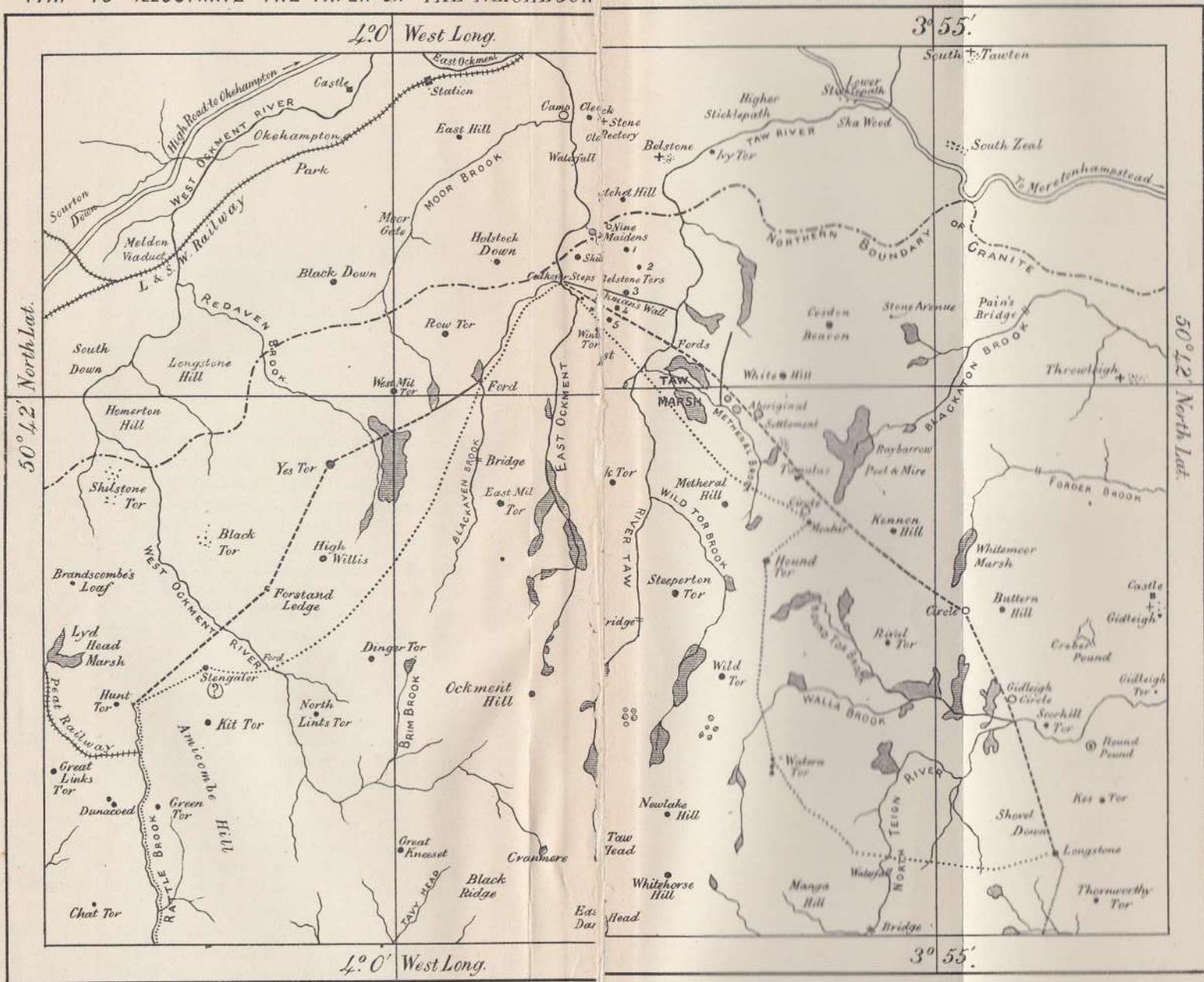


MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE PAPER ON "THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF TAW MARSH" by Arthur B. Prowse, M.D. F.R.C.S. 1890.



Dotted Line..... present Forest Boundary;

Interrupts
Marsh

Line..... Probable ancient Boundary



NOTES ON
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF TAW MARSH,
NORTH DARTMOOR.

BY ARTHUR B. PROWSE, M.D. LOND., F.R.C.S. ENG.

(Read at Barnstaple, July, 1890.)

TAW MARSH consists of two large stretches of bog, each about one-third of a mile long, and from one to two hundred yards broad, separated by a strip of firmer ground through which runs a small tributary of the Taw—Metheral Brook. The bog is at the northern broad end of a pyriform open valley, about 1200 feet above sea level, extending from Steeperton Tor on the south to the foot of Belstone Tors and Cosdon on the north. The first plate in the 1848 edition of Rowe's *Dartmoor* is a picture of Taw Marsh Valley; and is fairly correct, though the artist has exaggerated some of the features. The western boundary of the valley, near which the Taw runs in its northward course, is the abrupt slope of a ridge which connects the Belstone group of tors with Okement Hill (the nurse of Cranmere), and which is marked midway by the rocks of Ock Tor, 372 feet above the valley. This ridge is the water-parting between the East Ockment and Taw rivers. The eastern boundary is formed by a spur of Cosdon called White Hill (1665 feet), and by Metheral Hill (1503 feet).

