A STONE CIRCLE IN THE PLYM VALLEY.

BY R. HANSFORD WORTH.

SHORTLY after the publication of my paper on the Moorland Plym (*Jour. Plymouth Institution*, 1892, Vol. xx) I found on Willings Walls Warren a stone circle which is unlike any other circle known on Dartmoor. I showed the circle to the Rev. H. H. Breton, who published a somewhat inaccurate description in part 1 of his booklet on " *Beautiful Dartmoor*," p. 48 of the first edition, and p. 54 of the second. In especial he says that there are six clusters of stone, whereas there are but four certain clusters, with doubtful indications of a fifth, although the fifth did most probably exist at one time.

A reeve, or stone bank, crosses the Hentor Brook at a point 400 yards above the Leemoor Leat, its general direction is approximately N.E. by N. ; north of Hentor Brook it forms the hedge of the old Hentor Farm ; south of the Brook it is an isolated bank ; at approximately 500 yards from the Brook, to the S.E. by S. it is touched on the north side by the circumference of the circle referred to.

Turning back along the course of the reeve toward Hentor Brook, at a distance of 330 feet from the circle, one passes a kistvaen which lies 170 feet away from the reeve to the right (*Fifty-first Barrow Report*, D.A., Vol. lxiv, p. 115, where the circle is also briefly mentioned). At 200 feet further along the reeve, and at a distance from it of about 50 feet to the left, lies another kistvaen (*Nineteenth Barrow Report*, D.A. Vol. xxxii, p. 49, as *Lee Moor*). We may describe the circle and the kistvaens as the " *Lee Moor, Willings Walls Warren* group," and thus emphasize the tendency to grouping of sepulchral remains which is found, not only in the Plym Valley, but also on Dartmoor in general.

The circle is not shewn on any edition of the Ordnance Survey ; it should be found on Six-inch Devon, CXII, S.E., in lon. 3°-59'-57", lat. 50°-28'-7½".

Fig. 1 in the text supplies a plan of the circle, the four undoubted groups of stones being marked respectively " A," " B," " C " and " D " ; while the words " Large Stone " indicate a stone in the reeve which may be a displaced remnant of the fifth. It will be seen that, for a distance of sixty feet the reeve interferes with the circumference of the circle ; and somewhere in this length the fifth group is most probably
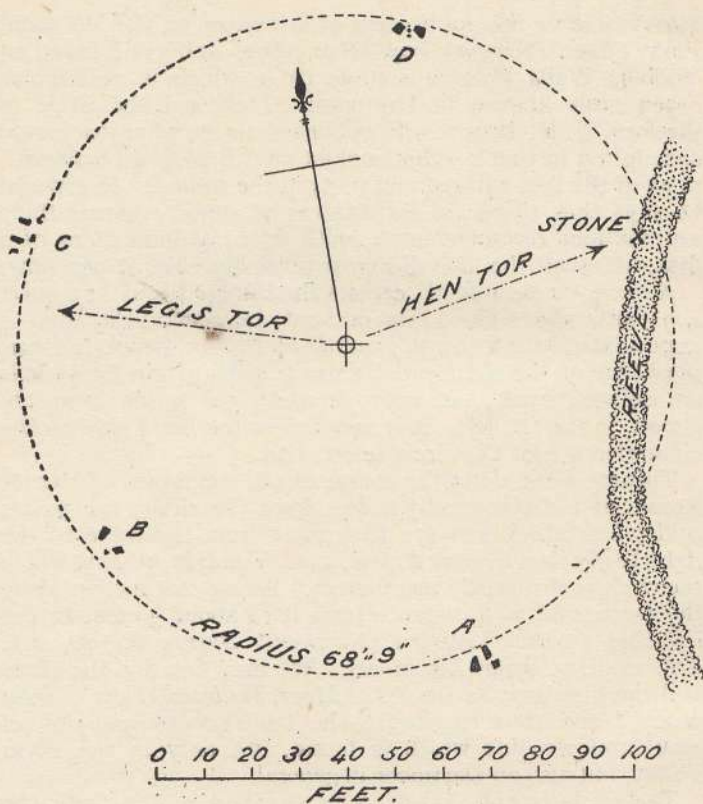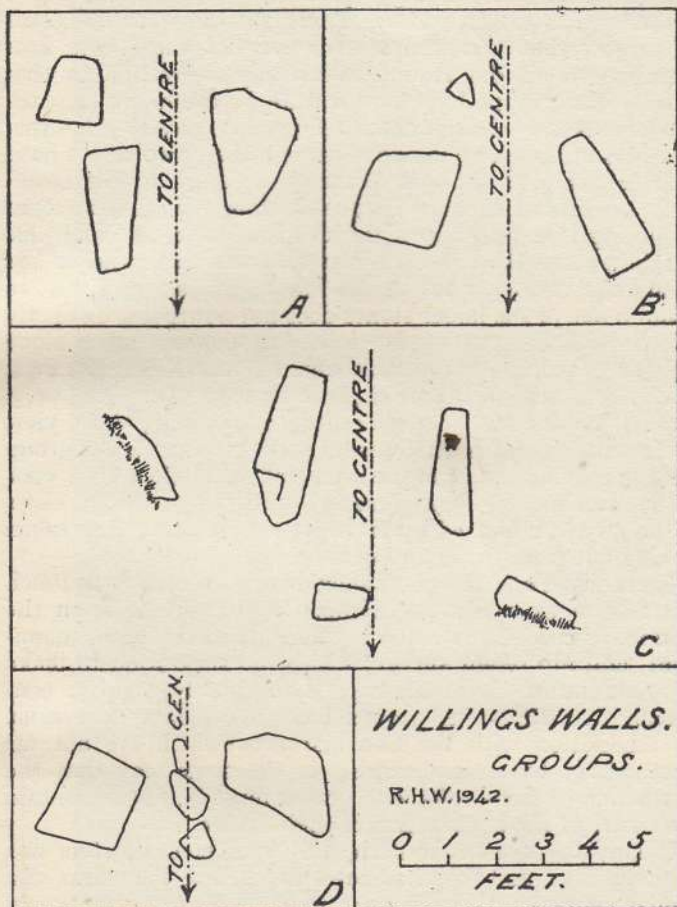
Fig. 1. PLAN OF WILLINGS WALLS CIRCLE.

