

The 'Bell'; 'Table'; 'Cup'—The Evolution thus far—The 'Ring' and the 'Disc'—The 'Frying Pan' at Todmorden—Distribution of the 'Disc'—Evolution of the Stone-circle—Stone Ringworks—No Square Barrows in Britain—Variety of the Circular forms—Origin of the Dolmen—The Menhir and the Grave-slab—Ancient forms and modern analogues—Distribution of the various types of Monument—The Circle the Symbol of Death—Compound Circles—Hackpen Hill—Radial Burials—Mule Hill—Crichie and Tuack—General summary of the Evolution.

From the earliest times continuously onward, wherever paganism existed in the British Isles, the barrow in one or other of its forms was the customary memorial of the illustrious dead. At first perhaps the only form, it gradually became less frequent, and in some areas perhaps almost disappeared before the simpler requirements of cremation and the extended use of urn-fields. Even in post-pagan times pagan intruders would of course still adhere to the pagan custom, so that pagan barrows may have been reared in England as late as the tenth century.

So much has always been admitted. What has not been recognised is, that, so far from abolishing the practice of barrow-building, Christianity actually adopted it, and the making of Christian barrows did not cease earlier than the tenth century. These Christian barrows came to be so many churchyards, and after many years many of them came to have each its church. But this was not generally the case until the eighth century was well advanced or past, and if we find authority, a century later, still issuing orders forbidding the faithful to bury their dead elsewhere than in churchyards, the obvious inference is that until so late (ninth century) there survived a stubborn tendency to revert to the older practice. It is further implied that by that date the Church, if it had not actually forgotten the real origin of churchyards, was at any rate very anxious that its flock should forget it. From that date forward, therefore, barrow-burial was condemned as pagan. But in the case of any individual barrow reared between that date and the first introduction of Christianity into that locality, we have no means whatever to decide whether it

CHAPTER III.

EVOLUTION OF THE SEPULCHRAL RING.

Barrow-building did not cease with Christianity—Intrusive-burials and Consecration-graves—Foundation-deposits—Criteria of genuine Barrow-burial—Classification of Barrows—The 'Limes' and the Monument—The 'Limes' invariably circular—The 'Bowl'—The Buried Circle—

¹ Glass vessels of square shape are found occasionally with interments of Roman date, but the Roman, though in Britain he reverted to the Celtic practice of barrow-burial, did so without understanding its symbolism. Small circular cists of stone are common in the Merovingian (vi-vii cent.) cemeteries of Poitou.

² Grenier, *Habitations Gauloises et Villes Romaines*, p. 26, figures rectangular hut-urns of Gallo-Roman age from the region of Metz, but these appear to be both late and exceptional.

³ Sir Thos. Browne, *Hydriotaphia*, v.

was reared over a Christian or a pagan, except such evidence as excavation may possibly reveal. And the chance of finding conclusive evidence even by excavation is small, partly because Christianity did its best to suppress the evidence by prohibiting the burial of grave-furniture with the dead, partly because the older traditions of pagan ritual tended obstinately to reassert themselves.

Throughout the British Isles, and more frequently in the more Celtic areas, are to be found Christian graveyards which still preserve all the essential features of the pagan barrow, the circular or oval plan, the mounded area, and not infrequently the encircling fosse or vallum. But whereas the pagan barrow was frequently, perhaps usually, designed by its builders to be the individual burial-place of one great man, in the Christian barrow were buried, or were entitled to be buried, all such of the community as could claim to be 'members of one family in Christ.' There will be produced, however, indisputable evidence that for many centuries still survived the sentiment that a barrow, Christian or pagan, was primarily the burial-place of one specially great man; and we shall find instances, long after the introduction of Christianity, where one or other of such great persons is buried with all the pomp and individuality of the older time. In 1581, it is recorded, 'Brian Ceach O'Coinnegain, an eminent cleric . . . died, and the place of sepulture which he selected for himself, was, to be buried at the mound of Baile-an-Tobair . . . And we think that it was not through want of religion that Brian Ceach made this selection, but because he saw not the service of God practised in any church near him at that time.'¹ Ever and anon the old sentiment reasserts itself even in this modern age, and as late as 1919 Sir Bryan Leighton was, by his own wish, buried upon the open hills of his estate in Shropshire.²

Barrows are the purposed monuments of the dead, or rather they are one class of such purposed monuments. Not every mound therefore which has the appearance of a barrow is really such. Many of them are indeed natural formations. Even if a burial be found within a mound, this does not in itself prove that the mound was in the first

instance constructed for a sepulchral purpose. So far as regards the simpler forms of grave-monuments, this is a common-place of archaeology. Less consideration has been given to the point in the case of the more elaborate forms of monuments, yet it is a point of the first importance. Exactly as a mound, natural or otherwise, which was never intended to be a barrow, has repeatedly been made to serve as such, many another construction which has the outward seeming of a ring-barrow, disc-barrow, or other form of circle, may quite conceivably have been constructed for a totally different purpose, even though a burial may have been found within it; or to put it another way, if, as is admitted to be the case, the finding of an interment within a mound does not of necessity prove that mound to have been reared as a barrow, neither does the finding of an interment within a stone-circle or an earthen ringwork necessarily prove this to have been intended for a sepulchral monument.

There are two main factors to be reckoned with and allowed for if any correct conclusion is to be drawn: one is the intrusive interment, the other the consecration-grave. During long centuries the greater number of the races who successively occupied these islands regarded any and every circular *enceinte* as necessarily sacred, and therefore a proper place for the interment of the dead.¹ There were circular burial-places—barrows in the legitimate sense—everywhere; but there were also other circular works, perhaps in very great numbers, which had been reared for entirely different purposes. When, from whatever cause, the proper use of such works was forgotten, the dead would inevitably be brought to them for burial, as they had always been brought to other works—the true barrows—externally precisely similar.² These

¹ Instances are to be found in any volume dealing with barrows, in Greenwell's *British Barrows*, Bateman's *Ten Years' Digging*, Jewitt's *Grave Mounds*, Mortimer's *Forty Years' Researches*. Sometimes the barrow was enlarged (raised) with each successive inhumation; Greenwell, pp. 196, 294, 491, and cf. the cairn at Carn Brea, below ch. xx. More often there was no such enlargement. In many cases, again, the mound covering a later burial has been added on to the earlier barrow,

thereby perhaps altering—occasionally spoiling—the circular plan of it. See John Ward in *Memorials of Old Derbysire*, pp. 59, 60.

² Amongst such cases are the *crucs*, the non-sepulchral mounds to be described presently. Speaking of 'Druid Circles,' i.e. circles of standing stones, Stukeley says (*Stonehenge*, p. 3) 'in many places . . . the people bury their dead in or near them to this day, thinking them holy ground.' This was written in 1723.

¹ Wood-Martin, *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland*, p. 237.

² *The Times*, 25 Jan., 1919.

are all intrusive interments, and as they may belong to almost any age, very great caution is needed in reading the evidence. It has constantly happened that an intrusive or secondary burial has been mistaken by careless diggers for the primary one, and the age of the barrow consequently miscalculated by centuries. It has also happened that, on the strength of intrusive interments, mounds and circles which were never intended to be burial-places have been written down as such and entirely mis-dated.

The consecration-grave is a totally different thing, but an equally dangerous cause of erroneous conclusions. It is the concrete expression of the once world-wide feeling that the sacrifice of a human life was needful to the consecration of any spot for whatever purpose. There is ample reason for thinking that in not a few cases the act of ritual has been confounded with the purpose of an anhistoric work, stone-circle, ringwork, or other; and that certain sweeping conclusions as to the true character of such works, being deduced from such erroneous premisses, are in need of revision.

The belief that the success of any human undertaking, the permanence of any human construction, depended upon the sacrifice of a human life is of the widest occurrence. It is embodied in the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and in that of the death of Remus at the foundation of Rome. In historical Rome it was liable to revive at any time of crisis, as when a man and a woman were buried alive to avert the coming of the Gauls, and when, to avert the coming of the Goths of Alaric, was sacrificed Serena the widow of Stilicho (A.D. 411). The foundation-deposits, reduced to merely animal bones, have been frequently found in Egypt¹; and more than one great bridge that spans a river of India, the work of English engineers, is reputed to conceal beneath its foundations the bones of an unofficial victim.² Even in some of the Balkan states, it is whispered, the belief is active still. Skulls of consecration-victims have been found in the fabric of Assurbanipal's buildings; when Jericho was rebuilt,

Prof. Flinders Petrie in *Report of Brit. School of Archaeology in Egypt*, 1906, p. 22.

² See *Dict. of Religion and Ethics* (Clark, Edinburgh, 1909), s.v. BRIDGE, and

the references there collected; Haddon, *Study of Man* (1898), pp. 347-399; and for examples from Greece, Ridgeway, *Origin of Tragedy*, pp. 163-6, and *Early Age of Greece*, i, 506.

the builder 'laid the foundations thereof in Abiram his first-born, and in his youngest son Segub set up the gates of it'; and when King Thebaw commenced the building of a new palace at Mandalay in 1861, he grounded it upon the bones of as many victims as there are weeks in the year.

