

ART. XXVIII.—*Two Moated Mounds, Liddell and Aldingham.* By THE WORSHIPFUL CHANCELLOR FERGUSON, F.S.A. President of the Society.

*Communicated at those places, July 23, 1885, and Sept. 13, 1887.*

WITH the English invasion of this country, arose the necessity for a new style of fortification suitable to the social conditions of the new comers. The British encampments, intended for the residence of a tribe having all things in common, were, both in position and arrangements, utterly unsuited to the new inhabitants: so were the fortified barracks, or camps of the Romans. The English did not settle down as tribes, nor as great garrisons, they settled as families dispersed up and down the country: they required something suitable for the centre and defence of a private estate, for the accommodation of the lord and his household, for the protection of the tenants generally should they be attacked, and for the safe housing, in the time of war, of their flocks and herds.

This is what the English did. First they cast up a truncated cone of earth, standing at its natural slope from 12 to even 50 or 60 feet in height. This, the "mound," "motte," or "burh"—the "mota" of our records,—was formed from the contents of a broad and deep circumscribing ditch, which indeed was the parent of the mound. Connected with the mound is a base court, sometimes circular, sometimes oval, sometimes horse-shoe shaped, occasionally square, having also a ditch and bank round it. This is not mere conjecture: we have history for it; in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, some fifty of these burhs are mentioned, and the dates of their erection with the names of their respective founders are given. Of these some score yet exist and can be identified.

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We can thus safely attribute these peculiar earthworks to the 9th and 10th centuries, and possibly to the 8th, that is to the northern settlers generally, as distinguished from the Britons and Romans. These "burhs" are found all over England, in the lowlands of Scotland, and on the marches of Wales. They may be defined as a moated mound with a table top, and a base court, also moated, either appended to one side or within which the mound stands. Mounds similar to these are found in Normandy.

On the top of one of these mounds there would be in the time of the original English settler, a wooden house built of half trunks of trees, set upright between two waling pieces at the top and bottom: there would be a palisade round the top of the mound, one round the bottom and, probably, another round the outer edge of the ditch. The base court would be also surrounded by a palisade, and there would be bridges of planks across the ditches: the base court would be occupied by huts of timber or of dab and wattle for the servants and retainers, and the bridge over the ditch of the moat would be drawn up at night, and the lord and his family thus secure against their own retainers, just as a Boer at the present time bolts out his slaves, for fear they should cut his throat in the night.

After the Norman conquest, most of these moated mounds were converted into castles of stone, as Windsor, Oxford, Lincoln, Tamworth, &c., and locally Appleby.\* Many remain: locally one at Irthington in Cumberland, one at Kirkby Lonsdale in Westmorland, and another at Black Burton in Lancashire, all which this Society has visited.

These moat hills must not be confounded with a class of mounds belonging to the same people, but used for civil purposes: they are not uncommon and are called also

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\* *Appleby Castle: its earthworks and keep*, by the President. These Transactions, volume viii., p. 382

motehills

motehills and toothhills, but they are very seldom moated and are not accompanied by base courts and enclosures. I may add (to obviate an objection) that Ducange defines "Mota," as "Collis seu tumulus cui inædificatum est castellum." Windsor Castle in mediæval Latin is "Mota de Windsore." These moated mounds generally were the *caput* of a manor, or barony, as at Irthington in Cumberland, and Black Burton in Lancashire; they may also have been talking places, as the tenants of a manor would naturally resort to the *caput* of the manor for that purpose.\*

#### LIDDELL MOAT.

We give with this paper a plan of this moated hill, reproduced from General Roy's Military Antiquities of the Romans in Britain. It is there titled "A plan and section of Liddell moat, a Roman Camp near the junction of the Liddell with the Esk."† No description of it is given in the text, beyond a suggestion, which the general hesitates to adopt, that it is the Roman "Castra Exploratorum."‡

It is thus described by Mr. Skene :

Proceeding (from the junction of the Liddell and the Esk,)§ half a mile up the south bank of the Liddel we came to what is called the Roman Camp, and which, I found, was known by no other name in the country, though it is called in the 'Statistical Account' the Moat of Liddel. It is situated on the top of a high bank overhanging the river. On the north side, the rock goes sheer down to the river. The highest point is about 160 feet above the river. On the other side it is defended by prodigious earthen ramparts, which rise from the field to a height of nearly 30 feet. The space enclosed by the great rampart measured about 38 yards from east to west, by about 55 yards from north to south. There is a smaller inner citadel measuring

