

ART. XX.—*Earthworks in Cumberland.* By R. S. FERGUSON, F.S.A.

Read at Egremont, August 30th, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to bring under the notice of this Society various earthworks, which have thus far escaped the record which they deserve. To some of them my attention was first called by Mr. Robinson, of Maryport, who used the spade with valuable results on many of the sites.

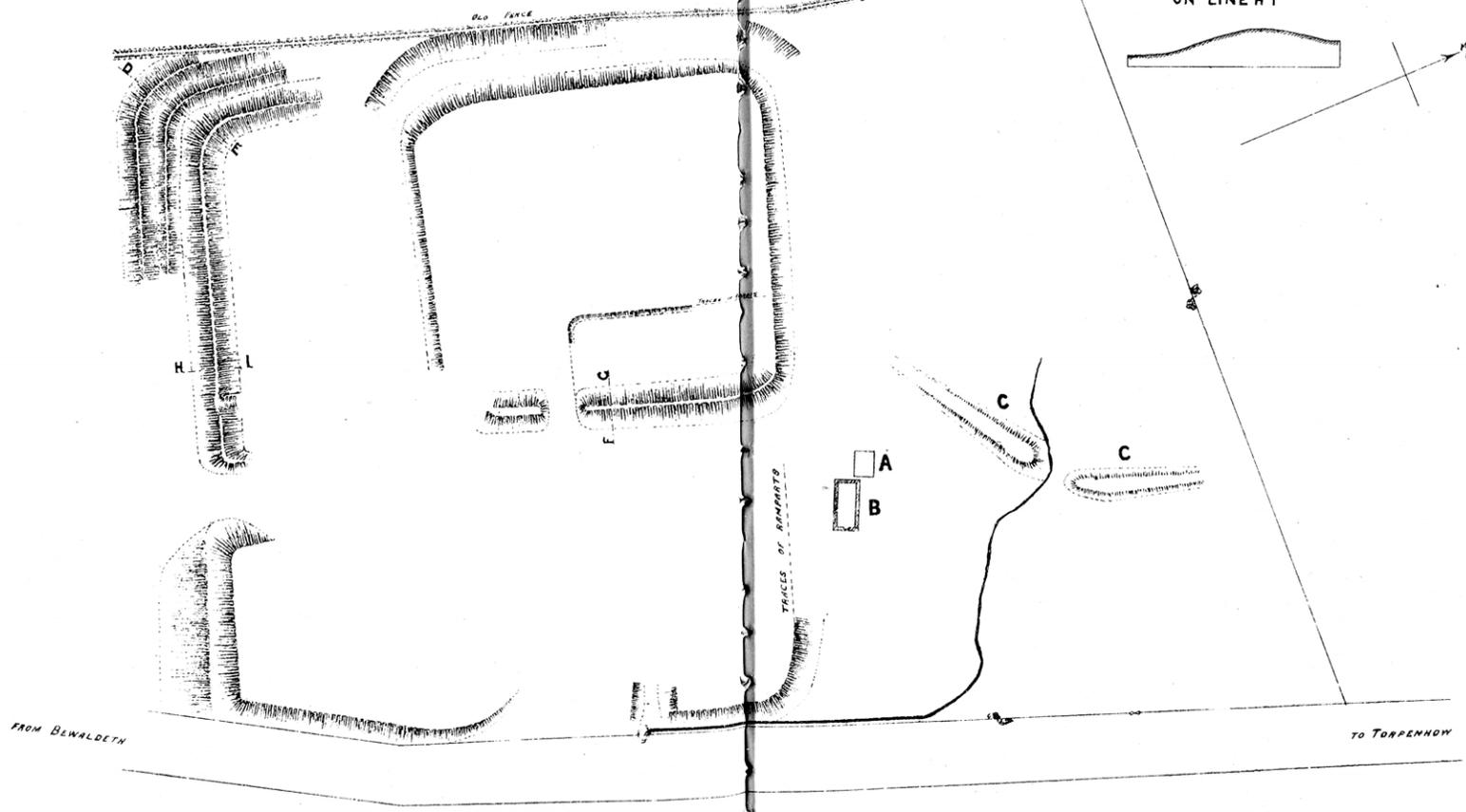
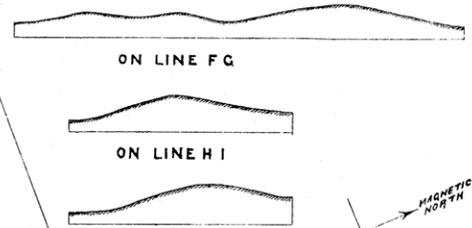
AUGHERTREE FELL, *Prehistoric period.*

