



ON THE "BELGIC DITCHES," AND THE PROBABLE DATE OF
STONEHENGE.

THE lines of ancient earth-work, which in various parts of England intersect the country, seem to admit of a division into three classes,—British roads, Roman roads, and Boundary lines. When tolerably well preserved, these different kinds of earth-work may, in most cases, be distinguished from each other without much difficulty, and the British road appears as a ditch, with a low mound on each side of it, the Roman road as a mound simply, and the Boundary-line as a ditch, with a mound on one side only. As we have no reason to believe that the Britons constructed artificial roads before the arrival of the Romans, and as we know from Cæsar that the country was densely peopled, we might expect to find their lines of communication worn into hollows. The accumulations of filth and refuse, which would necessarily result from a large traffic, when thrown aside for the greater convenience of passage, would soon form continuous mounds, and perhaps the more readily, inasmuch as such mounds might, in certain localities, be usefully employed as fences. There are many bye-ways in the west of England, which, if turfed over, would be no unfair representatives of the British roads that still exist upon the downs of Wiltshire.

Our ancient boundary-lines seem also to admit of a three-fold division. There are, first, the boundary-lines, which defined the territories of the British tribes before the Roman Conquest; secondly, those which were made by the Romanised Britons; and thirdly, the march-dikes thrown up by our ancestors, after the English colonisation of the island. The last of these three classes has sometimes attracted the attention of the historian; but the second, though for several reasons particularly interesting, has not, I believe, been hitherto noticed; and, if we except the speculations of Stukeley and Warton with respect to the "Belgic ditches," I am not aware that even the ancient British boundary-lines have as yet been made the subject of critical investigation.

According to Stukeley, the Belgæ, as they gradually expelled the British tribes, who preceded them, constructed four

successive lines of defence¹—Combe-bank, Bokerly-ditch, the ditch immediately north of Old Sarum, and Wansditch. Warton supposes there were no less than *seven* of these ditches. He does not enumerate them, but he probably added to Stukeley's four, the Grims-ditch south of Salisbury, the ditches on Gussage Cow-down, which really appertained to the British post of Vindogladia, and the ditch which runs over Salisbury plain to the north of Heytesbury. Neither Warton nor Stukeley point out the districts which they suppose to have been marked out by means of these boundary-lines, and the proximity of the lines to each other, is adduced as a proof of the desperate resistance which the Belgæ had to surmount before they could effect their conquest. The resistance must have been desperate indeed, which contested the possession of a few miles of worthless down-land; and the love of property equally strong, which could think such an acquisition worthy of being secured at the expense of so much labour. There can be little doubt, that the number of these boundary-lines has been exaggerated not only by Warton, but even by Stukeley.

It may be asked, what right have we to assume that the Belgæ overspread the south of Britain, in successive waves of conquest, such as are pre-supposed in the hypothesis we are considering? The only ground for such a hypothesis that I am aware of, is contained in Cæsar's statement, "*maritima pars ab iis (incolitur) qui prædæ ac belli causâ ex Belgio transierunt, qui omnes fere iis nominibus civitatum adpellantur quibus orti ex civitatibus eo pervenerunt, et bello inlato ibi remanserunt atque agros colere cœperunt.*"—*B. G.* l. 4. It may, perhaps, be inferred from this passage, that there was a succession of predatory inroads, some of which were followed by Belgic settlements; and when, in the district which we know to have been colonised by the Belgæ, we find successive lines of boundary evidently made by a people inhabiting the sea-board, to separate themselves from the tribes of the interior, it may, I think, be admitted that the

¹ That these ditches might occasionally throw impediments in the way of a party of freebooters is very possible, but that they were *military lines of defence*, like the Roman Walls in North Britain, or the Great Wall of China, is to the last degree improbable. Such lines of defence

would require an organised body of men to guard them, and the maintenance of such a force would be beyond the means of races only imperfectly civilised. The proper character of these ditches is clearly that of *boundary-lines*.

hypothesis advanced by Stukeley, and accepted by Warton, is, to say the least, not an unreasonable one.

