

No. VI.—*Account of the Roman Road called "The Maiden Way."* By
WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE, Esq.

"LITERA SCRIPTA MANET."

THIS old Roman Road which is called in old boundary rolls, the Mayden Way, or Mayden Gate (*Via Puellarum*), extends from the station on the Roman Wall, near Glenwhelt, called Caervorran, in Northumberland, over the mountains of the eastern part of Cumberland, to another station at Kirby Thore, in Westmoreland. There it joined the great Roman Road leading from York, over Stanemoor, to Carlisle and Scotland; the remains of which are very fine in that vicinity.

Between the two extremities of the Maiden Way, a nearer, and certainly a much more commodious, course might have been procured, by turning the corner of Tindale Fell and proceeding by the side of the mountain chain, called by the Romans the Pennine Alps, in the plain of the Eden. It is supposed, with some degree of probability, that the Romans preferred the hills for their roads, in order to guard against surprise from enemies lurking in the thick forests which then covered Britain; or in order effectually to subdue a vanquished people, who crowded to the mountains for a last resort. The Cumberland mountains have more than once afforded this protection to unhappy natives. In the present instance such a solution may be probable, but it is also likely that the Romans had other objects in traversing this wild and then barren country. There was an extensive military station at Whitley, about two miles from Alston, the remains of which are very complete, and there was without much doubt another station at a place called Hall Hill, immediately opposite to the town of Alston. The lead mines of this district have been worked from a very remote period, and there is every reason to suppose in the time also of the Romans. Indeed, Roman relics have been discovered in some of

them. It is, therefore, highly probable that this road was also made with the view of protecting their mines and transporting their produce.

The course of this road is described in detail below. It may be described generally thus:—It crosses the valley of the Tippald stream close by Blenkinsopp (old) Castle, and ascending the opposite hill proceeds over the inclosures which lately formed part of Featherston Common. From the higher ground here, there are fine views of the valley of the Tyne both to the east and the south; passing along a precipitous ridge on the left of Lowdie Cleugh, it reaches by a steep short descent, the junction of two small streams, and continues to be used as a parish road up the bank, still called Maiden Way Bank, and onwards with a slight interruption through Hartley Burn to the turnpike road which leads from Alston to Brampton. From this point to Burnstones it ascends a steepish part of the waste land, and it was used till the year 1824 as the common country road up the valley of the Tyne. The view down the Tyne from the top of the hill is very striking,—Featherstone Castle embosomed in rich foliage, the site of the Roman wall far behind elevated on basaltic and lofty crags, with the far stretching expanse of Bewcastle Moss behind, and with distant views of the Cheviot Hills, the Solway Firth, and the Criffel Mountains of Dumfries.

Descending to Burnstones the road continues up the valley, and in gradual approach to the Tyne, passing immediately behind the village of Slaggyford and then close by the river, where it is still used as a road, and up a steep hill opposite Williamstone to Thornhopeburn, and thence to the well known station at Whitley. Leaving here the valley of the Tyne it descends into Gilderdale and crosses the stream of that valley into Cumberland, a few yards above the inclosures, winding easily on both sides of the steep banks. It then passes through the inclosures on the south side in a long gradual ascent to a pass in the mountains called the Sloat, at the west end of Park Fell, and proceeds through other inclosures of common to the turnpike road leading from Alston to Penrith, which it crosses about half a mile westward from Hartside Inn. Descending to Rowgill Burn on a grassy slope it enters Melmerby Fell and ascends a long ridge of that fell to the summit of the chain. It is here seen in the greatest perfection, and may indeed be almost considered as just left by its

