PLACES IN LANCASHIRE DESTROYED BY THE SEA.

By Lieut.-Colonel Fishwick, F.S.A.

Read 14th January, 1897.

With the subject of lands in Lancashire submerged by the sea in pre-historic times we do not intend to deal in this short paper—indeed this subject has recently been brought under the notice of the Society by Mr. Cox (vol. 10). The places we shall refer to are such as are known from historic and undoubted evidence to have at one time formed part of the county of Lancaster, and to have at a later date been entirely destroyed by the sea; and we hope to now produce such evidence as shall at least approximately fix the dates when they were so destroyed. The places selected are Hert and Fordebuttle in Furness, and Argarmelés and Arnoldesdale (or Aynesdale) in West Derby.

According to Domesday Book, Earl Tosti, amongst his other lands in the Lancashire portion of Lonsdale, had two carucates in Fordebodele, six in Rosse, two in Hert, six in a place called Leece, and two in another bearing the same name. West, in his Antiquities of Furness, writing in 1774, says that all these places had been swallowed up by the sea; Gregson† in 1817 repeats this. William Beamont, in his translation of the Lancashire part of Domesday Book, published in 1863, makes the same statement; which is again repeated in Harland's edition of Baines' History of Lancashire, in

† Portfolio of Fragments.
1868. Now what is the fact? Roose and Leece are still well-known places in Furness, and are frequently mentioned in the coucher of Furness in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Fordebodele has disappeared, but we find that it was a well-known place for over 300 years after the Domesday Survey. In the year 1153, Michael Flameng gave Fordebodele and its appurtenances to the abbot and convent of Furness; this was confirmed by his son William, and subsequently by his grandson Michael, in or about 1228.

From a confirmation made by Henry II (A.D. 1154-1189) of these grants, it appears that Fordbotle, Roose, and Crivelton were exchanged by Michael Flameng for Bardsey. Pope Eugenius III, by special bull dated 1152, took Furness under his protection, and thereupon confirmed to the convent all its previous grants inter alia Fordbotle. Richard II, by a charter dated 6th Nov. 1397, also confirmed these grants, and Fordebotele is again mentioned. After this date (1397) we find no further trace of Fordbotle (or Fordebodele).

Crivelton, which was associated with Fordbotle, is no doubt the Cliverton named in Domesday Book, and which Mr. Beamont assumed had been washed away by the sea. Such, however, was not the case; as in the coucher of Furness charters it is described as then being called Newton, which is the place still known by that name. Hert, named in Domesday Book, was erroneously put down by Gregson as being intended for Hest near Lancaster, but Beamont includes it amongst the places swept away by the sea. It is somewhat remarkable that no notice of the place known at the time of the Conquest as Hert has been discovered of earlier date than 1387, in which year (on 14th July) Walter Doget (or Daget), citizen and vintner of

Furness Coucher Book. [Chetham Society, ix., xi., and xiv. N.S.]

Chetham Soc. vol. ix. p. 71, N.S.
London, made his will, in which he desired to be buried in the chancel of the church of St. Leonard's in "Estchepe," and amongst other bequests left £10 "to the more needy poor within the Isle of "Hertye in the county of Lancaster"; to his son, John Doget, he left £100 (having already given him £200 before his marriage); the residue of his estate he left to his wife Alice. This will was proved in London, 31st Aug. 1387. There can be no possible doubt but that the island of Hertye and Hert are identical, and that it was situate somewhere off the coast of Dalton parish, probably forming one of the group of islands not far from Peel. Fordbotle was near to the sea level, and assumedly between Aldingham and where the town of Barrow now stands.

According to West, about the middle of the last century ruins of a village were visible on the sands at low water near Aldingham, which village he assumes to have been called Tower Scales; he also adds that tradition says that the church of Aldingham, then standing within the reach of high tides, formerly stood in the centre of the parish, the portion lying adjacent to the sea having all been washed away. One thing, however is clear, namely, that Fordbotle and the Isle of Hert (or Hertye) were both well known at the end of the fourteenth century, and that they have since disappeared, leaving not even a tradition behind them. That they were both destroyed by encroaching of the sea or the shifting of the sand banks we at once take for granted; but to fix the date when their destruction took place is not quite so easy. The existing records of the fifteenth and the earlier part of the sixteenth centuries referring to this district are by no means numerous, and both places may have survived that period and yet no notice of them been discovered; but after the
middle of the latter century, when we have wills and parish registers to assist us, this could scarcely have been the case, and therefore the probability is that these places were certainly submerged long before the end of the sixteenth century. They may have been gradually destroyed by the slow encroachment of the sea, or they may have been swept away by unforeseen physical causes. We are inclined to think that to the latter must be attributed their final disappearance, and that this event took place early in December, 1553.