If we attempt to trace the progress of Belgic conquest by the light of Welsh tradition, we shall be disappointed. The all but utter silence of the Triads, with respect to a people who fill such a place in history, is one of the most puzzling circumstances connected with these mysterious records. The Triad, which mentions the three "refuge-seeking tribes," tells us, that the first of these tribes came from Galedin, and had lands allotted to them in the Isle of Wight. Welsh scholars consider Galedin to mean the Netherlands;² and, perhaps, we may conclude, that, according to Welsh tradition, the Belgæ came as refugees to this country, and were first located in the Isle of Wight—driven, it may be, from their own country by some inundation of the sea, an accident which appears to have been the moving cause of several of those great migrations we read of in Roman history. It is clear from Cæsar, that for some centuries before Christ, the Belgæ were the most energetic and powerful—and among half-civilised races, this means the most aggressive—of the Gaulish tribes; and we can have little difficulty in supposing, that the fugitive Belgæ, with the aid probably of their continental brethren, might soon change their character of refugees into that of assailants. Of the inlets, opposite the Isle of Wight, by which the mainland could be assailed, Tweon-ea (now Christchurch), at the mouth of the Stour and Avon, appears to have been one of the most important in the earlier periods of our history. Here, it would seem, the Belgæ landed. The uplands in the neighbourhood are barren, but the vallies rich, and the Belgæ, we may presume, were soon in possession of the pastures along the Stour as far as the neighbourhood of Blandford. This town lies in a kind of defile, over which, at that period, the woodlands of Cranbourne Chase in all probability extended. At this wooded gorge the Britons seem to have held their own, and the course of Belgic conquest to have been diverted—in the direction afterwards followed by the Roman road and the modern railway—into the vallies of the Piddle and the Frome. We may now ask,

² This hypothesis would receive strong confirmation if we were justified in giving to the Belgic settlers of the south-east of Dorsetshire the name of *Morini*. But I believe our only authority for so doing is

a dictum of "Richard of Cirencester," and I will not insult the reader by quoting a patent forgery. I allude to Bertram's clever fabrication, merely to show the reader that I have not overlooked it.

whether there be any earthworks, which might serve as boundaries to the district we have thus marked out. In the first place, we observe between Holt-Forest and Cranbourne Chase, the well-known earthwork, called Bokerly-ditch, shutting in from the northward the rich valley drained by the Wymburne-brook. From Bokerly-ditch the boundary may have followed the outline of Cranbourne Chase, have crossed the Stour south of Blandford, and then run to the north-westward along Combe-bank. There was also, some years back, "in the road from Bindon to Weymouth, a great ditch, like Wansdike, for several miles."—*Hutchin's Dorset*, i., 217. No such ditch is now visible on this line of road, but after a long day's search, I succeeded by an accident in finding³ its mutilated remains between the Frome and Owre-brook. The bank was *to the eastward*, and I have little hesitation in regarding this dike as a portion of the western boundary of the first Belgic conquest. What course it took to join Combe-bank is, at present, only matter for conjecture; but there are reasons for believing, that fragments of it still exist in the neighbourhood of the Piddle river and its tributaries.

The second Belgic conquest may have included the downs of Hants and South Wiltshire. The narrow valleys that intersect the latter meet in the neighbourhood of Old Sarum (Sorbiodunum), which must always have been, what in military language might be termed, the *key* of the district. The Hampshire downs appear to have been called by the Britons the Gwent, or champaign. No natural frontier separates these two tracts of down, but their northern boundary is indented,

³ The dike ran nearly parallel to, and about one or two hundred yards west of "the bounds" which separated Owre from Galton. For nearly a mile it had been fashioned into shape, and formed a clay-fence some eight feet thick. A wide stretch of arable land succeeded, on which it had been levelled within the last two years by an improving landlord. Its traces, however, were sufficiently obvious, and by following them, and clambering over some terrible fences, I again lighted on the object of my search, and found it running over the common for nearly a quarter of a mile, in very fair preservation. It terminated before it again reached cultivated land. I presume there must formerly have been a tract of woodland in the neighbourhood.