former owners. Its elevation at this spot cannot be less than 2,500 feet above the sea. The view from this elevation is of the most enchanting description, surpassing for extent, richness, and variety, perhaps any other in the Kingdom. The great steepness of the western escarpment of these lofty hills, which are covered with the finest verdure, occasions at once the most comprehensive and the most delicious prospect of the great, broad, and rich vale of Eden, which, with its scattered forests, cultivated fields, and silvery stream, may truly be called the Garden of Eden. The distant and clifty hills of the lake district with the conspicuous summits of Skiddaw, Saddleback, and Helvellyn, form a most exquisite background which, bounds the vale along the western side to the extreme south. On the north-west, the rich plains of Carlisle, and the Solway, the ocean, and the Scottish mountains beyond, give their last features to this sublime sight. The Roman soldiers with as much truth as amid the hills of Perthshire might have here exclaimed "Campania!" The vast expanse of the primæval forest which then filled that noble plain, intersected only by rivers and roads, and in the midst of which the Druids celebrated, at one of their most renowned shrines, their unholy rites, must have filled with delight even the conquerors of the world.

Immediately below, is a singularly beautiful amphitheatre, in the very bosom of the hills, and clothed with delicious verdure, called Ousby Dale. Along the eastern side of this, the road pursues a gently descending course down the green steeps of Ousby Fell and finally descends into the plain below by a most remarkable chasm or cleugh called Argill. This portion is by far the steepest part of the course. It enters the head of the gill by an abrupt turn to the left, and continues down a rapid steep confined between two lofty hills, for about a quarter of a mile to the plain. All trace is obliterated by the fallen rock. The passage is so narrow that there is barely room for a road and must have afforded great opportunity for resisting a hostile attack. It crosses Ousby Beck at the foot of the hill, almost directly beneath the round conspicuous summit of Cross Fell. It then traverses a large pasture and descends towards a farm house called the Bank. No trace of its course is visible, after leaving the pasture, for a mile and a half, where it is met with in a very distinct state in Wythwaite

Pasture in Westmoreland, for a short distance, in a straight line from Argill. It is then invisible for two miles, and is seen again on the north-east corner of Newbiggin Moor, near a corn mill on Milburn Beck. It is from this spot used as a common parish road with little alteration to within a very short distance of Kirby Thore.

Such is the course of the Maiden Way, which, with slight exceptions, may still, after the lapse of so many centuries, be distinctly followed for about 36 miles. In some parts, and particularly on the summit of Melmerby Fell, as before stated, there is perhaps a better specimen of what a Roman road really was than in any other part of Britain.

The mountainous character of the route has of course produced this state of preservation. Its destruction has been more rapid within the last twenty years than during all the former period of its existence. The inclosures of commons and the more extensive use of the plough now continually prey upon it. But even in places where every trace is lost, and must have been lost for ages, such is the strong and abiding interest which is attached to the road by the neighbouring people, that tradition will probably not soon fail in indicating its entire course with great accuracy.

The extreme and unnecessary steepness of many portions of the road, the apparent absence of all bridges at the various streams it traverses, and the condition of the road itself in its best parts, render it almost certain that it was not used as a road for waggons or carriages.

The extreme straightness of its course and the consequent loss of level which so frequently occurs, and which occasions frequent and long alternations of ascent and descent, seem also to confirm this conclusion. Neither are there any traces of wheels upon the stones as seen in the old roads of Italy and France. The road is almost uniformly 21 feet broad, and has been raised above the ground with a ditch on each side, and intersected with proper conduits many of which are very entire. In the most perfect part on Melmerby Fell the sides are raised 2, 3, or even 4 feet high. The stones are large at the sides, 2 or 3 feet long and 1 or 2 broad, and of freestone from the adjoining bed. In the middle are chiefly small stones, many of which are thin and flat; these are now lying loose on the surface; but it appears from other portions of the road which are favourable for examination

that these smaller stones were rounder and all rudely wedged or paved in compactly with each other.

In one place on the waste which is wet, there were thicker stones under the thin ones making the road about fourteen inches thick. The materials vary with the strata adjoining. Great attention seems to have been given to the sides of the road and its proper drainage. In other respects the structure of the road varies with the nature of the ground.

No vestiges of bridges are visible at any of the streams which are all small in their usual state.

There was a bridge over a stream near Kirby Thore on the great line of road before mentioned, at which many valuable coins have recently been found.

