

Thursday.

Excursion to Radstock.

The morning was fine, to the satisfaction of every one. Taking the train by the Midland, the journey was easily made, and Radstock was reached a few minutes past eleven. A short walk brought the party to the offices, where some diagrams, showing the coal measures and geological features of the district, were found suspended on the walls.

Mr. McMURTRIE, using the diagrams for illustration, in giving some account of the local mining, said, in the course of the elevation of the Mendip Hills the upper series of coal measures had been thrust bodily forward a considerable distance, and the seams very much overlapped each other. The fault occasioned by the upheaval was one of the most remarkable things to be met with in the country in connexion with physical geology. After describing the position of the different strata, he said they were just commencing to sink one of the shafts to the new series of coal measures, and it was intended to go down to a total depth of 300 fathoms. It was hoped that they would meet with an entirely unbroken group of seams, which had never been touched in the parish before. Although they had still large resources existing in the upper seams, which had been worked for many years, yet they had a much larger storehouse lower down, and they hoped to reach

it some twelve months hence. The work had been in progress for two or three months, and he was glad to say it was going on thoroughly well. Proceeding to explain the mining operations carried on in the parish, he said, having reached the coal by driving through the rock from the bottom of the shafts, they opened out the mineral, working it out continuously, without leaving any pillars to support the roof. In other parts of the country large pillars of coal were left, which stood for many years, and when the pit was about to be abandoned, as much as possible of these pillars was removed. In Radstock, however, they worked on the long wall system, and built walls and a series of passages through the worked strata. The roads were laid with tram rails, and the coal was brought from the face to the bottom of the shaft in trams worked by horse or engine power. They worked in that district the thinnest seams that were to be met with in any part of England, and when the visitors inspected the mine they would see what trouble and expense were incurred to obtain the coal, and probably they would not grumble so much at their coal bills. Some of the seams in Staffordshire were very thick, but in Radstock they worked veins only 14 inches in thickness. There was a certain quantity of *debris* produced from the shales which over and under-laid the coal: it was not only sufficient to fill up the spaces caused by the extraction of the coal, but they had to raise large quantities to the surface. The roads underground were made six feet high, and to a certain extent they were timbered up. The earliest mining operations in the locality were the lead-mining works of the Romans, who exhibited great energy in mining for lead on the Mendip Hills, and lead-mining was carried on down to a modern period. There were no exact data which would fix the time when coal-mining was begun in that district, but the active period of it was limited to the last hundred years. There was evidence that at a time long anterior to that, large numbers of small, shallow shafts had been sunk, and he dared say that

coal-mining had been going on in the locality for several hundreds of years.

Mr. DAVIS mentioned that, in 1587, coal was worked at Hallatrow; and that in the same year nine sacks of coal sold, in Bath, for 6s. 8d.

The HON. SECRETARY remarking that coal was worked about the year 1300, at Kilmersdon, said that the early centre for the mining was about Stratton or that neighbourhood.

Mr. McMURTRIE remarked that in the district mentioned the coal measures came to the top, and were not overlaid by any newer formation, whereas at Radstock they were covered up by several formations. Radstock was only opened up when the measures, which were of easier access in other districts, were exhausted. As to the cost of the nine sacks, of course all would depend on the size of the sacks.

Proceeding next to Ludlow's Pit, the party assembled showed itself larger than expected; many had evidently, notwithstanding repeated requests, given no notice of their coming, thus causing much anxiety, and endangering the arrangements, as well as the general comfort. After a change of dress on the part of some, the descent commenced. The cages had been most carefully cleaned, and the sides boarded, so that, accompanied by experienced torch-bearers, five at a time were admitted and taken down: Mr. McMurtrie descending with the first cage to attend arrivals, leaving the Secretary at bank to superintend the departures. It was stated that a hundred and forty-five availed themselves of this opportunity. Arriving at the bottom, the visitors found the roadways brilliantly illuminated by some thousands of candles; a candle being placed on either side, about a foot or eighteen inches apart. Thus all could be seen with but little discomfort. During a walk of about a mile, the face of the coal was inspected, and the men seen at their work. Several fossil plants were pointed out *in situ*. Mr. McMurtrie accompanied the party, doing all in his power to make the ramble pleasant

and profitable. The courtesy of the men, too, was most marked. After an hour thus spent, the party assembled in the main roadway, and witnessed a further illumination by coloured Bengal lights. No doubt many would willingly have stayed down longer, but time demanded a move for the outer world. The ascent was made with the same ease and success as the descent, all coming to bank without mishap. The Secretary's horn presently sounding the advance, the Members proceeded through the churchyard,—some, as they passed, inspecting the church, not long restored,—and then ascended to a meadow adjoining Mr. McMurtrie's residence, on South-hill, where, in a marquee, was found ready a luncheon, most kindly provided by the President. By good fortune, some who had descended the pit had taken the earlier train, or otherwise gone away, so that the accommodation, as well as the provision, happened to be equal to the occasion, to the satisfaction of the President, and the hundred and twenty guests around him.

