

**PLAN OF
ANCIENT BRITISH REMAINS
NEAR
BIRTLEY & BARRASFORD,
NORTH TYNEDALE.**

Scale 1 Inch to a Mile

- Camp and Shooting Stone
- Ditches and Fences
- Earthwork Ditches and Trenches
- Barrows and Graves
- Boundaries of Parishes
- Enclosure
- Fossils
- Probational Sites of Battles



the centre of the hall, and from thence, passing beneath the railway arch next to the carriage road, a passage will lead down to the western window of the guard-room in the Castle. The western front towards the street will present a curtain wall in the style of the Old Castle, connecting that building with the Blackgate. Should this design, with such modifications or changes as the Society may suggest, be carried into effect, the antiquaries of Newcastle will possess a Museum excellently adapted for the study of their collection of antiquities, and attached, moreover, to a building of high historical interest. The Council trust that ere the next anniversary arrives the Museum will have made considerable progress, if it be not by that time completed.

ON ANCIENT BRITISH REMAINS NEAR BIRTLEY AND BARRASFORD, NORTH TYNE.

BY THE REV. GEO. ROME HALL.

IN September, 1862, a brief account of certain ancient remains observed near the village of Birtley, in North Tynedale, chiefly on the estate of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, was communicated to this Society through Dr. Charlton. A description more in detail was then promised. I have since that time been able to take a more accurate and wider survey of the district, in superficial extent about 30 square miles, which is well defined by the rivers Rede and North Tyne on the north and west, and by the Gunnarton or Barrasford Craggs and the Watling Street on the south and east. It seemed preferable for archæological purposes to choose such a locality, with which a four years' residence had made me intimately acquainted, rather than to venture at present upon a survey embracing the whole area of the river-basin of the North Tyne and its tributaries. I may add also that during the last autumn I have had the pleasure and advantage of going over a great portion of the district with Revs. Dr. Bruce, W. Greenwell, and J. F. Bigge, and Mr. MacLauchlan.

The physical characteristics of this valley—the rounded hills and high escarpments of the carboniferous or mountain limestone, and the numerous intersecting “denes,” with the great range of columnar basalt—offer many “coigns of vantage” for aboriginal castrametation and settlement. The district, it should be remarked, is, comparatively speaking, isolated by two rivers not easily fordable; and this, com-

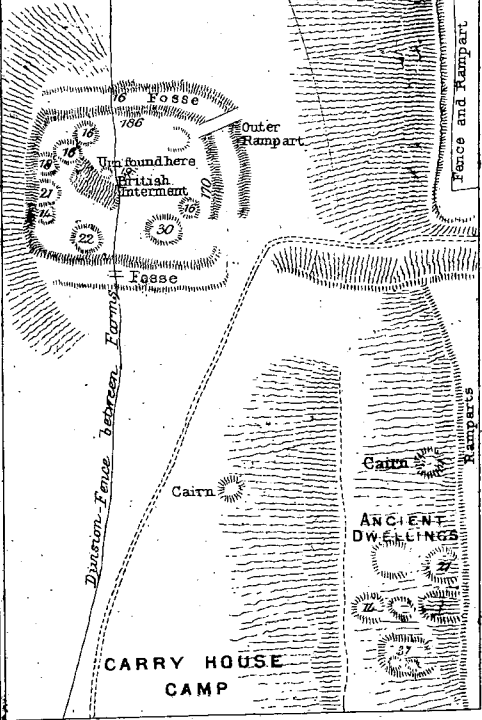
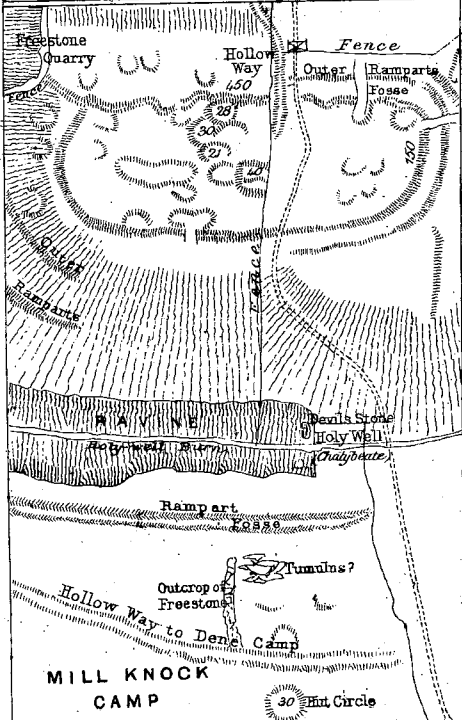
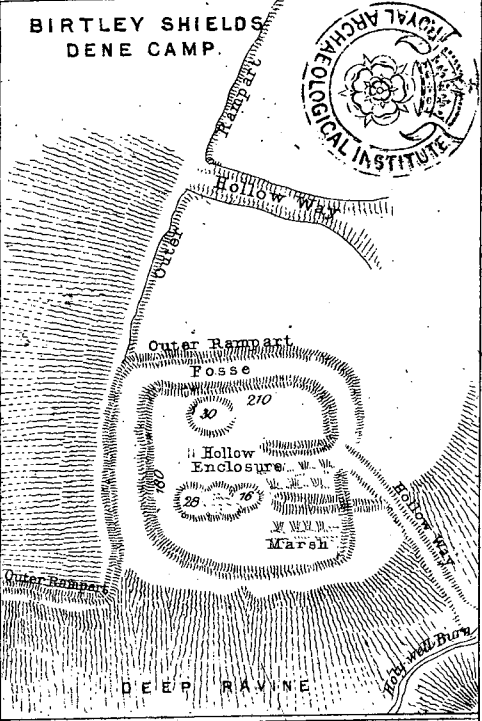
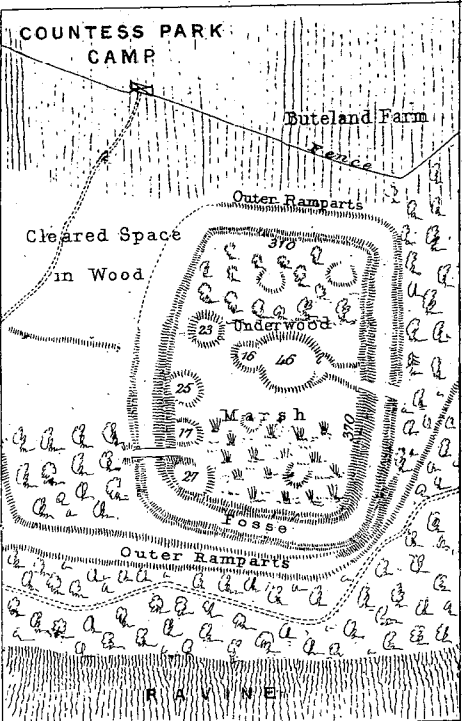


BRITISH REMAINS NEAR BIRTLEY AND BARRASFORD.