Besides the many and varied charms open to a lover of Nature in this district, there is much of interest which owes its origin to man in ages long ago. Something of this I noted last summer during a stay of three or four weeks near Belstone; and the following pages include matter which is new to print, and which I trust may be interesting to other lovers of the "wild and wondrous" Devon upland.

About half a mile W.N.W. of Belstone is an old sculptured stone, (see Fig. 1) of granite like that found in the neigh-

bourhood. It is built into a wall, facing S.E., by the side of a roadway leading to the Old Rectory farm, from which it is distant about 50 yards. Its height above the ground is 4 ft. 1 in., and its greatest breadth 1 ft. 7½ in. The pattern on it is simple, and formed by shallow grooves about 1 inch wide. Near the top is a circle 15 inches in diameter; and within this a cross, formed of a vertical limb 9 inches long, and a transverse limb one inch less. Below the circle is a curved groove, with the convexity downwards, about 14 inch span; and this is bisected by an upright groove, ending below in what was evidently a trident when perfect. Now, however, the right-hand portion is wanting, owing to the corner of the stone having been broken off obliquely. The stone is not quite vertical, for the centre of the cross is 2½ inches to the S.W. of the plumb-line through the centre of the trident. Of its history I could learn nothing.

Less than half a mile S.W. of Belstone Church, in a line between it and a small tor marked in the Ordnance maps "Scarey," but called by most people in the neighbourhood "Skūtor," is Watchet Hill (1285 feet). This is marked by a flagstaff, used by the military authorities for three or four months in the summer to display a red flag as a danger-signal during artillery practice on Halstock and Black Downs. On the summit of the hill, about 30 yards S.W. of the flagstaff, is a tumulus 12 yards in diameter. It has plainly been dug through in all directions; and its ruined condition was, no doubt, the reason that it was not marked upon the new six-inch Ordnance map. Only one-fifth of a mile S.W. of it down the gradual slope is the well-known antiquity, the "Nine Maidens." I quite agree with those writers who think this neither a "sacred circle," nor a "hut-circle," but the remains of a ring of stones, which was sometimes placed round the base of a tumulus, as in the case of the much larger one on the top of Cosdon. There are seventeen stones remaining, but some are so small, or so little above the surface, that from a short distance only eight or nine are seen.

About 300 yards S.E. of the confluence of the East Ockment and Blackaven Brook, and 90 yards E. by S. of a small modern bridge carrying a farm road over the former stream, is a circle 5 yards in diameter, of which I can find no record. A few stones of small size are still erect, but most are much larger than is usual in hut-circles, and these are all fallen. I am inclined to think that this also is a small tumulus-ring like the "Nine Maidens"; but against this view is its small

diameter as compared with other tumuli on the Moor, and the fact that it stands on relatively low ground.

In ascending from it up the rocky slope of Winter Tor, we meet, at a distance of 250 yards, with a space 4 yards across, surrounded by a series of large stones. From the regularity of its circular outline it may be human handiwork, but I am not at all sure that it is not merely a "freak of nature."

About 300 yards S.S.E. of Winter Tor (1416 feet), and almost level with its top, is a tumulus 9 yards across, and rising about 3 feet above the level of the ground on which it stands. It is marked on the new Ordnance map. On the top is a hollow in which lies an irregular four-sided granite slab 4 ft. 6 in. long by 2 ft. 9 in. wide, and varying in thickness from 3 to 9 inches. This I raised with a crowbar, and, with help, removed the soil beneath. A few inches down was an erect slab, 10 inches thick, just under the centre of the tumulus. This proved to be the northern boundary of a sepulchral cavity or kistvaen, which was quite filled with a mixture of granite sand, peat-earth, and stones of various sizes. The removal of this was not easy, owing to the fact that another large slab was found lying obliquely across the space, and dipping down into it towards the N.E.

The other edges of this stone were firmly bedded in the tumulus; but, by probing the soil with a steel-shod pole, its outline was mapped out and found to be roughly triangular: length 4 ft. 9 in., breadth 3 ft. 3 in., thickness along exposed edge 6 to 9 inches. Since it would have been necessary to remove a large amount of soil first, this stone was not disturbed, but the space beneath it was cleared out. The east and west boundary-slabs are each 5 inches thick. Both incline inwards, especially the former, and at the top are 1 ft. 11 in. apart; but the breadth of the cavity at the base is 2 ft. 6 in. The length is 4 ft. 1 in.; and the depth 1 ft. 8 in. I carefully examined the contents as they were thrown out, but found nothing of interest except a few small porous and very brittle fragments of what is apparently bony tissue, some of which I have here. My friend, Mr. Neville C. Gwynn, and I have both failed to prepare from the fragments any specimen which would show more than a mass of shapeless particles under the microscope. I found, however, that pieces dissolved almost completely in weak nitric acid with considerable effervescence; and the solution, when tested with appropriate reagents, was found to contain both lime and phosphoric acid. These observations were

confirmed by Mr. F. H. Kilner, F.C.S., to whom for his kind help I am greatly indebted. The chemical evidence, therefore, together with the naked-eye appearance of the fragments, make it almost certain that they are portions of bony tissue; and I think that, considering the place in which they were found, we may fairly conclude they are human.

