



ANCIENT ROADS AND FINDS NEAR GOSFORTH.

($1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the inch).

TO FACE P. 151.

ART. VI.—*Roman Coin found at Gosforth.* By C. A. PARKER, M.D.

Read at Carlisle, April 27th, 1905.

THIS coin was found by a gamekeeper while engaged in digging out a rabbit in a field near Hallsenna, in the parish of Gosforth. It was not in the fence, but about half-a-dozen yards from it, and about a foot deep in the sandy soil. The keeper dug freely round the spot without finding any more.

It is a silver Roman coin, the size of a sixpence, in a good state of preservation. The reverse bears a figure of Fortune, standing, with a steering oar in her right hand and a horn of plenty in her left. Inscription :—

FORTVNA AVGVSTA.

On the obverse is the laurelled head of the emperor, a typically Roman profile, surrounded by the inscription :—

IMP. NERVA. CAES. AVG. PM. TRP. COS. III. PP.

which when extended reads :—

IMPERATOR NERVA CAESAR AVGVSTVS PONTIFEX
MAXIMVS TRIBVNITIA POTESTATE CONSVL
TERTIVM PATER PATRIÆ

M. Cocceius Nerva was emperor for two years only, from A.D. 96-98, consequently his coins are scarce, averaging about one in a thousand coins found.

Although the line of Agricola's march is thought to have been near the sea, and may be marked by the straight pieces of road between (1) Drigg and Seascle and (2) Braystones and St. Bees, it is probable that the later Roman road, which must have existed north of the camp at Ravenglass, was on the line of the present high road to Gosforth and Egremont. That is to say, after

crossing the Mite close to the railway, the Roman followed the straight road running to Gubbergill, where it twists to cross the Irt at the Holmrook shallows. From Holmrook to Calderbridge the road pursues a direct course over hill and dale, and over it the sandstone found at the camps at Ravenglass and Hardknott was probably carried from Gosforth. At a point called indifferently Benfold or Sandy Lonnins, about midway between Gosforth and Holmrook, the road rises over a ridge 180 feet above the sea, and is crossed at right angles by a lane which appears to be a very ancient track—possibly pre-historic.

This track, which keeps persistently on dry ground, is the most direct route from Wasdale to the sea, crosses the Gosforth marsh at its narrowest point, and avoids a rise of 170 feet which the modern road from Gosforth to Wasdale takes. Fifty years ago it was called the old road to Wasdale. It extends from the guide post at the foot of Rainors Brow to Hallsenna, the Wasdale end pointing directly to the fellside called Bolton Wood, on which is a stone circle, not far from which a bronze celt was found. Called at first Low Lonnin, it passes near Laneside and Rainors, at both of which places polished stone implements have been found; then crossing the Bleng, it runs close to the old manor house Hall Bolton, being known as Toft Lane. Under the name of Stubbs-head Lane, it passes close to Gallabanks, a legendary place of execution; then crossing the high road at Sandy Lonnins, it runs direct to Hallsenna Moor, where there were formerly several tarns, and where a large polished celt was found. It was close to this lane, about 460 yards from the high road in the direction of Hallsenna, that the coin was dug up.

It seems not improbable that the coin had come into the possession of a native who lost it while following this ancient path, which originally led from place to place in which his forefathers had lived or hunted.