The luncheon over,

Mr. W. E. SURTEES said a vote of thanks had already been passed to Lord Carlingford for the feast of reason which he had given them in his opening address; and they had now to thank him again for a material feast, which was hardly less grateful to them.

Bishop CLIFFORD was sure he was only expressing the feelings of those present in seconding the motion, and thanking the President for the manner in which he had presided over them, and the kind manner in which he had provided for them. In these Societies not only was pleasure experienced at the time of the gatherings, but pleasant recollections were left of those whom they met. The remembrance of the kindness his lordship had shown them would not terminate with the three days of their meeting, but they would have all the pleasure of long recollection.

Colonel PAGET, M.P., remarked that their old-fashioned

way was to drink the health of their President, and give him three hearty cheers.

The health of Lord Carlingford was then heartily honoured.

LORD CARLINGFORD, in acknowledgment, said he was most sincerely obliged to them for their proposal, and for the manner in which his name had been received. He assured them it had been a real pleasure to him to extend what hospitality he could, both to his brother Members of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, and to all their visitors—visitors who, he was happy to say, were considerably more numerous than he had expected, but whose presence had only added to their satisfaction; and he was proud to find that they were sufficiently prepared to meet them—a point about which at one moment he was rather nervous. He was glad also to congratulate them on their safe return to the upper world. Some years ago he received a large number of the Members of the British Association from Bath, and the elements then were decidedly against them, as the rain pelted, all day long, and the only dry and comfortable place to go to was underground. On the present occasion they had been more fortunate, though in their three days they had not entirely escaped the Mendip rain. It sometimes rained on Mendip. They had never experienced that perpetual snow which Mr. McMurtrie said existed at one time, but it sometimes rained. He was happy to find that the efforts made at Radstock to receive them met with their approbation. As far as he was concerned it had been a matter of goodwill, but the real pains which led to the good result were taken by his friend, Mr. McMurtrie. He agreed with one observation which was made, viz., that such an occasion gave them an opportunity of making acquaintance with neighbours and visitors that in many cases may not end with that day. He thanked them sincerely for the way in which they had received his name.

Colonel PAGET, M.P., said he desired to make a proposal, to

which he was sure they would give their unanimous approval, and that was a vote of thanks to Mr. McMurtrie. Interesting as the annual meetings of that Society were, year by year, he ventured to say that meeting would stand out as one of the most interesting that had ever taken place in the annals of the Society; and the chief interest in it was owing to the assistance given to them by Mr. McMurtrie. He was sure there was no one who had listened to his plain, admirable, short lectures on the geology of the district which they had seen, who did not feel Mr. McMurtrie had given him something to take home with him. They had been congratulated upon going down into the bowels of the earth and coming out once more; and they must thank Mr. McMurtrie for that. He might have left them in the pit. They would have been a pleasant company, and would have been happy if he had sent their luncheon down to them; but it would have been terrible if they were left there, and the luncheon up above. But, seriously, it was a great responsibility to take down a number of people unfamiliar with underground ways, and the presence of ladies added to the responsibility of Mr. McMurtrie. All of those who visited the underground workings must have been struck by the civility and good manners of the workmen; they greeted them with a ready smile. No doubt they were astonished to see the party, but they were glad to see them, and he ventured to say that a plate should go round the table, which should be entrusted to Mr. McMurtrie, that those who went down into the pit might contribute, in order that the miners might have some slight recollection of what had been a most pleasant day. He proposed to Mr. McMurtrie a hearty and unanimous vote of thanks.

The toast was heartily received.

Mr. McMURTRIE, in response, said he felt in some considerable degree the responsibility to which Colonel Paget had alluded, and he was exceedingly glad that the party had returned to the surface without mishap of any kind. His only

regret was that owing to the number of the party he was not able to give so much personal attention as he wished; and that he was not able to say a little more upon the subject of coal working.

The amount collected for the miners was £7. 10s., and this will be supplemented from the Society's funds.

After the party left the tent, Mr. McMurtrie's private collection of fossils, especially rich in specimens of the coal measure plants, was inspected.

Assembling to the call of the Secretary's trumpet, the walk was commenced for the

Fosse Road.

A section was found cut and cleared for inspection, so that the paper prepared in explanation, by Mr. McMurtrie, as printed in Part II, was readily understood. A thorough examination was made, especial notice being taken of the wheel tracks worn on the road surface. Some general conversation ensued, when

Mr. MURCH mentioned that a discovery of a Roman pavement had just been made in Bath.

