

ON VARIOUS MONUMENTS IN INDIA, CORRESPONDING TO THE CROM-
LECHS AND STANDING STONES OF THE NORTH OF EUROPE.

The first portion of this communication was by Lieut. Henry Yule of the Bengal Engineers, and recorded the result of his personal observations during a journey through the hill country lying to the east of Bengal:—"On the

eastern frontier of Bengal, a hill people commonly called *Cossyas*, or, in their own language, *Kasi*, occupy a part of the mass of mountains which forms the south side of the Valley of Assam. The characteristic features of the people are strongly Mongolian. Their territory principally consists of a series of undulating table-lands from 4000 to 5000 feet above the sea, and embraces an area of about 1600 square miles.

“ A peculiar and striking aspect is thrown over almost every scene in the upper parts of this country by the remarkable monumental stones which are scattered on every wayside. These are of several kinds, but almost all of them recal strongly those solitary or clustered monuments of obscure origin, which abound in our native country, and are seen here and there in all parts of Europe and Western Asia. The most common kind in the Kasia country are composed of erect oblong pillars, sometimes nearly quite unhewn, in other instances carefully squared, planted in line a few feet apart. The highest pillar is in the middle (sometimes crowned with a circular disc), and to right and left they gradually diminish. In front of these is what English antiquaries call a *cromlech*, a large flat stone resting on short rough pillars. These form the ordinary roadside resting-place of the weary travellers. The blocks are sometimes of great size. The tallest of a cluster of pillars in the market-place of Nurteng (Plate IV.), rising through the branches of a huge old tree, measures twenty-seven feet in height above the ground. A flat table-stone, or *cromlech*, near the village of Lailang-Kot, elevated five feet from the earth, measures thirty-two feet by fifteen, and two feet in thickness at the edge. Near this village there is a field covered with these upright monuments as thickly as the churchyard of a populous European village.

“ In other instances the monument is a *Kist-Vaen*, or square sarcophagus, composed of four large slabs resting on their edges, and well fitted together, and roofed in by a fifth, placed horizontally. In Bell's *Circassia* may be seen a drawing of an ancient monument existing in that country, which is an *exact* representation of a thousand such in the Kasia hills; and nearly as exact a description of them, though referring to relics on the eastern bank of Jordan, may be read in Irby and Mangles's *Syrian Travels*. Other instances nearer home will occur to many, such as Kit's Cotty-house in Kent, between Rochester and Maidstone.

“ The sarcophagus is often found in the shape of a large slab accurately circular, resting on the heads of many little rough pillars planted close together, through whose chinks you may desery certain earthen pots or urns containing the ashes of the family. Belonging to the village of *Ringhot*, in the valley of *Mausmai*, deep in the forest, is a great collection of such circular cineraries, so

close that one may step from slab to slab for many yards (Plate IV.). Rarely you may see a simple cairn, or a pyramid, some twenty feet in height, and sometimes one formed in diminishing stones, according with the common notion of the Tower of Babel, or like the pyramid of Sakkara in Egypt. But the last is probably rather a burning place than a monument, or, at least, a combination of the two.

“The upright pillars are cenotaphs merely; and if the people are asked why their fathers went to such expense in erecting them, the universal answer is: ‘To preserve their name.’ Yet to few, indeed, among the thousands, can they attach any name. Many of the villages, however, appear to derive their appellations from such erections, as may be judged from the number commencing with the syllable *mao*, which signifies a *stone*; e. g., *Māo-smai*, ‘the stone of the oath;’ *Mau-mlū*, ‘the stone of salt;’ *Mao-flong*, ‘the grassy stone,’ ‘the upturned stone,’ and a score more. The first name (the oath stone) suggests that these pillars were also erected in memory of notable compacts. On asking an intelligent native the origin of the name, his answer was a striking illustration of many passages in the Old Testament. ‘There was war,’ said he, ‘between two of the villages, and when they made peace and swore to it, they erected a *stone for a witness*.’ Genesis xxxi. 45–48: ‘And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.’ Both signifying the *heap of witness*. ‘And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day.’ *Vide* also Josh. xxii. 34, and xxiv. 27. The name of *Mau-mlū*, ‘the salt stone,’ is probably of kindred meaning as the act of eating salt from a sword point is said to be the *Kasia* form of adjuration.

