presented by Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Instituted Augt. 10th, 1876. This is the first personal appointment by the Bishop of Bristol since the foundation of the See. Hitherto this presentation has been with the Bishop's Lessee. This gentleman was Rector of Nympsfield near Stonhouse, Gloucestershire, which he resigned on his appointment to Buckland. Died March 17th, 1889, aged 69.

Rev. W. Bulmer appointed by the Bishop of Glo'ster & Bristol (Dr. Ellicott). Instituted 25th May, /89. Read in May 26th. M.A. of Durham University, late Vicar of St. James', Gloucester.

(To be continued.)

The Discovery of Human Remains in the Forbury, Reading.

By W. Ravenscroft, F.S.A.

THE discovery of human remains in the Forbury Gardens at Reading during November, 1906, while excavations were being made for the purposes of a drain, opens up a most interesting enquiry and suggests a possible connection between the most ancient burial ground in the neighbourhood of Reading and the place of sepulture in use at this very day. The present paper, however, must not be supposed to do more than suggest such possible connection, and while it will endeavour to set forth facts which are or have been ascertainable, at the same time it will endeavour to keep such facts distinct from inferences drawn from them.

Particulars relating to the recent discovery will be dealt with in due course, but first it is proposed to call attention to the finding of two burial places in the neighbourhood of Reading on which the late Dr. Stevens has left some valuable notes. These are situated the one at a little distance from the "Dreadnought" public-house, which stands on the banks of the Thames just a little eastward of the junction of the Kennet with the main river, and through which

the Great Western line passes; the other opposite the "Jack of Both Sides" public-house, which stands at the junction of the London and King's Roads. This cemetery was on the north side of King's Road just opposite the "Jack." The former of these two burying places may be regarded as chiefly, if not wholly, Pagan Saxon, the latter as mainly Christian British and Saxon. With the latter, therefore, we will first deal.

Dr. Stevens's paper appeared in the "Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal" for January, 1896, but the discovery was made in 1890. It was during the excavations being carried out for the foundations of buildings that the skeletons, etc., were found, and a series of the crania were arranged in the Reading Museum. Some 50 skeletons were uncovered at three different levels, the lowest on a bed of gravel at six feet depth, the next at three to four feet depth, and the uppermost at 2ft. 6in. depth. The material of the graveyard consisted of dark loam mixed with flint and gravel. The bodies occupying the lowest tier were oriented after the Christian manner, from west to east. Many of those occupying the upper level were lying in various directions, and it was with these chiefly that relics were found. Stout nails were found in some of the deepest graves, but never more than three in a grave, implying that coffins had been used, or possibly boards simply nailed together. Some 30 nails in all were found of a coarse Romano-British type. In the upper graves in two instances what appear to have been grave-pins were present, suggesting the bodies had been buried in wrappers.

It would be out of place here to go into details of the discoveries from this cemetery, but a few of them throw light on the nature of burial, such, for instance, as in the case of one of the uppermost bodies. This lay at a depth of about 2ft. 6in. from the surface, and underneath the left shoulder some fragments of pewter were found, which when put together formed a rude coffin-plate. It was pierced with two small holes, apparently for fixing to a board, but no traces of a coffin were found. On this plate, however, were three line-drawn Greek crosses, which certainly suggest Christian burial. Pewter vessels were also found suggestive of the poverty of the period, and a cruciform pewter pendant. One brick, or rather tile and mortar, constructed tomb was discovered with finger bones, and a circular bronze broad buckle of Saxon type. This tomb, however, had some appearance of having been rifled. With the lower graves were found fragments of Romano-British pottery, and the discovery

of a foundation wall of coarse flints and mortar, very like Romano-British mortar, suggests a possible cemetery chapel. Generally the soil just below the top yielded traces of various races from the Romano-British period down to the 14th century.

