EARLY LIFE
IN THE
WEST.

J. A. DAVIES.

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LUTON

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FOREWORD.

THIS is not a summary of the adventures of early man in Britain but a sketch of the discoveries and possibilities in the West of England, one of the richest archæological fields in Britain, where there is room for much methodical spade-work. Everything outside is of necessity treated in a few words. Most of the material mentioned may be seen in one or other of the local museums.

This is a time of extensive public-works and it is likely that prehistoric objects are turned up from day to day. It would be of value if record of such finds were sent as they occur to the local Museum Curator or to the Secretary of the local Archæological Society, or to the Secretary of the Spelæological Society. At present such material is usually destroyed or dispersed. It is this failure to record, together with casual or inexpert excavations, which so hampers the progress of the study of early man in this district.

These papers first appeared in the *Western Daily Press* last Autumn, and it is to the Editor, Mr. W. E. STONE, that we are indebted for permission to reprint and for the use of three blocks. The remainder of the blocks were loaned by Professor E. FAWCETT, President of the Spelæological Society of Bristol University and the Committee.

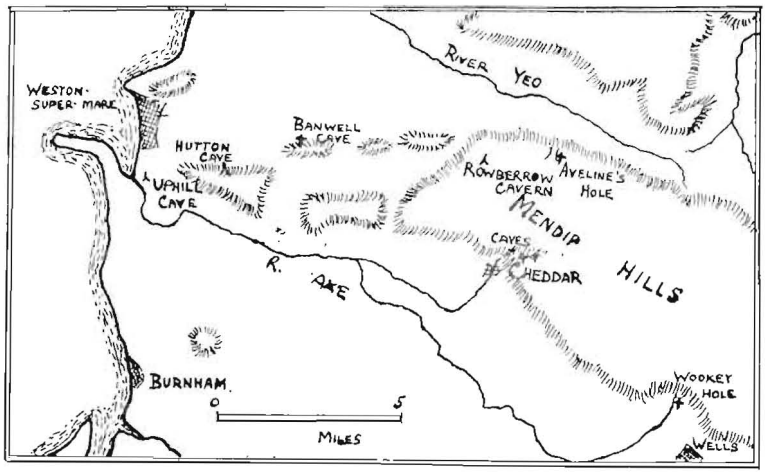
CLIFTON. SEPTEMBER, 1927.

THE OLD STONE AGE.

River-Drift Man.

LITTLE is known of the first men in these islands. The skull found at Piltdown, in Sussex, is certainly human, although the jaw associated with it is chinless and the canine teeth would not be out of place in a great ape. The favourite weapon or tool of the Piltdown man and those who followed him was a pear-shaped instrument of chipped flint, often weighing several pounds, which, designed for everything, was variously used as handaxe, knife, dagger, scraper, and root grubber. These implements were best preserved in the silt and shingle left by ancient rivers, and from this drift they are now dug together with the bones of the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and other beasts which tell us that the climate was genial. Tidal action in the Severn and the rivers that empty therein has always been more vigorous than along the shores of the Channel and North Sea, consequently the drift was often washed away and, therefore, few hand-axes have been found near Bristol. There are specimens from the Avon and Walton Bay in the Bristol Museum; and at Freshford, Twerton and Taunton, bones of these animals have been discovered. Recently two hand-axes were discovered in St. Anne's Park, Bristol.

Fig. 1



Neanderthal Man.

Neanderthal man, successor of the river-drift man, was less ill favoured; that is, he went through life with a great shelving brow, a retreating forehead, a receding chin, and a stooping gait. He was enough of a man to employ fire and to have an organised religion, as ceremonial interments made in French caves demonstrate. His remains have been unearthed in the Channel Islands and in Rhodesia, in Gallilee and in Gibraltar; but so far none have turned up in England, though his stone weapons are not uncommonly found along the Thames. It is possible that he dwelt in a cave, now quarried away, at Uphill. During his stay in Europe the climate grew cold. At about 12,000 B.C. a new race, better adapted to withstand the cold, arrived in Europe, and under the impetus of their competition he disappeared, leaving no descendants.

Cave Man.

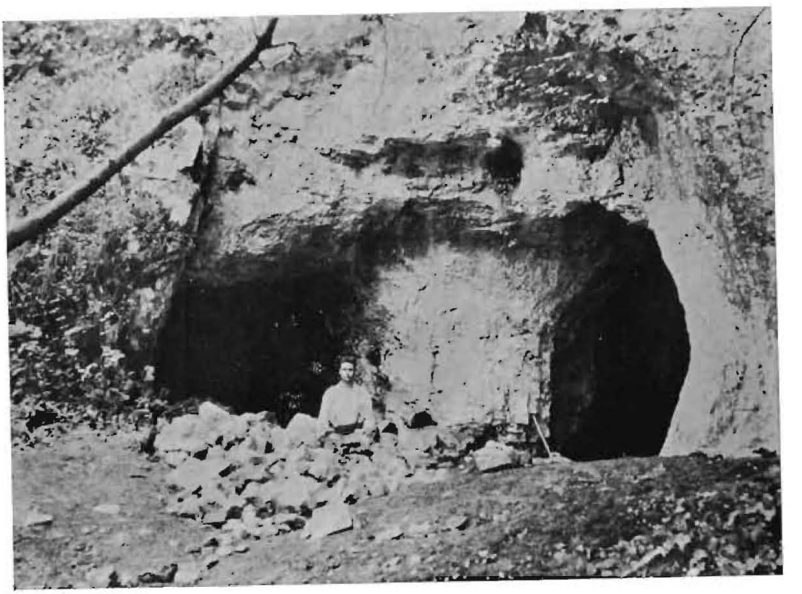
Under the name of Cave Men the new folk are now familiar to everyone. They camped in the open country or lodged in caves where their remains and effects are best preserved. The stone implements used by the invaders were first studied from a cave at Aurignac, in the South of France; whence the earliest men of the new type are known as Aurignacians, just as the inhabitants of Britain, affected by Roman thought and culture as they were during the occupation of this island, were Romans. The Aurignacians of Britain lived in Paviland Cave in Gower, near Swansea, and at Langwith in Derbyshire. Their stone implements are small, skilfully wrought, and there seems to have been an instrument for each purpose; for they had knives, scrapers, planes, awls, and graving tools. They also fashioned bone, ivory, and antler into javelins and other weapons of the chase.

The Aurignacian race varied greatly, but notwithstanding these differences the man himself was in all bodily essentials modern; the first ancestor whom we may recognise. He existed by hunting the beasts that ranged England in his day, and they were a pretty formidable bill of fare. There was the woolly mammoth, larger than the African elephant of to-day, the woolly rhinoceros, the cave lion, the cave bear (a super grizzly) and ox, bison, elk, and reindeer, to name a few. In some caves there are literally tons of bones which have been split for the easier extraction of the marrow. When we consider their miserable weapons and scanty resources, and realise that they and their successors not only endur-

ed the struggle with weather and beasts but found it in themselves to make ornaments, to engrave their weapons, and to paint impressionistic pictures of bison, horse, rhinoceros, and lion on the walls of the inner recesses of their cavern dwellings—pictures that can hold their own with most modern work—easy statements on the advance of mankind seem grave impertinences.

A hunting people takes up a lot of room. In the Old Stone Age the population of Britain can never have exceeded a few thousands who followed the untamed herds in their quest for pasture, slew indiscriminately when they were able, and fell back on roots or went hungry when the hunting was bad. Moreover, in Britain, life was more rigorous than on the Continent and leisure for artistic effort was limited, so that only a few moderate engravings have been found here. It is noteworthy that in these days certain types of stone implements which were peculiar to the island began to appear, and seem to indicate, if not a national feeling, a certain unity of thought among the scattered tribes which wandered here 12,000 years ago. It is hard to affirm with confidence that any of the implements found hereabouts are Aurignacian. Some from Banwell and Loxton-in-Mendip probably belong to this period.

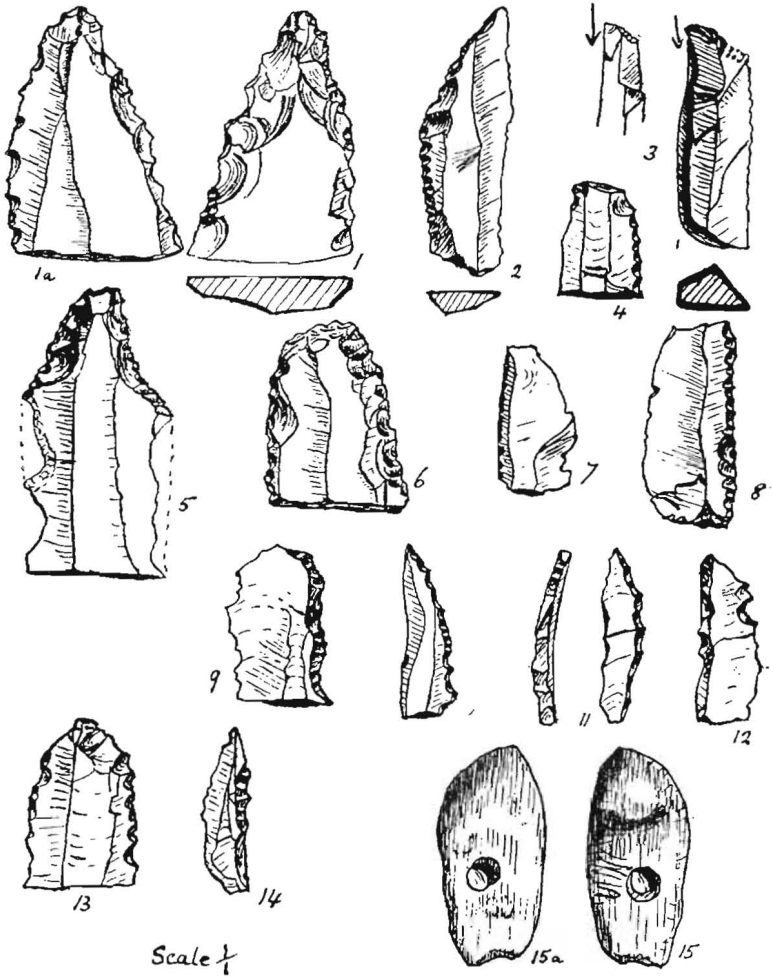
Fig. 2—King Arthur's Cave.



The Solutreans.

In the 60's Sir William Boyd Dawkins, while excavating a cave at Wookey Hole, came across some heart-shaped flint implements with delicate scaling on their surfaces. In 1899 similarly scaled implements were discovered in Uphill Cave, and last year others

Fig. 2a—Upper Palæolithic Implements from King Arthur's Cave.



