

ART. XX.—*Survey of the Roman Road from the Maryport Camp to Cross Canonby Vicarage.* By J. B. BAILEY.

*Read at Maryport, September 10th, 1903.*

FOR many years the determination of the exact direction of the Roman road for the first few miles of its course from the Maryport Camp to Carlisle, has to some extent occupied the minds of antiquaries. Writing in the *Transactions* (vol. v., p. 186), Mr. Jos. Robinson says,

The work I have had in hand (*i.e.*, near the Maryport Camp) was suggested to me by Mr. Ferguson, F.S.A., and was begun with a twofold object, *viz.*, to determine accurately, field by field, the course of the road from this camp to that near Wigton, and, if possible, to find if the road to Beckfoot ran along the shore, as generally supposed. As there is no evidence of the latter known nearer to Maryport than the point to which I have traced it from the Beckfoot Camp, I was in hopes that I could find in these fields the point where the two roads separate, assuming they do so. The point where the road to Old Carlisle, near Wigton, began to deviate from the straight line was found in the fourth field from the Maryport Camp, but, so far, no trace of the other has been seen.

Unfortunately, Mr. Robinson was not able to carry his explorations further, but, as some portion of this work then fell to my lot, I naturally felt desirous of completing it when he left the district.

Till 1887, however, little opportunity occurred to follow up the clue already obtained. In this year, accompanied by Mr. T. Carey, also one of the band of explorers in 1880, we found undoubted traces of the road in a field bordering on what is now known as the Bank End Lane. (*Transactions*, vol. ix., p. 435.) This field is number 13 in H.M. Ordnance Survey made during the year 1899.

Incidentally I would here mention that the "cup and ring" marked stones (*Transactions*, vol. ix., p. 435) were

found in this same field. Somewhat unfortunately, the record is placed in the field on the opposite side of the road (No. 15). This is, of course, not correct. How the mistake occurred I am not able to say, but, as the information on all the various "finds" there recorded was given to the officials making the survey by myself, I may probably unwittingly have caused it. Those who have the new Survey can accordingly alter the allocation.

Little more was done till the early part of 1899, when the officers of H.M. Ordnance Survey were engaged in the district. Mr. R. Hoyle, who was responsible for the Maryport Section, called upon me to ask if it were possible definitely to decide the exact direction of the road, as he was anxious to include it in the Survey in this case. He was the more wishful of doing it, as his colleague in the Crosby district had succeeded in tracing it from the direction of Aspatria to the vicarage at Cross Canonby.

Accordingly, on March 2nd, 1899, we commenced operations. Proceeding to the "find" of 1887, already mentioned, we found it impossible to get across the marshy ground between us and the turnpike road. However, skirting Barney Gill for a few yards to the north-east, we came to a place where apparently a *bridge* had crossed. The evidences were very strong on one side of the water course, but so far we have not been able to examine the other side, though even here everything points to the same conclusion.

Fortified, however, with the fact that, in company with Mr. T. Carey, we had some years ago noticed similar traces to the find of 1887 along the occupation road to the west of Birkby, we determined to follow the course of Garley Gill (field 418) to that road.

As this field had fortunately just been ploughed, we had every opportunity of thoroughly examining it. Nor were we disappointed in our search, for we soon were in touch with a long line of cobbles similar in every respect to those we had seen previously. Such cobbles were rarely found

far from the edge of the gill, and this in itself seemed to point to the fact of an ancient road. In short, without interruption we were able to keep in touch with them till we came to the occupation road itself (field 349).

Into this we dug in several places with varying success till we came to field 391. Here the present road, which had hitherto followed a straight course, now deviated in a long curve to the east. Judging that this would afford a good chance of finding whether a road had crossed the arc of the curve, we narrowly examined this field, but particularly where the deviation from the straight course took place. In a very short time we came upon a small section of the cobble pavement still intact, the plough having just passed over it, leaving it uncovered.

From this point we were able, by means of numerous cobbles that had been ploughed up, to cross the field in a straight line till we reached the present road again at the gateway in field 390. Following the occupation road for a short distance we soon came to a portion of it where it turns abruptly to the right. We, of course, crossed the fence immediately in front of us into field 387.

This said fence, and several others, were composed of larger stones, both freestone and granite, which may have been a portion of the original Roman road, if such it was. However, no sooner were we over the fence than, whatever our feelings may have been previously, we felt now assured that we had made no mistake in our estimate of this road, for road it had evidently been. Moreover, the characteristics were exactly in keeping with what we had noticed in 1880 in the four fields nearest to the camp.

Nor were the traces of a meagre description, for the stones were literally in cartloads. As we proceeded across the various ploughed fields the number of cobbles showed no diminution, and there was no cause for the slightest hesitation in following up the traces of the road.

They lay in a perfectly straight line, and within a breadth of some 14 to 15 feet; indeed we rarely found one

outside this zone. The plough, however, had done its work of destruction well, for there was no trace of bedding visible.

So clear then were the traces that we did not stop to examine for them when we came to a pasture field; we simply passed on to the next ploughed field, where, without the slightest difficulty, we were able to resume our search. So we went along till at last we arrived at a point in the field exactly opposite to the vicarage at Cross Canonby, the road evidently passing where is now the main gateway.

Thus, without seeking it, we were drawn to the same objective as Mr. Hoyle's colleague had been. It would seem as though the Roman road from Aspatria to the proximity of the Maryport Camp had been put on a tangible footing.

But, on our return journey, we did something more, for we pursued an imaginary course, such indeed as a road might have gone had it kept much nearer to the sea. We were led to take this course as various opinions had been expressed as to the presence of a Roman road a short distance to the east of the cemetery. A careful examination of every field through which we passed was made, and, although a large number of the fields were ploughed, still we were not able to find the slightest trace of any such road. Nor looking at the chief characteristics of the country, would it appear as though the Romans would have made their road in any other direction than that we have described.

Little more remains to be noted. Early in 1902 the Rev. A. Ainley and myself with very little difficulty traced the course of the road across field 13 so far as Bank End Lane. Hence there seems little doubt but that it proceeds across field 15 and the corner of No. 27, and so on to the place where Mr. Robinson found the deviation in 1880.

The field being in corn, we were unable to examine it.