In summing up the evidences from this cemetery, Dr. Stevens points out that it was evidently of early date and long usage; that the absence of weapons and the use of lead and pewter imply a settled people, but with little wealth; that it was a place of general interment from the fact that old, middle-aged and young are all buried there; that difference both of period and race is evidenced by the deepest graves being orientated and without relics, as well as by their occupants being tall with globular crania, powerful jaws, and high cheek bones, characteristic of the Celtic race; while the shallower graves yield secular objects with the bodies, which were not buried in so orderly a way, their occupants having longer, broader, and more capacious skulls. A comparison of the types of these two shapes of skull with others of ascertained race further evidenced the suggestion that we have here found a Christian-British cemetery afterwards used by Christian Saxons, but from whose practices Pagan superstition had not been wholly eliminated.

So much, then, for the Christian cemetery, with which this paper has first dealt because it appears as if in point of time the next one to be reviewed comes in between the dates to which we assign this one. In other words, we get first of all the British burials near the "Jack of Both Sides," then probably the Pagan burials to which we are about to turn, and after that the Christian-Saxon burials, which might well bring us down to about 740 A.D. This, however, is but a speculation, although not without some foundation.

With regard to the Pagan cemetery, as already stated, it is situated close to and, indeed, in part at least on, the site of the Great Western line and south-east of the "Dreadnought" public-house. It was discovered in 1891, while excavations were being made during the process of widening the line, and formed the subject of a paper read by Dr. Stevens in 1893, before the Winchester Congress of the British Archæological Association, and as in the reference to the other cemetery in this paper information is largely drawn from what Dr. Stevens says.

First of all, then, there was no tumuli, but they may have been previously destroyed on forming the line. Unlike the former cemetery, however, in this case the bodies were sufficiently far apart to have made tumuli possible, although it is not unusual to find graves

without tumuli in Pagon-Saxon cemeteries. The interments were both incinerated and inhumed, the latter lying east and west. These bodies were generally but superficially buried, one being found 25 inches below the surface only. Dr. Stevens enumerates in all 13 interments, of which but four were inhumed burials, and from his very careful examination of the ornaments and other articles found, he came to the conclusion they were of thoroughly Saxon type, and remarks: "When we consider the shallowness of these interments, the presence of secular relics, and the absence of orientation, there is little doubt that they are Pagan, although probably of late date. The contemporaneous practice of cremation and inhumation is of considerable importance in showing when the heathen custom of burying the dead was on the point of change to the Christian mode of sepulture." He concludes his paper by remarking: "As Christianity opposed itself to the practice of cremation, the new discoveries that are continually turning up (and will to yet greater extent as the country becomes more thoroughly broken up under the exigencies of an increasing population) serve to show with those already made how completely England was over-run with Pagan Teutons. The dual practice of cremation with inhumation with relics and without orientation observed in many burial places, particularly in the Northern Counties, evidences that the one was so far as Pagan as the other. Authorities have not been wanting who have advocated that the two forms were co-existent in time and place. There is no doubt of their co-existence in place, but if they cannot be correlated in time, inhumation, although accompanied with Pagan accessories, would appear to indicate that those who practised it were becoming more in sympathy with the Christian form."

We now come to the recent discoveries in the Forbury Gardens, and the facts concerning these are as follows:—A drain was required from the subway leading from the Forbury Gardens to the Abbey Ruins, and this passes beneath the way from the Abbot's Walk to the grounds of the Roman Catholic Church. This drain of necessity had to be deep, as a matter of fact some ten feet below the surface of the ground. It passed to the Forbury Road on the north side of the Gardens, having an inclination slightly towards the west, but not very great, the drain running in a straight line. The excavations were commenced at the northern end, and generally were carried down to the gravel; but as the work proceeded southwards bodies were found at about four feet below the surface of the

