

The application of Philology to Archæological Investigation.

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IT is always interesting, and, I would add, though it may not be so regarded in this utilitarian age, even profitable, to mark the remains and to trace the footsteps of the various tribes which, in byegone ages, have successively occupied the land in which we dwell. The associations which thus gather around the localities the eye becomes familiar with in our daily walks, greatly enhance the pleasure and the profit arising from the contemplation of the scenery around us ; and we live, for a time, not only in the present, but in the past ; while, to the mind's eye, the mountain and the dell become peopled again by their ancient inhabitants.

In almost every district in Great Britain, and especially in the West of England, we meet with many undoubted remains of our primæval ancestors, the ancient Britons, which have survived the destroying power of time, and continue, to the present day, striking monuments of the

power and greatness of that extraordinary people. As might have been expected, however, the incessant tide of ages has washed away many of their works, and rendered faint and indistinct many of their footprints. But, as the geologist delights in the faintest impress of organic remains when they present themselves in the primæval rocks ; so does the antiquarian delight in every new discovery of the remains of ancient times, and in every new gleam of light from old discoveries, which helps to define and illustrate the great epochs of his country's history. Each great geological period, we know, is distinguished by peculiar and characteristic forms of organized life ; hence, the occurrence of even a fragment of shell, or coral, or bone, or plant, is sufficient to enable the experienced geologist to determine the exact place any particular formation holds in the great series of created being. That which is true of the phenomena of the material world, is not less true of those which present themselves in connexion with the human race. For here, likewise, the form of the earth-work ; the masonry of the wall ; the shape and design of the pottery ; the curve and mouldings of the arch ; the tracery of the window, whether presented entire or in fragments ; are, in reality, so many *dates* impressed upon these remains of antiquity, enabling us to assign each to its true period and its people.

Besides, and in addition to, these, which may be called the *material* tokens left to us by former generations, we have in the elements of our language, and especially in the names of mountains and towns, of rivers and encampments, another class of remains, not less deserving of our attention, nor likely to be much less profitable to those who are engaged in antiquarian research. It is to this—the application of Philology to Archæological investigation—

that I have now the honor to direct your attention ; more especially, as it relates to the West of England in general, and to the county of Somerset in particular.

While treating of words, I need hardly observe, that if time has dealt so roughly with the material remains of the handywork of by-gone ages, and has changed to a great extent their outline and their form, we cannot expect the fleeting sounds of the human voice,—the utterances of human thought—to have altogether escaped its influence. We must, therefore, be prepared to allow some margin in our derivations ; more especially as some of the names of places in this county, undoubtedly had their origin, and were in use here, many ages before the Roman invasion. Besides, it should be borne in mind, that all those names for which we claim a Celtic origin, have been handed down to the present age, through generations of men altogether ignorant of their original signification. Yet, notwithstanding that so powerful a cause of corruption and change has existed for so many centuries, we find most of the local names retaining, in an extraordinary degree, their original form and sound.

I am very sensible of the difficulties which necessarily attend an investigation of this nature ; in which, perhaps, more than in any other, the imagination is like to outstrip the judgment. At the same time, seeing that among the Celtic race the names of places were always designed to be descriptive, we evidently possess, in the general outline and prominent features of the country, at the same time a guide, and a check, in our philological enquiries : and the results of Topographical Etymology become more sure and certain than otherwise could have been expected. In confirmation of this view, it is especially interesting to observe, that even where great physical changes have

undoubtedly occurred, the names of places in the district have been retained, though they evidently had their origin in, and literally describe, a state of things which does not now exist. Striking instances of this present themselves in the names of *Ched-zoy*; *Middle-zoy*; and *Weston-zoyland*;—places which now stand on red-marl prominences slightly elevated above the alluvial deposit of the *Bridgwater* levels, but which, during the early period of *Saxon* occupation, were evidently surrounded by water. These names, as well as that of *Langport*, contain in themselves the physical history of the places they stand for; and the use made of them and other words of the same character, in the paper on *Langport*, the *Llongborth* of *Llywarch Hên's Elegy*,* amply justifies the claim of philology to be regarded as the hand-maid of archæology.