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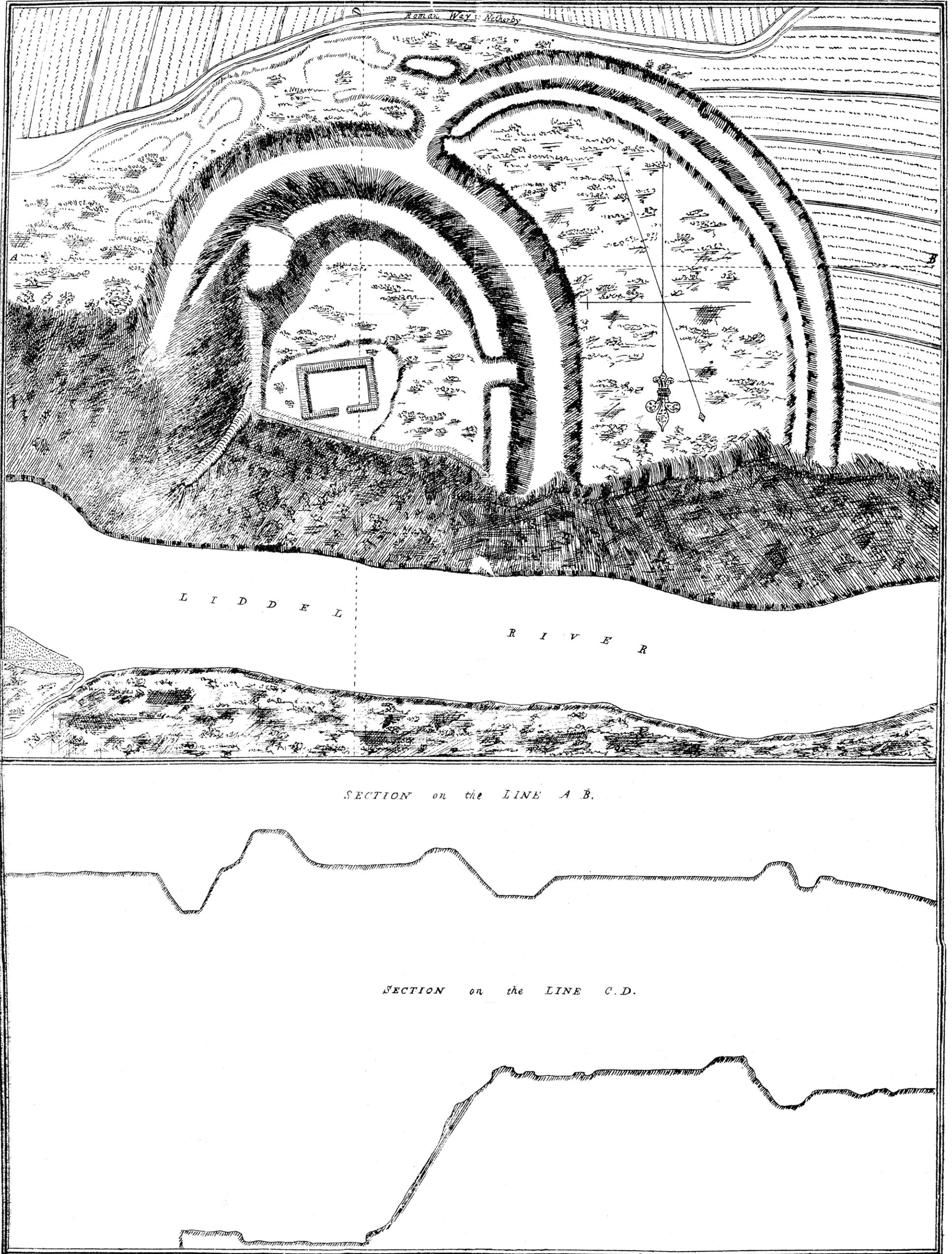
\* The above is a very brief *resume* of a portion of the second chapter of *Mediæval Military Architecture in England*, by G. T. Clark, F.S.A. London: Wyman & Sons, 1884. It should be studied by all who wish to understand this interesting class of earthworks.

† Plate xxiii.

‡ Pages 118, 119.

§ On the borders of Cumberland, near the station at Riddings junction, on the North British Railway.