ground, the first remains being somewhere opposite to the Church, but of course inside the Gardens. From this point southwards enough skeletons were found to account for some 40 bodies, all practically having their feet towards the east. They were of varying size, one or two of quite young people, some possibly of women. Some were large, and belonged apparently to powerful men, and some of the teeth were in excellent preservation. No trace of coffins, nails, or grave-cloth pins was to be found, or of wood which might account for coffins, and no relics appear to have been buried with the bodies, except a few flint chippings and oyster shells. There were also one or two horse's bones and a dog's tooth. In one or two cases the bodies were very close together, as if buried one over another after a considerable time, and in one or two instances leg bones were disturbed possibly by being interfered with by subsequent burials; but there was no indication of bodies having been buried in a cramped position. One flint implement of a rude description was found, but in all probability this was accidental, and had no bearing on the question of the date of these burials. No traces of cremation or of cinerary urns were discovered. The condition of the bones was very dry, and all traces of gelatine had entirely disappeared. Of course it must be remembered that the excavations afforded but limited scope for research, the trench being nowhere three feet in width, and, indeed, it is remarkable that so narrow a cutting should yield so much. It may also be remarked here that some 30 years ago three bodies were reported as lying buried in the North Forbury Road, close to what is now the north gate leading from that road to the Forbury Gardens, all orientated, and that since then others have been found in the neighbourhood, such being, apparently from the description given of them, of more recent date than those under review. As the excavation approached what should be the site of the north wall of the north aisle of the nave of the Abbey Church, there became indications of disturbance in the earth running deeper than the average of four feet in which the bodies were found. (By the way, one body is reported to have been found on the gravel at a depth of six feet from the surface). The deepest part of this disturbance, which slopes each way from the average of four feet until a depth of ten feet is reached, is at a point about 60 feet north of the present south boundary wall of the Forbury Gardens, and is, roughly speaking, somewhere about where the north wall of the north aisle above referred to should be found. Here bones have been thrown in together evidently after having

been disturbed, and beneath them are flints roughly scattered here and there, and of coarse description, with remains of mortar. No bodies have been found south of this point; indeed, nothing to speak of except a fragment or two of encaustic tile evidently of the 13th or 14th century. The older remains appear to be those nearer to the north aisle wall, but that may not count for very much. The skulls generally were of both shapes, round and oval, but this again may be due to mixture of race, and the differences not greatly marked. Let it be remembered we are still recording facts, and so we will turn our attention to the doorway leading from the south aisle of the Abbey to the Cloisters. Here we have the bases of what appear to be either Norman or Transitional shafts, and on excavating round such it was found that at a distances of five inches below the bottom moulding there was a line on the masonry, and at a further distance down of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches the free stone ceased, and flints were found tolerably well compacted as a foundation. This line apparently indicated the floor level of the nave, and if not so it cannot have been many inches away from it in level. Taking this, then, as a datum, a carefully-worked-out section gave the Abbey floor at 18 inches below the surface of the ground in which the bodies were found, or 2ft. 6in. above the bodies themselves. If one foot were allowed as the distance from the Abbey floor to the ground outside, and that is really very little, we should get the bodies but 18 inches under the ground level outside the Abbey on the north side. More of this, however, hereafter. One other point might be mentioned, and that is there were under several of the skulls very coarsely made tiles. So much, then, for facts; and now for inferences. Of course several suggestions have been made as to the antiquity of these burials. They are chiefly as follows:—(a) They were pre-historic; (b) they were the result of the battle of 871; (c) they were Saxon Christian; (d) they were the result of the Civil War; (e) they were victims of the Plague. As to the pre-historic claim, that would seem to be met at once by the orientation of these skeletons, as well as by the absence of really anything, but one rough flint, which would justify even the bare suggestion, and which in point of date would be long ages before that of the skeletons under review. That they were the result of the battle of 871, unless exception be made in the case of a few Danes, seems unlikely on several grounds. First, it must be remembered that then the Danes were encamped at Reading, and from the description of the fight, or rather series of encounters between Danes and Saxons given in the

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, they must have taken place considerably west of the Forbury. This is the record :—A, 871. This year the army came to Reading in Wessex ; and three days after this two of their earls rode forth. Then Ethelwulf, the earldorman met them at Englefield, and there fought against them and got the victory ; and there one of them, whose name was Sidrac, was slain. About three days after this King Ethelred and Alfred his brother led a large force to Reading, and fought against the army, and there was great slaughter made on either hand. And Ethelwulf the earldorman was slain, and the Danishmen had possession of the place of carnage."