Round Hill Barrow.

This interesting spot, locally called Round Hill Tump, could not be visited, as the railway times demanded punctuality, and the hill on which it stands an uncertain time for exploration.

From the fact that the top of the barrow, on which grows a tree, seems excavated to form a crater or hollow, it was supposed that it had been used as a beacon; but the cause for this depression, as will be seen, is simple enough.

The late Mr. Skinner, of Camerton, of whom more should be known,—especially of his exertions in exploring local antiquities,—wishing to learn more of this barrow, hired two colliers to open it. Beginning on the east side, a passage was driven to the centre, four feet high, and the same wide. Five yards were done the first day, the 22nd September, 1815, and

the whole propped, as the loose stones and falling earth much impeded the work. On Sunday, the 25th, some idle colliers visiting the place, pushed a large stick into the excavated part, and so brought down so much loose stone, that Monday was wholly occupied in clearing it. By the 28th, fourteen yards had been opened,—the ground being black at the bottom, indicating fire,—but nothing was found. On the 30th the middle was reached, when it was found that a hole had been sunk through the centre, to four feet below the natural surface, thus accounting for the hollow at the top. The interment was gone; there was no cist, only a hole in the soil.

Mr. Skinner notes that the barrow had been opened about 1737, the circumstance being mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

The curiosity which prompts the disturbing these monuments of our early times, had once other motives. In 1236 (*Close Rolls*, 21st Henry IV, m. 14), the Earl of Cornwall was ordered to go to the Isle of Wight, to enquire concerning persons who were digging there to seek for treasure; and in the same year the Earl was ordered to cause certain mounds, "Hogæ," in Cornwall to be dug into to seek for treasure, as the King had commanded should be done in the Isle of Wight.

Roman Remains at Radstock.

Mr. Skinner has also left some memoranda respecting Roman remains found in eighteen acre field in Camerton, on 23rd June, 1814. (*Add. MSS.*, 28,794.) Finding in his walks to Radstock that he picked up specimens of Roman pottery, and that coins had also been found there, he determined to examine some gentle risings in the ground, on a line running parallel east and west with the Fosse road. Accordingly, having engaged four labourers, they began on the morning of the 23rd June, 1814, to open the ground at the southern extremity, working northward. A foot below the surface the earth was found mixed with loose stones, fragments of coarse pottery,—red and white,—and pieces of painted stucco, the colours quite

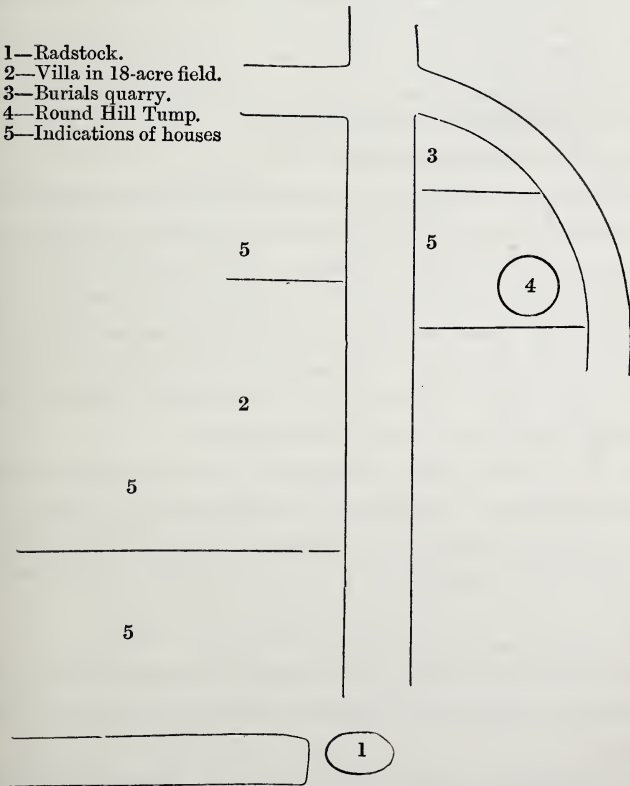
fresh. The foundations of a wall were found, running east and west; and also another wall, running north and south. Many stones had been removed. The chamber uncovered was about nine feet square. A finer piece of pottery was found near the south-east angle on the outside of the wall. There was also the lower part of a female figure, on a pedestal a foot and a half long, by one foot; the figure was nine inches in height. It was cut from coarse freestone, and supposed by Mr. Skinner to represent the goddess Victory. Besides these, a statue, a column, and an inscription were also found. The capital of the column measured twenty inches in diameter, and in a square hole cut in the upper part of the stone was a small coin. The coins found were:—Faustina (silver), Constantino-
polis, Constantius, Constantinus, Crispus, Octavia, C. Quintillus, Tetricus, Lecunius, Maximinianus, Postumus.