This may perhaps seem a bold statement to make, but we believe there is sufficient evidence to warrant it. In the first year of Queen Mary, the inhabitants of the Isle of Walney, Ramsed, Salthouse, Marshgrange, and Sowerby Lodge, all in the parish of Dalton, and of Angerton Moss in Kirkby Ireleth, and of Salthouse in Cumberland, made complaints to the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster that on or about the 6th December then last past (viz., 6th Dec. 1553) a great part of the said towns adjoining the sea by "great tempestuous, rages, surges and highe springes of the "sea" was surrounded and overflown either by the sea or sand, to the great detriment of the complainants. In answer to this the Queen directed Thomas Carus, vice-chancellor of the county, John Preston, deputy steward, and William Sandes, receiver of the Crown's possessions belonging to the dissolved monastery of Furness, to go to the Island of Walney, and "by view and examination "of witnesses "find out the damage done. It may be noted that the effect of this storm as here indicated extended all along the coast line from the extreme south of the parish of Dalton to the north of the mouth of the Dudden in Kirkby Ireleth—a distance of 15 miles.

On the 30th September, 1554, the commissioners above named repaired to Walney Island, and exa-
mined six substantial witnesses, to wit—James Hunter, John Ronalson, William Robynson, Robert Nycolson, Laurence Bolton, and Nicholas Yowdelles—whose evidence proved that certain of their Majesties' land, in the occupations of Richard Richardson, John Goweth, and John Yeattes the younger, tenants at Southend (in Walney), had been as alleged overflown "by the sea and sand" within the space of two years past to the extent of 8 acres. The lands in Buggar (in Walney), in the occupation of their Majesties' tenants John Yeates, John Parker, Laurence Torver, John Quynfell, Edward Decanson, James Decanson, John Gybson the younger, Christopher Bolton the elder, Christopher Bolton the younger, William Bolton son of John Bolton, Rowland Lange and James Haveygge, had been damaged to the extent of 5 acres of arable land, 1 of meadow, and 14 of pasture. Of the Crown lands in North Scale (in Walney) 2 acres of pasture were "wasted by sea and "sand"; the tenants of these lands were William Bolton son of Christopher Bolton, George Cawsey, Alexander Gibson, William Wynrey and others. The lands held by Geoffrey Wylde, Richard Bankes at North End in Walney were inundated to the extent of 4 acres of arable ground, and 4 acres of pasture. Of the lands at Ramsed 2 acres of arable and 4 acres of pasture land were wasted. As this place is described as in the island, it may not be identical with Rampside; there is a very small island between Walney and the mainland still called Ramsey Island. At Salthouse the tenants of the duchy were Richard Hunter, William Dagg get, Matthew Hunter, the wife of James Dagger; their lands were wasted to the extent of 4 acres. Sowerby Lodge, though on the mainland, is described as in the island; here the tenant, Robert Herteley, only lost 3 roods of meadow land. Marshgrange, held by the widow of Roger Ask-
ew, was inundated to the extent of 3 acres. At Angerton Moss in Kirkby Ireleth 7 acres of arable land and 2 acres of meadow were destroyed; the tenants of the Crown here were the heirs of Perceval Woodhouse, James Walley, Nicholas Woodburn, Nicholas Richardson, Richard Shepherd, John Postlethwaite, Robert Askewe, Richard Walley, and others. In Cumberland at Salthouse (in Coupland) there were also some duchy tenants who fared even worse than the Lancashire ones; lands were wasted, houses, hedges, and ditches were broken down and destroyed.

The commissioners further reported that it did not appear possible to recover any of the lands submerged, on account of the vehemency of "the sea which is continually flowing, and that no defence can be made against the great rage thereof." The land destroyed was of the yearly value of 16d. an acre for arable land, 2s. an acre for meadow, and 8d. an acre for pasture. The tenants at Bigger had spent 1800 days' work repairing their ditches; but one great hole remained which might be repaired for £10 spent in timber to make "spylys" and other things to fill it up. At Salthouse and Marshgrange "spylys and wyndynes" "and a sluice or hough were necessary for the "safeguard of their Majesties' inheritance." The extent of the damage done by this storm to the sea-coast of Walney Island and its neighbourhood is recorded by the fact that over 49 acres were utterly destroyed or buried by the sea; and this land was only the portion occupied by the tenants of the duchy. The Island of Hertye and the place called Fordebotle may have been owned by freeholders.

Before leaving the Furness district, it may be

6 Probably piles, the wyndynes being the wattle or rods and twigs used to fill up the spaces between the piles.

7 Ducho Flandings, vol. lxvi. R. 3, 1 Mary.
noted that besides the sea there were other agencies at work to destroy the small villages in the neighbourhood. The abbot of Furness, in 1516, it appears on most credible authority, pulled down the whole of a town called Sellergarth, in Furness, which consisted of 52 tenements, and turned the third part of the town to pastures for his own use, and at the same time he laid waste many other houses.  

At a much earlier period than that in which the lands in Furness were submerged, there was a great influx of the sea which seriously affected the Lancashire coast. According to Domesday Book, there were somewhere in West Derby two carucates of land, worth 8s. and free of all taxes except the gelt, and this land was held by Wilbert, and was known as Erengermeles. This place was assumed by Baines and others to be identical with Ravensmeols, a hamlet in the parish of Walton-on-the-Hill; we are now in possession of evidence to prove that this is not the fact, but that the land in question formed a part of the ancient parish of North Meols, and was so recognized for several centuries subsequent to the compiling of the Domesday Book.