After taking the measurements I replaced the raised slab and covered it, first with the stones which had been taken from the cavity, and then with the soil, so that the kistvaen is protected from injury, and at the same time is no source of danger to any sheep or cattle in the neighbourhood. It seems quite clear that this ancient grave must long ago have been purposely broken into, because the top of the tumulus was hollowed out to the level of the kist-cover, and its cavity was quite filled with mingled soil and large stones. Then also, from the size and relative position of the two covering stones, I conclude that they formed originally one large slab, which was broken by violence. (See Figs. 2 and 3.)

Proceeding southward along the ridge separating the Taw and East Ockment valleys we reach Ocktor, 1572 feet above sea-level. Nearly a mile S. by E. of this, and less than two miles from Cranmere, is an old bridge spanning the Taw river in its narrow gorge at the foot of Steeperton Tor (1738 feet). It resembles in structure the well-known bridge over the Blackaven below East Miltor; and, like it, seems to have been built in connection with some old tin works. But though Blackaven Bridge seems to have excited interest, mainly owing to its isolated position, Steeperton Bridge which is a mile nearer the heart of the Moor is not, as far as I know, mentioned in any published work. It is 29 feet long and 15 feet wide, and crosses the stream obliquely. There are three piers between the two terminal supports, and they are composed of layers of rather large flat stones. The piers, when I was there, were 4 feet above the water in a moderately full stream. The central one is 3 ft. 6 in. wide, the two western ones 3 ft., and the two eastern 2 ft. 6 in. Of the four spans between the five supports, the two through which the stream was flowing are 4 ft. 6 in. and 4 ft. wide, while the end ones are only 2 ft. 6 in. each. The numerous blocks forming the roadway, each of which rests on only two of the piers, vary in size: length 6 to 7 ft., width 1 ft. 6 in. to 2 ft. 3 in., and thickness 6 to 12 inches. Several of them on the north side and east end of the bridge have been displaced.

Upon the highest part of Ockment Hill, which is about a mile distant south-west, is a large dilapidated tumulus; and on the ridge running northwards from Ockment Hill, there is, a short distance south of East Miltor, and due east of High Willis, a small tumulus. Neither of these are marked on the new Ordnance map. Last July and August (1889) were very wet months, and in the course of a walk which extended to Newlake, or Hangingstone Hill (1984 feet), I saw a large sheet of water on the boggy ground forming the south end of the Steeperton Tor ridge, between the headwaters of the Taw River and of Wild Tor Brook. About a quarter of a mile north of this, on the same ridge, are several tumuli, some of which appear not to have been interfered with. They are not marked on the Ordnance map.

On the ridge between Newlake Hill and Wild Tor is another group of very large tumuli, most of which are, I believe, in perfect condition except for weathering. Three of them are marked on the *old* Ordnance map; but, strangely enough, none appear in the *new* six-inch. This spot, so near the heart of the Moor, appears to have been a favourite burial-ground of its ancient inhabitants.

A little to the east of a bee-line between Wild and Hound Tors, in the dip between them, is a patch of boggy ground which is crossed near its western end by a large artificial causeway running north and south. It is about 5 yards broad; stands from 4 to 6 feet about the soppy soil ground, and is 50 yards long. I think it is not unlikely to have been part of a regular trackway leading towards the large group of tumuli just now mentioned; and this view receives support from the fact that there is a trackline, consisting of a slight bank, running in the same direction across the top of Metheral Hill towards some prehistoric village enclosures at the foot of White Hill, which will be presently described.

From Hound Tor the forest boundary now passes north-east to a monolith called "White Moor Stone," which stands on a wide and nearly flat expanse S.S.W. of Raybarrow Mire and Pool. It is an upright slab of granite with its edges W. by N. and E. by S.; from 3 to 6 inches thick; extreme width 3 feet, and height 5 ft. 6 in.

About 140 yards N.W. by N. is a "sacred circle" (see Fig. 4), 20 yards in diameter, and consisting now of 13 stones; though, judging by the relative positions of these, there must formerly have been about 20. The largest is erect, but only 4½ feet high.

A quarter of a mile N.N.W. of the circle is a tumulus 8

yards in diameter, crowning a hill 1608 feet high. It has evidently been dug into. East of it is the wide open valley in which lies the worst bog on the Moor—"Raybarrow Pool." Last summer (1889), after some weeks of rainy weather, there was in its centre a small sheet of water, but usually there is no "pool," the surface being occupied chiefly by smooth emerald-green patches of dangerous swamp. From its east side issues the Blackaton Brook, which flows round near Throwleigh and Gidleigh to join the North Teign a quarter of a mile above its union with the South Teign.

About a quarter of a mile N.N.W. of the tumulus is a group of "hut-circles" about 1500 feet above sea level, on the verge of a steep rock-strewn slope which limits White Hill on the south. (See D. in Fig. 5.) This group, which numbers twelve circles with diameters varying from 4 to 9 yards, is protected on the west by the rocky ground sloping steeply to Metheral Brook; and on the east to some extent by a strip of marshy ground. South of it there is also some wet uneven ground leading down to an actual swamp. To the S.S.W. is a firm grassy slope, but this is crossed by an artificial bank 42 yards long, probably for defensive purposes. To the north the ground rises steadily to the top of White Hill; and on this side there is no special protection.

