

XIX. *An Account of a Stag's Head and Horns, found at Alport, in the Parish of Youlgreave, in the County of Derby. In a Letter from the Rev. Robert Barker, B.D. to John Jebb, M.D. F.R.S.*

Read April 14, 1785.

ABOUT five years ago, some men working in a quarry of that kind of stone which in this part of the country we call tuft *, at about five or six feet below the surface, in a very solid part of the rock, met with several fragments of the horns and bones of one or different animals. Amongst the rest, out of a large piece of the rock, which they got entire, there appeared the tips of three or four horns, projecting a few inches from it, and the scapula of some animal adhering to the outside of it. A friend of mine, to whom the quarry belongs, sent the piece of the rock to me in the state they got it, in which I let it remain for some time. But suspecting that they might be tips of the horns of some head enclosed in the lump, I determined to gratify my curiosity by clearing away the stone from the horns. On doing which I found that the lump contained a very large stag's head, with two antlers upon each horn, in very perfect preservation, inclosed in it.

* Tuft is a stone formed by the deposit left by water passing through beds of sticks, roots, vegetables, &c. of which there is a large stratum at Matlock Bath, in this county.

A a a 2

Though

Though the horns are so much larger than those of any stag I have ever seen, yet, from the sutures in the skull appearing very distinct in it, one would suppose that it was not the head of a very old animal. I have one of the horns nearly entire, and the greatest part of the other, but so broken in the getting out of the rock, that one part will not join to the other, as the parts of the other horn do. The horns are of that species which park-keepers in this part of the country call thistle-nest horns, from the peculiar formation of the upper part of them, which is branched out into a number of short antlers which form an hollow about large enough to contain a thrush's nest. I send you the dimensions of the different parts of them, compared with the horns of the same species of a large stag, which have probably hung in the place from whence I procured them two or three or perhaps more centuries; and with another pair of horns of a different kind, which are terminated by one single pointed antler, and which were the horns of a seven-year-old stag.

The river Larkell runs down the valley, and part of it falls into the quarry where these horns were found, the water of which has not the property of incrusting any bodies it passes through. It is therefore probable, that the animal to which these horns belonged was washed into the place where they were found, at the time of some of those convulsions which contributed to raise this part of the island out of the sea. Besides this complete head, I have several pieces of horns, bones (particularly the scapula I mentioned above), and several vertebræ of the back, found in the same quarry; some, if not all, of them probably belonging to the animal whose head is in my possession.

Dimensions of the horns found at Alport.

	Ft.	In.
Circumference at their infertion into the corona, .	0	9 $\frac{7}{8}$
Length of the lowest antler,	1	2
Length of second ditto,	0	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Length of third ditto,	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Length of the horn,	3	3 $\frac{1}{2}$

Dimensions of a large pair of throstle-nest horns.

Circumference at their infertion into the corona, .	0	7
Length of the lowest antler,	1	0
Length of second ditto,	0	10 $\frac{5}{8}$
Length of third ditto,	0	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Length of the horn,	2	7 $\frac{1}{2}$

Dimensions of the horns of a stag seven years old.

Circumference at their infertion into the corona, .	0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Length of the lowest antler,	0	9
Length of second ditto,	0	10
Length of third ditto,	0	10
Length of the horn,	2	8 $\frac{3}{4}$

Youlgreave, Jan. 23, 1785.

