

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

21 OCTOBER, 1895, TO 27 MAY, 1896,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXVIII.

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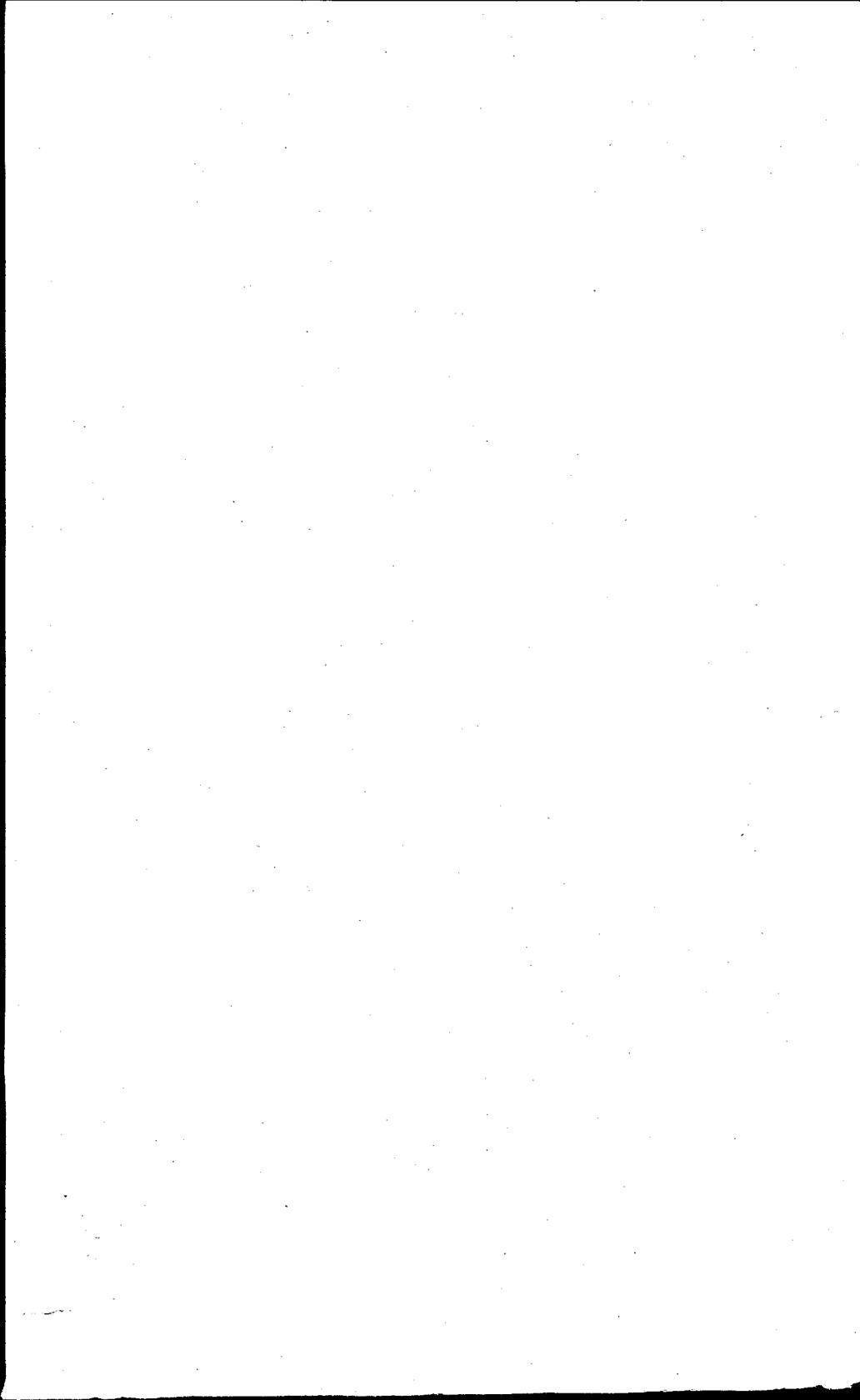
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We take things more quietly now and are doubtless more circumspect. We do not blazon abroad our politics, and any voter can register his vote silently and secretly without let or hindrance. Some of us may regret the boisterous fun and ingenious tricks that have given place to greater order and dignity, and it is a melancholy fact that even the demonstrations that are got up to celebrate a success are for the most part feeble and unconvincing.

Public spirit may be just as strong as ever, but we are more reticent in our expression, and have lost a taste for the exuberant fancy that make former elections appear more like the passing pageant in a serio-comic play, than an important page in the history of a University town.

Professor HUGHES made a Communication on the derivation of the boomerang and the battle axes of the Fijian type from cetacean ribs.

Professor HUGHES then made the following Communication :

ON THE EARTHWORKS BETWEEN THE TYNE AND THE SOLWAY.

