

Excursion : Wednesday.

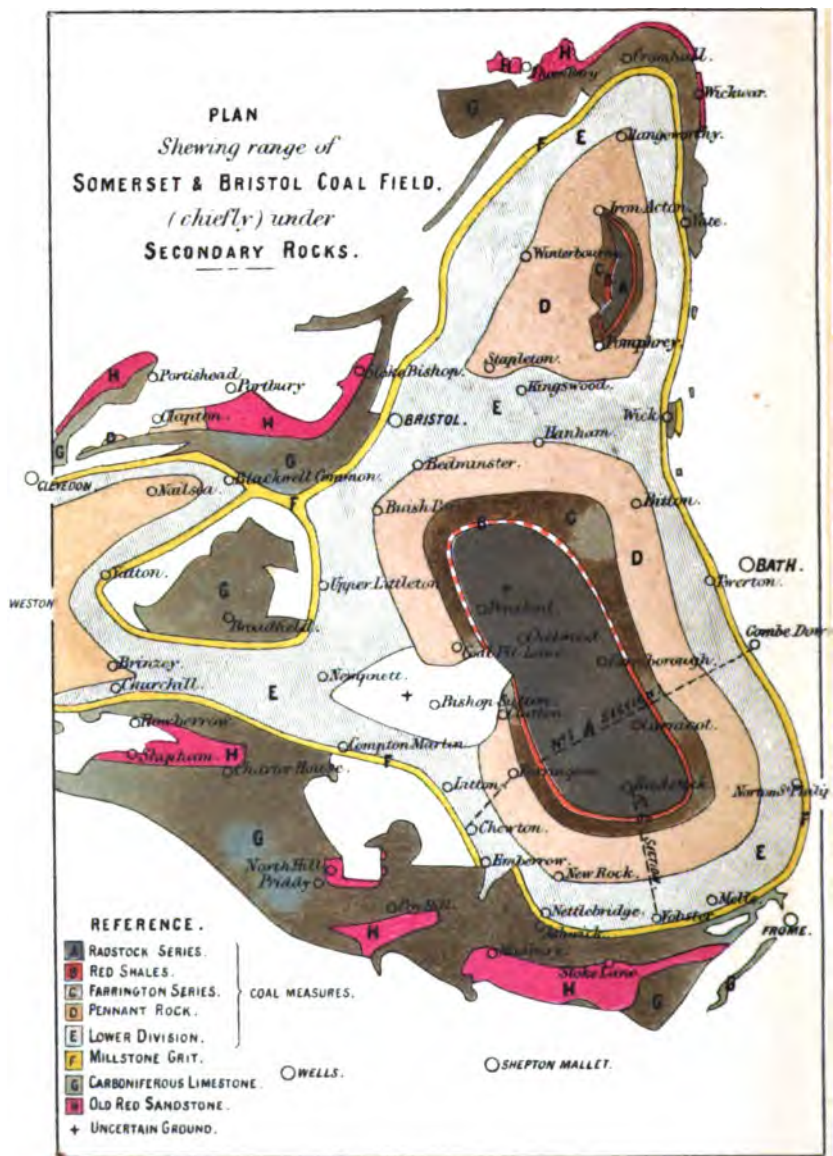
A large number started from the George at 10 a.m. for the Excursion. The road taken led over Innox hill, from which there was a beautiful view of the town, and then entered Orchardleigh Park, formerly the seat of the Champneys family, where a new house has been built by the present owner, Sir Wm. Duckworth. A halt was made on Murtry hill to examine the Cromlech. The Society visited these stones on July 11th, 1850 (Vol. I. part i. p. 40), but they do not seem to have been looked upon with the attention which they most certainly deserve. On this occasion the Society was fortunate in the presence of one of its members, the Rev. E. L. Barnwell, the Secretary of the Cambrian Archæological Association, one of the

most judicious and learned authorities on primeval monuments. The substance of Mr. BARNWELL's explanation, which he has prepared for the Society, is as follows :—

Orghardleigh Stones.