There is ample proof that the same superstition prevailed in these islands. Two consecration-burials, the one of an adult and the other of a child, were found beneath a massive mortarless wall in an anhistoric burial-ground at Harlyn Bay.¹ Under the wall surrounding the little Romano-British enclosure of Lowbury, Berkshire, was found the skeleton of a woman, so placed that the circumstances 'forbid us to think either that it was buried before the wall was thought of, or inserted after the wall was ruined.' The discoverer believed it to be a foundation-burial, and so it probably was.² Hugh Miller found the memory of the practice surviving in Cromarty. In the Isle of Arran, carefully built into the massive wall of what seems to have been a *broch*, was found a small cist containing a large urn 'of cinerary type' filled with calcined bones.³ Yet another was found under the wall of a pit at Caerwent.⁴ Under the wall of the *temenos* of the temple at Uriconium, near the south-eastern corner, was found 'a pot containing a fair number of bones,' apparently of the small ox for the most part.⁵ Irish writings make frequent allusion to the practice, and the sacrifice of a pig is discussed, in the *Life of S. Cellach*, in connexion with the building of *raths*.

The superstition was in fact universal, and it would seem ineradicable. We no longer kill a living victim, but we attach importance still to the presence of bones and ashes. The whole system of relic-worship grew out of it,

¹ Ashington Bullen, *Harlyn Bay* (Padstow, 912), p. 54.

² F. Haverfield in *Roman Britain in 1914* (Oxford, 1915), p. 27. He adds 'I understand that Sir John Frazer accepts this suggestion.' Lowbury is thought to date only from the Middle Empire.

³ J. A. Balfour in *Book of Arran*, pp. 195-213. He writes that 'the builders had evidently come upon a burial of an earlier period, and left it undisturbed.' The article is not by any means so clear as could be wished, but, apart from the improbability of the event he suggests,

the position of the deposit and its arrangement makes it almost certain that this too was a foundation-deposit.

⁴ *Antiquary*, vol. xxxviii (1902), p. 376. Nennius (§§ 40-42) relates the sacrifice and burial of a child at the building of the Dun of Guorthegirn.

⁵ Bushe-Fox in *Report Research Committee Lond. Soc. Antiq.* (1913), p. 7. He remarked that 'there does not appear to be any well authenticated example from this country,' but that was before the find at Lowbury.

and a hundred stories of monkish cunning in stealing a neighbour's most valued bones. It is a genuine 'idol of the race.' The first 'churches' of Latin Christianity were the mortuary chapels of the catacombs,¹ and that the first Celtic Christianity of these islands was founded upon the superstition in its most repulsive form, is proved by Adamnan's account of St. Columba's first procedure at Hy.

To decent-minded people to this day the presence of death is the presence of God. It is the canon law of the vast majority of Christians that there is no altar without its relics; and if the minority of Christians have broken away from that extreme attitude, none the less do they feel themselves the nearer their God, the nearer they be to their dead. The sentiment was equally as real in pre-Christian times, indeed more so, for with some at any rate of pagan peoples it took the illogical form that there could be no *locus consecratus* without a burial. Every place where was a burial was holy ground, and there could be no holy place where no burial was. The canon law of present-day Greek and Roman orthodoxy is but the old sentiment of all humanity with an added sanction.

If there is found within a circular work, whether it be a mound or a ringwork or a circle of standing-stones, an interment which may be regarded as of a certain date, it may or may not be a legitimate inference that the circular work is of the same date; but even if that also be conceded, it does not of necessity follow that the circular work was constructed only to serve as a place of burial. Such an inference is reasonable if the interment bears any proportionate relation, in point of position or of its accessories, to the surrounding circle; if it occupies a central or otherwise prominent position²; if it is marked by some elaborate external monument such as a dolmen

¹ 'In the book of the Apocalypse the martyrs are represented as reposing beneath the altar (*Rev.* vi, 9); and before the death of its author we behold the Christians of Rome offering the sacred mysteries on the tombs of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. See in St. Cyril (*Cont. Julian*, pp. 327, 334) the testimony of the emperor Julian, which must outweigh the authority of those modern writers who date the veneration

of relics from the commencement of the fourth century.' Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, ii, 95.

² Cf. Homer, *Iliad* xxiii, 241-2. There was no difficulty in distinguishing the bones of Patroclus from those of the victims sacrificed (and burnt) at his grave, for those of Patroclus lay 'in the middle,' and the others 'at the edge' of the place of burning.

or a pillar-stone or a slab, or if it is accompanied by the recognized accessories in the way of grave-furniture. But if there be no such reasonable proportion between the interment and the circle, if grave-furniture be cheap or even wholly wanting, if the interment lack all external monument, or if it be found to occupy a position which bears no intelligible relation to the surrounding circle, it is hardly credible that it should represent the *raison d'être* of the laboured construction which surrounds it.¹ In such cases it is more likely that the interment either is intrusive, or marks the consecration-grave, the choice between the two alternatives remaining to be determined either by internal evidence or by analogy. In neither event does the finding of the interment justify the conclusion that the circle within which it is found was designed to be a barrow.

Many and widely different as are the forms assumed by round barrows, it is nevertheless easy to demonstrate the development of all from a single prototype, and to establish a regular evolution, which, though not in itself chronometric, necessarily has a bearing upon the question of date. Into that vexed question it is not needful to enter here, save so far as to point out that, if there has been an error in placing by some centuries too early the *terminus ad quem*, it is quite possible that there has been made a similar error in regard to the *terminus a quo*.

It is not to be doubted that the simple 'bowl' barrow, the circular heap of material without any further elaboration whatever, is the original of all,² but it is an admitted fact that some such simple 'bowls' are amongst the very latest of such monuments; witness those reared by the Danes. The 'disc' again is most certainly late in time as in evolution. But there being in early times no such thing as equality of culture, the less fully developed type may have held its ground in one district contem-

¹ There are numerous instances of 'bowl' and 'bell' barrows in which the interment, albeit primary and without doubt the *raison d'être* of the mound, is not truly central. This might very easily occur in the building of such a mound over a grave. There could be no excuse for its occurring in any sort of ringwork or stone circle with its unencumbered area.

² So Thurnam (*Archæologia*, xlii, 291): 'It must be allowed that the bowl-shaped is the primary form of the circular barrow; which, so far from becoming obsolete, held its place side by side with the later-invented, and so to speak more fashionable bell and disc-shaped tumuli.'

poraneously with more highly developed types in districts but a few miles away. Moreover, the stubborn conservatism which dominates humanity in the matter of necrology, must inevitably have interfered to prevent any parity of development, individuals, families, clans, and tribes affecting each its own traditions of burial in those days, as they do at the present time.¹

In pre-Christian burials in these islands² there were two essentials, of which the modification and elaboration through long periods of time by different tribes in different localities, under the influence of local conditions, ethnic prejudice, foreign contacts, and perhaps even individual fancy, have produced the astonishing variety of our barrows, external and internal. These essentials were firstly the means taken to demarcate the place of burial, and secondly the means taken to mark the actual grave. The former it is convenient to call the *limes*. Beneath all diversity of the surviving examples these essentials remain constant; and of the two the *limes* was the more important and the less perishable. There are indeed too many cases where the *limes* has perished and the monument alone survives, but there are many more cases where the reverse has happened, and the *limes* remains when all superficial trace of the monument has disappeared. It is the same to this day in any Christian graveyard, the faithful dead must lie within the *limes*, and the *limes* must be a thing fixed and abiding; but how many of their number have any other monument to mark their graves than the 'heaving sod'? And how many millions more lie there, whose very grave-mounds, like their frames, have vanished ages since?

From the remote date when the builders of the round barrows reared the first monument of its kind in Britain, throughout the long centuries to the triumph of Christianity, and thereafter for several centuries more, the *limes*, the thing demarcating the piece of ground

¹ This fact is abundantly illustrated by ancient Greece and Rome.

² It is assumed that barrows, of whatever form, are the most complete expression of the ideas in matters of eschatology held by those who built them; that they are the monuments of the select minority,

who would possess at once the most intimate understanding of these ideas, and the best means to give them expression. The vast majority of the lesser dead were doubtless in all ages buried without any such costly outlay or any abiding mark of their resting-places.

which, great or small, was hallowed by the presence of the dead, was in plan one and the same. It was a circle. In scores of cases to this day, in Christian England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, to say nothing of other areas of northern Europe, it is still the same. In many cases it is a geometrical circle; in some cases a geometrical ellipse. Old burial-places, pagan or Christian, were obviously never designed to be in any sense angular; or more correctly, they were obviously designed to be non-angular.¹

It is not asserted that this symbolism was peculiar to the Celt. It will be shewn that it prevailed at one or other period in countries as divergent as Greece, Italy, and Denmark. It is found also in Abyssinia, Arabia, Palestine, Persia, and India, to say nothing of remoter lands. To account for its appearance there may be matter of enquiry for other brains. The present papers are concerned only with the origin and history of the symbol in Britain.

The round barrow in itself embodies the circular plan. In its simplest form it is a circular mound in the shape of an inverted bowl—hence the accepted name of 'bowl' barrow—without other external feature of any kind.² To this large class belong most of our smaller barrows, albeit some of the 'bowl' barrows are of very large size. Whether this type was originally provided with any further visible mark of its sepulchral character is unknown. Some of them unquestionably had a peristalith of great stones set at intervals around the base.

