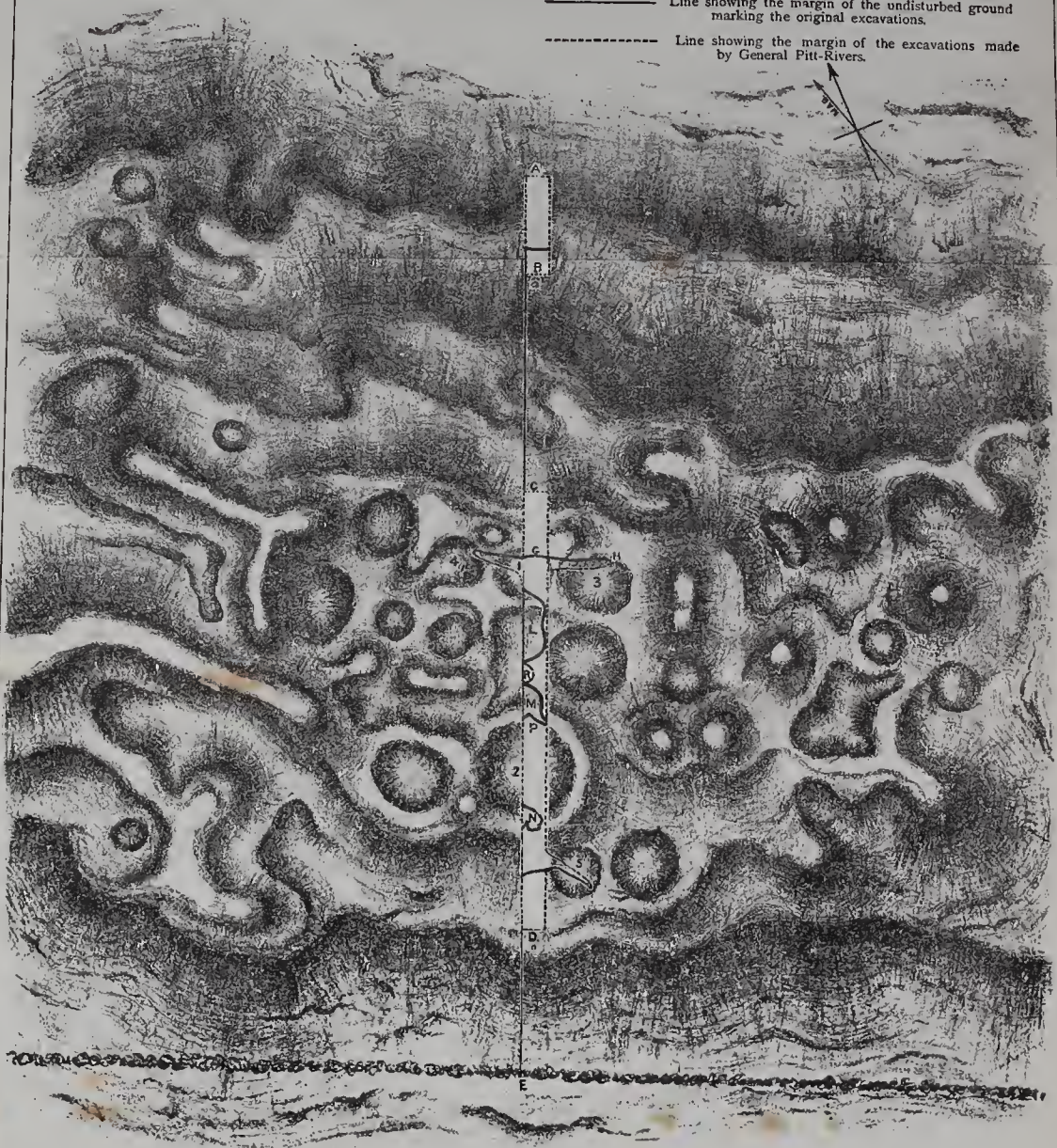
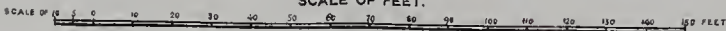


PLAN OF THE PORTION OF PEN-PITS EXCAVATED BY LIEUT.-GEN. PITT-RIVERS,
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1883.

- Line showing the margin of the undisturbed ground marking the original excavations.
- - - - - Line showing the margin of the excavations made by General Pitt-Rivers.



SCALE OF FEET.



The Result of Further Excavations at Pen Pits.

BY REV. H. H. WINWOOD, F.G.S.