Although these primitive remains are unusually (even for this class of remains) scanty and imperfect, yet they are by no means unimportant or devoid of interest. Of their real character there can be little doubt, and they are rightly described in the Ordnance Map as what is popularly known as a Cromlech. It may not, indeed, in the present instance be easy to present a complete restoration of the original structure without a considerable amount of conjecture : an element in such matters to be handled with caution, and not used, as lately has been the case in a well known instance, with unqualified audacity, as if mere guess work and undoubted facts were one and the same thing. The character however of these stones is so patent to every one who has had the opportunity of examining similar ones, that it is unnecessary to dwell on a modern tradition that these stones are not ancient at all, but were erected by a former owner of the estate for some curious reason ; but if report speaks truly, that gentleman was the most unlikely of men to have thus amused himself by setting a trap for unwary antiquaries or for his private amusement. But another and a genuine local tradition exists which annihilates the one alluded to, for the natives of the district to this day have a dread of passing near the stones except in broad daylight, as if there were still remaining the notion that they marked a place of burial, or perhaps of Pagan rites, in which Satan may have taken an active part. Such traditions are not uncommon both in these islands and France, although they vary in details. Among them is the one connected with remarkable line of tall stones near Fishguard, marked on the Ordnance Map as *Parc-y Marw*, or *field of the dead*, to avoid which the peasants after night all make an enormous detour to the left as one goes towards Newport. This

PLAN
Shewing range of
SOMERSET & BRISTOL COAL FIELD.
(chiefly) under
SECONDARY ROCKS.



circuitous route was formerly on the open heath, long since enclosed, but stiles have been placed probably to prevent persons making gaps through the fences. This deviating path is now the regular pathway used after nightfall, for in the day time there does not appear to be the same dread of passing near the stones. The story of the Lady in White haunting these mysterious relics, although firmly believed, may be a comparatively late addition to the earlier superstition. To find something of the same feeling in Somersetshire in connexion with a similar memorial, as in the present instance, is not devoid of interest ; for that the Orchardleigh stones are connected with a burial place may be assumed as a fact, or if not exactly an established fact, it is a conclusion arrived at both from analogy and common reason. The original work in its complete state consisted of a large mound, the base of which, but at some short distance, was surrounded by a circular bank of earth. Between this and the base of the mound is a small stone, not of the same kind as the larger ones, of oolite, and as in many instances graves were surrounded by circles of stones placed at regular intervals, the stone in question may be one of these, and the last survivor of the ring. Whether others exist beneath the ground might be ascertained by probing with an iron bar, as such a mode of disposing of such stones by burial was sometimes thought easier than by carting away or breaking up. In ordinary cases the grave proper is found on or near the original level in the centre of the mound. In the present instance it is a little on one side. Whether there was a second and more central chamber cannot now be ascertained, but as there are many instances of two, three, or even more, such chambers under one tumulus, there is no reason why this also may not be an instance of the kind. In the cases of urns, or other similar interments of a smaller class, the finding of them under the shoulder of the tumulus is not uncommon. A mound of the size required in this case could not be heaped up without much labour, and therefore would be utilised by secondary and subsequent inter-

ments, and in many cases the original mound is added to from time to time, thus forming the long barrows not uncommon in the adjoining county of Wilts.

The remains of this chamber have been so mutilated and ill-treated that the exact dimensions and position cannot be satisfactorily made out. The large upright stone is evidently a part of, or one side of it; the smaller stone leaning against it has been broken. In its complete state it may have formed the opposite side, but the whole arrangement is very uncertain. Nor is it a matter of much consequence. All that is important to establish is that the present stones have formed part of an original chamber, and have been covered over by a mound.

Prebendary Clutterbuck, the vicar of the parish, stated that after digging at the foot of the larger stone, to a distance equal to its height above the ground, the labourers were unable to reach to the bottom of it, so that the actual length of it is not known, nor is it worth ascertaining at the risk of overthrowing it. The sinking such stones so deeply into the ground was not done without reason, for as they had to bear a ponderous capstone or cover, as well as the superincumbent earth or stones, of which the enveloping mound was composed, it was of the utmost importance that their perpendicular position should be preserved, as under such great pressure any inclination of them would probably become fatal to the chamber. And it should be remembered that the capstones also are necessarily enormously massive to enable them to bear the weight of the artificial mountain resting on them, so that extra pressure is thus exerted on the supporters, which would give way unless the stones retained their vertical position. Hence we have an indirect argument in the deep sinking of the supporters that every chamber without exception was once buried beneath a tumulus. It is true that many now exposed and dilapidated stones have not the least trace of any covering material near them, and are sometimes found on bleak rocky ground where at the present time neither soil or small stones exist; and hence

