

ART. XXX.—*The Ancient Village near Threlkeld.* Three letters from C. W. DYMOND, F.S.A.

*Read at Langholm, July 12th, 1898.*

I.

HIGH WRAY, AMBLESIDE, 11/9/97.

DEAR CHANCELLOR FERGUSON:—“While spending three days this week at Keswick, I took the opportunity of seeing the prehistoric village on Threlkeld Knot, of whose existence I was unaware before seeing your notice of it in the Hugill letter.\* The visit had a twofold object—to see the place, and to be able to report to you if it is really, as you had been led to apprehend, threatened with destruction by the quarrying operations which are carried on near by. I do not know whether you yourself have been on the ground; but if you have not, you may be interested in learning that the whole of the ancient remains occupy a portion of a northern slope of the fell; and for the greater portion of their length the ground rises northward towards the quarry-face, which is thus cut in a bossy hill standing out at the foot of the fell. The quarry has been worked for fifteen years; and I estimated that if this goes on at the same rate, it will take upwards of a generation to reach the edge of the ancient remains. But by the time the dip is reached, the face will have become so low as probably to be not worth working. The remains consist chiefly of a number of irregular and some rectangular enclosures, with visible wall faces here and there; several straight spurs running down the hill; two or three—perhaps more—hut circles; an enclosed spring; and a small collection of cairns at the east end, on lower ground. The place is moderately well preserved, but does not promise to yield much of interest to the digger; as nothing would be found below the surface but a few chance relics, except in the cairns; and those at Barnscar and elsewhere would be much more worth opening. I am told the place is called Setterah, or some such spelling. Is this a corrupted form of the word ‘Saeter’—a Norwegian upland dwelling?

\* These Transactions vol. xiv. pp. 460-469, p. 463 n.

## II.

HIGH WRAY, AMBLESIDE, 24/9/97.

DEAR CHANCELLOR FERGUSON :—Since receiving yours, I have referred to Mr. Clifton Ward's 'Notes on Archæological Remains in the Lake District,' which contains a very interesting description of the Threlkeld village.\* It had previously escaped my notice or memory. The doubt had occurred to me whether what is now to be seen is all that was formerly there, and whether Threlkeld Knot, which your Hugill letter mentioned as the site, is the large round projecting boss in which the quarry is now being worked. In a cursory scamper over this hill, I saw no ancient remains; and if this was the site of the main enclosures, these must have almost or quite disappeared. But a careful reading of Mr. Ward's description leads to the conclusion that what he saw was what we visited under the guidance of Mr. Crosse. The radial spur banks running down towards the neck between the quarry hill and the northern fell side slope, rather strengthen this impression, which I hope is the right one, that the village is practically complete and intact, so far as modern speculation is concerned.

## III.

To the Editor of *The Antiquary*.

SIR,—Your issue for this month gives the substance of a brief report which I made last year to the President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society on the state of the ancient village near Threlkeld. This notice concludes thus :—"The place is called 'Settrah,' and he (Mr. Dymond) asked if this is a corrupt form of the word 'Saeter,' a Norwegian upland dwelling." At the date of the report, I had not been able to find where rested the authority for the said name, which, if well established as ancient, might, it was thought, have been given to the inclosures by Scandinavian settlers—even though these might not have built, or even used them.

And so the matter stood until a few days ago, when I received a letter on the Threlkeld village from a former vicar of the parish, mentioning, among other things, that, after reading "Feats on the

\* *Ibid.* Vol. iii. pp. 241-265, pp. 247-8.

Fiord," he was so impressed with the apparent similarity of these remains to the Saeters therein described by Miss Martineau that he "had some success in giving the town a name"—implying that this was the one in question.

It turns out, then, that Settrah, or Setterah, is only a fancy name given to the ruins within the last few years ; and thus of no evidential value.

I am, yours &c.,

C. W. DYMOND.

*High Wray, Ambleside,  
27th August, 1898.*

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