

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON DARTMOOR.

SECOND REPORT of the Committee—consisting of Mr. J. S. Amery, Mr. C. Spence Bate, Mr. W. F. Collier, Mr. J. Divett, Mr. R. Dymond, Mr. G. Hirtzel, Rev. W. Harpley, Rev. Treasurer Hawker, Mr. F. H. Firth, Mr. R. J. King, Mr. W. Lavers, Mr. G. W. Ormerod, Mr. W. Pengelly, Mr. J. Brooking Rowe, and Rev. W. H. Thornton—for the purpose of influencing public opinion in favour of preserving the peculiarities and antiquities of Dartmoor.

Edited by W. F. COLLIER, Hon. Secretary of the Committee.

(Read at Paignton, July, 1878.)

THE Dartmoor Committee beg leave to report :

1. That Mr. Robert Dymond has been engaged during the past year in carefully preparing, for the use of the Association, a map of the Dartmoor District, including the parishes adjoining, in which he has made considerable progress. The map is on a scale of six inches to the mile, and in it minute details have been included, taken from the various parish maps made for the use of the Tithe Commissioners.

This valuable service to the Association, contributed by Mr. Dymond, will constitute a lasting record of the principal characteristics of Dartmoor as it now exists. It will be a record of the natural features of the Moor—of the rivers, the water-courses, and the tors—and also of the roads, the rights of way, and of the enclosures. It will also be an assistance to the parishioners of any parish in case their rights on the Moor should ever become a subject of dispute. The map is so constructed that additions may be made to it at any time, either of curious remains of by-gone times, or of any other detail of interest to the public.

The Committee recommend that the thanks of the Association be accorded to Mr. Dymond, for the laborious work of great utility which he has thus performed, and proposes to complete.

2. That a line of railway has been projected on Dartmoor, from the Great Western Railway Company's line at Yelverton to Prince Town, and that the Bill authorizing the construction of this line, having passed the Committee of the House of Commons, will probably become law.

This railway, if constructed, will be an encroachment on the public rights on Dartmoor, claimed by this Association, to which the public, as it will be legalized by Act of Parliament, must submit.

3. That a company has been formed to convert the peat beds on a portion of the north-western part of the moor into compressed fuel, to which company, it is alleged, extensive rights of cutting peat have been granted by the Duchy of Cornwall. As the right of cutting peat belongs to the Venville Commoners, the Dartmoor Committee doubt the power of the Duchy of Cornwall to grant rights of this nature to parties who are not commoners. They therefore consider it necessary to report the circumstance.

The Committee in reporting that a railway has been projected to the heart of Dartmoor, and that a company has been formed to remove large quantities of peat from the peat beds, take the opportunity thus afforded to call the attention of the Devonshire Association to the water supply of the county of Devon, largely dependent as it is on the quantity of rain caught and retained on Dartmoor for distribution, south, west, east, and north, by means of the rivers which take their rise in the bogs of the moor. The destruction or removal of the peat beds will cut off the supply of water at its very source. The population of Prince Town, especially if it is much increased in consequence of the advent of a railway, must inevitably, at so high a level, pollute the water to an incalculable extent. It is not too much to state, in the light of modern science, that typhoid fever at Prince Town would be distributed with the water throughout the whole of the south of Devon lying between the Tamar and the Dart, and by the agency of the water supply to shipping throughout the fleets of the royal navy and the merchant service.

The Dartmoor Committee recommend that they be re-appointed, in order that the important questions of public interest which are arising from the exercise of disputed private rights on the waste lands of Dartmoor may not be neglected.

W. F. COLLIER, Secretary.

J. MANLEY HAWKER, Chairman.