In six of the circles the entrance is plainly marked by short upright stones; the position in five being towards the S.E., and in the sixth E. by S. On the verge of the rocky slope, about 17 yards S.W. by W. of two of the circles, which are close together, is a fallen mênhir 10 ft. 9 in. long. Fifteen yards S.S.E. of the same circles is what appears to be a ruined kistvaen; and 43 yards N. by E. of the large central circle is a small mound 4 yards across, possibly the remains of a hut.

About 250 yards N.W. of this village, on the steep grassy slope overlooking Taw Marsh, is a second group of hut circles. (See C. in Fig. 5.) These are in a broadly oval space, 70 yards by 80, limited by a bank of earth and stones, which in some parts is well marked, rising about 2 feet above the turf, and in others indistinct, as on the N.E. side, where a boggy strip of ground affords some protection. The basements of the ancient huts vary in diameter from 4 to 5 yards; five of them are in contact with the encircling bank, and the two others are near the centre of the space, which is much overgrown with gorse, heather, and whortleberry bushes.

One hundred yards west of this enclosed group, and only a

few feet above the level of Taw Marsh, is another irregularly-ovoid space (see B. in Fig. 5), surrounded by a similar bank, which on the S.W. side takes in a portion of the steep gully of Metheral Brook. Near the centre of this space is a large hut circle, 8 yards across, and two smaller ones near it, 5 and 6 yards in diameter respectively. Touching the enclosing bank are two other circles 5 and 6 yards across.

Sixty yards N.W. of this pound we come upon the boundary of a third, somewhat heart-shaped (see A. in Fig. 5), and about 50 yards in diameter. Within this area are no circles, but the bank is interrupted at the N.W. side by a circle 15 yards across. This itself includes a hut circle (5 yards) built against its N.N.W. side; while nearly opposite in its S.E. side are two fallen mênhirs, about 7 feet long, which may have marked the entrance.

Along the middle of the space between the pounds A and B runs a strip of boggy ground, on the south side of which are two hut circles each 4 yards across; and from the south part of pound A a low bank of earth and stones runs nearly due south for 42 yards, as far as the boggy ground, where it ends in a circle 5 yards in diameter.

Twenty-two yards west of the large excentric circle of pound A we come upon a bank which runs from Metheral Brook due north for 560 yards, and then N. by E. 516 yards further, where it ends in a boggy depression on the west slope of Cosdon. This bank, about 70 yards north of pound A, is interrupted by a circle 6 yards across; and 30 yards nearer to the pound is a rather smaller circle close to the bank. One hundred yards E. by N. of the former circle are two others about the same size.

On the new six-inch Ordnance map none of these pounds are marked; nor the long embankment; and of the circles only the large excentric one of pound A, two central and one marginal of pound B., and nine only out of the twelve in group D. Those in C. are entirely wanting.

The four groups formed one extensive aboriginal settlement; and the site is well chosen for comfort and defence. As to the former, the three lower groups are sheltered from the north and east, and are all on a S.W. slope. In the low land bordering Taw Marsh would be plenty of forage for the cattle; and Metheral Brook provided an unfailing supply of good water. As to *defence* of the inhabitants from their enemies on the borders of the Moor, scouts upon the tumulus-hill to the S.E., and upon White Hill or Cosdon to the N.E. would command such a wide expanse of country

that surprise from the lowlands to the east would be almost out of the question. The most likely quarter for attack would have been from the N.W. The course of the Taw in its narrow gorge at the foot of Belstone Tors would almost certainly have been followed by a hostile force from the lowlands, because of the cover afforded until it reached the neck of the Taw Marsh valley, hardly more than half a mile from the settlement. At this point in the river are two easy fords, and here, leaving the river, the foe would be within a few minutes' run of the settlement. But across the firm grassy slope, flanked on the north and south by unsafe boggy ground, runs the long embankment, probably then crowned by a palisade of brushwood and gorse. Should they succeed in forcing this, they would then receive a check at the two lower enclosures, doubtless also fenced in the same way. Should success again be with them, they would still have to take the third enclosure on the steep hillside above; and even then the result would be doubtful, for out of their sight over the crest of the hill, 200 feet higher, is the strongly placed and largest group of huts, from which a large body of men might suddenly swoop down upon them while tired and breathless, with the advantage of being fresh, and of having the ground in their favour. Besides giving protection against such attacks, the enclosures would also serve to protect the cattle at night from wolves and thieving neighbours.

