

## NOTES ON A HUMAN SKELETON, FOUND AT FOXEARTH, ESSEX.

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[WITH PLATE V.]

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ON lately visiting Foxearth, a small parish in the Stour Valley, near the northern boundary of Essex, I was shown a human skull, which at once engaged my attention from its size and evident age. On enquiry I found the labourer who had picked it up in a gravel-pit. The pit is situated two hundred yards east of Western Hall, just over the Foxearth boundary in the parish of Liston, in Field No. 25, and shown on Map vi. 6, 25 inch Ordnance Survey. (See Fig. 1.)

This gravel-pit has been open for some years. The workman referred to was digging and carting gravel therefrom, and was searching for something to block the wheel of his cart, when he picked up the skull, thinking that it was a great stone. The inference is that the skull slipped down with part of the cliff during the excavating operations. The floor of the pit is about 12 feet deep at the spot. When found the skull was encased in loam with fibrous roots in the cavities; it was in nearly perfect condition, the lower jaw being in position, and the set of teeth perfect, although by an unfortunate accident the skull was dropped, thereby detaching the jaw and knocking out one of the teeth.

The presence of the fibrous roots led me to suppose that the original resting-place of the skull had been somewhere near the upper surface of the wall of the pit. I carefully examined the face of the pit, but could find no trace of any place where the skull had lain, nor could any pottery or worked flints be discovered in the cliff or in the loose debris.

The geological character of the earth in which the pit was made is Glacial-drift, but whether any part of the upper surface is Post-Glacial I am not qualified to determine. The beds are composed of chalky gravel with patches or seams of coloured and white water-washed sands and a small layer of water-worn chalk nodules and some fossils and shells. I should say the beds are false-bedded, the lines of bedding being much curved and contorted, and towards the top or surface of the pit there are

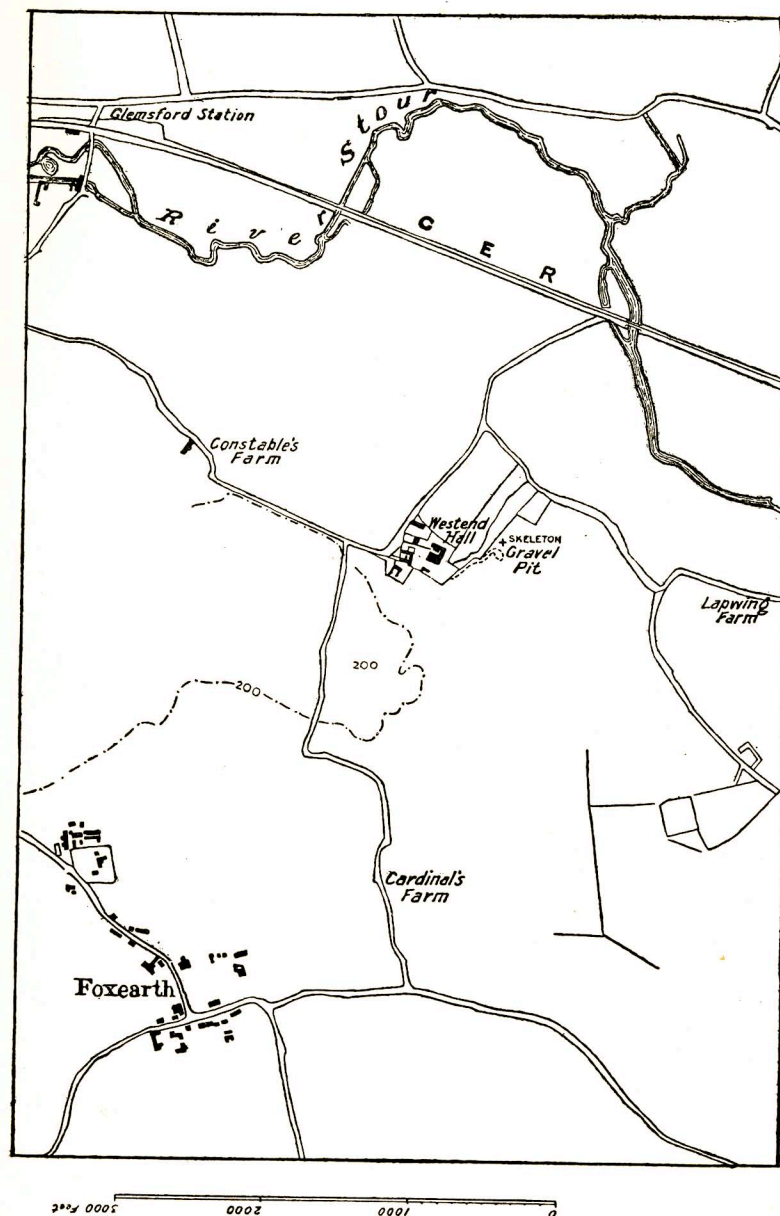


FIG. 1.—PORTION OF ORDNANCE MAP (ESSEX VI. 6, 25 INCH SCALE), SHOWING POSITION OF GRAVEL-PIT AT FOXEARTH.