On 13th January, 1815, the eighteen acre field being again clear, with four helpers the work was re-commenced and continued until the 22nd. The walls of the previous discovery being first uncovered, the foundation of another wall was met with, running east to west, and traced easterly for fifteen feet. It was then traced north and south for thirty feet, when it was joined by another wall, part of an apartment nine feet square. This seemed to have been entered from a court, and not connected with the interior of the house. Some burnt bones, apparently of sheep, and some small fragments of thin white glass were found. The south front was next traced, and found to extend for seventy-six feet; having an opening for entrance near the centre. The base of a column was found at the door-side, corresponding with the capital found in June; but the workmen split it, expecting to find money beneath it. The hall flooring was hard and smooth, but without tesserae. There was also found a fibula, copper-enamelled, red and silver. The eastern extremity of the wall made a semi-circular course, and was traced to within twenty feet of the western, where the foundations had been removed.

Other tracings were made, but the walls had been disturbed and the stones removed. A small red vessel was found, about four inches high, nearly perfect; and portions of another, bearing the maker's name,—CLVPPIM,—“by no means a Roman one; perhaps he was a Briton.” The earth being turned over, only nails, pieces of tile, and pieces of brass, and a hand-mill were found. Judging from the dispersed pottery, it was assumed that the Roman buildings extended a quarter of a mile, east to west. On the 31st July, therefore, the search was continued in the same field, the spot now chosen being within a stone's throw of the former, and where a rising ground indicated a site. Pottery and loose stones were found, but no regular foundations, so the spot was left. The next day another rising was tried, when, at the depth of two feet and a half, squared stones and roofing tiles were found, but no foundations. At four feet deep, some ware was met with. Six coins were found; one of Constantine, bearing two soldiers, standing by the military standard, on which was the labarum (P with a \times); also a stylus, and an iron celt, five inches long, “evidently from a cist two feet below the foundations.” To encourage the workmen, beyond their pay and beer, they were offered two pence for each coin, five shillings for a perfect clay urn, and a guinea for one of coraline ware. The other discoveries or finds were some copper coins and some oyster shells. Coal was found, “an evidence that its use was known to the Romans;” probably brought from some place where it crops out at the surface. Another place was tried, “near the foot-path to Radstock,” but, after two day's work, only a few coins and sundries were found. Some of the stones unearthed were afterwards carted off by the farmer, to build a wall, whilst others were removed by Mr. Skinner to the parsonage at Camerton, to build an arch over a spring, in a field above the house.

At the northern extremity of the field in which the Round Barrow stands, about twenty feet from the Fosse, there is a

rising ground, where the plough is sometimes stopped by stones or walls, and where coins and pottery have been found. Beyond this, about a hundred yards from the Barrow, but close to the Fosse way, several burial places had been discovered at the depth of three or four feet, containing black mould, fragments of coarse unbaked urns, bones of animals and men, charcoal, etc. A fresh burial having been opened whilst the above searches were in progress, made it a favourable time for an inspection.



Going next to these quarry graves, the earth was thrown out, when human bones and remains, coarse pottery, and bones

of the sheep, pig, and roebuck were found. There was no cist, and the place seemed to have been disturbed as the remains were much mixed.

As the pottery was found broken and mixed up, part of one vessel being on the top, the other part being found at the bottom, Mr. Skinner thought it was the site of a large British burial place, which had been at some time disturbed and all the remains then thrown in together.

From the Fosse way the Members returned to the rectory, where they were received by the Rev. H. Nelson Ward, and invited to tea and other refreshments.

Afterwards, gathering on the lawn, on the motion of the PRESIDENT, seconded by Mr. MURCH, a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Ward for his hospitality.

Mr. WARD briefly responded.

Col. PAGET, in moving a vote of thanks to Lord Carlingford for presiding, said that those who had the pleasure of listening to his able and interesting address, would recognise the great advantage which the Society had received. His lordship had told them that there were Cis-Alpines and Trans-Alpines in respect to the Mendips. He hoped the Cis-Alpines present would carry away with them the knowledge that the barbarians of Mendip had some good qualities.

Mr. W. E. SURTEES, in seconding, remarked that he had been in the habit of attending the meeting of the Society for thirty years, but had never experienced greater hospitality. He had rarely listened to a more interesting Presidential address.

The motion was carried with acclamation.

The PRESIDENT briefly acknowledged the compliment, and in concluding the meeting, wished continued prosperity to the Society.

The proceedings then terminated, there being comfortable time before the departure of the several trains.
