*Geology.—*The oldest formation in the county is the Devonian, which extends eastwards from Devonshire across Exmoor to the Brendon and Quantock hills, and consists of sandstones, slates and limestones of marine origin. The Old Red Sandstone, the supposed estuarine or lacustrine equivalent of the Devonian, is a series of red sandstones, marls and conglomerates, which rise as an anticline in the Mendips (where they contain volcanic rocks), and also appear in the Avon gorge and at Portishead. The Carbon­iferous Limestone, of marine origin, is well displayed in the Mendip country (Cheddar Cliffs, &c.) and in the Avon gorge; at Weston- super-Mare it contains volcanic rocks. The Coal Measures of the Radstock district (largely concealed by Trias and newer rocks) consist of two series of coal-bearing sandstones and shales separated by the Pennant Sandstone; locally the beds have been intensely folded and faulted, as at Vobster. Indeed, all the formations hitherto mentioned were folded into anticlines and synclines before the deposition of the Triassic rocks. These consist of red marls, sandstones, breccias and conglomerates, which spread irregularly over the edges of the older rocks; the so-called Dolomitic Con­glomerate is an old shingle-beach of Triassic (Keuper Marl) age. The Rhaetic beds are full of fossils and mark the first invasion of the district by the waters of the Jurassic sea. The Lias consists of clays and limestones; the latter are quarried and are famous for their ammonites and reptilian remains. Above the Lias comes the Lower or Bath Oolite Series (Inferior Oolite group, Fuller’s Earth and Great Oolite group), chiefly clays and oolitic limestone; the famous Bath Stone is got from the Great Oolite. The Oxford Clay is the chief member of the Middle or Oxford Oolite Series. Above these follow the Upper Cretaceous rocks, including the Gault, Upper Greensand and Chalk, which extend into the county from Wiltshire near Frome and from Dorset near Chard. There are apparently no true glacial deposits. Low-lying alluvial flats and peat-bogs occupy much of the surface west of Glastonbury. Caves in the Carboniferous Limestone *(e.g.* Wookey Hole, near Wells) have yielded Pleistocene mammalia and palaeolithic implements. The thermal waters of Bath (120° F.) are rich in calcium and sodium sulphates, &c. The chief minerals are coal, freestone and limestone, and ores of lead, zinc and iron.

*Agriculture.—*The climate partakes of the mildness of the south­western counties generally. A high proportion, exceeding four- fifths of the total area of the county, is under cultivation. In a county where cattle-feeding and dairy-farming are the principal branches of husbandry, a very large area is naturally devoted to pasture ; and there are large tracts of rich meadow land along the rivers, where many of the Devonshire farmers place their herds to graze. Floods, however, are common, and the Somerset Drainage Act was passed by parliament on the 11th of June 1877, providing for the appointment of commissioners to take measures for the drainage of lands in the valleys of the Parrett, Isle, Yeo, Brue, Axe, Cary and Tone. Cheese is made in various parts, notably the famous Cheddar Cheese, which is made in the farms lying south of the Mendips. Sheep-farming is practised both in the lowlands and on hill pastures, Leicesters and Southdowns being the favourite breeds. In the Vale of Taunton heavy crops of wheat are raised; this grain, barley and oats being raised on about equal areas. Turnips, swedes and mangolds occupy most of the area under green crops. Somerset ranks after Devon and Hereford in the extent of its apple orchards, and the cider made from these apples forms the common drink of the peasantry, besides being largely exported. Wild deer are still found on Exmoor, where there is a peculiar breed of ponies, hardy and small\* The Bristol Channel and Bridgwater Bay abound in white- and shell-fish; salmon and herring are also caught, the principal fishing stations being Porlock, Minehead and Watchet.

*Other Industries.—*Coal, from the Mendips, and freestone, largely quarried near Bath, are the chief mineral products of Somerset, although brown ironstone, zinc, limestone and small quantities of slate, gravel, sand, sulphate of strontia, gypsum, ochre, Fuller’s earth, marl, cement, copper and manganese are also found. Lead mining is carried on near Wellington, and lead washing in the Mendips; but these industries, like the working of spathose iron ore among the Brendon hills, are on the wane. The chief manufactures are those of woollen and worsted goods, made in a large number of towns; silk made at Frome, Taunton and Shepton Mallet; gloves at Yeovil, Stoke, Martock and Taunton ; lace at Chard ; linen and sailcloth at Crewkerne; horsehair goods at Bruton, Castle Cary and Crewkerne; crape at Dulverton and Shepton Mallet. Tobacco, snuff and spirits are also manufactured; and there are large potteries at Bridgwater, where the celebrated bath-brick is made, and at Weston-super- Mare; carriage works at Bath and Bridgwater; engineering and machine-works also at Bridgwater. On the Avon, copper and iron are smelted, while several other rivers provide power for cotton, worsted and paper mills. The bulk of the export trade passes through Bristol, which is situated mainly in Gloucestershire, though it has large docks on the Somerset side of the Avon, and others at Portishead.

