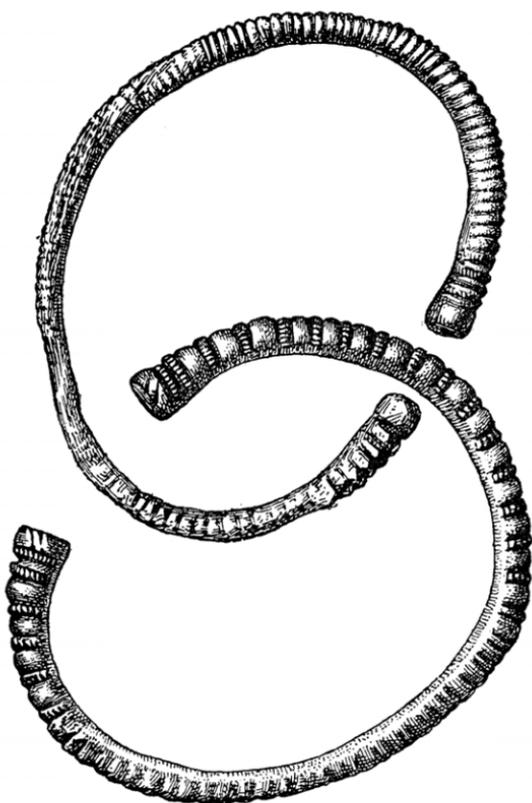


ART. III.—*Two Bronze Armlets from Thirlmere.* By
W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

Exhibited at Carlisle, April 30th, 1903.

THE two bronze armlets, figured opposite from my drawings, were found in December, 1902, at the foot of Rough Crag, Thirlmere, by Joseph and Solomon Grisedale, while getting material for repairing the road. The site is on the south-western side of the lake, halfway between Hause Gill and Launchy or Deergarth Gill, and nearly opposite Clark's Lowp. Rough Crag is the last of a series of high bluffs on the right hand as you go south from Keswick by the new road past Armboth. After crossing Launchy Gill you skirt the foot of Bull Crag, known by its vertical "chimney," and then the road winds into a broad scree gully between Bull Crag and Rough Crag, which advances upon the lower ground so that the road has to take an outward curve to round the precipitous foot of the rock, here more than 400 feet below the brow, with a fall of about one in one. This is by no means vertical, but gives the impression of almost perpendicular height, when seen either from above or below. The armlets were found in the scree gully, less than twenty yards above the road, and close under the rocks. On the six-inch Ordnance Map of 1867 the point is nearly on the 600 feet contour, about one-third of the distance from the *R* of "Rough Crag" to the *g* of "Bull Crag."

Mr. R. D. Marshall, who acquired the armlets through Mr. W. Hodgson, the road surveyor, and kindly lends them for exhibition, tells me that one was found only a few inches below the fern roots; the other came down amongst the shilley which the workmen were getting.



BRONZE ARMLETS FOUND AT THIRLMERE.

Also that several bones were found about the place, but they were recognised as sheep bones.

The armllets are penannular with expanded ends; one measuring $2\frac{7}{8}$ by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, with simple incised beading, narrow and close set, not continued for $\frac{1}{8}$ inch on the side of the ring which would come next the wrist. The other measures $2\frac{3}{4}$ by $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter; it is ornamented with alternate broad and narrow beads, the narrow beads being again broken up by transverse cuttings; this armllet is also plain on the side next the wrist. On being exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries of London they were pronounced to be of Late Celtic or Early Iron Age.

There can have been no interment in the scree where they were found; they must have fallen from above. There is no sign of any tumulus or habitation on the grassy ground above the crag, as on other crags along this side of Thirlmere. But looking up from any point on the road to the northward, you can see a whitish patch in a niche of the rocks, above the birch bushes which fringe the precipice and beneath the actual summit, which is surrounded by a ruinous fence, looking from a distance like a dark curved line overhanging the rocks, with the white patch in the centre of its arch. By entering the iron gate in the roadside east of Rough Crag and climbing the rough slope, a ledge of rock can be found, leading round the shoulder and across the main face of the precipice, with a well defined and apparently artificial path, to the niche with the white patch. Here sheep sometimes take shelter, and the path is trodden by them and by shepherds in search of them; but this does not seem to account for all the aspects of the place. The white patch is a rock face, overhanging a platform about 18 by 12 feet, strewn with stones unlike a mere rock fall. Many fragments seem to have been burnt, and though there is no traceable house wall the ground has all the appearance of a very old inhabited site. One big rock

has fallen so as to make a cave, about a dozen feet in horizontal length, and just large enough for a boy to crawl into. From the platform rude steps lead up to a grass slope by which the summit can be reached; so that, if this were really an ancient stronghold, it could be attacked from below or above only by rather difficult and dizzy approaches. Anything or any person falling from the platform would light at the spot, 400 feet beneath, where the armlets were found.

The place resembles Ree Castle in the Watendlath Valley, though on a very much smaller scale, and in its position it is like Buck Castle in the Shoulthwaite Valley, overlooking the country far and wide. It would be more or less visible from below unless the birches, which now stop short of it, once grew in front of the platform; but in any case a small stone bield would be far from conspicuous. From it are seen all the Thirlmere Valley, Legberthwaite, St. John's Vale, Armbboth Moor with its many old buildings, and the course of the ancient road beneath. It would make an ideal retreat for robbers or refuge in time of war. As Mr. R. D. Marshall said at the time of the discovery, one can imagine all sorts of romantic reasons for the presence of these bracelets—evidently a pair from a lady's hands—at the foot of that precipice; and I think the path and platform above may give us some clue to the mystery.
