SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF TORQUAY.

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TORQUAY has a history—junior borough though it be—that does not yield in antiquity to that of any other town in the kingdom. Unfortunately, beyond this fact, we know very little else about it. No spot in England—indeed, I may fairly say in the world—has given such evidence of the continuous occupancy of man as Kents Cavern; an occupancy which, measured by the social scale, dates back to palæolithic times, and by the chronological compels a geologic standard. Mr. Pengelly once summed up this phase of the record of Kents Cavern in the pregnant words—it was "never discovered," it "has always been known"; and though it may be too much to assume that Kents Hole has been inhabited by man with absolute continuity, say from the inter-glacial period, it is plain fact that it has been the dwelling of man in all stages of social progress from the earliest on physical record—that in short it is about the oldest human habitation extant. We can imagine what a history that would be, could we only record it, in which Norman conquest and Saxon settlement and Roman invasion and British occupation are all but things of yesterday, mere "black mould" incidents, behind which lie cave earth and stalagmites and breccia, with their relics of a vanished animal world, and their traces of contemporary man. But all this we can only imagine, unless, indeed, we take the method of a spiritualistic adept, into whose hands I placed some teeth from another Devon cave, and who had "borne in upon him" a visionary glimpse of its history, reported thus:

In coming in contact with the teeth I see an animal like a fox; I think it is one. I also see the cave, and think some interesting

discovery will be made at the far end from the entrance. I have undergone a most singular experience when handling these teeth. I seemed to freeze. The cold seemed to penetrate every fibre of my body; in fact, I felt frozen. Then again a numb sleepy feeling took possession of me. I felt as if consciousness had left me. After this passed away I was conscious of a fearful noise; there seemed to be a grinding, crushing, splitting noise, and the fearful cold returned with greater intensity. I am now in an oblong cave. It is not very wide; this cave was formed by submarine action, an upheaval and split in the solid rock. The widening of the cave has been the work of ages. I see an abrading action caused by the decomposition of the lime in the rock through water entering from above. I am not learned in geology, and therefore cannot explain the intense cold, nor the grinding, rending, tearing, and crushing rounds. All this has a scientific meaning, and no doubt if I had time I might be able to clear up all I have seen in a way, at least satisfactory to myself. It would be to me an interesting study, but I should not again like to undergo the freezing process. I see flint implements, arrowheads, spearheads, and hatchets, such as I saw in Indian tumuli in Alabama, U.S.A. I also see bones of bears and animals that look like lions, and even very huge animals. I see the animals and their bones deep down below the present surface.

I presume that, save to an enthusiast, such a narrative will be deemed too uncertain a foundation whereon to erect anything more substantial than the "airy fabric of a vision"; so for our side-lights we must seek elsewhere.

It is generally assumed that, save for the pretty bit of historical romance which depicts Vespasian landing in Torbay and marching thence upon Exeter,—the earliest suggested authority for which is some eight hundred years after the event,—the first written allusions to the locality are to be found in the eleventh century, and chiefly in *Domesday*. But this is not so. As I pointed out at Seaton, in my "Notes on the Ancient Recorded Topography of Devon,"[1] there is every reason to believe that one of the "British cities and strengths," *(civitates et castra)* in the seventh-century list of the anonymous Chorographer of Ravenna, not only stood upon the shores of Torbay, but occupied part of the site of what is now Torquay. This is Apaunaris, which follows Milidunum, the Ravennat's name for the great earthworks on Milber Down. There the identity of names is clear enough, but for Apaunaris some of us may need a little help. Yet the clue is very simple. This old

[1] *Trans. Dev. Assoc.* xvii. 325 *et seq.*

Italian topographer, as examination of his list clearly shows, knew Saxon, but did not know Keltic. The Keltic names, or parts of names, in his list he put in a Latinized dress as he found them. The Saxon or Norse names or parts of names he translated. Here "naris" stands for "ness" or "nose"; in Apa we at once recognise the more familiar Hope; and in Apaunaris therefore read Hopes Nose.