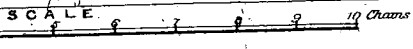
being, with the pastoral occupation of most of the inhabitants, has tended to conserve in an unusual manner the ancient vestiges now described for the first time.

These primitive remains consist of camps or fortlets, terrace-lines of culture, iron-stone workings, standing stones, and burial barrows. These I will take in order:—

CAMPS OR FORTLETS. One of the finest examples in western Northumberland of a valley-fastness, or stronghold, near the margin of the river, is the *Countess Park Camp*. It is placed on an extensive platform at the point of junction of two deep and wide ravines within a bow-shot from the North Tyne. Its area, if we include the fosse and outer rampart, is about three acres, and it is therefore one-third larger than the remarkable fort on Warden Hill, and almost thrice the extent of Bell's Hunkin₂ Camp, near Keilder. The ground slopes gently upwards towards Buteland House on the north, which is the only weak side. Here the ramparts are obliterated, but the ditch can be easily traced—determining the camp to be irregularly rectangular in form, with rounded corners. The rampart-walls are of massive blocks of freestone, unhewn and generally water-worn, with larger “binding stones” at intervals for additional strength. The fosse is between three and four yards wide, beyond which, on the south-west, there appears to have been a second outer rampart. This would protect a narrow outlet, as it seems to be, from the camp towards the level space which is now an open glade in the woods. An enclosure, nearly circular, of the extraordinary diameter of 46 feet, occupies the centre of the fortress. A kind of guard-chamber fronts the door-way at the eastern side, from which may also be traced the foundations of walls, nearly parallel, that proceed in the fashion of an avenue towards the chief entrance of the *caer*. This entrance is in the east, the usual position. Adjoining this great central circle is a smaller one opening out of it, having the wall in common, on the west side. Four or five hut-circles or “old buildings,” as the woodman terms them, are visible in other directions; a cluster of two, one on each side of the south-western adit, being in excellent preservation. In their dimensions these are typical hut-circles of the district, varying in diameter from 17 to 27 feet. The next valley-fort is the *Carry House Camp*, one mile distant to the south, where a free-stone escarpment literally overhangs its site, which resembles in this respect the old Celtic town of Greaves Ash, near Linhope. Between the Park and Carry House forts, and relatively more elevated on the slope of the valley-basin, stands the *Birtley Shield's Dene Camp*, on the verge of a deep, precipitous ravine. It is surrounded by a massive



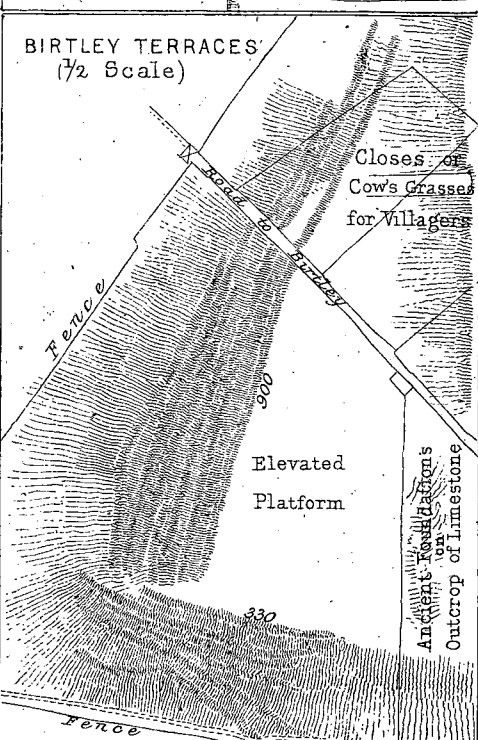
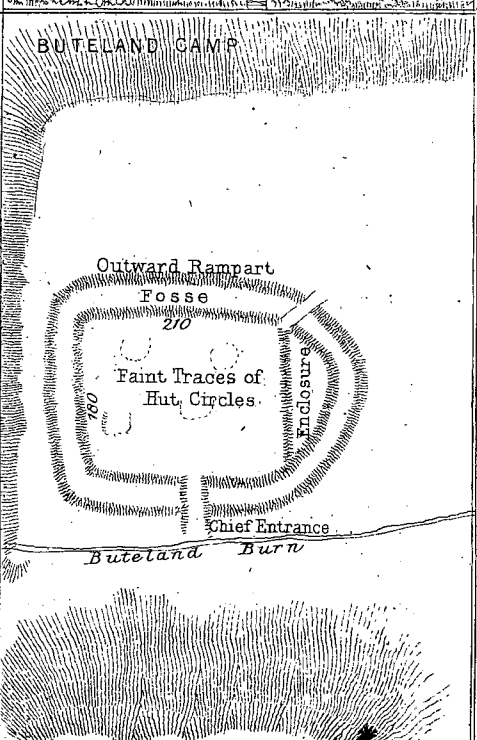
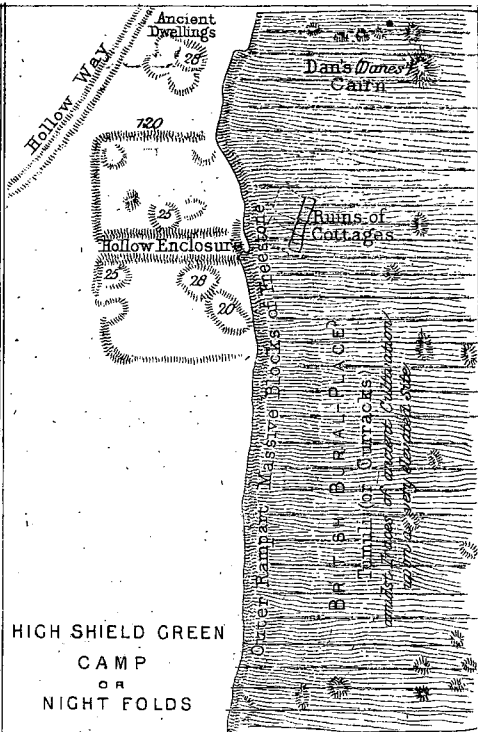
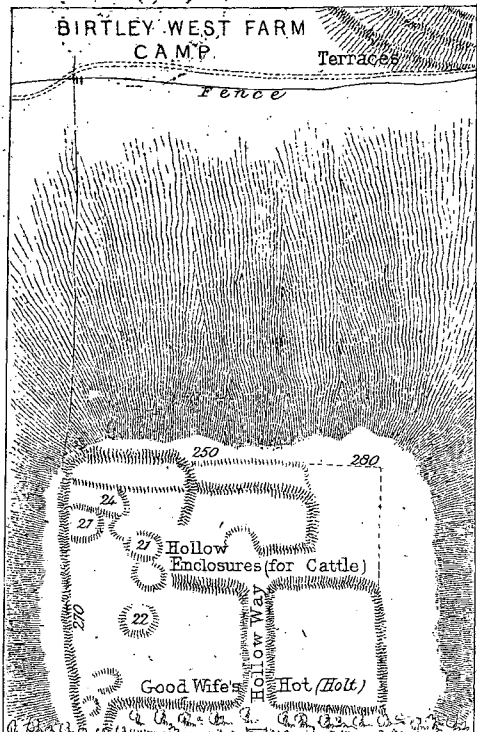
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ANCIENT BRITISH REMAINS, NORTH TYNE DALE - SHEET No. 2.





