Remarks on Some Archaic Structures in Somersetshire and Dorsetshire

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3. *Ox*.—Young. Fragment of scapula and ribs and cervical vertebræ.

4.—*Horse*. One incisor tooth.

The following paper was then read by the Author:—

REMARKS *on some* ARCHAIC STRUCTURES *in* SOMERSETSHIRE *and*
DORSETSHIRE. By A. L. LEWIS, Esq., F.C.A., M.A.I.

IN continuation of the observations which I have from time to time made before this and other Societies upon the rude stone monuments and other ancient works in different parts of the country, I now venture to offer a few remarks on some of those of Somersetshire and Dorsetshire.

The principal rude stone monument in these counties is the great collection of stone circles at Stanton Drew, about seven miles south of Bristol, and as these are well known, and have, moreover, been exhaustively surveyed by Mr. Dymond, whose plans are published with his descriptive and other notes by the British Archæological Association, I shall only give a general description of them. The central circle is about 365 feet in diameter, and a line drawn through its centre, or nearly so, in a direction about 54 degrees east of north and west of south takes us on the north-eastern side to another circle, and on the south-western side to three stones which appear to have formed a chamber, called the "Cove," (thus :—) the open side of which faced in a south-easterly direction; this resembles the Hoarstone at Enstone (Oxfordshire), and Kit's Coty House in Kent, except that there is no evidence of its having had a capstone, in which particular it resembles groups of stones at Avebury and at Arberlows (Derbyshire). If, as I believe, the circles with their north-easterly reference were devoted to the worship of the summer sun, these "coves" facing towards the south-east were probably devoted to the worship of the winter sun, and might well have served to protect any sacrificial fire from rough weather, and would thus remove one of Dr. Fergusson's objections to the use of stone circles for sun-worship. The circle which I have already spoken of on the north-eastern side of the great circle is about 100 feet in diameter, consists of very large stones, and is better preserved than any other part of the group; the distance from centre to centre of these circles is about 380 feet, and from the centre of the great circle to the cove about 990 feet. Another line, taken through the centre of the great circle, or

nearly so, in a direction about 20 degrees east of north and west of south leads us on the south-western side to a third circle, and on the north-eastern side to a single stone called Hauteville's Quoit; we thus get a distinct reference to two points on the north-east side of the great circle, and the general direction of the three circles is also in a bent line north-easterly and south-westerly, in which respect they resemble the Hurlers at St. Cleer, Cornwall, which are also three circles in a bent line running in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction, the largest, as at Stanton Drew, being in the centre. The diameter of the south-western circle is about 145 feet, and the distance from its centre to the centre of the great circle about 710 feet. Hauteville's Quoit is about 1,850 feet from the centre of the great circle. About 3,300 feet west by north from the centre of the great circle are two other large stones. The distance from the centre of the north-eastern circle to that of the south-western circle is about 1,050 feet. On the east side of the central and north-eastern circles are the remains of avenues which lead in such a direction as to make it seem probable that they joined. The stones composing these avenues were thought by the antiquary Wood to be remains of four concentric circles surrounding the north-eastern circle, but he does not seem to have had more data to form his opinion on than exist at the present day, and the opinion of Mr. Dymond, as well as myself, is that these stones belonged to avenues and not to concentric circles. Mr. Wood also looked upon this assemblage of stones as a large planetarium, and suggested that the south-western circle represented the sun, the great central circle the earth, the north-eastern circle the moon, the "Cove" Venus, Hauteville's Quoit Jupiter, and the two stones at the greatest distance from the circles Saturn, while Mercury and Mars were represented either by some stones no longer existing, or by some of those of the avenues, which would be inconsistent with his other supposition of the latter having formed part of other circles. With these, or any other very elaborate astronomical speculations regarding our circles, I have little sympathy, although I firmly believe in their use for solar worship.

At Wellow, some ten miles east from Stanton Drew, is a tumulus about 30 yards long, at the south-eastern end of which is the entrance to a passage, nearly 50 feet long, 5 feet high, and from 3 to 6 feet wide, which has three transepts forming chambers; this very fine tomb is composed of small slabs of stone between and above which smaller stones are built up without cement, and form a sort of vaulted roof. According to an inscription at the entrance it was restored in 1858, by Mr. T. K. Joliffe, the lord of the hundred, the design of the original structure being

preserved as far as possible with scrupulous exactness. A similar monument seems to have existed in Nemnet parish, about three miles on the other side of Stanton Drew.