some have doubted in such cases whether there ever had been a tumulus, especially if the remains are of any height and size. But whatever some may think of the difficulty of heaping up such artificial mounds, the simple answer is that there are several still existing after the lapse of centuries which could cover at once half a dozen of the largest cromlechs in these islands. As to the want of the necessary material being any objection, it may be replied that centuries ago what is now barren heath may not always have been so, and, even if it had been, what was required could be brought to the spot, especially when there was no want of the necessary hands. The well-known *Tumiac* mound, opposite Locmariaker in the Morbihan, said to be the largest in Britany, has partly been constructed of layers of sea-sand, placed at intervals, which sand could only have been brought up from the sea shore below with immense labour. Plenty of other suitable material was available on or near the spot, but for some unknown reason these bands of sand were added. It is clear then that the usual arguments against the universal use of mounds over chambers are of little value. Of late indeed a new fact has been discovered by the well-known Mr. James Fergusson, D.C.L., namely that the constructors of the larger megalithic monuments built them to show future ages how clever and strong they were, and therefore could not have intended them to be covered up. But the statement is based on mere assumption of the most gratuitous kind, unsupported by fact or tradition, or even common sense. It does not therefore require any further notice than to state that it proves how pressed the upholders of the theory of free-standing cromlechs (or cromlechs never covered up or intended to be covered up) must be to bring it forward.

The most interesting feature of the Orchardleigh monument is the earthen bank which encircles it. Many instances of mounds surrounded with a low ditch are found, but the raised bank is much more rare. Originally the latter may have been more numerous, and have since been levelled and the soil

spread over the ground, if suitable for the land. The well-known example of Maybrough, near Penrith, has an encircling wall of loose stones, strong enough to form a defensive work, but within the circle is a single upright stone, one of the so-called Druidical stones. It may have been used in after times as a defensive work, but it seems to be of the same kind of monument of which Abury is the grandest example, for it is certain that its huge circular bank was not for defensive purposes. In this large circle there was probably more than one mound, covering stone chambers, each surrounded by its own circle of stones. There are of course other details in Abury, which may be considered additions or rather adjuncts, such as the lining the inner edge of the mound with pillar stones, and the diverging avenues. But these do not necessarily alter the character of the original work, which may be described simply as a large circular space containing various burial places, all surrounded with the enormous bank of chalk still perfect except in one part. On a much more humble scale, the Orchardleigh monument seems to be of a similar nature, the earthen bank enclosing two chambers, one more central—now no more—and the other on one side, both probably once being covered by the same mound. Relics of this class and time are rare in the county, which however possesses one of interest hardly inferior to that attached to Abury and Stonehenge, and which we trust is safer from the destroyer than Abury itself was a few months ago. The Orchardleigh stones are at present in safe hands, but the time may come when the improving landlord or his tenant may, for the sake of the little additional space, sweep it away. It is the more important therefore that a faithful record and illustration of it as it is, its dimensions and arrangement, should be carefully prepared and committed to the pages of the Journal of the Society, where at least it will be spared for the information of future generations.

A discussion then took place as to the geological nature of the stones. Rev. H. H. WINWOOD stated that the two upright ones were inferior oolite, and the third a piece of millstone grit

found in the immediate locality. Soon after leaving the Park the pretty village of

Lullington

was reached, and a long halt was made at the church. A paper on this interesting building, by Rev. D. M. Clerk, with a lithograph of the interior, will be found in the *Society's Journal*, Vol. II. pt. ii. p. 86. It consists of a nave without aisles, a square and rather heavy central tower with an octagonal staircase turret, a chancel, and on the south side of the nave a large transept and porch. On the north side of the nave is a Norman doorway, with twisted columns, surmounted by capitals, on which are carved the figures of animals. Within the crown of the arch are two animals on either side of a cross, and above is a figure of the Lord sitting as Judge of the World.