rampart, strengthened by a broad fosse on the west and north. In form it is so nearly square that it is marked in the Ordnance Survey as a *Roman Camp*, but the rounded corners—the irregular southern rampart—and three distinct hut-circles militate against this supposition. A strong wall, passing from the central space of this fort, projects externally on the eastern side. Another wall runs parallel on the opposite side of the entrance, but does not project beyond the rampart. These inner walls would flank and cover the approach to the camp on the only accessible side, and might form a suitable shelter for the cattle of the inhabitants in times of danger. A hollow way, evidently artificial, and of considerable depth, has been cut through the escarpment on the north, which forms a second fosse, and leads down to the Countess Park and Carry House Camps. In the case of each camp, especially in that of the last named, the closely adjoining ridges would afford a dangerous vantage-ground for an enemy; and the sites can only be explained by supposing that these commanding positions were in the possession of the same or a friendly tribe. The *Carry House Camp* is remarkable for several peculiarities:—for the number of hut-circles in its limited area of about an acre, which are chiefly grouped against the circumference of the fort westwards, like those of a camp on Croydon-hill; for the discovery of a cist with enclosed urn in draining a few years since, and for a fence-wall nearly bisecting the whole area—which separates between two ancient farm-holdings—a proof that this camp has been a well-known landmark for many ages. A fourth valley-fastness exists on the *Birtley West Farm*, in which is an internal rampart. The site is on a rounded eminence called “The Good Wife Hot” (Saxon, *Holt*), still partially covered with bush, but its outline, apparently rectangular, has been rendered indistinct by surrounding tillage; and, perhaps, by the occupation of a later race.

We may now pass to another class of *caerau*, the upland or hill-fortresses of the district. These are characterised by a greater elevation of site rather than by any constructive peculiarities. The *Buteland Camp*, overlooking the valleys of the Rede and North Tyne, and the Garret Hot Camp on the right bank of the latter river, has been incidentally noticed by Mr. Hodgson in his Notes of a Journey to Mounces in August, 1814,¹ as “a round camp-like place of large dimensions.” It covers about an acre and a half, and is in form an irregular rectangle, with corners rounded off. The rampart is of massive freestone blocks, and is surrounded by a wide fosse. An additional defence, unique in the district, but not unusual in other parts of Northumberland, has been afforded by a second massive rampart, projected like the arch of an ellipse

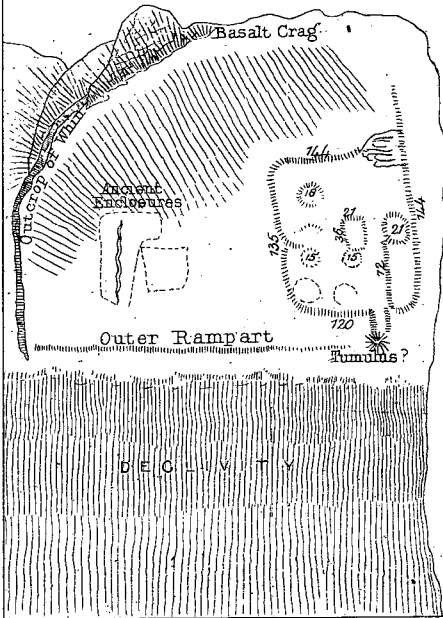
¹ Raine's Memoirs of the Rev. John Hodgson, Vol. I., p. 149.

on the eastern—the weakest side. At *High Shield Green* is an ancient fortified work, called the “*Nightfolds*,” resembling the “*Camp*” on Errington Hill Head noticed by Dr. Bruce, which is also popularly termed “*Nightfolds*.” Traces of four or five hut-circles exist here, and the foundations of two inner parallel walls, whose purpose in primitive or mediæval times may have originated the traditional name. Though the escarpment on which the camp is placed is nearly 900 feet above the sea, the surrounding slopes are considered an excellent “summer-feed” or pasture; and the fort may have served as a place of security for aboriginal herdsman and their cattle. One mile to the south-west is the *Mill-knock Camp*—an acre and a half in area—which occupies the summit of a lofty rounded hill. It is of an elliptical form. A broad and deep fosse, with massive double rampart, renders it secure towards the east, where alone it could be assailed. The entrance on this side is protected by a kind of guard-chamber; and six other hut-circles, besides a four-sided oblong dwelling, are yet visible. This has been a most important work, and commands a prospect only limited by the Cheviots and the Crossfell range. Its site is exceedingly well-chosen on the brow of abrupt declivities on the north, west, and south, now worked as a freestone quarry; and where there is a gentler slope on the south-west, the approach has been guarded by two outer concentric ramparts.