As these boundary-lines are often difficult to find, it may save future investigators trouble, and prevent mistakes, to learn that there are some other curious earth-works a little to the westward, round Woodford Castle. The agger runs from the Frome due south for about a mile, then turns at right angles, and after running half-a-mile eastwards, returns to the river. The agger was thrown *outwards* from the ditch. I suppose this work to have been the boundary of a very ancient park. A slight fence on the top of the mound, with the aid of the interior ditch, would have effectually prevented the deer from escaping. I have seen instances of similar earth-works in Berkshire and elsewhere, which seem to admit of the same explanation.

as it were, by the highlands around "Scots Poor," from which the greater part of their extent is visible. To this point the country rises from the east and south, and also, though more slowly, from the west. On the southern and eastern slopes we still find large masses of woodland—Collingbourn-wood, Dole-wood, &c.—and there can be little doubt that these high and barren downs were once encircled with a belt of forest. This description may serve to show the importance of these heights as a landmark, and in some measure to explain the fact, that at the present day three counties, and some seven or eight parishes, meet in the neighbourhood.

During a fortnight of rather inclement weather, I examined the country lying between Westbury and Ludgershall, and succeeded in finding most of the ditches described in the "Ancient Wiltshire." It is to be regretted, that Sir R. C. Hoare was not more alive to the importance of distinguishing between the trackway and the boundary-dike. His usual phrase "a bank and a ditch," more than once made me waste a day in searching for what proved, on examination, to be a mere drift-road. North of Heytesbury, however, I found an ancient boundary-line—one clearly of British origin, and *perhaps* anterior⁴ to the Roman conquest. I traced it from the west of "Knook Castle" to within a couple of miles of Tilshead, when it gradually died away in cultivated land. Ancient roads occasionally entered its ditch, more particularly at the salient angles,⁵ and its mound was broken and pierced in all directions by the trackways leading to the two British villages north of Knook Castle; but still, amid all the changes of two thousand years, its crest was seen stretching over the plain, and could be followed without the chance of a mistake. The next day I found "the Tilshead ditch," within little more than a mile from the spot where I had lost the

⁴ There are the sites of two British villages near the boundary line; and in a straggling portion of one of them, which lies beyond the dike, and which, therefore, must have been built after the boundary-line was *sighted* (to use a phrase of Cromwell's time), Sir R. C. Hoare found a stone-celt beside a skeleton. It is not probable that a primitive utensil like this was used after the arrival of the Romans; but the grave may have been there before the village extended itself beyond the agger.

Coins of Arcadius have been dug up among the ruins, but, I believe, no Saxon remains. We may conclude that the villages were burnt by the Saxon invaders, and never afterwards inhabited.

⁵ It may be worth observing that, just at the angle where the boundary line turns suddenly to the eastward, there lay a large stone on the top of the agger. I had not time to examine it minutely, nor even to chip off a fragment to ascertain the nature of the stone.

former one.⁶ It was a ditch with *two* mounds, and these gradually became lower as I traced it to the eastward, a mile or two beyond Tilshead. If this ditch be a continuation of the former one, I cannot satisfactorily account for its change of character.

I could find no remains of this Belgic boundary—if we may venture to give it such a title—north of Beacon Hill. Even "the unmutilated remains of a bank and a ditch," on Wick-down, turned out to be merely a deep ditch with a low mound on each side of it. But south of the hill, the Amesbury bounds presented appearances which strongly resembled those of an ancient earth-work, and we may be allowed to conjecture that they were once connected with the "Devils Ditch," east of Andover, and with the boundary-line, a fragment of which still remains to the south of Walbury.