I may add that the Ravennat does precisely the same thing elsewhere, as at Launceston. The Saxon name of that place was Dunheafod; Heafod or head he translates by *coronavis*, and then makes the whole name Durocoronavis.

But to return to Hopes Nose. I may be told that Hope is one syllable and Apau two. The loss of a syllable in the course of a dozen centuries would be nothing remarkable, but, as it happens, we have in this instance the same prefix remaining intact in *Happa*way Hill; and still more prominently in *Babba*combe. Nor have physical traces been wanting—*teste* the earthworks once existing on Warberry, which in all probability formed the cincture of this ancient town; and the remains of the still earlier cliff castle, formed by the rude wall cutting off the headland at Babbacombe.

I am aware that it has been the fashion to dub the former, at any rate, Roman, and to link them with the ramparts of the presumed Roman camp on Berry Head. But beyond a few scattered coins and a little pottery there is no evidence whatever of the presence of the Romans in the district. The earthworks on Warberry were never examined by any competent antiquary, and there is nothing Roman traceable in the descriptions. The rampart on Berry Head was enquired into by a competent antiquary, the late Mr. Henry Woollcombe, and he was quite certain that there was nothing Roman about it. The manufacture of Roman antiquities in this kingdom some century since seems only paralleled by the Druidical. When an antiquity of uncertain date was then thought equally doubtful in character—if it was not Druidical, it was Roman; if not Roman, it was Druidical—a short and easy way with antiquarian dissenters.

To return to our "Apa" or "Babba." It seems to me that this is by far the most valuable hint we have for the unwritten history of Torquay. Let it be borne in mind that on this part of the coast of Devon we have distinct nomenclatural evidence of Norse presence and settlement—witness the Ness at Teignmouth; add to this the significant fact that Papa is a frequent prefix to the names of the further islands in our northern seas, and we reach a most

important suggestion. The reason why these particular islands were distinguished by that prefix was the presence upon them of a priest or father = papa. Put the two things together—the fact of Norse presence and influence—the use of the same distinguishing prefixes (for *p* and *b* are only lighter and heavier forms of the same sound); and the plain deduction is that this early Torquay (but very, very far from the earliest) which has been handed down to us by the name of Apaunaris, took title from the fact of its being the residence of a Christian priest. It was the headland where the priest dwelt—headland being used as applying generally to the whole promontorial district, rather than to the actual limited point. Happaway and Babbacombe are of course later phases.

And this will help us to understand the remarkable prominence as a religious centre in Saxon times of St. Marychurch. Even at the Norman Conquest it must have been a foundation of considerable antiquity; and it may well be a relic of the ancient British Church, of the days before Augustine. It would be the most natural thing in the world for the northern settlers, if they found a priest living on the shores of Torbay on their arrival, to adopt forthwith the distinguishing prefix to which they were so well accustomed. Of course, this is largely a matter of inference—yet there is not only a name to be accounted for; but this remarkable fact of religious prominence, and the hypothesis has at least the merit of meeting all the conditions and violating none.

Monsignor Brownlow, in his admirable paper on the "Early History of St. Marychurch,"[2] questioned the existence of traces of Keltic nomenclature in the locality, with special reference to my suggestion that in the first syllable of Cockington we have the Keltic *Coch* = red. Dabblers in etymology are always more or less hardened in their sins, and the lapse of time has made me cling to the old and commit new. It seems to me, in this particular case, that nothing could be more accuratively descriptive. I admit of course that Saxon names predominate, as in Ils*ham*, Brix*ham*, St. Mary*church*, Bar*ton*, Churs*ton*, Edgins*well*, Meadfoot, Up*ton*, and many others. But I think the traces of the Kelt by no means slight.

