

ART. XIII.—*The Batteries, Aigle Gill, Aspatria.* By JOSEPH ROBINSON of Maryport.

*Read at Kirkby Stephen, August 18th, 1880.*

AIGLE Gill is about two miles north-west of Aspatria, and is about one mile distant from the villages of Westnewton on the east, and Hayton on the west. It is a large farm, and takes its name from a gill or ravine formed by a small stream. The places I am about to describe have suffered much, at the hands of former tenants, by the removal of scores of cart-loads of stones, and this has in a great measure destroyed the character of the sites.

Assisted by the Messrs. Mann, the present farmers, I have examined five places on the estate, which show signs of former occupation. Four of these are situated on the spur of a hill, known as Pow Rigg, which rises to a height of a little over one hundred feet, and as the country towards the sea is flat, a good view is obtained, the Maryport Camp, distant six miles, and the Beckfoot Camp, four and a half miles, being distinctly visible. Up to forty years ago the most westerly site was intact, but the removal of stones then began, and has been continued at intervals since. The result is that a hollow dish-shaped depression is left about thirty yards in diameter, but very few stones remain to tell its original use. I found the remains of a cobble pavement, however, and a portion of an amphora, similar in every respect to specimens found at Beckfoot and Maryport Camps, with traces of charcoal. The pavement was exactly like a section of road, but I could find no trace of its presence beyond the limits of work.

The second site is distant about five hundred, and the third about seven hundred yards. We cut a trench twenty-two yards long through the latter, from north to south,

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and found a rough wall or rampart at each side, consisting of rude large freestones apparently in some confusion, but only upon two of these could we find traces of pick or chisel marks. We could find no dressed block similar to the usual Roman wedge, and the dressed stones found were not of the usual type. The floor was found at a depth of eighteen inches, and consisted of a pavement of small stones, one layer deep only, and apparently put in with care. Above this, from three to four inches thick, was a layer of black earth and charcoal, which easily separated from the pavement. We could find no pottery. Two years ago the steam grubber was passed over here, and many stones turned out. Amongst them was a round tapered freestone, fourteen inches in height and sixteen in breadth at top, containing a hollow about ten by eight inches. Since my examination the half of a granite quern has been picked up, and I am told one or two others have come formerly out of the same place, and have been lost. The fourth site exhibited similar features, but contained larger stones. In one of them we found three holes drilled to a depth of an inch or so, and I have since observed a similar stone on the fifth site which is at a little distance.

The hill, on which these remains exist, is flanked on two sides, and covered in front, by low boggy land, which would be a swamp in former times, and is little better yet in wet weather. It is full of trunks of trees, locally known as moss-clogs, and the present surface is from forty-two to fifty feet above the level of the sea, distant here  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles. The hill would form an excellent position for defence, being exposed to attack from one side only.

Two of the stone implements in my possession were found in this and the adjoining field, viz., an adze and a pointed stone, and in the fourth site was found a freestone hammer, with a depression for a thong or withe very distinctly marked upon it.

The crops are always most luxuriant in these places, and  
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where our digging was made, there is a great difference observable at present; owing, no doubt, to the charcoal we found being spread over the top. There are two similar places at a short distance, which I have seen, but have not yet had time to examine. The stone used in these places, which are locally called Batteries, is obtained from the outcrop laid bare by the action of the small stream, and my attention has been particularly drawn to it as one of the probable sources from which the Beckfoot Camp would be built, as in point of distance it is about the nearest quarry to which the Romans would have access, there being no stone in the Abbey Holme itself.

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