*Communication*.—Somerset is well furnished with railways. The Great Western runs between Frome, Radstock, Bath and Bristol, and from Bristol it curves south-west through Weston and Bridgwater to Taunton, dividing there and passing on into Devon. Branches leave the main line for Portishead, Clevedon and Minehead on the north, and for Witham Friary via Wells, Yeovil via Langport, and Chard via Ilminster on the south. The South-Western main line from London passes through the south-west of Somerset, running from Templecombe to Axminster in Devon, and the Somer­set and Dorset runs from Bath to Shepton Mallet via Radstock. The Kennet and Avon Canal flows from Bradford in Wiltshire to Bath, and there joins the Avon, meeting on its way the two branches of the Somersetshire Coal Canal which flow from Paulton and Radstock. The Taunton and Bridgwater Canal flows into the River Parrett.

*Population and Administration.—*The area of the ancient county is 1,043,409 acres, with a population in 1891 of 484,337, and in 1901 of 508,256. The area of the administrative county is 1,037,484 acres. The county contains 40 hundreds and two liberties. The municipal boroughs are—Bath, a city and county borough (pop. 49,839), Bridgwater (15,209), Chard (4437), Glastonbury (4016), Taunton (21,087), Wells, a city (4849), Yeovil (9861). The urban districts are—Burnham (2897), Clevedon (5900), Crewkerne (4226), Frome (11,057), Highbridge (2233), Ilminster (2287), Midsomer Norton (5809), Minehead (2511), Portishead (2544), Radstock (3355), Shepton Mallet (5238), Street (4018), Watchet (1880), Wellington (7283), Weston- super-Mare (19,845), Wiveliscombe (1417). Among other towns may be mentioned Bruton (1788), Castle Cary (1902), Cheddar (1975), Keynsham (3512) and Wincanton (1892). The county is in the western circuit, and assizes are held at Taunton and Wells. It has one court of quarter sessions, and is divided into 22 petty sessional divisions. The boroughs of Bath and Bridgwater have separate courts of quarter sessions and commissions of the peace, and those of Taunton, Wells and Yeovil have separate commis­sions of the peace. The total number of civil parishes is 485. Somerset is in the diocese of Bath and Wells, excepting small parts in the dioceses of Bristol and Salisbury; it contains 508 ecclesiastical parishes or districts, wholly or in part. There are seven parliamentary divisions—Northern, Wells, Frome, Eastern, Southern, Bridgwater and Western or Wellington, each return­ing one member; while the parliamentary borough of Bath returns two members, and that of Taunton one member; and the county includes the greater part of the southern division of the parliamentary borough of Bristol.

*History.—*In the 6th century Somerset was the debatable borderland between the Welsh and Saxons, the latter of whom pushed their way slowly westward, fighting battles yearly and raising fortifications at important points to secure their conquered lands. Their frontier was gradually advanced from the Axe to the Parrett, and from the Parrett to the Tamar, Taunton being a border fort at one stage and Exeter at another. By 658 Somerset had been conquered by the West Saxons as far as the Parrett, and there followed a struggle between the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia, decided by a great victory of Ine in 710, which led to the organization of the lands east of the Parrett as part of the kingdom of Wessex. There were still occasional inroads by the Welsh, Taunton Castle being captured in 721, but from the 8th century the West Saxon kings were rulers of what is now known as Somersetshire. About this time the bishopric of Wells was founded, and the monastery of Glastonbury restored by Ine. The next hundred and fifty years were the period of Danish invasions. Egbert, king of Wessex, became Bretwalda or overlord of all England in 827, and under him Wessex with the other frontier kingdoms was organized for defence against the Danes, and later the assessment of danegeld led to the sub­division of Wessex for financial and military purposes, which crystallized into the divisions of hundreds and tithings, probably with the system of assessment by hidation. King Alfred’s vic­tory in 878, followed by the Peace of Wedmore, ended the incur­sions of the Danes for a time, but a hundred years later they were again a great danger, and made frequent raids on the west coast of Somerset. At some time before the Conquest, at a date usually given as 1016, though evidence points to a much earlier and more gradual establishment, England was divided into shires, one of which was Somerset, and tradition gives the name of the first earl as Hun, who was followed by Earnulf and Sweyn, son of Godwin. There has been curiously lit tle variation in the territory