DARTFORD ANTIQUITIES.

Notes on British Roman and Saxon Remains there found.

BY F. C. J. SPURRELL.

Stone Implements.

When the Kent Archæological Society met at Dartford, in 1868, the knowledge and study of the more ancient stone implements was in an early stage; almost in its infancy, being, so far as this country was concerned, barely ten years old. And as those stone implements were not commonly accepted as the work of man, they were looked upon doubtfully by the old antiquary: and because one class of them came out of deep cuttings in the ground, and from stalagmite caverns, they were left to geologists as "fossils;" regarding that word as dismissing the matter into the domain of geology. Yet, for all that, the recognition of the earliest palæolithic implements, as human workmanship is due to Englishmen's acumen; and although the study was revived in France, it was consolidated into a science by the investigation of Englishmen once again. In our own district, that is, about ten miles round Dartford, quite as much attention has been paid to the matter as in any spot in the world, and with a greater success than anywhere else in determining certain controverted points; such as the reality of human agency in the formation of implements, and the larger grasp of the subject consequent on the minute search which has traced them continuously through a greater range in elevation and consequently of age.

There are a few points to which I wish to draw attention. Where Palæolithic, Neolithic, or any implements whatever are found in stratified deposits, the determination of their relative age is comparatively easy. It is otherwise with those which lie on or near the surface or in thin deposits of gravel. But there are means of arriving at an approximation to the comparative age of these, which it is the speciality of geologists to apply. The determination of the true position of an implement lying in a river gravel, which now constitutes the water-parting of two streams, running in opposite directions, is a case in point; or the determination of the relation of an implement found on the surface, to a patch of gravel nearly denuded; or again the relation of implements to any epoch of the glacial ages. I will not trouble you with these details, but merely remark generally on the matter. First let me tell you that now, if the spots on which the older imple-

ments have been found were marked on an ordinary map of this district, there would be no room for anything else on it. Palæolithic implements have been found on the crest of our North Downs, and as has been recorded in *Archæologia Cantiana*, not merely scattered, but collected in special spots. If the scattered ones may have been ice-borne, or dropped nearly in the place on which they were found, those which like the collections at Ash, Bower Lane, and Hayes, point to the agency of water, whether temporary or intermittent, and in these cases there is some relation traceable between the site of the collection and that of the courses of our rivers; though it may be far away from where their diminished water course now runs.

As these implements, by wear, mineral condition, their comparative elevation, form and make are traced step by step from situations whose relative age is known, we arrive after due search at *their* relative age. And there can be little doubt that the majority of the implements found on our hills are the older as a higher level is reached. Of old and worn implements it is clear that we cannot imagine or suppose they travelled up hill, so that if found on a hill they are presumably older than those in a valley deposit near by, and inasmuch as all the implementiferous gravels of our district are the result of a severe denudation which reached its climax with the deposit at the bottom of the modern Thames, the general rule of height-age is safe, not but that implements from high levels are found in lower ones. And the denudation of 900 or 1000 feet of our valley is respectable. Some of these implements can be connected with the glacial ages. By the Glacial Period, as generally understood, is meant that glaciers enveloped the country, reaching a climax and declining. But the Glacial Age, or *age of Glaciers*, is that of various invasions of this country by ice sheets, whether from the north of England or from Norway at different times and with great intervals. If an ice sheet ever covered the North Downs it has left no signs behind. A glacier's sign is its moraine of transported stones and clay. Such a moraine now exists on the north edge of the Thames, seven or eight miles from here, and it lies at the elevation of 200 feet above the sea, but never advanced much further. Those river gravels which lie below that elevation contain as an important part of their constitution material transported from the North. Those gravels such as the patches on Darenth and Swanscombe hills, which lie above that elevation, contain no such northern drift, as it is called. Hence we are able to say with respect to the particular glacial epoch I have mentioned that the Darenth gravels and implements therein are pre-glacial, and that the implements from deposits 100 feet lower are either intraglacial,* or post-glacial as those of Dartford Heath and Crayford and Erith certainly are.

With respect to the separation between Palæolithic and Neolithic implements, as the two divisions are called into which

* Interglacial is the interval between two glacial periods. Intraglacial is during the glacial visitation.

stone implements are generally divided (the terms have also become common to distinguish human remains and even deposits with which they are associated, but care must be taken to keep to the terms strictly, and in no way to mix up the definition of a Palæolithic and Neolithic implement or deposit, with the presence or absence of extinct mammalia), it is obvious that there must be an approximation somewhere. If the question is unsettled as yet, whether in this country or elsewhere, it is quite clear that the matter has not been sufficiently investigated. So long as the desire to separate is permitted to override the desire to unite and correct, the matter will continue to be regarded according to the hobbled custom of the old school of thought.