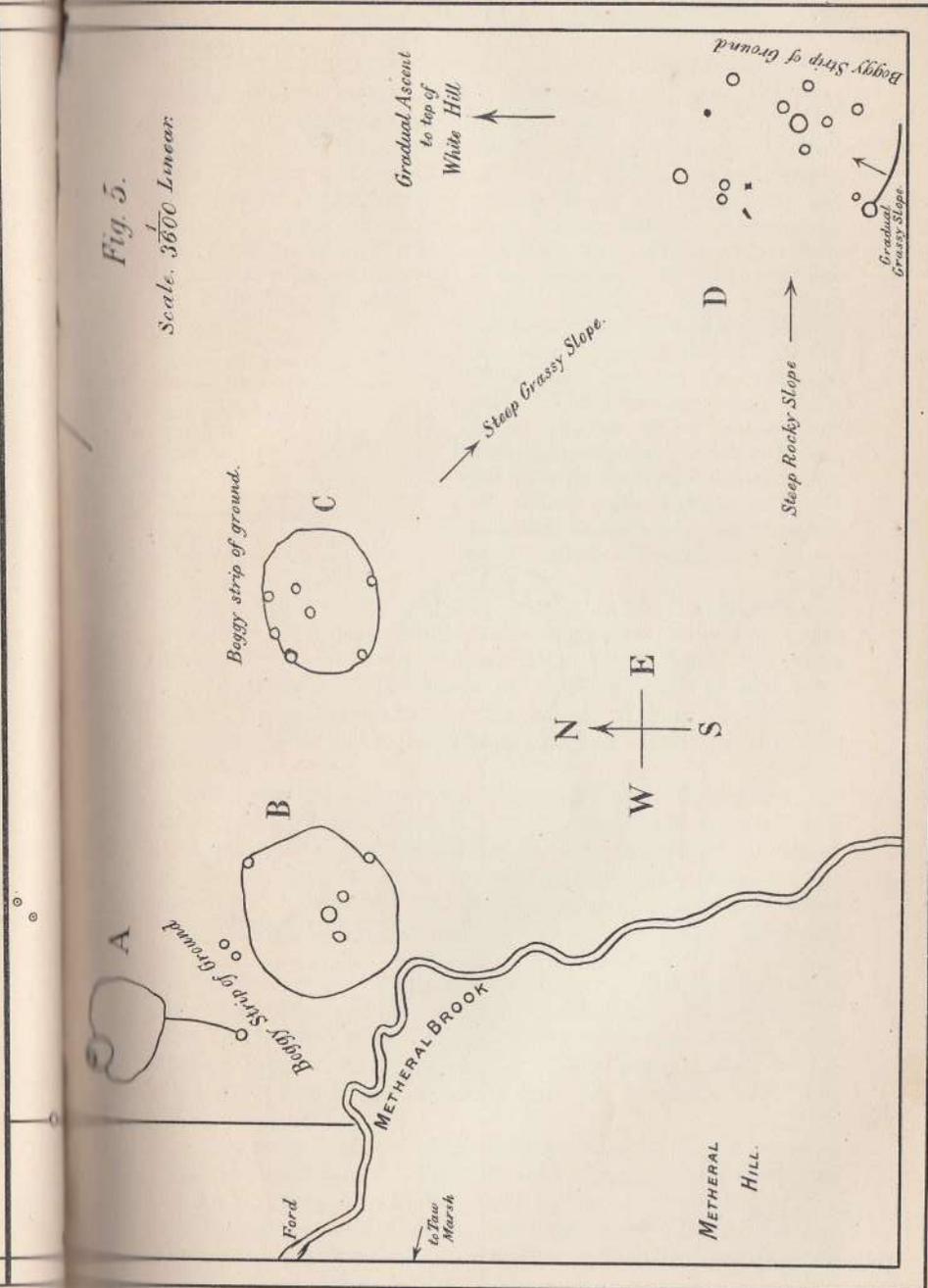
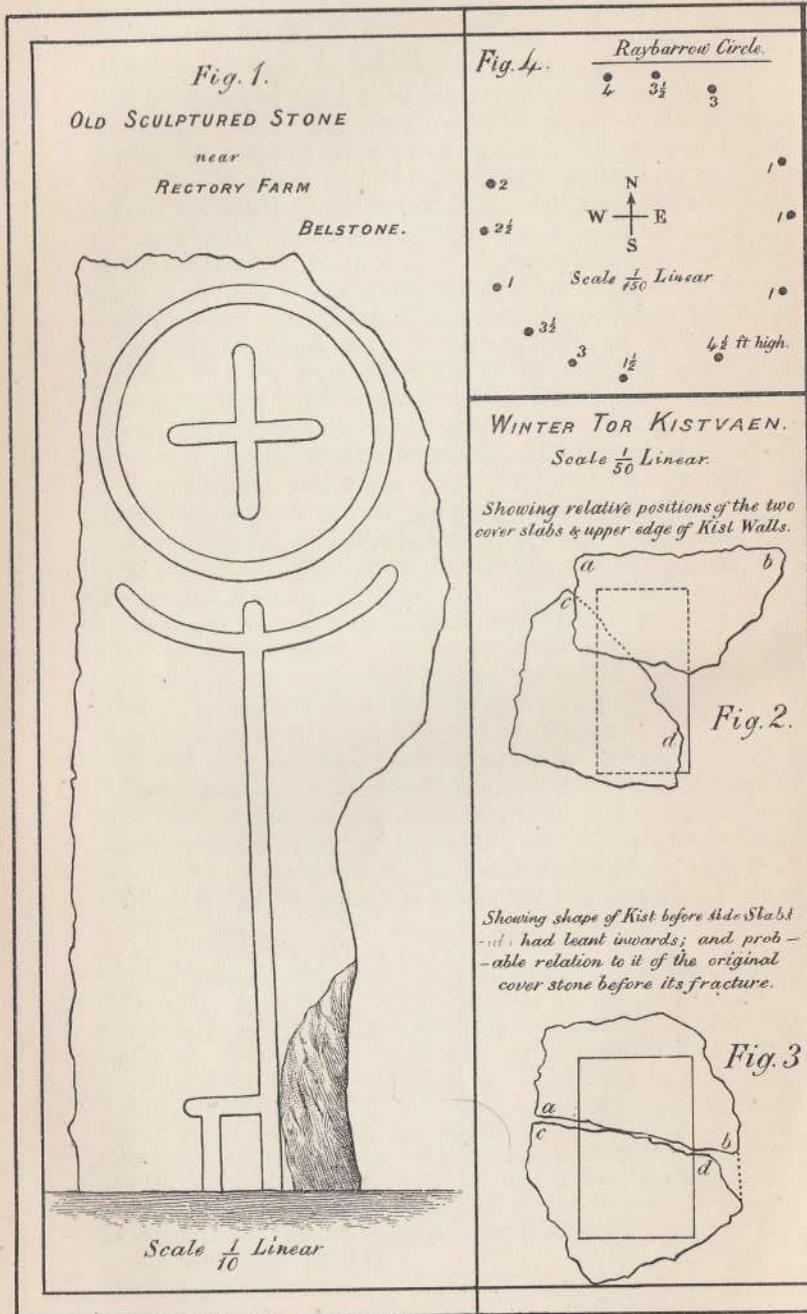
I will now consider briefly the Forest boundary in the "*North Quarter*" of the Moor, which is as a rule held to meet the *West Quarter* not far from the point where the Rattlebrook joins the Tavy at the south end of Amicombe Hill. The limits, as set down in the Perambulations of 1240 and 1609, will first be quoted from Rowe's (1848) edition.

