

## DARTMOOR: A NOTE ON GRAVES.

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IN preface to the following notes, and as an apology for their fragmentariness, it seems eminently justifiable to plead the exhaustiveness of the Barrow Committee's Report, in the thirty-fourth volume of this Association's "Transactions." That interesting résumé, of course, treats of Devonshire in general: but Dartmoor looms very largely in it, and it certainly afflicted with fatal paralysis a projected paper in the shape of a descriptive tabulation of the Greater Graves of Dartmoor, inasmuch as I found myself meditating little more than "Prolegomena" . . . in the historic interpretation of that word as signifying "things which have been said before."

Referring you, therefore, to that report for a relatively complete treatment of Dartmoor graves and interments, I add:—Assuming the term "greater graves" to include only tumuli, and kistvaens of the ordinary well-known type, and excluding the practically innumerable cairns, except in so far as they have been the subjects of special report or examination, the total of these comes somewhere near to 260. To be on the safe side, we should probably be allowing a very ample margin in fixing, in round numbers, on 300 as representing survivals in record or fact. Of this number, (somewhat small when compared with vague impression) tumuli—mapped or recorded, wasted, rifled, or competently explored—account for much the larger proportion; while kistvaens, as such, scarcely total to more than eighty—a disappointing number, especially in view of the stimulating suggestiveness of a sentence in one of our Presidential addresses: "On Dartmoor we have hundreds of kistvaens": but a number naturally liable to future expansion, though barrows which remain undisturbed are notoriously the exception.

Proceeding now to such details as still seem supplementarily necessary or new:—

YEALM STEPS, 119 N.W.—In the "Western Antiquary," 10, 178, a kistvaen is stated to exist in a circle of 13 ft. diameter, 30 yd. S.S.E. of the hut enclosures here. I could find no traces of this in September, 1902, but found two others which seem to be unrecorded. (1) 40 yd. S.S.E. of the pounds are (or were) some very fragmentary remains, lying N. and S., all being missing but the north endstone, a part of the eastern sidestone and the west sidestone (? one of two). (2) This lies near a track 200 to 300 yd. S.E. of the pounds, points N.E. and S.W., and has no traces of a circle. The east and west sides were formed of two stones, one being now missing in each case. The approximate dimensions seem to have been 3 ft.  $\times$  2 ft. A possible coverstone lies two or three yards S.S.E.

WILLINGS WALLS WARREN, 112 S.E.—There is a kistvaen here, my notes as to the locality and state (August, 1903) of which do not agree with any of those described hereabouts; and as the neighbourhood is a difficult one, usually deep in heather and bracken, it may be new. There is a long reeve across this piece of moor, from the upper part of Spanish Lake towards Hentor House, not marked on the O.S. The kistvaen is a few yards S.E. of this, at about its centre. It lies W.N.W. and E.S.E., and has its coverstone propped against its long side, E.N.E. The kist, of which the short sides have fallen inwards, is from 3 ft. to 3 ft. 6 in. long and 3 ft. wide. Its N.E. sidestone is unusually thick (12 in.), and the coverstone is also noticeably massive, measuring 7 ft. 4 in.  $\times$  4 ft. 6 in.  $\times$  1 ft. 4 in. thick.

WHITE HILL, Cosdon, 77 S.W.—A possible kistvaen is tentatively referred to as existent here, D.A. 22, 190. It seems almost certainly a natural disposition of stones. A similarly suggestive arrangement is on Green Tor, over the Rattlebrook (88 S.E.), with perhaps a little more suspicion of artificiality, but only of such as might qualify it to act as a sheep-shelter or something of the kind.

COSDON, 77 S.W.—The coterminous kistvaens and triple row, eastward of this, seem comparatively (and reasonably) to have monopolized interest. At least we find only general references to the two kistvaens on the summit. It may therefore be useful to register their state (as in May, 1903). (a) 150 yd. N.E. of a disturbed tumulus which forms the

highest point is a low circular bank of stones, 54 ft. in diameter N. and S., enclosing the remains of a kistvaen, of which the two long sides only are in place, pointing N.N.W. and S.S.E. (b) 50 yd. further N.N.E. is a second kistvaen, the S.W. and N.E. sides of which only are fairly recognizable. Direction apparently N.E. and S.W., and dimensions approximately  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. to 4 ft. long, 2 ft. wide. (130 yd. due north of this is another tumulus.)

CORRINGDON BALL GATE, 119 N.E.—I do not know what is the present state of qualified opinion as regards the stones near this—variously accepted and rejected as the relics of a cromlech. Both Spence Bate (D.A. 4, 513) and Rowe, in identical words, discover “unequivocal evidence of a dolmen.” The only opinion that can be given with certainty is that they distinctly suggest artifice and human mechanism of some kind. Taking the cromlech interpretation, we may say that one support is in situ on the west, approximately 5 ft. high. The coverstone is fixed at an angle southwards, with one support against it, outside; a third support is on the turf, a few feet westward of the upright stone, one side having apparently been fractured artificially. (A large stone S.W. is probably accidental and disconnected.) The present condition of the stones, taken in conjunction with the mound-débris, most suggests the wreckage of deliberate destruction; but however that may be, it is a reasonable explanation that the southern support fell outwards and sideways, causing collapse of the coverstone. The latter is between 10 ft. and 11 ft. long, 5 ft. at its widest, and averages 1 ft. in thickness.