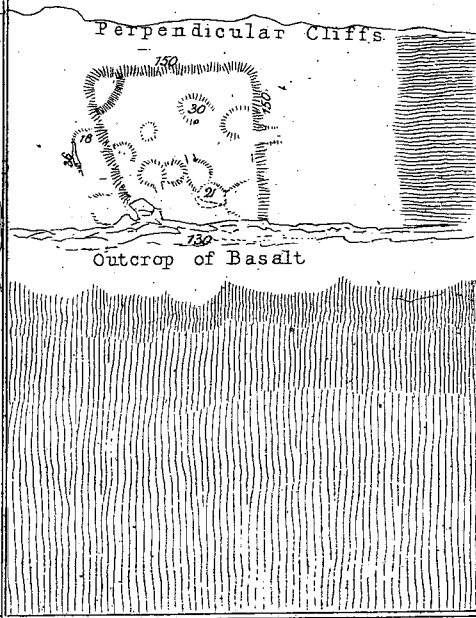
These seven camps, which form the Birtley group, are all in excellent preservation. The next great centre of aboriginal occupation is in the neighbourhood of Gunnarton and Barrasford, in the south of the district. Here three ancient forts occupy the elevated summits of the precipitous basalt crags. Several gaps or fissures, locally called “*Heughs*,” occur in the protruded mass which ranges from west to east in the line of this portion of the great fault that stretches from Sewingshields to Bam-borough and Dunstanborough. The fissures mark off several isolated slopes and platforms, well-adapted for such castrametation. And it is not improbable that these almost impregnable strongholds constituted the great “camp of refuge” of the neighbouring tribes, and their final retreat, where they made their last ineffectual stand against the invincible Roman legions. Two of these are situated on the sides, one on each of a deep pass called the *Gunnar Heugh*, close to the loftiest peak of the range. The west fort covers only about half-an-acre, in which are four distinct hut-circles and an oblong enclosure 36 feet long by 21 feet wide. But a high out-burst of the whin on the west appears to have been joined by a rampart proceeding from the south-western angle of the camp, so that an enclosure of considerable extent has been formed beyond the limits of the fort itself. The second camp is nearly quadrilateral in



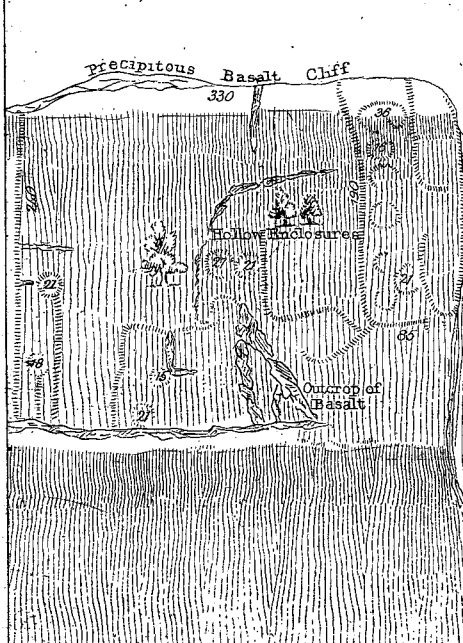
GUNNAR CAMP
(West)



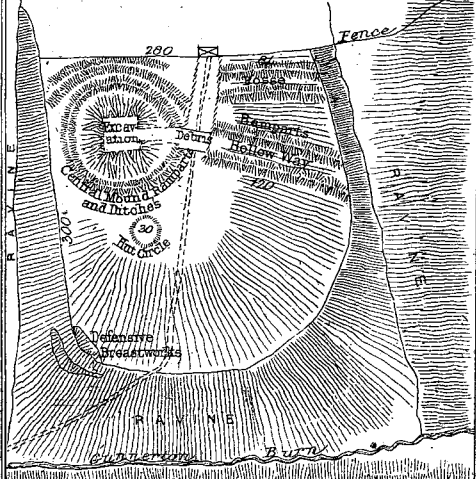
GUNNAR CAMP
(Middle)



GUNNAR CAMP
(East)



GUNNERTON
MONEY HILL FORT



SECTION



CENTRAL MOUND WITH RAMPARTS AND DITCHES

outline, and large blocks of the native basalt have been piled up into cyclopean walls of unusual massiveness. In extent it is over an acre, with three hut-circles within, and there are other enclosures without the camp on the brow of the Gunnar Heugh. Traversing the crags eastwards, we arrive at a third example in this important series of ancient forts. Like the first, a much larger space than bears vestiges of primitive occupation has been bounded by rampart walls following the verge of the precipice and one of the passes on two sides. A peculiarity in this enclosure—containing about two acres—is observable in detached fortlets, so to speak. Two of these approach the form of an oblong rectangle; whilst a third is nearly circular, and a fourth square. They are grouped along the eastern and southern faces of the entire enclosed camp; an outcrop of the whin having been made available for the rampart to the south. In each of the inner fortlets are several hut-circles of the usual dimensions, from 27 to 15 feet in diameter, with two oval dwellings. A few inner lines may be of later date, though even these seem to be anomalous only through conformity to the up-burst of the igneous rock. In all these examples the native whinstone has furnished the primitive builders with materials for ramparts and hut-circles alike; whilst the common freestone is invariably met with in the Birtley group. No vestige of ditch or fosse occurs in the three Gunnar forts, a fact easily to be explained, however, by their position on the impregnable crags, and on account, also, of the impervious nature of the basaltic surface, which no doubt set at defiance the rude tools of the ancient, as it still defies the well-tempered implements of the modern artificer.