1240.

"Ad Rakernesbrokysfote, et sic ad caput ejusdem aque, et deinde linealiter usque ad *la Westsolle*, et inde linealiter usque ad *Ernestorre*, et inde linealiter usque ad vadum proximum in orientali parte capelle Sancti Michaelis de Halgestoke, et inde linealiter usque ad predictam hogam de Cossdonne in orientali parte."

1609.

"Northward to Rattlebrooke foote and soe from thence to the headd of the same Rattlebrooke, and soe from thence linyallie unto *Steinegtorr* and from thence linyallie to *Lungaford*, *al's Sandyford*, and so from thence linyallie to the ford w^{ch} lyeth in the east side of the chappelle of Halstocke and so from thence linyallie unto the said hill called Cosdon al's Cosson, wher they did begin."



1240.

The officials began the round "ad hogam de Coss-donne et inde linealiter usque ad parvam hogam que vocatur *parva Hundetorre*, et inde linealiter usque ad *Thurlestone* et inde linealiter usque ad *Wotesbrokelakesfote* que cadit in Tyng."

1609.

"Beginning at a high hill lying in the north quarter of the said fforest, called at this day Cosdon, al's Cosson, and in the old records written Hoga de Costdonne, and from thence lineallie eastward by estimacon one mile or more unto *little houndetorr* w^{ch} in the said records is called 'hoga de parva houndetorr,' and from thence lineallie to a place named in the said records *Thurleston*, now as they suppose called Waterdontorr, being about three quarters of a myle from Houndtorr aforesaid, and from thence near a myle to *Wotesbrookelakefoote* w^{ch} falleth into Teynge, and w^{ch} lake they thincke to be the same w^{ch} is now called Whoodelake."

From the confluence of the Tavy with the Rattlebrook the boundary runs nearly three miles due north along the latter stream as far as its source near Hunt Tor. From this point to the nearest of the fords on the east side of the land owned by or pertaining to the chapel of Saint Michael of Halstock, the forest bounds mentioned differ in the two accounts.

The *earlier* one gives "La Westsolle" and "Ernestorre" as intervening points, while the *latter* gives "Steinegtorr" and "Langaford" *alias* "Sandyford." The derivation of these words may help us to fix upon the places they refer to; for these old names almost always describe faithfully some marked physical feature of the object to which they are given.

The first, "La Westsolle," is plainly a Keltic name in a Norman dress, and means "the west *head*," from *siol*. I identify it with what is now called "Forstand Ledge," the abrupt rocky south-west end of the towering mass which rises into Yestor and High Willis. It is about 1930 feet above sea level.

"Ernestorre" may, I think, be traced to the Keltic *yr ynys ttor*, "the island tor." Possibly this word is an early form of Yestor; Ernéstor becoming *Estor* by the accentuation of the penultimate syllable, and the slurring-over followed by the elision of the first one in accordance with the well-known

Keltic tendency to the suppression of unaccented syllables. The final result, Yestor, being due to the West-Country tendency to prefix a *y* to words beginning with vowel or aspirate, as in the case of *yarth* for *earth*, *yether* for *heather*. I am the more inclined to this derivation of Yestor because it certainly describes the idea of its insulation, suggested by the appearance of the tor from the border lowlands to the north and west. From other points of view it would have been relatively rarely seen.

Or, again, the term *island tor* may have been suggested by experiences like the one following. I was descending the western side of White Tor (Meuborough) towards Cudliptown on August 8th, 1888, about 6.15 p.m. The sun was shining brightly, and its light was reflected in a most dazzling manner from the *upper* surface of a layer of clouds nearly 400 feet below, which concealed the country for some miles in the direction of the Cornish hills. The only points to be seen were the rounded top of Black Down and the peak of Brentor; and they looked like islets in a billowy snow-white sea. Now, although such an effect is rarely seen at so low an elevation (about 1500 feet), the necessary conditions for its production occur more often at higher altitudes; and observers on neighbouring heights, such as Great Links Tor and Amicombe Hill must occasionally have seen the towering mass of High Willis and Yestor appear like an island in a sea of clouds.