According to these speculations, the second Belgic boundary must have included the valleys of South Wiltshire, and then have swept round, so as to separate the downs of Hampshire from the woodlands which encircled Scots Poor. The hypothesis does not seem an unreasonable one, and I know of no other which can satisfactorily account either for the boundary-line to the north of Heytesbury, or for the lines which are found in the neighbourhood of Walbury and Andover.⁷

It will be seen that the writer differs from Stukeley in considering the first and second of his ditches as forming parts of one continuous boundary; and in denying altogether to the ditch which runs immediately north of Old Sarum, the character of a Belgic earthwork.⁸ Were this last

⁶ When these mounds approach the "Long Barrow," which lies about a mile from Tilshead, they turn at right angles, and after having half enclosed the mound, pursue their former course. Our best chance of explaining anomalies like these, would be a really critical edition of the "Gromatici veteres."

⁷ It may, perhaps, be said, that the lines near Walbury and Andover might have been the boundaries of a Belgic settlement, whose capital was Winchester; and which was united to its western neighbour before British geography was known to the Romans. But there is reason to believe that the State of the Southern Belgæ was not merely a political, but an ethnographical unity. The other Belgic districts, though politically united, are always spoken of as peopled by different races; but the classical writers,

whenever they speak of the Belgic Province, treat it as a whole.

It may be observed, that there are some ditches near Chisborough, which have not been inserted in the map. There can be little doubt that *four* distinct lines of boundary passed near that fortress, and to have noticed the remains of all these boundaries would have answered no good purpose, and would have made the plan much too complicated.

⁸ The period at which, and the purpose for which, this earth-work was constructed, were sufficiently discussed at Salisbury. Those who feel an interest in the matter may see what are the writer's views on this subject, by consulting the paper he has written for the Salisbury Volume on the "Early English Settlements in South Britain."

ditch made by the Belgæ, we must suppose, that although the invaders were strong enough to capture such a fortress as Old Sarum, they were not powerful enough to possess themselves of the valleys which it commanded—an inference which at once shows us the falseness of the premiss that led to it. With respect to the connection supposed to have existed between Combe-bank and Bokerly-ditch, it may be right to state, that I have not examined the course of Bokerly-ditch west of the Roman Road, and only cursorily the line of country which intervenes between the two earth-works. Combe-bank still crosses the down, in fine preservation, from the neighbourhood of Winterbourne Clenstone to Col-wood. For some distance it forms the boundary of this wood, and then enters it and disappears. My guide⁹ professed to trace the bank to the north of Mapperton, but I must confess that to my eyes it was invisible. Its course, however, when I last recognised it, pointed eastward in the direction of Badbury, which was full in sight, and about four miles distant. I felt a strong conviction that the information given to Leland (according to which it went to Lytchet Maltravers) was erroneous. It seemed to me clearly intended as a boundary to separate the Winterbourne valley from the bleak and swelling downs to the north-eastward, and to be as clearly connected with the great fortress, which lifted itself aloft on the other side of the Stour directly in our front. As Badbury commands the valley, where lay Vindogladia—which existing remains, as well as the Itineraries, point out as the capital of the district—and as Bokerly-ditch was obviously intended as the northern boundary of this valley, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion that both Combe-bank and Bokerly-ditch were constructed as parts of one design, by the same people, and at the same, or nearly the same period. That people we may conjecture to be the Belgæ, and the period five or four, or, it may be, only three centuries before the Christian era.

The general consent of our antiquaries has fixed upon the Wansdike as the last of the Belgic boundaries. Were it called the last frontier of the Belgic province—understanding

⁹ His testimony must not be altogether rejected, as he has for years "cried the Courts" at the bank, and, therefore, may be considered as familiar with all the circumstances connected with it. After

proclamations duly made on this ancient earth-work, the courts are held in the valley at an old manor house, which lies some two miles from the bank.