Take Kents Hole for a first example. What is this Kent but the same Keltic word we have in *Count*isbury, in *Kenn*, *Kent*on, *Kent*isbeare, *Kint*erbury, and elsewhere in this

[2] *Trans. Dev. Assoc.* xviii.

county, and by way of further illustration in *Cant*erbury—and which means an edge, border, or headland. The Keltic *kent* and the Norse *ness* were practically equivalents: and there is no greater difficulty in understanding why a cavern so well known in ancient as in modern times should be called Kents Hole; than there is accepting Countisbury and Kinterbury and Canterbury as alike meaning the earthwork on the headland or on the promontory. The county of Kent was so-called from its promontorial character, and Canterbury was its chief burgh. We have here the *hole* of the "Kent" instead of the *bury*, that is all. The usual apostrophe before the "s" is a misleading corruption.

Then there is Maidencombe. Here we have the Keltic *maen* for rock or stone, as in the stone circles of Cornwall called by a similar corruption the "Merry Maidens," though the word more frequently takes the form of "man." It is far more likely that the "War" in Warberry stands for *warth* = high, than for the Saxon *weard* = guard; "war" itself as war must be left out of the question. It is very hard too *not* to see in the first syllable of Paignton the Keltic *pen* = head; while as to Goodrington I have no doubt whatever that the ton is simply a Saxon suffix to the Keltic *Coed-ryn* = the "wooded hill," or *Coed-rhyn* = the "wooded headland." And why should Tor itself be surrendered to the Saxon without a struggle? It is perfectly true that Tor *may* be Saxon, but equally at least it *may* be Keltic. As to which I commend enquirers to the admirable summary of the evidence on either side, given by Mr. Pengelly in one of his series of "Notes on Slips connected with Devonshire."[3] It is found in the oldest Gaelic records, in Welsh, Armenian, Mauritanian, Arabic, Chaldean, Persian; "in all the branches of the Gothic stem," according to the late Sir John Bowring; and while Dr. Bosworth makes it the same as the Anglo-Saxon *tyrre* = tower; Prebendary Earle "traces it from the East."

On the whole, therefore, I think that any dwellers in Torquay who can prove a Kents Cavern descent—even if they choose to drop their palæolithic and neolithic ancestry, may fairly exclaim, after the late laureate—

"Briton and Saxon and Norse are we."

And if I am asked, "How about the Norman element?" Well, I think it is one of the peculiar glories of Kents Cavern that it affords no trace, so far as I am aware, of the "pestilent banditti" who fill the Battle Abbey Roll.

[3] *Trans. Devon. Assoc.* xv. 214, 215.

One of the most important features in the local *Domesday* record is the testimony borne by the population entries, to what we may fairly regard as not only the prosperity, but the continued prosperity, of its neighbourhood.

As is well known, two manors of Torre are entered in the Survey, one held by William Hostiarius, or William the Doorkeeper, the other by Godeva, widow of Brictric the Sheriff. There is very little doubt that the former is that which is now represented in Torquay. William also held Ilsham, as to which there is no doubt whatever. Alric being the Saxon owner of the one, and Bere of the other. Brictric was the previous owner of the other Torre, and I do not find that Brictric held any property in this locality.

William's Torre is set down as consisting of seven carucates of arable land, with twenty-four acres of meadow, twelve of wood and two hundred of pasture—the latter a descriptive element strongly in favour of the identification, cliff land being largely devoted to pasture from time immemorial. Godeva's Torre contains more tillage land—twelve carucates, and its distinctive feature is the possession of one hundred acres of wood, which in like manner fits more closely with identification as Tor Brian. The stated population of William's Torre is thirty-two—four serfs, sixteen villeins, and twelve bordars. Godeva's is exactly the same in total and details; but her manor is worth one hundred shillings a year against William's sixty.

Cochintone, as to which there is no doubt, is much more important than either Torre. It had thirteen carucates, fifteen acres of meadow, fifty of wood, and fifty of pasture, with a total population of thirty-eight—fourteen serfs, eighteen villeins, and six bordars; but its value was only fifty shillings. Now Cochintone was held by William of Faleise, and as its Saxon owner had been Alric, the same who held William the Doorkeeper's Torre, we get a collateral proof that seems to me to make probability certainty. *Domesday* records the holding of a certain Depton with Cochintone, but this, as Mr. Mallock is kind enough to inform us, and as the Court Rolls in his possession prove, is not near Torbay at all, but Deandon in Widdecombe-in-the-Moor. We have apparently a somewhat similar linking of waste and moorland in William the Doorkeeper's manor of Sutton, which follows Ilsham, and which there seems no adequate ground to doubt is Sutton in Dunsford, a manor with venville rights. So in the connection of Daccombe in Moretonhampstead with Coffinswell. This, however, by the way.