Roger de Hoveden's description tells us still more, for he says : " These (the foraging party above mentioned) were met by Ethelwulf Earl of Berks, at a place called Englefield, that is 'The Field of the English.' Here both parties fought with the utmost animosity till, one of the Danish generals being killed and their army being either routed or destroyed, the Saxons obtained a complete victory. Four days after this battle King Ethelred and his brother Alfred, having collected their forces, marched to Reading, killing and destroying all before them as far as the gates of the fortification. At length the Danes, sallying out from all the gates, attacked the victorious army, when, after a long and bloody battle, the Danes obtained the victory."

Now, it is quite likely that while every care should be taken that the bodies of Sidrac and any other chieftains of their party, or even less distinguished Danes, should be taken back and buried within their lines, it is not likely the same treatment would be accorded to their Saxon foes, so that if there is any connection between this burial ground and the fight of 871 it would be but a limited one. Christian burial neither party would get at the hands of the Danes, but who shall say what the Forbury Hill would show if opened, and might not the very Yarl Sidrac himself lie therein ? That they were the outcome of the Civil War, or the Plague, may be dismissed at once, since the presence of tiles under the heads, and of shells and flints, together with the absence of buttons, implements of war, etc., would render the former untenable, while the latter would be equally so from the number of corpses found in so small a space of excavation, all laid in order, and close to the surface of the ground. This all leads to the conclusion that here we have the first Christian Saxon graveyard in Reading. Be it noted the word graveyard is here used as distinct from cemetery, to indicate the yard around the church in which the Christian dead were laid.

Evidences in favour of this are numerous, and if not absolutely conclusive they are largely so. To begin with, we have seen that according to Dr. Stevens the cemetery near the "Jack of Both Sides" was Romano-British first, and afterwards Christian Saxon. Now, in the year 742, Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury (according to Weever), introduced the practice of burials in churchyards, they having previously been outside the towns, probably as a survival of Roman custom. Pagan usages, however, died hard, and even as late as the days of Canute (1014) enactments were made against them. Hence the presence of Pagan relics in the Saxon cemetery by the "Jack." Lord Stowell (Enc. Brit., 537, under burial) says: "In England, about 750 A.D., spaces of ground adjoining the churches were carefully enclosed, and solemnly consecrated, and appropriated to the burial of those who had been entitled to attend Divine Service in those churches, and who now became entitled to render back into those places their remnants to earth, the Common Mother of Mankind, without payment for the ground which they were to occupy, or for the pious offices which solemnized the act of interment." Kerry remarks (St. Lawrence, Reading) that these graveyards and their churches were inseparable, and that from the middle of the 8th century there was no parish church in the country without its graveyard, and no graveyard without its parish church; moreover, that the situation of the graveyards was regulated entirely by the position of the church, and not "vice versâ."

Thus he says, "The old parish church of St. Lawrence (possibly then dedicated to St. Matthew), before the foundation of the Abbey, stood within or near this ancient parish cemetery," stood in fact in the heart of the old Saxon Burgh.

This evidence as to the association of churches and churchyards naturally raises the question as to how it came about that the church of St. Lawrence had originally and for centuries no churchyard. An entry in the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of St. Lawrence throws light upon this. Coates's account runs as follows: —"Churchyard. In the year 1556, Queen Mary granted to the inhabitants of the parish of St. Lawrence a certayne grounde lying next unto the parishe churche ther, ffor the erecte and make thereof a churche-yarde for the seid churche and parishe, as by the wall and enclosure thereof, then and ther made, it doth and may appeare which seid grounde for the seid church-yarde so granted was and is in recompense to the seid inhabitants and parishe of and for another churche-yarde of the late belonging unto the seid parishe lying next

unto the late churche of the late monastery there and from the seid inhabitants taken. The charge for the makyng of the seid newe churche-yarde was borne and paide by the 'nh'intants of the seid parishe, in manner and forme as here after followeth:—that is to witt for ev'y perch of the seid wall conteying xviii fetes vijis."