It has often been suggested by antiquarians that this road was the 10th *Iter Antoninum*, and that Whitley Castle was the *Alonis* of that *Iter*, suppositions which seem quite inadmissible. All these notions embrace only the western portion of the road and reject the northern part. The *Maiden Way* seems throughout distinct in itself. If *Glanoventum* is Lanchester, it is highly probable that *Alonis* is Allendale Town, which, in addition to similarity of name, comprises in an admirable manner all the desiderata for a Roman Station. In this case a road might be expected to be found over the hills by the head of the South Tyne towards Appleby, which is a matter to be solved. No remains have yet been met with in Allendale, notwithstanding the assertions of Warburton, Hutchinson and Horsley.

I. FROM CAERVORAN TO BURNSTONES, SEVEN MILES AND A HALF.

COURSE.

First seen at the west end of a ploughed field, about a quarter of a mile from the station going along a steep hill side, and with a steep descent for about sixty yards, and then enters a wood about two hundred yards from the Tippald, a rivulet opposite the limekilns, and a quarter of a mile from Glenwhelt.

CONDITION.

The form only visible, the stones were taken up within recent memory.

COURSE.

Crosses the Tippald probably opposite the Colliery and close by, or under, Blenkinsopp Castle, then across a ravine called Widing Cleugh to a pasture beyond called.

Waterloo pasture, which it traverses about a hundred yards from the parish road.

Another field in which it crosses a small hollow.

Another field.

Another field, disclosing fine views down and up the Tyne.

Another field.

Another field, a wood on the left, through which the parish road passes.

Descends gently into the middle of a large pasture allotted to Jacob Lee having the plantation on the left—in the middle is a shallow cleugh called Pinkins' Cleugh, which the road crosses about half a mile above the place where the parish road crosses the cleugh, which is deeper below.

Another pasture, and along the ridge of a steep deep cleugh called Lowdie Cleugh for a quarter of a mile, and at the end a very steep brow of about forty yards to the parish road.

CONDITION.

Invisible for three quarters of a mile.

Form seen—stones lying about. This and all the succeeding pastures have been ploughed since the passing of the Featherston Common Inclosure Act in 1808. The form of the road can be traced throughout, either by the difference of the grass or the hollowness of the ground, or the stones still left ungathered. But most of the stones were taken for erecting the walls of the inclosures. There is, therefore, no good entire specimen of the road left, but often the stones at the sides and in the middle well define it.

Only visible in the middle by the large stones.

At the end large stones in heaps—the ground fallen in, but road green and form preserved.

COURSE.

CONDITION.

Crosses the stream about 15 yards above the present bridge—two streams join here.

Large paved stones on the left bank.

Follows in the present parish road up a short steep hill, still called "The Maiden Way Bank," and so on to the top of the hill about one hundred and fifty yards, except at the top of the first steep brow where the present road turns abruptly to the right and turns again.—Close by on the right of the road is a house called Maiden Way House, said to have been built on the old way, but probably on the west of it.

The old road discernible at the sides of a new one.

From the last hill top, probably through the pasture on the right, and not in the present devious steep and awkward road, but in a fine slope towards the corn mill in the hollow, crossing Killaw burn and then Blackburn on the right of the mill, and along the present road up the steep bank on the other side.

No traces.

Along the present road for more than a mile in a straight line to the Alston turnpike road leading to Milton, which it cuts at right angles.

Large stones on the sides which are very perfect in ascending the hill from the burn.

It crosses the burn after making a slight turn to the right to avoid the steep descent and ascent, passes the public house close by the turnpike road ten or twelve yards on the west.

The old road from Alston to the Coal Pits here, used up to the year 1824, now grassed over, is upon the Maiden Way to within half a mile from Burnstones, which is as follows.

Large stones visible and right side very good.

