

TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT OF THE BARROW COMMITTEE.

TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT of the Committee—consisting of Mr. P. F. S. Amery, Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Dr. Brushfield, Mr. R. Burnard, Mr. J. Brooking-Rowe, Rev. J. F. Chanter, and Mr. R. Hansford Worth—appointed to collect and record facts relating to Barrows in Devonshire, and to take steps, where possible, for their investigation.

Edited by R. HANSFORD WORTH, Hon. Secretary.

(Read at Lynton, July, 1906.)

YOUR Committee's present Report includes:—

- (1) The record of the exploration of two small cairns in the Tavy Valley, on Dartmoor, by the Rev. I. Kempt Anderson.
- (2) The record of the exploration of three barrows near Brockenburrow Lane, Challacombe, North Devon, by the Rev. J. F. Chanter. To which is added an abstract of Westcote's tale of the opening of Broaken Barrow.
- (3) A description of certain North Devon barrows, Five Barrow group, and Setta Barrow. To which is annexed an abstract of Westcote's report of the opening of Woodbarrow.

TAVY VALLEY.

On the slopes of Hare Tor, near Tavy Cleave, is a small cairn, unmarked on the Ordnance Survey (Devon LXXXVIII. S.E. Long. $4^{\circ} 2' 52''$, lat. $50^{\circ} 38' 3\frac{1}{2}''$). Of this the Rev. I. Kempt Anderson reports:—

The cairn is about 11 feet in diameter and stands about 18 inches high in centre; it has a stone boundary circle. It was opened on 6 July, 1905, in the presence of myself, Mrs. Anderson, Mr. G. Warren Smallwood, Robert

Densham, William Tancock, William Cole, Joseph Newcomb, Miss Meade (Mary Tavy), Miss Dora Brown (ditto), and others.

We found the place of cremation, about 18 inches to 24 inches below the natural surface. There was a great quantity of large pieces of charcoal, some ash, and what, I think, might probably be human cinder dust. No pottery—no kistvaen.

IRVINE K. ANDERSON.

Near Homer Red Lake is another small cairn, also unmarked on the Ordnance Survey (Devon xcvi. N.E. Long. $4^{\circ} 1' 50''$, lat. $50^{\circ} 37' 40\frac{1}{2}''$).

This is a small cairn, which I found on 5 June, 1905. It is but 4 feet in diameter and 2 feet high at centre. There is no stone circle.

It was opened on 26 July, 1905, in the presence of myself, Robert Densham (of Hornden), Joseph Newcomb (ditto), William Cole (ditto), William Tancock (Mary Tavy), and James Stevens (Devonport).

Burnt earth was first found within 1 foot of surface, afterwards more burnt earth, a good quantity of charcoal (probably oak), some ash, and one good worked flint with remarkably sharp edge. (A small semicircular scraper.—R. H. W.) We cleared the surface of the "deads."

IRVINE K. ANDERSON.

BARROWS NEAR BROCKENBURROW LANE.

The neighbourhood of Brockenburrow or Broaken Burrow has an especial interest. Westcote preserves for us the record of a barrow-opening here in or about the year 1623. This will be found given *in extenso* in our first report, Vol. XI of the "Transactions," p. 149. It appears that a certain labouring man, having saved a little money, invested this in some few acres of waste land and began to build a house thereon. Not far from the site was Broaken Burrow; and, following the method even now prevalent, this he utilized as his quarry, fetching "stones and earth to further his work." Presently, "having pierced into the bowels of the hillock, he found therein a little place, as it had been a large oven, fairly, strongly, and closely walled up." Evidently a kistvaen.

This and the prospect of treasure "comforted him much." He broke through into the cavity and espied an earthen pot, which he essayed to seize. Twice he tried, and twice a noise

as of trampling or treading of horses caused him to desist, fearing that there were those coming who should "take his purchase from him." The third time he brought the urn away, and found "therein only a few ashes and bones, as if they had been of children or the like." "But the man, whether by the fear, which yet he denied, or other cause which I cannot comprehend, in very short time lost senses both of sight and hearing, and in less than three months consuming died. He was in all his lifetime accounted an honest man."

The record is in all probability the true account of an "honest man's" tragic adventure. The kistvaen and urn accord with the results of the most recent opening in this immediate locality.