There can be no doubt, that the different races which, one after the other, have had possession of this country, have left behind them, in the names given to their settlements, distinct traces of their successive occupation: and it would be very interesting, and likewise instructive, to have the names of places in the county, whether *Celtic*, or *Roman*, or *Danish*, or *Saxon*, classified according to their origin. Such a classification is, no doubt, practicable; but it will necessarily involve great research, and lengthened investigation, to make it complete. It cannot, perhaps, be expected as the work of one man; but rather as the result of accumulated observations made at different times, and in different localities, by those who are interested in antiquarian pursuits in the county. The following explanation of names which seem to me to be of *Celtic* origin, I now submit to the members of the Society, as a contribution towards this object, in the hope that

* See *Proceedings* 1853, p. 44.

others will help to render complete this much-needed addition to our county history.

That part of the county of Somerset which lies *west* of the Parret, belonged to the district known to the ancient Britons as DYVNAIN. This the Romans called DUMNONIUM, adopting with some slight modification as their custom was, the names in use among the natives of the country. It requires very little philological skill to identify DYVNAIN with DUMNONIUM; and both with DEVON of the present day. That, however, which gives significance and meaning to the name must be sought for in the language of the ancient Britons; and nothing could be more descriptive of the district than the name it bears—DYVN-NAIN—"the country of the deep vallies."

Frequently among the Quantocks—indeed all over the county—we meet with a genuine British word, CWM, for a valley. At the foot or opening of one of the Coombes on the Quantocks, we find a striking British name in TRESCOMBE, which is composed of TRE-IS-CWM—"the dwelling beneath, or at the foot of the vale," and the hill at the *head* of another Cwm, is called Buncombe Hill, which is no other than the British BEN-CWM, the *vale head*.

The QUANTOCKS themselves have a very descriptive name, especially when they are regarded in respect to the physical characteristics which they present on their northern side;—GWANTOG—"abounding in openings." The great number, comparatively, of deep dells, almost amounting to ravines, which *open* among the Quantocks towards the Bristol Channel, and thus "divide" the range of hills, would naturally give rise to their ancient name. On one of the loftiest eminences in this range, stands the extensive British encampment sometimes called Danesborough, but by the peasants of the neighbourhood

known as Dousborough. This the ancient British inhabitants would have called DINAS;—a word which, standing by itself, means pre-eminently “*the fortification*” of the district; a distinction which Dousborough might well claim, alike from its situation and its extent. Dousborough and Danesborough I take to be a corruption of DINAS, or DUNS-borough; the latter part being a Saxon addition made by a people ignorant of the meaning of its original name. The encampment on Hamdon Hill I believe to have had originally the same name, and to have been simply DUN, “*the fortified place*” of that neighbourhood. When the hamlet underneath became of sufficient importance, in Saxon times, to require a name, the Saxon inhabitants called it HAM-DUN—the hamlet nigh to the DUN.

Westward of the Quantocks we have the same word DUN occurring in DUNSTER, which is no other, I conceive, than DUN-YSTRAD—“*the fort in the vale.*” Ystrad, in Welsh, is applied to the flat or bottom, formed by the course of a river. The propriety of such a descriptive name as Dun-Ystrad, no one, I think, can doubt, who has stood upon the brow of Grabhurst Hill, and looked down upon Dunster Castle. CUNNEGAR tower surmounts another stronghold, standing between the castle and the sea. This would be appropriately called CYN-GAER—the “*foremost*” fortification—the GAER in advance.

Going on a little farther west, we come to LUCCOTT Hill, with the GREY-WOOD, literally (in Welsh) LLWYD-COED, skirting its base, and stretching up its sides. Through this wood flows a rapid, impetuous stream, truly British in character, and in name: the HORNER; CHWERN-DDWR; which, in the Celtic, denotes the “*whirling*” and “*wrangling*” with which its “*waters*”

rush towards the sea. And towering above, with its brow and sides bristling with fragments of rocks and stones, is DUNKERRY-BEACON, which, from these physical characteristics, obtained the name which it now retains—DUN-CERYG*—"the stony height." These are names selected, for illustration, after a mere cursory glance over the district. Others there doubtless are equally striking, and equally indicative of the tenacity with which the names given by the aboriginal Britons have clung to the localities where they made their homes.

Retracing our steps eastward, we pass by WILLITON (the Wœllas-town), which, with WILLS-NECK (Wœllas-neck) has, not without reason, been assigned to the Saxons, as names given by them to these localities while they were still occupied by the Welsh, or WœLLAS, as the Saxons first called the Celtic race in Britain. We then come to the gradual opening or widening of the vale, south-west of the Quantocks, until it is lost in the wider plain of Taunton Dean;—just what the British would have called LLEDYAD, from the verb llediannu—"to grow wide." Here, I believe, we have the origin of Lydeard (given, in Domesday Book, and in an old map,† published A.D. 1610, as LEDIARD), standing, as it does, where the smaller vale gradually opens and *widens* into the broader expanse of Taunton Dean.