The third name, "Steingtorr," may be from the Saxon *Stán* = stone, and *ég* or *éy* = island; and, if so, it is probably but an alternative term for Ernestorre. Rowe, on page 198, mentions *Stengator alias Steincator*, as being at the north end of Amicombe Hill. These names are plainly forms of Steinector, for the transposition of letters in a word is a very common thing in rustic speech. On the new six-inch Ordnance map also is marked "Stinkator" (evidently a further corruption of the name); it is on the verge of the deep gorge of the West Ockment River, just opposite to Forstand Ledge. I do not believe that *this* tor is the original "Steingtorr," for its physical features do not agree with those suggested by what seems to me a reasonable derivation. It is also an insignificant landmark compared with other points not far off, and is very near the preceding forest-bound, in point of fact little over half a mile from it.

The names "Sandyford" and "Langaford" (*i.e.* long ford), seem to define fairly well the characters of the next

boundary (though one may remark that all fords in a granite district are likely to be *sandy*), and after careful consideration I have come to the conclusion that a ford over the Blackaven Brook is meant, rather more than half a mile below the old bridge at the foot of East Miltor.

In accordance with the views just put forward the forest-boundary would have formerly passed from the head of the Rattlebrook north-east across the West Ockment to Forstand Ledge; then to Yestor, and the ford over the Blackaven; and so on to Cullever Steps.

From this point it is said in the Perambulations to go to Cosdon; and if in a direct course it must have passed over the Belstone Tor ridge near the line now marked by the so-called Irishman's wall.

With regard to this "wall," the new six-inch map marks it as ending, towards the west, at the point where it meets a cart-track which passes close to Winter Tor; but it does *not* end there, and is plainly to be seen crossing the common for 390 yards further, in a direction slightly to the north of west, down to the Ockment a short distance above Cullever Steps.

The question now arises, "What part of Cosdon was taken by the officials as the forest-limit? the summit, or some point at the foot?" I think it most probable that in 1240 the summit was the starting point; but, as will be seen further on, in 1609 the evidence points to the western foot of the hill, just where the Taw River leaves its marshy valley.

From Cosdon to the "foot" or end of "Wotesbrolake" (or "Whoodelake"?) the boundary line is uncertain; and the account of 1609 is very inaccurate if the line followed were at all like that *now* marked on the Ordnance map, which in point of fact nowhere touches Cosdon.

In the first place we read that the boundary goes "lineallie eastward by estimacon one mile or more unto little Houndetorr." What is now known as Hound Tor is more than one and a half miles in a bee-line *south by west* of the top of Cosdon; but if the *western foot* of Cosdon were the starting-point, the 1609 account would seem rather more accurate, for Hound Tor lies S.S.E. of the most likely starting-point, *i.e.* just where there are two good fords over the Taw. The 1240 document speaks of "the little hill which is called *little* Hundetorre," so it would seem that there must have been a *great* Hundetorre also. A hill between the present Hound Tor and Cosdon, crowned by the

tumulus mentioned previously, seems to answer best to the description of the "little hill." It is distant from the fords one and a quarter miles in a S.E. direction.

The next point mentioned in the 1240 document is "Thurlestone," which the 1609 jurors thought must mean "Waterdонтorr;" and modern writers seem to have fallen in with this idea, because of the appearance of a part of the rocky crest of Watern Tor, as it is now called. Two of the granite piles incline towards each other in somewhat different planes; and so, from a distance, there seems to be a *hole* through the rocky mass. Now the Anglo-Saxon for *hole* was *thysel*; and this word appears in such compounds as *Nosthyrl* (A.S.) or *Nosethirle* (M.E.); modern, *Nostril*. In using the phrase, "to *drill* a hole," the same root is employed as a verb. Now since holes usually have an outline which is more or less circular, I see no incongruity in the application of the same word to denote a *circle*; and the "Thurlestone" of 1240 may surely have meant "circle of stones" or "stone circle." The name Thurlestone appears nowhere on the old one-inch Ordnance map (1809) of Dartmoor; but in the new six-inch map the Watern Tor rocks are marked "Thirlstone," probably in deference to the suggestion of the 1609 jurors, which has since become the popular belief.

On the one-inch Geological Survey Map, corrected to 1866, I find the name Thurlestone upon the rising ground called "Kennon Hill" on the new six-inch map; and one would think the geological surveyors must have had the guidance of local usage when they inserted the name on this particular hill, which is three-quarters of a mile E.S.E. from the tumulus-hill, just now mentioned as possibly being "little Hundetorre."

I am inclined to think that a "sacred circle," or rather its remains (about 25 yards in diameter), which is upon the slope of Buttern Hill, and one and a quarter miles west of Gidleigh Castle, is the "Thurlestone" of the 1240 Perambulation.