Even in its most rudimentary form the 'bowl' barrow showed the primary essential, the circular plan. But excavation has in not a few cases shown that a circle had been constructed within and buried under the mound. Sometimes it takes the form of a circular trench³ which has been laboriously excavated in the soil around the spot where the body or the urn was to lie, and presently filled

¹ As with stone circles and ringworks, so the mound-barrows are not seldom of oval rather than of circular plan. This is usually explained as the result of juxtaposing two or even three separate true round barrows. 'Disc' barrows are occasionally juxtaposed; see the fig. in Heywood Sumner's *Earthworks of the New Forest*, p. 80. In Ireland such juxtaposition of ring-barrows is not at all uncommon, and the late T. J.

Westropp regarded them as mostly of late date.

² I agree with Dr. Thurnam (*Archæologia* xlii, 291) that the true bowl-barrow was in its original form unfossed. Heywood Sumner has recently opened several barrows of this type on Ibsley Common, Hants; see *Proc. Bournemouth Nat. Sci. Soc.* vol. xiv (1923), pp. 3-12.

³ Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches* p. xxii; Greenwell, pp. 6, 2c1, 245.

in again. Sometimes it is a circle of isolated stones, even of pebbles or small nodules of flint¹ if larger stones were scarce in the locality, larger blocks where such were obtainable.² Or again it appears as a regular dry-built wall of stone.³ Occasionally the circle is double or even triple.⁴ The origin and meaning of this practice will be considered later. Here it is sought only to emphasise the fact of the presence of this circle, excavated or constructed at the cost of much painful labour, yet obviously never intended to be seen by mortal eye when once the barrow was raised and the circle buried within it. Only the religious sense could prompt such a procedure; the circle was, to the minds of those who built such barrows, *the* symbol of sanctity. It marked a *locus consecratus*, and it was the symbol of the grave.

Probably this 'cryptic' circle was the original piece of ritual, and the practice of giving to it more visible expression arose later when the growing mass of the superimposed earthen mound completely hid the circle from the eye. Thereafter it appears in the form of an exterior fosse, a ring-wall, or a peristalith, surrounding the mound; and the tendency being always to lay more and more emphasis upon the symbol, there were gradually evolved all the subsequent types of sepulchral monument, first the 'bell' barrow, then the ringwork and the cromlech, and finally the perfect 'disc' barrow. Where the buried circle is found, there is usually no exterior presentment of the symbol, whether as fosse or wall or peristalith.⁵

¹ *Ibid.* p. 6. Cp. Pitt-Rivers on inhumations of the Iron Age near Mount Caburn in Sussex: 'an oval space surrounded by a row of large flints appeared to have been cleared in the chalk rock, within which the body was placed at full length' (*Archaeologia*, xlv, p. 425). Worthington Smith (*Man, the Primeval Savage*, pp. 334-9, and fig.) found the skeletons of a woman and a child similarly ringed with some 200 fossil echinoderms, within a round barrow on the Dunstable Downs. The several heaps of burnt and unburnt bones found beneath the floor of a dolmen at L'Ancrese in Guernsey were each surrounded by a circle of small stones, and exactly similar was the arrangement of the bone-deposits found within a Christian *keel* in the Isle of Man (*Report*

of *Manx Archaeological Survey*, 1910). The ill-burnt ashes of an interment found (1923) in a mound in Rottingdean, Sussex, were surrounded by the broken fragments of the neck of a large urn arranged in a circle.

² Near Cawthorn Camps, N.R. (Bateman, *Ten Years' Digging*, p. 207); in Flaxdale, Derbyshire (*ibid.* p. 63); in Dorset (Warne, *Celtic Tumuli of Dorset*, p. 33); near Sherburn, E.R., Gilling, N.R., Hutton Buscel, N.R. (Greenwell, *Brit. Barrows*, pp. 145, 344, 358, 363).

³ Greenwell, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁵ The writer has not met with any recorded instance of the conjunction of the buried circle with the external circle. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable to suppose that such exist, marking the over-

The 'bell' barrow is the 'bowl' provided with a visible external fosse. Instead of concealing the symbolic circle within the mound, the builders dug it about the mound.¹ Occasionally there is also a raised parapet along the outer edge of the fosse. 'Bells' may be of almost any size, though it is not common to find very small examples of this type. The dimensions of the fosse naturally vary with the size of the contained mound, but allowance must be made for wastage, which will vary with the character of the soils. In very many cases the fosse is discoverable only by excavation.

As the necessary materials for the building of a 'bowl' barrow must have been brought to the spot from the surface of the surrounding country, the labour entailed was very great, and the construction of such a barrow on any large scale must have taken much time, even if many hands were employed. As the 'bell' was built largely of the material thrown out in making the fosse, the labour involved was considerably less; so that economically as well as artistically the 'bell' was an improvement upon the 'bowl.' The height of the mound naturally depended upon the dimensions of the enclosing fosse: so long as this was set out upon a circle of small radius there would be material enough for a considerable mound, but in proportion as the radius was increased the mound became necessarily of less and less elevation. In very few cases is it likely that the mound was built up of the *déblai* from the fosse alone: it must have been augmented by soil fetched from outside, as in the case of the primitive 'bowls.'² The tendency being steadily to increase the radius of the

lap between the earlier and the later practices.

¹ 'Bowl' and 'bell' are merely convenient terms for the two varieties as they now appear, but a good many 'bowls,' as originally constructed, were actually 'bells,' the once visible fosse having been filled up or even wholly covered over by the wastage and spreading of the mound within. In these cases, however, the fosse is a wholly different thing from the buried circle previously described, which was never intended to be visible. On sandy soils especially, the tendency is always for the 'bell' to assume the appearance of a 'bowl,' and many seeming 'bowls' were originally

designed as 'bells.' Pitt-Rivers in the whole of his wide experience in Cranborne Chase met with but two barrows which had had no exterior fosse (*Excavations*, vol. ii, plate lxxv). Besides its merit of better satisfying ritual requirements, the 'bell' had the further advantage that the digging of its fosse provided at once much of the soil needed to build the mound.

² Wright (*Uriconium*, p. 42) satisfied himself that this was the case with the great barrow at S. Weonards, Heref., and another at Fitz, 5 miles N. of Shrewsbury. 'The barrow was made by forming a circular bank round the objects to be buried, and the central part was afterwards filled in.'

fosse, and by consequence to diminish the height of the mound, the barrow tended to become always less and less elevated.

Some of the 'bowls' and 'bells' are still extraordinarily steep-sided, in spite of the denudation of centuries, and there is reason to think that, when first completed, they were sometimes covered over with turves to prevent their spreading.

The tendency to economise labour by reducing the height of the mound, produced the 'table' barrow. This is simply a geometrically circular platform with a perfectly level summit. The fosse, which commonly has no entrance-way, is quite distinct, and the height of the 'table' varies with the dimensions of the fosse; it may reach a vertical height of 10 ft. or it may be so slight in elevation as to be scarcely discernible. Occasionally, where the platform is of no great height, there was sufficient soil available to provide a slight parapet on the counterscarp. Yet another variety shows a slightly raised rim surrounding the edge of the 'table' itself.

In many cases the top of a 'bowl' or a 'bell' shows an irregular depression in the centre, quite distinct from the purposed regularity to be seen in the variety last mentioned. This is sometimes the result of unscientific exploration or other modern interference,¹ but in very many cases, amongst the smaller barrows especially, it is apparently original, though whether due to carelessness of construction, or to the sinking of the centre as the interment perished, is not determinable. Quite possibly it represents the first beginnings of a new design, developed fully in the 'cup' barrow.

The 'cup' is a small barrow with a shallow fosse, having, in lieu of a solid central mound, a mere ring of soil within the fosse; and where the area within the fosse is very small, the whole has the appearance of a cup. In some cases the ring of soil and the fosse are alike continuous; in other cases they are penannular, *i.e.* intermitted at one point as if to provide an entrance. The latter are the earlier in evolution, for in the symbolism of the grave,

¹ *E.g.* the erection of wind-mills upon such barrows, a very frequent proceeding in the Down countries. In this case, however,

the depression commonly takes a pronounced cruciform plan. See Allcroft, *Earthwork of England*, pp. 534-9, and figures.

the penannular ring is older than the complete circle.¹ In either form the 'cup' would seem to be a decadent and 'cheap' type, representing a penurious economy of labour.²

As the area embraced by the fosse grows larger, the 'cup' develops into a circular flat-floored arena surrounded by a ring of earth, and this again girt by the fosse. This is the 'ring' barrow, and there is no limit to its area, but rarely is the fosse, and by consequence the vallum, of any great depth.³

Thus far the evolution of the successive types is easy to follow. The keynote of all is the presence of the circular plan. Whatever else may vary, the circular plan is invariable. Originally it determined the shape of the simple 'bowl,' and it may be traced without breach of sequence, and with always more emphatic prominence, onward to the fully developed 'ring.' But here the perplexities begin, for there are innumerable ringworks in the British Isles all precisely identical in appearance and in construction, of which only a limited number were built to serve as barrows. Almost any ringwork may have been constructed for a barrow; no ringwork may safely be so labelled unless excavation has proved it to be such. And here in particular the intrusive interment and the consecration-grave prove themselves troublesome. As every ringwork possessed for earlier races and earlier generations precisely the same attraction as did every mounded barrow, the chances of finding intrusive interments within any ringwork are very high. On the other hand, every *locus consecratus* being of necessity circular, and of necessity hallowed by some victim, any ringwork may be found to contain the deposit needed for its consecration, while at the same time it may never have been in any sense constructed for a barrow. Residence, 'camp,' 'pastoral enclosure,' temple, place of debate or of judicature—a ringwork may have been built to be any of one of these, and possibly to be many other things as well, and for every one of these purposes it may have

¹ See the next chapter.

