

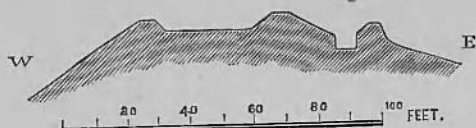
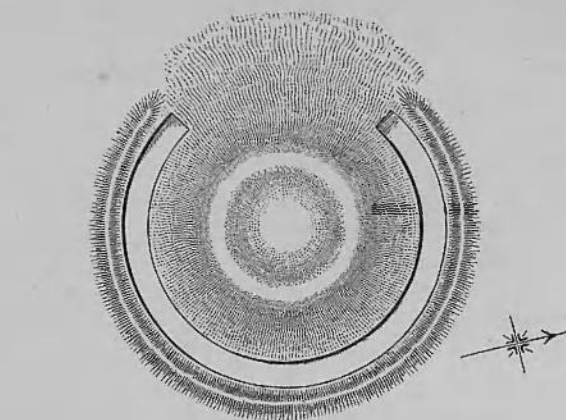
## EARTHWORKS IN BRECKNOCKSHIRE.

By G. T. CLARK.

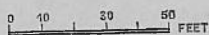
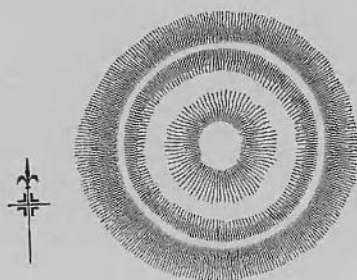
THERE are two earthworks in the north-eastern quarter of this county, about ten miles west of Builth, which, from their peculiarity, deserve notice. They are unlike the usual hill camps of the district, being less lofty in position, much smaller in area, and of a regular outline.

One is placed upon the southern and higher end of a ridge, perhaps 250 or 300 ft. above the valleys at its foot, of which that to the north-west is occupied by the Cammarch, and that to the south by the Cnyffiad, two streams which meet below the point of the hill in the meads of Dolaeron, where also they receive the Annell, and their combined waters fall, a little lower down, into the Yrfon, an important tributary of the Wye. This earthwork is, on the Ordnance Map, designated FFOREST, but the name by which it is locally known is CAER-AERON. It is composed of a central tump, a fosse nearly surrounding it, and a bank upon the outer margin or counterscarp of the fosse. The tump is about 42 ft. north and south by 36 ft. east and west, rather oval therefore than circular, though this is probably from mere irregularity of construction. In height above the surface it is about 12 ft., and it is hollow. The hollow is rather rectangular than round, and about 5 ft. deep. On the north-east side the bank is rather lower, as though for an entrance.

The outer slope of the tump rests on the inner edge or scarp of a ditch cut in the rock, about 4 ft. deep, and 7 ft. wide. No tool-marks are visible, the rock weathering to a rough surface, but the fosse has wall sides, and was evidently hewn with tools. This fosse surrounds about one-fifth of the tump, ceasing on the west side, where it is less necessary, the ground falling steeply towards the Cammarch. Outside, and on the edge of the fosse, is the bank already mentioned



Caer-aeron, near Builth.



Circle near Builth.

about 4 ft. high, which also ceases where there is no ditch. Had the bank completed the circle, its length would have been as near as may be 300 ft., and of this the part where the ditch is wanting is 60 ft. Thus the whole work, from the centres of the circumscribing bank, measures in diameter 100 ft., and to the foot of its slope a trifle more. What has this earthwork been intended for? Clearly, for defence, as shown by the ditch and bank; but these alone, though perhaps a foot or two higher and deeper than now, would have been of little use. To have been of use, they must have carried a palisade. For a wall they are too slender. Then for what purpose could this dwelling, thus defended, have been employed? It could not contain above five or six, or, at the very outside, eight or ten, persons, and a single family would scarcely have established themselves up here. Probably, therefore, its tenants were placed to keep a look-out, and the view all round is certainly extensive. The rock-cut fosse, and the sharpness of the angles of the earthen hollow within the tump, look as though it were not of high antiquity; and, taking all the circumstances into consideration, it seems to have been a look-out post in advance of the stronghold of Builth, and may in that case be attributed to the invaders from England of the eighth or ninth century, shortly before or after the boundary dyke was thrown up by Offa.

The other earthwork, also of a peculiar character, is about two miles due west of the above. It is not marked in the Ordnance Map, but it is placed above "Cwm Cowydd" on a height of the narrow steep ridge which lies between the valleys of the Cnyffiad and the Annell, and but a few yards south of the old ridge-way which ran from Abergwessin to Builth, and was formerly the main way for drovers from the north of Caermarthen and Cardigan to England. This work is a circle 65 ft. diameter, and fairly true, contained within a bank about 3 ft. on the east and 5 ft. on the west or weather side. There is no ditch, exterior or interior, no mound, and not even a depression. On the contrary, the soil rises slightly, say 2 ft., towards the centre. There is no depression for an entrance.

This is evidently not a military work. It seems, however, to have been a dwelling, and a large one, composed probably of spars resting against the bank and meeting in the centre,

the weather bank being the highest, to keep out the snow. Probably those who occupied it represented some local lord who took toll upon the adjacent way. Had its occupiers been mere clerks of St. Nicholas, acting on their own illegitimate authority, they would scarcely have pitched their wigwam in so exposed a position, visible for miles around. The ridge on which the work is placed may be 500 ft. above the valleys. It stands upon a considerable knoll, but does not cover the whole of the top, the ground to its immediate south being, perhaps, a trifle higher. It is a curious earth-work, and peculiar.

Besides these works may be mentioned another, at no great distance to the south-east, and the name of which, though correctly given on the Ordnance Map, is calculated to mislead. It is there called CAERAU, and a spot close by it is called "Castell Lan." It is a large conical mound, about 18 to 20 ft. high, and about 150 ft. in circumference at the base, to all appearance sepulchral; nor are there any traces about it of banks or ditches other than those occupied, or formerly occupied, by fences, and apparently constructed for that purpose alone.

The position, though rather on high ground than on a hill, is visible for some distance round, and is a not improbable site to have been selected for a burial-place for the dead in some local struggle.