

ART. XIV.—*The Earthwork on Allen Knott, Applethwaite (Windermere)*. By R. G. COLLINGWOOD, B.A.

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ALLEN KNOTT is a hill standing rather more than 700 feet above sea level and overlooking the valley of Troutbeck. To the west, the ground falls abruptly into the valley; to the south, a gentler slope leads to the farm of Orrest; to the north and east the hill is separated from the central fells of Applethwaite Common by a slack through which runs the road from Ings to Troutbeck. Immediately north of the summit of Allen Knott this road is joined by another coming straight down the valley from Hag Gill, into the head of which the Roman road descends from High Street. This road, known as Irishman's Lane, is of modern construction; but it represents by far the most probable line of the Roman road.

The site of the Roman road from Kendal to Ambleside has not been hitherto fixed. It is unlikely that it went so far out of the straight line as to follow the modern route by Troutbeck Bridge, and it seems in every way more probable that it ran north-westerly through Ings, on which line the names Broadgate and Causey suggest its presence. A short section of Roman road is still visible in a field on Causey Farm, not far from the modern road from Ings to Troutbeck; but this is nearly at right angles to the modern road.

If these two identifications are correct, the Roman roads met at a point barely 200 yards from and overlooked by the summit of Allen Knott. This makes the site an important strategical point: and the name of the nearest

farm (Orrest, Icelandic *orrösta*, battle) indicates a tradition of fighting close at hand.

Of the earthwork itself, the existing remains probably represent barely one-half. The north-west rampart is complete. It crowns a ridge of the Brathay flags of which the hill is composed, running roughly north-east and south-west; this ridge falls in steep crags to the north-west, and upon the other side commands the more or less level ground within the earthwork. Where this ridge ends westward, the rampart bends to the south, crossing the gap between the first ridge and a hummock forming part of the second, and thence to a fence-wall, beyond which it has been entirely obliterated by cultivation. The north-east rampart, on the gentler slope leading down to the road, is less well marked; but there may have been a second rampart here, one section of which is still visible spanning the gap between two rock-ridges at a point within the northern angle. This, however, differs from the rest of the construction in containing large unworked stones.

There are no traces of a fosse or of internal buildings, and the whole of the south-eastern rampart, together with the greater part of the south-western, has been destroyed. The only existing sign of an entrance is a path, the lower part of which is cut in the rock, leading up the north-western crags to the western corner at the point where the rampart crosses the gap mentioned above; but the rampart is not interrupted.

Granting the connexion of these remains with the Roman roads, it does not necessarily follow, as Codrington and others have supposed, that they are of Roman origin. The fort is about 460 feet long by at least 320, that being the length of the existing portion of the north-east rampart. It was therefore probably nearer in size to the great forts along the Wall than to such constructions as Hardknott, which is closely analogous to it in situation.

If therefore it was a permanent fort, it was a place of considerable size and importance. This is completely disproved by the entire absence of finds. Half the site has been made into fields, and relics, if there were any to find, must have appeared. One of the ramparts was recently trenched through for drainage, and careful search made for any objects which might throw light on the nature of the site. The disturbed earth of the rampart was clearly distinguishable from the natural soil beneath it, but no finds were made. This would be impossible in the case of a permanent Roman fort.

There are also objections to the view that it was a temporary camp. In the first place, the rock-cut path which gives access to its western angle would be a puzzling feature. Secondly, the absence of finds would still be a difficulty. Thirdly, the character of the defences is not Roman. On the east side, where a Roman camp would show a well marked fosse, it is plain that there has never been a ditch at all, though the ground would admit of it. Also, in a Roman camp, we should expect a gate in this rampart; but there is none.

Nor does Allen Knott belong to the well-marked class of Westmorland British settlements, of which the nearest example is not two miles off, at Hugill. Such settlements often, as at Ewe Close, Crosby Ravensworth, stand in close relation to the Roman road-system. But their plan is of a type entirely distinct from that of Allen Knott, which contains no hut-circles or enclosures. It is a mere hill-fort, adapted not for permanent inhabitation but for use as occasion might demand, though, as the rock-cut path suggests, a permanent construction. The use for which it was designed is shown by its situation. No better point could have been chosen at which to resist an invader coming by the Scots' Rake or the Ravenglass road. In fact it is of the type of pelegarths, such as we know at Foldsteads and Ponsonby Infell (see these *Transactions*, N.S. ii., v.).

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The accompanying plan is based on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey, in which the earthwork is not marked. I am indebted to Mr. W. Little, of Chapel Ridding, the owner of the site, for much valuable assistance and information, and it is not likely that, under his ownership, the earthwork will suffer any further damage.