A few isolated camps in the neighbourhood of Swinburne, and on both sides of the Watling Street—as at Rever Crag, Oxhill, Camp Hill, or Pity Me, and Blue Crag (the last being a large and strong fortress, with twelve hut-circles distinctly traceable)—have been casually noticed by Mr. MacLauchlan in his valuable Survey.² These may have been used as “redoubts or exploratory forts” by the Romans; but the greater part bear evidence of British rather than “Roman construction.” Besides those already mentioned, tradition and local names preserve the remembrance of several ancient forts, where scarcely a vestige is now visible; among which may be mentioned Rochester (Rutchester on Camden’s Map of 1609) and Carmogon on the Chipchase Castle estate; with Cowdon farther north, and still nearer to Habitancum (which occupies the north-east corner of the district under consideration), the Steele, and Broomhope. At the last named spot the “Camp-hill” is a wedge-like promontory, defended on each side and towards the Rede by natural precipices, and approached by a spiral ascent like that of Old Sarum hill-fort in miniature.

² Memoir on A Survey of the Watling Street, Durham and Northumberland, pp. 251.

Such are the most important remains of the aboriginal occupation in fortified settlements. Vestiges of primitive dwellings, hut-circles, and enclosures not entrenched exist in various parts of the district; as near the Mill Knock Camp on the opposite side of the ravine southwards, where there is also an ancient road or hollow-way; below the Carry House Camp; and near the Buteland Camp, in a field called Black Buteland. The farmers pronounce these remains not to be the so-called "sheep-stells" or circular folds, but more ancient dwellings of the earlier dales-folk; and they may have been outlying abodes of primitive pastoral tribes in times of comparative peace and safety.

TERRACE CULTIVATION. The next class of ancient vestiges presents itself in the numerous terrace-lines occurring on the upland slopes of the valley near Birtley and Barrasford. They are found chiefly in close proximity to the northern groups of camps, on the limestone escarpment above the Steele farm house, on the southern face of the Buteland ridge near High Shield Green; and, which is by far the finest example in Western Northumberland, on another limestone escarpment, between the Carry House and West Farm Camps, but more elevated in site. A series of terrace-lines also occur in Swinburne Park. One out of many theories to account for these remarkable earthworks is that their singular conformation of broad parallel lines or gradations of ascent is owing to the abrading force and gradual subsidence of primeval seas in the geological periods acting on the peculiar conformation of the strata. If the Swinburne terraces be conceded as formed by natural causes, though this is more than doubtful when the very numerous adjoining settlements are considered, the other examples cannot be explained by this theory. A more probable supposition is that such terraces are ancient lines of entrenchment, and the Birtley Shields series is marked as such in the Ordnance Survey. This example consists of six or seven terraces from six to ten feet high, and varying from eighteen to twenty-seven feet in breadth. The lines follow the face of the escarpment as it bends nearly at right angles, the south-west front being about 170, and the north-west face about 500 yards in length. The objections to this theory are, that the terraces lessen by degrees in the more extended front until they become useless as entrenchments through at least one-half of their length, being only from 12 to 18 inches high, and that they coincide at last with the level ground; that the inosculation of the lines in both fronts are apparent, destroying their exact parallelism; and that Lieut. Sitwell pointed out an inclined approach at the junction of the terraces, which is unusual in earthworks for military purposes. The remaining explanation

appears to be correct—assigning them as examples of the terrace-cultivation of the aboriginal tribes. The only reason to be alleged against this conclusion is the fact that both the Swinburne and the larger front of the Birtley Shields terraces face towards the north-west, a point of the compass which the Rev. H. Taylor, a competent authority, assures me would be carefully avoided by practical agriculturists of the present day. This objection would not hold in the case of the Buteland series, which consists of seven or eight lines from five to seven feet high and proportionately broad, and is artificially formed on the southern slope of the ridge, directly fronting the mid-day sun. The Steele terraces, again facing the west, would receive the afternoon rays throughout their single front, which is of considerable extent. Besides, at Heathpool, high up on the slopes of the College valley, are similar terraces facing the north, which are generally allowed to be British culture-lines; and such also occur, Mr. Greenwell informs me, in the Craven district, which, like three out of the four in the Birtley district, bear no resemblance to entrenchments. With a race, living chiefly upon milk and flesh, as Cæsar describes in speaking of the inland people of Britain, and whose tillage at best was on a limited scale, a suitable site for the construction of these terraces might counterbalance other defects in position. The known fertility of soil on the limestone formation with its iron oxides, two-thirds of the largest series of terraces being receptive also of the sunshine, and the rest scarcely shadowed by the platform alone; and the knowledge that even the Birtley Shields lines have been under cultivation within memory, leave scarcely a doubt on the mind that we have here the representative sites of the cereal cultivation of the ancient tribes who inhabited the closely-adjoining *caerav* or fortified dwellings.

IRONSTONE WORKINGS, DELVES, AND SCORIA. The third class of primitive remains, the ironstone delves and heaps of slag, indicative of the rudest smelting apparatus, is of more doubtful antiquity, although they may probably be referred, for the most part, to the Romano-British period. Beneath the limestone escarpment near the Steele farm-house—whence the name is derived—are innumerable delves, or rounded shallow pits, stretching for several hundred yards above the terrace-lines, where a great mound or hill of iron scoria occurs. The native iron is found in nodules near the surface, and so rich is it in quality, that the site appears to have been worked in all ages. Perhaps the later Britons used this valuable deposit for the construction of their long and broad, but rudely-tempered swords. Nor could it long escape the vigilant observation of their Roman conquerors,