A further interest attaches to these barrows, since they are associated with some of the despoiled stone monuments described in the "Transactions" for last year, and again referred to in Part II of "The Rude Stone Monuments of Exmoor and its Borders," in the present volume.

[R. H. W.]

BARROW A. BROCKENBURROW.

Devon VI. S.E. Long. $3^{\circ} 54' 19''$, lat. $51^{\circ} 9' 56''$.

Last year my investigations of the barrows on the western slopes of Exmoor were confined to the groups, being on Chapman Barrows, the results of which were given in the twenty-fourth Report. This year I determined to shift my ground somewhat, and tempted by the account which Westcote gives of the mysterious events which happened before his days at the opening of one of the barrows on Challacombe Common, known as Broken Barrow, fixed on the same locality as a probably interesting field, and it is perhaps needless to say that the noise as of trampling horses which alarmed the explorer of those days at the opening of the kistvaen did not visit me when I, in my turn, made my discovery.

The first barrow on which work was commenced lay in a field known as Deer Park, formerly part of Challacombe Common, enclosed and broken about forty years ago, and now forming part of Wistland Pound Farm, in the occupation of Mr. W. R. Smyth, by whose kind permission, and also that of the owner, Lord Fortescue, I was allowed to make the necessary excavations. The barrow is marked A in Plate XI of "Stone Monuments of Exmoor" ("Trans. D.A.," 1905, p. 397), where the stones in connexion with it are

described. It is 31 feet in diameter and 3 feet 7 inches high above the present level of the ground at its highest point, and had no traces of any previous disturbance. A trench about 4 feet 6 inches wide was driven in from the south side, and at 14 feet from the margin some quantity of charcoal and burnt clay was found just below the present ground level, while at 15 feet 6 inches a cairn of stones was reached of conical shape about 2 feet 3 inches high, with its top 1 foot 11 inches below the top of the barrow. The stones were all set longways upward and leaning inwards. On removing the outer stones of this cairn a kistvaen was exposed 17 inches long, 13 inches wide, and 12 inches deep—the cover-stone was 18 inches long and $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide—the ends composed each of a single stone about 12 inches by 13 inches, the north side a single stone 19 inches long and irregular in height, and the south side of two stones, one 14 inches by 13 inches, the other $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 10 inches—the bottom formed by a single stone about 17 inches by 12 inches. The length of the kist lies N. 67° 13' E. On lifting off the cover-stone an urn was exposed full of bones, bone ash, and charcoal, and some earth which had been forced in by pressure from above, and which in its fall had unfortunately broken the urn in several fragments; and in attempting to move these they proved to be so imperfectly baked and so sodden with water that many crumbled and broke; sufficient, however, remained intact to render some reconstruction and measurements possible. It stood upright, not inverted, and was probably about 10 inches high and 10 inches in diameter at the top internally; 6 inches internally and $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches externally at the base; the thickness of the material varies from $\cdot 75$ inch at the base and at a ridge half-way up to $\cdot 45$ inch at the rim; the clay is very coarse, with a large admixture of sand; externally the colour is yellow-brown, internally nearly black, the black colour extending through three-quarters of the thickness.

The urn was perfectly destitute of any ornamentation except a plain rib half-way up, and is rudely hand-moulded, the rim being very uneven. An examination of the contents showed large quantities of bones, some quite white, others charred, charcoal, and one burnt flint, broken in two, about 3.25 inches long, which showed traces of working and use at both ends and sides. At the bottom of the kistvaen four small shale stones and one quartz had been placed round the base of the urn to keep it in position. An extended search did not bring anything else to light in the

ground around, but one flint chip was found in the next field. The barrow consisted entirely of earth and layers of surface turf. Barrow was opened on Saturday, 2 June, and Monday, 4 June, 1906.

The base of the kistvaen was 4 feet 2 inches below the top of the barrow, and therefore about 7 inches below present level of ground.

J. F. CHANTER.

Mr. Chanter has kindly forwarded the flint and a portion of the urn for examination. I am inclined to think that the urn was made in the near locality. The flint, a much-worn "fabricator," is very interesting. It has obviously been burnt, the surface being fused in parts and presenting the appearance of an irregular glaze. It was broken by the fire before the cremation was completed, one half being much more fused than the other, having presumably fallen into a hotter part of the fire. If we except the absence of a slight ornamentation, the urn is of the same character, and of much the same shape, as one figured in the last Report, and found at Westerland Beacon, South Devon.

