

THE BEMBRIDGE LIMESTONE  
("BINSTEAD STONE")  
OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

---

By G. W. COLNUTT.

---

In one of the picturesque valleys which run back from the north-east coast of the Island, and straggling along the side of the high road which crosses the valley, lies the village of Binstead, now little better than a suburb of the town of Ryde, and much modernised by the unattractive addition of staring red brick cottages with slated roofs, replacing quaint old grey stone buildings, sometimes tiled, but more often thatched. The village no longer knows the old industry which during many centuries, and up till quite recent times, made this district famous throughout the south of England as the place from whence the finest local building stone was obtained.

Modern improvements in brick-making have almost abolished the use of Binstead stone as a building material, and the closing of other quarries of the celebrated Isle of Wight Limestone, besides those at Binstead, suggests the desirability of placing on record some account of the Limestone and its uses, and of the places from whence it has been obtained. The subject too is interesting in a double sense, for, apart from the extreme importance of the Bembridge Limestone as a geological formation of an almost unique nature (occurring nowhere in the United Kingdom except in the Isle of Wight), the constant recurrence of the stone throughout the county of Hampshire in the structures of Churches and other old buildings suggests historical investigations of considerable local value. Although Binstead was always the most important of the places whence the Limestone was obtained, and the past history of the village and of Quarr might of itself form the subject of much

interesting research, yet it will be well to treat the matter on a broader basis and give some account of other places along the northern half of the Island, where the stone crops out and where it has been quarried for building or for agricultural purposes. The subject of the Binstead, or, as modern geologists term it, the Bembridge Limestone naturally arranges itself under two headings and it can conveniently be treated from two points of view, viz., the geological and geographical, and the industrial and historical. Both phases of the subject would seem to demand much consideration, but in the space at one's disposal one can only attempt an outline of the matter and rest content with suggesting openings for further study and research.

The geologist who is studying the Oligocene and Eocene strata of the Island will probably be struck, soon after he commences his labours, with the very curious and unusual nature of the Bembridge Limestone, and later on he will notice that the rock preserves throughout, to a large extent, the same peculiar features. This persistence of character is unusual in the upper Tertiary strata of the Island, for we frequently notice the clays and marls thinning out and completely changing in their features as we may proceed from east to west, or *vice versa*. These changes seem clearly to point to these Oligocene clays and marls having been deposited in very limited areas which were subject to frequent and often extreme changes of physical conditions—changes bringing with them their different fauna and flora. All these facts render the Oligocene strata particularly interesting to the palæontologist, and account for their being so rich in fossil remains. The general similarity in character of the Bembridge Limestone at its various outcrops, at once suggests to the observer that it owes its origin to causes which operated in a much wider degree than was the case in the depositing of the clays either above or below it. What can have been the conditions under which this deposit standing out alone—different alike in texture and composition from the surrounding clays and marls—was formed? A careful study of the embedded fossil remains, both of plants and animals, throws much light on the origin of the Limestone. The abundance of shells of molluscs very similar to those now inhabiting

our rivers and streams, the frequent occurrence of several species of land snails very nearly allied to some recent forms, the presence of the remains of large terrestrial mammalia, as well as those of aquatic plants similar to recent forms which grow in rivers, all point to the Bembridge Limestone as having been deposited in the upper reaches of some large river, or more probably in a large fresh-water lake. The texture and composition of the strata tell us that the molluscs must have simply thronged the water, for their powdered and broken shells almost wholly go to form the basis of the stone, which is very little removed from pure calcic carbonate. The almost entire absence of remains of turtles points again to the probability of the Limestone having been formed in a lake shut off from any communication with the sea, for turtles as a rule live more in estuaries and lagoons where there is brackish rather than purely fresh water. It may be noticed that turtle remains occur abundantly in the clays overlying the Limestone, and also below it in the clays and limestones of the Osborne Beds—but these strata all possess characters which suggest an estuarine rather than a purely lacustrine origin. The Limestone, in short, forms one of the very many instances of the sudden changing of the conditions of deposition, which one constantly comes across among the Oligocene strata.