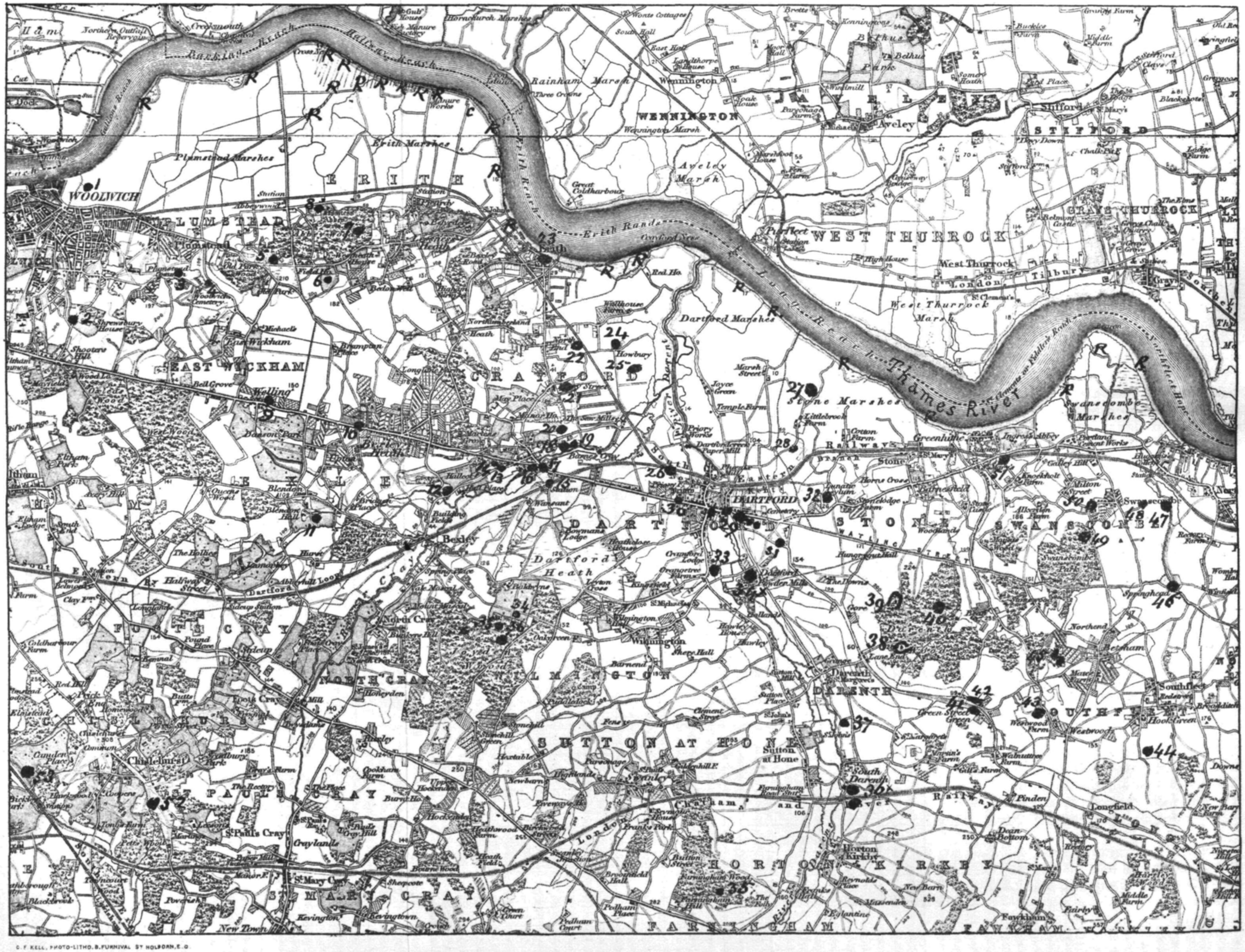
The Palæolithic implements of our district are very marked in their characters, but there may be seen examples of very rude and very fine implements. Yet it is clear that, if the principles by which I have argued, that there is a great range in their antiquity, be true, this rudeness and sameness is extended over a period of time incomparably greater than the stages of improved forms occupied in the extension of the Neolithic period.

That there was no break between the two ages I feel sure, and it will be the duty of discontented and scientific enquirers to search for the connecting link. Perhaps it will be found in the deep gravel bed underlying the alluvium and water of the Thames estuary, as I believe; for clearly, the river brought down gravel continuously from Palæolithic times, until having become an estuary gravel ceased to accumulate and alluvium formed. Quite lately I received a communication from Mr. Laurence that he had some stone implements from the bed of the Thames whose history is perfectly satisfactory. On examining these I found that two, obtained from the Thames near Erith by dredging, had resemblances which placed them if not midway, in such a position that they indicate a passage type or form between Palæolithic and Neolithic. Their workmanship is good, they are uninjured, and their mineral condition, marking, and colour is perfectly agreeable to the gravel in which they were found. I am very well acquainted with the implements of the lowest Thames gravel and the older gravels on its margin, and can say that they resemble nothing as yet discovered in either, but have a likeness to both, constituting a distinct type.

Earthworks.