for it is situated in immediate proximity to *Habitancum* and the Watling Street. Other iron-workers may have followed in their steps in mediæval times, like Sir William Armstrong, who is obtaining the ore on the same site at the present day. Another great limestone escarpment, bending round from Pitland Hill—hence so called—for the distance of a mile and a half from the Mill Knock Camp and the Birtley Shields terraces, is indented in its entire length with these ancient delves. A hollow way, plainly artificial, has led down from the vicinity of the West Farm Camp to several immense heaps of scoria, termed the “Cinder Kiln Hills.” Hundreds of tons of iron ore must have been smelted in this secluded woodland glade. There is little doubt, from a fragment of pottery, the bottom of a small vessel, found on the surface of one slag heap, that mediæval metal-workers—probably from the village of Barrasford, which is traditionally said to have been noted for the manufacture of armoury in the middle ages—have here exercised their craft; though the entire oxidisation into a red powder of much of the scoria in the adjoining heaps indicates the labours of earlier artificers. A hollowed contrivance to promote a blast is yet visible; and lime to be used as a flux, with abundance of wood for charcoal, was near at hand. On various other sites, as on the Warkshaugh Farm, similar but smaller deposits of iron-slag, and also of charcoal, are met with. But there has as yet been no discovery of coins or other relics, as in the Sussex slag-heaps, to prove their Romano-British origin; only, perhaps, because no attempt at exploration has hitherto been made. Sir John Lubbock remarks in his recent very valuable work :³—“When the armies of Rome brought the civilisation of the South into contact with that of the North, they found the value of iron already known to their new enemies; the excellence of whose weapons indicated very considerable progress in the art of metallurgy.”

STANDING STONES. A fourth class of undoubtedly early remains is found in two or three huge upright stones with legendary associations. One of these primitive and so-called Druidical monuments is an immense mass of freestone, severed, apparently by natural forces, at some far distant era, from the adjoining cliff in the ravine to the south of the Mill Knock Camp. It is within a hundred yards from the fort, stands about twelve feet high above ground, weighs several tons, and closely adjoins to the chalybeate spring called the Birtley Holy Well, which issues from the perpendicular rock beneath a picturesque linn or water-fall. As the cromlech is commonly termed a devil’s table in France and Ireland, so this great stone is popu-

³ “Prehistoric Times,” ch. i., p. 7.

larly known as the devil's rock, from a wild tradition, unique, I believe, in the annals of demonology, in respect of its tragical catastrophe. The legend tells of a Satanic personage leaping from its summit, where the marks of his footsteps are still visible, it is said; and falling short of his aim to reach the opposite bank of the river, a mile distant, he plunged headlong into the Leap Crag Pool, the deepest abyss in the whole course of the North Tyne. Like the herd of swine of the ancient Gadarenes, when possessed by the demoniac legion, tradition averreth that he was drowned. Another remarkable stone-pillar, a *peulvan*, or *ménhir*, eleven feet high, three feet and a half broad, and about two feet in thickness, spreading out at the top like an open fan or human hand, stands near the southern boundary of the Swinburne Park, and not far from several tumuli and the terrace-lines. The deeply furrowed indentations, worn by falling rains through many ages, prove a hoary antiquity for this singular stone. Whether it marks the site of an ancient interment, after some important battle,⁴ or has formed one in a series of monuments, like the three of similar dimensions near Matfen, has not been ascertained. The field in which it occurs is called from it the "Standing Stone Field" at the present day. In a close near the Barrasford School, a third example, a huge block of the native basalt, may yet be seen. This stone was blasted a few years since by gunpowder, and it now lies in an inclined position, and is about six feet in length. Within the memory of the Rev. C. Bird, the venerable vicar of Choller-ton, two or three standing stones occupied this site, which is a level space almost in the centre of a kind of natural amphitheatre. But the too-eager encroachments of modern agriculture have caused the destruction and removal of all but this solitary memorial. Mr. Bird informs me that, beneath the stone, fragments of bones and charcoal have been found in digging, which would imply an ancient interment. It is popularly believed that the series of stones which once stood here were located on the spot, through a duel between two ancient giants, who from their respective stations on the heights east and west of the river hurled these Titanic missiles at each other, which clashed and fell mid-way—a legend closely resembling that of Brittany, which terms such great stones the quoits or *palets de Gargantua*. "Long after the people who raised them had passed away," remarks Mr. Wright⁵—by no means a credulous authority—"and when their meaning or the object for which

⁴ Compare 1 Sam. XV. 12, where Saul's "placē" or monument after his victory is the Hebrew, *yad*, and LXX, *χεῖρα*, literally, *a hand*, from the representation of a large hand, the symbol of power, being set on a stone pillar.

⁵ The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon, p. 62.

they were erected were alike forgotten, these monuments of stone continued to be regarded by the peasantry with reverence, which, combined with a certain degree of mysterious fear, degenerated into a sort of superstitious worship. In this feeling originated legends connected with them, and the popular names which are often found attached to them."

SEPULCHRAL BARROWS OR TUMULI. The last class of these primitive vestiges which remains to be noticed is found in the numerous burial-barrows, tumuli, or *carneddau*. Perhaps even the most remarkable example, in the North of England, may be seen near the village of Gunnarton, placed on an elevated head-land or platform above the junction of two concurrent streams. It is an immense conical mound of earth, about 30 feet high, and 100 yards in circuit at the base, with a fosse of great breadth and depth surrounding it. Another fosse or ditch of equal depth, with a high rampart of earth on either side passes, as it were, to isolate and defend the approach to the great barrow, diagonally across the level space to the north between the ravines. It is difficult to say whether this great earth work was raised for purposes of interment only; for an exploratory mound, as it occupies high ground; or for a session place or *crug*, used in the law gatherings and other Druid ceremonies. The adjoining outer fosse has the appearance of a hollow way, and leads across the ford of the larger stream towards the neighbouring settlements of the aborigines on the Gunnar Heights and Camp Hill or Pity Me. This favours the idea that all these purposes may have been combined. An attempt has been made, probably about a century since, to dig into this Gunnerton Money Hill, as it is called from a tradition of a dragon or other unearthly monster guarding a central hoard of treasure. This is precisely similar to several legends from the old Scandinavian Sagas recorded by Dr. Charlton.⁶ The excavators could not say with Grettir the Strong,

"The hope of spoil
Failed not in the cairn,"

if the rest of the tradition be true that they were ignominiously dispersed by the "cairn-dweller." So large is the excavation, however, that the mound might easily be explored; and under Mr. Greenwell's experienced direction, who promises shortly to give his aid, much may be done to elucidate the original purpose of this interesting barrow.⁷

⁶ The Runic Inscriptions of Maeshow.—Archæol. Æliana, vol. vi.