Mr. E. A. FREEMAN said that the outline of the church was most singular. The transept-like building was, he should think, bigger at one time than the nave. He remembered that there was a somewhat similar projection in St. Giles's Church, Northampton, but it was altogether different in outline from this. The church was built originally without aisle or transept, and this great projection had been added in the first half of the fourteenth century, as a chapel. The tower was Perpendicular, but it had something of the lowness and massiveness of the original Norman building. He had heard it suggested that the Norman church had an apse, but, as there was no certain rule, the question could not be decided without digging. As regards the interior, Mr. Freeman said that it would require a very minute examination to make even a guess at the different pranks which had been played with the tower arches. It was evident that, when the present tower was built, the Norman arches were tampered with, and brought into their present shape. He was glad to see the choir in its proper place under the tower between the nave and chancel.

Mr. J. H. PARKER, C.B., said that the church was transitional Norman, with a chantry chapel of the time of Edward II

added to it, in the form of a transept. The building had been carefully restored, but he must protest against the folly of encouraging ivy to grow over the walls, and thus for the sake of a present picturesque effect probably endangering the safety of the building in the future. The carved stone in the churchyard wall belonged to the eleventh century, and that in the vestry to the twelfth. He drew attention to the rich Norman font with its inscription—

HOC FONTIS SACRO PEREVNT DELICTA LAVACRO.

No one present was able to make out the remains of the other inscription, upon the edge. From Lullington the party drove to

Norton S. Philip,

and drew up at the famous George Inn.

Mr. PARKER said that, though the Society had visited this house before, they were doing rightly in coming again, as many who were present at their first visit had passed away, and those who now came for the second time would probably be able to understand the building better than when they had been there for the first time. He pointed out the gables and chimneys, and said that it was a remarkably fine house of the kind, and that there was no doubt but that it was built early in the fifteenth century.

Rev. W. HUNT said that in Murray's *Handbook* it was stated that the house was formerly the grange of the Prior of Hinton.

Mr. DAVIS said that he believed the house had always been an inn, and in confirmation of his view pointed out a corbel by the door, which he believed to have been placed there to support the sign. Norton was always a great place for wool, and a wool market is said to have been held in the house.

Rev. W. HUNT thought that the two stories might be connected. It was certain that Philip S. Norton belonged to the Carthusians of Hinton Priory, and that in the time of Edward I the market and wool fair of Norton belonged to the Prior, as well as the patronage of the church and other rights: that it was not unlikely that the George Inn was also the property of the Priory, and that, though used as an hostelry, the large upper

room might also have been used for the purposes of the wool trade of the Priory.

Mr. WALTERS said that it was here that the Duke of Monmouth slept on the night of June 26, 1685 ; that the next day the rebel troops got the better of the royalist advanced guard in a cavalry skirmish, and were able in consequence to make their entrance into Frome ; that, it was said, in hopes of the reward offered for the life of the Duke, a man fired at him as he stood at a window of this house, on which, according to a ballad, the Duke

“ gently turned him round

And said, “ My man you’ve missed your mark

And lost your thousand pound.”

The Church is dedicated to S. Philip and S. James.

Mr. FREEMAN described the tower as one of the most irregular he had ever seen—one that some man had devised out of his own head without reference to any other tower. It was not at all of any Somersetshire type, nor of any other type that he was used to in any part of England. The only point which it seemed to have in common with any class of towers was the staircase turret, and that it shared with the Bristol type of western towers. Let them look at the tower, from the bottom to the top, and see how different it was. If they took the best of the western towers, they would see that there was a steady growth of ornament and lightness from the base to the summit, but the ornament in this tower was scattered about, and the lower stage was much richer than the upper ; there were panelling and niches down to the very bottom, while the battlements were quite plain. The arrangement of the church was eccentric from beginning to end. In the inside there was nothing that could be called a regular arcade. There were undoubtedly three arches on one side ; on the north side there were two that agreed and one that did not. The two that did agree were at both ends with one of another character between them. They were mere pieces of masonry, and the walls must

have been cut through in a strange fashion. In the arcade of the nave was a panelled arch without any shafts, of a kind not uncommonly used between a chapel and a chancel. Here was a case where local records would be of use, in showing the changes which had taken place. If they could ascertain that there had been a series of chapels they might understand what had been done. The best feature of the church was the tower arch, but it appeared too tall for the remainder of the church. The building would look better if there was a clerestory. He pointed out that there were two squints. As to the roof, he said it made him sigh and groan to find the very best features of English, and the special features of West-country architecture done away with.