by that phrase the district which the Roman geographers assigned to the Belgæ proper—I should be little disposed to quarrel with the conclusion they have come to. Nor would I venture summarily to dismiss even the suggestion of Stukeley, that it was Divitiacus who here fixed the limits of the Belgic dominion, though I may smile at the etymological trifling by which he endeavours to support his hypothesis. This Divitiacus, Cæsar tells us, had been King of the Suessones, and even in his time (*nostrâ etiam memoriâ*) the most powerful chief in all Gaul. He tells us also that Divitiacus had obtained a supremacy not only over a great portion of Belgic Gaul, but also over a great part of Britain—"qui quum magnæ partis harum regionum tum etiam Britanniæ imperium obtinuerit." By what steps he obtained this supremacy we are not told, but we may surmise that it was with his aid that the Belgæ pushed their conquests into the interior of the island, and that the *imperium* naturally followed conquests so extensive and important. The question remains, what was the locality and the real extent of these latter Belgic conquests. If, as is probable, the British king who opposed Cæsar belonged to the intrusive race, then the Belgæ must have obtained possession of the vale of Aylesbury, and the plains of Hertfordshire previous to the year 55, B.C.; and we may infer that they acquired these districts under the leadership of Divitiacus, for we do not learn that Verulam had fallen into the hands of Cassivelaunus by any recent act of conquest. There still exist some interesting lines of earthwork, which seem to have been made with a view to separate the new conquests from the country of the Trinobantes. They have been as yet only partially examined, and with very little intelligence; but as they are mixed up with another system of boundary-lines, it would require a more lengthened notice than our present limits will admit of to discuss this question satisfactorily.

It is possible that the same monarch who settled the boundaries of the Catyeuchlani—I give the word as it is usually written, without vouching for its correctness—may also have pushed forward the Belgic frontier to the Wansdike. There are, however, difficulties in the way of such a conclusion which are calculated to shake our faith in the soundness of Stukeley's hypothesis. Every critical reader will, I think, admit that the Roman geographers and historians

looked upon the Belgic province as an organic whole, which might indeed have developed itself at successive periods, but was not a mere aggregation of separate and independent parts. With respect to the states lying north of the Audred—*i. e.*, of the great forest which spread over the wealds of Kent and Sussex—the case was different. The Cantii, the Attrebates, the Catyeuchlani were probably all three Belgic races ; and indeed, as regards the Attrebates, we are able to make this assertion positively. All three seem to have been subject to the *imperium* of Cassivelaunus, but there is nothing to lead us to the inference that the Southern Belgæ acknowledged his supremacy. As so few years separated the reign of this prince from that of Divitiacus, it is a reasonable presumption that he was, if not a descendant, at least a successor of the Gaulish monarch, and consequently that the limits of his dominion defined the British *imperium* of his great predecessor. If so, the course of conquest which Divitiacus traced out must have nearly coincided with that followed by later invaders—by Cæsar, by Plautius, and by the Norman William ; and consequently this celebrated Belgic chief could not have been the conqueror who reared the Wansdike.

This magnificent earthwork reached from the woodlands of Berkshire to the British Channel. Its remains have been carefully surveyed by Sir R. C. Hoare. The conquests it was intended to include, seem to have been, first, the Vale of Pewsey ; secondly, the mineral district of the Mendip Hills ; and, thirdly, the country lying between this range and the marshes of the Parret. Ptolemy gives us Winchester, Bath,¹ and Ilchester, as the three principal towns of the Belgic province. If we run a line along the Wansdike from Berkshire to the Channel, then along the coast to the Parret, then up that river eastward till we strike the southern borders of Wiltshire, and then follow the first Belgic boundary across Dorsetshire to the sea, we shall have defined, with tolerable accuracy, the northern and western boundaries, which Roman geographers assigned to the Belgæ proper.

¹ Bath is just without the Belgic boundary, and, therefore, could not have been a Belgic town. Ptolemy has, in other instances, assigned towns situated near a frontier to the wrong people ; thus he gives London to the Cantii. There are generally circumstances connected with the towns thus misplaced, which help us to explain the blunder ; we have reason

to believe that London had a suburb south of the river, even in the Roman times ; and the Belgic fortress on the Wansdike, which lay immediately above the hot baths, may very probably have led the geographer into making the misstatement that has given rise to the present note.

It will be seen that the Wansdike bends to the south, as if to avoid Avebury, and approaches close to, but does not include, Bath. It seems reasonable to infer, that when the line of demarcation was drawn, the Dobuni insisted on the retention of their ancient temple, and of their hot baths ; and if this inference be a just one, another and a more important one seems naturally to follow. Assuming that the Belgæ were thus excluded from Avebury, is it not likely that they would provide a "locus consecratus" at some central point within their own border—a place for their judicial assemblies, like the Gaulish temple, "in finibus Carnutum,² quæ regio totius Galliæ media habetur?" May not Stonehenge have been the substitute so provided?

