkirk.' On the moors between Ilkley and Keighley is a spot called 'Kirk Stones.' There are, or were, many barrows in the vicinity, and the map marks a stone circle. On Stanbury Moor, south-west of Keighley, is 'Ponder Kirk.' At the present time it appears to be nothing but a cluster of natural rocks, but that once it was something different is suggested by the local tradition that it was 'the only place where folks could get properly married.'² On Ringstone Moor near Halifax was a spot called 'Oyden (or Ogden) Kirk,' probably once marked by the cromlech which gave to the moor its name of Ringstone. But the capital examples are the work still known until 1846 as 'The Kirk,'³ at Kirkby Ireleth in Furness, and that called Towtop Kirk, near Bampton in Cumberland.

'The Kirk' in Kirkby Ireleth is a perfectly circular unfossed ringwork of earth and stone, 75 ft. in diameter, enclosing a perfectly level garth, lying near Gill-house beck at a distance of one mile ENE. from the present church of the parish. The vallum has a width of from 6 to 10 ft., and extreme height of 2 ft. 10 ins., with an entrance 6 ft. in width opening to the south-east. There is no fosse. In 1846 it was described by C. M. Jopling⁴ as having once carried a peristalith, which had been removed

¹ Lewis, *Topog. Dict.* s.v. WHITBECK. Murray's *Guide to the Lakes* describes them as having each had 'a pair of stones forming a kind of entrance on the east side,' as in many Irish *killeens*. They are now all but destroyed. One of these circles was formed of two concentric rings of stones (J. K. Walker in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1863), and 'an ancient round called Kirkshead,' in Westmorland, is also mentioned (*ibid.*).

² cf. the popular traditions in regard to the Stone of Odin, or Thor's Stone, at Stenness. At Ponders Kirk also there is said to have been a perforated stone, through which couples used to join hands

in betrothal. This information is due to F. Villy, M.D.

³ The name appears to be now lost. H. Swainson Cowper (*Archaeologia*, liii, 389. *sqq.*) gives details of a number of very similar works in the same district, to none of which is the name of 'kirk' said to attach.

⁴ In *Archaeologia*, xxxi (1846), 450. The accompanying plan shows four stones, set like the four pips upon dice, in a group immediately outside the vallum on the north. H. Swainson Cowper (in *Archaeologia*, liii (1893), 389), though dismissing the plan as 'conventional and useless'

for building-material, 'not many years ago.' Jopling, who held to the traditional view—still current in the locality—that all such works were 'druidical,' remarked the 'somewhat singular' fact that 'the original appropriation of the circle is still recorded by tradition,' for the natives asserted 'that it was a place where their ancestors had worshipped,' and he observed that its name of 'The Kirk' was curious.

This earthwork is further of interest in that it was for an unknown series of years the meeting-place of the neighbourhood on Easter Monday, when, the lord of the manor presiding, the afternoon was spent in wrestling, dancing, leaping, and hurling; nor was the custom discontinued until, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the president for the nonce unluckily fell and broke his thigh.¹

'The Kirk' is circular. The association of games with the spot is good evidence that it was a sepulchral monument.² It is exactly such a circular burial-place as the Saxon Version of Bede would style a *ciric*. It is scarcely possible to doubt that the name is old—that this is a genuine case of the application of the term 'kirk' to a spot from times long antecedent to the building of structural churches; and that other circular sepulchral monuments—ringworks, cromlechs, and barrows—were called 'kirk' and 'church' because the original *ciric* was a circular place of burial.

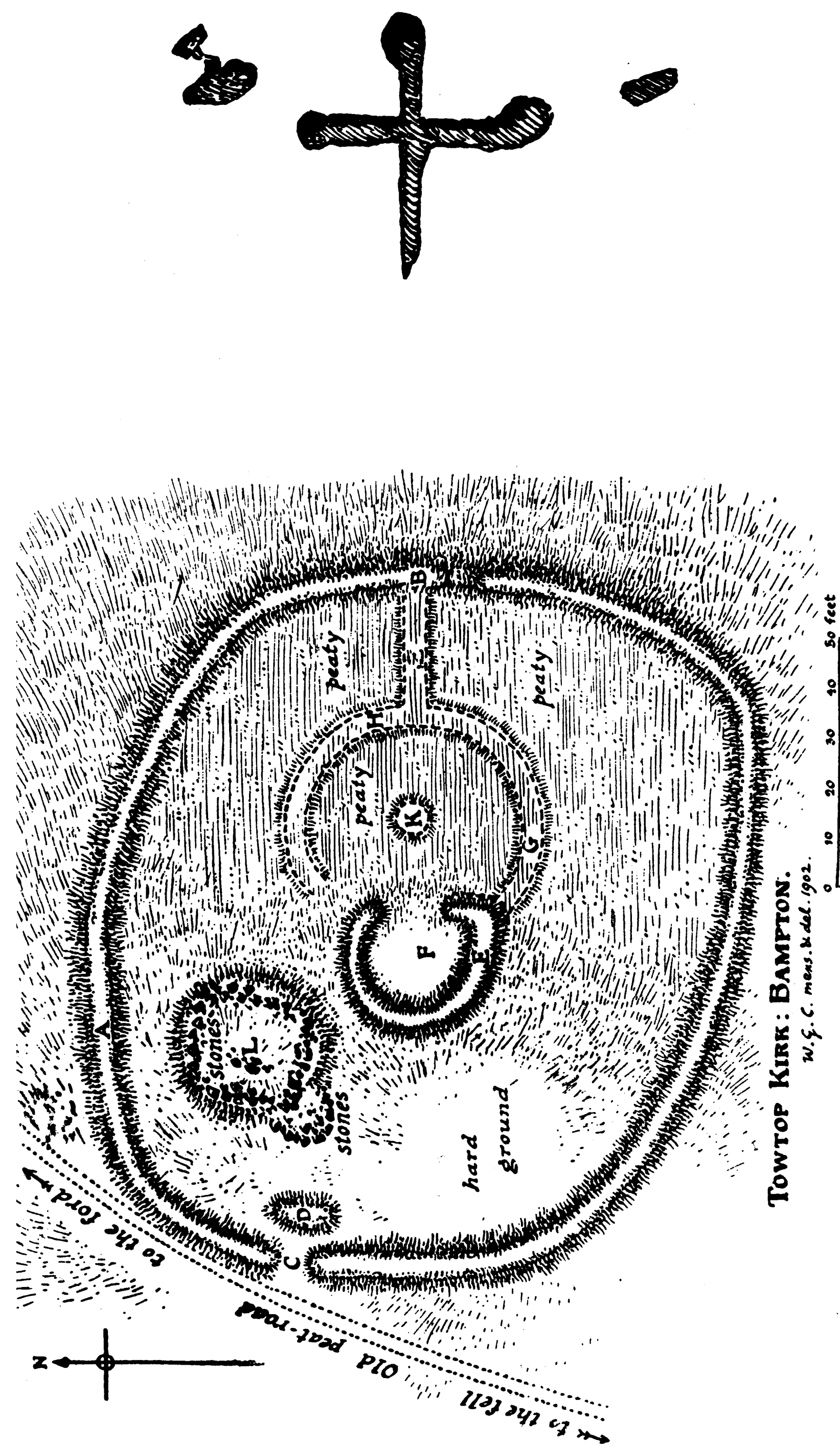
Towtop Kirk, in the parish of Bampton, Cumberland, is a similar but less regular enclosure on high ground above the moorland slope called Towthwaite, 'opposite to Moorah Hill, beyond the Con Beck, and about twenty yards from the latter.' In plan an irregular oval (145 ft. by 125 ft.), it is enclosed within a low vallum built of stones collected from the moor, and has no fosse. Those