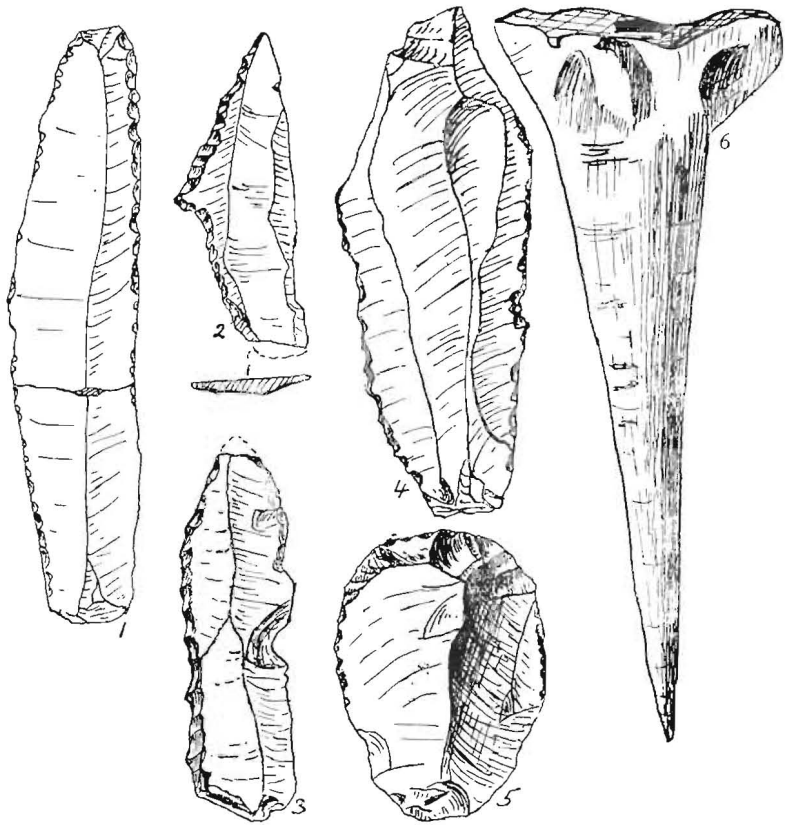
were found by the Spelæological Society in King Arthur's Cave, Symond's Yat on Wye. In each case they were found with abundant remains of food animals; hyæna and horse predominating, rhinoceros being next favourite. Now these scaled implements are very like specimens found with the same animals in France, Spain, Germany, Poland and Russia. This new culture of scaled stone is known as the Solutrean; from Solutré in France where a vast number of typical implements were unearthed.

It is now known that between 10,000 and 9,000 B.C. a hunting folk advancing from the East pushed through Europe to Spain, making a sort of racial corridor. That this race ever reached England or even France is uncertain; but their influence went before them and their beautiful and striking flint work replaced the Aurignacian technique. For some unknown reason the intrusion also temporarily quenched the artistic spirit. Some authorities maintain that the Solutreans are the direct ancestors of the fair men of North Europe. It seems that the new culture prevailed only as far as Mendip. At Symond's Yat and elsewhere to the north and west the native Aurignacian survived unaltered, though a few implements were scaled in the Solutrean manner.

The Magdalenians.

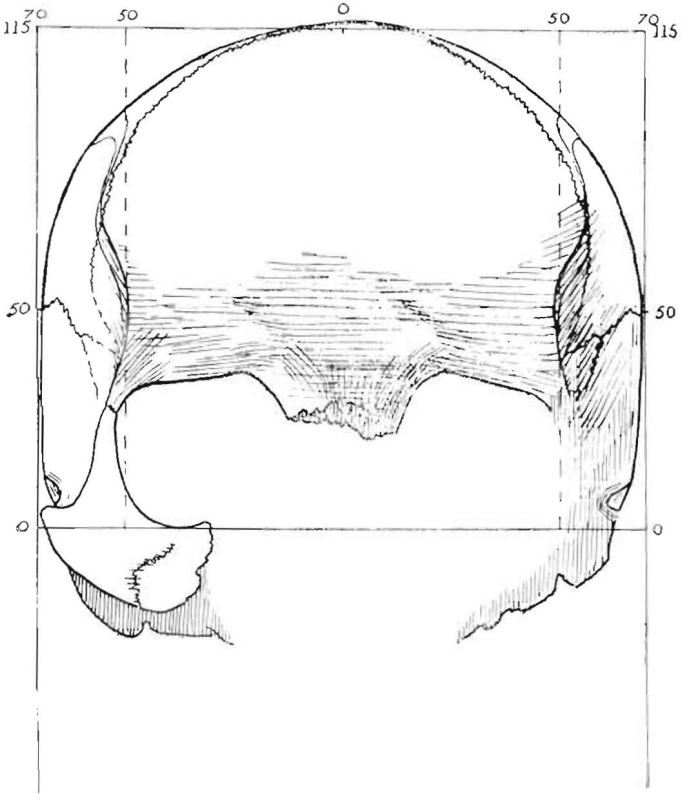
The most important inhabited caves in this district are Gough's Cave, Cheddar, and Aveline's Hole, Burrington Combe, which is still being explored by the Spelæological Society. The former was occupied the earlier since the hyæna found there is absent from the latter, but otherwise there is a resemblance between the contents of both. There are also indications that whereas when Gough's Cave was occupied the conditions were extremely severe, the Aveline's Hole men lived when the English climate was as warm and even wetter than at present. A beautiful six-barbed harpoon of stag-antler found in Aveline's Hole dates its occupation near 6,500 B.C. A rudely engraved reindeer antler from Cheddar certainly belongs to the same epoch. The flint implements are all of one culture: they belong to the native Aurignacian which had resurged from the north and west, eradicating from Mendip every vestige of the invading Solutrean Culture. Amongst other things a number of sea shells and some deer teeth, drilled for stringing together as a necklace, were found at Burrington.

Fig. 3—Upper Palæolithic Implements from Gough's Cave, Cheddar.



The importance of these two caves is found in their content of human remains. The Cheddar skeleton is almost complete. Aveline's Hole has yielded bones of at least twenty individuals. Ornaments show that some, at least of these were buried with ceremony. The most striking feature of the remains is their conformity to modern types. Not one of these folk would arouse comment if, in modern garb, he passed through the streets of a seaport town. Such differences as we meet are slight. Their incisors did not overlap, as ours do, but met edge to edge : a gritty diet had worn down their molars to an extent rarely encountered nowadays : and their shin bones were flattened. There is no trace of the overhanging brows and rugged ferocity of feature wherewith the novelist loves to invest the cave man.

Fig. 4—Skull from Aveline's Hole, Burrington Combe, after Sir. A. Keith



The facts are that these Mendip cave men and women were little people, low of stature, slender of limb, smooth featured, not very muscular, hardy ; but still subject to some ills with which we are acquainted. In general appearance they resembled the inhabitants of Corsica and Sardinia, except that one meets with broad heads amongst them.

They probably made up for lack of inches in agility. Their chief prey and staple food was the giant red dear of the new forests, that everywhere were growing and they successfully ran him down without even the aid of a dog. The rhinoceros was about to vanish, but reindeer and brown bear provided a change of diet, and they were fishers as well as hunters. Recently it has been shown that this race occupied Britain with little change until the rise of the

Roman Empire, and to-day it constitutes the matrix of the English people.

Several other caves in the district were occupied by Palæolithic man, but unfortunately their excavation was so badly performed that the evidence derived from them is of small value.

Fig. 5—Flint Knives from a Cheddar Cave. Natural Size.

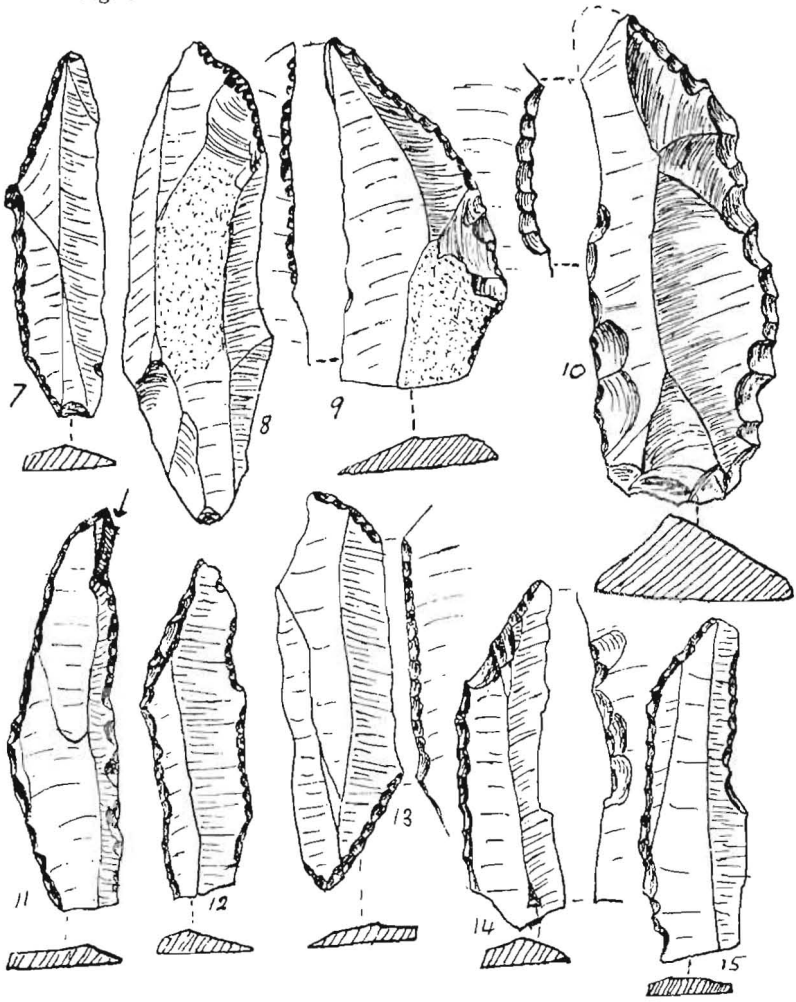
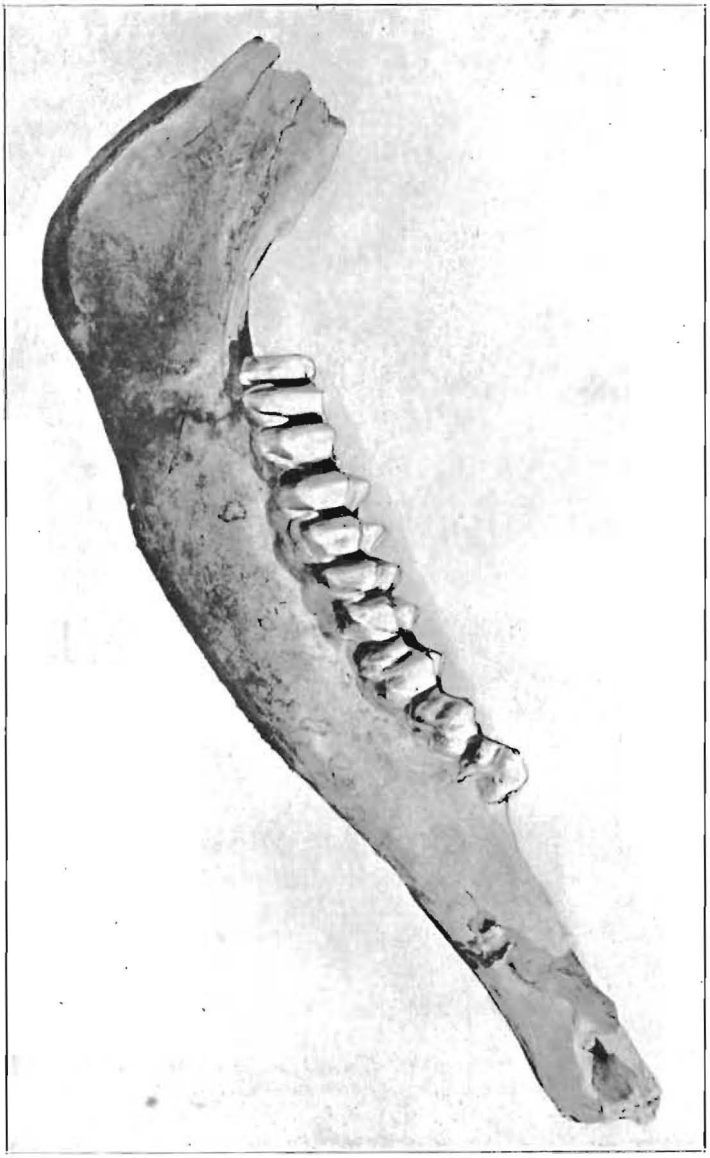


Fig. 6—Jaw of Giant Deer from Aveline's Hole.