Fig. 2.   Details of Groups, Willings Walls Circle.

merged.   The nearest true circle approximating to the actual internal circumference has a diameter of 137 ft. 6 ins.

There is no trace of a barrow within the circle, nor is there any trench around it.

Plans of the individual groups of stone are given in Fig. 2 in the text, as A, B, C, and D.   There is nothing in these plans to suggest that the groups were ever kistvaens, nor does examination on the ground afford any suggestion to that effect.   The groups have one feature in common ; in each two stones are clearly outstanding and exceed the other members of the group in size.   In each these two stones have their longer axes set approximately radially to the circle. It is perhaps desireable to qualify this general statement by noting that in group A the third member, although distinctly smaller than the other two, is not so markedly less as are the minor stones in the other groups ; and that in group D one of the larger stones does not now point distinctly radially to the centre of the circle, but this is a fallen stone and has been subject to disturbance.   Plate X and IX. Figs. A, A' ; B, B', C and D give views of the stone groups.   Of these, A is taken looking out from the centre of the circle, A' is a view of the same looking a little west of north ; B is a view of group B taken looking out from the centre of the circle, B' is a view of the same looking approximately north ; C and D are views of the groups indicated by those letters, in either case taken looking out from the centre of the circle.

These views and the plans should serve to convey as much information as would an examination of the circle on the ground.   I confess that, after my long knowledge of the monument, and my recent survey, I have no suggestion to make as to its nature or intent, beyond the purely negative conclusion that the stone groups have never been kistvaens. Its association with the two kistvaens which are not far distant may have significance ; in the same way that the association of stone rows with graves must be felt to contain some part of the explanation of their intent.

It may be noted that if the full number of clusters was originally five, and they had been disposed at the points of a regular pentagon, their distance from centre to centre would have been, in round numbers, 80 feet.   The actual distances are :—A to B 80 feet, B to C 67 feet, C to D 89 feet (mean of B–C and C–D 78 feet).   There remains sufficient space for, D to lost member 81 feet, and lost member to A 81 feet.   It seems probable that the figure was originally five-sided.
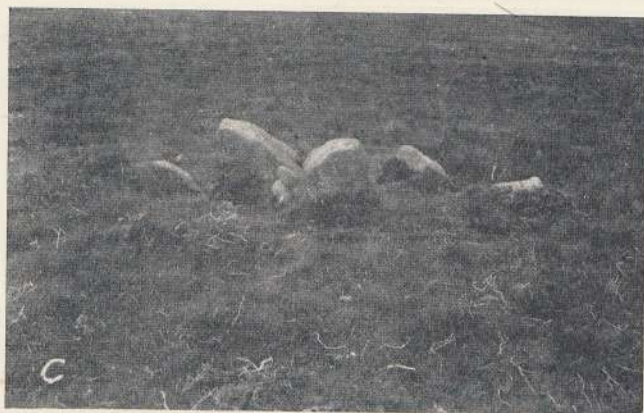
PLATE X

STONE CIRCLE, PLYM VALLEY

PLATE XI

R.H.W.

STONE CIRCLE, PLYM VALLEY