

have yet proved a Neozoic cover so thick as to preclude the possibility of successfully working any coal which may be found beneath it.

It is argued that the time has now come for the organization of a systematic survey of this area by means of a considered series of borings so planned as to investigate the structure of the concealed Palæozoic floor, to ascertain the thickness of cover, to locate any coal-basins which may form part of the floor, and to elucidate their exact tectonic conditions in order to determine their suitability for profitable working.

It is admitted that such an exploration would involve many practical difficulties and would introduce a new practice into British institutions, but it is pointed out that similar methods have been employed in foreign countries and even in British Colonies.

It is urged that the close dependence of the future of the nation on its coal-supplies justifies a new departure, and that it would be a wise act of statecraft to take deliberate measures to devise a comprehensive and well-considered scheme of exploration, the results of which might be at hand for application before the growing scarcity of coal shall have begun to produce its inevitable economic consequences upon the manufactures and upon the very conditions of existence in this country.

The Ballot for the Council and Officers was taken, and the following were declared duly elected for the ensuing year:—

OFFICERS:—*President*: Aubrey Strahan, Sc.D., F.R.S. *Vice-Presidents*: Professor Edmund Johnston Garwood, M.A.; John Edward Marr, Sc.D., F.R.S.; Richard Dixon Oldham, F.R.S.; Professor W. W. Watts, Sc.D., LL.D., F.R.S. *Secretaries*: A. Smith Woodward, LL.D., F.R.S., F.L.S.; Herbert Henry Thomas, M.A., B.Sc. *Foreign Secretary*: Sir Archibald Geikie, K.C.B., D.C.L., LL.D., Sc.D., Pres. R.S. *Treasurer*: Bedford McNeill, Assoc. R.S.M.

The other Members of COUNCIL are:—Henry A. Allen; Tempest Anderson, M.D., D.Sc.; Charles William Andrews, B.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.; Henry Howe Arnold-Bemrose, J.P., Sc.D.; Professor Thomas George Bonney, Sc.D., LL.D., F.R.S.; Professor William S. Boulton, B.Sc., Assoc. R.C.S.; James Vincent Elsdon, D.Sc.; John William Evans, D.Sc., LL.B.; Robert Stansfield Herries, M.A.; Herbert Lapworth, D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E.; George Thurland Prior, M.A., D.Sc.; Clement Reid, F.R.S., F.L.S.; Arthur Vaughan, M.A., D.Sc.; and the Rev. Henry Hoyte Winwood, M.A.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS. OBLITERATION OF TRACES OF INTERMENT.

SIR,—A skeleton has just been found buried in the top of the Barrington Beds under circumstances which are at the present time of special interest.

'Barrington Beds' is the name given to a deposit of freshwater origin occurring over an area of very limited extent near the village of Barrington, some seven miles south of Cambridge. The locality has recently been visited by the Geologists' Association, and described in their Proceedings (vol. xxii, pt. v, p. 268, 1911).

I took a party of students there yesterday to examine the sections and in order to facilitate our work I employed labourers to remove

the top. At the bottom of the surface soil, exactly where the head of the man in the white straw hat comes in fig. 1 of the report above referred to, the workmen came upon the bones of a child about twelve years of age. There was nothing, as far as I could ascertain or see, in the appearance of the overlying soil to suggest an interment until the bones were reached. There was, however, a small irregular depression excavated in the top of the underlying chalky loam, and in this the body lay as if it had been buried in a contracted position. The bones were crushed and disturbed by the settling down of the overlying earth during the decay of the soft parts, and were much decomposed, but there was nothing obviously abnormal in them. In such cases we have to remember that the surface soil is always on the move, and that all traces of a grave or other pit quickly disappear in a homogeneous superficial deposit. It is only where there are stratified beds of sand or gravel and the continuity of the layers is interrupted that the infilled grave or pit can be clearly seen in section.

I once saw a remarkable case of the obliteration of the signs of interment at Faversham in North Kent. Here an interesting cemetery of Roman and Saxon age was entirely carried away in the course of digging for brickearth. In the face of earth seen in section at the time I refer to, the bones in the Saxon graves were exposed at a depth of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet, and some 4 feet lower the Roman skeletons were seen.

In ordinary dry states of the weather the earth above the skeletons showed no sign of having been moved, and there was nothing obvious in its condition to indicate in either the one case or the other that there had been any interment. The graves had been dug in homogeneous yellowish-brown brickearth, and there were no lines of stratification or stony beds cut across to betray the disturbance. But the loosening of the earth had permitted a more free percolation of surface-water in the graves, and had in this way produced a small change in the texture of the loam, which was indicated in damp weather by a slightly darker colour in the moved soil.

In view of these facts I attach no importance to the absence of any signs of disturbance in the soil above the skeleton at Barrington. I believe that the Ipswich skeleton occurred under exactly similar conditions. It showed, as I was informed, no signs of disturbance in the earth above the bones, which were in a small irregular depression in the underlying sand. This sand is that called by Searles Wood 'Middle Glacial'. The earth above the skeleton was simply 'soil', 'head', 'run of the hill', or 'trail', but there was, I feel sure from what I saw, no Boulder-clay overlying the skeleton.

T. MCKENNY HUGHES.

February 28, 1912.

STRATIGRAPHICAL NAMES.

SIR,—I think Dr. Bather has done well to call attention to the growing necessity for some official control over geological nomenclature. The introduction of a new name for any stratigraphical unit ought to be regarded as a serious matter, which cannot receive too much