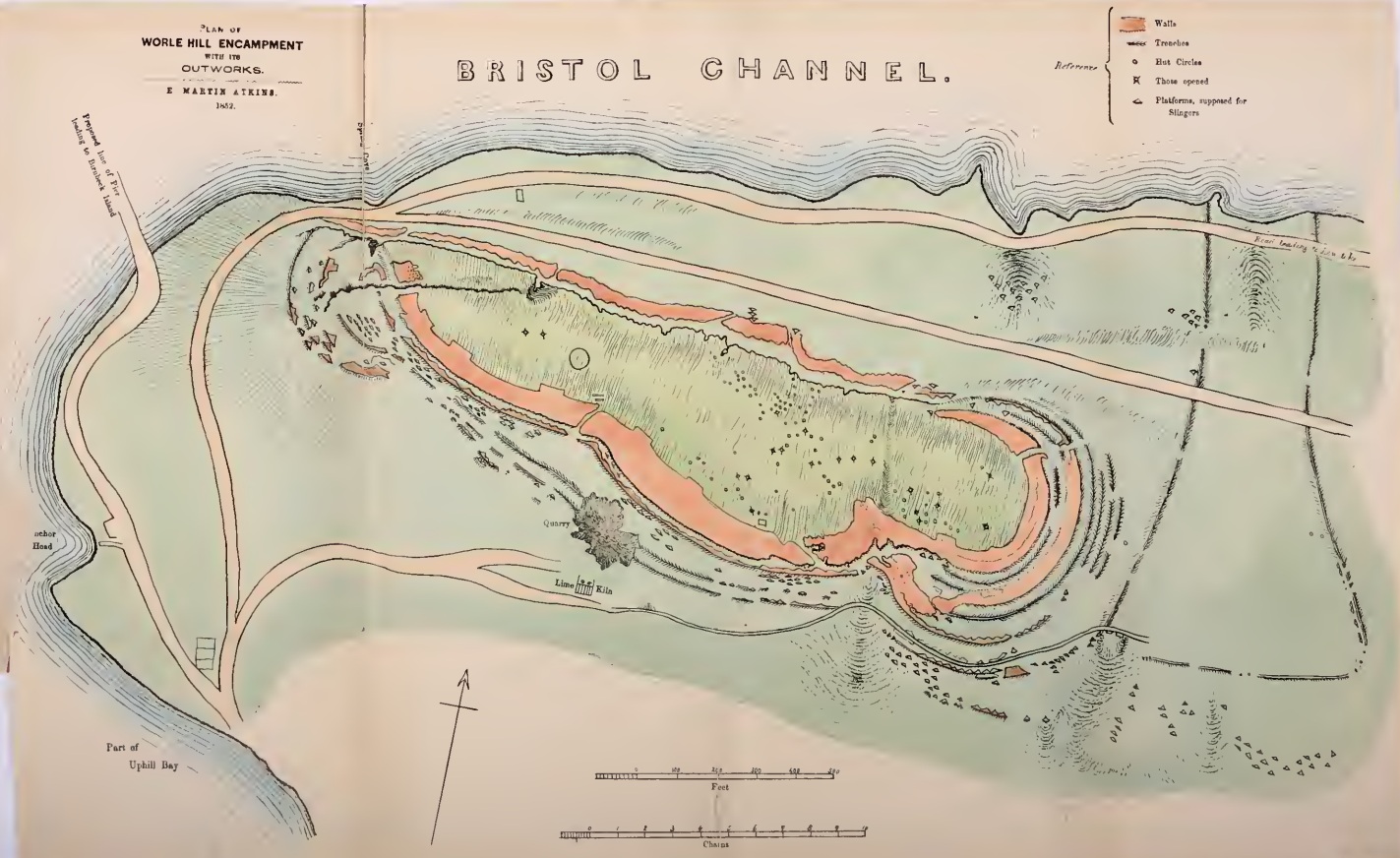
Worle Camp.

BY THE REV. F. WARRE.

THE magnificence and beauty of our mediæval structures are so striking, the remains themselves so important, and so suggestive of all that is dear to the poet, the historian, and the ecclesiastic, that no one can wonder at the growing fondness for them, which is one great characteristic of the days in which we live. Who can pass the ruins of a stately castle, its Norman Keep still looking down in stern majesty on its external defences, without figuring to himself the proud baron, who, surrounded by his foreign soldiery, exerted a despotic and too often tyrannous control over the conquered Saxons, and built these towers, within whose walls he might laugh to scorn their attempts at resistance or revenge? Who can contemplate the more elaborate and scientific fortifications of the Edwardian period, without recalling the gallant days of chivalry, and peopling the ruins with good knights and true and noble ladies, whose matchless charms inspired their daring valour? Who again can view such a cathedral as Wells, or wander through such ruins as those of Glastonbury, and not see in imagination the gorgeous procession, the splendid vestments, the attending