Mr. PARKER said it appeared to him that chapels had been added to the church, and afterwards turned into aisles. He asked whether there had been a clerestory.

Mr. FREEMAN replied that he saw no signs of it.

A visit was then made to the dovecote of the Manor House. It is a square building of the Elizabethan era, and is in fine preservation. It is entered by a low door, and has one small window. The walls are pierced inside with a great quantity of square holes, for the nests of the pigeons.

Sanleigh Hungerford

was the next place visited. A full description of the Castle by Rev. Canon Jackson, with plans, will be found in the Society's Journal, Vol. III. pt. ii. p. 114. A luncheon was provided in the grounds by the kindness of some gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and afterwards

Mr. PARKER led the party over the site of the former buildings. His description did not differ in any material point from that given by Canon Jackson. He said that the chapel was remodelled in the time of Henry VIII. The walls are covered with a medley of arms and armour of different dates and nations.

Mr. KING pointed out a suit of chain mail as of Eastern make ;

and a doublet of heavier links, which hung close by, was, he said, of English make of the thirteenth century.

Mr. HUTCHINGS said that the carving of the reredos was certainly not genuine, and looked suspiciously like part of an old bedstead.

The Parish Church is dedicated to S. Leonard, and was built by Sir Walter Hungerford in 1443. The only remarkable thing about it is an inscribed stone over the south porch, which was doubtless once the tympanum of a Norman doorway. It bears the inscription—

“Muniat hoc templum cruce glorificans microcosmum

Quæ genuit Christum miseris prece fiat asylum.”

Beckington Church

was the next halting place, and was commented on by Mr. FREEMAN. He said that before the Perpendicular people began to pull the tower about, it must have been a remarkably good specimen of Norman work. Inside the tower could be seen two Norman windows completely blocked up, one of them by a strange buttress; the belfry window was very fine. It was to be noted that this church had a clerestory, and at the same time high pitched roofs to the aisles—a most unusual thing. Inside the church, Mr. Freeman said that there the original character of the building could be easily seen. There was the lean-to of the original roof, which spoke for itself. The church was evidently at one time much smaller, and had no aisles. It had been rebuilt in Perpendicular times on a good deal larger scale. The herring-bone masonry was a bit of the old Norman church. He must make a protest against the barbarous custom of scraping off the plaster from the inside of the walls of churches, and thus leaving them as bare inside as they were outside. The church in which they stood was an example of the mischief which this senseless custom did: the effect of the inside was thoroughly spoiled by the appearance of the bare rubble walls. If the interior were finished with fine ashlar it would be reasonable enough to have it uncovered, but there was

no sort of reason for scraping off the plaster from rubble walls, and so exposing the rudeness of the material, and making the church look as if it were turned inside out. The old custom was to cover rough walls inside with plaster, and the sooner modern architects condescended to return to the old paths the better. It was said that Richard the Fearless when he built a certain church painted it inside with histories, it would be difficult to do that here. Before ending his remarks he must ask people to remember that one of the foremost of the Somersetshire worthies, Bishop Beckington, took his name from this place.

Mr. PARKER expressed his entire agreement with what Mr. Freeman had said about stripping off the plaster from the inside of churches. He asked those present to observe the roof, which he considered singularly good.

Mr. TALBOT said that from what appeared on the walls he could not but think that at one time the roof timbers sprung quite low down just above the capitals of the pillars.

Mr. PARKER said that that was probably the case before the clerestory was put in.