Viewed from a purely geological point of view the Limestone may be described as one or more bands of hard cream-coloured rock varying in total thickness from 3 or 4 to as much as 18 or 20 feet; it has a sharp fracture under the hammer, is sometimes of a travertinous texture at the western part of the Island (at Headon Hill portions of the strata are hard enough to "ring" under a blow of the hammer); it has usually a fairly well defined transverse jointing, and separates readily into large blocks which are often strewn along the coast line; it is harder than any of the surrounding clays and marls and on this account on the seaboard forms long "ledges" of rock which stretch away into deep water; it is solvent under the action of percolating rain water, and therefore is seldom seen projecting above the surface of the ground, although in the western part of the Island it stretches over a considerable area in a dip slope;

when first hewed it is comparatively soft and easily worked, though it hardens in a remarkable degree by exposure to the air, and consequently it forms an excellent building material.

Foremost among the fossil mollusca of the Limestone is *Limnea longiscata*; the shells in all localities but one are nearly always in a very friable state, little remaining but the casts, oftentimes formed in part of crystals of carbonate of lime, and in some portions of the strata crowded together in profusion. We may often see quantities of these casts in the stone used in many old cottage and garden walls in the Island, tempting the geologist to do damage with hammer and chisel in forbidden places! Several species of *Planorbis* may be found—*Planorbis discus*, *P. obtusus*, and *P. oligyratus*—the first being the most common. Other shells, such as *Achatina costellata*, *Paludina orbicularis*, *P. angulosa* and *P. lenta*, are not unusual, while at the west end of the Island the palæontologist may be on the look out for the fine land snails *Bulimus ellipticus* and *Helix globosa*; both these latter are fine shells, and when perfect form handsome specimens for the cabinet. Other *Helices* are also met with at Headdon Hill—*H. D'Urbani*, *H. occlusa*, *H. omphalus* and *H. tropifera*. One or two forms of *Pupa*, *Cyrena*, and *Cyclotus* also occur at Headdon Hill, and in the fallen blocks of stone on the beach at Heatherwood Point there may often be found beautiful masses of calc spar lining the cavities in the rock. The outcrop of the Limestone at Sconce Point and Cliff End were, in years gone by, a happy hunting ground for the geologist, as at these places the land snails were found in their greatest profusion; the sections here are now much over-grown and a large area of the sloping cliff has been enclosed by the Government for the purposes of works of defence, in connection with the fort at Cliff End.

The flora of the Limestone is anything but an abundant one; almost the only fossil plants are the *Charæ*, the seed-vessels of which occur throughout the entire extent of the strata. These seed-vessels are usually in a silicated condition, and careful examination of weathered surfaces of the rock will often be rewarded by the finding of good specimens, showing the granulated and spiral surfaces of the pericarp. The seed-vessels, however, are not so easily

extracted from the Limestone as from some of the Bembridge and Hampstead clays, from which, by careful washing, they may be obtained in abundance and in an exquisitely perfect condition. Dr. Mantell mentions in his "Geology of the Isle of Wight"<sup>1</sup> the occurrence at Whitecliff Bay, in "a large mass of fawn-coloured Limestone that had fallen from the Freshwater strata of the cliffs," of a palm leaf, which he identifies as *Palmacites lamanonis*. As the palm leaf in question was embedded in a mass of stone bearing a great resemblance to some of the "cement stones" of the Bembridge marls, it is doubtful if the Limestone proper can claim the credit of yielding this fossil. Practically speaking, the *Chara* is the only plant of which remains have hitherto been detected in the Limestone, and from the wide distribution of its seed-vessels, it is evident that the plant must have flourished in great profusion. The stems or leaves are almost unknown in the Limestone, as the plant of the *Chara* is very soft, and has little fibre. They may probably have been embedded in the rock during its formation, but would seem to have been all dissolved away and have left no traces of their presence. The seed-vessels, on the other hand, have resisted the agencies which prevented the preservation of the parent plants and remain in a perfect state.

More important than either the fossil mollusca or the flora are the remains of the mammalia found in the Limestone, forming as they do a graphic and wonderful picture of the terrestrial life of the period. The remains for the most part are those of pachyderms of types long since extinct, or only represented at the present time by mammals possessing some of the features which characterised these older forms. The types of the period of the Limestone seem to have almost entirely dropped out of the present scheme of vertebrate life; they doubtless formed some of the less stable types, easily influenced by selection, by physical surroundings or by natural enemies—types which appeared and as quickly disappeared, but whose fossil remains serve as beacon lights to the palæontologist and help him to surmise, to some extent, some of the phases in the past history of the life on our sphere.

<sup>1</sup> 3rd Edition, p. 311.

