



CAWFIELDS CRAGS from the North

RECENT DISCOVERIES AT CAWFIELDS, ON THE
ROMAN WALL.

READ BY MR. CLAYTON, 28TH JANUARY, 1883.

IN the month of January, 1848, a narrative was laid before this Society of the result of excavations in and about the Cawfields Mile Castle. In that narrative was described a mural tablet of the Second Legion, bearing the names of the Emperor Hadrian and of Aulus Platorius Nepos, his legate in Britain, one of four tablets bearing this same inscription, which have been found in four several mile castles, and also a mural tablet of the Twentieth Legion, one of the three legions employed by Hadrian in building the Wall, but which has left fewer memorials than the Second or the Sixth Legions—the other legions so employed. Some objects of antiquarian interest have been discovered during the last summer in this locality which it is proper to bring before this Society, and it may not be inopportune before doing so to mention one or two other objects which have been met with in this locality since January, 1848. The Cawfields Farm, which is the scene of these discoveries, is situate on the north side of the Roman Wall, with the exception of 260 acres on the south side. A brook running from Greenlee Lough passes through the farm, bearing the name of Caw Burn, till it turns to the south on its way to the South Tyne, and from that point it assumes the name of Haltwhistle Burn. The farm is traversed from east to west by a basaltic precipice facing to the north and in some parts more than 100 feet high. This precipice is part of the basaltic formation familiarly called the Whin Dyke, which passes through Northumberland from east to west, and which the Romans have in many parts adopted for the base of the Wall. On the top or brink of this precipice was built the Roman Wall, and at its base lie scattered ruins of the structure now overgrown with mosses, ferns, and lichens. A landscape sketch of the “Castled Crag” of Cawfields

is here presented. The murus and the vallum in this part of their course are about 300 yards apart, and together, with the Roman military road between them, are in a state of excellent preservation. Not long after the excavation of Cawfields Mile Castle there was discovered at a distance of a few yards south of the vallum, near to a spring



of water, an altar inscribed to Apollo, dedicated by a soldier from Upper Germany, doubtless from that part of Germany separated from the Teutonic barbarians by the Wall of Trajan—a rampart which has been graphically described for the information of Germans as well as Britons by our able and energetic colleague, Dr. Hodgkin, whose paper on the subject, which appeared in the last number of our Transactions, has already been translated into German, and printed and published in Rhenish Prussia. Soon afterwards, in

reconstructing the outbuildings of the Cawfields farm-house, was found built in the wall of a coal-house a centurial stone of Valerius Maximus, which is described by Horsley in his "Britannia Romana," as lying near



Haltwhistle Burn. The complexion of the stone has been darkened by its association with the coals. Such were the discoveries of Roman remains which had been made on the Cawfields Farm previous to the summer of last year, when the shepherd employed on the farm, in attempting to remove a large stone, found it to be a milestone, bearing on its face an inscription which had been preserved by its being under ground. Of this a woodcut is here introduced, but, as from the shape of the stone the drawing of it does not present to the eye the whole of the inscription, a literal copy of it, and also an expanded copy, are here represented :—

IMP · CAES · M · AVREL
 SEVER · ALEXANDRO
 PI · FEL · AVG · PM · T R · P
 COS · P · P · CVR · C · XENEPHON
 TE · LEG · AVG · PR · PR
 A · PET · MP XVIII

Imperatori Cæsari Marco Aurelio
 Severo Alexandro
 Pio Felici Augusto Pontifici Maximo Tribunitiæ Potestatis
 Consuli Patri Patriæ Curante Claudio Xenephon
 te Legato Augusti Pro-prætore
 A Petrianis Millia Passuum XVIII.

