XL. *Further Observations on Pen-maen-mawr. By Governor Pownall. In a Letter to Mr. Gough.*

Read at the SOCIETY of ANTIQUARIES, Nov. 10, 1774.

SIR,

Sept. 28, 1774.

IN the account which I gave to the Society of the *Mount* of Pen-maen-mawr, called *Bre-y-Dinas* *, I said that the publick might expect a more particular account from Mr. Pennant, who had gone twice over it, and did intend to have an actual survey made of it.

I DID take upon me to be positive, that the place *had never been a fortress*, as it was supposed to be by the account which Dr. Gibson transcribed into his edition of Camden. I supposed it to be one of those Druidical HIGH PLACES which were *separated off from common profanation*, and were consecrated to the holy offices of divine worship. I did suppose that the circles, which were said to be within its enclosures, were holy compartments, exactly of the same kind as those found at Carn-bre in Cornwall. It did appear to me, who had traced the *vestigia* of the temple of Carn-bre, to be a temple of the very same kind. Mr. Pennant has since caused a more accurate draught to be taken of its parts,

* See before, p. 303.

and

and has in the most obliging manner sent me a drawing of it. Captain Grose was so kind, as to make an etching of this drawing, and it is hereunto annexed. The drawing would make a companion to that which Mr. Borlase made of Carn-bre. The forms of the general enclosure and of the interior adyte are almost precisely the same; and the little circular enclosures lie dispersedly scattered about exactly in the same manner.

IF we may compare the profane rites of Idolatry to the sacred ones of the pure worship of the Spirit in Truth; we shall find in the outward and visible forms enough to mark, that, although they were corrupt and become abominable, yet they were originally derived from the true and sacred source.

WE read of *the Mount of God*, even prior to the Mo-
saic institution (Exodus, xviii. 5.). And, previous to the com-
mencement of this institution, on the spot *where the Lord*
came down upon Mount Sinai, to deliver the Law to his people,
the consecration of the Holy Place was by the same forms as this
appears to lie under. First, the Mount itself was separated by
one general line of consecration enclosing the whole. Next, the
Mount is divided into an outward and holy, an inward and more
sacred *holy of holies*, the place of the Presence, or Symbol. The
people at large were prohibited, under the highest denunciations
of divine vengeance, and by the severest capital penalties, from
intruding upon the Holy Mount. The priests were indeed per-
mitted to *come near*, and to enter into the first orb, within the
first enclosure; but the high-priests alone could approach and
enter into the *Place of the Presence*. Exodus, xix. 12.
“And thou shalt *set bounds* unto the people round about, say-
“ing, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the
“Mount, or touch the *border of it*: whosoever toucheth the
“Mount shall be surely put to death.” Ver. 20. “And the Lord
“called

“ called Moses up to the *top of the Mount*: and the Lord said unto
 “ Moses, Go down, and charge the people, lest they break through
 “ unto the Lord to gaze, and many perish.” Ver. 22. “ And
 “ let the priests also, *which come near to the Lord*, sanctify them-
 “ selves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.” Ver. 24. “ Thou
 “ shalt come up, Thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the
 “ priests and people break through:” that is, let each keep
 within the bounds appointed as before for each. The priests
 might *come near to, but not enter into*, the place of the Presence,
 at the *top of the Mount*: the people were to remain without, nor
 was a hand to touch, the border of the Mount.

WITH these ideas let us view the plan of *this* consecrated Mount. Here is, first, *an outward line of holy separation*, by which the whole Mount is consecrated. There is next, a double and *more sacred separation*, by which *the Top of the Mount*, the BRE-Y-TINAS, *the Mount of the Holy Fire*, or the Representative Presence, is made secrete and sacred: into this the arch-druid, or high-priests alone could enter. The space between the outward and inward, or more sacred, line of separation was the *Pronaos*, in which all the *secondary* rites of religion, and all those duties *wherein religion mixed with the civil*, were performed: such as the ordinary sacrifices, the consecration of the children, the judgments, the teachings and divining, and lastly the burials. Hence it is, that in this space were found cromlechs, cistvaens, judgment-seats, holy basins, rocking-stones, and these circular chapels. I do not mean to be understood as supposing that all these several particulars are to be found within this space, on this Holy Mount, now the subject of my inquiry; but in this, and in that of Carn-bre, I may venture to say all may be enumerated. In my former paper I had, in the spirit of conjecture, said I would call this Mount Carn-bre as well as that in Cornwall so called.

But,

A Plan of the Top of Penmaen Mawr

But, since I have been taught, by Mr. Bryant's and Major Valency's learning, the rites of the Fire-worship, and especially those which were performed on *the tops* of mountains, I am bold to hazard the calling this hill (whose vulgate name is pronounced *Bre-y-Dinas*, The Hill of the City) BRE-Y-TINAS, *The Mount of Fire*. I need not rummage over quotations to prove, that on these cars was lighted up the *sacred fire of Bel*, or Baal; and that they were actually the *presence-place* of this fire of Baal: it would be needless to any one the least learned in these matters; it would be impertinent to this learned Society to do it. But, when I am taught by Mr. Bryant (for this peculiar I first learnt from him) that many of these mounts had *a double car*, representing the breasts of a woman, and were therefore called Λόφοι Μασοειδεῖς, and then contemplate *the particular mammulary form of this double car*, I cannot suffer myself to doubt one moment of the precise nature of it. Far be it from me to assimilate, by the most distant comparison, the sacred rites to the profane abominations of Idolatry: yet if I might suppose, that in the earliest times, or in some such remote and separate corner of the earth as this is, the people did yet retain, not wholly corrupted, the old patriarchal rites, such as the Holy Scriptures frequently speak of as prior to, and cotemporary with, the revealed religion of the Lord; I could, after viewing this place, and reading the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, describing the most sacred ceremony of the true religion, raise up to myself some lively images of the imitative, but false and superstitious, ceremonies of the beggarly elements of the Fire-worship.

THAT the tombs and burial-places were within the precincts of the temples, one might prove by numberless quotations and facts. One taken from Virgil, descriptive of this custom, will be sufficient:

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Tum vicina astris Ericino in vertice sedes

Fundatur Veneri Idaliæ ; tumuloque sacerdos

Et lucus late sacer additur Anchisæo [g].

Here we find the tomb of Anchises, erected within the temple of Venus, *itself established as a kind of chapel, with a priest*, something similar to the Romish chapels erected for saying masses for the dead, to whom these chapels are dedicated. The small circular holy compartments, found within the precincts of the *Pronaos* of this temple, were certainly of this kind.

UPON the whole, these very curious remains of Antiquity are not only an existing exemplar of those temples dedicated to the antient Fire-worship, which with such uncommon learning Mr. Bryant has first explained to the world ; but the parts point out the real existence, and explain the nature, of many of the ceremonies of the old religion, of which we knew, or perhaps yet know, so little. I cannot therefore conclude without wishing to have it marked, that this temple, this *Bre-y-Tinas*, and the Carn-bre, are two the most curious pieces of Antiquity that are to be found perhaps in the known parts of the world. They certainly deserve the most accurate examination, and the most attentive consideration ; and if, in this little memoir (*fungar vice cotis*), I could hope to raise the curiosity of the learned, I am sure some of these inquiries will lead to many very important discoveries. If the curious and the learned copy the example of Mr. Penant, we shall begin to understand what we have been used only to stare at with wonder ; and Antiquities will become objects of knowledge, instead of mere curiosity.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

T. POWNALL.

[g] *Æneid. lib. v. ver. 760.*

XLI. *An*