PLAN and SECTION of LIDDEL-MOAT, a ROMAN POST near the junction of the LIDDEL with the ESK



13 yards by 9, and also a well in the enclosure, and on the west side there is a second great rampart. I am sorry that I am not a draughtsman, and cannot lay before you a plan or sketch of this magnificent fort. It is obviously a native strength and would well repay a visit. The view from it is magnificent. Standing on the highest point and looking north, the river Liddell and the railway wind at the base of the rock under your feet. Looking north-east, the beautifully wooded vale of the Esk opens out before you, up which the eye carries you as far as Langholm, and the bare and pastoral valley of Liddesdale extends to the north-west. In the horizon, the top of Birrenswork hill, notable for its Roman camps, is most prominent. On the west the Solway Firth stretches before you; and looking due south, the eye rests upon the Arthuret knowes, and beyond them the chain of Cumberland hills bounds the horizon.\*

These magnificent earthworks consist of a horse-shoe shaped ditch, whose heel rests on the precipitous bank, some 150 feet above the river Liddell: the earth from this ditch has been thrown inwards, so as to form an inner rampart of nearly 30 feet in height on the east side of which is the mound: the heel of the horse-shoe is closed by a smaller rampart; from its toe another ditch sweeps round to the west, and runs out on the precipice; the earth from this ditch has been utilised for the formation of a large inner rampart and a smaller outer one. The foundations of a rectangular building exist in the inner ward. These earthworks have nothing Roman about them, nor are they British: they much remind the spectator of those at Appleby Castle,† and may be safely assigned to the same period, that is to some time between the eighth or ninth century, and the Norman conquest of the district by the Red King; in these earthworks we have the fortified dwelling of the great thane or franklin, whom William Rufus found in possession, and who had to make way for some Norman baron, probably Turgis Brundis, first lord of

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\* *Site of the Battle of Ardderyd*, W. F. Skene, F.S.A., Proceedings Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. vi., pp. 91, 97.

† These Transactions, vol. viii., p. 382.

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the barony of Lyddale.\* But the Norman lords of Lyddale never translated the earthworks of Liddell Moat into the stone walls of a Liddell Castle: the early barons had little money! the barony was but of small value, and it at an early period fell to the Crown, who needed no residential castle, while, for military purposes, the castles of Carlisle and Bewcastle sufficed. Ultimately it, or some place hard by, became the residence of a branch of the Greymes, and the foundations in the inner ward probably mark their dwelling place. In the year 1553 "Fergus Greyme of the Mote of Lydysdale in the Countie of Cumberland gentleman" had a grant of arms from William Harvey, Norroy King of Arms, as a reward for his true and faithful services done in the reigns of King Henry VIII and Edward VI.

The site is admirably suited for its purpose: towards Scotland and the north, it is defended by the precipices of the Liddell, which bounds the barony; towards the other sides are long easy slopes, up which cattle could easily be driven, entering the shelter of the great earth ramparts, and their palisading by an opening left towards the south.

Mr. Skene continues his account:

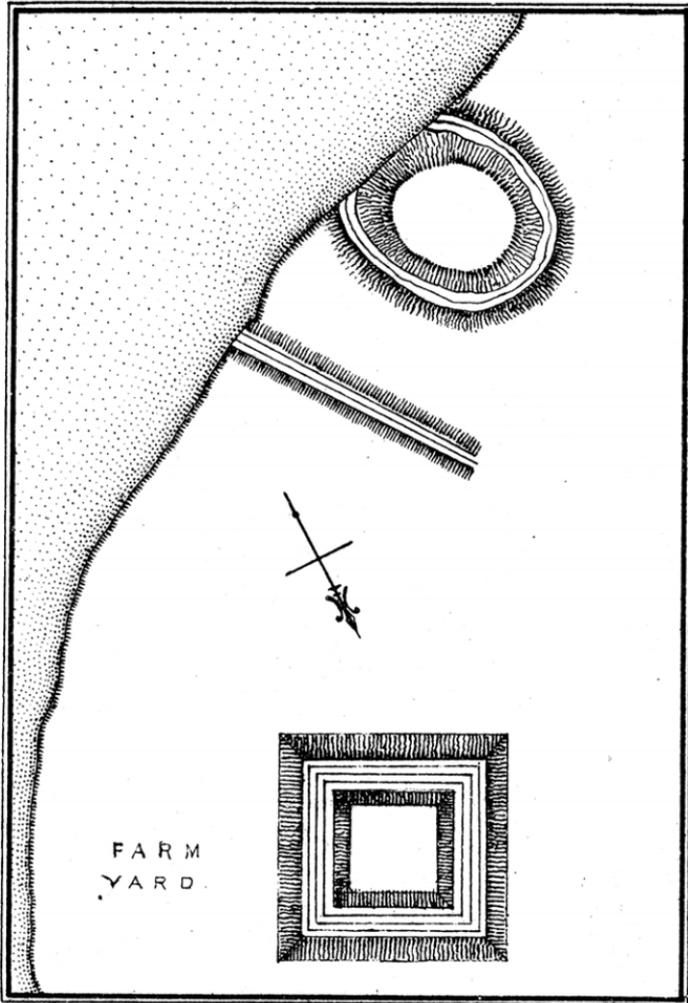
On the east side of the fort the ground slopes down hill till it comes to the level of the river at a place called Riddings, not quite half a mile off. Between the fort and Carwhinelow is a field extending to the ridge along Carwhinelow, which is about half a mile. The old farmer of the Upper Moat, who accompanied us, informed me that the tradition of the country was that a great battle was fought here between the Romans, and the Picts who held the camp, in which the Romans were victorious: that the camp was defended by 300 men, who surrendered it, and were all put to the sword and buried in the orchard of the Upper Moat, at a place which he showed me.