There seem to be two opinions prevalent with respect to the date of this mysterious monument. There are antiquaries who maintain that it was built before the Christian era, at some period of great and undefined antiquity ; and others, who would postpone its erection to a period subsequent to the Roman occupation of the island.

The first of these opinions is generally supported on the authority of a passage in Diodorus Siculus, which appears to have been taken from Hecataeus of Abdera, who flourished about three centuries before the Christian era. According to this authority, there was among the Hyperboreans a round temple dedicated to Apollo, and situated in an island "opposite Celtica." Our English antiquaries assume, that the word Celtica, in this passage, was used with the same meaning as by Strabo and his contemporaries, or, in other words, that it signified Gaul, and they conclude that the island was Britain, and the round temple Stonehenge, or Avebury, or the Rolrich circle, according to the particular hypothesis they are interested in supporting. Swedish antiquaries give to *Celtica* a wider meaning, and as the ancients considered Scandinavia to be an island, they boldly claim the round temple of the Hyperboreans as Swedish property. Wesseling, in a sensible note, examines these different hypo-

² Cæs. B. G. 6. Does not the name of *Carnutes* mean the people of *Car-nut*, in modern Welsh, *Caer nawdd*, the City of the Sanctuary? In the discourse, which the writer delivered at Salisbury, on "the Early English Settlements in South Britain," one of the points he contended for was this, that both Stonehenge and

the great monastery which was afterwards built in its neighbourhood, were known as the *nawdd*, or sanctuary, and that it was from this Welsh word that the Anglo-Saxons got their *Nat-e*, and also the title by which they designated Ambrosius, viz., *Natan leod*.

theses, and, for reasons which appear satisfactory, rejects them. He is inclined to fix the round temple far more to the eastward, than would suit the views either of our own or of the Swedish antiquaries ; and whether we agree with him or not, the criticism which identifies Stonehenge with this temple of the Hyperboreans, rests, I think, on grounds much too questionable to secure the assent of any cautious inquirer.

The opinion which assigns to Stonehenge, and indeed to *all* our Druidical structures, a date posterior to the Roman conquest, is the one most generally entertained at the present day. It has been elaborately maintained by Mr. J. Rickman.³ He objects to an earlier date for Avebury, because it adjoins to a Roman road ; because it resembles a Roman amphitheatre ; because its dimensions seem to be adjusted to the measure of a Roman mile ; and lastly, because the engineer, who made the Roman road, did not avail himself of the deep ditch round Silbury, to lessen the steepness of the ascent ; whence we may conclude that such ditch was not in existence when the road was made. His attempts to support the second and third⁴ of these positions appear to the writer to be most unsatisfactory ; and with respect to the first, it might be answered, that the Roman road from Silchester to Bath was, in all probability, preceded by a British trackway, and that the point where the Ickneld road crossed such trackway, was well suited for the site of a great national temple ; while the fact that the Roman engineers did not avail themselves of the lower level afforded them by the ditch, might be owing to their unwillingness to wound the national prejudices by violating unnecessarily a national monument. Rickman maintains, that tools of mixed metal, such as are found in the barrows of the early Britons, would have been unequal to the "respectable workmanship," which he observed on the tenons and mortices of the Stonehenge

³ *Archæologia*, Vol. 28.

⁴ The avenue which stretched south-east from the main temple, was intersected by the Roman road, and, according to Rickman, the distance of Silbury both from the point of intersection and from the centre of the Avebury circle, was a Roman mile. I can only say, that according to *my* measurement, Silbury hill is distant from the centre of the circle *more* than a Roman mile, and from the point of intersection *very considerably less*. But even were

the measurement correct, how could the symmetry of the structure be anyway dependent on the distance of Silbury from the point, where the road cut through the avenue ? The proper inference seems to be, that the Romans would not allow a great public road to be diverted out of its course, in order to spare the mere adjuncts of a building, whose hold upon the respect and reverence of the people had probably been for some time declining.

trilithons; and that stone so hard could only have been worked after the introduction of steel tools. As we know that "the maritime states" produced iron in the time of Cæsar, it is clear that any hypothesis which does not carry back the origin of Stonehenge more than a century or two before the Christian era, will not be affected by the difficulty here suggested.