R. H. W.

BROKEN BARROW GROUP.

BARROW B. (Plate XI, "Stone Mon.")

Devon VI. S.E. Long. $3^{\circ} 54' 18''$, lat. $51^{\circ} 9' 57\frac{1}{2}''$.

Examined 10 June, 1906.

The barrow was ploughed over when the moor was broken forty years ago, but has not been touched since; it is 30 feet in diameter, 20 inches high. A trench was driven in from south about 4 feet wide; about 2 feet in a low wall of stones was reached, and another about 10 feet in; beyond this the ground appeared to have been previously disturbed, large stones which may have been part of a kistvaen, earth, clay, and decayed turfs, with small pieces of charcoal, being indiscriminately mixed up. After driving about 3 feet beyond the centre it was abandoned and filled in, nothing being found but one small flint flake and spot where the cremation seemed to have taken place.

BARROW C. (Plate XI, "Stone Mon.")

Devon VI. S.E. Long. $3^{\circ} 54' 28\frac{1}{2}''$, lat. $51^{\circ} 9' 57\frac{1}{2}''$.

Excavated 10 June.

This barrow, according to the old man on the farm, was not ploughed over or touched when the field was taken in

from the common, but the top was irregular, with depression in the centre. Diameter, 42 feet 6 inches; greatest height, 3 feet 9 inches. A trench was driven in from south about 4 feet 6 inches wide. The mound was entirely of earth and turfs, with no containing wall; and at about 16 feet from edge it showed previous disturbance, a large shaft having been sunk from the top about 6 to 7 feet diameter down below the subsoil in this area. Everything was mixed up, large flat stones, earth, etc., as if thrown in indiscriminately. At about 1 foot 9 inches down from the top a few sherds of pottery were found, probably the remains of the former barrow-openers, and may perhaps determine their date. Was this barrow, for it lies close to Broken Barrow Lane, the broken barrow of which old Westcote tells such strange tales? Nothing was found on the present occasion beyond the potsherds and a flint core.

J. F. CHANTER.

Mr. Chanter has sent me a piece of the pottery found in this barrow. It is red ware, yellow glazed inside, and may be medieval or of almost any later date. Quite probably it is the relic of a seventeenth-century barrow-opening. But from the description I hardly think that this is the original "Broaken Burrow." (I fear the name as attached to any definite mound is now lost.) The state of the barrow hardly accords with what one would expect had it been used as a quarry. This, however, is purely a personal opinion.

R. H. W.

FIVE BARROW GROUP, NEAR SPAN HEAD, NORTH MOLTON.

Devon XI. S.W.

Leland, Hearne's Copy, Vol. II, p. 103:—

There rennith at this Place caullid *Simonsbath* a Ryver betwixt to great Morisch Hilles in a depe Bottom and ther is a Bridge of Woodde over this Water. . . .

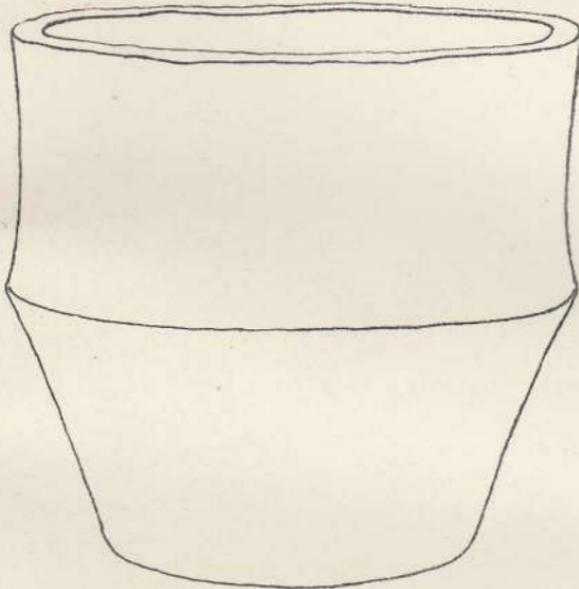
The Boundes of *Somersetshire* go beyond this streame one way by North West a 2 Miles or more to a place caullid the *Spanne*, and the *Tourres*; for ther be Hillokkes of Yerth cast up of auncient tyme for Markes and Limites betwixt *Somersetshir* and *Devonshire*. And here about is the Limes and Boundes of *Exmore* forest.