TRANSITION TO A SETTLED LIFE AND THE NEW STONE AGE.

At the end of the Old Stone Age men were living in small hunting groups which ranged, each in its own orbit, all over Europe. How far they influenced each other can be seen in the homogeneity of the art in various districts and in the industry. It appears that at this time Britain was a unit with a native spirit. Moreover, as far as we can judge, these people left as a legacy a religion which was only stamped out with difficulty by the mediæval church, and, as witchcraft, has survived in remote districts to the present day.

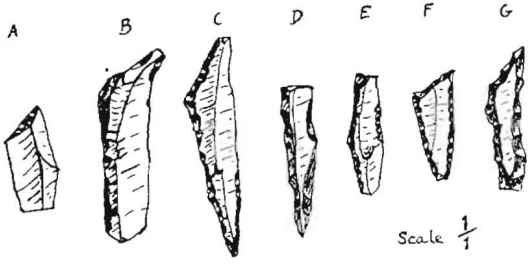
Of the strange shadowy period that followed we know very little, but about the time that men inhabited Aveline's Hole a new people, physically much like the old, pushed along the North of Africa and poured into Spain. They hunted less than their predecessors, living chiefly on fish and snails.

England was now joined to the continent, and there were forests everywhere. By 5,000 B.C. the new men were settled along its rivers and coasts, while the descendants of the Palæolithic hunters retired to the hills—they may be found living to-day, with their blood unchanged, on the flanks of Plynlimmon and in other remote places.

The Mesolithic Period.

The newcomers are best distinguished by their works. It is their peculiar and delicate work in flint which has impressed every investigator. Implements, sometimes only a third of an inch long, bearing scores of minute chips not easily seen by the naked eye, and often of geometrical form, are found on all Tardenoisian dwelling sites; for that is the name of this period.

Fig. 7—Pygmy Flints from Rowberrow Cavern.



One such site was discovered by Mr. T. F. Hewer in the platform outside King Arthur's Cave, Symonds Yat. It is now in the early stages of investigation, but already a number of these pygmy tools, which were used as harpoon barbs, have been found. Other flint implements of new types, polished pebbles and utilised bones, occurred in fair quantity. The great and unfamiliar beasts of the Old Stone Age had vanished, leaving ox, horse, giant-deer, swine, and beaver ; and these, together with fish and mussels from the Wye beneath, formed the food supply. Some survivals of Palæolithic types were found among the flint implements, but as yet it is too early to hazard an opinion as to whether the King Arthur's Cave folk were of a surviving Palæolithic stock, or new-comers, or a mixed tribe.

More is known of the Continent in these days. In France the magnificent naturalistic art had gone. The fishermen were very numerous and in the cave of Mas d' Azil over a thousand of their rough harpoons came to light. On the shores of the Baltic other men were now building villages, literally on rafts, and had begun to tame the dog; the first domestic animal. This rude civilisation reached Yorkshire. The kindred French culture spread to the Highlands.

The New Stone Age.

The taming of the dog made the keeping of flocks and herds possible, thus revolutionising human life to an extent which has never happened before or since. By 5,000 B.C. the first men of the broad headed Alpine Race from whom most modern Frenchmen are derived were in central Europe, and others swarmed after them driving sheep and oxen and bringing a knowledge of agriculture. By 3,000 B.C. they were established in large villages that possessed pottery, corn and fruits. Civilising influences crept into Britain more tardily, but by 2,500 B.C., when there had long been cities in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the natives of this land were forsaking their fishing settlements on riverside and shore, were gathering flocks and herds to themselves, and were breaking in small hillside patches to tillage. Sometime between the end of the Old Stone Age and this date Britain had finally become an island.

The true Neolithic period is the period of the chipped or polished stone axe, earthenware and husbandry. There is reason to believe that in Britain it lasted from 2,500 to 1,800 B.C. Of the early years little remains outside the great and imposing flint mines of Grime's Graves in Norfolk and Cissbury in Suffolk. A small flint factory of this date at Thatcham near Newbury has supplied material

which suggests that Baltic influences were coming in. But in the West there is nothing we can confidently assign to this period. We may be sure that people lived here, but their relics have yet to be discovered.

The difficulty of realising the position of the British Isles in the Neolithic period when political organisation, as it is now understood, began to appear, is vast. To-day in all humility we may say that England is the hub of the earth; the port and clearing-house of the Old World up to and including India. But this status only began with the discovery of America, and was only consolidated after Waterloo. In some way allied to this geographical promotion is the rise of our cultural importance in the widest sense. We may be as insular as we please in the Hebrides or the London suburbs, but Shaw and Shakespeare are popular dramatists in Germany to-day, a Middlesbrough firm is building a bridge across Sydney Harbour, and Bristol aeroplanes are flown all over the earth. Not one of these happenings is accidental; there are contributory racial and environmental factors, as anyone can see.

Early in the New Stone Age Britain was about as important in the general scheme of things as Papua is to-day. Its life was a dim sluggish reflection of the daily round in the outer world.

Towards the end of the third millennium B.C., the possession of flocks and herds and the practice of agriculture had had its effect and the erstwhile hunters had formed large tribes with powerful religious organisations. The old nomadic life had ceased and each tribe was settled in a district which belonged to it. Men no longer depended on the day's effort and the day's luck for the day's food.

Megaliths.

At this point there was a great quickening of the communal life which is revealed to us by the new culture of megaliths or mighty stones. The British megaliths closely resemble French examples. Vessels and implements like others found along the Mediterranean were found within the latter, and these in turn are related to certain Egyptian forms of known date. 2000 B.C., the approximate earliest date of these monuments in Britain, has thus been arrived at.

Single stone monuments or menhirs are not common in this district, but a stone in Armoury Square, Stapleton Road, Bristol, the poor remnant of a block that once was much greater, may be one. In that case its position near the centre of a city is surely unique. There is reason to believe that the stone on Redland Green

is a fallen menhir. The circular stone temples at Avebury, Stonehenge, Rollright and Stanton Drew are famous enough to need no description. Dolmens or table stones are box like chambered tombs which once were covered by earthen mounds. There are examples at Druid Stoke and on Broadfield Down.

The best known and commonest megalithic monuments are the long-barrows. These mounds are between 50 and 200 feet long and 30 and 80 feet wide. Usually the east end is the higher and wider. In most Cotswold examples there is a portal at this end which gives access to a chambered passage wherein the remains rested. The sides of the barrows are often retained within dry walling. Perhaps no two long barrows are identical any more than two churches. There are at least ten of these overground family vaults in North Somerset, including those found by Mr. E. K. Tratman at Felton, Redhill and Priddy. More than 60 Cotswold examples are known including the group of five round Avening, near Nailsworth, and eight at Upper Swell in the extreme north-east of Gloucestershire.

The idea of building chambered tombs came from France and perhaps Denmark: two regions which already were in contact with Britain. But it was an age of invention and foreign ideas were soon adapted to native conditions and tastes. Thus long barrows and great stone circles are British developments which are rare or absent in France.

The Stone Axe.

The polished stone axe, a far more efficient implement than anything which came before, belongs to this period. Mr. Alfred Selley who has searched the ground hereabouts for a life-time, and knows more of the local distribution of flints than anyone else, has found by the frequency of polished axes on high-ground, something of the haunts of the axe-men. Abbot's Leigh, Failand Hill, Wraxall Hill, Walton Hill, Bishopsworth and the Mendip plateau were centres of their population. A polished and perforated stone mace head was found on Winterbourne Down; very few polished stones have been discovered on the Cotswolds.

As a rule the migration of the axe-men to the unforested and healthier uplands was pretty general, but one axe was found on low ground at Portishead. Some years ago Mr. Selley took several others from the rubbish heap of a neolithic fishing village at Shirehampton which was half obscured by Avon mud. Scrapers, chipped knives, arrowheads, and coarse potsherds, most of which are now in the Cambridge museum, were in the same heap. Other flint axes have been turned up from time to time in the Glastonbury fens, often

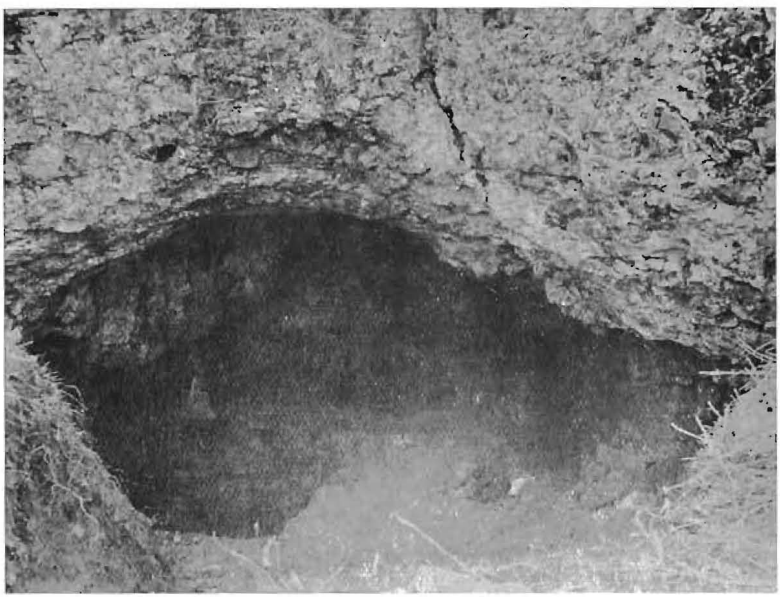
along with bronze weapons. These, together with fragments of polished tools from bronze-age barrows excavated by the Spelæological Society, show that this most efficient tool remained in use long after the Megalithic period.

Neolithic Dwellings.

Most of our knowledge of these folk is drawn from tombs and therefore is very one-sided. Recently, several late Neolithic cave dwellings have been explored in Mendip. A party from Downside Abbey found in a fissure at Nettlebridge near Shepton Mallet a number of broken human bones of modern type together with vessels decorated all over with the impressed thumbnail; a motif which has survived on Scotch shortbread. The exploration was never completed.