endorses most of Jopling's observations, but regards the stones (of which he counted six) as possibly the remains of avenues. The site appears never to have been scientifically explored.

¹ *Archaeologia*, loc. cit.

² There is a considerable cairn some 350 yards to the north, and other indubitable sepulchral remains in the vicinity. At Urswick, some four miles to the south, was another group of remains including the 'Stone Walls,' an oval work (350 ft. by

315 ft.) girt by a ten-foot stone vallum. In the centre was a small circular enclosure, radiating from which were irregular walls dividing the whole into compartments. See the plan in *Archaeologia*, liii. The stone circle of Sunbrick (diam. 88 ft. and 75 ft.) lies a few miles to the east. H. Swainson Cowper has remarked the likeness between the 'Stone Walls' and the Celtic *casbels* of Ireland and Scotland, comparing also 'a supposed British *rath* near Kirkby Lonsdale'; for which see *Trans. Cumb. and Westm. Antiq. Soc.* vi, 111.



TOWTOP KIRK: PLAN, AND INSCRIBED CROSS

(By permission of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society).

who explored it, considering it to be 'a small example of the British Settlement with rudely circular rampart and hut circles . . . of whatever date can be given to the other examples of this type,' looked for traces of a palisade upon the vallum, but looked in vain. The area has been greatly cut about by peat-diggers, but there remains in the centre the unmistakable ring-wall of a hut (diam. 20 ft.), built exactly as was the outer vallum and therefore probably contemporaneous, with an entrance facing east. It had been 'paved with flat stones set in clay,' and 'soot and small fragments of charcoal were found in the joints of the stones.' The entrance of the enclosure lies at the west end, opening upon an old track which leads to a ford on the Con Beck; and at a spot a few feet within this entrance was found a broken stone upon which had been cut a very small,¹ but unmistakable, Latin cross. An authentic alternative for the name of Towtop Kirk is that of Bampton Old Kirk.² This name, and the finding of the carven cross, throw light each upon the other.

The great 92-foot stone circle at Swinside, parish of Millom, Cumberland, has an almost contiguous peristalith set upon a bottom of small rammed stones, with an entrance from the south-east. Thoroughly explored, it has yielded no trace of any interment, and no indication that any building ever occupied the area.³ Yet to this also attaches the similar name of 'Sunkenkirk.'⁴ It belongs without

¹ It is described as being 'about an inch and a half in length, evidently ancient and artificial.'

² For further details, see *Transactions Cumb. and Westm. Antiq. Soc.* n.s. iii (1903), p. 265, where it is stated that the late 'Chancellor Ferguson thought *kirk* was derived from *circus*.' There is a local tradition that Bampton village once stood hereabouts.

³ *Proc. S.A.* II, xix, 98.

⁴ The ground, dry when the circle was built, subsequently became boggy. At the present time it has been drained, and is again dry. 'Kirk Sinkings' is the name of the boggy ground on the west of The Kirk, Kirkby Ireleth. Such names as 'Sunkenkirk' or 'Sunkenchurch' are not infrequent. The current explanation having been that all such sites had once borne structural churches or chapels, which had so to say 'sunk' into

the ground, i.e. gone to ruin, the excavations at Millom were satisfactory in so far as they disproved any such explanation. The use of 'sink' in such names is good Anglo-Saxon; cf. Orosius (Saxon Version) ii, 6, *from burgum ond from tunum on eorþan besuncon* (Latin Version, *de ruinis villarum oppidorumque*); *ibid.* iii, 2, *twa byrig . . . on eorþan besuncon* (Latin Version, *duae civitates . . . abruptis locorum biatibus devoratae sunt*). Similar names attaching to the sites of buildings, Roman or later, often reflect the vulgar error that any old mason-work must be ecclesiastical, a belief which itself presumes a time when mason-built churches were almost the only kind of stone building to be seen in country districts. Such are Kirk Sink, Gargrave, W.R., apparently a small Romano-British farmstead (*Bradford Antiquary*, 1911), and Sunkenchurch, Ickleton, Cambs., which seems to have been the site of a *basilica*.

question to the class of larger circles which were certainly not sepulchral, and probably were moots.¹ Inasmuch as science with all its efforts has not yet satisfactorily distinguished between peristalithic and other ringworks which are sepulchral and those which are not, it would not be surprising if earlier generations should have failed to do so and should have written down this particular work as sepulchral simply because it superficially resembled many other peristalithic works which were understood to be burial-places, and should therefore have styled it a 'kirk.' But it is also possible that, though the presence of graves was and is a constant feature of kirks (churches), this was no part of the original meaning of *kirk*, and that the stone circle was called a *kirk* solely because of its circular plan. A sub-circular *rath* overhanging Loch Roan, parish of Crossmichael, Kirkcudbrightshire, is yet known as the 'auld kirk of Loch Roan.'² Cases like the last prompt the belief that *caer* and *kirk* have been confused: thus Kirkhill, near Kirkoswald in Ayrshire, has been thought to stand for Caerhill and to have reference to an earthwork there³; but reading that this earthwork, 'not quite circular,' is on the *outside* of its fosse and has a circumference of 221 paces only, one doubts whether there be any such confusion. The earthwork is plainly one of a somewhat rare class of ringworks which are usually held to have been not defensive, but 'religious,' whether sepulchral or not. It is certainly not what is understood by the term *caer*. So with Kirkmagill, in the parish of Stoneykirk, Wigtownshire. Sir Herbert Maxwell explained it as Cathair mic Giolla, 'MacGill's Fort.' 'There are,' he says, 'ruins here . . . but nothing to indicate a church.'⁴ If the ruins indicate

¹ It is 'eminently suited to be a hypaethral temple . . . I suggest this may have been the chief purpose of it' (C. W. Dymond in *Trans. Cumb. and Westm. Soc.* v, pp. 56-7).