Up the steepish hill on the uninclosed waste part of Tindal Fell for a mile directly south, then over a fine flat part for one third of a mile, and down into Glen-due (Dark Glen), by a fine, but still very steep, sweep to the right, crossing the stream very near to the present bridge and proceeding almost by the side of the new road by a gentler sweep to the top of the other hill—a quarter of a mile from Glen-due passes close on

Large stones in this descent two feet thick.

COURSE.

CONDITION.

the west by the inclosure wall which afterwards stands in the middle for two hundred yards. The old Alston road then turned to the right, but the Roman road went on (about half a mile from Burnstones), and passed through the inclosures and under the present blacksmiths' shop to the burn, a few yards above the present bridge.

No traces.

II. FROM BURNSTONES TO WHITLEY CASTLE STATION, FOUR MILES.

Passes through the west corner of the first field, up a steep brow which has been hollowed for the road.

No stones.

Follows the east side of the wall of the next field, at the end of which is a small descent.

No trace now—the stones taken up in this year (1845.)

A pasture; road begins on the west side of the wall which afterwards stands on it—the wall ends in an elbow about one third of the way through; the rest of the pasture very wet, passes close by the south-east corner of the pasture.

Stones visible on the sides and in the middle.

No trace.

Crosses a parish road leading to the moors and then through a small strip of common land which is being inclosed, just opposite Town Green Toll Bar.

No trace.

A meadow field, which it crosses diagonally; at one third of the way, a new cart road is made on it to the end.

Quite visible but much impaired lately.

Another field of which the corner is traversed and then the road joins the present turnpike road for a quarter of a mile to a round hill not far from the Knarburn; the present new road here turns to the left, and wind round to the right, to the bridge, the Roman road goes on the road of 1834 over the top of the brow, and crosses the new road on the other side, and descends to the burn a few yards eastward of the present bridge.

No traces.

By a ford across the burn close by the River Tyne, and up the short hill to the left of a large quarry.

No trace.

COURSE.

Through several arable fields and along the brow of a natural terrace for one third of a mile to the village of Slaggyford, from thirty to forty yards below the present road.

Passes close behind the village and down a brow to the site of the present road which is the same for half a mile to Thomason's Well, close by the Tyne.

Opposite the ford leading to Williamstone, leaves the new road, going directly on up the steep hill. This was part of a former road of modern days, used by pack horses forty or fifty years ago.

Along the brow edge for one hundred and fifty yards, then in a straight line for Fartown Hill, a green hill on the other side of Thornhope Burn seen prominently over a flat piece of ground, from fifty to one hundred yards from the new road; the modern horse road took a turn still very visible to the right and joined the site of the new road, but the Roman road goes straightforward through awet meadow.

A large pasture on the north of Thornhope Burn, a full grown tree in the middle of the road, descends at the end to the burn which it crosses about one hundred yards below the present bridge.

Up a narrow pathway to the top of the brow, from whence is the trace of an old road leading on the left to the top of the adjoining conical hill (Lintley Hill), which is supposed to have been a station.

Through several wet meadows for upwards of a mile to the top of a hill with trees called Fore Knowe, below Temple House and opposite Barhaugh Scars, passing about one hundred yards below the green high hill, called Fartown Hill.

CONDITION.

No trace now—the stones taken out at various parts, a few years ago, and particularly two or three years ago, in a close immediately behind Slaggyford.

No trace.

Stones gone; but the form remains.

No trace—form visible.

Form visible.

Fine green line all the way with the stones and sides complete in most parts, except at the end and near the burn.

No stones seen.

No traces now except at Fore Knowe, where there are stones and the form of the road.

COURSE.

Descends on the west side of a wall and passes in a straight line for Whitley Station, through a byer and house to a small stream, and then enters the common.

At the elbow of the wall opposite the peak of Heaplaw Fell, the road continues under the wall for some distance—leaves the common and passes through the meadows and across the turnpike road to the house at Castle Nook, which stands upon it.

Up the meadows on the foot path towards the Roman station, and on the east of the wall opposite the station, its distance is about one hundred and fifty yards on the east and inside the wall; it does not, therefore, enter the station.