Rev. S. L. SAINSBURY, the rector, kindly entertained the company on the rectory lawn. Before leaving some of the party visited two of the old houses, in which the village is rich. One, occupied by Mr. Meade King, was not only well worth a longer visit from its architectural beauty, but also as containing a rich collection of objects of art, majolica ware and such like, which came from Italy, many of them having formerly belonged to religious houses, and having been sold at their suppression.

After the dinner at the George Hotel an

Evening Meeting

was again held and was well attended.

On the motion of the HON. SECRETARY, the word "shall" in Rule XVII. was altered to "may." Mr. Hunt then announced that he had that day received a telegram from his colleague,

Mr. Malet, that Mr. H. Gore Langton had most liberally given £50 to the Castle Purchase Fund ; and a vote was passed that Mr. Gore Langton and Mr. H. Danby Seymour should be added to the present Trustees.

Mr. KING then gave a short and interesting account of the day's Excursion.

The PRESIDENT said that the stones at Orchardleigh had often been made the subject of discussion. He had heard it said indeed that they were placed in the Park not many years ago by Sir T. Champneys, but, though he had had this from those who were certainly likely to know, he was quite willing to believe it a myth, now that it had been contradicted by such an eminent authority. He hoped and trusted that Mr. Barnwell would convince him that the stones were Druidical remains, so that the inhabitants of those parts might no longer be in doubt.

Mr. BARNWELL hoped to convince his lordship that the stones were not Druidical, but were placed in their present position at a far earlier time than that in which Druids are said to have lived. As to their erection by Sir Thomas Champneys, he was the least likely man he knew of to do such a thing. Mr. Barnwell then repeated for the benefit of those who had not been present at Orchardleigh that morning some of the arguments on which he based his belief that the stones were the remains of a primeval monument.

The PRESIDENT then called on Mr. Mc Murtrie, who read a valuable paper on "The Physical Geology of the Carboniferous Strata of Somersetshire and Associated Formations," which will be found in Part II.

Mr. SANFORD, who remarked that they could not do less than congratulate the county on the good account given of its coal-field, said the paper was an admirable one. There was one thing in it, however, to which he took exception. Mr. Mc Murtrie made use of the words "washed away." He (Mr. Sanford) had previously spoken of ice. He believed that Professor Ramsay had expressed an opinion that the Permian period was clearly

an ice era. As he said on the preceding night, the country had been raised up in great ridges, and in such a latitude as this those mountains could not exist without forming glaciers which cut and planed down mountain ranges in a manner that must be seen to be believed. He did not think that the Permian period, long as it was, would have been long enough for the rocks to have been washed away. A greater power than water would be required, that power he believed was moving ice.

The Rev. H. H. WINWOOD referred to the paper which had just been read as the result of much patient labour. He remembered that Sir W. Guise on the previous day had stated that the Mendips were the consequence of a slow upheaval, that Mr. Moore expressed an opinion that it was a sudden movement, and that Mr. Mc Murtrie now referred to it as gradual. Had the Society gone to Mells they would have seen some of the results of this denudation in the conglomerate so well exposed there, which is nothing but the old water beach of that period.

Rev. W. HUNT said that the reason the Society did not visit Mells was the absence of Mr. Horner.

Mr. MC MURTRIE said objection had been taken to the words "washed away." They might be supplemented by another. The rock might have been "ground" first and washed away afterwards. He thought that water would not be sufficient of itself, and that if they could see evidence of the ice action it would be a proof. What they were in want of at present was proof of the ice action.

Mr. SANFORD hoped that the paper would be published in the *Proceedings* of the Society, and also the diagrams.

Dr. PARSONS then read an interesting paper on "The Flora of Eastern Somersetshire," which is printed in Part II.

The PRESIDENT thanked Dr. Parsons for his paper, and had no doubt but that it would lead some who heard it to take a new interest in their walks abroad. His Lordship then called on Mr. Elworthy to read a paper on "The Dialect of West Somerset."

Mr. ELWORTHY said that at this late hour in the evening he would not inflict a long paper on the audience, but, with his Lordship's permission, would put off the reading of it to a more convenient season.

It was then announced that Mr. Elworthy's paper should be read the next day. It is much to be regretted that time was not found for this arrangement to be carried out, but Mr. Elworthy has kindly consented to read his paper at a future meeting of the Society.