² *New Statistical Account, Kirkcudbrightshire*, p. 196; *Proc. S.A.Scot.* xvi, p. 153.

³ Mackinlay, p. 420, citing John Smith, *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire*. Westerkirk, one of the 'five kirks of Eskdale,' is probably so called because it lay furthest west, but Mackinlay (p. 126) would have it stand for Wester Caer, the name of a hamlet and sometime manor in the vicinity. Kirkclaugh in Anwoth, Kirkcudbrightshire, is said to represent Caerclach (*Proc. S.A.Scot.* xxvii, 167).

⁴ *Studies in Galloway Topography*. The names of Kirkintilloch (Kirkentaloch, 1200) and Caerpentaloch would seem to be genuine cases of the confusion of *caer* with *kirk* (Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i, 153). In this case, however, the earthwork is a true *caer*, i.e. a quadrangular Roman fort (*castra*). In Wales a sharp distinction is usually drawn between the quadrangular and other shapes: the former are called *caer*, the others *castell*: cf. on Carmichael and Carluke, above, p. 196. There was a constant tendency for the Cornish *cruk* to give way to *car* (i.e. *caer*): thus the modern Carclew and Carplight stand for earlier Cruclew and Crucplight.

a ringwork, it is not needful to seek further for the origin of the 'kirk' part of the name. The apparent identity of the names of 'church-field' and 'round field' in Cornwall has been mentioned (ch. xx), so that there is a good deal of evidence that any circular *limes* might be called Kirk or Church. It is, however, remarkable that these names seem never to be applied to any veritable hill-fort, no matter how strikingly circular its plan. They appear to be extended only to works which were not military, whether sepulchral or not.

Kirkby or Kirby¹ is one of the commonest of English place-names. It is Scandinavian,² as the suffix shows, and must have arisen from the establishment of a Scandinavian settlement at or near a *kirk*. What were the *kirks* in question? The first recorded Scandinavian incursion, that of the Danes, occurred only in 787, and ninety years later was made the peace of Wedmore (878). The earliest of such settlements cannot therefore date before the ninth century,³ and up to that time there were few or no structural churches of stone outside the monasteries. Even within the monasteries the churches were with few exceptions still built of wood, and as the Dane made the monasteries his chief object of attack, plundering and burning them until there was scarce one left unscathed throughout northern, eastern, and southern England,⁴ it is not clear how there could survive even the ruins of such structural churches in numbers sufficient to account for the long list of Danish kirk-names on the English map.⁵ Moreover it

¹ In Curthwaite, Cumberland, occurs another spelling of the word *kirk*. But *Kirk* is not the original of all Kirby-names, as witness Cold Kirby (*Place-Names of North Riding of Yorks*, p. 197).

² It rarely occurs except in the areas known to have been settled by the Danes and Northmen. The exceptional case of Horton Kirby in Kent is due to the land's having at a later date passed into the hands of a family named Kirby. This explanation will not account for Kirkby in the Berkshire parish of Inkpen. There was evidently a Scandinavian colony here: witness the name of *Nothing Hill*, in Kingsclere, once the site of the Hundred-moot. A few yards away from Kirkby (House) is a curious mounded enclosure, small and sub-circular, which may very possibly be the original *ciric* to which the name refers.

³ Such names 'must have arisen mostly between 877 and 919,' says Prof. Ekwall (*Introd. Eng. Place-Names*, p. 55).

⁴ Alfred's *Preface* to his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral*.

⁵ 'Very few of the religious houses which perished during the Danish wars ever rose again from their ashes. The cathedral and city monasteries were almost the only exceptions' (Stubbs, *Chron. and Mem. Ric. I*, p. xviii). This statement is demonstrably exaggerated, but in his *Preface* to Gregory's *Pastoral* Alfred says that even south of the Thames the Danes' ravages had reduced land and people to barbarism at the close of the ninth century. The case of Northumbria must have been even worse, as the visitation had lasted so much longer. In the non-Danish areas names analogous to Kirkby, etc. are few. Evidently, as Kemble

has been shown that at that date the word *kirk* (*ciric*) did not denote any building at all. The word for a structural church was *mynstre*, and the fact that there is not a single Minsterby or similar Danish name in the *Gazetteer*, is proof that, in the Danelagh at any rate, few or no structural churches can have survived. The Danes could and did easily destroy both monasteries and *mynstres*. They could not so easily destroy the *ciric*,¹ the circular precinct which, alike in monasteries and elsewhere, marked a Christian place of meeting,² nor was it worth their while to try. That survived, and its name also; and when at last the Dane settled down to a peaceful occupation of the country, he found about him many such *kirks*. The Danish village which grew up beside such a *kirk* might not unnaturally be called Kirkby.³

From the churchyard of Kirkheaton, 11 miles north-east of Hexham and a mile west of the Roman road ('The Devil's Causeway') from Hunnum to Trimontium (Old Melrose), has come a series of carven 'Celtic' crosses, which, says W. G. Collingwood,⁴ carry back the continuity of the primitive Church there to the earliest years of the ninth century. Here then was a Christian burial-ground, a *ciric*—of a structural church of that date there is no proof at all—at least half a century before the Danish pacification, and to that *ciric* the name of Kirkheaton must have originally referred.

The inscription⁵ at Kirkdale (p. 232) tells us that before Orm's 'minster' was built there had been a church there. There is no reason to think that it was other than of wood, and it can therefore have dated only after the pacification of 878. But when the Northmen settled on the spot they distinguished it from others as 'the dale where was the kirk.' So here too they must have found a *ciric*, a circular Christian burial-ground.

thought, on the south and in Wessex most of the A.-S. settlements had already won to names of their own which survived the storm, whereas in the north and the east many of the old Saxon names had perished, to be replaced by Danish *-bys*, *-dales*, and *-thwaites*.

¹ For the 'destruction' of *cirics* recorded in A.-S. *Chron.* 684, see above, p. 230, n. 3.

² If this was, as it probably frequently was, one of the new intra-mural *cirics* lately

made in accordance with archbishop Cuthbert's order (ch. xxv), it would be the more likely to attract the invaders' notice.