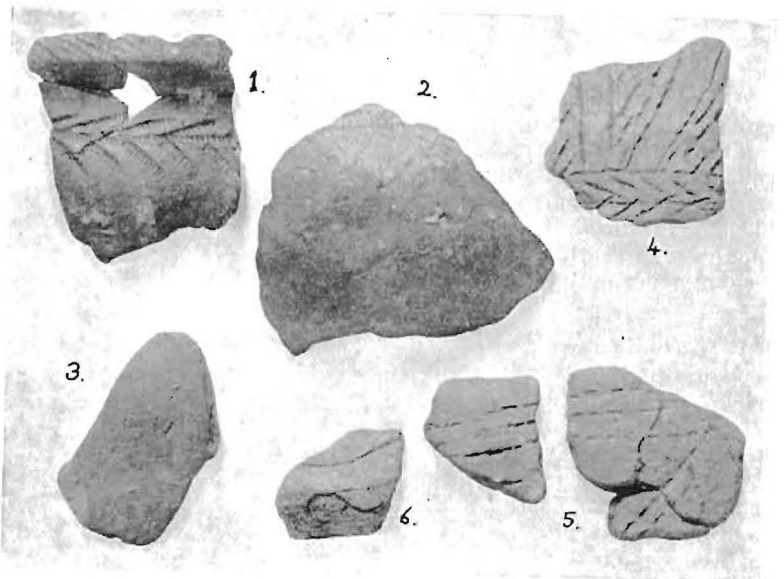
In the Outlook Cave, Ebbor Gorge, Mr. Balch has found human bones, thumbnail pottery, part of a polished stone mace-head, a triangular flint arrowhead, and many bones of domestic beasts. In another dwelling place of the same age, beneath an overhanging rock in the same gorge, he was fortunate enough to obtain a stone axe with a ground blade, a large oval scaled knife, and more thumbnail pottery.

Fig. 8—Rowberrow Cavern.



Dr. Taylor's labours in Rowberrow Cavern have supplied a round bottomed Neolithic bowl with an overhanging rim decorated with the " maggot " pattern, it therefore belongs to a well-known long-barrow type. Sherds of Beaker-ware (*Fig. 9., 4*) which

Fig. 9 —Neolithic, Beaker and " Food Vessel " sherds from Rowberrow Cavern.



will be described later, were near it. With the pottery was a service of flint implements wrought by shallow scaling, including part of a polished tool and barbed stone arrowheads. But undoubtedly the important feature of the industry here found was the presence of 30 pygmy flints (*Fig. 7*); though not quite the same as the earlier pygmies from King Arthur's Cave they are probably derived from the Arthursian industry. They suggest that the indwellers in Rowberrow Cavern were the descendants of men who dwelt in Britain in Tardenoisian times. They in turn perhaps were derived from the cave men of Old Stone Age.

Sun Hole, Cheddar, has also produced an association of round bottomed Neolithic pottery, sherds of Beaker-ware, finely scaled flint implements and small fragments of a polished axe. Soldier's Hole in Cheddar Gorge has so far given us a set of stone implements including a polished axe and a chipped stone spear-head.

The most significant Neolithic site in this district was found by the Somerset Archæological Society under an overhanging rock in Chelm's Combe, Cheddar, where round bottomed bowls and the bones of the men who used them had survived. One of the bowls is of a Spanish type. The Neolithic men who dwelt in these seven caves had domestic beasts, but they hunted freely to augment their food stocks.

Neolithic Man.

The description of the Palæolithic man of Aveline's Hole and Gough's Cave could be used for the men from the Gloucestershire and Somersetshire long barrows and from Chelm's Combe without much amending. Perhaps the main difference is that the long-barrow men had narrower faces than the cave men. Judging by the skeletons we have there is no reason to suppose that the long-barrow men were other than the descendants of the cave men. But this is a theory that needs testing by research in transitional stations.

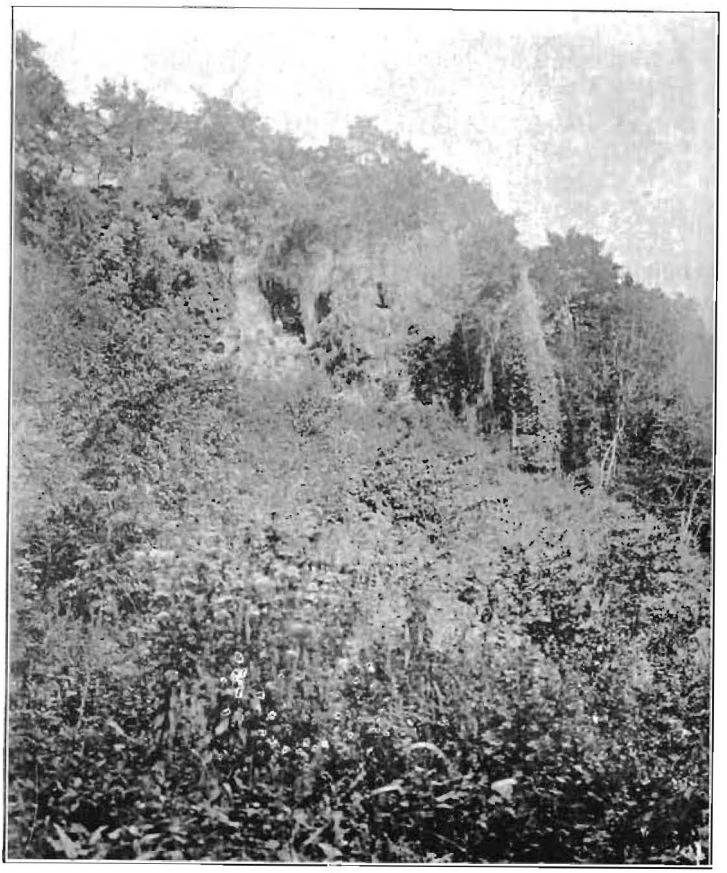
A skull was taken from Bisley long-barrow upon which the dangerous and delicate surgical operation of trepanning had been successfully performed.

It has been asserted that the Megalithic culture was carried across Europe by traders from the Near East who were in quest of gold, amber and pearls. They were dark broad-heads, and are known as Prospectors. Professor Fleure has discovered in Pembroke and South Cardigan, where Megaliths are numerous, numbers of men who may be their descendants. Never the less, no oriental Neolithic objects have appeared in the West of England and, moreover, the skeletons from the long-barrows all appear to belong to the distinctive native type.

At this period it is probable that work began on the gold bearing gravel of Wicklow. For centuries this was the most important gold-field in Europe and this may account for the enormous number of flint axes and early bronze implements found in Ireland. But there are few signs of the gold trade in these parts. Trade there was: no one can walk across a ploughed field on Mendip without discovering a flint implement or flake. No flint is found naturally in the district, therefore, the presence of such enormous quantities on the land is testimony of settled conditions and an interchange of commodities in the New Stone and Bronze Ages.

The Megalithic stage certainly lasted into the early Bronze Age; the occurrence of Beaker-ware with Neolithic pottery is good evidence of that. Stonehenge itself was raised after the close of the New Stone Age. It is now well-known that the inner circle of blue stones was brought thence from Pembrokeshire. Perhaps they were ferried across the Severn estuary to Uphill or Worlebury and toiled along Mendip to the Wiltshire Downs by devout herdsmen.

Fig. 10—Merlin's Cave, Symond's Yat.



THE BEAKER FOLK.

Towards the end of the Megalithic period a great drought in Russia, like that which had such terrible results some years since, set in motion a fair skinned people who lived in the Ukraine. They seem to have violently intruded on their neighbours, killing the men and marrying with the women ; then local pressure, or the impulse to adventure, set them on the road again. By their skeletons and by the distinctive objects they left behind they can be traced to Bohemia, and from thence to many places. The branch which concerns us moved along South Germany, and made its way up the Rhine to the shores of the North Sea. By 1850 B.C. they had crossed to Britain, and for many years their incursions continued ; not as invaders, for their numbers were relatively small, but as the prototypes of the colonists of New England.

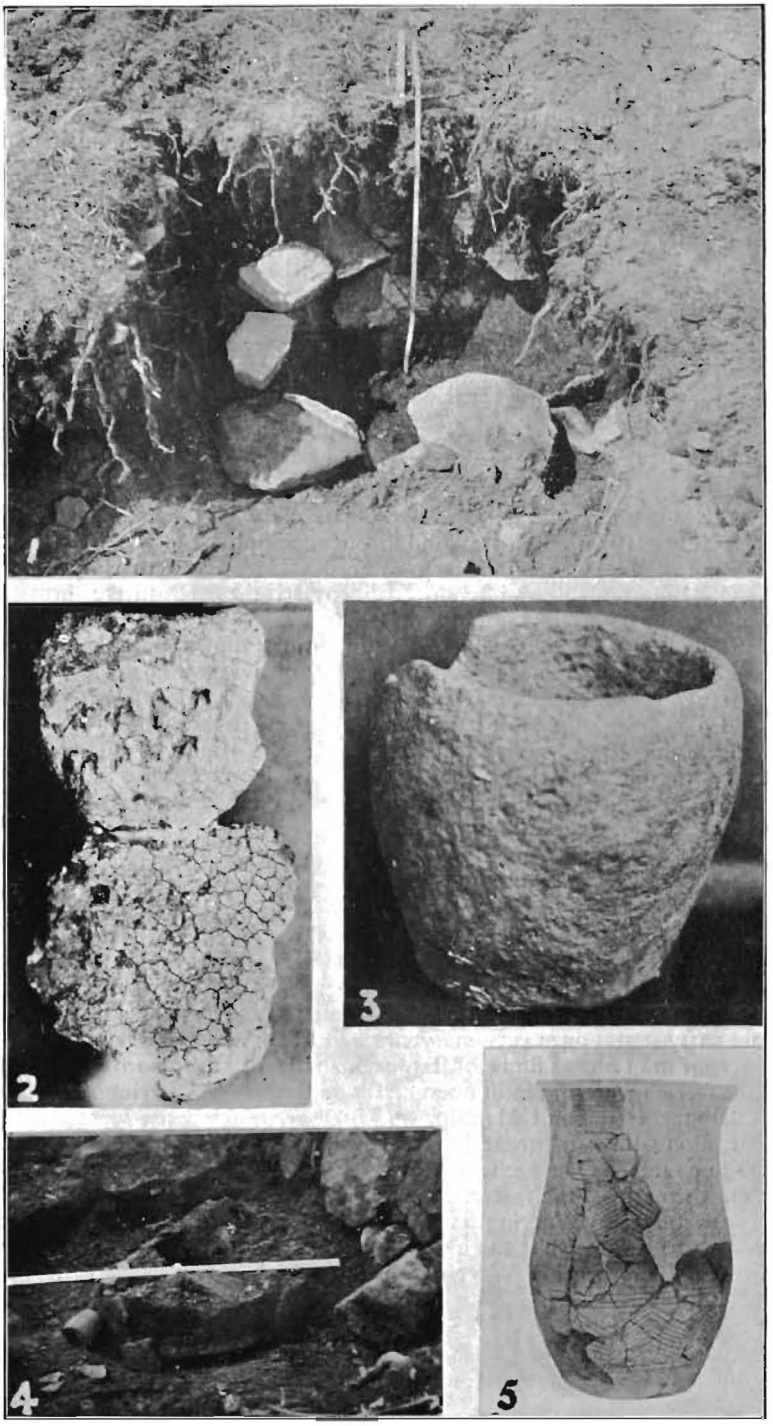
The characteristic vessel which this colonising people always made and left in their graves and dwelling sites, whereby we may trace them throughout their wanderings, is the beaker ; a well-made pot of good yellow or red earthenware, always decorated (*Fig. 11., 5*), usually in zones or bands.