The locality thus indicated by Leland is that of "Two Barrows," "Five Barrows," and "Setta Barrow." Of these Setta Barrow is the only one which actually lies on the county boundary, although at Two Barrows this latter

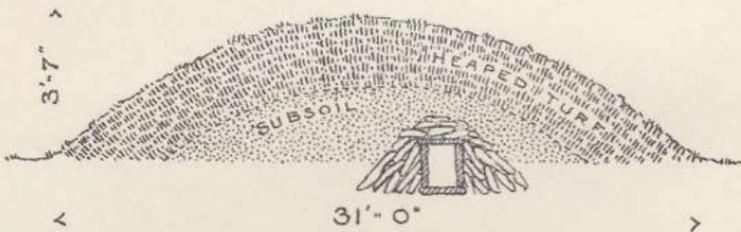
PLATE I

BARROW NEAR BROCKENBURROW.

VI. S.E. lon. $3^{\circ} - 54' - 19''$
lat. $51^{\circ} - 9' - 56''$



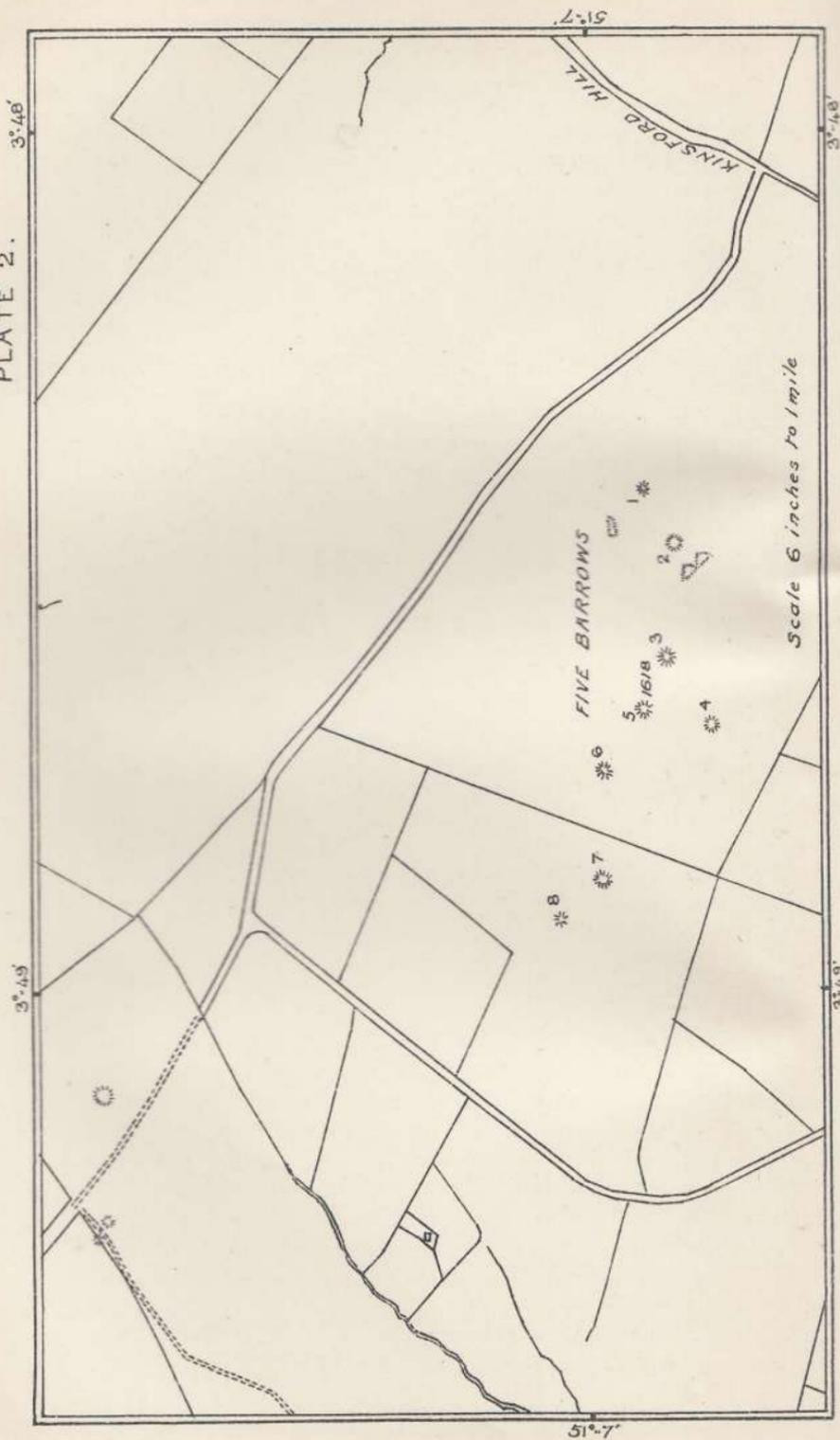
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SECTION OF BARROW.