Following the course of the river TONE, which I find by Toulmin's History, is represented by Whittaker as a form of AVON (T'avon, hence Tone) we come to Taunton

* The C, in the Celtic dialects, has always the power of K.

† "SOMERSET-SHIRE Described and into HUNDREDS devided, with the plott of the famous and most wholsom waters and citie of the BATHE by I. S. Anno. 1610." In the Museum of the Society at Taunton.

—the **TONE-TOWN**—surrounded by a country beautiful and rich, herself not unworthy of the beautiful scenery with which she is surrounded. The connection of the name of this river with the Celtic “Avon,” is very probable; and **TAVON** may be the contraction of **TAW-AVON**, which literally describes the peculiarly “silent” course of the river. **TAUNTON DEAN** (well known not to have had its origin in any ecclesiastical division) may be either from the Anglo-Saxon **DEN**, “a valley;” which, in the form of **DEAN**, is still used in the district of Craven: or, more probably, is identical with the Celtic root **DEN**, which enters into the names of many localities associated with forests or woodland. Thus, we have the **FOREST OF DEAN** in Gloucestershire, known to the present day by the Welsh as **Y DDENA**; the **FOREST OF ARDEN**, in Warwickshire, formerly extending from the Severn to the Trent, but now confined to that part of the county of Warwick west of the Avon about Henley, called the **WOODLAND**; and the parish of **ARDEN-VIL** in Lanarkshire. Then, there is the great Forest of **ARDENNE**,—the “*Arduenna Sylva*” of Julius Cæsar*—which gives a name to a department of France, and formerly extended as far as the country of Liege, in the neighbourhood of which—another indication of Celtic occupation—there is a district very like our own Devon, known in the present day as **Dinant**, identical evidently in sound and signification with the **Dyvnaint** of Ancient Britain. The aspect of Taunton Dean, even now, from any of the neighbouring heights, fully justifies the appellation of **DEN** or **DEAN** in the sense of “woodland.”

Leaving Taunton, and passing through **HATCH** (a Somerset provincialism, even in the present day, for **GATE**)

* Cæsar de Bello Gall. l. vi., c. 29, 31.

where there is every reason to believe was placed the old HATCH or GATE to the unenclosed forest; we have, stretching on our right, the Blagdon hills; on the very spine of which the practiced eye of the antiquary (in spite of the thick and rapid growth of the plantation) may yet recognize the deep foss of Castle Neroche—a fine encampment, well deserving of the attention it has lately received from one of our most experienced and successful antiquarians. NEROCHE is so Norman in its sound, that I long thought its meaning would be got at only through the French. Had it stood near or upon a rock, LE ROCHE would naturally occur as the probably original form of the name. There being no such physical characteristic; and, which is of equal importance, the name prevalent among the peasantry of the neighbourhood being CASTLE RACH, we are necessarily led to seek in some other source for its true meaning. Having been in the habit, on principle, of giving the preference to those forms of the names of places which are preserved by the peasantry of the neighbourhood, it was with no small pleasure I found this principle confirmed, by the reference to this place, in the "*Perambulations of the Royal Forests*," made by the command of Edward I. The part which applies to our subject opens as "Perambulatio forestæ de Nerachist, in Comitatu Somerset." In this there is reference made to a former Charter of Henry, the father of Edward, which relates—"De forresta videlicet :—quidam mons qui vocatur Castrum de Rachich."* Taking this as an approximation to the more ancient form of the name, I am disposed to regard it as derived from RHAG, or RHAC, which signifies in Welch, "that which is uppermost," as the spine of a quadruped : and Castell-RHAC would thus be the camp on

* See Phelps' History of Somerset, vol. I, p. 45.

the SPINE of the hill ; which is certainly descriptive of its appearance from all the lowlands around.*