The imperfection of the geological record, and the great influence of denudation, are nowhere more strikingly displayed than when dealing with fossil mammalia. There is a great gap from the older Secondary rocks right up to the Oligocene deposits, for the strata between these epochs afford us very imperfect and fragmentary records of what took place on the dry land of the globe. The strata of necessity tells us little, as, with one or two exceptions (for instance, the Wealden beds) they consist for the greater part of deep sea deposits formed away from the coast-line, and, though they have occasionally yielded the remains of mammalia, we can gather but a feeble notion of the terrestrial life during the ages which must have elapsed between the deposition of the Stonesfield Slate and the Oligocene marls. On the other hand the Bembridge Limestone, deposited in some lake, throws a strong light on the scheme of terrestrial life of the period. The mammalia of the Limestone form what are vulgarly and incorrectly termed "connecting links," though such things as "links" and "joints" are unknown in the grand and marvellous system of ever-changing life. No type is persistent; it must ever be subservient to the all-powerful influence which called it into existence—the law to which all animals and plants have ever bowed, and must of necessity bow—the law of Evolution. The Limestone affords us a peep at a page in the world's history, and then, as far as terrestrial life is concerned, the book is suddenly closed, and we have to guess at random as to what changes came over the beings we have seen, and to what influences the pachyderms of the Limestone period were exposed. All we can know is that types having some of their characteristics still wallow in tropical rivers, and graze among the rank herbage on the banks of the lakes of some of the warmer countries. The strata above the Limestone were not deposited in such close contact with terrestrial life, and, though they yield mammalian remains in fair abundance, yet they cannot be compared with the strata under discussion in this respect—the remains are scattered and fragmentary and their condition is such as might be expected in strata which were mostly deposited in estuaries and tidal lagoons.

The dentition of all the Limestone mammals points to their having fed on a vegetable diet, and from this we may conclude that there must have been a rank herbage, but on this point our evidence is only circumstantial, for as before stated the fossil flora of this period is exceedingly scanty. The Limestone bears a very striking resemblance, so far as its mammalian remains go, to some of the beds in the Paris Basin, and much interesting work has been done by geologists in comparing the fossils found in both localities. The conclusion arrived at is that both series of strata were deposited under very similar conditions and at approximately the same time. Dr. Mantell gave a good deal of attention to the fossil mammalia of the Limestone, and he had the great advantage of studying the subject at a time when the quarries at Binstead were in full working order, and when a small payment to the quarrymen often secured fossils of great value. Dr. Mantell, however, did not approach the matter with that scientific care which is deemed necessary at the present time, and the account given by him in his "Geology of the Isle of Wight," of the fossils found in the Binstead Quarries leaves much to be desired in this respect. He does not seem to have taken much care to discriminate between the teeth and bones found in the Limestone itself and those obtained from the pockets of loam and gravel excavated by the quarrymen at the surface of the ground in the course of their work. These two sets of remains of course represent widely different periods and bear no relationship whatever to each other. Many of the fossils mentioned by Dr. Mantell, however, are of much interest and importance.

Some of the mammals of the Limestone bear a good deal of resemblance to the existing *Tapir*, and others nearly resemble, on a larger scale, the modern *Peccari*, others seem about midway between the *Tapir* and the *Pig*, while others have some of the characteristics of the *Deer*. The following is probably a complete list of the Limestone mammals, as recorded by Dr. Mantell:—

|                                 |          |                               |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| <i>Anoplotherium commune</i> .. | Binstead | <i>Palæotherium medium</i> .. | Binstead |
| " <i>secundarium</i>            | Seafield | " <i>magnum</i> ..            | Seafield |
| <i>Charopotamus cuvieri</i> ..  | Seafield | " <i>crassum</i> ..           | Binstead |
| <i>Palæotherium minus</i> ..    | Seafield | <i>Dichobune cervinum</i> ..  | Binstead |