Unlike Neolithic men the Beaker-folk never built long barrows, but threw up round mounds over their stone-lined graves or cists. (*Fig. 11., 1*). From their bones we know a good deal about their appearance. They were stalwart broad-heads, their more powerful muscles were scaffolded upon rugged frames, and their features were the reverse of suave.

The inlets and rivers from Southampton to Aberdeen let the Beaker-folk into Britain. They swarmed up the Thames, and strongly established themselves on the unwooded chalk uplands of Wilts, Yorkshire, Derby, and Aberdeen. Until recently it was believed that they had avoided this district entirely, but within the past few years the Spelæological Society has found their pottery at Blackdown, Rowberrow Cavern, Tyning's Farm, and Sun Hole, Cheddar, in Mendip ; at Nailsworth, and at Symond's Yat. The same ware was discovered in the Chelm's Combe rock shelter. Some years ago Mr. St. George Gray excavated a great round barrow at Wick, near Stogursey, and found therein three beakers and skeletons, and some elaborate flint daggers. Thus there is every reason to believe that the Somerset hills were strongly colonised, forming a link between the settlements of Wilts and those of South Wales. Only a few beakers have been found in Ireland.

There is every reason to believe that in the south and east of this country, at least, the Beaker-folk constituted themselves an aristocracy which led and ruled the less vigorous but far more.

Fig. 11—Beaker and Bronze Age Graves and Grave Goods.



numerous dark, long-headed natives. How they established their rule we can only conjecture, but whatever their status was there was undoubtedly a great increase in prosperity and population in their day, which lasted until 1,500 B.C.

The Beaker-folk were always out-numbered by the natives, especially in the North and West, and gradually they were absorbed. To-day folk of this type are most frequently found in Aberdeenshire, Northumbria, Derbyshire, and the Bala Cleft in North Wales, where there are also many evidences of their early occupation. Charles Darwin was a counterpart of this very fine type. In the South they contributed strains to the population, but such have been obscured by later invasions.

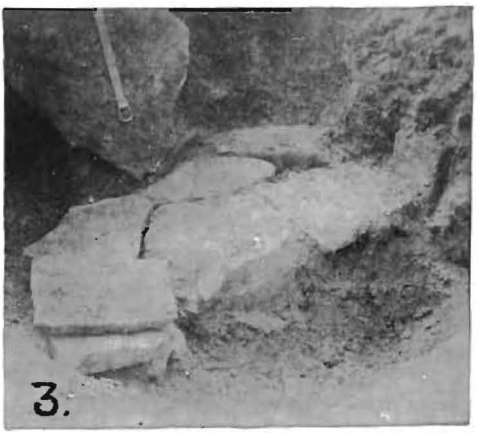
THE BRONZE AGE.

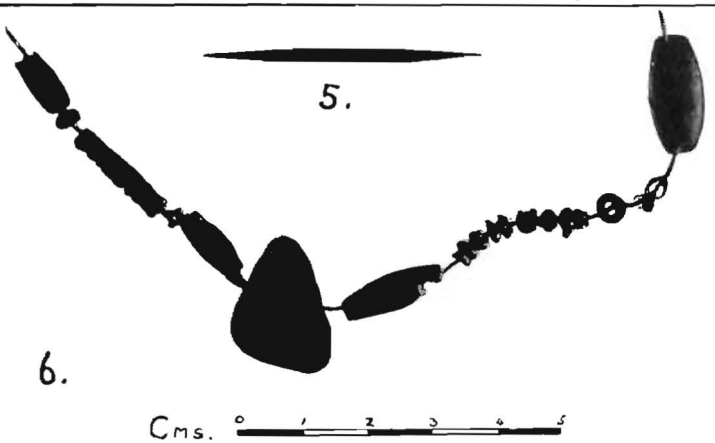
Researches in Egypt have made it clear that the discovery of bronze and its possibilities had been accomplished by 2,800 B.C. The knowledge was slowly carried across Europe so that by 2,000 B.C. (?) it had been introduced into Britain. Primitive bronze daggers are sometimes found in Beaker graves. It gradually came into general use, displacing more and more flint implements; but the revolution that it effected in the way of living was more tardy. The people still avoided the swampy, forested valleys, with their wild beasts and ague, and dwelt on the bare uplands. In fact, in Britain during the early Bronze Age life was confined to the hills more than at any other period. The vast labour required to hew down trees with small bronze or stone axes kept the damp wooded Midlands almost uninhabited.

Metal.

The earliest bronze axes were flat plates of the shape of polished stone axes. More of these specimens are found in Ireland and England than anywhere in Europe, testifying to the importance of the Wicklow gold-field and the density of the population here in the early metal ages. Some years ago Mr. O. G. S. Crawford prepared a map of the finds of flat axes made in this country. Most discoveries were made in open chalk or limestone districts such as Salisbury Plain and Mendip, but further, many axes were strung out along lines of great length which appear to indicate ancient trade routes. One such route runs from the region of Southampton, through Winchester, Newbury, Cirencester, Worcester, and Shrewsbury, to Warrington, where other routes join it. There is reason to believe that the chief port for the Irish gold-fields was in the neighbourhood of Warrington.

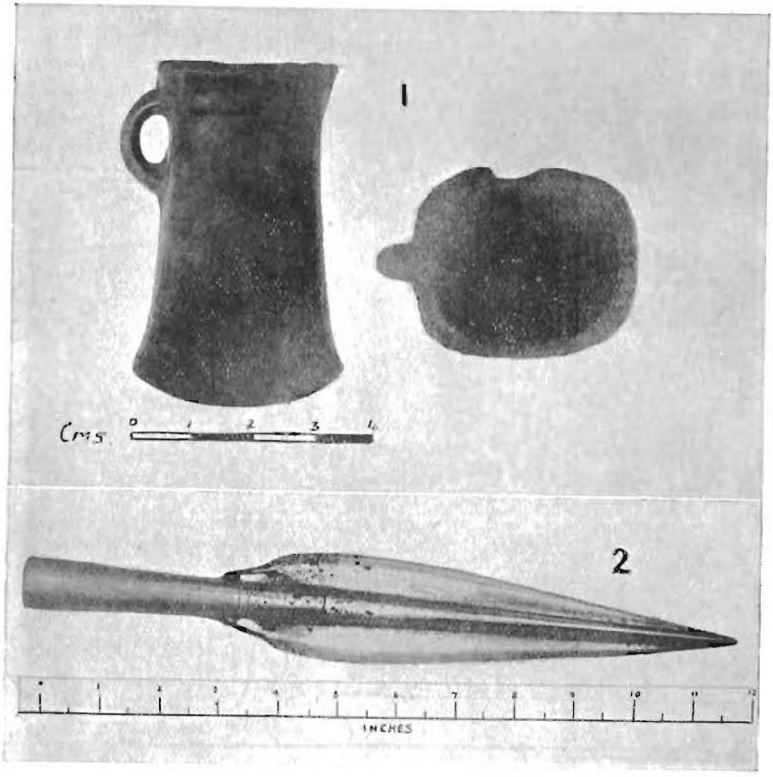
Fig. 12– Bronze Age Graves and Grave Goods.





Flat axes have been found locally on Bannerdown, near Bath, and in the gorges of Ebbor and Cheddar. A small hoard of axes of an early type, which was discovered at Coombe Dingle by a schoolboy, is now in the Bristol Museum.

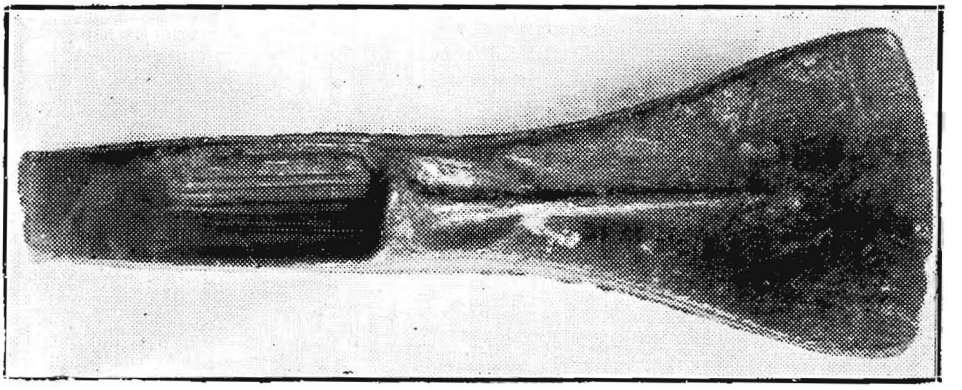
Fig. 13—Socketed Axe from near Chipping Sodbury and a Spear-head from Yeovil.



The wealth of the middle and late Bronze Age may be judged from the numbers of more evolved weapons and implements found about the country, among the localities being Edington, Draycott, Axbridge, Brean Down, Hutton, Banwell, Tickenham, Cheddar, Priddy, Compton Martin, Radstock, Camerton, Solsbury Hill (Bath), the city of Bristol, Floating Harbour, Avonmouth Dock, Westbury-on-Trym, and Chipping Sodbury. In other places implements have been found and straightway consigned to the melting-pot. In some

places isolated spearheads or axes were discovered, but at Compton Martin, Priddy and the Edington turbaries, hoards of weapons, hidden and forgotten by merchants or founders, have come to light. The sole surviving axe from Compton is of Breton type and presumably was traded over from Brittany before 1,000 B.C.

Fig. 14—Bronze Axe. Compton-Martin.



The Round Barrow.

The Bronze Age is the period of the round barrow. These burial mounds are found everywhere in the district and are spoken of as "toots," "touts," "tuts," or "tumps." In size they range from examples like Mill Tut Barrow, between Westbury-on-Trym and Southmead, which is seven feet high and about seventy feet across (*Fig. 15*) to the little mounds on Kingsweston Down, which cannot be seen when the grass is long. Bodies were no longer buried in the rough stone coffers or cists of Beaker times, but were cremated. Often the ashes were gathered into large decorated urns of coarse earthenware and these were inverted and placed on the ground and the earth piled over them (*Figs. 11., 4, and 12., 2 and 3.*)

Some years ago an archæological survey of North Somerset was begun by the Spelæological Society, and the results are published from time to time. In the small area between Priddy and Cheddar Mr. Tratman found seventy-two round barrows, the majority of which had not been previously recorded. Another score were discovered in the region between Filton, Redhill and Cleeve. Altogether in the district the number runs into several hundreds; there is hardly an upland skyline that is not broken by one or more

of them. If the British Bronze Age lasted from 1,800 B.C. to 700 B.C., and every mound was heaved over the remains of a notable person, the density of the upland population in those days was very great.