² Of those on the South Downs, which are very numerous, many are said to be of Saxon date.

³ The fosse may be many feet wide, but a few inches only in depth. In stony countries there is frequently no visible fosse at all.

received its consecration-deposit. For some of these purposes it certainly received it. But to prove it an intentional barrow there is needed something much more prominent, much more central perhaps, certainly much more proportionate, than the thing that served for a consecration-burial. And generally speaking, the same perplexities which attend the simpler forms of ringworks attend also every one of the more elaborate forms yet to be described.

Simple ringworks are to be found in almost every county, and the difficulty of determining their true character is enhanced by the fact that such works were constructed, for whatever purpose, by probably every race and every age from the days of neolithic man down to those of the Tudor sovereigns. On the top of the Mendips are the remains of four of the very largest of their kind, having an average diameter of 550 ft. These have vallum and fosse as usual, but they have thus far yielded no hint of their purpose. On Baildon Moor, Shipley, W.R., are three others, each of 50 ft. in diameter, enclosed by valla of earth and stone without fosses. Some of these have been proved to contain interments. In the North Riding and in Northumberland they are common. Dr. Thurnam thought the 'circular trenches' at Standlake, Oxon, to be perhaps tumuli of this kind.¹ They had diameters varying from 50 ft. to 120 ft. Of certain other individual examples more will require to be said in the sequel.

The final development is the true 'disc' barrow, a form of monument of which the perfect symmetry and finish strike with admiration anyone who sees it as it is to be seen on Setley Plain, Hants, on Oakley Down by Handley in Cranborne Chase, and in the vicinity of Stonehenge. It is nothing but a ringwork, sometimes of geometrical regularity, surrounding a perfectly level arena of turf often upwards of an acre in extent. The fosse, like the vallum, is but slight, and in the perfected type it lies within the vallum. The interment occupies the central spot, marked by a mound of very variable diameter, but rarely of high relief, and frequently so

¹ *Archaeologia*, xliii, 302; *ibid.* xxxvii, 362.

slight as to be scarcely noticeable. When other interments occur they are usually set as close as may be to the central burial. There is no entrance-way, vallum and fosse being completely annular.

The type is local and decidedly uncommon. It is most frequent in the neighbourhood of Stonehenge, the headquarters of the Brythonic power in the last centuries B.C., and becomes scarcer as one goes further away from that centre; but there are fine examples in Oxfordshire, Somerset, Sussex, Hampshire, on the Malvern Hills, and in Yorkshire. A group of four, the largest having a diameter of 120 ft., exists at Pendoylan, between Cowbridge and Llandaff, in Glamorganshire,¹ two others may exist in the neighbourhood of Hengwm, Merion.,² and there are examples at Llanelwedd in Radnorshire, close to Builth; but otherwise this type is hardly recorded from Wales. A chalk soil gives the best opportunities for its construction and the best chance of its survival. On harder soils it could not well be built with the same symmetry, and on softer soils it had little chance to escape destruction, for one or two ploughings would obliterate it wholly. The local variations are largely attributable to the character of the soil; in stony localities, for example, there may be no apparent fosse at all, the *limes* being marked only by the piled vallum of stone. In the perfected examples the height of the vallum seldom exceeds 2½ ft. One on Flower Down, Winchester, has an arena 81 ft. in diameter, a fosse 3 ft. deep, and an outer vallum which rises 2 ft. only above the natural surface. The central mound has a diameter of 27 ft, and is of very slight relief.³ There are examples, however, in which the central mound rises to a very considerable height.

¹ To the late Mr. W. Clarke of Wenvoe is due the credit of drawing attention to these, an invaluable piece of evidence for the infiltration of Belgic influences into S.Wales. When he discovered them one of the group had very recently been rifled by some unauthorised person unknown, who had left behind in the disturbed central area pieces of an urn; which fact is proof enough that the work was a purposed barrow.

² Explored in 1919 by O. G. S. Crawford, with small results (*Arch. Cambr.* 6th ser. xx, p. 111).

³ Williams Freeman, *Field Archaeology*

of Hants, p. 248. The same writer mentions (p. 276) another variety having now no visible vallum at all, and the fosse extremely wide and shallow. One he gives as having a diameter of 159 ft. and a fosse 21 ft. wide; another, which he says is the largest he has ever seen, has diameter about 195 ft. and ditch 48 ft. wide. Neither fosse is more than 9 in. deep, and neither work shows any central mound. (It is possible that these peculiar features are in part due to the works having been ploughed over). Both these are between Clanfield and Chalton, Hants.

Occasionally the fosse and vallum are duplicated, as in an example at Broadstairs, where the solitary interment (inurned) occupied almost the centre of a circular 'island' of 28 ft. in diameter, demarcated by a fosse 5.5 ft. in width, which in turn was surrounded by a second fosse of 3.5 ft. in width described on a radius of 29 ft. over all. Both fosses were complete, showing no gap; each was 2.5 ft. in depth; and it was not possible to determine on which side of the fosses the valla, if any, had been raised.¹

In the 'disc' barrows, and in the ringworks related thereto, the most casual observer recognises the laboured regularity and scientific construction which one is apt to overlook in the 'bowl' and the 'bell.' There are good reasons for thinking that the 'disc' is chronologically the latest outcome of barrow-building,² as it most certainly is the latest in point of artistry. In Ireland the construction of ringworks of various kinds was a special craft, and there can be very little doubt that in Britain also there must have been professional barrow-builders, and in particular expert builders of disc-barrows.³

The geographical distribution of the true disc-barrow, together with the character of its contents, goes to show that this type was the work of the last of the Brythonic invaders of South Britain, the Belgae, who made their headquarters on Salisbury Plain—probably because this was already the seat of an ancient sovereignty—and thence spread eastward and northward, and more particularly

¹ *Archaeologia* lxi, 432. The barrow was written down as late-Celtic, on the evidence of other finds made in the immediate vicinity. It should be mentioned that a large rubbish pit lay only 6 yds. away, and 40 yds. away what may have been the vestiges of a stockaded habitation-site, which suggests that the Celt did not invariably lay his dead at any great distance from his dwelling-place. The work near Casterley, Wilts, known as 'Robin Hood's Ball,' resembles this in plan, but in lieu of fosses it has two concentric valla, with an entrance on the north side.

² Dr. Thurnam in *Archaeologia* xliii, 303. Lord Abercromby (*Bronze Age Pottery*), on the other hand, thinks the latest specimens of the type to be no later than about 650 B.C., from the evidence of their contents; but the present writer is amongst the number of those who are not satisfied

with that evidence. Dr. Thurnam, who took no account of the aesthetic line of reasoning, believed the construction of disc barrows to have continued until the Roman conquest. Why it should have ceased then he does not explain, nor is there any sufficient reason to suppose that it did. In Ireland and Wales barrows of this type continued to be built so late as the fifth and sixth centuries. Dr. Thurnam endorses the observation of Colt Hoare (*Ancient Wilts*, i, 173) that cinerary urns are of extreme rarity in disc-shaped barrows, from which it would seem that they belong mostly to a people, or peoples, with whom the use of such urns was dying out.

³ So Heywood Sumner (*Earthworks of the New Forest*, p. 81): 'the precision of planning and construction of Bell and Disc barrows is remarkable, suggesting inner knowledge by a set-apart class.'

westward into Dumnonia and South Wales. If so, the type was at its zenith of prevalence about the Christian era.

Stukeley called these by the name of 'Druids' Barrows,' and if that expression is taken to mean merely that the type was characteristic of the race and the period in which Druidism likewise reached its zenith, Stukeley was probably right; but whether his choice of the name was founded on evidence, or upon a still persisting folk-memory, or was a mere guess, there is nothing to shew.

Now if a disc-barrow of the perfect type, with slight vallum, slight fosse, and still slighter grave-mound, be ploughed over but once or twice, the result is that the grave-mound disappears entirely, the fosse is probably filled in, and there remains merely a scarce-perceptible circular heave of the soil to mark where was the vallum. If the plough has gone deep enough to disturb the interment—and in disc-barrows it is almost always a cremated interment and therefore laid at small depth—it may be possible to find a shard or two of the broken urn; but if this has not occurred, there will most likely be no visible relic whatever to betray the real nature of the work. It is labelled, if labelled at all, a 'simple circular enclosure,' and having about its remains nothing whatever to distinguish it from a score of similar things, it is at the option of every one who chances upon it to argue it according to his bias a 'habitation-site,' a 'camp,' a 'pastoral enclosure,' or what not. Should there remain evidence that the fosse was on the inner side of the vallum, it is usual to write such works down as 'sepulchral' or 'religious,' but the criterion is hardly infallible.¹ A better test, though still not infallible, is the geometrical precision of the ring. In the matter of area no limit can be set.

