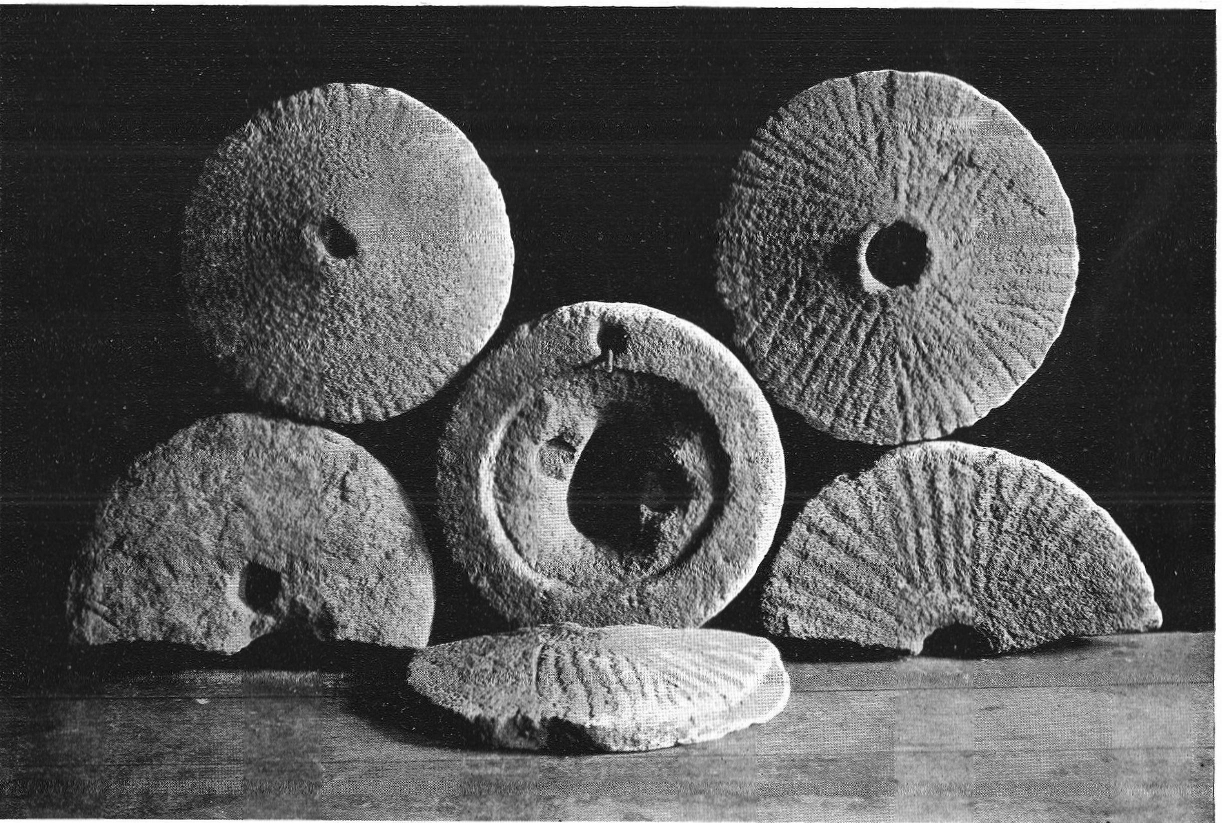

Fig. 2. Roman Querns.

To face p. 8

The Roman Occupation of Derbyshire.

FROM the earliest days the Romans drew a sharp distinction between the spheres of peace and of war. This distinction was, in the first instance, local. Certain regions, the city of Rome in particular, were *domi;* others, outside the sacred line, were *militiae*. The same distinction reappears rather curiously under the Roman Empire in the provinces. Technically, no doubt, the whole provincial area was *militiae*. Practically it was divided into two portions, one the region of peace and the other that of war, or at least of military men. Thus we find in most provinces two distinct areas. The troops, legions or auxiliaries are massed on or near the frontiers. The peaceful population lives behind the military lines and is free from the presence of soldiers. In the Gallic provinces, for example, the whole garrison, with one trifling exception, was massed along the Rhine in the *hiberna* and *castella* which guarded the frontier against German inroads. Similarly, in the Danubian lands, as the frontier advanced under successive rulers from Augustus to Trajan, the troops advanced too. The land behind became a land of peace, and the fortresses were turned into municipalities.