Mr. Herbert's theory may be considered, in one point of view, as a modification of Rickman's. He supposes that Stonehenge, Avebury, and our other "megalithic monuments" were erected *after the Romans had left the island*; and he has exhibited no small acuteness and learning, in support of this startling hypothesis. According to his theory, the bards and other favourers of the old superstition returned from Ireland, whither they had been driven by the influence of Roman civilisation, and of Christianity; heathenism, for a while, regained its ascendancy, and the enthusiasm awakened by the return to old habits and feelings, and by a sense of recovered independence, led to the erection of these mighty structures. Mr. Herbert skilfully avails himself of Rickman's arguments, and presses upon us the additional one, that the so-called Druidical temples, and other similar erections, are only to be found in Britain, or in countries closely connected with it, as Brittany; and therefore must have been the results of causes operating partially, and not the general expression — the necessary outward manifestation — of a religion so widely diffused as the Druidical. Every candid reader will admit, that there is considerable weight in the argument last referred to. Do the following considerations supply us with a sufficient answer to it?

We know from Cæsar, that Britain was looked upon by the Gauls, both as the great centre of Druidism, and as the country in which its peculiar doctrines originated; "*disciplina in Britannia reperta, atque inde in Galliam translata esse existimatur; et nunc qui diligentius eam rem cognoscere volunt, plerumque illo discendi causa proficiscuntur.*"—*B. G.* 16. We might therefore expect to find in Britain, and such countries as were intimately connected with it, more marked traces of the peculiar structures which characterised this system, than are to be met with elsewhere. It seems also to be a fact, that, with the exception of Stonehenge, to which I shall shortly advert more particularly, all the larger Druidical

temples are situated in places where the blocks of stone, commonly called Sarsen stones, abound, or, at least, are known at one time to have abounded ; and that the geological conditions which distinguish such localities, occur more frequently in England than in the interior of France. I think, therefore, we may account for the unfrequent occurrence of these structures in such parts of Gaul as are remote from its western coast, without being driven to the conclusion which Mr. Herbert would bring us to.

There is one argument against the theory, which assigns to Stonehenge, and the other Druidical structures, a date subsequent to the Roman occupation of the island, which the members of an Archaeological society are peculiarly fitted to appreciate. We all know—the principles on which our “Gothic buildings” were so long constructed, sufficiently teach us—how difficult it is for an architect to compose in a new style of architecture, and at the same time to keep his mind unswayed by the forms to which he has been long accustomed. Now I do not forget, that Inigo Jones started the hypothesis, that Stonehenge was “a hypæthral temple ;” but in his day the fundamental principles, which distinguish the different systems of architectural construction, had been but little studied, and the researches of modern times have placed us on a vantage-ground that enables us to estimate at its proper value, a theory, which, coming from a man so eminent, might otherwise occasion us some difficulty. After thus much of preface, I would ask the archaeological reader, whether he thinks it comes within the limits of a reasonable probability, that men who had, for centuries, been familiarised with the forms of Roman architecture, could have built Stonehenge ?