¹ This interpretation is based upon the position of the fosses of Avebury, Arbor Low, and similar works, which the world agrees to call 'religious,' though it is by no means agreed that they were 'sepulchral.' The interpretation has the drawback of suggesting that every 'religious' or 'sepulchral' work should have its fosse within the vallum, which the cases of Stonehenge and many hundreds of 'bell' barrows show to be untrue. Pitt-Rivers' excavations at Handley Down, and others

at Beltout, Sussex, have established the fact that enclosures of rectangular plan sometimes had the fosse on the inner side of the vallum, and Mrs. Cunningham's exploration of Oliver's Castle, a camp near Devizes, has shown how this might arise fortuitously in any 'British village.' It may be contrary to modern practice, but it is none the less true, that cattle are more easily kept within bounds if the ditch be within the fence than without it.

'Encircling mounds (*valla*) and trenches (*fosses*),' writes Dr. Greenwell,¹ 'are found to surround spaces of ground which have been devoted to the purposes of burial, but where apparently no barrow has ever surmounted the grave.' There is no doubt at all that some such ringworks were themselves barrows, but whether or no there ever existed a grave-mound within any particular ring, it may be impossible to determine. The fine mould of such mounds, the flint and stone of barrows and cairns, all have their value: they may easily be carted away, leaving no visible trace of themselves; and if the ring-wall be treated in the same fashion, there remains nothing but a circular fosse surrounding a level 'island.' The original interment however, which was commonly made within the soil before the grave-mound was piled over it, may yet remain undisturbed until the grave-hunter digs expressly for it. But it is by no means certain that any burial found within such a ringwork or 'island' is part of the original construction. The burial or burials may easily be intrusive, and the ringwork may not have been intended by its builders to be sepulchral at all; and inasmuch as any circular *limes* continued to attract to it those who had dead to bury, from the time of the first round barrow to actually modern days, the chances of finding intrusive interments are very high. And again the interment, though original, may not be 'sepulchral.' It may be a consecration-grave. Here the only possible test is relative: does the interment bear any reasonable proportion to the ringwork in point of dignity, or does it occupy a reasonable position in relation thereto? A central interment, rich or poor, is very probably a veritable grave, and moreover the original grave and the purpose of the whole. A number of interments scattered about the area are just as likely to be intrusive, failing good evidence to the contrary.

A typical example of a burial-ring of this class is to be seen on ground called Blackheath, on the flat summit of a hill (1,224 ft.) outside Todmorden, Yorks. It is a perfectly regular ringwork formed by a single vallum with an exterior fosse, the diameter being 96 ft. The

¹ *British Barrows*, p. 6.

vallum, now much reduced, may originally have stood 5 to 6 ft. high. There was no mound within the ring, nor superficially anything to suggest that this was different from a hundred other 'camps,' unless it were the regularity of the design. The work was locally known as the 'Frying Pan,' and variously regarded as a camp, a fairy-ring, or 'a circus-ring made to break-in horses.' Some 350 yds. away stands the church of Cross Stone.¹

Explored in 1898, it revealed in the exact centre of the arena a fine urn, with others—distinct interments—arranged round it at regular intervals. In all there were recovered seven large urns and two 'incense-cups,' and amongst the finds were bronze pins. The methodical disposition of these interments, their number, and their elaborate character, prove that this was indubitably a barrow and had been constructed solely to serve as a place of sepulture.²

Thus far has been traced the evolution of the circular fosse from its first appearance as a mere symbol concealed beneath the mass of a superincumbent barrow to its presence as the chief, in some cases the only, feature of the whole monument. Precisely similar was the evolution of the stone circle, which, as Dr. Greenwell observed, is sometimes found, in lieu of a fosse, buried within the mound.

The first step was to bring the circle of stones out of the grave-mound and arrange it round the base of the mound as a peristalith, in which position it may perhaps have served in some cases the purpose of a rudimentary retaining wall to the whole. In many cases it stands at such a distance from the mound or cairn that it can never have fulfilled any such purpose. The tendency being always to spend less and less labour upon the mound, the circle of stones came to acquire always more importance,

¹ Cross Stone is an ecclesiastical district formed out of the parish of Halifax. The church, says Miss Arnold-Forster (*Studies in Church Dedications*) is probably old. Its present dedication is to St. Paul, but in 1542 it was to St. Ursula; and the change, she conjectures, was made when the church was rebuilt in 1572. The fact that the Christian church stands so near to the pagan burial-place has a certain significance.

² *Proc. Yorks. Geol. and Polytech. Soc.*, 1899, p. 144; H. Ling Roth, *Prehistoric Halifax* (1906), p. 307. From the character of the finds the whole is of course attributed to the Bronze Age. It is impossible to say at what date works of this type were first constructed as barrows, but it is certain that many of them are far later than the Bronze Age, and it is a question whether the 'Frying Pan' be as old as it is said to be.

until one reaches the large class of grave-monuments in which the stone circle or cromlech,¹ with or without an accompanying fosse, is the sole feature. The size and number of the stones seems to have been entirely a matter of individual taste, and the diameter of the circle may vary from as little as 3 ft. to as much as 40 ft. or even 50 ft. In peristalithic circles of still greater diameters, it has been for the most part impossible to prove a sepulchral purpose, and many of the smaller examples also have been proved non-sepulchral. The circle of stones, like the circular fosse and the circular vallum, demarcated a *locus consecratus*, but not necessarily a place of burial.

The circle of stones is found adapted to each and all of the various types of grave-mound and barrow above described, irrespective of size. It is present in the great stone-built cairns of Clava, Inverness-shire, in the vast 'bowl' barrows of Knowth and Newgrange, in barrows of average size in Cumberland and Northumberland, in diminutive grave-mounds of Cornwall, and was originally a feature also of the great artificial pile of Silbury Hill, which was apparently not sepulchral at all. It is found combined with the 'table' barrow of any size up to the great Ring of Brogar in the Orkneys. Standing upon the vallum of a ringwork it produces such monuments as Sunkenkirk in Cumberland. The last step in the evolution gives us the 'great circles' which have neither fosse nor vallum, and cannot be proved to be sepulchral. Occasionally the circles show a double concentric peristalith, *e.g.* that which once stood on Hackpen Hill, and that at Winterbourne Bassett (exterior circle, 90 ft.).² Stonehenge and Avebury excepted, the inner ring in such complex circles is not composed of stones of such size as to interfere with a clear view over the whole area of the circle.

The individual stones composing the circles are as a rule entirely untooled. The only determinable sign of

¹ Continental archaeologists use this term (Welsh *crom*, *crom*, Gaelic *crom* 'circular'; Welsh *llech*, Gaelic *leac*, 'stone') to denote a circle of free-standing stones. In West Cornwall any barrow demarcated by a ring of stones may be termed a 'grumbla.' Documents of the fourteenth century refer to them as *cromlegbes*, of which 'grumblas'

appears to be the modern representative. It is worth notice that this name is not applied by the Cornish to the 'great circles,' such as that of Boscawen-Ūn, which are a feature of Cornish antiquities. I am indebted for this information to C. H. Henderson.

² Stukeley, *Abury*, p. 45.

working to be discovered is in the cup-markings and similar symbols which are occasionally cut upon some of the monoliths.¹ The stones used are commonly the native surface blocks of the district, but in some cases pains have been taken to gather blocks of a particular kind, quality, or colour.

In place of the circle of free-standing stones is found again a continuous wall of dry stone treated exactly as is the true peristalith. It is sometimes buried under the grave-mound, sometimes set as a revetment thereto; and finally, treated as an independent feature and taking the place of the earthen vallum and fosse, it produces the simple stone ringwork like those to be seen on Baildon Moor. In not a few cases this, like the earthen vallum, is combined with the true peristalith, as was the case in the 90-ft. ringwork called 'the Kirk' at Kirkby Ireleth, Lancashire.

Fergusson remarked² that there appears to be no example in this country of a pre-Christian work of rectangular plan which can be proved to have been constructed as a place of burial; and apparently little has since transpired to qualify the statement. The dolmen in Jersey called *le Couperon* lies within a parallelogram of stones, 'the only instance in' the Channel Islands³; but it has yet to be proved that the dolmen in question is of pre-Christian date. The nearest approaches to anything at once sepulchral and rectangular which this country can show are the 'circular barrows with square trenches' of Yorkshire (p. 244, n. 2). Works like Studfold Ring near Ampleforth, between square and circular in plan, may be sepulchral, but the matter waits proof. The finding of Anglo-Saxon graves within the *enceinte* of Highdown Camp in Sussex, and of seemingly Roman burials within that of Poundbury near Dorchester, is merely parallel with the frequent presence of barrows within ancient camps, *e.g.* at Small-

¹ These are found chiefly in Scotland. They may have been placed upon the stone before it occurred to some one to use it in a cromlech, or they may have been cut upon it at a later date, and it is quite possible that the sculpturings have nothing to do with the purpose of the circles with which they are now associated. The meaning of the cup-marking is discussed in ch. iv.