Inasmuch as Severus Alexander, who had been consul before he ascended the Imperial throne, A.D. 223, was not a second time consul till

226; it follows that this milestone must have been erected between these two dates. In the expansion of the name of the place from which the measurement is taken the plural number is used in accordance with the language of the Notitia Imperii. It is probable that



Petriana was a district from which the name of the *ala* was taken, and the use of the plural number in the name of the fortress may be supposed to indicate a group of forts.¹

The road upon which this milestone has stood is a paved causeway, with a kerbstone on each side, measuring 18 feet in width, and is made throughout its course within the entrenched camp formed by the *muris* and the *vallum* between the Tyne and the Solway, and could be used only for military purposes. No other milestone has been found upon it, but as there was a milecastle at the end of every Roman mile, the soldiers would have little occasion for milestones on the road, and no travellers were allowed to use it. Why it should have been found necessary to erect a milestone at the distance of 18 Roman miles from Petriana can only be matter of conjecture. It is possible that it may have been erected to mark the point at which the cavalry patrols from Petriana, on the west, should meet those from Cilurnum, the next cavalry station on the east—each passing three intermediate infantry stations. It is to be observed that this milestone is of much smaller dimensions than those placed by the Romans upon their highways. The height of the milestone, including the part below as well as that above the surface of the ground, is only 3 feet 9 inches, and the diameter 1 foot 4 inches.

By the side of the milestone we have described was found a stone of the same shape but of somewhat larger size, bearing an inscription much weathered and worn, upon which can be traced the name of the Emperor Hadrian, preceded, as is usual in the inscriptions of that Emperor, by the name of his patron and predecessor Trajan. This last-mentioned stone must have been erected when the Wall was built and the road formed about the year 120, and must have been exposed in a high and bleak situation to the storms of a century, before it became necessary to replace it in the reign of Severus Alexander. These stones, if further evidence were necessary, would assist in establishing the theory first propounded by our late lamented colleague, the Rev. John Hodgson, that the *muris* and the *vallum*, with their accessories, were contemporaneous, and were the work of the

¹The letters PET in this inscription are less distinct than the others on the stone, and some eminent antiquaries are unable to identify the first two letters, but do not suggest an alternative reading.

Emperor Hadrian. But this theory has already been placed beyond dispute by the unanswerable facts and arguments placed before the public by our distinguished colleague, Dr. Bruce, in his work on the Roman Wall.¹ Some light, however, seems to be thrown on the still debated question of the site of the station of Petriana, which is placed by Horsley, Hodgson, and Dr. Bruce, though with some hesitation, at Castle Steads, formerly known as Cambeck Fort. The distance of eighteen miles from Petriana, on the face of the milestone, must be measured along the line of the road on which it is placed, and it must be borne in mind that a Roman mile measures only 1,618 yards, and that between the site of this milestone and the fortress of Petriana this road diverges for the purposes of communication with fifteen mile castles and three stations—Aesica, Magna, and Amboglanna. Its first divergence going westward is at the Cawfields Mile Castle, which occasions a prolongation of the road to the extent of at least 200 yards. It is worthy of notice that Claudius Xenophon, whose name appears on this milestone, was the Imperial Legate in Britain in the reign of Severus Alexander, that is to say, in the early part of the third century. The name of this legate is recorded in only one other inscription which was found at Vindolana early in the last century. It is mentioned, No. 262, in the “Lapidarium Septentrionale.” The date of that inscription is there assumed to have been in the early part of the third century, the correctness of which assumption is proved by the present inscription. In both cases the vowel in the second syllable of Xenophon is “e” instead of “o,” thus differing from the Greek “Xenophon.” That these two stones should have remained undisturbed since the Romans left Britain may be ascribed to the solitude of their position on a wide and bleak waste, where there was no passer-by for centuries but the moss-rooper, who, not being a literary character, would not be attracted by a lettered stone. During the middle ages the roads left by the Romans were largely used by the inhabitants of the country; but in this particular district the inhabitants would use the Roman road from Cilurnum to Magna, which here is parallel to the military road between the murus and the vallum, at a distance of about a quarter of a mile, and is at a lower level, with better gradients. It

¹ The first edition of Dr. Bruce's work on the Roman Wall was published in 1852.

will be seen on Mr. McLauchlan's map, and there designated the Stanegate, which in the Northumbrian language signifies the stone way or road of stone.