Since the publication of the short communication which I had the honour of making some years ago, much work has been done along the line of the Roman Wall, and as some of this has an important bearing upon the special point which I then brought before the notice of the Society, I have ventured to return to the subject. I then considered the character of the earthworks known collectively as "the Vallum." They consist of one or more deep fosses with banks along them on either side formed of the earth which was dug out of the fosse. The distribution of the Roman Camps seemed to me to point to there having been here some more or less defensible line along

which the British made a stand, and in front of which the Roman Camps, presumably of the earlier advances, were thrown up. The British Camps also were clustered along it, perhaps where population was thickest or the probabilities of a struggle greatest, but obviously along the same belt of country. I inferred that, whatever there might be to mark it, there must have been a pre-Roman frontier line somewhere here.

History tells us that the Romans constructed some obvious boundaries along this belt of country. It was not merely an imaginary line from point to point but it was of such a nature that it was necessary to restore it from time to time. It was always spoken of as strengthening the defence and not merely as a line of demarcation to cross which was a *casus belli*—and there to the present day we see the remains of a stone wall, with strong towers at intervals of a mile, and fortified stations here and there all along it. That at any rate was something more than a mere boundary line built with no object but to mark the limits of the empire in that direction at that time.

But when was it built and what was its relation to the other lines of which also traces still remain is a matter about which there is still some difference of opinion.

The following are briefly, as far as at present known, the various constructions which can still be traced.

1. A great ditch with two or three banks running parallel to it. These are not now continuous nor of similar construction all along this line. We cannot at present say for certain that any change of front or shifting of the main mass of the banks has been shown to have taken place, but it is not improbable, and such modification in later time may explain what was observed by Dr Hodgkin in the course of his excavations, where the clay from the bottom of the fosse was found in each bank. Either those banks were both thrown up when the fosse was excavated, or some of the material of an older bank was used in building a newer.

2. A turf wall, with a great fosse on the north side, running between the stone wall to be next mentioned and the fosse and

banks mentioned in the previous paragraph (No. 1). Mr Cadwalader Bates had the good fortune to be on the spot, and to be the first to detect the black lines of the vegetable matter in this bank, when they were exposed in the excavations recently carried on under the auspices of the two vigorous Antiquarian Societies that have grown up at either end of these most interesting frontier lines. Those black lines represented the grass of the sods with which this wall had been built, in that respect resembling the wall between the Clyde and Forth, known as the wall of Antoninus. This turf wall occurred exactly where his historical deductions had led him to expect to find it, and other trenches cut across the same bank amply confirmed his observations. The fosse, with its upcast, forming banks along it, was formerly included with the vallum. Mr Bates' discovery marks a new departure altogether in the history of the Roman Wall and its adjoining lines. When we were driven by the distribution of the camps, the form of the ramparts, and the historical evidence of hostile British tribes confronting one another along these lines in pre-Roman times, to refer some at any rate of these lines to British work; we were met by the statements respecting Roman frontier lines earlier than the wall having been thrown up here. Now we have this third line, differing in construction and direction from the stone wall on the north and the earthworks on the south of it, which will do very well for the earlier Roman work. Of course the reasoning from the way in which the stone wall cuts off the fosse and bank at the Mile Castle east of Wall Bowers has no longer any force, because these belong to the *turf wall*, not to the southern earthworks, but the other arguments in favour of the pre-Roman age of the southern earthworks are immensely strengthened.

I owe to the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Hodgson, of Newby Grange, the opportunity of re-examining the recently explored area. The sections cut across the banks and fosses had been closed, but I opened out the end of the bank where it is traversed by the stream which runs south from Appletrees, and saw myself an ample verification of Mr Bates' observations.

The admirable sketches of the sections made by Mrs Hodgson will, I am glad to learn, soon be published.

The turf was not taken off in long continuous strips and then cut into rectangular pieces as is done in the present day, but the spade was driven in obliquely all round so as to produce a lenticular sod. The sods were, therefore, of necessity laid alternately, the thick middle portion of the upper sod falling into the depression due to the thin margins of the two adjoining sods in the layer below. These margins also sometimes overlapped so that the whole wall was thus built of flexible interlocking masses. As the pieces were not rectangular it gives a wrong impression to describe it as built like bricks in bonded courses or with broken joints, although the strengthening effect produced is the same.

3. To the north of all these lines and cutting off the turf wall and its fosse there is the well-known stone wall with its turrets and mile castles and walled stations.

The turrets and mile castles are obviously part of the wall and built at the same time, but it is clear that some at any rate of the fortified stations were built before the wall, because they are constructed with rounded corners as if to stand alone, and their north face is not in the line of the stone wall. They may have been originally earthworks, but if so the earthen ramparts were replaced by stone before the great frontier wall was built.

Then there are other earthworks, such as the Black Dyke, along the same line of country, though not in the same direction, and numerous groups of Roman and British Camps, upon the distribution of which I chiefly relied in support of the view that the main line of what has generally been spoken of as "the Vallum" was pre-Roman.