² *Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 308. Borlase (*Dolmens of Ireland*) cites most of Fergusson's instances and adds many more, the outcome being to show that the rectangular figure in sepulchral monuments was almost as common in the Baltic lands as it is rare here. The case of the Coldrum dolmen with its rectangular compound is mentioned later on.

³ F. C. Lukis in *Archaeologia* xxxv, 250.

down in Chesterblade, Somerset¹: in such cases the burials are probably intrusive, and belong to an age when the *enceinte* had ceased to serve its original purpose. So far as concerns the British Isles it would seem that the only matter in which rectilinearity was permitted was the avenue² of approach, if any existed.

This brief summary shows that a wide variety of forms may be produced by the gradual evolution of the circular *limes*, whether as fosse or vallum or peristalith, and the combination of these, with or without the central grave-mound; but in the upshot all tend to assume the form of a simple circular enclosure, whether of earth or of stone, with or without an accompanying fosse. Yet other varieties were produced by the gradual development of the various forms of grave-monument, of which the chief were the dolmen³ and the menhir or pillar-stone.⁴

Galleries and chambered tombs built of enormous unhewn stones are so constantly associated with long barrows as to prove them not the invention of the round-barrow men. As they are also found, however, within round barrows, it is clear that their construction did not cease when the round barrow came in. The true dolmen may be the outcome of the wish to adapt the earlier galleried tomb to the narrower limits afforded by the round barrow, or it may be an independent development from the small four-sided stone cist which was locally in use

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* 1904, pt. ii, p. 32.

² Stone avenues—parallel lines of free-standing stones—are a frequent feature in connection with stone circles on Dartmoor, but the sepulchral purpose of the circle in each case remains to be proved. At Merivale Bridge and on Stalldon Moor are avenues formed of two parallel rows of stones, but at Assycombe and Yardsworthy occur single lines only, while at Cordon there are three lines, on Challacombe Down four, on Shuffie Down five, and at Coryton Ball as many as seven. In 25 cases out of 38 the lines lead to and end at a stone circle, and appear to mark the approach to a *locus consecratus*, as did the avenues which once existed at Avebury and the paved causeway leading to the stone circle at Tullynessle in Aberdeenshire. At Stonehenge the avenue is represented by a roadway between parallel earthen *valla*.

³ The dolmen, or 'table-stone,' is an exaggerated cist made of one or more flattish blocks laid horizontally upon a number of vertical supporters. Commonly the horizontal stone (cap-stone) is single, and there is no limit to its size. The supporters are usually four, corresponding to the four sides of the cist, but there may be more, or sometimes only three. In its fullest development the whole becomes a rectangular flat-roofed house with wide eaves. The use of the word *cromlech* (p. 44, n.) for these monuments is entirely wrong.

⁴ There was a menhir (στήλη) upon the barrow of Ilus outside Troy (Homer, *Iliad*, xi, 371). In *Odyssey* xi, 77, we have a hint of the occasional use of more individual grave-marks, when the ghost of Elpenor begs Ulysses to give his body due burial, and to set up the dead man's oar upon his grave (πῆξαι τ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ ἑρπετῶν, τῷ καὶ ζωὴν ἔρεσσον). Obviously such a memorial would be but short-lived.

throughout the whole of the barrow-building ages. Quite possibly it owes something to both of these causes. It may be impossible to say when the building of dolmens began: there is no doubt at all that the round-barrow men built them freely, and there is no doubt that some dolmens were erected well within the limits of the historic period.¹ While there is no sufficient reason for regarding all dolmens as necessarily of immense antiquity, there is considerable reason to think them a late development in point of time, as they assuredly are in point of evolution.

It is scarcely to be doubted that the dolmen was originally intended to serve as an actual tomb and was therefore concealed under the grave-mound. In course of time it assumed greater and greater prominence, until it became first the visible monument crowning the grave-mound, and finally an independent structure irrespective of any mound at all.² Its evolution would seem to be precisely parallel with that which turned the rude stone cist of primitive times into the ornate beauty of a Roman sarcophagus, and produced from a forbidding tombstone the exquisite shrines and chantries of medieval times. It was again precisely parallel with that which evolved the symmetry of the naked disc from the symbolical buried circle of an earlier age. The more the labour spent upon the monument, the less likely is it that it should be purposely hidden out of sight. The dolmen, however, when thus erected *à jour* had mostly ceased to be the actual tomb. Whether it was put to any other use, and what such use may have been, are matters of pure conjecture. The only facts which seem to have any

¹ 'It is certain that' dolmens continued to be built 'in Africa under the Roman domination'; Baring Gould, *Deserts of Southern France* (1894) i, p. 179. Merrill (*East of Jordan*, p. 439) noticed their position 'on the line of a Roman road at commanding points.' Fergusson (*Rude Stone Monuments*) was led to suspect their connection with Christianity alike in India and in Ireland.

² Whether the dolmen was or was not covered with soil, is one of the most debated questions of archaeology. Wakeman (*Handbook of Irish Antiqs.* p. 52) says that, 'the great majority of existing cromlechs

(i.e. dolmens) in Ireland are, now at least of the free-standing order. Of these some, from the nature of their position and structure, could never have been the centres of tumuli. Others no doubt were covered'; and he cites G. A. Lebour (in *Nature*, May 9, 1872) as saying much the same of the dolmens of Finisterre. It is reasonable to surmise that in dolmens, as in other matters, there was a gradual development—that they represent the religious ideas of different ages throughout a long period of time; and that, while the earlier were simply tombs and no more, the later examples were rather in the nature of mortuary-chapels.

connexion with the matter are certain practices of Irish Christianity. In other words the dolmen not seldom seems to have a more intimate connexion with modern times than with any immeasurable past.¹

In almost every one of the forms assumed by the sepulchral ring the dolmen is to be found as the central feature. Covered with earth or stone it formed the grave-chamber of cairn or barrow, indifferently 'bowl,' 'bell,' and 'ring.' Brought out 'into the eye of light' it might stand, singly or in a group, upon the level platforms of 'table' barrows or in the arena of any form of ring-barrow. The encircling *limes* may be fosse or vallum or both, and the vallum may be of earth or of stone, or there may be a formal peristalith with or without fosse or vallum. Inasmuch as the dolmen needed very large blocks of stone, it is seldom found except where such blocks are abundant; and because stone is abundant in the dolmen-areas, the individual dolmen is commonly surrounded by a peristalith. The maker or mender of roads, the builder of dry dykes, the farmer in need of gate-posts, have between them destroyed hundreds of such peristaliths, and probably many hundreds of dolmens also; but a few of the latter

¹ Nothing that is said above is necessarily in conflict with the peculiar geographical distribution of dolmens. In England (excepting the group at Addington, Kit's Coty, and Coldrum, all within a very narrow area on the banks of the Medway, just north of Maidstone) there are none to be found east of a line drawn from Hull to Southampton. The fact does not prove that no others ever existed east of that line, but very possibly it was so. The dolmen at Coldrum has been partially explored and the results reported in *Journal Anthropol. Inst.*, xliii (1913). It was found that a number of interments, possibly all of the members 'of one family, or of several families united by common descent,' had been made within it. The dolmen stands upon and among old lynchets, enclosed within a rude megalithic compound of rectangular plan; and such lynchets are asserted to be of a date not earlier than the early Iron Age (O. G. S. Crawford, in *Geog. Journal*, lxi, pp. 342-366). There were no finds excepting a few worked flints and scraps of rude pottery. The bones were 'closely like' those from a Saxon cemetery of the seventh to eighth centuries at Folkestone. A. L. Lewis pointed out the close similarity

between the whole monument and certain examples from Denmark, Frankfort and Hanover, and believes it to be the work of a 'small prehistoric colony which came across from Germany and up the Medway.' This would account for its isolated position, but leaves its date undetermined. Possibly some further exploration of the rectangular compound will throw light on the matter. In the meantime all that can safely be said is that this particular dolmen was used as a tomb, and apparently as a family tomb. The dolmen called *l'Autel*, in Guernsey, was found to contain the remains of a great number of interments—piles of bones, mostly incinerated, and of all ages and sexes—and as many as 150 urns. See *Archaeologia*, xxxv, p. 244. The late Mr. W. Clarke of Wenvoe took a human skull and other bones out of a small ruined dolmen forming one of the great group at Dyffryn Golwch, Glam. The name of Dyffryn Golwch signifies 'valley of Worship.' Sepulture and religion being synonymous to the Celt, the name suggests a genuine tradition of the purpose of the dolmens, and increases the suspicion that they are frequently more recent than is usually believed.

have survived because of the immense size of the stones employed in their construction, irrespective of the fact that many of them were concealed from sight beneath barrows. Thus all trace of a peristalith, or indeed of any *limes* whatever, may have vanished while the dolmen remains intact.