³ The name is therefore in form and in meaning exactly parallel with Barrowby (D.B. Berghebi), which occurs once as a parish near Grantham, and twice in hamlets near Leeds.

⁴ *Yorks. Arch. Journal*, 1916.

⁵ It is attributed to a date between 1056 and 1065.

It is hardly possible to doubt that Kirkby in Furness derived its name from the adjoining ringwork still called 'The Kirk,' but if this be incapable of proof it yet remains to explain how that ringwork comes to bear its peculiar name. It has not the smallest resemblance to a church, nor is there any evidence that it ever included a structural church of any kind. On the other hand, as it is in appearance exactly such a circular burial-place as the Saxon Version of Bede terms a *ciric*, it must owe its name to its peculiar plan and 'kirk' must signify a circular enclosure.

Closely parallel is the name of Kirkabost (O.N. *böstr*, 'homestead') in Great Bernera, Isle of Lewes. Here are the ruins of a stone circle so large as to have been described in 1842 as 'only paralleled by those of Stonehenge and Stenness.'¹ Here too is the old burial-ground and site of the vanished chapel of St. Macra (or Macrel), an early Scotie missionary.² In this case the first element in the name of Kirkabost might be held to refer either to the stone circles or to the burial-ground, but either way 'kirk' must again denote a something circular, and Kirkabost means 'the homestead beside the kirk.'³

It would be unreasonable to expect that in every case there should survive to-day in recognisable form the original *kirk* from which the multitude of English Kirkbys are named. Rather it is remarkable that there should yet survive such striking examples as those cited. In the great majority of cases the *kirk* is presumably the original Christian graveyard of pre-Danish times, and with the conversion of the Danes many of such graveyards would once more revert to their original purpose—would become the churchyards of the villages—with small chance of preserving unspoilt through the centuries their circular form. But here and there are traces of the thing which gave its name to one or other Kirkby. The churchyard of Kirkby Wiske near Thirsk (N.R.) is still in part circular and mounded; so is that of Kirk Hammerton, 10 miles west of York.

That the term *ciric* was in use long before the first coming of the Danes is proved by its appearance in the *Laws* of Ethelbert and Wihtraed. There is therefore no

¹ Lewis, *Topog. Dict.*

² T. S. Muir, *Ecclesiastical Notes*, p. 57.

³ Very possibly Kirkabost has supplanted some such older Gaelic name as Kilmacra.

reason why some at any rate of the place-names of which 'kirk' or 'church' is a constituent should not go back to the very beginning of Christianity in England.¹ The total number is not large, and while some are obviously named in honour of this or that saint, others as obviously preserve the name of the layman who gave the ground or made the *ciric*, and yet others that of the priest who served it. Bede mentions one 'Tunna, a priest and abbat of a monastery in the place still called after him, Tunnaceastir'²; and the names of other men and women would be perpetuated in the same way and for the like reasons, although it may be impossible at this date to decide whether such persons were lay-folk or otherwise. Baschurch in Salop keeps the name of Bassa, as Colkirk in Norfolk that of Cola, Honeychurch in Devon that of Huni, Pucklechurch³ in Gloucestershire that of Pucla, and Alvechurch in Worcestershire that of a woman named Aelfgyth. Achurch in Northamptonshire is the '*ciric* of Asa,' as Lillychurch⁴ in Kent is the '*ciric* of Lilla.' Aelfgar and Orm are commemorated in Algarkirk (Lincs.) and Ormskirk (Lancs.). Both were Danes, like him who rebuilt St. Gregory's minster at Kirkdale. Hornchurch⁵ in Essex perhaps commemorates another such benefactor, as also Hawkchurch in Devon and Ashchurch⁶ in Gloucestershire and Offchurch⁷ in Warwickshire. This last certainly goes back to the name of Offa, though not necessarily to that of the great Mercian king (757-795).

¹ Such names as Kirklington and Kirtlington have mostly nothing to do with *kirk*, but Kirklington in Cumb. stands for Kirk Levington.

² H.E. IV, xxii, § 318. The date is *circa* 679. The S.V. reads Tuna and Tunanceaster. The place was apparently in Northumbria and on a Roman road, possibly Tunstall near Sunderland, in which case Bede might easily have heard Tunna's miraculous story, as he avers, from men who knew the persons concerned.

³ McClure suggested (*British Place-Names*, pp. 274-5) that in this name (*A.-S. Chronicle*, 946, *aet Puclancyrca*) *cyrca* may be 'a modified form of the British *cruc* (= *tumulus*).'

⁴ It is now the name of a house only, five miles north of Rochester, but it was once a village with its own church. See Thorpe, *Customale Roffense*, p. 10.

⁵ The popular etymology of the name of Hornchurch refers it to 'the old industry pursued by the pelt-mongers or skimmers, who settled here and prepared raw hides for the market. Over the eastern gable of the church there is a sculptured bull's head bearing a pair of natural horns, with obvious allusion to the accepted etymology' (Worley, *Essex*); and Prof. Allen Mawer thinks the name may possibly refer to the fashion of the architectural ornaments of a (structural) church. The name of Hornchurch does not appear in *D.B.*, but the personal name Horn is well attested.

⁶ Hawk (Hafoc) and Ash (Aesc) were common personal names.

⁷ Ofecirche in 1300: cf. Offley in Warwickshire (*D.B.* Offeleia), and Offlow, a barrow and Hundred in Derbyshire (Bateman).

Some few names commemorate the saint to whom the church was dedicated. Romaldkirk (Yorks.) keeps the name of St. Romuald (Rumbold), as Kirkoswald (Cumb.) and Oswaldkirk (Yorks.) more doubtfully preserve that of the saint-king who died at Maserfield in 642. Peakirk (Northants.) is certainly named from its foundress St. Pega (714), a sister of St. Guthlac; and the farm-house of Ile Kirk in the parish of Westward (Cumb.) is said to tell of a hermitage of St. Hilda which once stood there. Chadkirk¹ in Cheshire requires no explanation. Ludchurch in Pembrokeshire may be a Saxon attempt to render its Welsh name of Eglwys Lwyd.² The foreign-born Felix—Bede says he was from Burgundy—who missionised in East Anglia about 636 is perpetuated in Feliskirk (Yorks.) and Felixstowe (Suffolk). Christchurch³ explains itself. Dymchurch⁴ in Kent, Bonchurch⁵ in the Isle of Wight, and Vowchurch⁶ in Herefordshire are puzzling. Laithkirk, now a chapelry of Cotherstone, 'a plain rectangular building 60 ft. by 20 ft.' with a western bell-cote, is said to have been originally the tithe-barn of the rectors of Romaldkirk,⁷ and Stokenchurch, Bucks, means merely