Vertical Scale twice Horizontal.

PLATE 2.



touches one of the mounds. Five Barrows, which number eight, are all in Devon.

Taken in order, from east to west, the following are the descriptions of these barrows. The numbers refer to the plan (Plate II).

(1) A small mound, 39 feet in extreme diameter, in the form of a truncated cone, 5 feet 5 inches high, and measuring 12 feet across the top.

(2) The total diameter of this barrow is 111 feet. It consists of a central mound, the top surface of which is slightly domed, and measures 46 feet 6 inches across. From the edge of this area the sides fall rapidly 3 feet 1 inch to a trench. The trench is surrounded by an annular "rampart," rising 2 feet 1 inch above the surrounding ground. For 21 feet of the western circumference there is no ditch. A somewhat similar barrow was described in Part I of "The Rude Stone Monuments of Exmoor" last year, and illustrated in Plate XI, fig. 2. In that instance a few spar stones lay on the outer margin of the trench. I do not think that this form of barrow is in any case original. Subsequent spoliation is responsible for the present shape. We have to remember that many barrows are provided with a retaining circle of stones, which very probably formed the original margin. Such a circle is well seen at Setta Barrow. Subsequently, as the slopes of the mound flattened, in consequence of weathering and the tread of animals, the material would bank up outside the retaining circle, and very likely rise high enough to obscure it. Intermediate conditions can be found. Any person desiring stone, and seeking it in such a barrow, would find the best material in this circle, and in removing the same would excavate a trench. For hedging and other purposes the slate stone is best, spar blocks being very awkward and irregular in shape, hence any spar stones might be allowed to remain. The barrow itself might also be likely to be reduced in height for the sake of the earth it contained. It is noteworthy in this connexion that the trenched form is always, within the writer's experience, found in the vicinity of hedges and enclosure walls.

(3) A mound in the form of a truncated cone, the diameter at base 104 feet, the diameter of the top 12 feet, and the height 10 feet. A fine and well-preserved barrow.

(4) A dome-shaped barrow, 66 feet in diameter and 4 feet 10 inches in height.

(5) A conical barrow, from 100 to 110 feet wide at base, 11 feet in height. The top has been partially excavated,

and the material thrown out steepens the upper slopes of what was probably a dome.

(6) A dome-shaped barrow, 81 feet in diameter at base and 7 feet 5 inches in height. Apparently untouched.

(7) A dome, 93 feet in diameter, 7 feet in height. Bears slight signs of disturbance.

(8) The barrow which is shown, with its associated stones, in Plate X, fig. 2, of the paper above referred to. Its height is 9 feet 9 inches and its diameter at the base 98 feet. A shallow basin, 14 feet in diameter, in the top shows where an attempt has been made to open this mound.

This brief description will enable some idea to be formed of the magnitude and importance of the members of the group. The total distance from 1 to 8 is 2000 feet, and the barrows are scattered over a width of 500 feet measured at right angles to this length. They occupy the summit of a ridge and are conspicuous from many directions for miles around. There is no true alignment, but the group as a whole trends N. 67° W. The Two Barrow group on the adjacent hill lie very much in this line, but S. 67° E., while their own alignment is N. 86° E.

There is a general tendency toward east and west extension in many groups of barrows in this neighbourhood. For example, Chapman Barrows, N. 89° 30' W.

Instances are known elsewhere in the county of north and south rows of barrows, such as the seven on Broad Down, near Honiton.

