

HUT CIRCLES AT TAVY CLEAVE.

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HAVING been present during the excavation of a good part of Broadun Pound and Broadun Ring, conducted by Mr. R. Burnard, in the autumn of 1893, I considered it a matter of great archæological importance to ascertain whether other collections of hut circles on Dartmoor gave the same testimony, or whether these habitations had been used through a long period by a succession of peoples at different epochs and stages of culture, and engaged on different occupations.

I had not much time at my command, and the days were closing in when I undertook to examine the settlement near Tavy Cleave, on the east slope of Ger Tor, consequently I was unable to do more than make a hasty examination, one intended to be preliminary, and I should not now say anything about the work done on this settlement were it not advisable to collect into one the notes made on the hut circles on Dartmoor as far as their exploration has been carried.

On the slope of Ger Tor towards the Tavy are numerous huts with a "clatter" running through them, whence the stones are derived of which the huts are built. They are on the property of Mr. V. Calmady Hamlyn, of Leawood, and he very readily permitted me to make the exploration of them when I applied to him for leave. A line of stones forming an old boundary runs along the shoulder of the hill above the settlement, and tracklines run down the hill towards the river. A small stream breaks out between Ger Tor and Tavy Cleave, whence, doubtless, the occupants of the huts derived water. There is no enclosing pound, but there is a singular structure that occupies a space between the main masses of rock that constitute the cleave. Two walls

have been erected between these natural towers, enclosing a space of turf roughly rectangular.

Of the huts themselves I was able to examine but four, and of these only one exhaustively. I can therefore on this occasion give but an imperfect and superficial account of their nature and contents, and this I will do as briefly as possible, and leave a more detailed account till a future period.

Hut 1. This hut is 17 feet 6 inches in diameter internally, the doorway is 2 feet 6 inches wide, and the entrance is paved. Each door jamb is 2 feet high. Near the centre several earthfast flat stones, not perfectly level. No sufficient evidence was there to say that they constituted a hearth, but close to them was a very distinct cooking hole 1 foot 6 inches in diameter, perfectly circular, and 1 foot deep, scooped in the "calm," and full of peat-ash and particles of charcoal.

Hut 2. This hut is 19 feet 6 inches in diameter. In the centre was a hearth. Much ash and charcoal was found round it and in the interstices between the stones. To the north of the hearth some naturally straight-faced stones were found, four of which were in position, but not the rest, and they seemed to form a dais. In the floor of this hut a piece of flint was found, a portion of a flint pebble that had been broken in half and flaked, with secondary chipping, begun, but not completed. The entrance to this hut is paved, and is 2 feet 6 inches wide, each jamb is three feet high.

Hut 3. This ring is 22 feet in diameter, and seems to have been divided across by a wall that has fallen. No hearth was found. There were indications of paving, and apparently this was a cattle pen, and not a dwelling. The doorway is 3 feet wide, and the jambs 2 feet high.

Hut 4. A double hut, or rather double ring. A trench was cut through it, and no indications of hearth were found. It also seemed to have served as a cattle pen. All the doors are to the south.

What is specially noticeable about the two huts which give indications of having been habitations of men, is that they are very much larger in diameter than those at Broadun, and those described at Grimspound.

In both were found numerous "cooking stones," rounded pebbles that had been burnt, also several small round river pebbles that had not been subjected to fire, and which might have served as sling stones, or for some sort of game.