The Ordnance Map marks three circular camps on Aughertree Fell, near Ireby, in central Cumberland. Circular enclosures are not uncommon in the north. Besides the large one at Mayborough near Penrith, there is one near Kirkby Stephen; another near Hayton, Carlisle; one called Tower Tye in Naworth Park; instances also exist at Triermain, at Haltwhistle, at Walwick Chesters, in Yorkshire, in Wales, &c., at Howbury Camp in Bedfordshire. Their use has, locally, been much disputed, some authorities being of opinion that they are pre-historic, and have protected settlements of neolithic men; others that they are of later date, and are mere cattle kraals. Some may be the one; some the other. But Mr. Robinson seems to have proved the Aughertree Fell circles to be pre-historic, for in a tumulus near he has found no less than twelve urns of the usual British type, which as yet are not dry enough to be fully examined, or their contents (calcined fragments of bone) diagnosed.

The three Aughertree circles are not on the top of a hill, but on the slope of one. Each is about 85 yards in diameter, and is surrounded by a ditch, which must once have been six feet deep, the earth from it forming a rampart within

CAMP ON SOUTH EAST SLOPE OF CARMOT.

SECTIONS OF RAMPARTS
ON LINE D E



SURVEYED BY JOSEPH CARTMELL A.M.I.C.E. DECEMBER 1881.

within the ditch. Such ditch and rampart is no mere fence of a cattle kraal against beasts; it was destined to keep out man, and when palisaded must have been a stiff nut for a foe to crack. Each circle has but one entrance; one, however, seems to have a supplementary enclosure at one side of it, and this circle is divided into compartments by radiating turf walls, similar to the stone ones, at Hugill, near Ings.* The entrance to one circle is rudely paved.

From the vicinity of the tumulus, we may conjecture its connection with the circles, and hence conclude them to be pre-historic. Other tumuli must have existed in the vicinity, but the external traces have perished under sub-aerial denudation.

The discovery of urns was made while the writer was attending the Bedford meeting of the Institute, and hence his information is not quite so full as he could wish. No stone or other implements, or flints were found, though carefully looked for. The urns will probably be exhibited when the Institute meet in Carlisle in 1882, and their contents will be examined by competent observers. They were arranged in a circle round the centre of the tumulus.

CAERMOT, *Roman period.*

The large Roman camp on the south-east slope of Caermot has been overlooked by the Ordnance Surveyors, though it is described by West (in his Guide to the Lakes), and is, probably, the "camp in the parish of Ireby," mentioned by Camden and by Blome. The credit of its re-discovery belongs to Mr. Jackson, F.S.A., and it has been described by him in the 2nd volume of the Transactions of this Society, where he points out that the Roman road from Old Carlisle to Keswick runs through the camp.

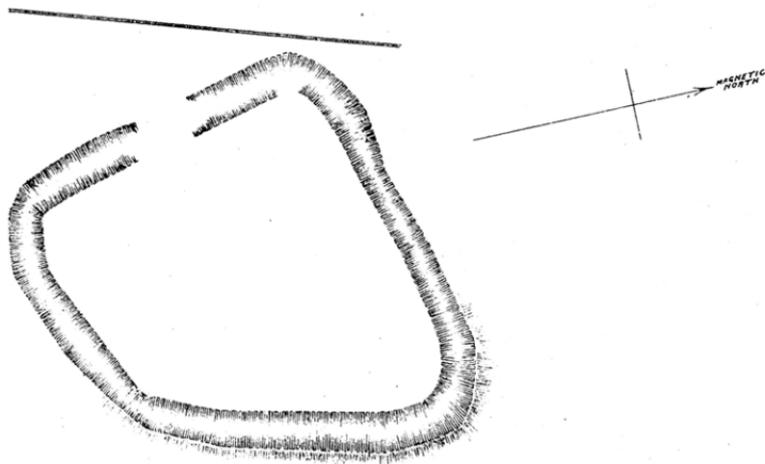
The following facts are the results of a careful survey

* Ante p. 84.

