

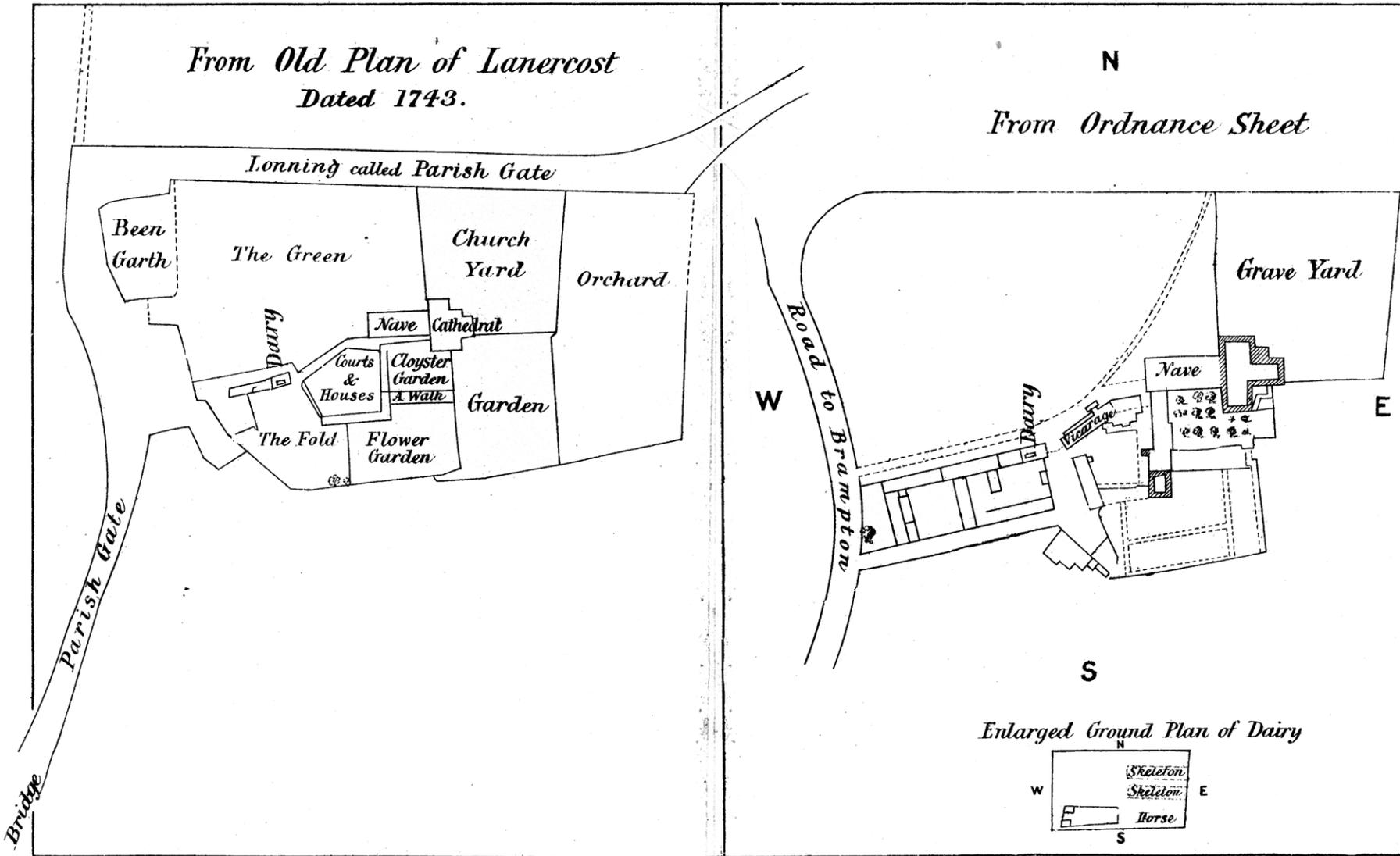
ART. V.—*On a supposed interment of a Horse with Human Remains at Lanercost.* BY THE REV. H. J. BULKELEY.