III. FROM WHITLEY CASTLE (STATION), TO ROWGILL BURN, EIGHT MILES AND A HALF.

Passes through the meadows towards the north-west corner of Wanwood Bent large pasture on the other side of Gilderdale burn—on the north-west of and close by a house at Whitley, and then enters the common—leaves the valley of the Tyne now.

Along the flat part of the common diverging to the dge of the brow not far from the inclosure wall.

Steep and long zig zag descent to Gilderdale Burn, following well the best parts of the ground, for two hundred yards winds by the side of the hill, but still steep descent.

Crosses the burn at right angles—two hundred yards above the inclosure wall, a mile from the Tyne.

Up the opposite high banks, in order to gain the ter-

CONDITION.

Form very visible at first, the stones taken recently, but afterwards invisible.

Form and stones seen.

No traces.

Form quite visible—and stones still there but many taken up.

Not seen—all stones taken up.

Very distinct and perfect, entire breadth and sides complete for two or three hundred yards, with large stones in the middle, twenty one feet broad.

Very plain and fine.

No trace.

COURSE.

race above, winding gently to the left along the side of the hill, and then by a fine bold sweep turning to the right and along the top of the brow, diverging to the left: the elbow is about thirty yards from the modern but now obsolete road to Alston.

In a fine long gradual ascent of three miles to a pass in the mountain range, which intersects Gilderdale Forest, called the Sloat—crossing the corner of Wanwood Bent pasture for half a mile to the wall, and then entering the Gilderdale allotments.

Passes through eight allotments—all more or less covered with heath—road in a straight line—the ascent greatest in the sixth and seventh allotments—in the last allotment it passes close by the site of an old mine house on the south, and under some mine rubbish—it is level here but descends gently to the wall, where it enters the waste part of Gilderdale Forest.

Turns a little to the left on the west side of a small stream for one hundred yards to the Sloat.

Passes through the Sloat which is a small narrow defile of fifty or sixty yards in length, on the top of the Fell on the west of Park Fell.

Continues through the waste for one mile and a half across a moss called Bell's Moss, slight descent and slight winding by the hill side to avoid a greater descent—gradually approaches the inclosure wall, to which it is quite close in the allotment next passed through.

An allotment called Scarberry Lot for three quarters of a mile. Follows the wall at three or four yards distance on the west to the elbow of the wall, disappears in a hollow part occasioned by the sinking of the lime-

CONDITION.

Form very visible, stones mostly gone, but many large stones near the turn.

Indistinct owing to the wetness of the ground—stones and sides seen here and there nearer to the wall.

The line very clear and seen almost without interruption—one or both of the sides generally prominent—indistinct towards the end of the eighth allotment, and where it passes the wall—stones probably used for the wall.

Quite plain near the top of the hill.

Very visible, green and hard.

Very easily traced—in some soft places lost but generally very perfect, especially the sides. The structure more easily seen here than in any other part.

Quite visible—green—defaced at the hollow part, then beautifully green with high raised

COURSE.

stone into what are called "swallow holes", and which plainly appear to have occurred since the time of the Romans—then over the hard limestone (great limestone bed) to the end—quite flat.

Another allotment adjoining the Alston turnpike road on the east—slight bend to the left along the limestone bed, enters the allotment at a point about one third of the length of it—close by the wall for a short way, then diverges to the wall on the south by a gentle descent.

A pasture—passes the lower part for thirty or forty yards, and crosses the present new turnpike road about one third of a mile westward from the inn called Hartside House.

Another pasture, part of Quarry-house farm, enters about twenty yards from the north west corner—crosses the upper part and the old Hartside turnpike road, then lost in a hollow broken piece of ground for a few yards, and then for eighty yards to a narrow plantation about a quarter of a mile below the new turnpike road, and eighty yards below the old turnpike road.

On leaving the plantation, which is about thirty yards broad, enters the common called Glassenby Fell, and descends gently in a fine straight line of more than a mile to Rowgill Burn which it crosses one hundred and fifty yards below the junction of that burn with Blackcleugh Burn.