There are several earth-walled enclosures in the district. There was one, it is now only just discoverable, on Badgersmount, Darenth Wood, it is a rough square with rounded corners, it was 200 feet in diameter outside the wall at the ground level; with a ditch round it about 10 feet across and 8 feet deep. Much stone chipping covers the place.

There is another on the hill top overlooking the Church of Swanscombe, the diameter from the top of the mound is exactly 100 feet, quite circular with a ditch. At one part are banks and ditches difficult to explain.



C. F. KELL, PHOTO-LITHO, 8 FURNIVAL ST HOLBORN, E.C.

Ancient Sites in the District of Dartford, Kent. marked by F.C.J. Spurrell.

There are some very extensive banks and excavations on the top of the Telegraph Hill, Swanscombe, on either side of the old Roman way.

There is a camp on Mount's Wood, not, however, of great importance, and the outline disturbed.

In Darenth Wood are banks and works on the south-east side. Again on the south-west side, overlooking Lane End, they are of considerable area.*

Hasted mentions banks at Greenstreet Green, and to the westward of it. Both these I have formerly identified and marked on the map, though now they are obliterated.

There is a faint outline of a camp (oval) 500 yards south-east of Howbery. This is nearly obliterated.

There is a square camp with works, lying on the site of a previous village in Jorden's Wood. It is probably Roman, but this is not quite clear. I cannot reconcile it, however, with any forms known to be Saxon. Stone arrow-heads and Roman pottery are found in it.†

* This list will explain the numbers on the map opposite, R.=Roman; C. Celtic; T. Teutonic, Saxon, or Norse.

1 Urns, pottery. The Warren. R.
2 Tumulus. Shrewsbury House Grounds.
3 Tumulus. Plumstead Common.
4 Leaden Coffin. East Wickham. R.
5 Iron furnace and early hut holes. Bostol Heath. C.
6 Tumulus, partly examined.
7 Tumulus. Crematory.
8 Wick. Lesnes Abbey. T.
9 Urns and Coin. R.
10 Coin. R.
11 Urns, etc. Blenden. R.
12 Pottery. R. and C.
13 Leaden Coffin. R.
14 Deneholes.
15 Ornaments. T.
16 Foundations, etc. R.
17 Coins, miscellaneous objects. High Road. R., T., etc.
18 Misc. R., T.
19 Ditto. R.
20 Ditto. R.
21 Pottery. Perry Street. R.
22 Pottery. R.
23 Coins. R. and C.
24 Tumulus.
25 Very ancient camp.
26 Pottery in Denehole and on surface. R.
27 Littlebrook Walls. T.
28 Burials. T.
29 Foundation burials, coins, misc. objects on East Hill and Town of Dartford. R.
30 Coin. West Hill. R.
31 Tumuli. T.?
32 Coins. R.
33 Foundations, misc. R.
34 Tumulus.
35 Tumulus not burial.
36 Square camp. C.
Pottery. R.
34* Burials. T.
35* Foundation. R.
36* Graveyard. T.
37 Foundations. R.
38, 39 Camps or enclosures.
40 Small camp on Badger's Mount.
41 Tumuli. } Mentioned by
42 Earthwork. } Hasted.
43 Earthwork. }
44 Pottery. R.
45 Tumuli. R.
46 Springhead finds. R.
47 Foundations. R.
48 Misc. pottery, etc. R.
49 Circle camp.
50 Misc., etc.
51 Foundations and remains in Denehole. R.
52 Earthworks (Paul's Cray Common).
53 Misc. in Denehole. R.
R. Roman remains in the Marshland.

† See *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxviii., plate 1, for a plan.

There are ancient enclosures still visible on Paul's Cray Common, which have been figured in our volumes by Mr. Flinders Petrie.*

The old roads of the country side can easily be inferred when they are found to connect certain ancient sites, and when judged to have existed previously to their having been crossed unconformably and regardless of convenience by later ones of known date. There are plenty of older ways than the Roman street now called the Dover Road. This road was called Watling Street by the Saxons. A military way undoubtedly existed in Roman times, and I think before then.

The top of Swanscombe Hill was a most unfavourable spot for a road; it is capped with greasy clay and is very steep. Heavy baggage could have been carried over it with great difficulty, and in winter it must often have been quite impracticable for an extensive equipage. I think it more than probable that this road was rarely used, and that the branch leaving Dartford Brent by Greenhithe, Northfleet, and Gravesend to Strood, superseded it during the Roman occupation.

No Roman remains are found on Swanscombe Hill top, but by the more northerly or alternate road they are found.

The old road by the Jorden's Wood Camp is certainly pre-Roman, although now discontinued even as a path in the wood.†

There are few tumuli here. One on Shooter's Hill, one on Bostol Heath, one in Abbey Wood, opened and found to be a crematory. The How, which gave the name to Howbury; two in Baldwyn's Park. One I opened and found not to be a burial mound.

Several tumuli once existed on Dartford Brent, and also in the woods overlooking Betsom. Near there I remember three close together, and one is marked on the Ordnance map.

Iron smelting has left traces at Dartford Heath, Northfleet, and at Abbey Wood, and on Bostol Heath.