Turning to the other side of Torquay we find the manor of Sancte Marie Cerce, which had been part of the lands of Ordulf, held by Richard under the Earl of Moreton, and consisting of four carucates with an acre of pasture, and the remarkable population for its size of sixteen—three serfs, five villeins, and eight bordars, to which fact its equally remarkable value of forty shillings, increased from twenty shillings, is probably due. Monsignor Brownlow, in the paper to which I have already referred, speaks of the existence of another manor of St. Marychurch, held by the Bishop of Exeter, and forming part of the sustenance of the canons. The bishop, however, is not said to hold St. Marychurch, but the "church of St. Mary"—"ecclesiam S. Marie"—which is or may be a very different affair. To this church were attached three carucates with four serfs and four bordars, the value being fifteen shillings. We find much the same kind of entry under the lands of the Church of Creneburne, where the church of Battle Abbey is said to hold the "church of Colyton," "ecclesiam de Colitone"—with certain lands. And if it be objected that the *de* occurs in the one place and not in the other, the very next entry tells us that Battle Abbey held in Exeter "ecclesiam S. Olaf"—the "church of St. Olaf"—which is precisely on all fours with our own case. I cannot, therefore, regard it as clear that the Latin "ecclesiam S. Marie" and the Saxon "S. Marie Cerce" are nominal equivalents; and in fact, while there are many churches of St. Mary in the county there is only one parish—quasi manor—of St. Marychurch.

I think this view of the case strongly confirmed by the fact that when Leofric granted to the cathedral of Exeter certain properties that had before been alienated, he does not speak of St. Marychurch, but of "the land *at* St. Mary-Church"—"Sancte Maria circean." There is all the difference here between *at* and *of*, and no indication whatever of the name by which this church land may have been known.

We know also that *Domesday* St. Marychurch by no means represents the present parish, even if we pray both holdings in aid. Monsignor Brownlow has pointed out[4] that the parish includes "Babbacombe, Ilsham, Barton, Combe Pafford, Edginswell, Shiphay-Collaton, and Watcombe; it has also dependent upon it the parish of Coffinswell, including Daccombe." Of these Ilsham, as we have seen, is mentioned in *Domesday* as one of the manors of William the Doorkeeper, the holder of Torre; and as to it therefore there can

[4] *Op. cit. Trans. Dev. Assoc.* xviii. 15.

be no doubt. It was a small manor with three carucates, two serfs, two villeins, two bordars, and twenty acres of pasture, and worth 10s. a year. This, with the Earl of Moreton's Marychurch, and a reservation as to Collaton-Shiphay, are, I venture to suggest, the only portions of the parish that can certainly be identified, unless we take Combe Pafford as representing the ecclesiastical St. Marychurch, seeing that it appears in Henry's *Valor Ecclesiasticus* as belonging to the Cathedral of Exeter. There is no dispute that the secular Marychurch—S. Marie Cerce proper—is represented by the manor of Mr. Cary.

Monsignor Brownlow, however, tracing Edginswell to Agenswell, identified it with the petty manor of Hagewile, belonging to Judhel of Totnes. With this I cannot agree, for Hagewile is clearly Holwell in Brixton, the two chief manors of which also belonged to Judhel.

Then we have Coffinswell. This Monsignor Brownlow identified with the Wille of Ralph de Limesin, a somewhat valuable manor with five carucates of tillable land, seven serfs, sixteen villeins, and four bordars, twelve acres of meadow, thirty-two of pasture, and fifty of wood, and worth £5 5s. yearly.