I need not do more at present than merely refer, in passing, to Langport—the Llong-borth, the “port for vessels” of the ancient Britons,—as in a former paper I explained what I conceive to be its origin and its history. Leaving POLDON likewise—the MOEL-Y-DON† or VOEL-DON of the Britons—a name descriptive of its character, when it stood out as “elevated land” (MOEL) in the midst of the waves (DON); and STREET, which, of itself, is an undoubted indication of Roman occupancy, and of its position on a Roman high-way, STRATUM, we come to GLASTONBURY. This place is rich above all others in names, which clearly indicates the various points of interest from which it was regarded by successive generations, during the ancient British and the early Saxon periods. Thus we find it called, in very early times, YNYS-AVALLON—“the *island* of apple trees.” This name was evidently given at the time when the present turf moors between the Poldon and Mendips were in the course of formation beneath the expanding waters of an estuary, or of an inland lake. That it was known by this name during the Roman period is evident from the latinized form, Avalonia, which occurs in some of the Itineraries. Its former position in respect to surrounding water or marsh-lands, is indicated by another name—YNYS-WYTRYN—“the island in the midst of bogs or marshes.” Wytrin is a form of WY, the Celtic word for water, which enters so largely into the composition of the names of rivers and lakes in

* In the modern Castle-Rach, the *ch* is soft: in the Celtic Castell-Rhac, the *c* is hard. *Chester* from *Castrum*; *Charter* from *Carta*, are instances of a similar change of sound.

† There is a MOEL-Y-DON, in the present day, near the Menai Straits.

the kingdom. A third purely British name is ABER-GLASTON. Wherever ABER occurs, it indicates the *confluence* either of two rivers, or of a stream with a lake or the sea; the succeeding part of the word being either the name of the smaller river, or some characteristic feature in the locality. The confluence of the river BRUE with the lake or swampy grounds of that period could not have been far from the site of the present town. Hence ABER forms a part of the name; and GLAS-TON would either describe the river Brue flowing with clear "blue waves" into the meares: or more probably would apply to the "green sward" in the neighbourhood of the confluence. The words admit of being rendered either way. In Saxon times, the ABER was dropped from GLASTON, and BYRIG was added. Thus we have *Llærtinȝabyrig* of the Saxon Chronicle, and Glastonbury of the present day.

We must not leave Glastonbury without a visit to WEARY-ALL-hill, for here we have a curious and interesting example of the corruption of an old word, from the prevalent and very natural desire to call things by names which have a *meaning* to those who use them. The origin of the name, even in its present form, dates a long way back. Thus, in "A little monument to the once famous Abbey and Borough of Glastonbury," published A.D. 1722, the writer says, that "he was told by the Innkeeper, that St. Joseph of Arimathea and his Companions marched, from the place where they landed, near the town, to a hill, and there, being weary, rested themselves, which gave the hill the name of Weary-all-hill."* This incident is, no doubt, a comparatively modern addition to the older legend of St. Joseph of Arimathea, and was suggested by the old

* The History and Antiquities of Glastonbury, etc. by T. Hearne, M.A., mdcclxxii.

name of Wyrall, which the hill seems to have borne at an early period. In the general survey of the temporalities of this monastery, as given in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, we find, among others, "WYRRALL park, which conteyneth in circuite one myle and one quarter." This WYRRALL is evidently the WEARY-ALL-hill of the present day, and itself, I believe, a corruption of an ancient British name—YR ALLT—"the wood." We have a curious confirmation of this view in another entry of the Survey: "Within the Park of Wirrall, lx acres of fayre tymbre;" and likewise in the Charta or Epistle of St. Patrick, in which he describes himself and his "brother of Wells" as toiling to the summit of the hill through a "*dense wood*." "Post multum vero temporis, assumpto mecum *Wellia* confratre meo, per condensitatem silvæ, cum magna difficultate, conscendimus cacumen montis, qui eminet in eadem Insula." *

Another corruption of like character presents itself in the name of the site of an ancient earthwork known as BLACKER'S hill, overlooking Nettle-bridge Valley. It has been described by the Rev. W. Phelps as a British encampment "protecting the pass of the defile." I do not know the locality myself, but this description clearly corresponds with the Celtic BWLCH, literally "the pass of the defile;" and BLACKER becomes the Saxon corruption of a fine old British name—BWLCH-Y-GAER, the "pass of the defile below the camp."