The churchyard of St. Lawrence thus granted by Queen Mary was considerably smaller than the present one, it having been enlarged on its east side in 1791. From this it will be tolerably clear that the original churchyard was the one under our review, viz.: that to the north of the Abbey, and possibly on the site of it also, and somewhere here must have been the original Saxon parish church. The date of the earliest parts of St. Lawrence's Church indicate that it must have been built somewhere about the time the Abbey was founded, or shortly after, and the obvious conclusion is that the site of the old Saxon church was required for the Abbey, that such church was pulled down for this same purpose, and a new church was erected, being no other than that of St. Lawrence. Thus we get the new church separated from the old churchyard, and may be tolerably sure that had there not been rights of burial in the old churchyard before the acquisition of the land by the Abbey, these would never have been granted right up to the church wall, but rather another site, in all probability such as now forms the churchyard of St. Lawrence, would have been given. And, further, this churchwardens' account speaks of the older churchyard as having been taken from the inhabitants, indicating that at the suppression or subsequently when the Abbey grounds passed into Royal hands, this was appropriated and hence reparation would naturally have to be made, this significantly enough being done by Mary. There seems to be no other way of accounting for the possession by the parish of this older churchyard, except it be an ownership prior to the founding of the Abbey.

In passing it is worthy of remark that at the southwest corner of the chapterhouse, and on the return wall, both on the outside of the chapterhouse, there is some walling which from the zig-zag way in which the flints are laid would indicate earlier work than any other part of the Abbey, and it is also worthy of note that this portion of the wall is of greater thickness than the Abbey walling generally. This may, indeed, have formed a portion of the Saxon church which existed after 1006, when the Danes destroyed the town, and which would most likely have been rebuilt in flints, etc., with the town (which from the Doomsday Book we learn was rebuilt), and so re-

placing the earlier church which probably was of wattle and mud.

Now let us turn to the evidence we get from the burials themselves, and first as to their depth. They are nearly all some four feet below the present surface of the ground, but the Abbey floor level, as has already been shown, was some 18 inches below this level, so that allowing for the ground on the north side of the Abbey being but one foot lower than the nave floor, we should get these bodies buried in only 18 inches of earth. If they had been subsequent to the Abbey they would never, surely, have been allowed at such a shallow depth, but if, as it would be quite reasonable to suppose, the land northward of the Abbey was levelled down at its building, this would account for the shallowness of the burials.

The absence of any discovery of interments under the floor of the Abbey does not count for much, seeing at the demolition not only were the wrought stones taken away, but in the case of the little bit of aisle wall we ought to have found, the very flint foundations were also removed. The made ground, the jumbled condition of bones about here, all indicate that excavations were made subsequently to the suppression of the Abbey, and, moreover, it must not be forgotten that the recent trench ran but a short way under the Abbey floor, so that there was not much scope for discovery. Not only so, but in building the Abbey it is just possible any bodies found might have been removed.

As regards the further evidences of this being a Christian burial ground, we have: 1st, the orientation of the bodies: 2nd, the absence of Pagan relics; 3rd, the absence of incineration.

The arguments for this being a Saxon burial ground are: 1st, the similarity of shape and character of the skulls to other known Saxon skulls; 2nd, the absence of gelatine from skulls and bones, indicating considerable age; 3rd, the presence of flints and oyster shells, the placing of which some regard as corresponding to the present practice of throwing in earth, etc., flints and shells are found both in Romano-British and Saxon burials; 4th, the comparative shallowness of the interments; 5th, the greater apparent age of skeletons found near the Abbey Church would suggest that after its buildings burial would be carried on further north, but there is not sufficient evidence as yet on this point to draw any definite inference from it; 6th, the presence of tiles under the heads, upon which subject Prof. Rolleston remarks (Scientific papers and addresses. Rolleston Ed. 1884, p. 683) "In some cases it is possible to be nearly sure that we have to deal with an Anglo-Saxon, even though

there be no arms or insignia in the grave. These cases are those in which we have evidence from the presence of stones under the skull that no coffin was employed in the burial, and in which stones are set alongside of the grave as if vicariously."

