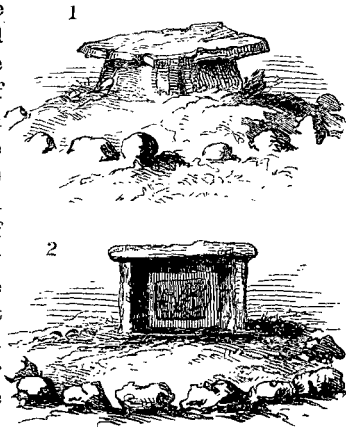


II.

NOTES AND DRAWINGS OF SOME ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF ASIA, COMPARED WITH THOSE OF EUROPE. BY T. A. WISE, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

There is between the ancient structures of Europe and those of Asia a resemblance so marked and peculiar, that it can be explained only by supposing the nations which erected them to have been originally derived from the same race. This people, which appears to have inhabited a central part of Asia, gradually spread itself over Europe on the one side, and Hindustan on the other; and in both those regions, remains strikingly resembling each other are seen. Lieutenant Henry Yule, in his interesting observations in the first part of the Society's Proceedings, has enumerated various parts of India where such remains are to be found, and many more might be enumerated. My present object is, by reference to some examples, to throw light on the common origin of the monuments in question; and to shew the modifications which the primitive idea and plan of some of them have undergone in the lapse of ages, as associated with the idolatry of the Hindus. Should we succeed in establishing an identity of origin, we may reasonably expect to explain some of the obscure points of the Celtic religion, by reference to the Hindu mythology of the present day.

1. *Kist-Vaens, or Stone Coffins.*—These are pretty numerous in wild and retired places in the Peninsula of India. The late Colonel Mackenzie, surveyor-general of India, made sketches of several of them, from which it appears that they resemble those found in different parts of Europe. (Fig. 1.) They consist of three or four flat stones placed on their edges, and another over the top of these. They appear to be more carefully rounded than those of Europe, and in the one found near Raidroog there was a rude attempt at sculpture, proving a certain advance in ornamental art. (Fig. 2.) In the rectangular chamber, thus prepared, earthen vessels were found containing the ashes of the dead. In some cases the southern end of the chamber was wanting; and, when present, a hole was found in it; probably to allow an entrance to the soul of the departed,

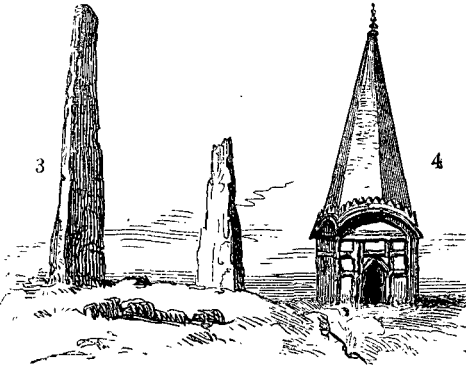


which was supposed to hover near the remains of the body for a certain time after death.

2. *Cromlechs*, as well as the *kist-vaens* we have mentioned, were probably used as altars, upon which sacrifices were offered up, even when these structures were merely cenotaphs; as I have seen wives burnt on the altar, when their husbands had died at a distance. In such cases it was considered necessary merely that the widow should have something in her hand, or upon her person, that had belonged to her husband. Some of these sepulchral structures had one or more circles of stones round them.

3. *Cairns and Burrows* are a third class of monuments common to Celtic Europe and India. These consist of a mound of earth, or probably a *cairn* of stones, as in one found near Hyderabad, in Central India. It was surrounded by a circle of stones, which exactly resembled that round a cairn I examined at Snaigow, in the Stormont district of Perthshire, the estate of the late James Keay, Esq., with the permission of Mrs Keay, and the kind assistance of the Rev. Mr Campbell of Caputh. We divided the cairn by a trench, and found in it the remains of a rude and imperfectly baked urn containing ashes.

