

ART. XIV.—*On the Remains of a Stockade recently found in Carlisle.* BY R. S. FERGUSON, M.A., LL.M., F.S.A.

Read at Gilsland, June 21st, 1877.

MOST of the members of this Society will be aware that very extensive building operations, necessitating deep excavations, have for some time past been in progress within the area once enclosed by the Norman Walls of the city of Carlisle. Two such excavations especially commended themselves to me, and probably to others also, as likely mines of antiquarian wealth; the one, the site of the Bush Hotel, whose vicinity has for years yielded up quantities of Roman "finds;" the other, Bank Street, which has always proved rich in bones, being the site, as is believed, of the burial ground of the Grey Friars: here, when the ground was some months ago cleared, was found a portion of a very heavy mediæval sepulchral slab,* while at the west end, where stands the Bank, was found, close to the surface, the skeleton of a horse, a relic no doubt of the White Hart stables, and below that again many human bones.

Knowing this much, I watched both these excavations with interest and anxiety.

I shall first describe the Bush site and find:—

(1) The Bush Hotel stood at the edge of a plateau, which, behind or west of the Bush, formed a very steep declivity, well known as the Bush Brow, midway on which stood the Norman West Curtain Wall of Carlisle, with the city ditch below it. Steep as is this declivity, as we

* The stone was found utilised as a foundation stone in the cellar of the White Lion; it was the foot of an incised grave slab of very great weight and thickness; it showed the bottom of a very large cross, standing on degrees, or steps, and four letters which read ETAR. I am told a smaller, and complete one, without letters, was afterwards found.

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know it, its lower portion must have once been steeper, for there is there from 20 to 30 feet of made, or artificial soil. More than fifty years ago, when the gaol was building, Mr. C. Hodgson, brother of Hodgson, the Northumberland historian, took a section of this declivity on an east and west line, a few yards south of the Bush Brow. This section was published in the 2nd volume of the *Archæologia Æliana*. Mr. C. Hodgson describes the made soil as "a light blue clay, which is very uncommonly found in the neighbourhood of Carlisle; the clay of that district being all of a red colour, and such as is usually met with in new red sand formations. * * * Several fragments of red earthenware, being ornaments in bas relief, were found in the stratum of rubbish." This was precisely the character of the soil under the Bush. The artificial soil was about 12 feet or more in depth, and was full of fragments of red Roman pottery, of the kind termed Samian, some of which bore the potters stamp, "Advocisi" and "Advocisus" was no doubt its manufacturer. About six feet below the surface two small vases were found, one only of which was preserved; it is made of coarse red sandy clay, and is no doubt a local production of Roman date.

Some 10 feet below the surface was found the top of a stockade running diagonally across the site for about 30 feet, from N.W. to S.E. This stockade consisted of three rows of oak posts, each row a foot apart, and each stake a foot apart, set quincunx fashion thus :

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or the stakes of the middle row, opposite the interstices of the outer rows, so that, as the excavators observed, a man could not come straight through them.

A few feet outside or west of the stockade, was a tank
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of oak, planked with oak slabs. A perfect examination could not be made of this, as the superjacent earth was not removed from it; and no bottom could be found to it by prodding with a rod. It was about two feet across one way. It is very singular that a similar oak tank was found by Mr. C. Hodgson, in the gaol: it is described in the *Archæologia Æliana* as "composed of square oak frames, covered on the outside with riven oak boards. This tank was about 7 feet deep." It was full of black sludge intermixed with stones and other rubbish. A pitcher was found within it, at about 15 feet below the surface: Mr. C. Hodgson does not give the depth of the top of the tank below the surface. The tank opened the other day contained sludge and stones, much resembling that described by Mr. C. Hodgson, who ascribes his tank and the pitcher found in it to the times of the very first Roman settlers in this country, which he infers "from a very great quantity of Roman earthenware and other antiquities which were found all over parts about the tank." This very sensible inference is of great importance, when we come to consider the date of the stockade.

The works of the new viaduct have opened out a section, from the Bush, in an east and west line parallel to that taken by Mr. C. Hodgson, but about 15 feet to its north, and with very similar results as to the depth of the made soil. Some coins and pottery were discovered; and a cotta head of a female; also, at a depth of 10 feet, a Roman road running north and south, and paved with stones set in hydraulic mortar. This road was outside the Norman Curtain Wall.

(2) At the Bank Street excavations the first things brought up by the spade, were a couple or so of skulls, and then Roman pottery and coins began to appear; a vase and a lamp or two being got by Mr. Carrick, and a brass fibula by Mr. Fisher. Mr. Cory will presently describe to the Society certain metal objects found here.*

* See his paper immediately following this.

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Some of the Samian ware was highly ornate with hunting scenes. At six feet below the surface was found the top of a stockade of identically the same character as that found on the Bush site, the three rows of oak posts set quincunx fashion. The posts here were dug out, and are about 4 feet long, and 6 inches by 4 inches thick, pointed at both ends. There was a long strip of stockade disclosed, running north and south, and apparently continuing each way under the unexcavated soil north and south. From the centre of this a cross piece ran at right angles to the east.

The upper part of this stockade showed traces of fire, but the lower portions were as fresh, and as sharp at the angles, as if just cut by the axe.