If we suppose Stonehenge to have been erected after the Southern Belgæ had pushed their frontier to the Wansdike, and not long before Divitiacus obtained his *imperium* over the other Belgic races, every difficulty vanishes. The manufacture of iron was probably known in Britain at that period, though it seems to have been only lately introduced, as Cæsar tells us, not many years afterwards, that the metal was not abundant,⁵ “*ejus exigua est copia ;*” and

⁵ Iron appears to have been scarce, at least in the remoter parts of Britain, as late as the beginning of the third century. Herodian informs us, that the tribes who opposed Severus decked their loins and

necks with this metal (*i. e.* I suppose, made their *torcs* of iron, and covered their girdles with it), and esteemed it not only as an ornament but also as a *proof of wealth*.

we are accordingly able to account for "the respectable workmanship," which Rickman observed at Stonehenge, and which certainly presents difficulties in the way of the hypothesis, that assigns to Stonehenge the remote antiquity sometimes given to it. Again, our geologists seem to be agreed, that the huge blocks of sandstone, which form the trilithons at Stonehenge, must have come from the neighbourhood of the Vale of Pewsey. Now the amount of physical power equal to the transport of such large masses, would exhaust the whole resources of the district; and we may safely conclude that the builders of Stonehenge, whoever they were, must also have been lords of the fertile vale, so celebrated in the annals of agriculture. If the Belgæ were the builders, it follows necessarily that this temple was erected after the vale became Belgic territory, or as we may otherwise phrase it, after the Wansdike had been raised. That Stonehenge *had* some peculiar relation to the Belgic province, may be inferred from its central position within it. The capital towns of the Celtic races were often on the confines of their territories; as Winchester and Ilchester, near the borders of the Belgæ; and Silchester near those of the Atrebatæ. The facilities which such positions afforded for the defence of the frontier, may have been the reasons why they were selected. But we may gather from the passage already quoted, relative to the Gaulish temple, that a central situation was thought most suitable for the "locus consecratus," where justice was administered, and the national assemblies held. That Stonehenge was such "locus consecratus" is admitted by all, who regard it as a Celtic structure; and the enormous labour which was expended in transporting the materials to the spot, proves that the spot on which it stands was thought peculiarly eligible. I can point to no circumstances which could have made it so, save those which have been suggested.

The peculiarities which distinguish the structure of Stonehenge, seem to afford us additional arguments in support of the conclusions we have come to. Most of our Celtic temples are surrounded by a circular ditch. Now at Avebury, and in other cases, the mound or agger is on the outside of the ditch, while at Stonehenge it is within it. This new arrangement seems to indicate the usages of a new people; while the general style of the building, the more artistic plan, the

use of imposts, the well-executed tenons and mortices, and the worked surfaces of the uprights, all seem to point to a later age, and a more advanced civilisation. I think therefore we may fairly conclude, that Stonehenge is of later date than Avebury and the other structures of unwrought stone; that it could not have been built much later than the year 100, B.C., and in all probability was not built more than a century or two earlier. As to the antiquity of *Avebury*, I dare offer no conjecture. If the reader be more venturesome, and should fix its erection some eight or ten centuries before our era, it would be difficult to advance any critical reasons against his hypothesis.

NOTICE TO THE READER.—Portions of the map which is attached to this paper are coloured yellow. They are intended to represent the district, that were retained by the Britons after the conclusion of the treaty of the Mons Badonicus, A.D. 520. The boundary lines, which, in certain localities, mark out the frontier, are supposed to have been constructed—or, it may be, in some cases, adopted—by the Britons upon that occasion.

NOTICE OF INSCRIPTIONS AND ANTIQUITIES, DISCOVERED AT CAERLEON.

COMMUNICATED BY JOHN EDWARD LEE, ESQ.

NUMEROUS are the vestiges of interest, connected with the history of Roman occupation in the ancient district of the *Silures*, which have repaid the researches of archaeologists in that part of the kingdom. Some of the discoveries recently made at Caerleon are not unknown to the readers of the *Journal*, whose attention may have been invited to the memorials of the antiquities and of an extensive villa there brought to light, noticed in previous volumes.¹ The publications to which we refer will show the variety of these remains, and especially the value of the accession to the history of Roman times in Britain, as illustrated by inscribed monuments, derived from investigations of late years at *Isca Silurum*. Upwards of twenty inedited inscriptions have

¹ See Notices of "Roman Antiquities found at Caerleon," by John Edward Lee, Esq., 1843, and of his recent work,

entitled, — "Description of a Roman building discovered at Caerleon."—Arch. Journal, vol. ii. p. 417; vol. vii. p. 97.