Barrows at Tyning's Farm, Mendip.

An interesting group of five barrows has been excavated by Mr. R. F. Read and others at Tyning's Farm, Charterhouse, Mendip. One contained burnt bones and little else; another had been disturbed. There were two interments in the third. The oldest interment of burnt bones had been made in a pit along with hone stones (*Fig 12., 4*) and a flint scraper. In the secondary interment the burnt bones of a woman and young child were contained in an inverted urn which culturally had descended from the Neolithic bowls of the pre-Beaker period (*Fig. 16, 3*). Among the bones was a bronze awl of early date and part of a necklace (*Fig. 12, 6*). This is only another instance of the respect accorded to women in prehistoric times. Probably it was not until historic times that their sex was regarded as the inferior.

The form of the urn, which is a pure native product betraying no trace of Beaker influence, is evidence of a remarkable re-establishment or revival of native life and culture. As soon as the Beaker immigrants were absorbed their culture was lost in a resurgence of native culture and art that had been developing quietly in such remote districts as Wales and the Northern hills, which were virtually immune from foreign influences. This is another instance of the native feeling—insularity, if you will—of these parts. Three thousand five hundred years ago, whatever the political sub-divisions of the land were, the people were one. Stonehenge may have been erected in the period of this resurgence.

To the archæologist vanity is a virtue; it behoves him never to pass a jeweller's shop without a gesture of profound respect.

The jet beads from this urn are tokens of a trade between Somerset and the North-East coast and, moreover, a settled country in between at the very dawn of the period. With the jet were corrugated tubular beads of turquoise paste of a type common in Egypt after 2,500 B.C. They inform us that Britain was no longer isolated.

The First Horsemen.

The south barrow is larger than the others. The cremated bones were buried in a decorated urn of fairly late date (*Fig. 16., 4*) and small cairns, each covering some object such as a flint saw,

Fig. 15—Mill Tut Barrow.

scraper, or knife, were buried in the mound. One such cairn was piled over the skull of a very old horse. We know that about 1,100 B.C. a tall, fair, long-headed folk who probably spoke Gaelic and were the first horsemen to reach this country, spread over Europe from the Danube valley and established themselves as an aristocracy over the short, swarthy people they found living here. They carried leaf-shaped swords of types which may be seen in the Bristol Art Gallery. They were attracted by Irish gold. Amongst other things they began to reclaim the valleys for agriculture. The pottery was made soon after this invasion.

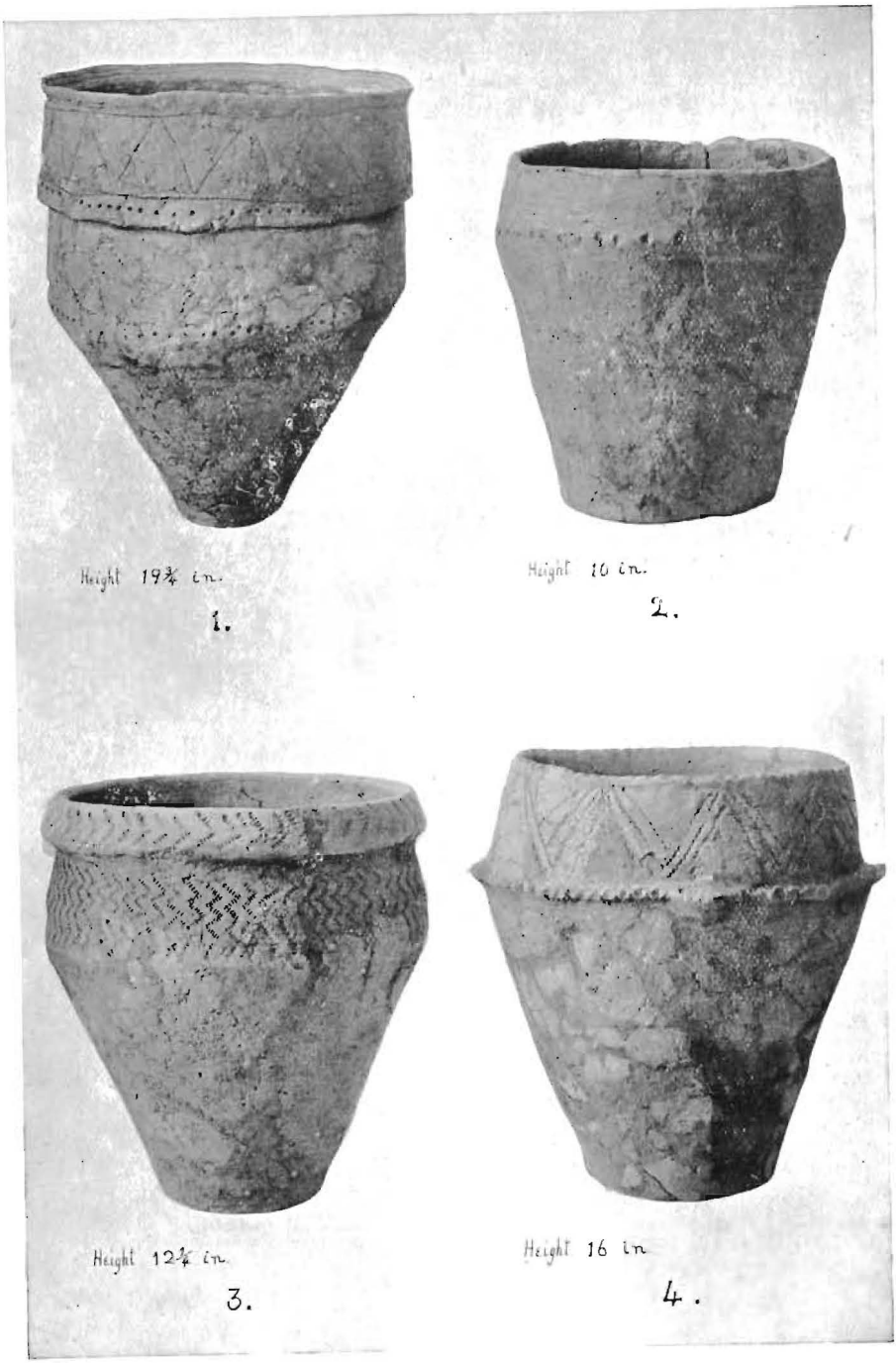
This barrow contained several arrowheads and some hundreds of flint implements demonstrating that right down to the end of the age the employment of metal did little to limit the use of stone tools. However, the tools are of types different from those made in the Stone Age (*Fig. 17*).

The remaining barrow at Tyning's Farm is a very curious affair. Evidently the men who raised it hit on the happy idea of making the greatest show for their labour by piling earth on a grave mound erected by long-forgotten people. A rough platform of stones was exposed when the turf was removed, and immediately below the stones were two plain bucket-shaped urns filled with calcined human bones. They belong to the extreme end of this period or to the dawn of the succeeding Iron Age, and are dated at about 700 B.C. (*Figs. 12., 3, and 16., 2*). The core of the barrow contained fragments of Beaker ware which were perhaps a thousand years older than the latter interments; and, most interesting of all, four pygmy flints.

The pottery from another Mendip barrow suggests that during the peaceful middle Bronze Age the inhabitants of Somerset were in closer touch with the North of England than with the adjoining districts to the south (*Figs. 11., 3, and 16., 1*).

We know very little of the dwelling-places of these folk. Caves were still occasionally occupied, as pot-sherds and other material found in Cheddar Gorge, Chelm's Combe and at Symond's Yat show. But the material is rather scanty and does not completely supplement the evidence from burial mounds. However, we know that at the end of the period—that is after the fall of Troy and the foundation of Rome—the descendants of the Neolithic men were prospering under the rule of more robust aristocrats. They grew corn, spun yarn and wove it into cloth, and wrought bone and metal. They had commenced the conquest of the valleys and had built some of the smaller hilltop camps.

Fig. 16 – Bronze Age Cinerary Urns from Tyning's Farm and Blackdown, Mendip.

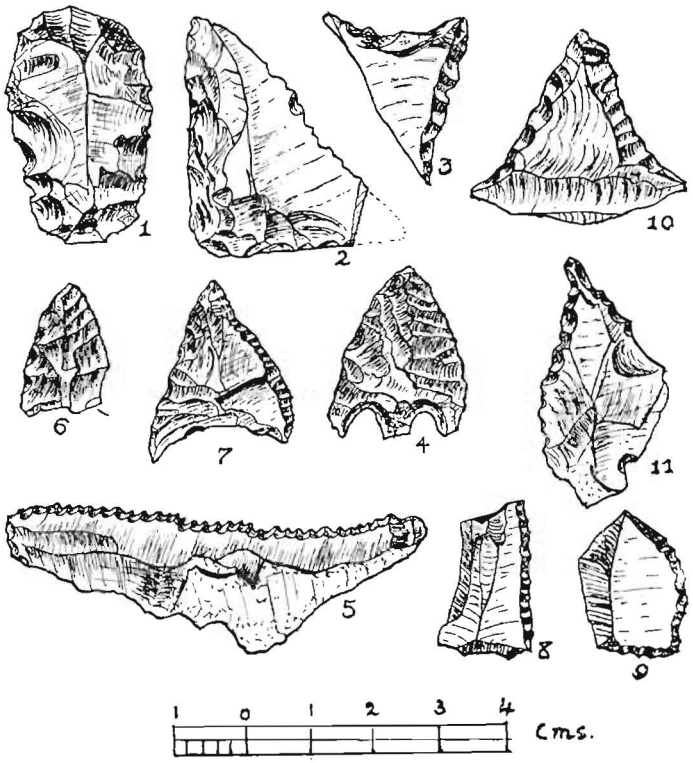


THE IRON AGE

The Halstatt Period.

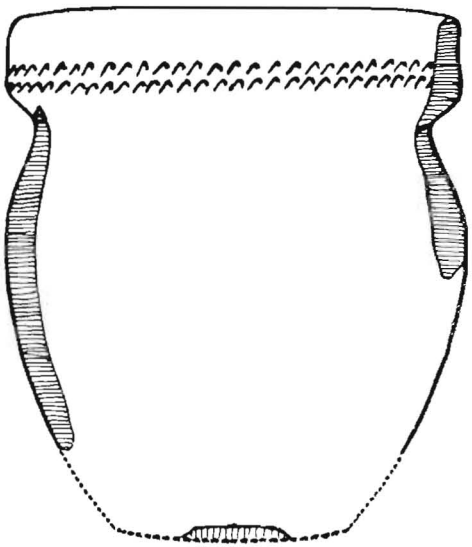
Iron was brought into this country by folk who landed on the South coast, notably at Hengistbury, near Christchurch, where one of their trading stations has been excavated. They followed in the wake of the bronze swordsmen, establishing smithies and a new agricultural system wherever they went. The classical station of the period is Hallstatt, a cemetery on the banks of the Danube, and the typical British station is All Canning's Cross; a village site near Avebury excavated by Mrs. Cunnington. A few weapons and other edged tools of bronze were in use at All Canning's, but the great majority were of iron.