The menhir ('long stone') is usually a solitary stone, unhewn of course, planted upright upon or close beside a grave. Occasionally it is found in pairs, and still more rarely in groups of three, four, or five; and in the latter case the five stones are commonly set quincunx-fashion, one in the centre, the other four at so many points upon the circumference of a circle described about the first. Menhirs are associated with all the various types of barrows, but not very commonly, doubtless because they could so easily be removed. On the other hand they occur in great numbers without any mark of sepulchral significance, in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland especially; and excavation having frequently failed to bring to light any trace of an interment, there is reason to think that many of them were never set up to mark graves at all.¹ Olaus Magnus mentions their use in Sweden as a means of determining time by the shadow,² and their convenience as boundary-marks was almost universally recognised; while yet others seem to have been objects of veneration, amongst the Celts especially, quite apart from any discoverable connexion with the grave. As grave-monuments they are the originals of the Greek *stele* and the Roman *cippus*. When the use of writing came in, the dead man's name was written upon the stone in oghams, in Latin characters, or in both; and the final development is to be seen in the lettered headstones in any Christian churchyard. The simplest means of marking a grave, the menhir was un-

¹ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* xxiii, 329. There were two white menhirs near the tomb of Patroclus, but the poet does not venture to decide whether they marked the tomb of some forgotten person, or were the goal-posts of some earlier people. Evidently there was no barrow associated with them; evidently it was understood that not all menhirs were sepulchral; and evidently, if Homer could not distinguish sepulchral from non-sepulchral menhirs, it may well be difficult for us to do so, some 3,000 years

later. It was the custom of certain tribes in India (e.g. the Mundas of Chota-Nagpur) to set up menhirs of 9 to 10 feet in height to the memory of their great men, but such menhirs (*bid-diri*) had nothing whatever to do with the grave of the person so honoured. This, with its own grave-slab (*sasang-diri*), was in the general burial-ground of the community.

² But if they were used for this purpose it by no means follows that they were originally set up for this purpose.

questionably one of the oldest, and remained in use longest, if indeed it be not still in use.

In some cases the place of the dolmen or the menhir is taken by a flat slab or flag-stone covering the actual grave, a form of monument which did not so readily lend itself to any striking evolution.

There is no doubt that all these various methods of marking a grave—barrows in all their manifold varieties, dolmens and menhirs and slabs—were the monuments of the select few only. The vast majority in all ages would be buried without any such memorials. For a few years their graves would be marked by a mound no more noticeable than that of a modern grave, and in a few years the one, like the other, would wholly disappear.

It is curious to note how exactly the various types of prehistoric grave-marks have persisted to the present time. In almost any old churchyard one may see first the multitude of nameless graves, marked, if marked at all, by nothing but the mound of soil in various stages of evanescence; secondly, those with headstones only; thirdly, a number marked by horizontal slabs with various degrees of ornament; and lastly, the select few whose memorial is in the form of the rectangular altar-tomb. These severally represent the humblest barrow, the menhir, the slab, and the imposing dolmen of pagan times.¹ The efforts of all the centuries have failed to produce a single original type of memorial, while on the other hand it is not rare for the modern mourner, in his craving for novelty, to hark back to the actual originals, setting up slabs, menhirs and even dolmens,² of pseudo-antique simplicity.

The *limes* was always of greater importance than was the grave-monument. If then the forms of the latter have persisted almost unchanged through so many centuries, would it be in any way surprising that the *limes* also should boast something of the same continuity? The wonder would rather be if it did not. It is to be seen to-day wherever there is a circular churchyard, and it is traceable still in hundreds more which have lost most of their original plan.

¹ Cf. R. N. Worth, in *Cornwall Roy. Inst. Journal*, xii (1896), p. 90.

² Such pseudo-dolmens are a noticeable feature of several of the churchyards of Wharfedale.

Even in modern days the fashion in memorials is largely governed by local conditions: where stone is abundant, every grave has a headstone, possibly also a kerb-stone, and altar-tombs are common; but where stone is scarce or altogether wanting, the mass must be content with transitory memorials of wood or with none at all. It is to be supposed that the same facts governed life in earlier days. If there are multitudes of dolmens and cromlechs and menhirs in the western parts of Britain and in the north, the primary reason is that there also there is abundant stone; if they are rare in other parts, it is less owing to the activities of the *démolisseur* than to the fact that, because stone was scarce, there was never any great number built. In such localities attention would be given rather to the *limes* than to the monument, and as a matter of fact the *limes* reaches its best development in the districts where stone, if not altogether absent, is certainly scarce. The case of the timber-built circle at Bleasdale, Lancs.¹ shows that occasionally the attempt was made to substitute wood for stone where the latter was scarce, just as wooden memorials take the place of stone in many modern churchyards. The simpler way, if monument there must be, was to rely rather on the barrow itself, and of all the long list of various forms of the barrow the finest and most elaborate belong to the relatively stoneless southern counties of England. Conversely, with the exception of Avebury and Stonehenge, the megalithic structures of those areas are not imposing or, save in Devon and Cornwall, numerous.

It is clear that in pagan times the circle was associated with death and burial. It was associated therefore with religion, for religion arose out of death and burial, nor has the world yet seen any religion which, though divorced from the recognition of death, has yet exercised any wide and lasting influence. The symbol might occasionally be treated freakishly, but freakishness never went so far as to leave out entirely the circle. Similarly in Christian art, variously as the form of the cross is treated, the basic symbol remains one and the same.

In the last century B.C. came in the urn-field, that is,

¹ *Proc. Lancs. and Ches. Antiq. Soc.* xviii (1900), pp. 114-124.

the practice of laying the dead in individual graves in one extensive cemetery, without any superficial mound to mark the grave, or at any rate none of such proportions as to have left any sign to-day.¹ The best-known example of this form of burial-place is that at Aylesford in Kent,² which Sir Arthur Evans attributed to an immigrant Belgic tribe. Unquestionably their culture was very high, as is shown by the forms and the quality of the urns, which were also wheel-turned. In this case it was not determined that the urn-field had ever possessed a common *limes*, and perhaps it was not to be expected, but in default of this the sacred symbol was nevertheless present with each interment, for each was laid in a carefully-formed circular pit sunk into the chalk to a depth of 2 or 3 ft., and in some cases carefully lined with some kind of chalky puddling as with cement. Not only so, but the individual graves were themselves disposed in circular groups, and this so systematically that the excavators, on finding one interment, knew by inference where to seek for the remainder of the group. Three other important facts were noticed. In the first place the tribe which used this urn-field for its burial-ground had usurped that of a tribe before them, some of whose graves, and much of whose rude pottery, were discovered. Secondly, there were found upon the spot the pits in which the burial-urns had been fired. And thirdly, the highly elaborate grave-furniture of the later comers was intimately associated with the same flint-flakes and scrapers as are found in other barrows belonging to peoples of a culture much less advanced.

The use of urn-fields did not apparently make any very extensive headway in Celtic Britain, the Roman Conquest interfering to prevent it; otherwise it would probably have spread widely, for such urn-fields were the logical consequent of the great disc-barrow with its merely formal *limes*. It made a fresh start with the advent of the Saxon tribes, with whom at large barrow-

¹ The continental term for such featureless graves is *Flachgräber*, 'flat-graves.' There must, however, have been some visible mark of each interment, else they could never have been disposed with the regularity which marks such urn-fields,

nor would it have been possible for the several interments to have been made so close together without interfering one with another.

² *Archaeologia*, lii (1890).

building was certainly exceptional. The Celts went on commemorating their dead mostly by one or other of the monuments already described, and all these various methods seem to have been practised simultaneously, the oldest side by side with the newest. 'Bowls,' 'bells,' 'discs' and 'rings' were in use at the same date and often in the same locality. Tribes, families, communities and individuals, claimed and exercised entire freedom of choice in these matters, and to write down any particular mound as of the Bronze Age, for example, without at least the warrant of scientific excavation, is as unlawful as it is misleading. Even where excavation has been made it is quite possible that there may be errors in the consequent deductions. The only point upon which the mass of archaeologists are agreed is that the disc-barrow is late in time, but not even archaeology can say off-hand when the first 'disc' was made and when the last.

Hackpen Hill¹ (887 ft.) lies 4 miles NNE. from Avebury. Along it runs from north to south the old British ridgeway, heading for a ford upon the Kennett river; and on the summit of the hill stood in Stukeley's time (1743) the remains of a 'temple' of oval plan consisting of two concentric rings of monoliths of an average height of 4 ft. to 5 ft. The inner ring measured 51 ft. by 45 ft., the outer 155 ft. by 138 ft.² As to whether it was ever surrounded by a fosse, Stukeley and Aubrey are at variance. Aubrey says that it was. One Dr. Toope, writing to Aubrey under date of 1 Dec., 1685, relates that he had personally visited it, and had dug up the bones of a large number of bodies which had been buried a foot only beneath the surface, in a double ring around the temple, 'so close that skull toucheth skull, their feet all turned towards the temple. . . At the feet of the first order [row] lay the heads of the next row, the feet always tending towards the temple.'³ The interspace between the bodies and the temple is given as 'about 80 yards.' There

¹ Otherwise Overton Hill. There is another Hackpen SW. of Wantage.

² The number of stones in either ring is unknown. The monument was to all intents destroyed when Stukeley saw it (*Abury*, p. 31, and pl. xxi).