On passing from Somerset to Dorset we find no stone monuments equal to those just described. At Winterbourne Abbas, four or five miles from Dorchester, is a small circle called the "Nine stones," 28 or 30 feet in diameter (not in height as stated by the Post Office Directory); six stones only remain, two of which are 6 feet high, the others half that size or less; there are a road and a ploughed field close to the north of this circle, so that if there were ever an outlying stone there it has probably been destroyed or buried; according to Gough's *Camden's "Britannia"* there were formerly a large single stone half-a-mile to the west of this circle, and four smaller ones half-a-mile west of that, but I could hear nothing of them.

At Gorwell, on Tennant's Hill, four or five miles beyond Winterbourne Abbas, and about ten south-west from Dorchester, is a ring consisting of eighteen stones or fragments, all prostrate, the largest being 8 feet long; the figure which would touch most of them, so far as they are at present uncovered, would be an oval, of which the diameters would respectively be 87 and 78 feet, but they are much overgrown with turf, and if cleared it might be found that a circle of from 80 to 82 feet diameter would touch most of their original positions. I was not able to find any outlying stone or other remarkable feature to the north-east of this circle, but there is a thick plantation on that side, which shuts out the view of the surrounding hills, and within which a stone or stones may be buried; there are, however, two outlying stones towards the south, and these occur also at "Dance Maen" in Cornwall, and at "Mitchel'sfold" in Shropshire, and at very nearly the same bearing from the circles; I believe that some of the Cumbrian circles, which I have not yet visited, have outlying stones towards the south, Silbury Hill stands about south from the circle at Avebury, and Stonehenge has a barrow to the south and an outlying stone to the south-east on the line of the ditch. These coincidences are surely not undesigned; these stones, placed in these positions in so many cases, must have been so placed for some reason which it would be to the advancement of our science to find out. At Gorwell, about half-a-mile south-east of the circle just mentioned, are the remains of what appears to have been a large sepulchral chamber and tumulus; the latter stands from 4 to 6 feet above the level of the ploughed field in which it is situated, and at the south-eastern end are three stones close together in a line, two of which stand more than 6 feet above the ground outside; these would seem to have been headstones rather than supporting stones, though they may

have formed one wall of a chamber, as there are two stones in the tumulus immediately behind them, which appear to form part of two other sides of a chamber, and another lies flat in the position of a covering stone for the chamber (from under which I took a few worked fragments of flint) but these do not attain half the height of the stones first mentioned, so that my impression is that, while the chamber was covered with earth, the two tall stones stood out through the covering like our own gravestones. Something of the kind occurs in the Isle of Man, at "King Orry's grave," and the "Cloven Stones," concerning which I made some remarks before this Institute as long ago as November 1871; there is another stone $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, lying flat on the edge of the tumulus in line with the upright stones, but at a little distance from them, so that I cannot say whether it was originally upright or another covering stone. The stones of all these Dorsetshire monuments are a kind of flint breccia.

Within two or three miles of the monuments just described is a place called the Valley of Stones, where there are great numbers of stones of various shapes and sizes, which probably got there by natural means; but at about the middle of them there is the semblance of a circle, ten yards in diameter, from which a few stones appear to form an avenue leading in a north-easterly direction towards one of the hills which bound the valley, and it is not impossible that these stones may have been arranged in their present position by man, even though they were brought very near to it by nature.

At Portisham, about eight miles from Dorchester, and two from Gorwell, is a dolmen called the "Hellstone," having nine upright stones from 5 to 6 feet high, supporting a capstone $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, $7\frac{1}{2}$ broad, and 2 thick. I believe that this structure has been "restored," and I should imagine not very accurately.

There is said to be a circle of large stones at a village called Poxwell, six miles south-east of Dorchester, but I could find nothing of them. I have since been informed that they are a hut circle or circles.