There was formerly a small quarry at Seafeld, just west of Sea View, but it has been closed for many years, and its exact situation is rather difficult to determine. Whether the quarry was in the Bembridge Limestone (as it probably was, judging by the presence of the above remains) or in some of the Limestone beds of the Osborne series, which are well developed around Sea View, seems a question admitting of some doubt. I have in my cabinet almost the last fossils found in Binstead Quarries—obtained just before the workings were finally closed. They consist of several specimens of *Achatina costellata*, and a couple of good molars of *Palæotherium magnum*. The dentition of the *Palæotheria* is very peculiar, and there is every reason to believe that they had a proboscis much the same as that of the living *Tapir*, and used as an organ for gathering food. In the present absence of all workings in the Limestone the mammalian remains are very rarely obtained—the most important “find” of the kind in my experience being the discovery of a number of scattered teeth of *Palæotherium medium* (?) in a block of Limestone at Whitecliff Bay. Unfortunately the rock was particularly hard and intractable, and the teeth could only be extracted in a broken condition. In quarries one would have a better chance of obtaining perfect specimens, as when the Limestone is first dug out it is much softer and more amenable to the chisel than when hardened on the shore by exposure to the air. Of course it is quite possible that mammalian remains may perchance be met with wherever the Limestone may be seen, and geologists will hardly need the admonition to keep a sharp look out for traces of such interesting and important fossils.

Starting at the west end of the Island, and tracing our way along the shore, we first find the Limestone forming the topmost band in the cliff at Headon Hill, and occurring immediately under the capping of plateau gravel. It is here of a very hard nature, and in some places almost resembles a chert. Coming north-east from Headon Hill we lose the Limestone until we reach the top of the cliff at Sconce Point and Cliff End, where we again find it standing out boldly above the mottled Osborne Clays. Blocks of the Limestone are scattered along the shore here. It rapidly dips eastwards

until it is lost beneath the beach just before Yarmouth is reached, and it remains out of sight beneath the Bembridge clays and the Hamstead Beds until the Newtown river is reached, on the west side of which it again rises and stretches away to form Hamstead Ledge. East of the estuary it may be seen in the low cliff before Burnt Wood is reached; and this locality is of importance as being the only place in which it contains perfect shells, and not merely casts. Many fine specimens of *Linini* and *Planorbis* may be easily extracted from the blocks of Limestone on the beach. It soon sinks under the level of the beach, but rises again in Thorness Bay and forms Quarry or Sticelett, and Gurnard Ledges. It gradually rises in the cliff all along to Rew Street, and just before Gurnard Marsh is reached the position of the lower band of Limestone is about 40 feet above high water mark. In the talus of the cliff east of Gurnard the Limestone is lost, though blocks of it strew the beach along to Egypt Point, and also the beach below Spring Hill Farm, near Old Castle Point on the east side of Cowes Harbour. At Osborne, King's Quay, and along as far as Chapelcorner Copse, blocks which have fallen from the sloping wood-covered cliffs may be seen scattered along the shore. The Limestone will be noticed as a single band about 4 feet thick, and about 40 feet above the beach, in the cliff at the west side of the entrance to Wootton Creek. East of the creek as far as Quarr the blocks of Limestone are seen on the beach, but soon the Osborne Beds rise up so much that the Limestone is lost for the next five miles along the coast. At Horestone Point it rapidly descends to the beach and stretches out on the shore before we reach St. Helens Old Church—its three distinct beds of stone, with intervening bands of greenish clay, forming long ledges of weed-covered rocks. Eastwards of the mouth of Brading Harbour, the Limestone forms the base of the beach, and its extent is lost in the well-known Bembridge Ledge, which stretches far out into deep water. Southwards of the Foreland the Limestone gradually rises until at the Northern end of Whitecliff Bay it again forms the base of the cliff, and rises suddenly up with a bold sweep in the syncline, its creamy colour making it a very conspicuous feature between

the blue and green clays. Tracing our way westwards across the Island, we find the Limestone again in the Eastern banks of the old Brading Harbour, and near Brading Church; at the cement works at Brading a small quarry has been occasionally worked; it is also seen near Hardingshute Farm in a rather deep ditch by the road side; it was formerly quarried by the side of the railway south of St. John's Road Station at Ryde, at Great Pan and Little Pan near Newport, also at East Cowes Park and at Shamblers Copse (near West Cowes), where there are traces of a considerable quarry. It may be seen in the cutting recently made south of Cowes Railway Station, and is here in a crumbled and partly dissolved state, owing to the percolation of rain water.

