

VIII.—NOTES ON A PRE-HISTORIC CAMP AND AVENUE
OF STONES ON THOCKRINGTON QUARRY HOUSE
FARM.

BY R. CECIL HEDLEY.

[Read on the 29th September, 1886.]

THE camp is situated on what is known as the "Kiln" or "Limestone Rigg," about half a mile N.N.E. from the farmstead of Quarry House; it is roughly six-sided, a shape which seems to have been prescribed by the nature of the ground whereon it is constructed.

The dimensions of the outer rampart are as follows:—

	Yards.
Length of North side	48
Do. North-west side	57
Do. West side	17½
Do. South-west	26
Do. South side	63
Do. East side	70
Making a circumference of	281½

The height of the outer earthwork is greatest immediately to the south of the entrance: it is here 3 feet 9 inches high, and at the place where it seems to approach nearest to its original condition it is 10 feet wide at the base. The inner line measures, in circumference, rather more than 200 yards; it is impossible to even approximate its original dimensions, as it exists at present only as an irregular mound, about 2 feet high, with several huge stones which have escaped the spoiler; and seem to have once formed part of a continuous facing of upright stones on the outer side of the earth mound. Both the outer and inner works would be probably defended by a stockade, making in fact a double vallum.

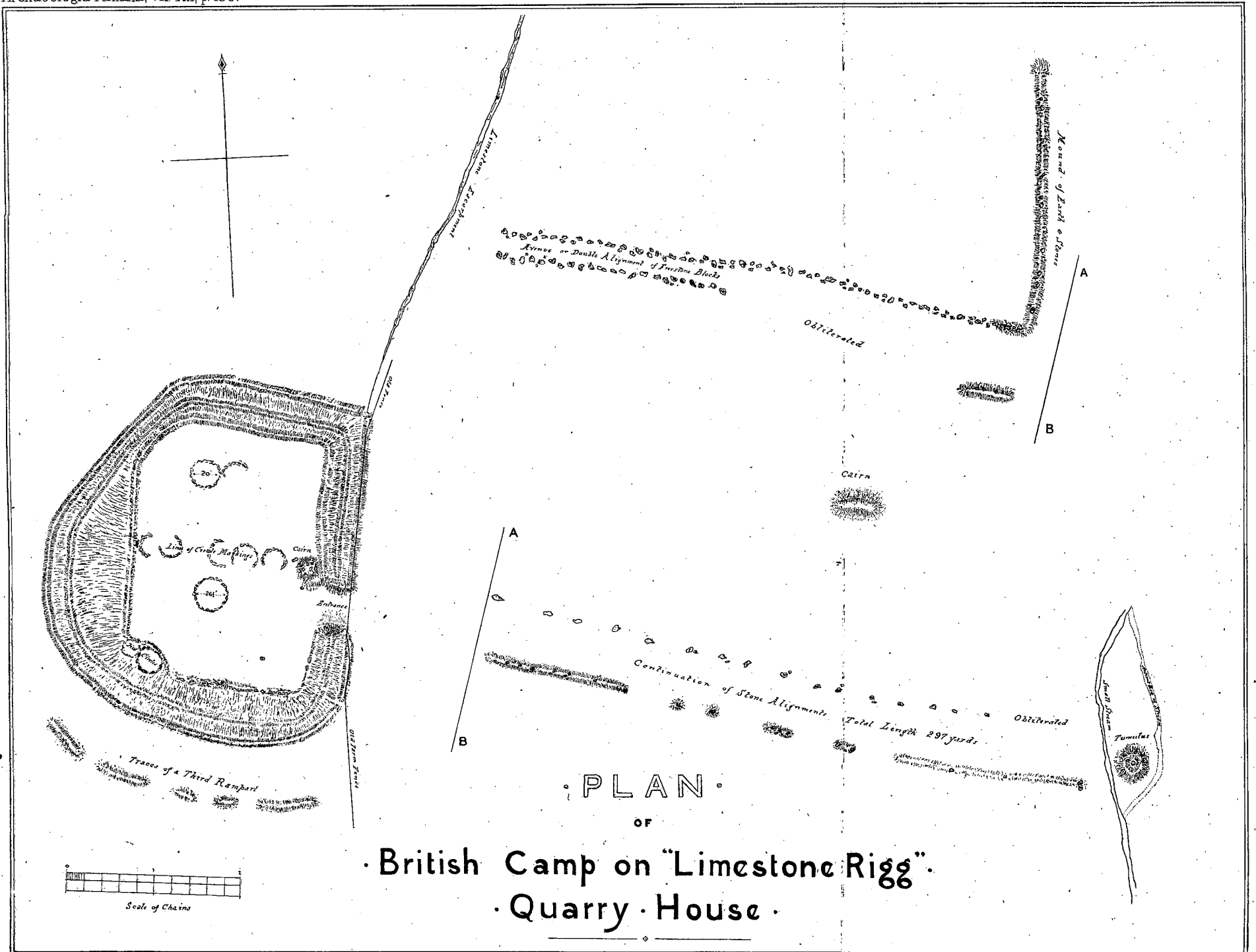
The entrance at G is 44 yards from the N.E. corner of the outer rampart. A mound of earth connects the outer and inner lines of defence to the north of the entrance. The fosse runs at a much higher

