

ART. XI.— *The Roman Milestone at Middleton.* By W. THOMPSON WATKIN.

Read at Caldbeck, August 22nd, 1883.

IN the year 1836 a labourer whilst ploughing on land belonging to the late Mr. W. Moore of Grimeshill,* struck upon a large stone slightly beneath the surface of the ground. Upon examination, it was found to be a cylindrical column, and was ordered by Mr. Moore to be dug out. It proved to be a Roman milestone in fair preservation, five feet eight inches high, and four feet in circumference and bearing the following letters

M.P. LIII.

i.e. *M(ilia) P(assuum) liii*, thus making fifty-three Roman miles from some station. Mr. Moore had the stone removed and set upright in an adjoining plantation, which is said to be about 200 yards from the spot where it was found. He added a modern inscription in Latin, supplied by Dr. Lingard, the celebrated historian, to the following effect :

SOLO ERVTVM
RESTITVIT
GVL MOORE
AN MDCCCXXXVI

by this means recording the fact of its re-erection by his orders.

It is difficult to say what Roman station is referred to as being fifty-three miles distant. If we consider the route was taken from Middleton to the junction of the "Maiden Way" with the second Iter of Antoninus, just south of

* Another version is that it was found in digging to make a fence for the plantation where it is preserved.

Kirkby

Kirkby Thore, and thence to Carlisle, that city suits very well. But on the other hand if the "Maiden Way" is taken for the whole distance, Caervoran (*Magna*) also suits, and again we do not know whether a station fifty-three miles to the south may not be meant.

One thing we can gather, that the Roman road up the Lune valley, must either exist under ground, at the spot where the stone was discovered, or must form the sub-structure of the modern road, which runs about 100 yards from the present site of the stone.

This Roman road, connecting Overborough (*Galacum*) with Borrow Bridge (*Alone*) is visible on Middleton Common, about a mile and a half to the south, and if continued northwards would pass the spot where the stone was found.

Until the present writer treated of this inscription in the *Archæological Journal*, Vol. xxxi, p. 353-4, it had remained unnoticed by antiquaries, but subsequently it has occasionally attracted attention. One or two writers have read VIII instead of LIII as the number of miles given, but only an inspection of the stone is necessary to prove that the latter is the correct reading.* The stone must have been previously noticed as forming an obstacle to the plough, though it was not dug out, for many marks made by that implement, are observable upon it.

Another broken Roman milestone, of which only the base remains, seems to be in the hedge by the roadside near Thurland church. The inscribed part will I think be found lying buried in the adjacent ground.

* The Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archæological Society visited this milestone on June 27, 1883, when special attention was directed to the question of the figures. They are LIII.