Most important of all the workings in the Limestone are those at Binstead and Quarr (the origin of which name is, of course, evident), and the quarries are still worth a visit, though few sections of the beds are now to be seen. These quarries were in great request for many centuries, and as the chief beds of stone lay but a few feet under the surface the whole district round Binstead bears traces of the extent to which the industry was carried. The quarries were finally abandoned in 1876, Mr. W. James, of Binstead, being the last of a long line of excavators. The last working was carried to the edge of the road leading round by Pitts cottage, and as the Limestone here had a tendency to dip under the hill the workings were abandoned, no effort being made to open up a fresh locality where the stone might be more easily got at. That there is plenty of stone to be still easily found near Quarr is proved by the fact that several garden and other walls have of late years been constructed with it in the neighbourhood, a small private quarry usually being opened temporarily on the land of the person wishing to build the wall. There are many old and deep pits just inside Quarr Copse on both sides of the road, and in one of the pits on the left hand side may still be seen a very fair section of the strata. Means were recently taken to drain a portion of the copse by cutting intersecting ditches, and the nature of the subsoil can be easily seen by the quantities of rock dug from the ditches and scattered about the copse. Roughly speaking, the quarries extend for about three-

quarters of a mile in a sweep round the base of the hill, from the Rifle Range on the south to the shore west of Binstead House on the north. The Limestone was penetrated at a depth of 112 feet in the well recently dug at Mill Hill by the West Cowes Local Board. It covers an area of upwards of three square miles in an extensive dip slope around Wellow, Newbridge, and Shalcombe, and at the latter place its escarpment is about 260 feet above ordnance datum. Just north of Calbourne it may be seen by the roadside, a cutting having recently been made to lessen the "shute" over the abrupt outcrop of the strata. At "Stone Steps" (a place-name referring to the rough escarpment of the several beds of Limestone) it can again be seen in some small pits west of the Tea Gardens, and also at Newclose Farm, Thorley, Wellow, and Newbridge. Dr. Mantell says a good deal about a quarry at "Dod-pits," but this appears to have been long abandoned. The Limestone is not difficult to trace at several other places in the West Medina. There would be plenty of places around Wellow and Newbridge where quarries might be worked. The road from Newbridge through Wellow to Thorley follows the Limestone just where it dips under the overlying Bembridge Marls, and along on the north side of this road would seem the best locality for working the stone, as under the clay the stone would be less damaged by the percolation of rain water and would be of better quality. This locality has the advantage of being but a short distance from the line of the Freshwater and Newport Railway. No one at present seems enterprising enough to embark in the work of quarrying, the most that is now done being to open small pits and dig out the stone for any temporary requirements. Quarrying on a larger scale used to pay as a business of itself, and it could probably be made to do so now.

From an economic point of view, the Limestone not only affords a most excellent building stone, but as a fertiliser its use would be very much better than the hard upper chalk at present favoured by the Island farmers as a manure for spreading over arable fields in the autumn. It is hard to remove prejudices, and the farmers of the northern part of the Island will prefer carting inferior chalk many miles rather

than taking the superior Limestone near at hand! Mr. J. Brierley, of Southampton, has, for the purposes of this paper, very kindly made an analysis of a specimen of Bembridge Limestone from the well at Mill Hill, West Cowes, and the result is as follows:—

|                                                                                         |    |    |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|--------------|
| Calcium Oxide (Ca O)                                                                    | .. | .. | 54.61        |
| Ferric Oxide (Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> )                                          | .. | .. | 1.38         |
| Insoluble Mineral Matter                                                                | .. | .. | 0.80         |
| Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> )                                                       | .. | .. | 40.09        |
| Moisture, Organic Matter, Magnesian Oxide, traces of Sulphuric Acid and Phosphoric Acid | .. | .. | 3.12         |
|                                                                                         |    |    | <hr/> 100.00 |

The Binstead quarries were probably in request by the Romans, and it is not at all unlikely that the workings were even at that date well established. In the recent excavations at Quarr Abbey some good Roman brickwork was discovered in the foundations just north of the chapter-house and the Limestone was intimately associated with the bricks. Its presence may also be seen in the foundations of the Roman Villa at Morton. The Roman inscribed stone to the goddess Ancesta at Bitterne is of Binstead Limestone. These facts are interesting as showing that the Normans were not the originators of the use of the Limestone as a building material, but only developed quarries at Binstead and elsewhere which had probably been opened long previously. The Normans of course made most extensive use of the stone and, from the great number of religious and other houses erected by them soon after the Conquest, we may assume that local building materials must have been in great request. The work of William of Wykeham, at Winchester, is too well known to be given in detail here; he bought the right of hewing stone at Quarr for the purposes of his grand works. He wrote on April 9th, 1371, to all the heads of religious houses and incumbents in the Isle of Wight, asking them to supply quarrymen to hew the stone and vehicles to haul it, under the general superintendence of the Abbot of Quarr. The builders of the older churches in the Island—Binstead, Wootton, Yaverland, and Shalfleet—all went to Binstead, or some other quarry in the Limestone, for their materials; while on the mainland the stone appears in the structures of Beaulieu