level to the north of this mound than it does south of the entrance. A morass encircles the site to the north and south, which, during the occupation of the camp would doubtless be impassable.

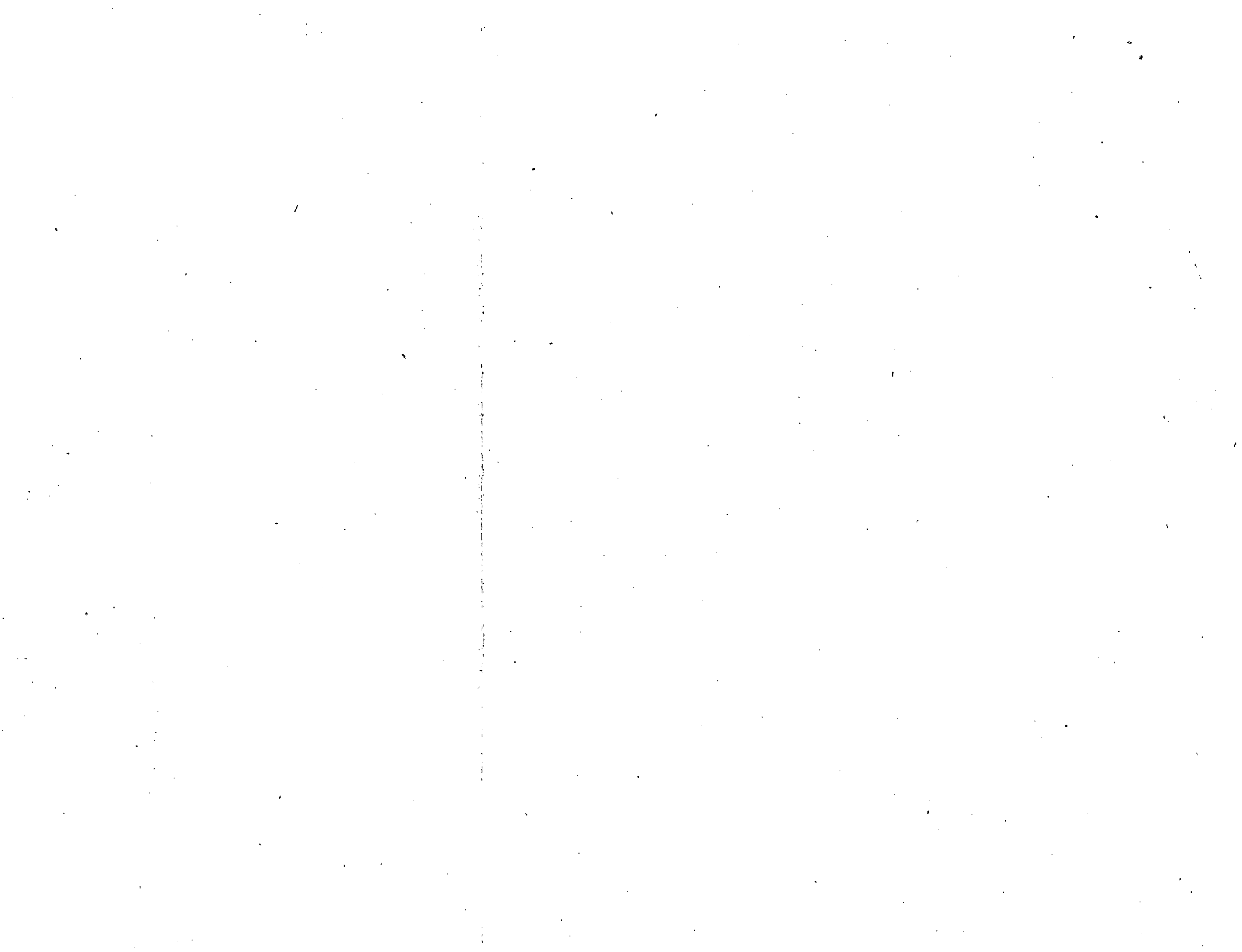
Mounds of earth and stone are observable to the south of the existent lines. I believe these are the remains of a third line of defence, which was composed mainly of stone, and forming a convenient quarry for the occupants of the farm. Through the removal of the stones it has assumed its present disjointed appearance. The present farm-tenant informs me that during his tenancy alone, hundreds of loads of stones have been quarried from the camp, the hut circles, and the stone avenue. Remains of many circular dwellings are to be distinctly traced within the earthwork. One of these is of unusual size, being $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter. The prevailing size is from 15 to 20 feet. A unique feature in the camp is the existence in the S.W. corner of the inner ramparts of two hut circles, as shown on the plan. Slightly to the north of the entrance is a cairn-like erection, which contains many large freestone blocks. This mound has been excavated, and presented a paved enclosure with a row of large stones disposed in the arc of a circle having a radius of 6 feet; these stones are backed up on the outside with earth and smaller stones, leading to the conclusion that this is the ruinous and incomplete foundation of a circular dwelling; but two very large stones occupy positions on their edges which seem to require explanation.