4. *Obelisks or Standing-Stones*.—Large tapering, erect stones or obelisks, such as are placed over the dead in all Celtic countries of Europe, are also found in Central India, as well as in Bengal and its neighbourhood. Plate IV., of the first part of the Society's Transactions, contains a characteristic example. The drawing (fig. 3) represents such stones, as found in Central India by Colonel Mackenzie, and copied by Mrs Graham. What renders this monument interesting is, that it appears to have formed part of a cairn, similar to that mentioned above, which was surrounded by a circle of stones. In many parts of India, however, such large blocks of stone are not to be procured, and pyramidal structures, spires, or "*muts*," evidently modifications, under the pressure of circumstances, of the original monolithical erection, were had recourse to. These are still erected by rich Hindus. They are sometimes cenotaphs, at other times mausoleums. In the former case, the wealthy erect these buildings as memo-



rials of the dead ; and in the latter, over the ashes of their relations, or over a bone of their body, after it has been purified by fire, on the banks of a sacred river. In this way each of the Maha Rajahs of Tipperah has a spire erected over a bone of his predecessor, on the banks of the sacred Teeta River. (Fig. 4.) A favourite wife, particularly if she had become a Sutte, had often a "mut" erected over some of the ashes of the body. In these cases, the spires were usually smaller than those over the husband. These "muts" often contain an image of Siva or Kalee ; others contain a *linga* (priapus), or a flat stone supporting a central pillar, representing the regenerator Siva, or nature, under the male and female symbols. These buildings are varied according to the means and the taste of the individual. In general they consist of one, but in other cases of many spires. I have selected a few, for the examination of the Society, as they are found in the eastern parts of Bengal.

5. *Circles of Stones.*—The circles of stones appear to have formed sacred spots, intended for other purposes besides that of depositing the remains of the dead. These examples were found in the same retired places as the cromlechs in Central India. They are often of the same size as in this country, and like them are formed of boulders. As the arts improved in Europe, the light of Christianity was introduced, and the erection of these structures was abandoned. But in India, where idolatry held its ground, the arts, as they advanced, were employed in their enlargement and embellishment. The objects and edifices of superstitious veneration were increased in size, until they attained the scale which we find exemplified in the remains of the vast structure of *Depaldinna*, the Hill or Mound of Lights, near Amrawatty, in Central India. There we see immense excavations, surrounded by concentric circles formed of vast numbers of stones, beautifully sculptured with mythological figures and inscriptions, in two or three different languages which are now unknown. The inner circle of this gigantic structure is about 160 feet in diameter. It may also be stated that in the neighbourhood are numerous remains of kist-vaens, circles, barrows, &c.

Some years ago I examined two interesting structures or temples, which had all the essential features of the stone-circle, and of the ancient temples of Central India. They are situated near the banks of the sacred Bargarittee, or Hooghly River, at Culna, and belong to the Maha Rajah of Burdwan. In this temple there are two concentric circles of stones of marble, formed into 108 lingas, with a temple over each. The external circle is formed of alternate white and black marble pillars ; the internal circle entirely of white marble. The outer circle had its entrances north and south, and the inner east and west, much in the same manner as in the remains of the large temple of *Depaldinna* in Central India ; and while in the centre of this there was a tank, the

temple in Bengal, where worship is regularly celebrated, has a well of water, the Yoni, the symbol of Parvati, the female energy. A second circle of temples appeared to be merely a modification of the other.

These examples shew that no fewer than five of the structures commonly called Celtic, abounding in the west of Europe, are also common in India ; with modifications, indeed, in some instances, but only such modifications as circumstances naturally originated. This appears to justify the inference, that the races which introduced them into these widely separate parts of the world, were of identical origin ; and while they shew the importance of securing accurate plans and drawings of such monuments, before they entirely disappear from this country, they indicate a quarter from whence the obscurities which hang over the early customs and religion of Western Europe may be eventually cleared up.

This communication was illustrated by a series of original drawings.

Dr D. WILSON announced that the restorations on the interior of the Chapel of St Margaret, in the Castle of Edinburgh, which had in a great measure originated from the exertions of the Society, were now nearly brought to a conclusion. And the Society resolved, on the invitation of Colonel PHILPOTTS, Commanding Royal Engineer for Scotland, to hold a meeting in the Chapel, on Monday, 21st March.

A Painted Glass Window, which had been prepared by Mr BALLANTYNE, for the west end of the Chapel, was exhibited, adorned with appropriate devices, and bearing an inscription, referring to Queen Margaret as founder of the Chapel in the year 1093, and to its restoration in 1853.

The Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries accordingly met in the Ancient Chapel of St Margaret, Edinburgh Castle, on the day above mentioned, to inspect the Restorations now completed, and were much pleased with the manner in which these had been carried into effect.

April 11, 1853.

JOHN M. MITCHELL, Esq., in the Chair.

The following Gentleman was elected a Fellow of the Society:—

ALLAN MACPHERSON, Esq., younger of Blairgowrie.