And clearly, if Coffinswell is mentioned in *Domesday* at all, we may assume that we shall find it under Welle or Wille, or some such title—the Coffin as the Edgin being clearly a *later* distinctive prefix. The Carswells or Kerswills had taken Cars or Kers before the Conquest.

There is a Welle in *Domesday*, and there is also a Wille. The Welle belonged to the Abbey of Tavistock, had been held by Archbishop Aldred, and is commonly identified with *Mor*well, near Tavistock. It consisted of eight carucates, with four acres of meadow, and twenty of pasture, had four serfs, ten villeins, and twelve bordars, and had increased in value from 40s. to £4. But it follows in the list *Denbury* (Deveneberie) which had also been a manor of Aldred's, and which I need hardly say closely adjoins Coffinswell.

The Wille of Ralph de Limesin is somewhat less important in area, with five carucates, twelve acres of meadow, thirty-two of pasture, and fifty-six of wood. There were seven serfs, sixteen villeins, and two bordars, and the value had fallen from £6 to £5 5s. The most important feature however connected with this manor is that it follows a Tovretone (Tiverton) and Wasfelte (Washfield), so that it can hardly be other than Well in Tiverton. The manors of this Norman chief tenant were singularly scattered.

It seems certain therefore that if Coffinswell is mentioned in *Domesday* at all, it must be the Welle which Archbishop Aldred had held, and which was held at the time of the Survey by the Abbot of Tavistock. If so, it must early have passed from the Abbey into secular hands, though the existence of a fief in Coffinswell belonging to the Abbey is proved by the *Testa de Nevill.* Whether the manor was subsequently divided, one part becoming Coffinswell and the other Edginswell, may be a matter for speculation rather than absolute proof.

Watcombe, like Babbacombe and Combe Pafford may, as has been said, "be among the many Combes described in *Domesday*" (though I have little hesitation myself in identifying Combe Pafford with the land set apart for the sustenance of the canons at St. Marychurch), and as Barton could in no case be the name of a manor, of which it is simply an administrative section, there is only Shiphay-Collaton left to deal with. We at once discard the Shiphay as a later Saxon prefix. Six Coletones, Colitones, or Cvlitones occur in the Devon *Domesday,* the most important of which is of course the town and parish of Colyton, which is given under two entries, one referring to the King and one to the Church. Then we have Colyton Ralegh; and finally three Coletones held by Judhel of Totnes. The first follows Loventor in Berry Pomeroy, and is succeeded by Lupton (Churston Ferrers), Brixham, and Churston. (=Church-town.) Next comes the second, followed in order by Loddiswell, Thurlestone, and Bachedone (probably Blackaton, Ugborough). And finally the third, followed by North or South Huish. There are more modern Collatons in the district than are required to fit; but there is the very strongest probability, almost amounting to demonstration, that the first of these is Shiphay-Collaton, the second Collaton-Kirkham in Paignton, and the third Collaton in Halwell. And an incidental point that may be urged in favour of the identification of the first, is the fact that its Saxon owner was Aluric or Alric, who, as we have already seen, held Torre and Cockington. It was a small manor with two carucates, five acres of meadow and two of pasture, worth but five shillings. Still it followed the rule of these Torbay manors with regard to population, having one serf and one villein and five bordars.

To sum up my conclusions as to Torquay and its vicinity at the date of *Domesday*—that is, Torremohun, Cockington, and St. Marychurch (with its appendix of Coffinswell). It

seems to me we can account for 5216 acres, of which forty carucates, or 4800 acres, were under tillage, forty-eight meadow, seventy-two wood, and two hundred and ninety-six pasture; and that the total enumerated population was one hundred and thirty-three—thirty-two serfs, fifty-two villeins, and forty-nine bordars or cottagers. This is an unusually large proportion, and shows, as I have before hinted, that eight centuries ago the locality must have been peopled by an active and prosperous community. This would be seen even more if I brought Paignton into view, for that manor had precisely the same enumerated population as Torquay and its immediate neighbours—133, and was worth £50 a year.

The Early History of Torquay, in my reading of the phrase, ceases at this date.