In some cases the ancient British names have utterly

* The whole Epistle is given in the Appendix to Hearne's *Glastonbury*, p. 114. Its authenticity has been doubted. Indeed, the internal evidence alone is sufficient to prove it to have been a forgery, executed no doubt by one of the monks of Glastonbury. This, however, does not necessarily affect the value of its testimony in regard to the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood.

disappeared, being supplanted by those of more modern origin. Thus, in ancient Welch literature, the city of BRISTOL is known as CAER-ODOR-NANT—"the city of the rent valley"—a name which the appearance of St. Vincent's Rocks on each side of the Avon fully justifies. UXELA, likewise, the Latin form of the old British name by which the estuary of the Parret was called, and which occurs in the old geographers, has disappeared, and has left no representative in the language of the people. The term would seem to have been applied to the land-locked estuary covering the Bridgwater levels, and is evidently derived from the British WYSC-HELI, implying the free access to it of the "sea-water"—HELI.

AD UXELAM was a Roman station lying on the shore of this estuary. It has usually been supposed to have occupied the site of the present town of Bridgwater; but the extensive Roman remains found by Mr. Stradling about the Poldon Hills, would lead us rather to look for it on the other side of the river. And if we are justified in identifying with Ad Uxellam and Avallonia the Uxelludiano and Avallano which occur in the *Excerpta ex Ravennate Geographo*, as connected together—"recto tramite"—by a direct line of road, this view is greatly confirmed.

The PARRET is a modern form of the Peðneban of the Saxon chronicles: and Pedredan is evidently a modification of PERYDDON, the name which was applied to the river by the ancient Britons. There is a peculiarity in this word Peryddon, deserving of notice. It has the *plural* termination. This may have arisen from its being applied not only to the river itself, but to the united waters of the Tone, the Ivel, and the Parret proper. It occurs in a Welsh poem of the seventh century,

by the Cambrian bard Golyddan, which relates to "the great armed confederacy of Britain," "Arymes Prydyn Vawr." Of this there are extracts, with a translation, in Thiery's *Norman Conquest*.* In one place we read—

"In Aber-Peryddon, the deputies of a Saxon king
Even before there was a public stipulation, stirred
up slaughter.

By arbitrary act, with violence, the deputies
Demanded and proceeded to collect a tribute.

The Cymri resolved they were not bound to pay:" etc.

The poem is mainly devoted to the utterance of the indignation of the Cymri at the wrong thus inflicted. This occurred at Aber-Peryddon; and if we take Peryddon to have corresponded to the ancient name of WYSC-HELI, the site of this great conference and conflict would not be far from PURITON, which is near to the *confluence* of the estuary with the Severn sea, and may possibly have been the ABER-PERYDDON of the Welsh bard. I find it in the same old map, before referred to, in the form of PERITON.

Passing by the Avon and the Ax, universally known as Celtic words, we come to the SEVERN and SEVERN SEA: the British name of which is deserving of notice from its connexion, indirectly, with the name which this county bears. What is now called the Bristol Channel bore the name of MOR ESYLLWG, and likewise MOR HAVREN. Havren is the Welsh form of Severn.†

In a very ancient notice of the "*Principal Territories of Britain*," given in the Iolo MSS., p. 86, we find the Mor Havren, with Dyvnaint and Cerniw, given as the boundaries of Gwlad-yr-hav, a district corresponding with that of East Somerset. This naturally leads to the conclusion that

* Bogue's edition vol 1. Appendix 1.

† See Note, p. 89.

Gwlad-yr-Hav is a contraction of GWLAD-YR-HAVREN. The county of Somerset to the Welsh population of the principality, even now, is not known by any other name than Gwlad-yr-hav. But in Welsh this word Hav (which in Havren is doubtless identical with AV, the root of AVON, a river) likewise means SUMMER : and Gwlad-yr-hav, therefore, admits of being translated—either the “land on the shores of the Havren ;” or, “the SUMMER-LAND.” The early Saxons, who named the county, would seem to have chosen the more obvious but less correct translation, and hence the county bears the name of SOMERSET.

Camden, in his *Britannia*, abandons the commonly received derivation of “the Summer-land,” assigning a reason which was sufficient even in his time, and must have had greater force during the period in which the name is supposed to have had its origin. His words are, “some thinke it was so called, for that the aire there, is so mild and summer-like : and in that sense the Welch Britans at this day terme it GLADERHAF, borrowing that name from our English tongue. And verily, howsoever in Summer-time it is a right summer-like country, yet surely, in winter it may worthily be called, a winterish region, so wet and weely, so miry and moorish it is, to the exceeding great trouble and encombrance of those that travell in it.” Immediately after, the old antiquarian adds, that the name of the County, “without all question grew out of Somerton, a famous town in ancient times,” etc. etc. The town of Somerton is, undoubtedly, very ancient ; occurring early in the Saxon chronicles. At the same time, seeing that the feelings cherished at this early period, by the Cymri towards the Saxon invaders were not such as to induce them to “borrow a name from the English tongue ;” and seeing, likewise, that Gwlad-yr-Hav, is

applicable to a country—*gwlad*—only ; Somerton would seem more likely to have been itself derived from, rather than to have given origin to, the name of the county of Somerset.