The Stanegate is a Roman highway not confined to military purposes, but for general traffic, measuring 27 feet in width, commencing at the southern gateway of the station of Cilurnum, in the valley of the North Tyne, passing at once over the ridge of high land which separates that valley from the valley of the South Tyne, and thence proceeding westwards on the north bank of the South Tyne, and ending in a junction near the station of Magna with the Roman road styled the Maiden Way, passing from the South into Scotland. An exploratory trench about 100 yards from the southern gateway of Cilurnum exhibits the formation of the Stanegate in a very perfect state, and less than 3 feet below the present surface. Its course may be traced with varying degrees of distinctness for its whole length, and one of its milestones is still to be seen *in situ* at Vindolana (Chesterholme), 6 feet in height above the ground, and 1 foot 10 inches in diameter. The inscription upon it, however, is so weathered and worn as to be illegible.

On that part of the Cawfields farm, which is on the north side of the Roman Wall, and near to the base of the precipice which intersects the farm, have been found, during the last summer, two inscribed stones, one of them a centurial stone of the centurion Victorinus, and the other a stone of a centurial character, which has evidently fallen from the face of the Wall. It is much weathered and worn, but is faithfully represented by the annexed woodcut. The reading is difficult, but it seems to refer to the Durotriges, the ancient inhabitants of Dorsetshire, and so may have a significance similar to two stones found in the Wall near Thirlwall Castle, on which the citizens of the Civitas Dumnonii seem to have recorded the fact of their having



assisted the Romans in building the Wall. Their locality, as well as that of the Hunters of Banna, mentioned on the Rudge Cup, has not been ascertained. The existence, however, of such a community



indicates that the civilization of the Britons under Roman rule, which had taken place between A.D. 79, when the Romans first took possession of the country, and the date of A.D. 120, when the building of the Wall commenced, had made considerable progress, and that the efforts of Agricola, recorded by Tacitus, to teach them to build temples and forums and houses had not been in vain

POSTSCRIPT.

At a meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute, held in London on the 1st February, 1883,¹ the first of these milestones was referred to as tending to prove that Hexham has the best claim to be considered to be Petriana, but this argument is founded on the mistaken assumption that this milestone belonged to and was found on the road called the Stanegate, for which assumption there is no foundation whatever. It is therefore unnecessary to notice any conclusions founded on that basis. At the same meeting a tombstone of a youthful officer of the Ala Petriana, found at Hexham, was referred to as confirmatory of the claim of Hexham to be considered Petriana, the thirteenth station per lineam valli. Now this is palpably a *non sequitur*. By a parity of reasoning, if the youthful invalid, instead of passing his last hours on the sunny slopes of Hexham, had resorted to the more southern climate of the Isle of Wight, that island would have had the best claim to have been considered Petriana.

From Segedunum (Wallsend) on the Tyne, proceeding westwards as far as Amboglanna, the twelfth station per lineam valli, according

¹ The Archæological Journal, Vol. XL., pp. 235-7.

to the "Notitia Imperii," there is no doubt or difference of opinion, and the accuracy of the "Notitia" is established by indisputable evidence. Having reached the twelfth station, Amboglanna, we naturally look for the thirteenth station, Petriana, at some point in our progress westward towards the Solway. If we fix upon Hexham as the thirteenth station per lineam valli, we make a retrograde movement of upwards of twenty miles, to a spot nearer to Segedunum than the sixth station, and four or five miles south of the Wall. The necessary conclusion is that Hexham has no possible claim to be considered the thirteenth station per lineam valli.

There can be no doubt that Hexham, from the beauty and salubrity of its situation, would be chosen as a settlement by the Romans, and abundant proofs of their occupation of it exist, but no remains of fortifications have been traced. It would be probably used as a sanatorium.