³ The original letter is printed in Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wilts.* ii, 63, and reproduced by Fergusson, p. 76. Stukeley remarks (*loc. cit.*) that in his time the circle was still called the 'Sanctuary'; and 'sanctuary' for many centuries meant the same as 'cemetery.'

is no doubt at all that the main facts are as alleged, though it could be wished that we knew for certain that the ring of interments actually girdled the whole temple.¹ Even as the evidence stands it is clear that the circular monument was a *locus consecratus*, and that the dead were brought thither to be buried within its influence. In no other way can their peculiar disposition be explained. Of the race to which they belonged nothing is known.

The fashion of disposing the dead radially about some central point has been observed at Newport Pagnell, Bucks, at Cuddesdon, Oxon, at Shoeburyness, Essex,² and also in the great barrow at Driffield, Yorks, the only difference being that in the latter case the position of the individual body was reversed, and each lay with its head toward the centre.³ These cases are set down as Anglo-Saxon, and a parallel is found in a Frankish (Merovingian) cemetery at Vendhuile, Aisne, in France.⁴ In Anglesey the same disposition was noticed in burials around the Capel y Towyn, Holyhead, which stands upon 'a mound of sand 30 ft. high,' at the edge of the sea⁵; and in Ireland it occurred at St. John's Point, co. Down, where the burials were arranged in a double concentric circle, the central object being a pillar-stone.⁶ In this case the interments lay within the graveyard of the ancient chapel of St. John. On the north side of the church of St. Andrew at Ford, Sussex, was found in 1899 a 'singular interment. Six skeletons placed in a circle, the heads innermost, and radiating from a centre, were found at about 5 ft. below the present level of the churchyard. No pottery or other remains to give a clue to the age of the interments were found with them.'⁷ The writers who record this fact

¹ If they did, then the number must have been very great, for the burials, 80 yards distant from a temple of the dimensions given, will represent a circle with a diameter of at least 650 ft., and a circumference of 681 yards, enclosing an area of $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres. Closely packed as Dr. Toope describes them, their number must have been upwards of 2,000 bodies, with ample allowance for any avenue of approach.

² *V.C.H. Bucks*, i, 204; *V.C.H. Essex*, i, 327.

³ Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p. 276. These were all secondary interments intruded upon an earlier barrow covering a

large cist-vaen. 'In another mound in the same district a similar irregularity of orientation was observed' (Thurlow Leeds, *Archaeology of A.-S. Settlements*, p. 75).

⁴ E. Fleury, *Antiquités et Monuments du Département de l'Aisne*, pt. ii, p. 131.

⁵ Murray's *North Wales*, p. 76.

⁶ W. G. Wood-Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland*, ii, 313.

⁷ A. H. Peat and L. C. Halsted, *Churches of West Sussex* (Chichester, 1912), p. 90. The name of Ford is one amongst several pieces of evidence that the Roman coast-road from Chichester eastward to Portslade crossed the Arun at this point. In 1890

hazard the 'obvious supposition' that the persons here buried were 'not Christian, and therefore either Celts or heathen Saxons.' W. G. Wood-Martin similarly calls non-Christian those found at St. John's Point. But it is by no means certain that the graves in either case were not Christian, for the same arrangement was found in an admittedly Christian burial-ground in the Greek East. 'During the explorations at Ephesus the graves in the Christian cemetery were found radiating from a central point, which was supposed to have been the tomb of S. John the Evangelist.'¹ Here is proof that at some very early period Christianity practised this radial disposition of the dead, and the question arises whether the similar discoveries elsewhere be not all or mostly of early Christian date, especially as so many of them are upon sites still Christian. The notable lack of any grave-furniture points in the same direction. In Glen Malin, Glencolumbkille, in the extreme west of Donegal, are the remains of a group of 'twelve large stone-covered tombs arranged as the *radii* of a circle' about some central monument now vanished, which is conjectured to have been a dolmen.² Tomb of some sort it almost certainly was, and probably Christian also, for Glencolumbkille, as the name imports, was the scene of very early Christian activities. That the *umbilicus* of a Christian cemetery should take the form of a dolmen or of a cromlech is only 'improbable' because it has never been suggested.

On Meayll (or Mule³) Hill, near Port Erin, Isle of Man, was a circle of 18 cists arranged in six groups of three cists each, each group so disposed as to form the figure of the Greek *tau*. The cross-line of the *tau* (two cists) lay upon the periphery of a circle of 50 ft. in diameter, while the stem (one cist only) was directed outwards, so that the plan of the whole was that of a ship's steering-wheel with six grips. Within the cists were a number of urns, the burials having been all cremated. The whole series had originally been covered with a broad vallum of

(*Sussex Arch. Coll.* xliii, 105) were still to be seen traces of the causeway leading to the river. So the churchyard lay, as usual, close beside an old road.

¹ *Journal R.S.A. Ireland*, 1879, p. 106.

² C. P. Kains-Jackson, *Our Ancient Monuments*, p. 82.

³ The word means 'promontory'; cf. Mull of Cantyre (A. W. Moore, *Manx Place-names*).

earth, with a gap or gaps for entrance-ways at the north-west (? and on the south). In the centre had stood something not now determinable, apparently either a menhir or another cist.¹ The cists, it is said, were not of a construction to have been free-standing, and if they were covered with an earthen vallum, the whole must have presented once again the familiar circle surrounding some central feature. Whether the dead were Christian or pagan is another question. Christianity, it is true, strove early to abolish cremation, but there must have been a transition period during which cremation held its own, at least locally, and the evidence that it did so will be forthcoming in the sequel. The name of *Rhullick*² points rather to the graves being Christian, as does the seeming absence of all grave-furniture, and possibly also the peculiar *tau*-pattern of their disposition. The circular figure tells us nothing at all as to the creed of those interred within it.

Excellent examples of yet another type of sepulchral ring are provided by Crichtie and Tuack in Aberdeenshire,³ both of which have been carefully explored. They are small, that at Crichtie measuring 50 ft. in diameter, that at Tuack but 24 ft., but each is surrounded by a formidable fosse 12 ft. wide. At Crichtie access is provided to the inner 'island' by 9-ft. interruptions of the fosse at the north and the south of the circle. At Tuack the fosse is continuous. Around the edge of the 'island' had been set in each case six pillar-stones, and a seventh stood in the centre. Excavation proved the presence of a large number of burials in each case. At Crichtie there were interments, one or more, at the foot of each pillar-stone, and others near the middle, while in the actual centre was a pit containing a carefully made cist-burial filled in with stones, in which last the central pillar-stone had been bedded.

Broadly speaking, the evolution of the round barrow

is from an abruptly conical mound, in which height was the most noticeable feature, to a symmetrical circular enclosure, of which the outstanding feature was not height but area. The mound becomes always less a mound, the circle always more and more a circle. If we find Romans building barrows of the older types, as at Bartlow, Anglo-Saxons doing the like at Taplow, and Danes following suit, these are either conscious reversions to the older type, or the work of peoples who had not advanced far in the path of barrow-evolution.

The evolution was attended by a constantly increasing economy of labour. The great central grave-mound becomes gradually less lofty and finally disappears altogether. Fosse and vallum become always more formal and less real. There is the same difference between the earlier and the later barrows as between Avebury with its 40-ft. fosse and Stonehenge with its merely symbolical *limes*. The huge megaliths tend to disappear. In the last stage of the evolution the flat ring-barrow and the disc-barrow pass into the urn-field. But even here the primordial symbol of the circle long remained: the individual interments are laid in carefully circular graves, or grouped in circular clusters; in the last resort the ashes are inurned in a circular vessel. The Roman may now and then have used a square vessel, but not so the Celt. In matters which concerned sepulture the 400 years of the Roman *régime* left the Celtic fashion almost unaltered. After the Roman had departed the Celt went on in his old way, burying his dead always within the same ancient circular *limes*,¹ and the Saxon, with whom such matters had apparently been heretofore of no particular moment, so soon as he came to adopt a formulated religion, adopted also the Celtic sepulchral formulae. Latin Christianity's efforts of 1000 years could not wholly eradicate these, for so late as 1723 Stukeley could assert that 'in many places . . . the people bury their dead in or near' the 'Druidical circles.'²

¹ See *Trans. Biolog. Soc. Liverpool*, Oct. 13, 1893; *The Manx Note Book*, no. xii (Oct., 1887), p. 157. Fergusson (p. 158) gives a cut and plan, scoffing at an earlier plan to be found in *Arch. Cambr.*, 1866, 3rd ser. xii, p. 54. Borlase (*Nenia Cornubiae*) says that the spot is called

Rhullick y Lagg Shliggah, 'The Graveyard of the Valley of Broken Slates.'

² *I.e. reliquiae*, 'relics.'

³ Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan Times (Bronze Age)*, lecture ii; Stewart, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, i, pp. xx, xxi.

¹ Amongst the multitude of grave-monuments at North Moytura, co. Mayo, appear sporadically eccentric forms such as are frequent in Scandinavian cemeteries, e.g. triangular burial-places (W. P. Wood-Martin, *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland*,

p. 176). Such cases are, however, of the extremest rarity in the British Isles, far too few to affect the general argument here advanced.

² *Stonehenge*, p. 3.