This last was a very rude Bloomery, if such a term can be used to a Celtic work, for such I find to be its age. This was a small work; much slag, however, covers the country for a couple of miles along the hill edge.

There are of course numerous earthworks on the country side which do not call for special mention. Dams across valleys are not uncommon, ancient banks which served the purpose of dividing land or edging enclosures. Most of these are evidently of historic date, and present no special points of interest. On Dartford Heath, however, there are numerous depressions and elevations which call for a word; they may be classified thus, small depressions; round, shallow, and rare. A few larger ones having the same proportionate width to depth as the smaller. Square depressions and oblong angular pits, these are mostly in rows, and placed as close as possible together. There are also many tumuli. These vary very much, but none are of large size, or exceed 4 ft. to 4 ft. 6 in height.

* *Archæologia Cantiana*, XIII., 8.

† See *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxviii., plate i.

When perfect they rise to a point so that there is no comfortable standing room. A slight and narrow ditch about one foot deep surrounds the mound—into which, projecting from the mound, are numerous (but an uncertain number of) very small steps with intervals between. These mounds are found in alignments, of which there are several. Yet in no case is there more than three or four in a straight line; one row in a slightly serpentine course extends over a large part of the Heath. The distances between the mounds varies greatly, from one yard to fifty or sixty, their size and height vary equally. If these in any way represent military arrangements, they are so far as regularity goes sadly deficient in the proverbial quality proper to the art. That several mediæval camps occupied the Heath is on record, as well as the notable one in the Prince Regent's time. Hence some confusion of alignment would be a necessity, but that hardly explains the want of symmetry I have noticed. Some years ago I dug into these mounds at various places, and found in every case that the gravel of the Heath had been heaped on the sod and that no mystery beyond that which appeared to the eye lay concealed. Similarly I examined numerous depressions or hut circles, with, however, no result as to dating them. Apparently, therefore, all these works on Dartford Heath are mediæval and military, the more ancient having been obliterated.

The Tide Walls of the Thames.

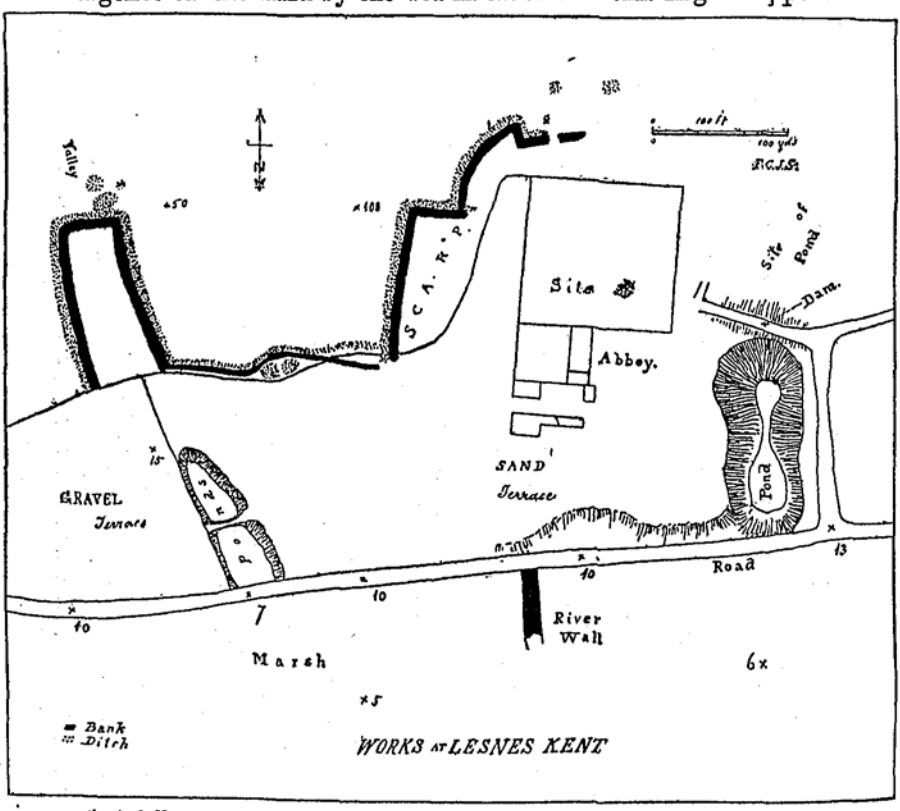
There were no tide walls to the river when the Romans first came here. The whole of what is now below the level of high water was then dry; at least, free from salt water. It was a thick woodland—marshy in places with streams running into a river now the estuary of the Thames; the river was fresh, or but very slightly brackish, shallow, and very much narrower than the present stream way. In the marsh now, under the layer of tidal clay which covers what was forest ground, are very abundant remains of Roman occupation; these are occasionally found in excavations over the whole marsh land. Occasionally relics of burial are discovered and in a few places the sites of dwellings. At Crossness, for instance, the quantity of scattered pottery is surprising, and much of it was of good quality.