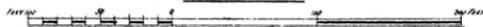
made by the writer. For the plan he is indebted to Mr. Joseph Cartmell, C.E. The camp is square, with rounded angles, about 160 yards by 140. It is defended by three ramparts of earth and two ditches, extremely well defined on all sides but the east, where the modern road to Bewaldeth has encroached upon them. There is a gate in the centre of each side, and the Roman road to Keswick runs through the north and south gates. Apparently this road went to Keswick by the east side of Bassenthwaite Lake; it is to be wished some local antiquary would trace it. The spade and pricker did not reveal the presence of stone in the ramparts beyond fragments, and the paucity of remains found indicate that the camp was not long occupied—probably merely while the road was being made. The garrison was then reduced from a cohort to a century, and a new camp was formed in the north-west angle of the old one. For two sides of the new camp, the triple ramparts of the old camp served; on the east side a ditch and rampart was made immediately west of the road which bisected the old camp. On the south of the new camp, a ditch and rampart was also made, on the site of the road, through the new camp, joining the east and west gates. The west ditches of the old camp were continued and turned through the old west gate, one being continued as the ditch just mentioned; the external one being stopped immediately after rounding the angle. The engineers seem to have thought it unnecessary to defend the new camp with the triple ramparts and double ditches of the old, and so to have contemplated a mere temporary occupation. Such seems to me to have been the duration of occupation of both camps—within whose area the foundations of buildings have not yet been found. But immediately outside of the north gate of the large camp Mr. Robinson bared the foundations of two small rectangular chambers, A and B on the plan, the lower courses of masonry being in, but they do not present any very distinctive Roman character.

The

CAMP ON NORTHERN PEAK
OF
CAERMOT.



SCALE OF FEET.



SURVEYED BY JOSEPH CARTMELL A.M.I.C.E. DECEMBER, 1881.

The buildings, be they Roman or not, have been roofed with lead, and have been destroyed by fire. Mr. Robinson took out over three stones of lead that had run into the soil, and more yet remains. Quantities of iron nails, in a decomposed condition, were also found, and much charcoal.

At B and C the soil has been disturbed: on being dug into it was found to be full of half-made or decayed fragments of brick, probably the debris of brickmaking.

By the kindness of Mr. Cartmell I also give a plan of the smaller camp on the summit of the northern peak of Caermot. It was, as Mr. Jackson suggests, the *mons exploratorius* of the larger camp.

SNITTLEGARTH, *Roman period?*

A "camp" is marked on the Ordnance Map near Snittlegarth: it is visible from the Caermot large camp, and is distant about a mile to the east. It is a most singular place. On a plateau on a hill, well sheltered on three sides by rising ground, and with a lovely view towards the south, a rectangular piece of ground, eighty-eight feet by thirty-one feet, has been isolated by a trench with regular scarp and counter-scarp. This trench is twelve feet broad at bottom, twenty-three feet at top, and the scarp and counter-scarp each nine feet, while the depth is five feet. The work is as fresh as if done yesterday. The profile is certainly Roman, but the spade revealed no pottery, and there is no trace of any entrance.

THISTLEBOTTOM.

A mile or so from Aughtertree Fell, at Thistlebottom, exists a small square Roman camp, which has not yet been examined. A larger one is near Overwater. The position of these two in, and their connection with, the general Roman system of grasp on Cumberland, remains to be worked out; the connecting roads must be explored. The Romans would be well acquainted with the mineral wealth
of

of Caldbeck, and would secure the approaches to that district, as well as to the Keswick mines.

All the earthworks dealt with in this paper have up to now been in the central district of Cumberland. We shift the venue to the eastern portion of the county, and the time to another period.

DENTON HALL, *English period.*

This site seems to be that of an English homestead. A large four-sided area (or the "base court"), about eighty-five yards on its longest side, is enclosed by a very broad ditch, about $8\frac{1}{2}$ yards wide—outside of which on the S. and E. sides is a low rampart with small ditch beyond. To the north there is no rampart, and the ground rises a little outside the enclosure. Adjoining the west side is a smaller enclosure in which is a mound, and some farm buildings. Within these is concealed the lower story of a pele tower, which is now the dairy. Its walls on the ground level are about eight feet thick, tapering to six feet at the first floor level; its internal dimensions are nineteen feet by fifteen feet.

At OVER DENTON CHURCH, near the Old Vicarage, is a place marked "camp" on the Ordnance Map, a small square enclosure, but by it there is a much destroyed mound in a circular or oval ditch, about fourteen yards in diameter. There would be an English homestead, and the square enclosure is its base court. The reputed Saxon village at the High Mains, west of Over Denton Church, is probably another such place. Moated mounds also exist, or have done so, at Irthington and Bleatarn. All these places lie along the Roman wall, and by its roads the English invaders came from the eastern coast.

DOWN HALL, AIKTON.

We seem to have here another "Englishman's homestead." The site is a long narrow kidney-shaped hill,
running

running east and west. A square platform has been formed by cutting deep ditches across the eastern and smaller hill, and two more, one to its north and one to its south. The western ditch is now the deep hollow road that leads to the church: the farm buildings stand in the southern ditch, but the east and north ditches are fresh and deep. An outer baily has been included in a ditch, which to the north and east is very perfect, but is obliterated on the south and west. This ditch is eighteen yards broad at the bottom and twenty-four yards at the top, and has scarp and counter scarp of about three yards. A stream runs along it, and it is crossed by a modern causeway. The north side of the outer bailey is about two hundred paces in length.