Abbey, Netley Abbey, Porchester Castle and Watergate, at Titchfield (Place House, built from the material of Titchfield Abbey), in the old church at Millbrook, in the great barn at St. Leonard's Grange (South of Beaulieu), and also in the remains of mediæval buildings at Bitterne. Jesus Chapel or Pear Tree church is traditionally said to have been built of stone from the bishop's house at Bitterne, and there are evidences which would lead one to suppose that this was so. The Limestone has been noticed as far north in the county as Burghclere old church, and at Popham, near Basingstoke. It may readily be recognised in old work of Norman and later date in Southampton—the old town walls for instance. Binstead stone may also be seen in the shafts of the great porch of Christchurch Priory. The Limestone is apparently referred to in payments made by the Corporation of Southampton in the reign of Henry VI. for the conveyance of stone from "Seynt Elne Wade" (? St. Helen's, I.W.) for use in works then in progress. Some of the large cannon balls dredged from the river at Southampton are of Binstead stone, as also are the remains of the Friars' well or water supply at Spring Hill.<sup>1</sup>

In the Island, besides the old churches already mentioned, the structure of Carisbrooke Castle claims attention, most of the building being of Binstead stone. Henry VIII. appears

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mr. T. W. Shore for much of the foregoing information as to instances in which the Limestone has been used in the County of Hampshire; these facts have merely been introduced to show how extensive has been the use of the stone as a building material, and are not intended to form a complete list of the buildings in the structures of which it may be seen. The altar stone to the goddess Ancasta is now in the summer house, near the Itchen, in the grounds of Bitterne Manor, the seat of Sir Steuart Macnaghten. There is a tradition in the neighbourhood of Itchen Village that Jesus Chapel, on Pear Tree Green, was built of stones brought from the Bishop's old house at Bitterne, which residence was on the site of the present Bitterne Manor House. There are still remaining some mediæval portions of this old episcopal residence. Mr. Shore tells me that this tradition may be assumed to be well-founded from the following circumstances:—(1) Pear Tree Green and the Church site were part of the episcopal property of the Bishop, he being Lord of the Manor. (2) The Bishop's house at Bitterne certainly fell into decay after the Reformation. (3) Jesus Chapel; it is believed, was the first new church or chapel consecrated in England after the Reformation. The date of the building is 1620. (4) The *old* part of the church or chapel is built of Bembridge Limestone, and two cross sections of broken circular pillars may be seen in the west wall. The newer part of the chapel is built of Swanage stone.

to have given a general order that the defensive works inaugurated by him should be built of stone hewed at Quarr. Consequently we find the Limestone at West Cowes Castle, at Yarmouth Castle, at Southsea Castle and in the old parts of Blockhouse Fort and the Round Tower at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. No doubt the now destroyed tower at Old Castle Point, and old "Sandham" Fort were also built of a like material. The extensive buildings at Quarr Abbey cannot be passed over without mention as having been built of stone from the neighbouring quarries. Numberless instances might be given of the use of the Limestone in old sea walls, manor houses, farm houses, barns, cottages, out-buildings and garden walls, but enough has been said to emphasize its importance as a building material.

It seems almost incomprehensible that so little use is made of the Limestone at the present day; of its value as a building stone it is only necessary to point to some of the works of Henry VIII.—West Cowes Castle, for instance—a structure which has not been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. The joints of the masonry are as fine, and the angles of the stonework are as sharp, as if built but a few years ago, instead of having stood for four centuries. The spread of technical education may, perhaps, lead the dwellers in the northern parts of the Island to recognise the fact that it is hardly necessary to send to Ventnor, or to Swanage or Purbeck, for their building stone, and may perchance persuade the Island farmers that, on the whole, the Bembridge Limestone is a much more valuable fertiliser than the hard and intractable local variety of chalk. If technical education can attain these two results, geologists and artists will be thankful, for then quarries may again be opened in the Limestone and opportunity afforded of studying to the best advantage these interesting and unique strata. As far as the artist is concerned, the quarries would probably again lead to the use of the Limestone as material for the erection of farm cottages—material which ever affords good support for a thriving crop of parti-coloured lichens and mosses—gladdening all those who have eyes for picturesque effect, as no red bricks and slates can do—and enhancing rather than diminishing the beauty of the roads and lanes of the Isle of Wight.