If thus we may be allowed to conclude we have found the original Saxon churchyard of Reading, we have a series of burial grounds extending from the times when the Romans occupied our land to the present day. First the cemetery by the "Jack of Both Sides," Romano-British and Christian; then the Pagan cemetery near the "Dreadnought"; then the Saxon burials in the first-named cemetery, also Christian, extending probably down to about 750; then the first churchyard in the Forbury Gardens, and close to the Abbey; then the churchyard of St. Lawrence formed in 1556, and lastly the present cemetery of the town.

One ventures to think that very few towns in England or elsewhere can show such a long succession of burials as we have here in Reading, and as regards the recent discoveries one is tempted to add, if the church was the centre of the churchyard and both were the centre of the Christian Saxon, surely we have a strong confirmation here of the site of Saxon Reading being eastward of St. Lawrence's Church, and on the higher ground between the Thames and the Kennet.

Two things only remain to be said; one is that further excavations are greatly to be desired, and surely ought to be forthwith undertaken, including the boring of the mound, the other, that in the preparation of this paper one would desire to express indebtedness to Mr. Colyer, of the Reading Museum, for help without which it could not have been written. Also to the Rev. Alan Cheales for valuable assistance in collecting evidence.

Since the foregoing notes were written Mr. Colyer has kindly furnished the following particulars, which have an important bearing on the question under reveiw :—

A comparison of the skulls, or at least six of them, found in the Forbury Gardens with six Saxon skulls taken in order from Davis's "Crania Britannica" (the best work on the subject) resulted in the following :—

Average circumference of Forbury skulls, 21½ in.; ditto of Saxon skulls from "Crania Britannica, 21¼ in. Average length of Forbury skulls, 7.47in.; ditto Saxon from "Crania Britannica," 7.5in. Average width of Forbury skulls, 5.34in.; ditto Saxon from "Crania Britannica," 5.5in. The imperfect conditons of skulls made other

measurements impossible. The skull of a Saxon found by Dr. Stevens with a pewter pendant, at King's-road Cemetery, is almost identical in all measurements with the Forbury specimens. Two Norman skulls in the Museum are more globular, being wider but not so long. Romano-British skulls are also of a larger size. It is interesting to note that the bone of both the Norman skulls—one is of a Knight Templar from Brimpton (period 1300-1320)—is full of gelatine, while those from the Forbury show no trace of it.

Bisham Abbey.

By Ernest W. Dormer.

(Continued from page 117, Vol. 12.)

There is a legend attached to the house dating from the early days. William, Earl of Salisbury, going to the Holy Land, came to Bisham Abbey to take leave of his friends, when his daughter, a nun at the Convent de Fontibus at Little Marlow met him. The squire, who had been in love with her before, on this occasion persuaded her to elope with him, and they escaped in a boat, but were taken at Marlow. She was sent back to her convent, and he was shut up in the Abbey tower—the predecessor of the Hobys' turret—whence he tried to escape by means of a rope made from his clothes torn into shreds. The rope broke, and he, terribly injured, was taken into the Abbey, where he afterwards became a monk.

There have been many royal visits to Bisham. Even Kings and Queens, accustomed as they are to everything of the most lavish description, found Bisham a spot of surpassing loveliness and a wondrous balm for the troubles which are supposed always to be the assets of the head that wears a crown. From papers in the Record and other Offices the following information has been extracted :—

1516. A letter from Cardinal Tace to Cardinal Wolsey, dated 14th July, at Wallingford, contains the following passage :—

> "Morrow in the morning the King departeth to Bisham as it is time for they do die in these partes in every place not only of the small pocks and mezils but also of the great sickness."