Fig. 17—Flint Implements and Weapons from the Tyning's Farm Barrows.



The villagers dwelt in rectangular huts, eighteen feet long, and round these huts there were many potsherds and other discarded rubbish. This material shows that these people were identical with the latest Bronze Age folk; their pottery cannot be distinguished from the ware of that age; and there was evidently no destruction of native culture following the introduction of iron. Even domestic beasts such as the sheep, which is of the deer-like type now surviving on Soay Island, near St. Kilda, are the beasts of the preceding stage. Tillage was on the up-grade, and corn was ground in very rough trough-like mills or querns. The village was not on the high ground, but a considerable way down the slope of the valley, so that the lowlands were then being reclaimed. Spinning and weaving had attained a fair development. The skulls of these folk show no variation from long-barrow types, and there is every reason to suppose that the manifold details of the new culture were introduced by traders.

Fig. 18



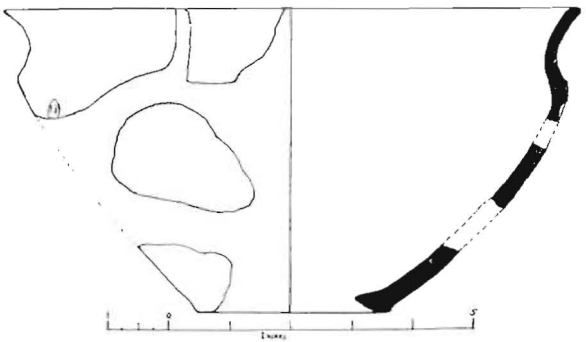
Cinerary Urn. Type I. (Reconstruction) { Height possibly about 10½" Greatest Diameter 9"

Secondary Interment, B.1. Blackdown.

It is hard not to believe that there was some invasion of the land in the centuries following 700 B.C. Many iron swords of Central European types have been found here at various times, notably in the Thames. The distinctive pottery from Deverel Barrow, Dorset, now in the Bristol Museum, which belongs to this period, is certainly influenced by the Central European culture. But any such invasion was not on a large scale and had little influence on the racial types of the West.

Mr. Tratman has recently found traces of these, the first iron using folk, in barrows on Kingsweston Down (*Fig. 19*). Others dwelt in caves at Rowberrow and Cheddar, and it may be that the first builders of Worlebury lived at this time, for their pottery has been found on the hill. At Slaughterford, near Chippenham, in a very narrow and dangerous rift, Mr. Hewer had the good fortune to uncover many human bones of long-barrow type which were associated with a few sherds of Hallstatt pottery and much kitchen refuse. The series of canine jaws found there bear testimony to the importance of the dog at that day. The Slaughterford dog was large and unspecialised, doing duty as hound, terrier, or mastiff. The earliest fancy breeds date from considerably more than a thousand years later.

Fig 19 –Halstatt Bowl from Kingsweston Down.



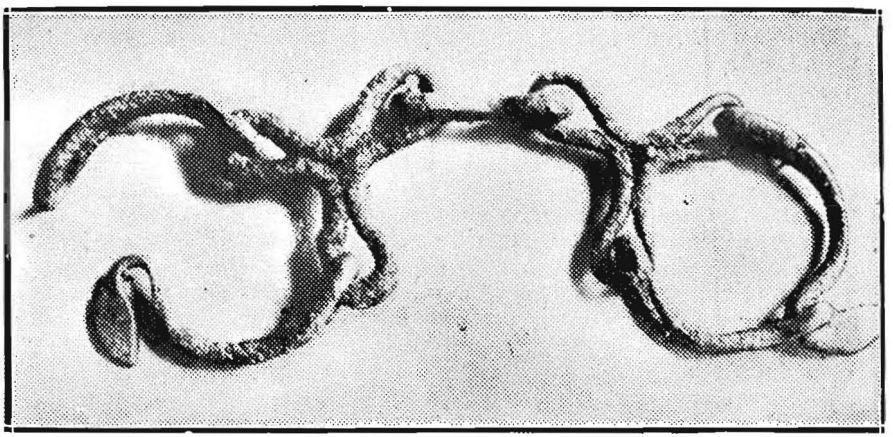
The La Tène Period.

Recently excavation by Dr. Clay at Fifield Bavant and Swallowcliffe Down, Wilts, has revealed two villages which date from after All Cannings and show that earlier native customs reasserted themselves. In these two localities the folk dwelt in circular pits, 15ft. in diameter and 8ft deep, hewn out of the massive chalk, like the

dwellings of the Neolithic people. These dug-outs were roofed over with conical brushwood thatching so that the villages had the appearance of a great bee farm.

From 300 B.C. onwards tribes of stalwart fair-headed men, known as the Belgae, crossed from north France and Belgium, and poured into Britain. Though they did not exterminate the native folk they soon dominated the south and east, and made, perhaps greater changes in the racial constitution than all the previous invaders had done. They pressed on down the Thames valley and along the south coast. Before the Roman occupation they had occupied Wilts, but apparently came no nearer the Bristol Channel; though they dominated the whole of England and Wales politically.

Fig. 20—Shackles: Read's Cavern.



The Lake Villages.

One of the outstanding events in British archæology in the past half century was the excavation of Glastonbury lake village by Dr. Bulleid and Mr. St. George Gray. From time to time so much has been written of the structure and appearance of this village that it is now familiar to most of us. A sister village at Meare, about a mile away, is being uncovered and is supplementing the story with its evidence. Lake villages existed in Switzerland as early as 3,500—4,000 B.C., but until Hallstatt invaders displaced the Swiss villages nothing of the sort was known in Britain. After a journey via Brittany, that lasted some hundreds of years, descendants of

the Swiss refugees reached Ireland and south-west England, and taught the natives—for the Glastonbury men were of the ancient long-barrow or Mediterranean stock—their ways and the Brythonic or Welsh tongue.

The two villages were constructed of thousands of tons of stone, timber and clay, which was carried from firm ground in little dug-out canoes and dumped in the lake. The mass was kept within bounds by oak piles. On this artificial island was piled the clay and wood which formed the foundation of circular skep-shaped huts.

After vast labour undertaken with the most primitive appliances, the most impressive feature is the artistic spirit that is caught and reflected at every facet of the life of these folk. Every vessel is of simple form, yet effective and artistic; and a large proportion are inscribed with Celtic designs. This art, which was not truly on the lines of native tradition but was derived from Armorican or Breton sources, was immediately taken by the folk to their hearts so that in Great Britain and Ireland it lived through incessant invasion for above a thousand years.

The earliest date of the foundation of Glastonbury is 300 B.C., and, therefore, we see the art in its first development, purely geometrical and decorative, without the utilisation of beasts and figures that came later. Moreover, one feels that much of the work was as experimental as Elizabethan verse, and thence that there was no stagnation of spirit in those times. At present it suffices to say that Celtic art is the art of movement, as contrasted with the classical ideal of formal perfection, and as such is amazingly "modern." It is more abstract, yet in regard to technique and medium the Celt always betrays himself as the complete realist. Whereas even the commonest classical design, even when painted or incised, is made to simulate some original in the round and requires a number of details to further the illusion, the Celtic design is always an end in itself, is severely economical, and leaves no space for fussiness.

The men of Glastonbury were considerable craftsmen who knew of the lathe and the rotary corn-mill but were without the potter's wheel. Many weaving-combs, bobbins and spindle-whorls were found in the debris from their huts, therefore, the ancient inhabitants of Somerset were not as naked as Cæsar would have us believe. It is pleasing to catologue their vices. They knew the dice-box and decked themselves with very beautiful glass beads, many of which were coloured with the favourite Celtic blue, and, as an offset to the razors which had been used by men for some hundreds of years, the women treasured bronze mirrors and berouged themselves.

Mendip Caves.

Caves were still occupied at Cheddar, and Mr. Balch has found much intimate and valuable material in Wookey Hole. Read's Cavern, near Burrington, discovered in 1919 by Mr. R. F. Read, and excavated by Dr. Palmer and Mr. Tratman, was used between 100 B.C. and 1 A.D.; probably by families from the adjoining Dolebury Camp. It yielded some fine examples of smith's work (*Fig. 20, 21 and 22*) and an interesting list of domestic animals. Sheep was the most numerous, pig was common, and there were a fair number of oxen like Kerry cattle; but the Celtic horse, which was like the Exmoor pony, was scarce. Wild animals, such as deer, were now quite negligible as food.

Fig. 21—Decorated Vase: Read's Cavern.

Other finds of this people and period have been made at Worlebury and Dolebury. Many years ago a hoard of superb enamelled Celtic bronzes was discovered in the Polden Hills. This collection, the finest in the country, is now in the British Museum. Some of the objects show signs of the encroaching Roman influence. Enamelled bronzes have also been found at Clevedon, while the magnificent bronze collar from Wraxall, now in the Bristol Museum, is illuminating to all whose business it is to handle curves. The famous engraved mirror from Birdlip is now in the Gloucester Museum.

Hill-top Forts.

It has long been known that the hill-top camps were completed before the Romans came. Almost every hill of tactical importance in this region is surmounted by one. The Observatory Hill Camp, Clifton, and Stokeleigh are familiar to all. They should not be regarded as fortifications in the modern military sense, but rather as safe places wherein the folk could stay in security and the cattle be driven in times of stress. It must be remembered that the lowlands had only been occupied recently, and a hold was still retained on the uplands. Possibly the hill-top camps were still regarded as permanent homes, and even may have been regularly occupied for months of the year.