¹ *D.B.* Cedde. Earwaker (*Hist. Cheshire*) says there is no mention of a structural church there before the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

² In *Myvyrian Archaeology*. Mediaeval forms are Londeschirche 1353, and Londchirche 1377, where the first element represents *llan*. As the church is dedicated to St. Elidyr, the place may have at one time been called Llanelidyr. The name of Ludchurch attaches also to a natural gorge in the rock on the moor above the river Dane, south of Buxton, and popular etymology explains it either as the scene of Friar Tuck's exhortations to Robin Hood and his men, or as a place in which nonconformists used to meet for worship. The latter explanation has been advanced to explain Church Barrow (p. 259) and Wildchurch Bottom (p. 260). A third Ludchurch (Ludcerce) is recorded in *D.B. Notts.*, for which see McClure, *British Place-Names*, p. 235. It seems to be 'Hlud's Church,' and the same name reappears in Lowdham (*D.B.* Ludham), Ludlow, Ludborough (Ludeburg), and Ludford.

³ *A.-S. Chron.* 1058, *aet Cristes cyrcean*. Johnston (*Place-Names*) cites from *Gesta Steph.* 1160, the form Cristiciria (? Christi-Curia).

⁴ McClure (*British Place-Names*) suggested 'the dim-church,' citing *dimbus* and *dimbof* from Napier's *O.E. Glosses*, but the site appears to be much too old for the name to refer to any building. It is a Roman site on which have been discovered 'vast quantities of crockery from Samian to coarse Upchurch ware,' as well as interments, and 'there is evidence that the site had never ceased to be occupied.' One would look for a personal name, possibly that of Diuna, the first (Scotic) bishop of Mercia (656-8). He was in office when Penda's son Wulfhere conquered the East Saxons and took in marriage a Kentish princess.

⁵ *D.B.* Bonecerce. The current interpretation, 'St. Boniface's church,' is not satisfactory, nor is Johnston's suggestion of 'prayer church' (*A.-S. ben*). It probably involves a personal name.

⁶ So spelt as early as 1291, but Fowechirche and Ffoweschirch in 1316. In Dorset is Frome Vawchurch (pronounced Vochurch), which appears in *D.B.* as simply Frome. Does the second element refer to some grantee of the manor who himself owed his name to the Herefordshire Vowchurch?

⁷ *V.C.H. Yorks.* iii, 126; Whitaker's *Richmondshire*, i, 142. In Yorks. and

'log-church.'¹ Churchover in Warwickshire is more correctly written Church Over, the name appearing as Church Waver in 1300, Chirche Wavre in 1327. The prefix therefore is merely distinctive² as in Kirk Ella (p. 287), Kirk Sandall (*D.B.* Sandale), Church Eaton (*D.B.* Eitone), Church Knowle (*D.B.* Knolle, Chenolle) and Church Icombe (*D.B.* Iacumbe), and the name probably derives from *A.-S. wafre* 'aspen, poplar.'³ Overchurch in the Wirral, Cheshire, refers to the situation of the original church, as does also its alternative name of Upton⁴; and is parallel with Upchurch in Kent—the *ciric* standing up above the marshes—with Upminster in Essex, and with Highchurch (p. 260). St. Mary Abchurch in London is said to be a corruption of St. Mary Upchurch, because it stands on relatively high ground. Handchurch in Trentham (Staffs.) representing *Hean-ciric*, has the same meaning, and is parallel with Hanbury, Henbury, Henbarrow and Handborough, possibly also Hendon. Fenchurch may mean the 'church in the Fen,'⁵ but Dunchurch (Warwick.) contains the same personal name seen in the neighbouring Dunsmore Heath.⁶ Newchurch in Kent speaks for itself, but the name is at least as old as *Domesday* (*Newchirche*), and in any case does not necessarily connote a structural church.⁷ Eastchurch is said to signify the 'church which lay east of the monastery,' i.e. of Minster in Sheppey, and a similar explanation is to be found for such names as Southminster, Westminster, and Southchurch. The last-named place (*D.B.* Sudcerca) lies at the southern end of an ancient road which here

Lancs. the word *lathe* or *laithe* still means 'barn' (*N.E.D.*). The building is said to date from the fourteenth century only.

¹ *Ligne capella . . . Anglice Stockin appellata* (*Cart. Sax.* no. 458). The name can have arisen only when wooden churches were rarities, and must therefore be either venerably old or fairly new. It is not known before c. 1200 (*Place-Names of Bucks.*, p. 194).

² It was simply Wara in *D.B.*, Waur and Waure in 1257.

³ cf. Wavertree, the place now called Poplar, and the many places called Ash or Nash.

⁴ 'Upon a knoll' (Ormerod's *Cheshire*). From the site of the original church came the 'Aethelmund Stone' and a stone (1887) with a runic inscription and an

interlaced pattern like that of the stones found at West Kirby (*Research*, 1887). There was a large Scandinavian element in the population of the Wirral.

⁵ cf. Church (or Kirk) Fenton, Yorks. There was a *D.B.* manor of Fenna, identified with Stow Maries (*V.C.H. Essex*, i, 394).

⁶ Dunkirk in Kent is a modern name, borrowed from the cross-Channel port of Dunquerque and alluding to the fact that the locality was a favourite resort of smugglers. Dunkirk in Kells, Kirkcubright, is explained as 'grouse-hill,' but that explanation will not suit Dunquerque, which would naturally mean the 'church amongst the dunes.'

⁷ There are six parishes of this name in the *Clergy List*, and all are ancient.

reaches the Essex coast. Berechurch in Essex means the 'church in the wood (*bearw*),' and the same meaning underlies Woodchurch (Kent and Cheshire), Woodkirk¹ (Yorks.), and Skewkirk (O.N. *Skógr*, 'wood'). Iychurch occurs in Kent and in Wiltshire, and in the latter case at any rate is to be understood literally, 'the *ciric* overgrown with ivy.'² Similarly Gracechurch (Gerschereche)³ means the 'grassy *ciric*.' Such names may be compared with Felchurch in Washbrook, Suffolk, and Felkirk near Barnsley, both meaning the 'church in the field(s).'⁴ There is mention of a Windcirice at Winchester in the time of Edward the Elder.⁵ Not one of these names of necessity implies the presence of any building.

