



IV.—NOTES ON THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED TURRETS ON THE WALLTOWN CRAGS.

BY THE REV. DR. BRUCE, V.P.

READ ON WEDNESDAY, THE 31ST OF OCTOBER, 1883.

AT a recent meeting of our Society, I mentioned that a specimen of those nearly obliterated buildings, the Turrets, which originally were thickly set along the whole line of the Roman Wall, had been found upon the westernmost height of the Walltown Crags. I then gave you a general description of it. Through the kindness of our friend Mr. Lamb, I have since been supplied with an accurately-drawn ground plan of the building, from which I glean the following definite details.

The Wall at this point of its course is 7 feet thick. The turret is let into the Wall to the extent of 2 feet 6 inches, leaving the Wall immediately to the north of it of a thickness of only 4 feet 6 inches.

The interior measurement of the turret from east to west is 13 feet; from north to south, 11 feet 10 inches. The thickness of its walls is 3 feet 2 inches. Their present height varies from 3 to 6 feet. The Wall which forms the north wall of the turret stands nine courses high.

In my recent notice of this turret I expressed a hope that further investigations would be made in order to ascertain whether some more turrets could not be found to the east of it, so as to settle the question how many of this class of structures there were between two neighbouring mile-castles. I am glad to say that further light has dawned upon us. Our Vice-President, Mr. Clayton, sent the other day his chief excavator, Tailford, to examine the spot. I give the result of his inquiries. At a distance of 578 yards eastwards, measuring closely by the Wall, he found another turret in all respects similar, so far as appearances went, to the previously-discovered one. Following the

line of the Wall closely for a distance of 412 yards, a mile-castle is reached. This mile-castle is laid down in Mr. McLauchlan's Survey of the Wall. Proceeding eastwards again for a distance of 522 yards, our explorer found a third turret. This turret stands on the top of the hill, on the east side of the gap in which King Arthur's Well is situated. Ordinary observers would not have detected the presence of a turret or other building here, but the experienced eye of Tailford noticed that the herbage on this spot was richer and of a different colour from that of the contiguous parts, he therefore put down his spade and found the turret. Like all the others it was let into the Wall, and it measured from east to west 11 feet, and from north to south 9 feet 6 inches; until a thorough excavation is made, the height of its walls cannot be given.

Horsley thought that there were four of these turrets, or, as we may call them, stone sentry-boxes, between each mile-castle. So far as we can at present see there were but two. It seems desirable that a little further exploration should be made with a view of settling the point. If the Wall be carefully examined between this third turret and the mile-castle that lies to the east of it, and which is laid down in Mr. McLauchlan's Survey, remains may be found which will tell us whether there were two, three, or four turrets in the interval between two neighbouring mile-castles. In the meantime, we are gratified with the thought that we now know of five turrets—the three of which I have now spoken; that on the Black Carts Farm, and that at East Brunton (both of which have been excavated by Mr. Clayton)—whereas a few years ago we could not point to one on the whole length of the Wall. In due time, these newly-discovered turrets will doubtless be thoroughly excavated, and protected by iron railings from the destructive tread of cattle, in which case the Nine Nicks of Thirlwall, always specially interesting, will have acquired a new glory.