It is scarcely probable that even at the latest moment of the Roman stay any banks were needed, and it is certain that there are no signs of any such early banks. There are no signs of banks even of Saxon date, except those of Little Brook and Lesnes, and these it is likely were to haul boats into, with walls only just sufficient to ward off storm floods and keep off foes.

The effective embankments which we now see are very modern. All embankments have been begun by small enclosures from the shores; piecemeal, which have by degrees united until the outer limit was reached and the walls as we have them were perfected. It was no stupendous, mighty, or vast work begun, continued, and ended at a single effort. They were hundreds of years in reaching their present limits. The earliest recorded mining of any import-

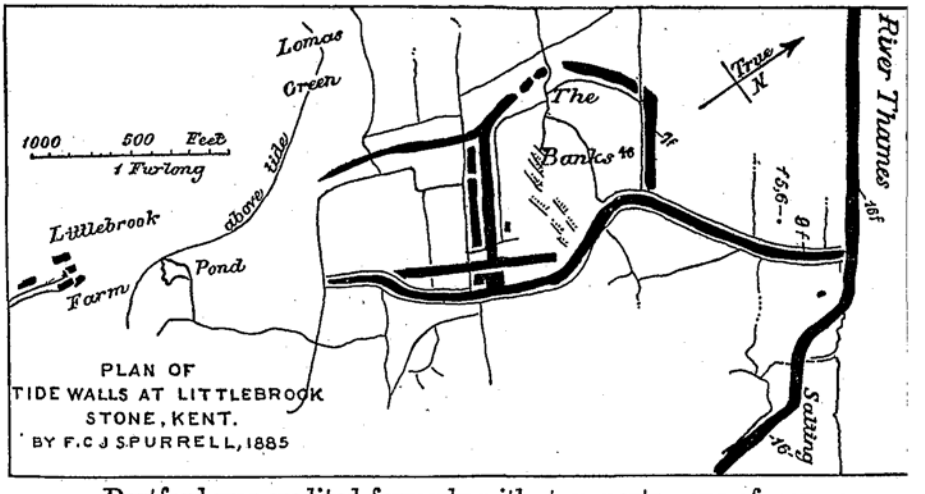
ance in this district is that of the marsh at Lesnes, and if the Canons began immediately after their foundation, which is unlikely, they had not done anything important until nearly one hundred years after, viz., in 1279.

The writers who have previously considered this question have been under a complete misapprehension as to the state of nature when the Romans lived here, believing that no change in the level of land and sea has happened since. Even Beale Poste, when treating of changes in the coasts of England, has noticed that ancient Roman towns built on estuaries have since been buried by deposits from the water; but he thinks that this is solely due to the raising of the bed of the river, and consequently its water level by the deposits brought down by the stream. In this he just misses the point I wish to insist on, that, though this would be true as to a fresh water stream, it is *not* true of an estuary, the height of the deposits of which are regulated solely by the height reached by the tide. If, therefore, we find land surfaces, as at Crossness and elsewhere, now deeply buried under tidal deposits, there *has* been submergence of the land by the sea in order that this might happen.*



* A fuller account of this part of the subject is given by me in *Archæological Journal*, vol. xlii., p. 269, and in the *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, vol. xl., p. 210.

There are works at Littlebrook extending into the tideway before the modern river walls were erected. These I take to be the Wick of some early Saxons, and to have been the celebrated place mentioned in a deed of Ethelred A.D. 995. There was perhaps a similar Teutonic Wick at the place afterwards occupied by Lesnes Abbey.



Dartford was credited formerly with two ports; one of course was at the end of Hythe Street; the other I suggest was at Littlebrook; a road can still be traced from the "port" through the fields to Overy Street. In early times, the Roman way crossed the marsh untroubled by the tide. Afterwards, the tide having advanced further inland, the road was raised, becoming a causeway. In mediæval times this bank was heightened against the tide, the road running inside it as at present.

During a section made a few years ago through this road, near Stidolph's house, I saw a human skeleton extended across the bank, about *two feet* below the present surface. This of course is a strange situation; but looking to the fact that it was a tide wall, it is possible that the once owner of the skeleton had the duty of repairing the bank, and having let the tide through by his neglect was placed in the breach, thus helping to repair it while suffering punishment. Mr. S. Smiles* has mentioned that such a mode of dealing was a mediæval custom. However, I know not how far the ancient graveyard extended hereabout, so that the body, which shewed no signs of burial, might yet have been buried in sacred ground.

Roman Remains.

The spots on which Roman remains have been recorded to have been found in this district have not hitherto been numerous. Dartford itself has generally been thought, until now, to contain no

* *Lives of Engineers.*

pavements or foundations; yet there are some. Beside the circular foundation on East Hill, seen in 1822 and mentioned by Dunkin and others, I have discovered a note in Mr. Dunkin's memoranda (kindly furnished me by Miss Dunkin), in which he mentions a strong pavement of plain red tesseræ under the corner shop nearest to the pump at the entrance to Lowfield Street.