This probably points to some great fight between the Romano-Britons, and the English thane or franklin of Liddell, and his retainers and tenants.

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\* The Pipe Rolls of Cumberland, edited by Hodgson, 1847, p. lxi.

Sketch of ANCIENT WORKS Upon the site of  
ALDINGHAM HALL.



From West's Furness.

## ALDINGHAM MOAT.

This is the second visit that this Society has paid to this interesting place : we were here ten years ago, and we had an animated discussion as to what this mound was, and who erected it ; turning lately to the discussion,\* I felt rather inclined to blush for the nonsense we certainly talked, to which I myself contributed a good deal. However, in the ten years that have elapsed since our last visit, I, for one, have learnt much. I have seen many mounds similar to this : I have sat at the feet of G. T. Clark, and I have made a study of his great work on "Mediæval Military Architecture."

On the occasion of our last visit to Aldingham Moat, accounts of it were read by one of our members, taken from West's *Antiquities of Furness*, and from Dr. Barber's *Prehistoric Remains of Furness and Cartmel* ; these are printed in the third volume of our *Transactions*, and may be referred to with advantage. We reproduce West's accurate description of the remains :

At a little distance from the present farm-house, anciently called Aldingham Moat, is a small square plot surrounded by a ditch, upon which Aldingham, the residence of the Flemings family, is supposed to have stood. It lies at the foot of a gentle slope, which, rising to the south-east, terminates in a precipice formed by the waste of the sea. On the crest of the precipice, are the remains of an artificial mount of a considerable height, having apparently been somewhat oval at its base, and surrounded by a deep trench, between which and the insulated square plot, at the foot of the hill, is a long straight ditch, erroneously called a fish pond. The intention and antiquity of these works are uncertain. No traces of foundations are perceptible upon the isolated square ; but at some little distance from the south-east corner, the foundations of some kind of buildings were not long ago demolished.

The conical hill is about 30 feet in height from the hill on which it stands, and about 96 from the sea level : the

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\* These *Transactions*, volume iii., p. xxix.

ditch

ditch round it is about 20 feet broad. The plateau within the square inclosure has been heightened with the earth from the ditch round it.