These observations on the Topographical Etymology of Somerset I now lay before the Society with great diffidence. Most of the derivations, I believe, are safe and satisfactory ; some may be open to objection. I have endeavoured to give not only the conclusion to which I have been led, but also the grounds on which they are founded. Such as they are, I now leave them, as a contribution towards a more complete classification of the names of places in the county, according to their origin.

Before I conclude, however, I would beg further to direct attention to the application of Philology to another department of the archæology of the county, which is deserving of notice—the dialects of Somersetshire.

The vernacular dialects of our rural districts are now, very properly, regarded as remains of the ancient language of the land, rather than as vulgarisms. The only Glossary of Somerset that has appeared in print, is that by Mr. James Jennings, published in 1825. In the Observations etc. prefixed, he states that his glossary relates especially to the districts *east* of the river Parret, “the pronunciation and many of the words in the district *west* of that river, being very different indeed, so as to designate strongly the people that use them.” This statement I have more than once heard confirmed by our late esteemed Secretary, Mr. W. Baker, who, if his life had been spared, might have added his accurate observations on this subject to his many other valuable contributions to the Archæology and Natural History of the county. It is very desirable that

those who have opportunity should take note of these peculiarities; and if they would forward their observations to the Secretaries of the Society, even though it be by one or two words at a time, a sufficient number of characteristic words may be got together, to lead to a safe generalization, and possibly to explain the ethnological grounds of the difference of dialect prevailing on either side of the river Parret. What is done in this way, had need to be done quickly; for the fine old Saxon words which our forefathers used, and which enrich, while from our ignorance they sometimes obscure, our early literature, are fast disappearing before the shriek of the railway whistle, and its accompanying civilization and progress.

NOTE.—The Severn occurs in the *Irish version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius*, (published by the Irish Archaeological Society. A.D. 1848.) in the form of Sabpamð, Sabraind. Notwithstanding that one of the learned editors, the Hon. A. Herbert, in a note p. 30, regards “the real etymology of Sabrina, Celticè Havren, to be, no doubt, from *hav*, (Irish jam or jamna) summer : part of the adjoining country being called Gwlad-yr-Hav, or Land of the Summer,” I would still submit that the more probable derivation of Havren is from AV, the root of Avon, “a river.” How the idea of “summer” could become associated with the Channel, it is difficult to conceive; and it is evident from the form of the word Gwlad-yr-hav, that the county took its name from the sea, and not the sea from the county.

It may not be altogether out of place here, to insert a curious and interesting notice of the phenomenon, usually

called the Boar, which occurs among the "Wonders of Britain" in the *Irish version of Nennius*, and likewise in the original Latin text, as given in the *Monumenta Hist. Brit.* p. 78, cap. lxxii :—"Aliud miraculum est Duorighabren, id est, duo reges Sabrinæ. Quando inundatur mare ad sissam in ostium Sabrinæ, duo cumuli spumarum congregantur separatim, et bellum faciunt inter se in modum arietum : et procedit unusquisque ad alterum, et collidunt se ad invicem. Et iterum secedet alter ab altero, et iterum procedunt ex uno cumulo super omnem faciem maris. In unaquaque sissa hoc faciunt ab initio mundi usque ad hodiernum diem." "Another wonder is Duorighabren, that is, The two kings of Severn. When the sea is poured into the mouth of the Severn to a full head of water, two heaps of surf are collected on either hand, and make war against each other like rams: and each goes towards the other, and they dash against each other, and separate again, and then flow from the one heap over the surface of the sea. This they do at every full head of water, from the begining of the world to the present day."

In the *Anglia Rediviva*, or History of the Motives, Actions, etc., of the Army under the Conduct of Sir Thomas Fairfax, by Joshua Sprigge, M.A. (1647), this phenomenon is called by another name—the Eager; and General Cromwell is described, during the siege of Bridgewater, as narrowly escaping "a sudden surprisal of the tide called the Eager," while going over the river to view the posts on the other side.