Though Dorset does not boast any very large megalithic structures it possesses several earthworks of different sorts, which are at least equal to those of any other county. The largest of these, called Maiden Castle, about two miles south-west from Dorchester, is a triple, and in some places quadruple, entrenchment of enormous strength, the entrances at the east and west being defended by a bewildering variety of detached ramparts; it is said to be 1,000 yards long, 500 broad, and a mile round, and to cover 115 acres, the inner area being 44 acres in extent, and I should think these statements rather under than over the mark; some writers assign this work to the Romans, but I

should rather suppose it to be British, though some fragments of pottery and tile I found seem to indicate its occupation during the Roman period. On the slope outside, and also within the ramparts, I found several fragments of worked flint, and I should think that, if the President were to devote his attention to this fortification, he might give us some valuable information about it. Between Maiden Castle and Dorchester—close to the railway station in fact—is Maumbury Ring, which appears to have been an amphitheatre, is said to be 220 feet by 140 feet in its respective diameters, and is attributed to the Romans. On another side of Dorchester, on a steep bank overlooking the river Frome, is a single entrenchment called Poundbury (locally, “Pumbury”); it is an irregular quadrangle the longest side of which runs nearly parallel with the river and is more than 400 yards long,—the extreme width is about 150 yards. This is attributed by some to the Danes, and by others to the Romans, who are thought, with much probability, to have erected it when attacking or “observing” Maiden Castle; there is a mound in the south-east corner which may have been a barrow, or a look-out post, or both; coins of Claudius Gothicus, Constantine II, Tetricus, &c., were dug up in the ditch when the adjoining railway was made; on the side overlooking the river there was a small slip in the rampart, from which I extracted a flake, which appears to me to have been newly struck off when it was buried in the rampart, from which circumstance I infer that at whatever time the rampart was constructed flint was still more or less in use.

DISCUSSION.

LORD TALBOT DE MALAHIDE expressed his obligation to Mr. Lewis for his very interesting account of the early antiquities of Somersetshire and Dorset. The speaker was not very well acquainted with the latter county, but thought that if Mr. Lewis had given some description of the great earthwork of Haggerstone and of the Giant at Carne, it would have increased the value of his paper.

MR. HOLT observed that several of the stones were pyramidal in form. This was also the case in Kit's Coty House, the Countless Stones, and in most other similar structures. Probably this would tend to the conclusion that they were associated with solar worship. He believed also that one of the outlying stones would generally be found placed at such an angle that it would cast no shadow at noon on Midsummer day, and so determine each year when that day had arrived.

MR. PFOUNDEN remarked that the question raised by the noble Lord suggested to him that further light might be thrown upon the point by the discussion of the appearance in various parts of the world of graven images, and even of (burnt) clay effigies of the

human figure, which are met with in ancient burial places. It was the speaker's belief that these had been in some way connected with the survival of the rites of human sacrifice known to have existed in many parts of the world.

Mr. G. M. ATKINSON exhibited a new instrument which he had devised for measuring the facial angle, and read the following note :—

On a NEW INSTRUMENT for DETERMINING the FACIAL ANGLE.

By G. M. ATKINSON, Esq., M.A.I.

[WITH PLATE VII.]

THE form of facial angle which is recommended by the French Instructions is that included between two lines meeting at the nasal spine, and passing respectively through the ophryon and the auricular point, and is named by Broca the ophryo-spinal facial angle. Professor Flower, on the other hand, makes use of the slight modification of Cloquet's facial angle known as the ophryo-alveolo-auricular angle, *i.e.*, the angle formed by two lines drawn through the ophryon and the auricular point as in the first case, but intersecting, and therefore the vertex of the angle being situated at the alveolar point. Both of these angles are measured by the instruments invented by Broca, either by his lateral goniometer or more conveniently by his median goniometer. In Professor Flower's recent lectures at the Royal College of Surgeons he pointed out certain practical objections to both of these angles, and suggested that one formed by a horizontal which should represent the plane of the visual axis (which Broca has recently laid so much stress upon as the true horizontal plane of the head) and a facial line, touching the ophryon above and the alveolar point below, would give a more satisfactory indication of the real slant of the face, which it is the object of the facial angle to indicate. Acting upon this hint I have the pleasure of submitting to the Institute a model of an instrument by which this angle can be measured upon the cranium with perfect facility, the visual plane being determined, it must be observed, by the method recommended by Broca.

Thus, I insert a needle into each optic foramen, and fixing it at a point in the centre of the orbit corresponding to the pupil in the eyeball, I get two equivalents for the visual axes ; two lines in the horizontal (base) plane. I connect the needles by a little axle about 5 inches long, which has flat end slits, so as to slide on the needles, an index pointer is attached to the