The next forest-bound mentioned is the "foot," or ending, of a stream called "Wotesbroke-lake," which joins the river Teign. This name seems to have been lost locally before 1609, and the jurors thought it might mean a stream then known as "Whoodelake." This name, in its turn, has now vanished; and its derivation and that of the first part of the older name—Wotesbroke-lake—is not apparent; so this help to localization is denied us. If, however, I have been right

in defining the position of the two preceding bounds, then this Wotesbroke lake would almost certainly be the stream now called Wallabrook, which joins the Teign a short distance south of Gidleigh Circle; or possibly the large affluent of the Wallabrook coming from below Hound Tor.

The Forest boundary thus sketched, from the western base of Cosdon to the union of the Wallabrook and Teign, deviates widely in its latter part from that now accepted and recorded in the new map; but this cannot be considered strange, for a pushing back of the old bounds has occurred in comparatively modern times in other parts of the Moor; as I gave good reason last year for believing has been the case in the neighbourhood of White Tor and Great Mistor. The line I have just suggested has the recommendation that it avoids sharp angular bends, and by a gradual turning follows the direction of the natural limits of the moorland towards the next landmark in the "East Quarter."

A few remarks now as to the derivation and meaning of some local names not yet incidentally considered. As regards "Mil Tor," a widely accepted view is that the origin of the name is the Keltic *Milin* or *Melyn*, meaning "yellow"; and I think this may well have suited *West* Mil Tor centuries ago, when the beautiful golden-flowered whin must have been more plentiful on it than now; but *East* Mil Tor is a bare hill, grassy to its top, and, from many points of view, rather conical in shape; moreover there is little or no gorse upon it, so that the above derivation is hardly likely. The Keltic *moel*, which means a bare conical hill, well describes its character, and this I believe to be the root of its name.

I agree with those writers who connect the name High Willis with *welli* or *wele*, a 'look-out': the spelling Willhayes, which occurs in the Ordnance maps, old and new, is thus seen to be probably further removed from the original than a *phonetic* spelling would be, which, as usual, is more truthful in representing the vernacular, Willis.

Though I do not follow those modern sciolists, who "scout the idea" of the existence of any evidence which points to the prevalence of the worship of Baal, or Bel, in ancient times in these isles of the West, I believe that the most likely origin of the name "Belstone," in connection with the tors, is the Keltic *bal*, a peak, or pointed hill; for this well describes the sharp serrated ridge, especially when seen from the lowlands to the north.

Cosdon, or Cawsand, as it is more commonly called, has

around it on three sides, east, west, and south, large stretches of actual bog, and it also very liberally supplies plenty of marshy patches, to entrap the unwary, on its western slope. This marked feature is described in its name, the first half of which seems to come from the Keltic word *cors*, a marsh or bog. The same word occurs in the name of a farm rather more than a mile north of Belstone village, together with another Keltic word *cwm*; "Corcombe," or, as it is commonly called, "Crosscombe," meaning "marshy valley."

The name of the large bog south of Cosdon—"Raybarrow," or Rayborough—is less easy to trace; but the following Keltic derivation certainly describes the place well: "*Yr ebyr aw*" = the meetings (or confluence) of water. The initial vowel being dropped, and the words joined together, the result closely resembles in sound the present name.

South-east of Raybarrow mire is "Kennon Hill." This name I trace to *cynhen*, which means *strife* or *contention*; for when we take into consideration the numerous aboriginal remains in the immediate neighbourhood, this broad, gently-sloping hill seems not unlikely to have been the scene of repeated fierce conflicts between the Kelts of the Moor and their encroaching Saxon neighbours.

"Metheral Hill" is a low elevation which on its north-west side slopes very gradually into the Taw Marsh Valley. The roots of its name are—*math* = a flat tract of land, and *ar ael* = near to. Or it may mean the hill of the "other flat land," from *math*, and *arall* = other, or another; the "flat land" *par excellence* being the Raybarrow Pool Valley, only a mile away, on the other side of the aboriginal settlement.

"Skütor," or "Scarey Tor," as it is called in the Ordnance maps, plainly obtains its name from the same root as *Ska*, which is the name of a wood on the abrupt slope of the northern foot of Cosdon, overlooking Sticklepath. Compare also *Scorhill*, near Gidleigh, also *Skir* Gut and *Skir* Hill, not far from Foxtor mire. To Gaelic Kelts *sgar* meant a steep, rocky place; while with Kymric Kelts *esgard* was a cleft; and since the ideas conveyed by the words in the two branches of the language are very closely allied, the modern names quoted may have been derived from either.

Before concluding I would call attention to the fact that there are many hills and tors the heights of which are not marked on the new Ordnance maps; and it is well to bear in mind also that even when figures are placed close to the top of a hill, it is not in every case the *greatest* height which is recorded, but merely that of certain marks cut upon the

rocks, often many feet below the actual summit, as in the case of Hound Tor.

In the following cases I have, by means of a simple home-made apparatus, estimated approximately the elevations in feet: West Mil Tor, 1780; Row Tor, 1550; Halstock Down, 1390; East Hill, 1149; West Cleave Rock, 1003; Watchet Hill, 1285; Skūtor, 1201; 1st Belstone Tor, 1408; 2nd Belstone Tor, 1507; 3rd Belstone Tor, 1571; 4th Belstone Tor, 1566; 5th Belstone Tor, 1544; Winter Tor, 1416; Ock Tor, 1572; White Hill, 1665; Hound Tor, 1623; Tumulus (Little Hound Tor), 1608; Wild Tor, 1743.