In 1866 I saw some foundations exposed in the High Street near the church. As this spot was on the west side, off the line of the Roman way (even supposing that it ran inside the raised causeway on which the northern row of houses stand), a building doubtless stood there. From this place a small collection of Roman relics was presented to the Kent Archæological Society's Museum. The town of Dartford now stands on black peaty soil; a mere swamp, the deposit of floods and the tide, mixed of course with the debris of old buildings.

But the Roman level is not touched nearer than 4 or 5 feet from the surface, and the foundations would be found still deeper. Therefore it is no wonder that the outlines of Roman houses are not found in Dartford, the foundations of the present houses rarely or never going so far as to reach the topmost tile of the Roman floors. Any comparison between Dartford's position compared with other places 1700 years ago must be conducted without haste, as becomes a thinker who is *more* than an antiquary.

About three years ago I saw numerous tiles and some extensive foundations shewing wide rooms and narrow passages, with coins all of Roman date about 150 yards south-eastward of the inn called the "Orange Tree." A silver coin of Vespasian was also found on West Hill. In 1797 and 1822 numerous Roman interments were discovered on East Hill on the brow opposite to the present old graveyard (and doubtless once extending into that), five or six stone coffins were extracted, one at least from a vault. Mr. Dunkin has recorded some of these discoveries. Those in 1822 were conducted by Mr. Landale with great care. He really loved the old relics, though what he did with the portable ones I do not know. One of the stone coffins was broken up in Dartford to pave a yard. Another Mr. Landale took to his property in West Hill; this, which was broken in extraction, he mended—the side and the lid.* He raised it above the ground and sheltered it. Within the last few years, however, it has been shifted about, and is beginning to suffer from exposure and frost. It is well worked and very lightly made. The stone is a shelly limestone. There is no inscription. Dimensions: widest 30 inches, longest 82 inches, narrowest 18 inches. The lid is 3½ inches thick, bevelled all round, ½ inch bevel extending 3½ to 4 inches. The bottom is bevelled 1 inch in 5 inches; the bottom is 4 inches thick; the depth outside 18 inches, inside 11 inches.

I have prevailed on the renter of the ground to get it out of

* J. Dunkin has given a sketch of this, by A. J. Kempe, in his *History of Dartford*.

its corner for the Society to look at. Roman remains consisting of foundations of buildings are mentioned by Beale Poste as existing in Crayford. From what he says, and from the existence of sundry bits of tile there, I take the spot to be on the site of Swaisland's printing factory. Pieces of brick may be seen occasionally on the left bank of the new river (the Cray) in the bordering fields north of the bridge. From this place beads and sherds are found E. and N. on the slopes on the hill of which Eardmont stands. Roman relics have been found close to the Crayford railway station. A leaden coffin was found close to the direct line of the Roman highway in the Bexley Road, near the Iron Church. Abundant remains have been found in old deneholes and shallow pits near Perry Street, Crayford, and also in the brick earth pit at Slades Green, where were graves and numerous bits of pottery all Roman. There are two sites of villas or house foundations unrecorded also—one on the edge of the stream immediately opposite St. John's, and another on the left bank of the Ebbsfleet in the bend of the stream, three-quarters of a mile E.S.E. of Northfleet Church. Around Betsom, and especially on the east slopes of the hills overlooking that place, were many tumuli, apparently Roman. On the cutting for the railway one mile south of Southfleet Church a pit was found with Roman remains in it. Pottery was found also in the square camp in Jorden's Wood. I found pottery also near Bourne House, Bexley, the only previous find there having been nearly two miles off at Blendon.

Some fifty years ago a row of cinerary pots full of bones were dug up at Welling, close to the high road. Two or three of these are now in the Canterbury Museum.

Several coins have been found in sundry places not previously recorded, at Bexley Heath, Upton, on the high road near the junction of the two roads, Erith* High Street, and the Stone Lunatic Asylum. At East Wickham a Roman burial—viz., a lead coffin in a wood case, another body lay near. Beneath the whole district of the Marshland, Roman pottery, burials and sites of dwellings are found, especially at Crossness. I have repeatedly found fragments of pottery on the shore of the Thames along the whole line of marshes between Woolwich and Gravesend.

The well-known Roman remains at Springhead so often described by Mr. Roach Smith, and others need not be particularly mentioned here, except to say that new discoveries of minor importance are continually being made. But I must say that I cannot consider that these finds, *per se*, constitute any right in this spot to the title of Vagniacæ, no relics in any way pointing to that town having been found. Even their comparative abundance is of

* I have to acknowledge the kindness of Mr. H. W. Smith in telling me of several places, previously unknown to me, whence he has procured some miscellaneous objects of Roman date, viz.:—Near the City of London Lunatic Asylum; Swan Lane, Crayford; High Street, Erith; and the hillside under Eardmount in Crayford.

no value, as Mr. Geo. Payne seems to think from the remarks introductory to his excellent maps of Kent issued by the Society of Antiquaries. Indeed, so far as that goes, more abundant and important remains have been found in the town and East Hill of Dartford than Springhead. Yet no one would give the former the name of Vagniacæ in consequence merely of that.

