

ART. VII.—*A Roman Road North-West from Overborough.*
By Dr. FRANCIS VILLY.

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A ROMAN road in this direction has been suggested previously; but, so far as I know, nothing definite is recorded of it: see, for instance, Codrington's "Roman Roads in Britain," p. 108. Yet there is distinct evidence of its course for some 4 miles; and it may conceivably be of more than local importance, for the last known piece of the York-Ilkley-Long Preston road points directly to Overborough from Clapham Common (six miles off) and lies in the same general direction. If these two roads were really one then they formed a line designed to connect York with the Lake District forts.

One sometimes hears doubts expressed as to the exact position and meaning of the Overborough site. Burrow Hall, two miles south of Kirkby Lonsdale on the east side of the Lune, lies within the area, which evidently has been a strongly built and well occupied fort. The late Mr. Anthony Moorhouse of Kirkby Lonsdale showed me where he had found the wall sweeping round the north-west corner, and he had quite a collection of Samian ware obtained in the course of his work. Elaborate capitals of columns were then to be seen in the garden.

To come to the road, following the present highway from Whittington to Hutton Roof, a quarter of a mile of straight road beginning half a mile past the church is clearly the first recognisable Roman stretch, for at its end the present way turns to the right in order to skirt high ground, resuming its previous straight line 300 yards before reaching Nanny Hall. But the old road, still

alive in tradition, went straight up the hill and can be recognised in snatches, sometimes quite clearly but more often very faintly, along a line of field walls. At the top there was a very slight change in direction; and then, the slope down being uncultivated, it becomes very distinct, conforming to Roman methods in width and camber and composed of gravel-like stone on the surface. Joining in line with and continuing as the present road to Nanny Hall, the wall separating the garden from the fields to the north prolongs the line, followed by an indefinite mark across one pasture, when it strikes an expanse which has been extensively quarried. Here the road again becomes recognisable about half way across, and then plainly continues to rejoin the Hutton Roof road on leaving the quarried area, winding a little as it does so on account of the steep slope. This gives nearly one and a half miles of almost straight road of Roman type.

The continuation must have been as the present road for at least a short distance, and near that road onwards through Hutton Roof, to turn left after passing the church and leading past New Biggin to Farleton, thus taking advantage of the pass between Hutton Roof Crag and Farleton Fell to the west and Scout Hill to the east; but there is no evidence that the modern road is truly on the line and probably it is mostly a little off, for in the first and second fields beyond New Biggin the Roman road is recognisable a few yards to the west sweeping into line with the present straight length beyond. For the road here suddenly changes in character from a tenth rate country lane of slightly winding course to an imposing structure laid out in straight lengths. A well banked up terrace some eighteen feet wide runs along the hillside and carries the present way of only of only about nine feet on its crown. This continues for about three-quarters of a mile largely through unenclosed land, on leaving which the lane veers gradually away to the west,

resuming its former insignificant character. However across the third field east of the lane the Roman line can be seen going straight on faintly but (I think) unmistakably. Apparently here it has once formed a boundary between moor on the west and ploughed land on the east. I have seen no further signs, nor is it likely that they will be easy to find in such a well cultivated region. We can, therefore, say no more at present than that it must have communicated with the Watercrock and Ambleside forts by one means or another.

There is one noteworthy point about the lay-out of this road. Plainly it was designed to take advantage of the Lupton beck pass, yet from Whittington it aims not at its mouth but at the impassable massif of Hutton Roof Crag and then skirts northwards in order to reach its objective. However, attention to details of the ground in a direct line shows that it is so broken as to make avoidance highly desirable.