These two seemingly erratic blocks are sunk beneath the line of pavement. Within the area excavated were found many stones which were reddened, and indeed powdered by heat; these were mostly found in front of the stone marked A, which was itself much reddened on the face. One small piece of hard inferior coal was found, and a few fragments of what seems to have been earthenware of a very coarse description—similar to ordinary draining pipes. The encircling stones are 18 inches deep. About 100 yards east of the camp is a cairn, which has very narrowly escaped destruction from the plough—a fate which seems to have overtaken two other mounds of like nature to the south and north of this one.

Ninety yards due west from the N.W. angle of the camp, and across the "bog," is a never failing well, surrounded by a line of freestone slabs, set on edge in a circle 6 feet in diameter; it is also com-



PLAN
OF
British Camp on "Limestone Rigg"
Quarry House



pletely paved out at the bottom, and is about 1 foot deep at present. We have here, probably, the well which supplied the camp. It is known at the present time as "The Roman Well."

From the N.E. corner of the camp an escarpment of grey limestone stretches away towards the north; along the foot of this "Limestone Rigg" are lying in seeming disorder a quantity of large freestone blocks. Upon the brow of the escarpment, and about 60 yards from the N.E. corner of the intrenchment, commences a double alignment of stone blocks, many of large size.

This avenue may be traced for a distance of 300 yards eastward to the course of a small stream, although the eastern portion is nearly obliterated, its former existence being only verified by scattered mounds and fragments. That any of this interesting relic has descended to our time is due to the nature of the stone used, and the size of the pieces, which alike prevented their easy dismemberment and their removal entire. The stone presents a silvery-grey fracture; it is very rich in silica. No stone of this nature exists in the immediate neighbourhood. Exposure to the weather seems only to have affected the stones by hardening them. One of the larger blocks measures 5 feet long, 3 feet deep, and 20 inches wide. This block, I was subsequently told, had been split and fully one-third taken away.

There now remain on the southern line of the avenue about 34 stones, which may fairly claim to be the full size as originally placed; on the north line remain 84 similarly; these represent less than one-fourth of the avenue, and not 10 consecutive yards retain anything like their original appearance. As far as can be inferred from what is left, the primitive workmen seem to have first constructed a rounded mound of earth and stones, and thereon to have placed the large blocks, which are the most striking feature of the works; these, I am of opinion, have been originally placed in a double line, and almost touching each other, if not close together.

The motive which prompted the erection at such an enormous cost of labour and time, of this class of rude stone monuments, of which that under consideration is but a humble type, was either the praise of achievement or the expression of religious feeling; possibly a combination of these caused the erection of the structure under consideration, as I discovered on my last visit to the spot, what is evidently a

tumulus, which probably covers an interment made ages ago. This tumulus escaped my notice before, as it is across the stream from the end of the stone avenue, but the original course of the burn has been round the east side of the mound on which the tumulus was raised. Belief in a future state, no doubt, prevailed amongst the erectors of this monument; they evidently expected their dead to participate in the pleasure they felt in its erection. May its orientation have any peculiar significance? Or is it purely accidental?

I trust that the excavations I purpose making may supply somewhat more of interest and worth communicating to the Society.