“These large slabs of stone are frequently formed into bridges for the passage of brooks; and most picturesque they often are. There is at Nurteng a bridge of this kind, consisting of one stone, thirty feet in length.”

The following notices of similar remains, observed in the Dekhan, forwarded for communication to the Society by Alexander Thomson, of Banchory, Esq., occur in a letter from Captain Meadows Taylor, addressed to the Bombay Government:—

“The most curious remains I have found in this district are those which appear to be Druidical, or Seythio-Druidical, and which, whether as Cromlechs, Kistvaens, Cairns, or Barrows, have the closest resemblance to European Druidical remains. On this subject, I have recently written to Dr Wilson of Bombay, giving an account of such discoveries as I have been able to make in the Shorapoor district, and included with them a notice of some similar re-

mains at a village in the Kanakagheree district near the Toombadra, which was visited at my request by a friend, the Rev. G. Keis, of the German Mission.

“ It is known that these remains exist in large numbers on the Neilgherries, in regard to which a valuable and interesting paper by Captain Congreve of the Madras Artillery, appeared in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, No. 32, and they have also been noticed in some parts of Mysore. I have no knowledge of their extending northwards further than the Theema in this district ; but as they extend to the Toombadra to the south, it is desirable, perhaps, to endeavour to trace them further, and I would recommend that the collectors of Dharwar, Belgaum, and Sholapoor, the officers of the Revenue Survey, if any in those districts, the political agent in the Southern Mahratta country, and the Commissioner of Sattara, be requested to institute inquiries as to the existence of any similar remains in their several jurisdictions, and to examine their contents.

“ I will not enter here upon a detailed description of these remains, but it may be fitting to mention that I find them of four kinds.

1. *Cromlechs.*

“ Erections consisting of three large slabs of stone set edgeways in the earth, with one large slab as a covering ; one side, usually the south, is open. These erections vary much in size, the large slabs I have seen are about twelve feet long, eight to ten feet broad, and half a foot thick. They do not contain any remains.

2. *Kistvaens or closed Cromlechs.*

“ These are similar to the others, only that all four sides are closed, and usually in the south slab, about the middle, is a round hole, from six to nine inches in diameter. These contain earthen vessels, filled with earth, calcined human bones and ashes, mixed with charcoal.

3. *Cairns.*

“ Circles of stones, double and single, surrounding small tumuli. When opened to a depth of eight to twelve or fourteen feet, stone chests, composed of slabs of stone, are found, containing skeletons, accompanied by remains of spear-heads and other weapons, &c. In others, larger vessels occur containing human bones and ashes, with charcoal, similar to the Kistvaens, and no stone chests.

4. *Barrows.*

“ These are larger than cairns, and consist usually of a group of several tumuli, or of one large one surrounded by others, as at Shapoor.



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“ The vessels in these cairns, &c., are all of the same character, strong earthenware, with bright red glaze ; some have a black glazing also, some are half red and half black. It is worthy of remark, that vessels of the same colour are found in these remains in Europe and on the Neilgherries.

“ As the subject is of considerable antiquarian interest in consequence of the coincidence of these remains and those of Europe, I trust I may be excused for directing such particular attention to them. It is very desirable that they should be traced as far as possible, with a view to define the boundaries of the expeditions in India of this probably Nomadic tribe. It would be curious also to trace whether any of these remains exist in Cutch, Guzerat, or Kandeish, as well as in the northern part of the Dekhan. Notice might also be given of the subject in Sindh, and if remains exist there, they might possibly be traced onwards, though this is a mere hypothesis.”

A letter was read from Dr T. A. Wise, of the Bengal Medical Service, expressing his regret that he was unable to be present at the meeting, but intimating that he would exhibit, on a future occasion, drawings of various monuments of the same class, examined by him in other parts of British India.