Saxon Remains.

The Anglo-Saxon remains as known at present are very limited, there being but four places in which evidence of interment has occurred and two riverside works which can be assigned to a Teutonic or Norse origin.

The earliest recorded remains are swords and relics apparently from graves in the powder works at Dartford. Then comes the cemetery at Darenth. This extends on both sides of the Chatham and Dover Railway Embankment; on the hillside, where it crosses the stream, and if, as seems certain, it is to be found under the embankment as well, the length must be nearly a quarter of a mile by 200 yards broad. Attention was first attracted by the report of skeletons, pots, and brooches having been found in digging foundations for the Home for little boys. Subsequently, cottages being required northward of the railway, the Rev. Mr. Coates watched the diggings, and conducted a few personally. I saw some of the work in 1867, and all in 1868, and I think that as no record has been preserved, my notes of the matter are still new enough to present at this time. The slope of the hill is rather rapid, and in consequence of a hedge having stopped the regular washing of the soil (chalk), the graves were extremely superficial, the skulls and pottery having been broken in many places by the plough, and some of the relics strewn on the surface. In any case, the graves were very shallow, having been dug deep enough to rest the body on the solid chalk merely. They were not cleverly dug, some being so short as to cramp the body, and others being irregular in shape. The bones were decayed in very varying amounts, so also were the iron implements found—some utterly reduced to rust, while others when ground down by the labourers took a good edge. The position of the bodies was chiefly looking directed to the eastward, with the heads to the west, but I observed that there was much variation in direction, and that the more northern graves pointed more to the true north than those to the southward—there appeared to be a rotation in the line of direction, the result of indifference. The bodies being laid on their backs, there was generally a flint stone or two, a lump of chalk, or perhaps a crumbling clod, placed under the back of the head, to raise it. The graves were very close together, almost breaking into one another. The total number opened on this side of the embankment while I was able to attend was about sixty. Apparently the wealth of the persons buried increased towards the N.E. of the ground. Very many of the graves contained apparently nothing in the way of ornaments, utensils, or weapons, and were the resting-places of the corpses of poor people.

In all the graves that I saw small particles of charcoal were scattered amongst the remains. In a few cases a double handful of charcoal was found in a heap near the middle of the body, which apparently occupied the middle of the grave. This, I suppose, with Kemble, to shew the use of the anti-Christian mode of burial by cremation in an attenuated and symbolical form, when the people, being Pagan, and desiring the modes of Pagan burial, were debarred by the law from carrying them out, except by some form of compromise.

Most of the objects found were presented to the Kent Archæological Society, and are now in its Museum.

The ornament on the cup-shaped brooch is a cross, and it might be said that it was a sign that the wearer was a Christian. I think, however, that would be too hasty a judgment from the evidence afforded by the ornamental tracery of a brooch to prove that. I am under the impression also that the elements of ornament or superstition of which the cross is composed are essentially Pagan, and that the peculiar signs which the arms of the cross carry are united in the Darenth case as a rare and single instance. The ℘ which is there seen is the simple conventional form for a head or face. In various forms it occupies the centre or leading position of a series of ornamental lines in very many Teutonic personal ornaments of different shapes. Sometimes the whole ornament is in the form of this figure. It is seen in Saxon (Teutonic) ornaments, singly, double, quadruple (but unjoined), and septuple. There is a remarkable case of it in the British Museum, placed inside the four arms of a cross, but no one would think, I suppose, that the cross in this case was Christian from the peculiarity of the face emblem obliterating to the eye the importance of the cross.

There is an example from Ashendon, Buckinghamshire. It is very curious. In a groundwork of crossed lines in separate blocks, like those round the edge of the Darenth specimen, are four of these signs placed equidistant from the centre and the margin, and from each other. Within them are seven radiating lines—two of these touch the "*face*" figure, the rest do not, clearly shewing that the

cross was not intended, although nearly formed by a mere accident. These crosses are all "Greek," not Latin, in shape.

Therefore, this figure is a mark which has been used on the field of ornament, and connected accidentally with the centre in consequence of dividing the field by radiating lines.

That this "face" figure is mystical, I believe, is shewn from its recurrence in various unexpected situations. A form of it was used in coinage, and particularly in that of Offa, where it has been described as meaning *merciorum* by contraction and the use of the Saxon ꝏ, but that is not so. To the "*m*" is added eyes, and the stem is carried downward in a marked manner, *i.e.*, the nose. The sign of contraction, so called, at the top of the face may have been so, but it is found where no contraction is required. In Offa's coins this sign remains as a Pagan emblem cunningly introduced by way of a contracted word and as a set-off to the sign of the Christian cross, which is also used, for Offa was at best but a political Christian.