This feature appears equally in Britain. So soon as the conquest of the province was tolerably complete, we can recognise two regions in it, the lands of the north and west, confronting Hibernia and Caledonia, and the lands of the south and east. The first was the district in which troops were posted. The second was a peaceful area, and saw no more of armed forces than occasional

drafts of recruits and veterans passing to and from their posts.

The dividing line between these two regions of Britain is geographical. Britain, as geographers do not always tell us, falls, physically considered, into two parts—uplands and lowlands. The uplands consist of the west country moors, the Welsh hills, and the Pennine chain and northern highlands that adjoin it. The lowlands are the midland plain and the southern and eastern counties. A line drawn from York through Derby to Chester, and from Chester through Shrewsbury to the Bristol Channel, would form a rough boundary between these two areas. Hills no doubt occur to the south of that line, and low ground to the north. But with obvious exceptions this line divides two very different kinds of country.

The uplands are rough and mountainous. They usually rise above 600 feet and often considerably higher. They are scarred with deep ravines and tortuous valleys and sudden gorges. They are unsuited to agriculture, and incapable of supporting a numerous population. The lowlands present a very different spectacle. They are level or covered with gentle hills that rarely rise above 600 feet. Their soil and climate favours, or at least tolerates, serious agriculture, a dense population, and peaceful and settled life.

The difference between these two regions is well marked in the history of Roman Britain. Even the course of the conquest illustrates it. Little as we know the imperfectly recorded details, we can see that the lowlands were overrun in three or four years (A.D. 43—47). By the end of that period the Roman arms had so far advanced that they could operate against the Welsh hill tribes, could seize the mines of Flintshire, and prepare to attack the Brigantes of Yorkshire. But here their victorious career

was stayed. Instead of four, it cost nearly forty years to subdue the uplands (48—85), and even after that the spirit of the hillmen was not finally crushed.

In the development which naturally followed the conquest, the two areas remained distinct. The lowlands became rapidly Romanized. Progress was necessarily not uniform. Some districts, like Kent and Essex, had learnt not a little of Roman culture before 43. Others lay so far outside the main currents of provincial life that they never became thoroughly amalgamated. Others, again, like Warwickshire, were so thinly inhabited that substantially there was no population in them to Romanize. Class, too, differed inevitably from class. The wealthier and better educated naturally adopted Roman speech and manners more accurately and intelligently than the labourer or the rustic. But in the main the lowlands were civilised. A few municipalities, with Roman charters, were established. Many smaller and less privileged towns developed and flourished. The countryside was dotted with the residences of large land owners, generally Romanized natives. The minerals were worked in suitable places. Corn was grown and exported. Wool was dyed and obtained a name.[1] There was perhaps little wealth, but there was abundant comfort, orderliness and peace.

Turn now to the uplands. We meet no towns or "villas," no indication of comfortable unwarlike ease. Everywhere our civilian life stops where the hills begin. Instead, the spectacle is military, and the normal elements are forts and fortresses. Here, in these uplands, was distributed the garrison of forty or fifty thousand men which kept the hill tribes quiet and prevented the inroad of the Caledonian Highlander or Irish pirate. No doubt

1. See my paper *Romanization of Roman Britain* ("British Academy Proceedings," vol. ii.), p. 25, and references there.

this was not the only function of this garrison. It was there also to keep the peace in the lowlands, ready to crush a rising if such occurred. So far as we know, its services in this matter were never needed. In the more important work of keeping the peace along the hills and frontiers, it was continuously and seriously engaged.