CONDITON.

sides and between dark heath—very perfect towards the end.

Quite plain—green all the way with stones at the sides and in the middle.

Line plain but no stones, known by the greener surface.

Quite green—stones quite visible and the sides.

In fine firm condition, green—left side very good, occasionally projecting two feet above the grass below—right side often seen—drains seen at the usual angle covered with large stones—very perfect, the water still flowing through them.

IV. FROM ROWGILL BURN TO OUSBY BECK OVER MELMERBY AND OUSBY FELLS, SEVEN MILES.

Proceeds up that part of Melmerby Fell, called Melmerby Rigg, to the south-west and in a straight line which is seen from a great distance—steep at first, then

Quite green, and distinct from the heathy parts of the Moor—wet,

COURSE.

varies, but ascending for more than a mile, when a flat part, a mile in breadth, appears, which it traverses to the foot of the next brow.

Turns slightly to the right to face the brow—steep but only twenty or thirty yards long—then up a rising slope for half a mile to some scattered freestone fragments.

From the free stones up the hill and over a flat of one hundred and fifty yards for half a mile to a point, when it turns to the left—in two or three places winding slightly to the right in a gentle curve.

Along the slope of the hill in gradual rise to the summit of the fell for half a mile.

Along the summit for quarter of a mile to the edge of the other side, which is just opposite a rocky peak of laty rock in the vale below, called Musca.

CONDITION.

with stones at the sides, drains perfect. On the flat covered with heath darker than the rest, which serves for a guide; slight ditches on each side and stones on the right side.

Indistinct at the brow but afterwards very clear—at times the whole breadth with sides complete.

Green — with sides complete—heath scanty —on the flat, stones very numerous and cover all the road.

Green with large breadths of stones intervening—left side raised.

The most perfect of all —road raised high, sometimes two or three feet at each side, just twenty-one feet broad, large stones at the sides, two or three feet long, by two —smaller stones in the middle —several thin stones, most perfect just at the end of the top for one hundred and twenty yards, all large stones, almost blocks, raised four or five feet; see general description above.

COURSE.

Descends from the top in a winding course in the form of the letter S for thirty yards then for sixty yards down a very steep green slope to an undulating flat, and then in a fine line gently down the slope of Ousley Dale for a mile and a half towards a hill on Ousley Fell, called Brownhill on the south of the dale.

On the left of Brownhill about one hundred yards, and after a level part, down a very steep part on the south of the hill, and then in a rapid slope to a great turn at more than a right angle on the right or north.

At this point there are two roads which unite again sixty yards below. The one that turns to the right winds again to the left to abate the steepness of the descent and joins the other, which comes almost straight down an excessively steep ridge, at the head of a very singular gill or cleugh called Ar-gill or Ardale.

By a very sharp turn to the left for a few yards and then to the right down the steep cleugh, which is a narrow ravine of about the breadth of the road between two hills of rock, the hill on the right being a soft slaty cliff, and crumbling very much and filling up the cleugh, very steep, about one third of the way down, the steepest of the whole line—exceedingly steep but for a few yards only—the cleugh about a quarter of a mile long—emerging at Ousley Beck which flows from the direction of Crossfell.

CONDITION.

Very distinct and stony at first, then beautifully verdant and hard, with stones emerging, and several conduits—right side raised.

Very fine—green and hard—on slaty rock of the great Pennine fault. stones covered with grass.

Stones covered with grass—the road at the North turn hollowed by water and much erased further on.

Scarcely visible at the entrance except by the form, and further down the fallen rocks have almost quite obliterated every trace—before coming to the beck it may be seen on some hard and more level ground, but not well.

Not seen near the Beck.

V. FROM OUSLEY BECK TO KIRKBY THORE, NINE MILES.

Crosses Ousley Beck nearly at its junction with a small gill and enters

A large pasture which it traverses for three quarters of a mile in a straight line leaving the highest point of the pasture and a quarry a little to the left.