As to the form of the so-called cup-shaped brooches rare in Kent, it has been said by Ackerman that it was the result of copying the cup-shaped coins of the Byzantine Emperors, but the earliest scyphate coin known is of the date 979 A.D., and the Saxon cup-shaped brooches are all earlier. It is more likely that the idea came to Byzantium from the West; if it were not certain that it was merely a moneyer's device in so constructing the coins.

Saxon Graves at Littlebrook.

In the beginning of January 1883 Mr. Percy Hassell sent me word that some graves have been opened near Littlebrook, Dartford. I went at once to see them, and found that seven or eight skeletons had been disturbed in removing gravel from the edge of the top of the hill overlooking Littlebrook Farm, by the side of the road on the eastward. Very few relics, a few small bits of pot of Saxon forms were all I saw. Mr. Hassell tells me that some of the graves were placed due east and west three feet apart, but that the feet were nearer than the heads, so that in the result there was another case of rotation in direction, different to that at Darenth caused by mere carelessness. There were other graves and some still remain.

These graves, from their position on the brow of the hill overlooking the river-walls of the Wick of Littlebrook, appear to be those of the inhabitants and sea-faring visitors (not usually rich people) belonging to the Saxon port of that name, which appears to have enjoyed much fame in the tenth century.

Mr. H. W. Smith, of Belvedere, has a few ornaments from graves at Crayford, some from the fields above the left bank of the New River north of the bridge, and some from Swan Lane, among them a beautiful little button of bronze thus described:—it is exactly an inch across the base, tapering to ¾ inch and ½ inch high. At the top are four engraved leaves within a circle, the stems inwards. On the outer side is a very characteristic wavy pattern in

raised lines. A plate is soldered over the base with a hole in the centre and a loop over that for the thong. There were also found brass and bronze spurs, buckles, bits, and curb chains, but their present possessors I know not.

Deneholes.

These caves abound in this particular neighbourhood, and from Lambarde downwards have received notice from all local historians. Yet none have delivered a clear account of them. During the many years I have examined the subject, and especially since the last meeting of this Society in Dartford, I have arrived at very definite conclusions.

There are varieties in form, all, however, having a narrow shaft to obtain the sole access to the cavern. There is (1) a simple cave of a beehive shape, (2) a small cluster of little caves, three in number, round the bottom of the shaft, and (3) a series of excavations founded on the principal idea of rectangular crossing of short tunnels. The whole are found here; and though in parts of Kent, as at Lenham and elsewhere, a few departures from the simple plans before mentioned have been found, they are exceedingly rare. Perhaps the finest specimen known, certainly the best I know, is to be seen at Stankey Wood, Bexley. It is 70 feet deep and contains four pillars, besides two which have fallen.

The situation of these caves is anywhere almost in the northern half of the county. Few rocks are suitable for digging caves in, and chalk stands first. The chalk is reached through 100 or 120 feet of superincumbent soil, and it is penetrated in still more numerous instances by shafts without an overlying soil at all.

The age of these holes extends from the Neolithic to a recent or, I may say, the present age; but few are of the time when stone or bone was employed to dig them. The majority belong to the age of iron, but they extend through the Roman period, and were largely used by that people as rubbish pits, which have hereabouts furnished many a Roman relic.

The principal features connected with Deneholes is that each is separate from the other, however near they were dug. If by any chance fear was entertained that one should break into the other, work was stopped or a swerve was made. All the holes are so far as the rock will permit very circumscribed in area, closely and neatly excavated. They are of large size, usually of the cubic content of a haystack of the present day, and as variable. The oldest forms are smallest. Some have received additional excavation, which has generally shewn itself by a peculiarity easily detected.

As to the use of these; I am now in a position to point out, that although once not able to speak with any sort of conviction or decision, I am now. The careful surveys by myself and excavations I have, in conjunction with friends, worked at; together with the admirable excavations in Essex by the Essex Field Club, conducted by my friend Mr. T. V. Holmes, enable me to speak more decidedly.

They are secret hiding-places. They are the hiding-places for grain. Such has been the customary mode of hiding grain over the whole of the old world. In Spain it is the method in use now. In France it has for some centuries died out; but it is universal in a sense that it *has* been the custom, if not the present one, in every part of the world. The main point of interest with us here is the great size and depth of the pits. The depth I have accounted for; a reason for the size I find to be that forage, straw, hay, etc., were garnered in these pits besides grain, as shewn by Diodorus in his excerpt from Pytheas' travels. In the countries where the custom is most common, the fields are always green, or there are *none*. In England, during the long winter, the cattle needed hay, and during the periods of history and before it, hay stacks were the first things a raider and an enemy burnt. But in a cave, so easily hidden, this could not be done; and history has proved that this use of these caves has been common to many countries. Pliny's remarks about the deep caves with veins like mines has reference to another set of excavations. That the chalk excavated was scattered about and found useful in manuring the land is a mere consequence of the necessity for its unobtrusive disposal and the observation of beneficial results.*

* See an article on Deneholes by F. C. J. Spurrell, *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxviii., p. 391. Also Report of the Denehole Explorations by the Essex Field Club, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, 1887, in which are several papers bearing on the subject.