The oft-recurring Whitchurch and Whitkirk⁶ in some cases undoubtedly refer to a building, presumably a white-washed building, and Whithorn (Hwit-earn, *Candida Casa*) goes back to the early years of the fifth century.⁷ It is,

¹ This was also an earlier name (Wdekyrch) for Thankerton in Lanarkshire (Mackinlay, p. 126).

² *Elements of Engl. Place-Names*, p. 41. It is in the parish of Alderbury, and was written Ivecirche in 1278. Henry II founded here a small priory, which was therefore styled *Monasterium Hederosum*. The Kentish Iychurch (Yvecherche in 1327) possibly has the same meaning, but there are some elusive saint-names (Arnold-Forster, *Dedications*, ii, 267) which might be involved, and Normandy also has an Yvecrique.

³ Before 1053 Brithmaer of Gerschereche bequeathed to Christchurch, Canterbury, the *homestall thet he on set alre balgene cherche* (*Diplomatarium*, pp. 372-3). It is commonly said that this church of St. Benet, Gracechurch, London, was so called 'because it was in the grass-market.' The name of St. Mary Colechurch, London, is said to be borrowed from that of a Coldharbour close by, but possibly it is original; for if Coldharbour meant an abandoned 'harbour,' Coldchurch would signify an abandoned *ciric*: cf. Coldkitchen, the name of a large Romano-British burial-mound in Kingston Deverill (Wilts.).

⁴ Otherwise explained as 'church of timber,' from O.N. *fjöl*, 'plank.' The same meaning has been seen in Bradkirk, parish of Kirkham, Lancs., as if from N.-S., *brede*, 'plank'; but the prefix may equally well represent 'broad,' i.e. 'spacious.'

⁵ *Diplomatarium*, p. 156.

⁶ There are ten parishes so called in the *Clergy List*, some of which appear in *D.B.*, e.g. Witcerce in Dorset (Whitchurch Canonorum). Wicerce of the *Exchequer Book* is Whitchurch in the hundred of Roborough, Devon.

⁷ Above, p. 176. The Scotie missionaries probably followed the pagan Irish practice of white-washing a *dun* or a *casbel*; cf. the Welsh habit noticed in ch. xviii. Whitland (for White-Llan) is supposed to preserve the memory of Paul Hên's monastery of Ty Gwyn, 'The White House.' So late as 1842 the church of Llanrug, 3½ miles from Carnarvon, was 'white-washed all over, not excepting the roof' (Lewis, *Topog. Dict. Wales*). The epithet 'white' was applied to many English churches and monasteries: in Glouces. is a parish of Whitminster, and the Norman name of Oswestry was Blancmoustier, 'White Minster.' In *Place-Names of Bucks* it is suggested (p. 86) that Whitchurch possibly means 'church of stone,' and an Assize Roll of 1262 is cited (p. 153) in which Great and Little Missenden are distinguished as Messenden Sancti Petri and Messenden Attewhytechirche. If Little Missenden was called 'Missenden of the Stone Church,' the name must have arisen at a time when Great Missenden did not as yet boast a church of stone. The church of Little Missenden is attributed to c. 1120, that of Great Missenden to c. 1340, though it is said that 'there was probably an earlier church on the site in the twelfth

however, not at all impossible that in some cases the names allude to the use of white materials to mark either the *ciric* as a whole, or the individual graves within the *ciric*.¹ To this day an English cemetery is frequently recognisable from a distance by its white headstones only.

In most place-names where *Church* or *Kirk* is the prefix, it merely serves to differentiate one village from another of the like name, as with the innumerable Kirk-towns of Scotland and the Church-towns of Cornwall. Thus *Kirk Ella*² (E.R.) is so called to distinguish it from West Ella, a mile away, and Church Honeybourne is so distinguished from Cow Honeybourne. In such cases *Kirk* or *Church* is no integral part of the place-name. In a few cases it may have reference to the exceptional size and dignity of the church,³ and if so, it must obviously be a late epithet. Occasionally also it preserves the tradition of an ecclesiastical manor or similar accident. Kirkby Fleetham (N.R.) represents two separate *tuns* now fused into one.⁴ In a few cases the modern Kirkby represents an earlier Kirkberg (Kirkbeorh), as the *Domesday* spellings show, and Monk's Kirby, on the borders of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, stands for Cyricbyrig of

century.' Is there perhaps rather an allusion to the fact that at Great Missenden was an abbey of Black Canons founded in 1133; cf. the French Noirmoutiers? The much-quoted remark of Ralph Glaber, with reference to the frenzy of church-building which set in with the Norman conquest, is pertinent: 'It seemed,' he says, 'that the world was putting off its dingy vesture and donning a pure white robe.' Compare the words of Llewelyn Fardd, in the same century, that 'the face of Gwynedd was bespangled with white churches as the firmament with stars' (Lloyd, *Hist. Wales*, i, p. 468; Hughes and North, *Old Churches of Snowdonia*, p. 97). In Langland's time (fourteenth century) to white-wash a church was still an act of piety (*Vision of Piers Plowman*, *Passus* iii), and up to that time the wash was usually applied to the outside only.

¹ Crushed quartz and white shells, especially cockles, are largely used thus at the present day. The practice is more frequent in the Celtic than in the Saxon areas, and would seem to be another instance of survival from anhistoric times. Mixed with the earth composing a barrow in Carmarthenshire—Crug y Bwdran; *Inventory*,

no. 597 (i)—were such quantities of small white quartz stones as to 'suggest that the mound had been "iced" over with a white covering'; *Trans. Carmarthenshire Antiq. Soc.* xlv (1925), p. 27. The fact possibly explains the name of some out of the many 'White Barrows' of the map. In the Isle of Man, parish of Kirk Michael, a spot known by tradition as the site of a chapel proved to be 'a circle of white quartz boulders about 23 ft. 6 ins. in diameter, the inside area packed with small stones, mostly quartz' (*Proc. I.O.M. Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Soc.* for 1914, p. 611).

² The old spelling was Elveley, which shows that the traditional connection with King Aella is wrong.

³ It is possible that . . . places having Kirk as a prefix acquired that addition when the church was built in the churchyard ready for it, a churchyard already consecrated and hallowed by years of divine service and sacred memories.' John Nicholson in Andrews' *Curious Church Customs* (1895), p. 147.

⁴ *V.C.H. Yorks*, iii, 320. It appears in *D.B.* as Chirchebi and Fleteham. It had 'a church and a priest' at that date.

the *A.-S. Chronicle* (anno 915).¹ A lost Churchfield² in Oundle means merely the 'field where was a *ciric*.'