The organisation of the garrison proceeded on the normal lines of the Roman army. That army, as it was under the Empire, consisted of two principal grades of troops—legions and auxiliaries. The legion was a body of 5,000 to 6,000 heavy infantry, recruited from the civilised and Roman or Romanized portions of the Italian or provincial populations, and constituting in size and morale and fighting strength the dominant element in the army, but an element which, owing to its very size, was a cumbrous as well as a powerful weapon. Three legions garrisoned Britain, one in each of three large fortresses—York, Chester and Caerleon. These formed the basis on which the defence of the province relied. But besides the legions, we have also the troops of the second line, the so-called auxiliaries. These were levied from among the subjects (but not the citizens) of Rome. They were less well-paid, less favoured in conditions of service, less reliable in warfare; they were also grouped together in less potent units of 500 or 1,000 men. But they had advantages. They were handier units, and they often included cavalry, bowmen, light troops. Accordingly they were stationed, not in large *hiberna* but in small *castella*, each covering some three or four or six or eight acres. These *castella* in most of their general arrangements were only a simplified variety of the *hiberna*. They were rectangular walled areas with four gates planted symmetrically in opposite pairs, central *principia* or headquarters in the middle, and barracks and storehouses

in wood or stone covering the rest of the interior. Such forts were dotted over the military area in strategic positions, along the frontiers, along the great roads of the north or west, or wherever need was apparent.

Derbyshire counts three of these forts. They are the most southerly forts in England proper, that is, among those which guarded the north as distinct from the garrisons of the Welsh mountains and valleys. One of the three—Littlechester, on the north side of Derby—is hardly known at all as a fort. But the remains there, as seen by Stukely in the eighteenth century, can only be explained as those of a fort. A second fort is at Brough, near Hope, in the Noe valley, guarding the route across the Pennine hills from the fort at Templeborough, near Sheffield, to the posts in the Cheshire and South Lancashire lowlands, and watching the wild heights of High Peak and Kinderscout. The valley in which it stands is the one bit of open habitable lowland among all the north Derbyshire hills, and it is just here that we might expect a fort to be placed to keep peace and order in the difficult region. The third fort is Melandra, near Glossop, planted on a spur that juts out into Longdendale and overlooking the easiest access from the western lowlands into the hills. It, too, by its position declares its purpose plainly.

We can tell the purpose of these forts. We cannot guess so easily their history. We know that the Roman advance northwards moved along the two lines of least resistance. Quite early in the conquest the legions had forced their way up the wide valley which separates Derbyshire from Wales and had established a legionary fortress[2] at Chester (about A.D. 48—50). It was probably

2. Full references to the authorities for this and other statements in this and the following page will be found in the *Victoria History of Derbyshire*, i., 201—221.

not so early that they pushed on from Lincoln to York. But it is likely enough that when they did advance the intervening wedge of Derbyshire was left still unconquered. Its adits were doubtless held. Coins[3] suggest that Melandra may have been established at least as early as Agricola (A.D. 78—85). Littlechester may also have been planted early, and thus if the hillmen were not conquered, they were at least hemmed in. By about A.D. 100 it was found possible to send into the Peak a *censitor* to register the natives for taxation and recruitment, and that step usually accompanies growing civilisation. But the progress was not wholly forwards. Late in Trajan's reign the north of Britain was disturbed and a whole legion was annihilated. The rising was crushed, and Hadrian's Wall was built to cut off the insurgents from the unconquered and unconquerable Caledonians (about 123). But a new generation sprung up that knew not the defeat of their fathers, and a fresh rising broke out (about A.D. 158). Then the fort at Brough was either built or rebuilt, and, as coins suggest, the other forts were occupied in force. The rising again failed, and it is the last in this part of Britain. Further north, troubles continued. But in Derbyshire, comparative peace apparently ensued. Littlechester seems to drop out of sight as an important place before the end of the second century. It may, indeed, have been dismantled and abandoned. The life of the other forts was possibly longer. But we have no cause to connect them with further troubles. They remained as part of the military system of the north, rather to prevent the growth of restlessness than to coerce unquiet men.

F. HAVERFIELD.

3. See the article on *The Coins, infra.*