RECENTLY some workmen were deepening the farm dairy, which stands a few yards from the west end of the vicarage and, according to the plan of Lanercost Priory of the date 1743, occupies the site of an old building: they found three human bodies buried about four feet below the surface. One body lay from south to north, but the others in the usual position, from west to east.* One body, larger than the others, lying from west to east, was entombed, being surrounded and covered by rough flags of stone, with a special chamber for the head, as in some old stone coffins. There were some traces of lime having been used to join the stones of this chamber, but not the other stones. None of them showed any signs of inscription or of fine working. They were recognised by one of the workmen as from a neighbouring quarry. The body lay on the earth. The skull was in good preservation, only one tooth wanting. The soil was river gravel. The remains of a horse's skeleton was found at the foot of this body, and those of another horse at a little distance off and outside the walls of the building marked in the plan of 1743. The bones of the second horse were of remarkable size, so large that it was supposed they might be those of some ancient monster buried in the old river gravel, but an expert has decided that they are only the bones of a horse. Remembering how the "Society upon the Stainlow" was broken up through Mr. Jones proving that some supposed prehistoric bones were only those of "one of his lost mules," we should bear in mind that farmers have been known to bury near their farms cows and horses that

* My information is that all three skeletons were lying from west to east.—
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LANERCOST ABBEY, 1743.

LANERCOST ABBEY, 1889.

have died, but this is being too sceptical. Some years ago, when drains were being made, other human remains were found near this spot. It may have been part of an old parish burial ground, but Lord William Howard, in copying the inscription on the cross on the green, says that it stood *in cimiterio exteriore*, and it is not likely that the position should have been changed, especially considering the adjacent position of the present churchyard, or that there should have been two parish burial grounds so near to one another. Nor is it likely that the whole green was a burial ground, for it would have been extravagantly large, and excavations have been made in other parts of the green without the discovery of human remains. May these burials have been anterior to the foundation of the priory? Is this the site of an ancient church and churchyard? But, if the tomb was that of some semi-christianised Dane or Saxon, buried with his faithful horse to bear him company to the shades, and if (there is much virtue in your "if") there were at that time any remains of an intramural Roman station, why were not stones to make the tomb taken from the ruins at hand, instead of from a quarry some distance off? Or was the body that of some famous mosstrooper, excommunicated on account of his crimes, and so denied burial in consecrated ground, and yet by not altogether unsympathetic monks allowed a resting-place near the priory? In the plan of 1743 a small plot of ground, including the old building, within the lines of which the entombed body was found, is called "The Fold." Can this name have such an ecclesiastical interpretation as may help us?

APPENDIX BY THE EDITOR.

With the exception of the farmer and his wife, and the workmen employed, no one saw this find, as an agent on the estate declined to allow the work to be stopped: by his orders the skeletons were buried elsewhere, and the stones of the cist piled up in a heap. This is much
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to be regretted, as Mr. Bulkeley resides within a few feet of the place. He heard of the find afterwards, and gathered what he could from the workmen.

The cist was six feet long by two feet broad: the chamber for the head was one foot by ten inches, giving a total length of seven feet, so that the occupant must have been a very tall man. His feet were to the east, and the skeleton of the horse was at his feet, lying east and west; the other two skeletons were on the north side of the horse, and close to it. All were at a uniform depth of three feet below the floor of the dairy, and so close together as to make it almost impossible for the horse to have been inserted later without disturbing the human interments: of this there was no sign. There can be no doubt that the interments of the men and horse (the first horse) are older than the building of 1743, whose date is unknown.

It may be worth while to mention in this connection that the Dacre of Naworth, who fell at Towtonfield, was buried at Saxton churchyard with his horse beneath him.* Local tradition says the moss troopers of the Borders were in the habit of having their horses buried with them.

* See *Yorkshire Archæological and Topographical Society*, vol. x, p. 299.