⁷ In April last the "Money Hill" was carefully and completely opened. In two days' digging, no trace of an ancient interment was noticed. A fragment of a mediæval drinking-vessel, of which the pottery decided its comparatively late date,

By permission of the Duke of Northumberland, several tumuli, forming part of an ancient cemetery near the High Shield Green Camp, were lately opened. The result was not very satisfactory, as only a few small fragments of calcined bones and charcoal, with abundance of stones reddened by fire, and a circlet of upright stones about two feet high beneath one of the barrows, were noticed. "Dan's Cairn," the largest, had evidently been opened long before, and the stones led away, as from a quarry, to form adjoining fence-walls. Some of these mounds may be "sow-kilns," as the heaps of burnt turf are locally called. But they are placed in the *midst* of ground under tillage at a remote date, and they have been all carefully avoided by the plough. Numerous solitary tumuli or cairns occur elsewhere in the district, respecting which the tradition is that they are the burial-place of ancient warriors. These "currachs" of stones have been opened in a few cases, but unfortunately no relics have been preserved. A large barrow was explored many years since by Mr. Thompson on his farm at Barrasford Green. Five large cists, from four to six feet in length, were discovered, each with an enclosed urn, apparently not containing any bones. One urn—the most carefully scored, and entire—was saved, and is now in the museum at Alnwick Castle. Another family-barrow, as it may be considered, has been excavated a fortnight since by Hunter Allgood, Esq., of Nunwick, in a field on his Warkshaugh farm. This very interesting tumulus was first known to be such through the accidental discovery in ploughing of a large urn, inverted, and surrounded by small protecting slabs. The urn was of a squat form, scored around the rim with well-defined incisions and cord-lines. It was 17 inches in diameter and 13 inches high. The site is unusually low, being near the river, and, before the embankment was made, beneath its level in high floods. From the humidity of the soil the urn fell to pieces, but not before Mr. MacLauchlan had taken a sketch and dimensions. Mr. Snowball, the tenant-farmer, observed a large stone slab near to it eastwards, which, with two similar slabs, formed a pavement between the urn and a cist of massive construction, containing no trace of interment except a quantity of dark unctuous matter, with a few small fragments of bones and charcoal. Further excavations have disclosed on the south and east sides of the barrow two

was found several feet beneath the surface of the early excavation—a relic, no doubt, of the former explorers. This negative result does not altogether militate against the supposition of the mound's sepulchral character. For many of the largest and probably earliest barrows have yielded no vestiges of human interment, which the lapse of thousands of years could not fail utterly to destroy, when no primitive cist enclosed the body laid, without cremation, to its final rest. But Mr. Greenwell inclines to the opinion, which a first view could suggest, that this singular combination of earth-works formed, like a Maori *pahi*, one defensive fort of the ancient inhabitants, the great central mound representing the donjon or keep of a Norman Castle, the palisaded summit, which would be the last resort of the defenders.

additional *cistveini* and one urn. And some time afterwards the original central cist, on a higher relative position, was found without any enclosed remains. The sunny sides of this family-burial place seem alone to have been used, in accordance with an intuitive feeling which yet exists amongst ourselves, and partly in connection with the sun-worship of the Ancient Britons. The cists, each about three feet long by one and a half wide, in every case were filled with river sand, and from the porous nature of the subsoil, mere fluvial sand drift, the unburnt bodies have almost entirely disappeared. In the eastern cist an urn of graceful form and scoring, but unfortunately broken to pieces by the falling in of a side slab long since, was found. It did not contain any calcined bones, as in the first example, but only some dark-coloured dust, probably of corn, intended for the use, or to propitiate the *manes*, according to the usual Pagan idea, of the departed chief. A flint knife or scraper, with some chippings of stone, was also found in this cist, besides flakes of flint around and above the barrow. The bottom and side of the urn from the eastern cist remain to determine its contour and size. The clay of which the pottery is formed is studded with glittering specks of mica; and it appears to have been baked in the north-east of the barrow where a number of stones, reddened by fire, may be seen. It has been mentioned that a kist-vaen with urn was discovered on the very unusual site of the Old Carry House Camp in draining the inner space; another was found in a field beneath it; and a third near Chipchase Mill. All these—with two so-called incense-cups, described as "salt-cellars" and used as such by the labourer who found them in draining a marsh near Robin Hood's Well (close to the North Tyne, below the Cinder Kiln Hills)—have been lost or destroyed. I have made many inquiries in vain respecting them. One instance of a Saxon burial on a British burial-barrow of much earlier date has recently been made out very satisfactorily. The tumulus or cairn of stones stood on a lofty escarpment above the Barrasford Burn, which was excavated in making the railway cutting near the station. The relics were very numerous, and remained in the possession of Mr. White, the station-master, until they were purchased by Mr. MacLauchlan in the autumn of last year. They were taken by him to London, and Mr. Albert Way and Mr. Franks (of the British Museum) agree in considering the projecting part of the boss or *umbo* of the shield to be of extraordinary dimensions. Several circular discs of silver, found with it, had served in part to cover the rivet-heads which attached the boss to the wooden shield. Some of these thin discs, which varied in size, had probably formed ornaments of the shield. A broad two edged sword of the same period—early Anglo-Saxon—was also found; but only fragments were saved.

The urn, from the character of the pottery, of which the bottom and part of the side remained, was pronounced to be not Saxon, but British; and the "find" may be deemed of particular interest because so little of their class has occurred in Northumberland. Some follower of the renowned Hengist or Horsa (be they Vikings, or only Viking's battle-standards), himself a chief of note, may have fallen here in battle, and been interred upon the site of the more ancient British hero's burial.

The traditional sites of battles in the district, I may add, are at the Broomhope Camp-hill and Buteland Common; near the Countess Park Camp; on the Birtley Shields terraces (which the popular memory associates both with the encampment of an army, in the "troublesome times," supposed to refer to Edward III.'s first campaign against the Scots in 1327, and with "rig and reen" culture); and at the Cattreen Greaves' head, near Birtley village.