Mr. Carrick, who visited the Bank Street stockade with me, recollects that many years ago, when a sewer was put in Citadel Row, a precisely similiar stockade was found there. Mr. Cartmell tells me that similar piling was found running across Castle Street, when Messrs. Carr's shops there were built.

These stockades must, from their similarity, be all part of one design, one fortification, and the question is to determine what that is.

The supposition that they were piles to support a building may be dismissed at once. In the first place, any Roman or Mediæval building of sufficient importance to require piling as a foundation would have had walls at least four feet thick, and this piling is but two feet across. Secondly, the tops of the piles are pointed, and not cut flat across, as they would be to support foundation stones. Thirdly, they occur in sites where there would be no necessity for piles, as the natural and solid ground, very solid, is little below the tops of the stockade.

With regard to date; the stockades cannot be Norman, or later, driven into the Roman strata. At the Bush site the Roman stratum extends four to six feet above the top
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of the stockade: in Bank Street the Roman stratum is level with, and perhaps a little over, the stockade tops. They must then be early Roman at the latest.

I do not believe them to be pre-Roman, for the following reasons. There is no evidence that the site of Carlisle was, prior to the Roman invasion, a British town. On the contrary, the evidence is rather the other way, for when, in 1859, an extensive collection of local antiquities was collected together under the auspices of the Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Mr. Franks, Mr. Tucker, and Mr. Albert Way, in classifying the curiosities brought together, were unable to identify any found in Carlisle as belonging to the "Antiquities of the Earlier Period," although several objects both of stone and bronze were submitted to them from other parts of Cumberland. In their second class, that of Roman and Romano-British objects, Carlisle proved rich, and to that class may be assigned many discoveries of ancient pottery made in Carlisle since the visit of the Institute to that city. Moreover, of the nine towns assigned by Ptolemy to the Brigantes, seven were east of the chain of hills that runs through the district occupied by that tribe, and no case can be made out for placing either of the two remaining in Cumberland: one, Galagum or Galgacum, has been allocated in Westmorland, and the other, Rigodunum, in Lancashire. No doubt some wretched wigwams the British had at Carlisle, probably on the Castle Hill, both as the highest ground and as convenient to the Eden, on whose salmon they would to a great degree subsist. But there was no collection of Britons at Carlisle to stretch from the Castle Hill to the present Court Houses, where one portion of the stockade we are considering was found. The sharpness and angularity of the lower parts of the stakes taken out in Bank Street indicate, also, that they were cut by workmen possessed of better tools than the Britons were likely to have. Mr. Cory will presently exhibit a
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very remarkable iron trenching tool, found with the Bank Street stockade.

I therefore assign these stockades to the early days of the Roman occupation. The burnt tops of the Bank Street stockade may record some attack by the Britons, or only an accidental fire.

It has been doubted whether Carlisle was girt by a stone wall or not in the time of the Roman occupation. It is very doubtful whether it was a military post or not; it certainly had no garrison at the time that the *Notitia* was compiled, (about 400 A.D.), but depended entirely for its defence on the great wall of Hadrian to the north, and the adjacent station at Stanwix (see Mr. Hodgson Hinde, *The Archæological Journal*, September, 1859, p. 218). On the other hand there is a passage in Mr. Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, which goes to shew that the Norman Walls of Carlisle stood on the foundations of an older Roman Wall. Mr. Hodgson writes thus of Carlisle: "That it was strongly fortified in the Roman age is plain from the fact that much of the city wall was built upon old ramparts, as appeared not many years since, by several centurial stones still remaining there in their original positions. I make this assertion, I must own, on no very strong evidence—only that of a note without date or reference in my own handwriting in a copy of Nicolson and Burns' *Cumberland*, but I think from information given to me by the late Mr. G. A. Dickson, of Newcastle, who was a skilful and zealous antiquary."—Hodgson's *Northumberland*, Pt. II., Vol. III., pp. 219-20. The odd thing is that no one else has ever seen these stones. Mr. Hodgson nowhere says he saw them, nor does his brother Mr. C. Hodgson mention them in his many communications to the *Archæologia Æliana* about Roman antiquities in Carlisle; nor does Mr. G. A. Dickson, who frequently made communications to the *Archæologia Æliana* about Cumberland and Carlisle in connection with
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Roman antiquities. I have searched vainly for them: the portions of the wall now remaining are full of Roman stones, evidently not in their original positions. In a stone wall of Roman date round Carlisle I do not believe. But did it exist, it would be later than this stockade. I may add that the section given in the *Archæologia Æliana* shows that the foundations of the West Wall of Carlisle are in the Roman deposit, some height above the natural soil. If these foundations are Roman they must be late Roman.

The conclusion then, that I arrive at, is that the Romans in the early days of their occupancy fortified Carlisle with a stockade of oak posts, which included a less area than the Norman wall afterwards took in. As times grew quieter they neglected this stockade, and Roman rubbish accumulated against it; and a Roman villa, (its hypocaust was found half a century ago under the present gaol,) was built outside the useless stockade by some citizen of wealth.

I have just a word or two to say about the tanks; the one found by Mr. C. Hodgson, and the one now found are precisely similar, and appear to have been rubbish holes. They are outside the stockade, which, in the case of so orderly a people as the Romans, is natural. Similar ones have been found elsewhere, see Article III. in this volume, and also Wright's "The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon," p. 215, 3rd Edition. Mr. Wright says such are always found outside Roman towns, and are places for personal easement.