No trace.

First seen at the brow of the hill a few yards from the beck to the right of a broken excavated

COURSE.

Enters an arable field and down a steep slope towards the Bank Farm House which is at the foot of the hill. It is said to pass under the present back kitchen of the house; supposed to pass through the fields on the north-west of Kirkland Church and for one mile and a half to Wythwaite Pasture.

Enters the high end of this pasture which is now inclosed and crosses the cart road leading to the fell and then enters another pasture called Loaning Pasture.

Passes again for two miles over fields which have been ploughed, and crosses Skirwith or Blincarn Beck close by, or under the Corn Mill, standing on the north-east side of Newbiggin Moor.

Enters the larger portion of the moor on crossing the brook, and continues towards a long narrow road which it passes close by on the north side, and then enters a long lane at the end of the moor and is now used with little alteration as a public road to within a quarter of a mile from the village of Kirkby Thore—A new road is now forming (1845), on the old Roman road for two miles from the Corn Mill by which the remains will now be defaced.

Is seen for the last time at the brow of the hill on the left of the Hall Farm House, passing for half a mile through the fields now cultivated, but seen thirty years ago before the improvements began. Conducted to the station here which is now a large raised green hill in the upper part of the village called Burwers or Burrans, a common term in Scotland and the North of England for a Roman Station.

CONDITION.

path way, seen distinctly all the way by the dark green grass, slightly raised—stones visible here and there.

No trace.

No trace.

No trace—all the fields have been ploughed.

Seen well for a quarter of a mile green and raised—stones seen.

Invisible.

Very perfect—the structure well seen here—slight curves in its course.

No traces.

Note.—Some discussion has lately taken place respecting the origin of the term “Maiden” in connection with this old road, in the hope not only of simply discovering the true derivation of the word, but also the purposes and history of the road itself. It has been suggested above, that the road might be connected with the working of the mines in the vicinity of South Tyne; and since the above account was written, several smelted slags of lead ore have been discovered at a great elevation on Melmerby Fell, close by the Maiden Way. These slags are considered to be undoubtedly Roman, and from the imperfect mode of smelting then adopted, are still very rich in ore. It has been suggested by the noble President of the Society, that it is a proper subject of inquiry, whether this Maiden Way cannot be connected with the Maiden Castles on Stanemoor and on Grinton-moor in Swaledale, all of which are not remote from the mining fields of the present day, and whether the word “Maiden” can with any probability be traced from the Arabic word “Māīdn,” signifying a mine, like Almaden, in Spain, or from any other source evincing the early presence in the North of England of an Eastern people. The well-known mining operations of the Phœnicians in Cornwall, and the long retention of proper names, render such a supposition quite worthy of discussion. It is urged that the Maiden Castles may have been the fortified towns of the miners, and that the Maiden Ways connected them with each other. It is certain, that the camp or fortification called Maiden Castle, on Grinton Moor, is not Roman; and no Roman road is near. But it is not far from the great ditch or rampart which is supposed to be connected with “the Devil’s Dyke” of Northumberland, the origin of which is still very obscure. It is situate in a slight recess of the hill side, is of oval form, appears to have been strongly fortified, chiefly with earthen works; but it contains a great mass of buried stone, with the visible wrecks of narrow streets or passages still faced with stone. About seven hundred yards to the west, there is apparently a tumulus or barrow, which has never been examined, and on the east is the supposed corresponding site of a temple. A footpath leading up from the village is still called Maiden Way. All this deserves further inquiry. But the Maiden Way, properly so called, cannot be connected with the Maiden Castles on Grinton or Stanemoor. Christopher Ridley, in 1572, says, indeed, that the road leads to the Maiden Castle in Stanemoor, and that there was a tradition of a king’s daughter who lived there. It is true there is still a castle there called Maiden Castle, about five miles from Brough, and eight miles from Bowes, upon the main road, which was also a principal Roman road—in fact, the 2nd Iter of Antoninus. This castle appears to have been strong, and occupies a very strong position on the brow of the hill, commanding the pass. Camden says (*Vol. iii. 159*) that the castle was in Leland’s time of pyramidal form, and that the stones were 18 feet high, and 60 feet in compass. It is *said*, Roman mortars have been found here, and the fort has been often considered to be Roman. But there is no sufficient evidence of this, and in many respects it much resembles the one on Grinton-moor. But it appears to have been intended entirely to defend the pass, and can hardly be supposed to have been the site either of a permanent camp or of a town. Now the Maiden Way, properly so called, does not lead directly to this Maiden Castle on Stane-