STANNON NEWTAKE, 99 N.E.—The kistvaen here, marked long since in the O.S., and therefore, as it were, among the more reputable of Dartmoor Antiquities, seems in spite of that honour to have so far escaped printed description. It lies N. and S., has its south endstone missing, and measures 2 ft. 3 in.  $\times$  1 ft. 8 in. There is an outer circle of about 11 ft. 9 in. diameter (taken N. and S.), with five stones standing and a sixth fallen; of these, the largest stone (S.W.) is 2 ft. 10 in. above the ground, and 3 ft. 4 in. at the base. (In August, 1902, this kistvaen was in a disorderly state, with loose turf mixed with the exposed stones of the cairn.)

SNOWDON, 113 N.E.—The three tumuli on the crest of this (marked on the O.S.) are all disturbed.

GREENABALL, 98 S.E.—Rowe (last edition, p. 210) describes these tumuli as all mutilated. This may possibly apply to the westernmost of the three; but the central and eastern appear to have suffered nothing more fatal than weathering.

CATER'S BEAM, 113 S.W.—This sodden and exasperating district of the moor is intelligibly not overcrowded even by Neolithic enthusiasts. But it has one object interesting apart from its repellent remoteness, and that is the ruined cairn on it, which seems to be the real end of the Stall Moor stone row, terminated by the majority of descriptions positively at Green Hill. Following the row from Redlake (to which point there is no possibility of doubt, except as to the number of stones), where a cautious enumeration places the 613th stone from the circle, the row, here directed W. of N., is easily traceable up Green Hill to stone No. 800, when a small square stone, set at right angles and appearing like a blocking-stone, occurs; but the row continues beyond it to No. 896. Here the depression of the Blacklane Brook makes a break, but stones continue beyond it, at much longer intervals, across a peat cutting, to stone No. 914, and thence, after a large gap of c. 100 yd. to 917. Cater's Beam cairn is some score yards beyond this last stone. It will be seen that the evidence of this prolongation is fragmentary; but the existing stones continue the line of the more unmistakable portion of the row S.S.E., and all the chances seem to be against considering them as a merely fortuitous series coincidentally related only.

TRISTIS ROCK, 119 S.W.—Published descriptions are somewhat summary. The rifled cairn of c. 30 ft. diameter, 100 yd. W.N.W. of the rock, is surrounded by five stones standing 2 ft. 11 in. and under. From this, a stone row, lying N.N.E. and S.S.W., runs to a newtake wall, to which it counts 108 stones, and continues beyond it to 122; its constituents vary in size, some being relatively large blocks, and others small and almost below the turf. Between this cairn and the tor there is another cairn, with a circle of twelve stones in place, of c. 17 ft. diameter. It encloses the southern side of a kistvaen, directed E.S.E. and W.N.W., measuring 4 ft. in length.

BUTTERTON HILL, 119 S.E.—The long row on this is partially described D.A. 24, 402. The following somewhat fuller details apply to its state in August, 1903. A few yards

N.N.E. of a tumulus marked "Heap of Stones" in the O.S. is a cairn marked "Pile of Stones." This is surrounded by a circle of at least twelve stones, all fallen, ranging to 6 ft. in length; the diameter E. and W. is 40 ft. From this cairn the single row runs almost due N. towards a completely excavated tumulus distant about two furlongs, which it leaves on the right. To a short distance beyond this the row has not less than 267 stones, of which 95 are standing or partly upright. Hence, still following the Harford-Ugborough boundary, the row ceases to be satisfactorily clear for some distance, but is traceable for over half a mile further towards and beyond the old rifle-butts, showing 150 additional stones, of which about a third are standing. Beyond the row, in the same line, is a B.S. with a small incised cross on its western face, the stone being 3 ft. 6 in. high, and the cross 7 in. high, and 5½ in. across. (This Mr. Crossing, "Stone Crosses," edition 1902, p. 15, conjectures to mark the original site of Hobajohn's Cross, the old cross being found too fragmentary for re-erection.)

STALLDON BARROW, 119 N.W.—The ruins of the square erection built on this, and of its materials, are known as "Hillson's House." I have been able to elicit nothing illuminative as to the individual—(there is a Hillson's Brake at the other side of the parish, near Rook, and the surname still survives among the inhabitants)—but one solemn fact was vouchsafed to me by a Cornwood farmer, which I hereby beg to present to the Folk-lore Committee, and that is, that the first grandfather's clock ever made was made on Stalldon in Hillson's House, it might be 150 years ago, it might be 200.