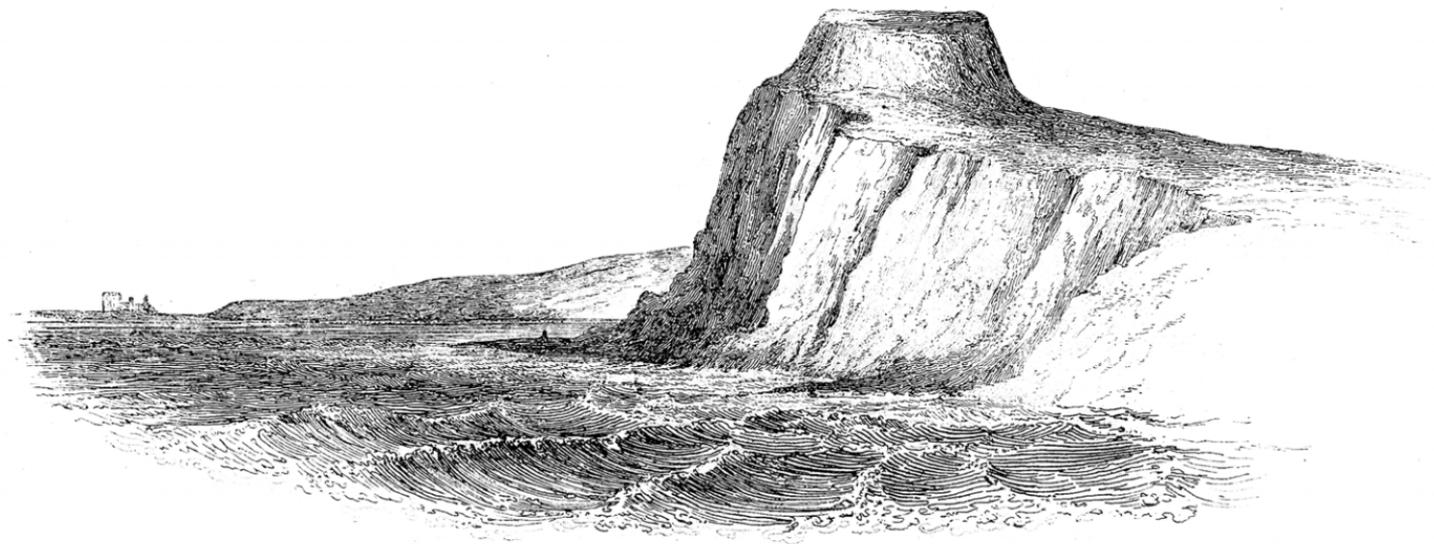
Dr. Barber says :

That the great mound just mentioned is nothing more than a barrow or burial mound there cannot be the least doubt, because by the directions of the late Colonel Braddyll of Conishead Priory, a small shaft was sunk down the centre of the hill from the top, and portions of human bones were brought to light after which they were replaced and the opening filled up.

We are so fortunate as to have here to-day an account of these excavations in a letter from the Rev. T. Tolming of Egton, Ulverston, addressed to our member Mr. Tosh. He says :

More than forty year have elapsed since Mr. Gwilym and I opened the mound with very interesting results. Unfortunately we could not proceed with our work at the time, and the farmer refused to have our cutting remain open till we could conveniently resume it. We wrought hard for one day and discovered enough to confirm the opinion we held that it was the ruin of a very ancient sacrificial altar ; it had been well constructed, and its condition manifested signs of hasty and violent disruption, for instance a pipe made of very quaint tiles which crossed it, still contained the materials which must have been passing at the time, and which being hermetically closed had become consolidated into a dark black substance which filled the tube. Some of the fragments of the pipe we sent to one of the great Societies. I think to the Archæological Society. We had a reply saying they were very interesting but the S. could not explain the motive for their peculiar construction, which was that the interior of the tube was rifled. We also found bones that had been burnt, also a boar's tusk. And Col. Braddyll who gave us a call picked up the only piece of metal we found ; he called it a bit of scale armour but I doubt it. On the sea face we cut into two steps at the base of the mound, possibly they might have gone round the whole mound but the day closed with us and we never resumed our work.

This is unsatisfactory : I confess I do not understand the sacrificial altar theory : nor is there any proof that the mound



*The Moot or Moat Aldingham.*

mound is sepulchral in its origin ; in fact it has not been cut through to the original surface of the ground, where the original interment would be : any interment near the top would be a subsequent insertion : the sepulchral theory and the sacrificial altar theory may be well dismissed.

I think that this is the " mound " " motte," or " burh," (the " Mota " of our records) of the family of the Aldingas—the fortified hame of the Aldingas, as the name Aldingham tells.\* It was probably also their talking place. I imagine it was also the *caput* of the manor of Muchlands or Aldingham,† whose lords at first resided on the top of the moat itself. I would further imagine that for shelter they removed their wooden house from that breezy location to the square camp, which tradition says was their early residence. When they grew wealthy enough to wish for a castle of stone, they sought another site.

One word more as to the ditch called the fish pond : this has probably been part of the ditch of the base court, which I fancy has been washed away by the sea, together with part of the moat itself.

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\* The Saxon in England by Kemble, vol. i., p. 456.

† Muchlands or Gleaston Castle by Dr. Hayman, see the Antiquary, vol. v., p. 102.