THE Members of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society may remember that a Committee was formed for the purpose of the exploration of those remarkable depressions in the surface of the ground, called Pen Pits. In the year 1880 (now four years ago), the Report of that Committee was written by myself, as requested, and will be found in the 25th volume of the Society's *Proceedings*. Three "riders" were attached to the Report, two of which were written by Members of the Committee, who had rarely, if at all, visited the excavations during their progress. Indeed, one of these Members, the Rev. Prebendary Scarth, whose reputation as an archæologist adds weight to his statements, only visited the spot once (to the best of my knowledge) during the whole time, and that was on the occasion of a preliminary traverse of the ground before the excavations were commenced. The general purport of these "riders" was that the writers hesitated to adopt the conclusions of the Report until further researches had been made. Whether it was quite in accordance with fairness for those who had not taken part in the active work of the Committee to come to such conclusions, adverse to those entertained unanimously by the working section of that Committee, I must leave to the opinion of the two Members in question, and to others, to decide.

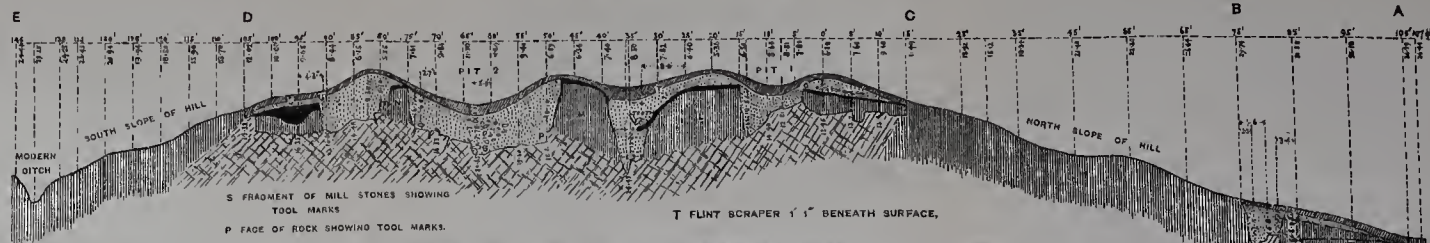
Whether it was owing to the importance arising from the names of those who disagreed, or from other and more sinister causes, I know not, but various remarks have since occurred in print, in the London weekly and the local journals, and else-

where (I especially allude to an article in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. xl. p. 288), which renders it necessary that some further notice be taken of the unwarrantable accusations therein levelled at the work of the Committee, and thus reflecting upon the judgment of our Society itself. With this view, then, I have asked the Secretary to kindly make the following short communication for me, which, owing to my absence in Canada, I am truly sorry to be unable to make myself.

In the autumn of last year, General Pitt-Rivers informed me that he intended making further researches at Pen Pits, and gave me the opportunity of being present. This I gladly accepted, and was present during the ten days that the excavations lasted.

After a preliminary view of the ground, a portion of the hill was selected which contained some of the deepest and at the same time some of the most shallow depressions, so that a line drawn across them would run through their centres. Along this line (*vide*. Plates I and II) a trench was cut, right through the hill from one side to the other, and at the same time through the depressions in such a way as to completely penetrate their respective depths and expose the rock below. A report is to be presented to Government by General Pitt-Rivers, containing a detailed account of the results of his researches, accompanied by sections and plans; and I may be allowed to say, without in any way anticipating that report, that in all the so-called Pits investigated there was a remarkable absence of any trace of their ever having been occupied as habitations or dwellings; at the same time there was clear and unmistakable evidence that they were merely quarries, worked formerly for the valuable Greenstone rock which existed below the surface. In nearly all, if not all, the depressions dug out, traces of the object for which they were made were found in the shape of broken and detached millstones, with the marks of the tooling fresh upon them (*vide*. Plate II). In one instance the face of the original rock itself had been

SECTION OF CUTTINGS THROUGH PITS ON LINE A B C D E OF PLAN (PLATE I).

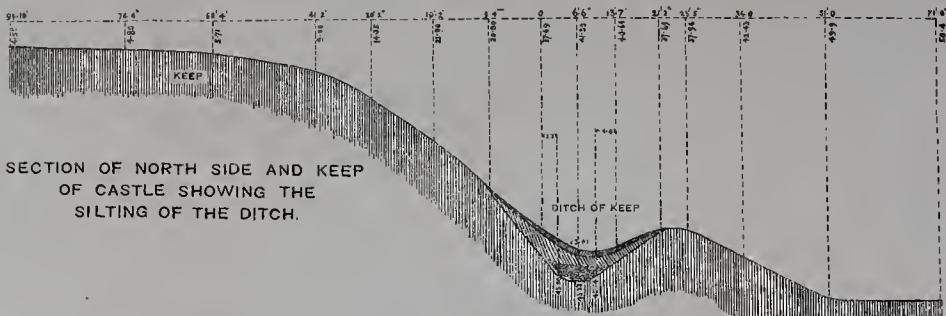


PLAN OF CUTTING SHOWING THE JOINTS IN THE ROCK AND THE UNDISTURBED GROUND L M N LEFT BY THE ORIGINAL EXCAVATORS.