GENERAL REMARKS. It may be perceived from this description of the ancient vestiges found in a district hitherto little known, that these remains are singularly numerous and varied in character. They may tend, perhaps, to cast some few rays of light upon the social life of a far-distant period in Northumbrian history. Yet it cannot be doubted that until there shall be a more extended and systematic observation, as at Greaves Ash and Yeavinger Bell, of the early vestiges in other parts of the country, and a more careful comparison of their peculiarities by the different observers, much that would be of general and scientific interest must remain unelucidated. With respect to the fortified and domestic dwellings of the race (no doubt Celtic, and, from the local names, both of the earlier and later immigrations), which has left so many remains in the limited district around Birtley and Barrasford, it may be possible with further data to separate them into something like a chronological series, as Mr. Albert Way has suggested to me. The constructive peculiarities of some of the camps, without special regard to size or form, should be noticed; for instance, those having massive inner or projecting ramparts, and whose walls are really "Pelagic structures," from their greater strength, may indicate the settlements of an earlier and more turbulent period. The Rev. Wm. Barnes thinks that the hill-forts of the Ancient Britons were of earlier date than their lowland fastnesses.⁸ Further diggings, and the discovery of such remains as sunbaked pottery, and weapons, or tools, as they may be, of flint or metal, would be of great service. A small celt of hard greenstone, which is now presented to our Museum by Mr. Lamb, was found in a bog on the Shaw Farm, near Bellingham. I am informed

⁸ Notes on Ancient Britain, p. 93.

also that a bronze celt was discovered a few years since in a camp at Conshields, near Wark. Excavations within the Countess Park Camp would probably be as amply rewarded as were those at Greaves Ash, near Linhope. In some parts of its ramparts and hut-circles three courses of the unhewn masonry are visible above ground. The exuberant growth of underwood and marshy plants has been checked, and the approach made more accessible by direction of the noble proprietor, our patron, the Duke of Northumberland, who has the satisfaction of being also the owner of the sites, with scarcely a single exception, of the remarkable vestiges described in this memoir. The Park *caer* resembles in many respects the town of Cassivellaunus,⁹ which Cæsar tells us (as Strabo and Diodorus Siculus also describe the British towns) was a place admirably fortified both by nature and men's labour in the midst of intricate woods and morasses, defended by a vallum and fosse, every approach to which could be effectually blocked up with fallen trees; and in which the Britons would find security for themselves and their cattle on the incursion of an enemy. It will be observed that, if numerous, as the accompanying map will show, the forts are of small dimensions compared with some in Northumberland and the South of England. They vary from three acres to half-an-acre in area. The internal domestic dwellings are similar, however, both in form and size. We have the rectangular, as well as the more usual round wattle-house, which are both carved as the abodes of a Gaul on the Antonine Column at Rome. A careful exploration of the two central hut-circles of the Park Camp, which may be dwellings of the Celtic Kinglet of the district, would, no doubt, give interesting results. Our usual notion of British dwellings, which Cæsar says were very like those of the Gauls, is that there was a foundation-work of unhewn stones, on which or against which was raised a circular wall of wattled stakes, surmounted by a high-peaked roof of thatch—such as our Venerable Bede describes as the inn of a benighted Briton, of the seventh century, who was travelling homeward with some of the holy dust from the grave of the saintly King Oswald at Macerfield.¹⁰ As the conservating presence of water exists around the hut-circles of the Park Camp—the whole inner area being a marsh, except in the height of summer—some fragments of the original walls and roof might be recovered, which, I believe, has not as yet been done in any known British dwelling of the prehistoric age.

Different phases of the aboriginal social life have been passed in review in the preceding survey. There is evidence of a condition of chronic warfare in the number of strongholds, which closely resembles the paha

⁹ De Bell. Gall., lib. V. c. 21.

¹⁰ Eccles. Hist. c. x.

of the Maoris of New Zealand, or, as Professor Wilson thinks, a still more appropriate comparison, the present state of the North American Indians.¹¹ The various septs may have occasionally united for common safety; for the Birtley group of forts are, as it were, a connected series, the occupants being able to see and convey signals to each other. The same holds good of the Gunnar group. Their terrace culture again proves that they had emerged from the lowest condition of savages dependent only upon the casual produce of the chase or the bounty of nature in her primeval forests. Numerous querns or hand-mills have been found in or near the camps, which are probably of ancient construction, (though they may have been used until even recent times), for grinding the corn grown on these "baulks" or terraces. Dr. Bruce mentions instances of this mode of culture at Borcovicus, on the banks of Rede Water, and at Old Carlisle.¹² It is found, also, on the banks of the Rhine, in Provence, in Italy, in Palestine, and in China. We have, also, seen these early vale-dwellers, at least in the Romano-British period, accustomed to work in iron, so plentifully distributed over this district. The flint knife in the Warkshaugh cist speaks, indeed, of a more primitive age, perhaps, when the aborigines were emerging from the rude life of the stone age into that of bronze, some centuries before the Roman conquest or even before the Christian era. Further, in observing the great stone monuments with their grotesque legends, and knowing that they are near to medicinal and noted wells, we are forcibly reminded of the ecclesiastical laws of Canute directed against the worship of such monuments and sacred springs. We obtain a glimpse of the olden Pagan superstitions in contemplating these enduring memorials of their religious veneration; and feel disposed to admit that they are in truth, if not remnants of the British temple-circles, at least

"Stones of power
By Druids raised in magic hour."

And, then, in viewing the opened burial-barrow, not without feelings of reverence, we discern the hallowed promptings of filial and tribal affection for those who were beloved and lamented in long-forgotten days. Here they were laid with all honour, after a peaceful ending or a death in manful fight, in their "long home," and rested with their fathers and kindred in the solitary cairn or family burial place, on which the sun, the symbol, it may be, of a brighter luminary to them, might never cease, as they hoped, to shine.

¹¹ Prehistoric Man, Vol. i., p. 6.

¹² The Roman Wall, 2nd edition, p. 192. Compare Columella, De Re Rustica, lib. ii. cap. 2; Palladius, lib. i. cap. 5; and Dean Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, 3rd edit. p. 138.