The absolute Church, the name of a parish in Lancashire, is a modern form. It was anciently Kirk, and when Walcott wrote (1850) the place was actually Kirk Church. St. Mary Church, a parish in Devonshire, is the *Domesday* manor of Ste. Marie Cherche (*Exch. Book*, Cerce). Chirk in Denbighshire (Cirice in the thirteenth century) is a genuine Saxon rendering of the older Welsh name of Eglwys (y Waen), 'the church (in the meadow).'³ Kirkham (Lancs. and Yorks.)⁴ and Churcham⁵ (Glouces.) may very well be amongst the oldest names in the whole series, and Kirkton (Kirton)⁶ may be little, if anything, later.

As before remarked, *cryc* and *ciric* have constantly been confused,⁷ and thus have arisen a number of names which have no authentic connexion with *ciric*. Amongst the commonest of these is Churchill (Oxon., Worces., Som. and frequently in Devon), which in most cases unquestionably stands for an original *Cryc-hyll*,⁸ and is therefore in meaning identical with *Cryc-beorh*; although such a form as *ciric-hyll*, the 'hill where was a *ciric*,' would be as natural as Kirkbergh (p. 301), Kirkbarrow in Motherby (Cumb.), and Stowborough (p. 280). Churchdown in Gloucestershire again has nothing to do with *ciric*, as the

¹ Intermediate forms Chircheberie, Kirkberia, and Kirkeby. The last two occur in two successive charters in Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi, 996. Mrs. Armitage (*Early Norman Castles*, p. 37) accepts Dugdale's identification with Cyricbyrig, remarking that 'the derivation... is not according to etymological rules, but there can be no doubt about it as a fact.' Normally Cyricbyrig should appear to-day as Chirbury, and the place so named has in consequence long passed as the site of Ethelfleda's *burh* of 915.

² *Cart. Sax.* no. 1129. There is no weight in the comment (*Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 107) that 'from the remote situation of this place it is exceedingly unlikely that there was ever a church here.' In Ragdon, a township of Hope Bowdler, Salop, is a grass field known as Church Field. An obvious barrow in the field explains the name: the barrow was once the 'church' (i.e. burial-ground) of the township. Probably a large number of such field-names admit of similar explanations.

³ So Sir John Rhys in his edition of

Pennant's *Tours in Wales* (1883), i, 345. He compares *perc*, the South Welsh form of the English *perch* (= a rod or pole). In Lincs. the peasantry still say that the chickens are 'upo' th' perk' (perch). Prof. Lloyd and Canon McClure refer the name of Chirk to that of its river the Ceiriog (earlier Ceirioc).

⁴ The Yorks. Kirkham is Chercham in *D.B.*

⁵ Chirchehamme in 1297. It does not figure in *D.B.* but there was a 'church' of some sort there in 1100 (*V.C.H. Gloucestershire*, citing *Hist. et Cart. Mon. Glouces.* Rolls series, i, 250, ii, 40).

⁶ In (Camden's) seventeenth-century English Kirton appears also as the phonetic equivalent of Crediton in Devon.

⁷ Above, ch. xv.

⁸ See *Place-Names of Worcestershire* (1927), pp. 106-109, where is collated the documentary evidence for the existence of two similar but entirely different O.E. words (a) *cryc*, a strong masculine with genitive in -es, and (b) *cirice*, a weak feminine with genitive *ciricean*.

earlier spellings (*D.B.* Circesdune, later Churchesdon) sufficiently declare; but whether the original reference in this case was to *cryc*,¹ or rather to the once popular saint Cyric, remains doubtful. The latter at any rate gave his name to Churchstow in Devon.² A medieval *Chircelford* in Dorset³ would nowadays be written Crichelford, with reference to the *cryc-hyll* which gave name also to Long Crichel and More Crichel⁴; but Churchinford (or Churchingford) in Devon probably represents *ciricean-ford*, the 'ford where was a *ciric*.' Churchinford is to-day a hamlet of Church Stanton, but as it anciently had fairs on 25th January (Conversion of St. Paul) and on 6th March (SS. Sithney and Kyneburga) it is to be inferred that it had also a *ciric*. Church Stanton itself (anciently Cheristontone and Churistanton) has no connexion with *ciric*, nor have Churston Ferrers, Cheriton⁵ and Chirdon.⁶ Churchley in the parish of Abson and Wick (Glouces.) may have taken its name from the spot where stood 'an ancient chapel of St. Bartholomew, now entirely ruined.'⁷ but the spelling Chercheslege (1228) suggests that it is parallel with Kirkley in Northumberland,⁸ and goes back rather to *cryc* than to *ciric*.

Kirk-names are far fewer now than once they were. Sometimes the entire village has disappeared, as with Kirkby (*D.B.* Chercheberie, Kirkeby) near Deene in Northants, whereof now remains only the house called Kirby Hall.⁹ Naturally there was a tendency to drop the *kirk* or *church*, as this came in course of time to be less distinctive: Kendal for example represents Kirkby-in-Kentdale.¹⁰ This tendency was already active in the eleventh century: thus *Domesday* has Langetone for the present Church Langton (Leices.), Sandale for Kirk Sandall

¹ The church appears to stand upon a barrow, possibly the *dun* (cf. Maldon) to which the second syllable refers.

² Above, p. 268. 'Cyric's stow' is quite consistent with other *stow*-names, whereas *ciric-stow* would be a meaningless tautology. Church Stow, the modern name for Stowe-Nine-Churches (p. 265, n. 1) is no parallel. St. Cyric, the familiar St. Cyr of France, is disguised under at least twelve other forms in that country, including St. Cirq and St. Cricq. The present dedication of Churchdown is to St. Bartholomew.

³ *Cart. Sax.* no. 708.

⁴ So C. A. Saylor in *Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 107.

⁵ According to Johnston (*Place-Names*) Churston and Cheriton are doublets meaning 'Cire's Town.'

⁶ 'Ciorra's town,' says Prof. Allen Mawer (*Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham*).

⁷ Rudder's *Gloucestershire* (1779), p. 212.

⁸ Above, ch. xv.

⁹ cf. Lillychurch, above, p. 283.

¹⁰ Similarly Kirkby Lonsdale is Kirkby in Lunedale.