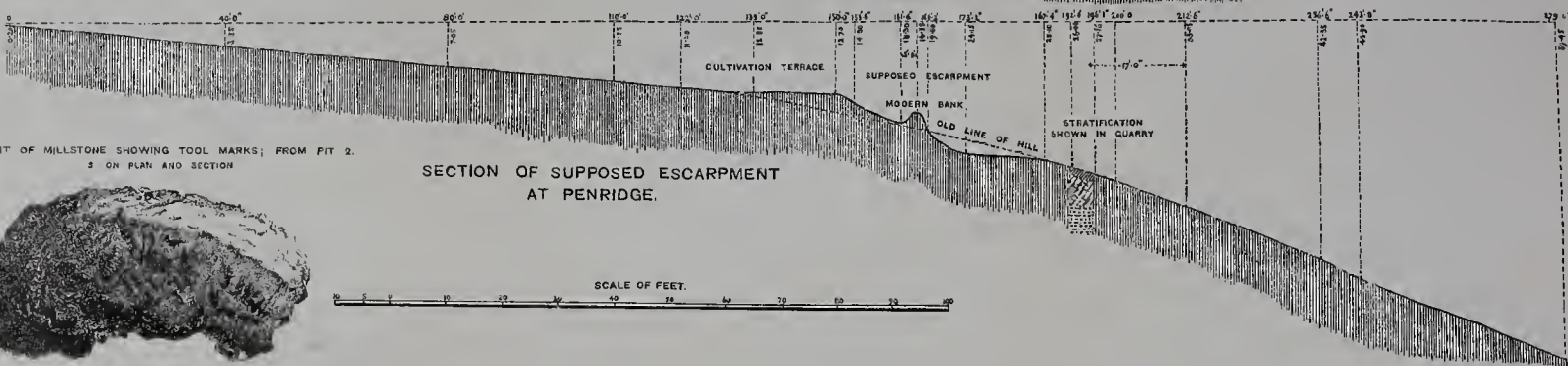


REFERENCES.

- Surface Mould
- Old surface line; buff coloured sand.
- Sandy clay with chert; disturbed ground re excavated during the explorations.
- Greensand rock undisturbed.
- Undisturbed soft.
- Silting of dark brown mould with large fragments of green sandstone at top and stony rubble at bottom.
- Sand.

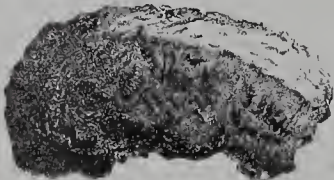


SECTION OF NORTH SIDE AND KEEP OF CASTLE SHOWING THE SILTING OF THE DITCH.



SECTION OF SUPPOSED ESCARPMENT AT PENRIDGE.

FRAGMENT OF MILLSTONE SHOWING TOOL MARKS; FROM PIT 2. S ON PLAN AND SECTION



SCALE OF FEET.



tooled preparatory to being detached, and was found as the old workmen had left it, as fresh as if done yesterday.

Thus nothing has been found to weaken the conclusions previously arrived at by your Committee. Nay, rather, those ten days' excavations, carried on under the direction of one who has not his equal anywhere in that art, have in a most unmistakable manner corroborated those conclusions, and must prove to all whose minds are capable of conviction that these Pen Pits are only the oval and rounded forms which excavations for stone have assumed after the lapse of years, under the smoothing down process of weather and natural agencies.

The accompanying plan, section, and view, issued since the commencement of these notes, and kindly lent to the Society by Gen. Pitt-Rivers, from his printed Report,¹ will illustrate better than any further words of mine, the nature and results of these recent excavations. "Plate I is a plan of about 10,000 square yards of the hill through which the section was cut, showing the slopes of the hill on the north and south, and the distribution of the surrounding pits with the ridges and mounds between." The position is also shown in the right-hand corner of Plate III by the words "cutting made through Pits." Pits 1 and 2, Plate I, were those selected to be cut through on account of their symmetry. In Plate II a section is given of the cutting, the letters corresponding to those on plan, Plate I. The thick black lines in plan, Plate I, show the margin of the excavations made by the original workers and re-discovered, and the dotted lines show the outline of the cuttings made by us. The cutting was commenced at *C* (Plates I and II), near the top of the northern slope of the hill, and pushed southwards to *D*, across the ridge. It may be added that the three dissentients from the former Report were severally asked to inspect the excavations when in

(1). *Report on Excavations in the Pen Pits*, near Penselwood, Somerset. 4to, London, 1884.

progress, but were unable or unwilling to put in an appearance.

There is one slight error in the Report of 1880 which needs correction. The word "Penstone" has there been erroneously written for "Greenstone;" the "Penstone" being that peculiar cherty and siliceous formation which occurs just below the surface, the best blocks of which can be made into scythe stones, and probably have originally been used for that purpose; the "Greenstone" is that more solid formation which runs through the hill.

VIEW OF THE CASTLE ON GASPAR COMMON,
SOMERSETSHIRE,

TAKEN FROM THE NORTH, SHOWING POSITION OF CUTTING.