I have above referred to an opinion, which is said to be gaining ground, namely, that some or all of these lines were thrown up merely to mark the boundaries, and not as lines of defence. It seems extremely improbable *a priori* that those, who imposed the limit and threatened that to transgress it would be considered a *casus belli*, should not, at any rate in the regions most exposed to aggression, make it so strong that it would assist them in

enforcing the arrangement. An examination of the several parts of each of the great barriers described and the record of the circumstances under which some of them were thrown up show that they were expected to aid in resisting invasion. A line of flags may sufficiently indicate a frontier, which all parties are willing or anxious to respect; but, as wattle set with gorse and daubed with tar, or a barbed wire, certainly suggests physical difficulties thrown in the way of trespass across a boundary hedge, so high banks, with palisading on top, and fortified places at intervals all along them, do seem to indicate an intention of defending the boundary on the part of those who put them up.

I will now briefly notice the historical evidence as to the lines of demarcation along this belt of country, pointing out to which of the above-mentioned constructions each may be tentatively referred.

There were on the north of the lines the Selgoouai (Solwayians) and the Otalinoi, who between them held the south of Scotland. These were probably separated from one another by the "Black Dyke." They were confronted on the other side of the "four dykes" by two tribes of the Brigantes. Now it is almost certain that these warlike tribes had some strong boundary between them, and there we have the Southern lines of "the Vallum" from their character and position just such as we should expect. The difficulty of assigning a frontage to them makes this suggestion all the more probable, as the custody of the boundary and the advantage of standing on the defensive along it may often have changed hands, and modifications of parts of it at any rate may thus have been found necessary.

Then Agricola advanced, cautiously at first, with strong camps to fall back on all along his route. He conquered, and enclosed the country of the Brigantes within his forts. Of course he built these outside or north of the great boundary that marked off the still unconquered northern tribes.

And there they are at intervals, now forming part of the stone wall, though probably when Agricola first constructed them they were only earthworks. Hadrian must have a share

in the work assigned to him, and there is the turf wall just discovered by Mr Bates, which connected the forts, but is now mostly obscured, or exactly covered, by later works. Severus repaired Hadrian's work, and perhaps as at Wall Bowers ran a connecting turf wall along a slightly different line.

Some one rebuilt the walls of Agricola's earth camps in stone. In the towns that sprung up along this strongly held frontier, there were all the appliances of Roman civilization and luxury. Grand buildings in unwallied towns were common in pacified Britain. Therefore, when later on the towns had been destroyed, there were plenty of dressed stones for building the walls, and among them the ornaments and altars of the earlier more quiet time. So along the Roman wall. Some one, at some time, before the great stone wall was built, fortified Agricola's frontier camps with stone walls; the camps became towns, and the repaired and modified turf wall of Hadrian connected them together. Then some one at some time built the great wall, and the ruins of unwallied towns furnished part of the building material for the camps and the great "Murus". I much incline to the view at which Mr Bates seems to be arriving that the Murus is of very late date, and indeed on almost every point I cannot help accepting the opinion of that shrewd observer and judicial interpreter of the border land, and I look forward with great interest to the exposition of his more matured opinions, which is shortly to appear.

J. W. CLARK, M.A., *Registrar*, exhibited some objects from Somaliland, which he presented to the Society.

At a general meeting, 7 November 1895, at 4.30 p.m.,
W. M. FAWCETT, M.A., President, in the Chair:

A letter from Mrs Babington was read, and it was agreed that it should be inserted in the Minutes.

Dr Clark made a Communication on

BISHOP BATEMAN.

It was decided by the Council to defer the publication of this paper in order that the documents illustrating the life of Bishop Bateman might be collated with duplicates at Rome.

Monday, November 25, 1895, at 8.30 p.m., W. M. FAWCETT, M.A., President, in the Chair.

M. R. JAMES, Litt.D., made the following Communications :

(1) ON THE PAINTINGS FORMERLY IN THE CHOIR AT PETERBOROUGH.

Although there is no European country which has kept so many of its mediaeval institutions in working order as England, yet England is poorer than many of its neighbours in respect of the external fittings and accessories of those institutions. Our Cathedrals and Capitular bodies and our Universities exist, and are doing their work on the same lines at least as those which were laid down for them centuries ago ; many of our ancient castles are still inhabited by the descendants of those who built them ; and the country is still full of hospitals, almshouses and small establishments of the kind, some of which can trace their history back five or six hundred years. On the other hand, the Englishman returning from a visit to Amiens, Chartres, or Troyes, is apt to feel very keenly the poverty of his own country in such matters as painted glass, statues and bas-reliefs, ancient vestments and plate.

We all know how and why these splendours departed from us in the first instance, and we can appreciate the necessity of

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