moor. It only leads to the great station at Kirby Thore, where it ends, and where it joins the great Roman road already mentioned, about twenty miles from Stanemoor. There is therefore no distinct connection between the Maiden Way and this Maiden Castle. But there is a distinct connection between another Maiden Castle, which has lost its name, and this Maiden Way, which appears to be conclusive as to the origin of the term. There is a Maiden Castle on the line of the Roman Wall, and it is from this very fort that the Maiden Way actually begins. The Roman station near Greenhead, called MAGNA by the Romans, and supposed with justice to have been one of the original forts of Agricola, is situate at a spot expressly demanding a large and strong fortress. The Roman name confirms the existence of such a station. It is singular that this station, which has been selected for its great natural strength, and which was undoubtedly made equally strong by art, and also the Maiden Castle on Stanemoor, should be situated at the *two lowest* points of depression in the great chain of hills which intersects the whole of the North of England. It was necessary in all times of warfare to defend these two mountain passes with more than ordinary care. The Romans had at least two strong stations, at Bowes and Brough. Hence probably the Maiden Castles. In fact, it was at Thirwall, close by Greenhead, that tradition asserts that the Wall was at last "thirled." The Roman station MAGNA was called by the Ancient British *Caer-vorran* or *forwyn*, fort maiden, as at this day, *Craig-forwyn*, in Denbighshire, signifies the rock of the Maiden, and *Dol-forwin*, the Maiden's meadow. There is no Roman or British name extant for the Maiden Way; but there is every reason to believe that it was called after the great castle from which it proceeded. It has been most erroneously supposed by Horsley, that it formed the 10th *Iter* of Antoninus; an error which I am sorry to see is repeated by Mr. Bruce in his Account of the Roman Wall. However much this *Iter* is disputed, there is no kind of claim for it so far north as this Maiden Way. The term maiden was of course imported by the Saxons, unless they adopted the Eastern word above mentioned, signifying a mine, in which case the subsequent monkish translation, "*via puellarum*," would be simply a blunder. But it is difficult to conceive that such a word could survive so many revolutions, even if it had been much more directly associated with actual mining operations than is supposed; for it is only for about ten miles of its whole course that the road intersects a mining district. It may safely be said, that no mines were worked at any remote period in the *immediate* vicinity of any of the Maiden Castles, except that at Grinton. Again, the British word must be supposed to have had an origin previous to the arrival of the Danes or Saxons. It seems to follow, that the derivation of the word must at last be sought for, like so many others, as *Magdeburg* and *Jungfrau*, from the inviolate character of the spots so called. In days when strong forts were not easily taken, there appears to have been a popular disposition to give the strongest their maiden name. The great fort or station at Dorchester has been always called the Maiden Castle (*Camden, Vol. i. 44*). The strong Roman station at Bowes (VERTERIS) was called, even so lately as Horsley's time, a Maiden Castle, though it has now lost that name. The castle of Edinburgh was also called *Castra Puellarum*. Even now the fortress of Comorn enjoys a similar title among the Hun-

garians. There is indeed another derivation which would be strictly in unison with the geographical description of the road. According to Camden (*Vol. iii. 96*), *Mai-dun* signifies a *great ridge*: and the road crosses the greatest ridge on the Pennine chain. It would be an excellent origin, if there was not a better. But it appears to me to be found with more reason in the expression of Horace, "*Intactæ Palladis urbem.*"

W. B.

July 28, 1851.