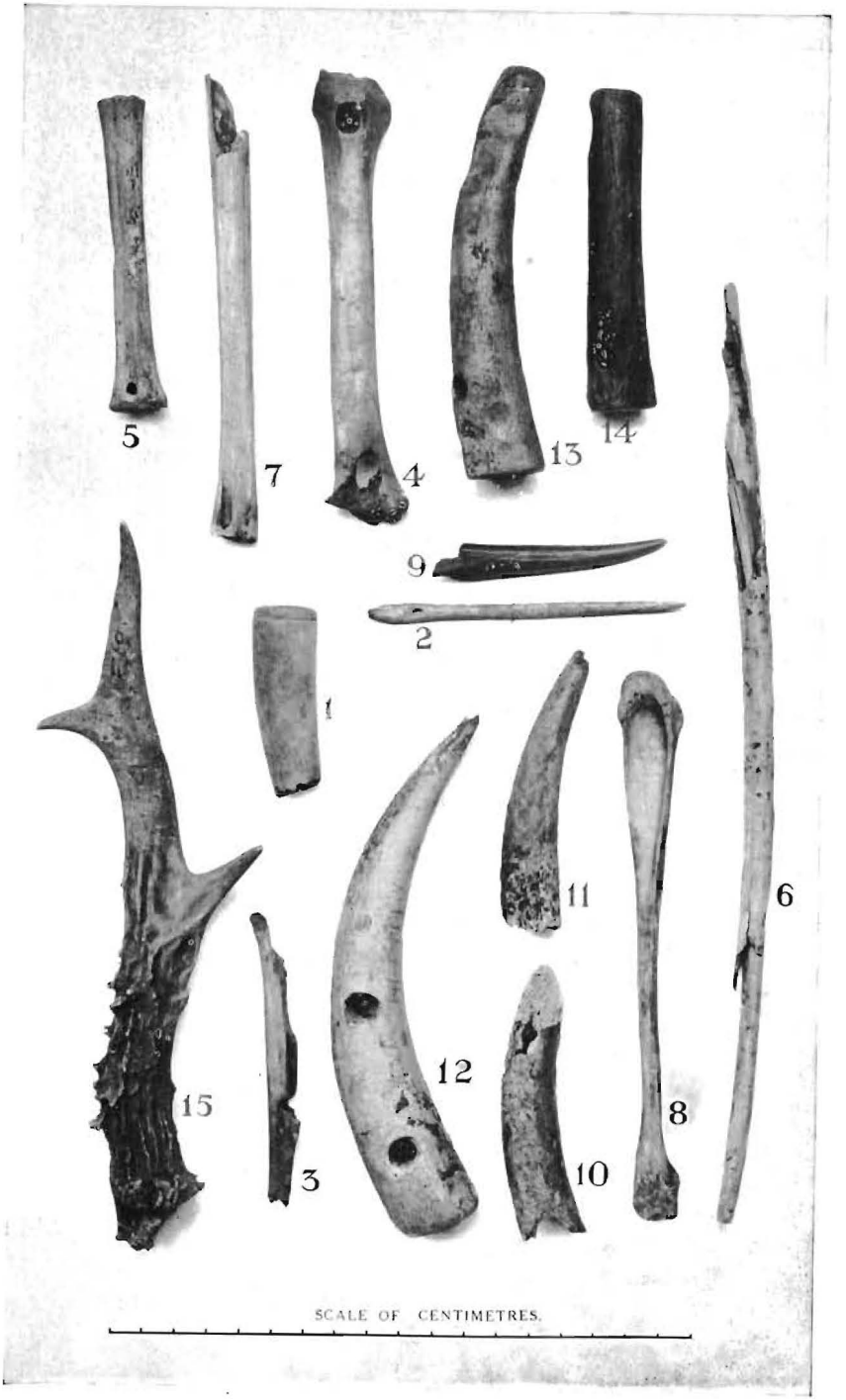
It needs little imagination to see that the land was densely peopled when the camps were built. Their great walls and ditches are the result of infinite labour. When excavating the vallum at Bury Hill the writer formed the opinion that all was done without bustle and on sound engineering principles.

Through Mr. Crawford's aerial photographs we are now learning something of Celtic Agriculture. Field systems, like patchwork squares, have been revealed, and they certainly have a strong affinity with the systems employed in Ireland and Brittany up to last century.

THE ROMAN OCCUPATION.

After the invasions of Julius Cæsar, intercourse with the Continent waxed greater considerably influencing every-day life on the South coast, and what is now East Anglia. Of this influence there is no local instance, unless it is to be found in the brooches from the Polden Hills which are hinged in the Roman manner. Otherwise industry and culture remained unchanged.

Fig. 22—Implements of Bone and Antler from Read's Cavern.



The Belgic immigration continued, affecting the South as far as the Cotswolds and Poole Habour. It is this influx which brought about the remarkable change in the physique and head form of our people which is so evident in Roman times. Hitherto, the great mass of the folk had been short with slight frames, very long heads, and delicate features; in Romano British villages the skulls are larger, lower and broader; much nearer in form to English heads of the present day; while the bones are from stronger frames. The fair headed Belgae were abler administrators than the natives, and before long they had extended their influence across the Midlands into Wales. Recent work seems to show that other intruders, of German or Scandinavian type, early forerunners of the Anglo-Saxon invaders, had settled at some points along the East Coast.

Conquest and Occupation.

The Claudian invasion took place in A.D. 43; by A.D. 50 the Severn Shore was occupied and the conquest of South Wales had begun. Probably the line of small Roman camps or signal stations overlooking the coast from Brent Knoll to Gloucester were constructed while the campaign was in progress. The power of the invaders was soon established in this district, as pottery of the First Century found at Sea Mills, Winterbourne, and at a few points on the Mendips betokens.

With the exception of the extreme West, there is hardly an acre of Britain which will not yield some fragment of Romano British pottery to the searcher; and this district is not unexceptional. It is well-known that at Sea Mills there stood an important station which was the point of embarkation for those who wished to cross to the legionary fortress of Caerleon. The site which is on rising ground a few yards south of the Trym is steadily being covered up by road making or building operations. The absence of tesselated pavements and the scarcity of luxury articles tends to show that it was purely a commercial or military station.

Pottery, coins and other material were found in great abundance more than a century ago, when the foundations of Gloucester Row and Sion Hill, Clifton, were excavated. This appears to indicate the site of a village, but, of course, no systematic investigation on the site was carried out at the time. Mr. Selley states that some years since, when the foundations of the Bristol Hippodrome were put in, a pebble track, running in the direction of the Floating Harbour, was uncovered. At the same time he procured some potsherds and an undoubted Roman fibula, which are now in the Cambridge University Museum. For many years past Roman potsherds, coins, and tiles have been turning up from time to time on

the site of the new housing estate on Bedminster Down, and though no excavations were made, there is no shadow of doubt that a Roman building stood here.

It may have stood on the line of a road from Dundry Hill, on past the Tramway Centre and Cotham, to the arm of the Julian Way that led to Sea Mills; but at present this is mere conjecture. But whether or no there was a road, a rectangular Roman building stood on Dundry Down, on the very crown of the hill, as potsherds and bronzes from adjoining molehills testify to this day.

Roman Villas.

Of true Roman villas, as distinguished from the rude native erections, the nearest example to home is the villa at Brislington. This was excavated 20 years ago, and the objects therefrom are now in the Bristol Museum. The discovery of others in Keynsham Cemetery and in the Somerdale works is fresh in everyone's mind. Like those at Newton St. Loe and Lansdown, they are probably connected with the Spa at Bath.

There is another group of villas in North Somerset, with examples at Shipham, Banwell, Congresbury, Wrington (2), Yatton and Cambridge Batch, Flax Bourton. A third very numerous group stands around Somerton, in the South of the county, but from thence to the west no more examples are known. It seems that the extreme West was never thoroughly settled. Perhaps it was always open to attacks by seafaring raiders who used Ireland as an advanced base. On the Cotswolds, along the line of the Fosse Way, which runs from Exeter to Lincoln, there were dozens of villas; in fact, more than in any other district in Britain. The Roman regarded these genial slopes much as the modern Englishman regards the country round Torquay or Bournemouth.

Mendip Lead Mining.

No account of the district is complete without mention of the lead mines round Charterhouse on Mendip. These were worked for the Emperor by native labour. A typical pig of lead, stamped with an Imperial die, is now in the Bristol Museum; and others have been discovered elsewhere in the country. The metal was not only carted overland to Winchester, but was taken along Mendip and transhipped, either at Uphill or at Worlebury. These mines were deemed worthy of special roads and a system of defence. They confer on the district its main archæological interest, for otherwise it was not of first-rate industrial or military importance, but rather a pleasant place to live in for the discriminating Italian or prosperous Briton.

A number of great hoards of Third Century coins were discovered about the commencement of last century in high ground round Failand, and a further hoard was found at Portbury three years ago. They are evidence of an unrecorded invasion from the West which, for a time, terrified the inhabitants and swept the Roman power from the very walls of the great fortress at Caerleon. According to some authorities, the decline of the Roman power is perpetuated in the Wansdyke, which runs from Portbury, past Lower Failand, thence to Maes Knoll and past Bath into Wilts. When it became imperative to abandon all projecting corners of the Empire, thereby shortening the line of defence, it was this line which, standing as a bulwark, kept the pirates from Ireland from the rich lands and towns of the South.

Effect of the Roman Occupation.

The Romans had little or no effect on our racial constitution and, moreover, bequeathed to us very few institutions. Even their roads soon fell into disuse and were forgotten. It is among the villages and settlements of those folk who came least under Roman influences that the student of our people gleans the most useful information. The Imperial civilisation with its neat town-made ware, all made to pattern, swept over the rustic life like a tide, almost drowning the magnificent Celtic art. Yet at the end of the First or the beginning of the Second Century, the art had begun to show signs of revival. The struggle between the intruding and native spirits was long, and probably unconscious. Yet in the end, the native spirit had recovered some of its old sway. The potters acquired new and improved techniques of fashioning and firing and wedded to them their native art; producing vessels which in beauty of form, and beauty and vigour of decoration, are superior to the by no means contemptible classical vessels brought in from the Continent. Shreds of such vessels manufactured at Castor, near Peterborough, and in the New Forest, are constantly turned up in this district.

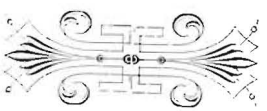
Moreover, the metal workers, especially in the North and West, returned to their native arts and fashioned jewellery and other articles which are entirely Celtic in design and tradition. In the Bristol Museum a number of these examples are displayed from Kingsholm, Gloucester; Camerton, and Charterhouse. The enamelled brooches betray an intense love of bright colours, and the dragon motif has a quite unclassical vigour.

Again, a few sculptures found in Bath, Cirencester, and elsewhere, are Celtic in their fierce intensity or subtle suggestion of local traits. Nothing could be further from the classical instinct.

Whatever chance there was of the survival of the Latin tongue and of Roman institutions in these Islands, were destroyed by the Anglo-Saxon invasion. Had the invasion come from the West, a Romance tongue might still be employed in East Anglia. But the Welsh language survived in the West and Celtic art proceeded towards its highest expression in Ireland.

When the Angles and Saxons invaded England they did not exterminate but subjugated the Celtic folk they found here.

In course of years the two peoples interbred and it is to the surviving native element that we should attribute the strong decorative feeling in Anglian art, and perhaps in mediæval masonry.



The following books are recommended to those who wish to extend their reading :—

Local.

A. Bulleid & H. St. George Gray.	Glastonbury Lake Village (1911 & 17). *(There is a cheap Edition in the Somerset Folk Series).*
O. G. S. Crawford.	Long Barrows of the Cotswolds. (Bellows, Gloucester)
M. E. Cunnington.	All Canning's Cross. (Simpson, Devizes).
Baker & Balch.	Netherworld of Mendip.
H. E. Balch.	Wookey Hole.
	Excavations at Chelm's Combe, Cheddar, 1927.

General.

M. & C. H. B. Quennell.	Everyday Life in the Old Stone Age.
	Everyday Life in the New Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages.
O. G. S. Crawford.	Man and his Past.
R. G. Collingwood.	Roman Britain.
T. Haverfield.	The Romanisation of Roman Britain.
M. C. Burkitt.	Our Forerunners.
	Our Early Ancestors
W. Sollas	Ancient Hunters.
T. Rice Holmes.	Ancient Britain.
Sir A. Keith.	The Antiquity of Man.
D. A. E. Garrod.	The Upper Palæolithic Age in Britain.

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