(Yorks.), Sigheston for Kirkby Sigston (Yorks.). Many such names are wholly lost : the *Domesday* name of Ulwineschercha (Essex) and Wlfrechirche of the *Taxatio* (Devon) can no longer be identified. Of Lestanescherche (1428) in Herts. there remains only the name of the donor (Leofstan) in the form Leyston. The present-day Newtown-Arlosh, Cumb., represents a place which as late as 1305 was Kirkeby Johan.¹ In other cases the patronal saint has usurped the field, as with St. Lawrence in Essex, representing the *Domesday* manors of East and West Newlands. On the other hand the ancient chapelry of Pontesbright (Essex) is now the parish of Chapel. The *Clergy List* shows four parishes of this name, all ancient dedications, besides five others where the name is qualified, as in Chapel-en-le-Frith and Chapel-en-le-Dale ; but all names derived from *capella* are relatively late.

In previous chapters it has been argued that the meeting-places of Celtic paganism were uniformly circular, and that the Celtic name for such meeting-places was *cruc*. *Cruc* is philologically the same word as the Latin *circus*. The *circus* was shown to have been the primitive Italian moot, and evidence was adduced to show that, during the Roman occupation, the *circus* largely superseded earlier forms of Celtic moots in Britain. This being so, it is reasonably certain that the name *circus* would during the same period largely supplant the name *cruc*, and in fact it actually appears in Old Welsh in the form *cyrch* (ch. xi). At the beginning of the seventh century we find the word *ciric* in official use to denote a place where Christians met ; and it has been abundantly shown that such places of Christian meeting were in the first instance uniformly circular. Moreover these, as was originally the case with the Celtic *cruc* and the Latin *circus* before them, were places of burial. Like the *circus* again, the Christian *kirk* was the official scene, not of the communal ritual only, but of all and every communal happening. Identical in plan, in origin, and in use, can there be any doubt that their names are also identical,—that *cruc*, *circus*, *cyrch*, and *kirk* are the same word ?

Did the use of the Latin word *circus* for a Christian

¹ The parish church being still dedicated to St. John, one may infer that others of the multitude of Kirkbys were similarly distinguished in earlier days.

place of meeting arise in the time of the Roman occupation, i.e. before A.D. 410 ? It did not, for had this been so, there must have appeared further traces of the word in this sense in one or other of the surviving Celtic speeches. This means that the use of the word to denote a Christian place of meeting, an *ecclesia*, did not arise until after the departure of the Romans and the dispersal of the Britons. Obviously therefore it could not arise until the return of Christianity to Saxon England, in the last years of the sixth century. It was therefore the Saxon who first used the word in this sense. For upwards of 1,000 years thereafter *ciric* (*church*) stood for the most important factor in English life, and in consequence this word tended to thrust itself in, in defiance of the older philologists and to their sore confusion, as the names above discussed amply prove.

It may be objected that, if the *circi* were really such ubiquitous and obvious facts in the time of the Anglo-Saxon settlement, there ought to be a large number of place-names which preserve the word. The answer is easy. There is a certain number of such place-names—the simpler compounds such as Churcham¹ and Kirkham, Kirkton or Kirton, and Kirkstead—which may quite possibly go back so far ; and if it be impossible to prove that they are so old, it is equally impossible to show that they are not. But further it is usually held that the Saxon avoided the vicinity of others' settlements. In any case where he came upon the scene the life went out of the *circus*. It became a dead and useless thing, whereas *strata* and *castra* and *vallum* still had life and use. The latter therefore were much more likely to leave their memory in place-names. They do, but to a very limited extent only. The *Gazetteer* shows that there are in the whole of England but one place named *Chester* without qualification, two *Walls* only, and not more than four *Streets*. Even the corresponding compound names are not many. There are but seven *Chestertons* and three *Castertons* ; *Stratton* occurs thirteen times, *Stretton* seventeen times ; and though there are forty *Waltons*, only a small number of these are referable to the word *vallum*.² Yet the formidable defences

¹ In Gloucestershire, four miles W. of Gloucester. A mile south of it is Minsterworth.

² Many of them derive from *weald*, *Weabl*, or *well*. It is remarkable that, while there are so many Kir(k)bys, there is

of Roman *castra*, the methodical system of the Roman roads, the laboured immensity of such a work as the *Vallum Hadriani*, must to the Saxons have been novelties vastly more arresting than the multitudinous grassy hollows in the soil beside the gates of the Romano-British villages. Is it any wonder if he made little of these, seeing that the world had to wait for Sir Christopher Wren to recognise the marvel of Maumbury Rings, and seeing that England still boasts a multitude of smaller *circi* which have passed unrecognised until this hour?

Commenting upon pope Gregory's advice to Mellitus in regard to the reconsecration of 'temples of the pagans' to Christianity (ch. xxv), Fergusson argued that 'the fair inference . . . seems to be that there was so little difference between the temples of the pagans and the churches of the Christians that a little holy water and a few relics . . . were all that was required to convert the one into the other'¹; and again, 'it would appear that the temples of the pagans, between the departure of the Romans and the time of Alfred, were at least very similar to those of the Christians.'² Although the picture present to Fergusson's mind, alike of pagan temples and of Christian churches, was hopelessly wrong, the two generalisations above quoted seem exactly to summarise the truth.

The sum of the last three chapters is briefly as follows. Christianity came into Scotland, and from Scotland into England, in the outward form of the circular Scotie monastic enclosure. This, from its resemblance to the circular moots (*circi*) of the Romano-Britons—'amphitheatres' or others—the Saxons termed *circ* or *ciric*. Spreading beyond the walls of the monasteries Christianity was visibly embodied in the circular burying-places of Christian converts, and to these was extended the same name. Latin influence introduced the term *mynstre* for the monastic settlement, and when this presently developed something in the form of a structural church in place of the earlier insignificant oratory, this too was known specifically as a *mynstre*. This term gradually usurped the sense of 'structural church' generally, but

not one example of *-by* compounded with *castra*, *strata*, *vicus*, or *vallum*. Clearly when the Dane came to settle, the *ciric* was now the living and forceful fact, the others (*castra*, *strata*, *vicus*, *vallum*) had ceased to be

novelties. Both literally and metaphorically the Dane had travelled a long way further than the Saxon of 400 years before.

¹ *Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 22.

² *ibid.* p. 23.

more particularly a church of stone. In the non-monastic *ciric*, the burial-ground, had meantime sprung up the little wooden oratory known as a *bedehus*, which through long centuries of evolution came to be a building of stone; and in due time the name of *ciric* was transferred to this building, precisely as that of *mynstre* had been transferred from the monastic enclosure to its principal feature. The graveyard which had for centuries been termed *ciric* was henceforward distinguished by a new series of names such as *ciric-tun*, *kirk-garth* and *church-haye*.