In the 33 Hen. III [1248-49], Thomas de Betham died seised of Argarmell and other lands; and in the 39 Hen. III [1254-55], Radulphus de Betham died in possession of the same. From a charter without date (but about A.D. 1280) it appears that Hugh, son of Roger de Derebry, gave to Robert, son of Richard de Formby, son of Albin the priest, a selion of land in the "vil" of Formby, lying in that place called le Wra, and running from the garden of Alan Norreys (?) to Hongelow, and also a garden which the said Hugh had near the Higfin' brigge, and a messuage which Roger

---

de Argarmeles held in the same place; and a little more than a century later (24th Mar. 1361), when Henry Duke of Lancaster died, amongst his vast Lancashire rentals were fees receivable from Northmeles and Argarmeles, the one name following the other in the original Inq. Post. Mort.

Argarmeles was clearly a well-known place in 1361, and was destroyed probably before the end of this century, or very early in the next. The proof of this is found in a pleading in the Duchy Court in 19 Hen. VII [1503-4], the plaintiff being the King's escheator of Lancaster, and the defendant Sir Henry Halsall, Knt., the matter in dispute being the title to lands in Northmelys (Northmeols) and Scarsbrik. The MS. is unfortunately very much worn and defaced, but sufficient remains to answer our purpose. It was admitted that the plaintiff's lands in Northmeols were held of the King as of his duchy by service of the fourth part of a knight's fee; but Sir Henry Halsall contended that Argarmelys, with all the lands and tenements belonging to it, were long before the decease of his father, Hugh Halsall, "drowned and adnichilate "with the high see oute of the lawgh water mark "and also oute off the body of the countye," so that they were not held either by the King or any other person.

The matter was committed to Hugh Conyngsby, one of the Justices at Lancaster, who on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1503, took down the evidence of the various witnesses. One of these was John Sherlock, aged 80 years, who deposed that he had always lived at Halsall, but he never knew a town or place called Argarmeles, but had "hard say " that suche londes ther were and drowned in the " see but wher nor in which parte he never hard

10 Deed fees, Mr. John Formby of Formby.
"tell." William Harrison of Barton (1½ miles from Halsall), aged 66, confirmed this; whilst Hugh Tokwold, aged 75 years (60 of which he had spent at Halsall), said that he had heard that the abbots of Merryvall and Whalley had great lands within four miles of Halsall "worn into the "see." As no one appeared to contradict these statements, it must be accepted as true that Argarmeles was washed away, or rather submerged, within a few years of 1500. John Sherlock, aged 80 in 1503, was of course born in 1423, and he had only "heard say" that Argarmeles had been washed away; it had evidently not happened in his time. In the face of such evidence, it appears certain that the locality of Argarmeles is now definitely settled.

In the parish of Lytham, tradition says that the original church lies buried beneath the sand, and that on Christmas Eve its bells can be heard to ring; and according to the testimony of a witness in a pleading, respecting certain lands there in 1532, the Kelgrymoles churchyard at Lytham was "worne into the sea 2 or 3 miles," and that even in his remembrance "2 miles of fair pasture had "been worn into the sea"; thus showing that the sea twice made great inroads on the land in Lytham—once during the witness's lifetime, and once previously.12

One other place on this coast which tradition says was submerged by the sea in 1554 is Singleton Thorse. This rests entirely on the authority of the late Rev. Mr. Thornber, who quotes Dods- worth's MSS., but gives neither volume nor page of that rather extensive collection; and as no one else appears to have been able to verify it, and not one particle of supporting evidence has been discovered, it may be relegated to the realms of

12 Duchi Pleadings, xxiii., L. 2 N., 24 Hen. VIII.
tradition, especially as Mr. Thornber built upon it a theory as to inhabitants of the lost Thorpe forming the village of Singleton, which was many centuries old at the time of the supposed flood; and also adds some utterly untenable propositions as to a Gingle Hall near Rossall, and Chingle Hall in Whittingham (see Mr. Thornber's *Penny Stone*). Mr. Thornber also states (on his own authority apparently) that a village called Waddon Thorpe, to the south of Blackpool, had also been submerged, but there is no confirmatory evidence of this; on the contrary, if a village or even a cluster of houses known as Singleton Thorpe or Waddon Thorpe existed between the mouth of the Ribble and the mouth of the Wyre as late as 1554, it is absolutely certain that some record concerning them would have remained.

In the same district, and no doubt destroyed at the same time, was Arnoldesdale or Aynesdale, of which in 2 and 3 Philip and Mary [1555-1556] in a dispute as to land in Birkdale, Henry Halsall, Esq., the plaintiff, deposed that there was no manor in Lancashire called "Anoldesdale, but he "had often heard it reported that for a truth there "was a certain town in times past called Aynes-
"dale near adjoining the lands in dispute" (in Birkdale), and that the said town time out of mind had been and still was "overflowen" with the sea, "so that there remains no remembrance thereof "now." 13

13 *Peadings, &c., Philip and Mary*, vol. xix. H. 2 C.