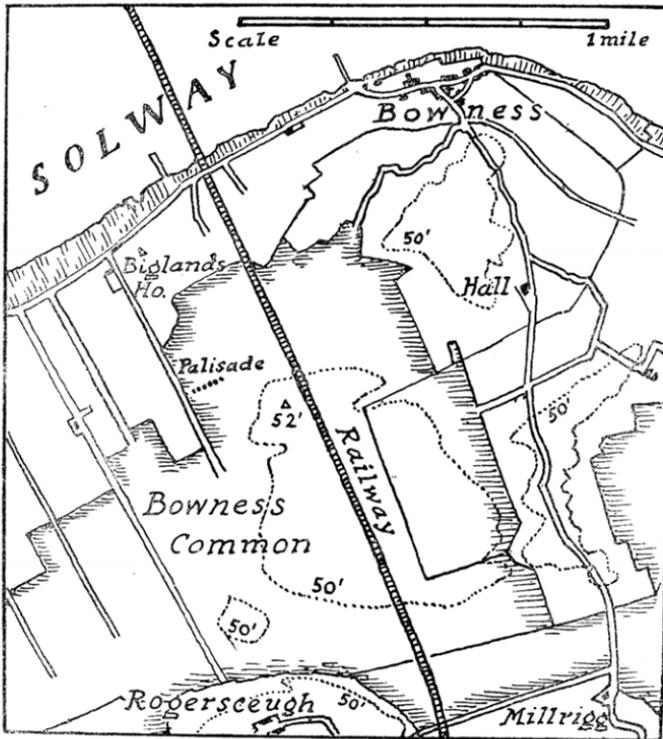


ART. XIV.—*An Ancient Palisade on Bowness Common.*
By T. H. HODGSON, F.S.A.

Read at Carlisle, September 10th, 1903.

IN July last a letter from Mr. Hopkins of Cardurnock, mentioning the discovery by a peat digger of an ancient palisade under the peat at Bowness Flow, appeared in the *Carlisle Journal*. In consequence I communicated with Mr. Hopkins, who kindly made an appointment to meet me, and also to have the peat digger in attendance, so that part might be uncovered in our presence. I accordingly met Mr. Hopkins on the 18th of July, 1903, and visited the place, when we saw some part of the palisade uncovered. It consisted of a row of small piles or stakes set close together and driven about a foot into sand which underlies the peat. The workman said that he usually found two rows of these piles, about a foot apart; at the spot, however, there appeared to be only one row. The stakes were of various kinds of wood; oak, birch, hazel, and, I think, alder, were clearly distinguishable. They were well preserved and shewed no sign of decay having set in before they were covered up by the growth of peat, but were, of course, very soft. One which we got out entire was about 3 feet long and 2 inches in diameter. This appeared to be the average size. Some were split in halves, and I saw one stake which was the middle piece of a stem which had been split into three. They were well pointed, the points being made by a long clean cut, such as would be made by a heavy tool having a clean cutting edge; it could not have been made by stone, or probably even by bronze implements. They were driven about a foot into the sand, the remaining 2 feet being embedded in the peat, which rose to 5 feet above their tops, a total thickness of 7 feet of peat.

Several had their roots attached, in fact the appearance was rather that of a brush fence into which stakes had been driven to fill up interstices; but it may well be that saplings having the roots attached had been used and the roots buried for the sake of stability, as the roots appeared to have been cut. A few stones, which must have been



brought to the spot, as they do not, so far as we saw, occur in the sand, were found at the base of the stakes, and had probably been used to secure them. The tops of all the stakes were cut to a uniform height of 2 feet above the sand. Some women who were looking on, and seemed much amused at the interest we displayed, told us that similar palisades had been found at other places in the moss.