SETTA BARROW, BRAY COMMON.

Devon XI. N.W.

This is one of an irregular group, of which the general trend is northerly, but there is no approach to an alignment. Setta Barrow is one of the bounds between Devon and Somerset, and has been cut into in order to admit the construction of a fence across its crest. Its form is a truncated cone, 101 feet in diameter at the base, 51 feet in diameter at the top, and 8 feet 1 inch in height. At some time it has been opened from the top, as is evidenced by a saucer-shaped depression 2 feet 9 inches in depth and 31 feet in diameter. Its retaining circle is very perfect, in part obscured by the margin of the barrow, in part standing clear from it. The largest stones are to the north, one measuring, as it stands, 1 foot 9 inches in height, 5 feet in length, and 1 foot 1 inch in breadth. On the western margin is clearly seen the manner in which the stones of this circle have been packed

against each other, flat sides toward the mound. When the stones are small, four or five thicknesses are used.

Four hundred and twenty-five feet southward from Setta Barrow is a companion, which has an associated stone row, figured in Plate VIII of the paper above referred to. This also has a retaining circle.

One hundred and seventy-five feet northward from Setta Barrow is another companion, probably despoiled in part. Its diameter is 81 feet and height 2 feet; the top is flat. Considerable remains of the retaining circle are visible, the largest stone nearly equalling the largest named above.

WOODBARROW.

Devon VII. S.W.

This also is a well-known barrow, and one of the bounds between the two counties. I mention it here because Westcote records its opening in the early seventeenth century.

His information as to Broaken Barrow being to some extent corroborated, it may be well to recall his tale of the "brass pan" found here. If by "brass" is meant "bronze," there seems some possibility of the truth, but the find would be most unusual.

It appears that "two good fellows, not inhabiting far from this burrow, were informed by one who took on him the skill of a conjuror, that in that hillock there was a great brass pan, and therein much treasure both silver and gold." The said conjuror undertook to preserve them from the powers of evil provided they would open the barrow and share the find with him. A fourth man whom "in love they made acquainted therewith," "no dastard, but hardy in deed," was "better qualified than to take such courses to procure wealth and absolutely refused to partake therein."

The barrow being opened, the pan, covered with a large stone, was found. The cover was to be opened, and the strongest fellow at work, but he was suddenly taken with such a faintness that he could neither work nor scarce stand. His companion met a similar fate, the faintness lasting no time in either case. Their defender, the conjuror, thereupon told them "the birds were flown away and only the nest left, which they found to be true," for recovering their strength they lifted away the stone and found nothing in the pan, but the bottom where the treasure should have been was very bright and clean, the rest all eaten with cankered rust. "The relator protested that he saw the pan,

and they two that laboured told him severally all the circumstances, and avowed them."

The record will be found *in extenso* in the Barrow Committee's first Report.

Woodbarrow may be called the extreme southern member of the Chapman group. Not far from it are a stone quadrilateral and triangle combined.

R. H. WORTH.

POSTSCRIPT.—On the sole substantial basis of the facts above stated, the "Daily Mail" of 18 June, 1906, produced the following historical novel:—

ANCIENT BRITISH RELICS.

CARTLOADS FOUND IN A DEVON EARTH MOUND.

Ilfracombe seems likely to add to its long list of attractions one which will specially interest scientists, especially those who make a study of archæology.

A well-known local clergyman, who has devoted many years to wide researches in the neighbourhood of the lovely North Devon health resort, has recently discovered a barrow—a great earthen mound—containing among other precious relics arrow heads, spear and axe heads, knives, bludgeons, and club spikes of flint, pieces of pottery ware, ornamented bones, and sundry other gear used by the ancient Britons. Several cartloads of these relics were taken out of the barrow—it being a somewhat paradoxical fact that the contents of this single barrow filled many wagons. It is understood that the British Museum has been advised of the find.

The search for further deposits is being continued with unabated zeal. Archæologists have long regarded the neighbourhood of Ilfracombe as one of the favourite haunts of the Britons. There are many evidences, also, of the occupation of the country by the hardy legions from Cæsar to Honorius; one in particular is an encampment made in the limited time of one day, yet complete in its details, and leaving upon it the trade mark of its builders—"thorough."

Great is the (magnifying) power of the Press.

R. H. W.