PLAN OF
WORLE HILL ENCAMPMENT
WITH ITS
OUTWORKS.
E. MARTIN ATKINS.
1852.
BRISTOL CHANNEL.
Reference
Walls
Trenches
Hut Circles
Those opened
Platforms, supposed for Slingers
Proposed line of Fire looking to Brean Down Island
Quarry
Lime Kiln
nchor Head
Part of Uphill Bay
Feet
Chains

bands of priests and monks, and hear the solemn chant and pealing anthem, while the bishop or mitred abbot presides at the celebration of some magnificent office of religion? Indeed, while fierce wars and faithful loves—while the remembrance of all that is exciting and picturesque in history and romance,—are interesting; while reverence for things holy, and admiration for things beautiful, survive, the stately castle, the solemn minster, and the ruined abbey, cannot fail of obtaining that attention, which except by the most obtuse dullness, or the most egregious bad taste, could never have been denied them. But there are other remains of by-gone days, more ancient and more mysterious than these, compared to which the Norman castle, the cathedral, and the abbey, are things of yesterday, their inhabitants as men of modern days, and their uses and origin plain and well known. These remains have not the charm of architectural beauty, nor the associations of chivalry, to recommend them to our notice. No common ties of religion exist between us and those who raised those earthworks, which we see on the barren down or the bleak hill. And yet to one who, like Wordsworth's traveller, has seen the hills grow bigger in the darkness, these monuments of nations whose political existence closed when the written history of this country began, possess a fascination little, if at all, inferior to those of later days; and their extreme antiquity, and the mystery attached to them, fully make up for the want of those charms which draw the attention so forcibly to the remains of mediæval structures, whether military or ecclesiastical.

On Worle Hill, to the north of the town of Weston-Super-Mare, exists one of the most remarkable and mysterious of these relics of antiquity that I have anywhere seen; to describe which, and, if possible, to shew what it

really was, is the object of this paper. But though it is the proper office of the archæologist to clear away obscurities, I fear there is little doubt that when he has done his best with regard to a fabric which has most probably existed for more than two thousand years, there will be quite enough left to satisfy the most imaginative mind, that ever took the unknown for the wonderful. The military works of the Romans, as well as the roads which they laid down, wherever their dominion was established, were constructed on a scale of such grandeur and durability, that many of them have survived the lapse of sixteen or seventeen centuries, and still bear witness to the power and enterprise of that wonderful people; while the bloody ravages of the Danes hold so conspicuous a place in the early annals of this country as not only to be recorded in real history, but in many cases to have come down to us in the less certain form of local tradition. It is not, therefore, a subject of wonder, that these relics of bygone nations have usually been ascribed either to the conquerors of the world, or to those northern pirates whose incursions were for some centuries the terror of the civilized world. But in reality a very little knowledge of history and antiquities will serve to convince us that probably the great majority of these mysterious structures could not have owed their origin to either of these people; though no doubt, when occasion required, they both made use of the fortifications they found ready made to their hands in the countries which they invaded. The rules of Roman castrametation are so well understood, and the rectangular form, with the gates regularly placed in each side, so universally adhered to by that people, that it is hardly possible to mistake an originally Roman camp for one constructed by any of the other races who have held military possession

of this country ; and even where, as in the case of Ham Hill, in this county, the later invaders made use of the fortifications of those who had preceded them, the part which the Roman camp occupied is frequently to be discerned with considerable accuracy ; while the rapid movements of the Danish pirates, and the astonishing rapidity with which they transferred their armies from one part of the country to another, render it improbable that the fortifications with which they surrounded their temporary camps, should have been of any very substantial character. Indeed I believe it will generally be found that those which are undoubtedly of Danish origin, consist of little more than a trench and rampart hastily thrown up, usually taking the form of the hill on which they are commonly placed, and apparently constructed without much attention to any fixed rules either of fortification or castrametation. When therefore we find, as in the case before us, works of great importance and strength, evidently intended for the permanent accommodation of a large force, and constructed on a plan essentially different from what we know to have been that in use with the Romans, we are compelled to conclude that the original constructors of those works were neither Romans nor Danes; and as it can hardly be that a place of such importance, if of Saxon date, should not be mentioned either in the Saxon Chronicle, or by Asser, or indeed I believe by any other author, it follows that we must date its origin before the Roman invasion, and seek for its founders among the British tribes, whether Belgæ or Hædui, who inhabited this district while Britain was as yet altogether divided from the Roman world.

The first inhabitants of this island were undoubtedly a branch of the great Celtic family which appears to have

held possession of the northern and western parts of Europe from the earliest times. But that they were not all of the same branch, though probably sprung from the same origin, is the opinion which the best Celtic historians have adopted, from certain differences in their language, of which I am no competent judge, being profoundly ignorant of the Celtic tongue in all its dialects. Davis, the learned author of the Celtic researches, gives the following translation from the Welsh triads on the subject of the primitive inhabitants of Britain, collected by Caradoc, of Langarvan, about the middle of the twelfth century :—"The three Benevolent tribes of the Island of Britain. The first were the stock of the Cymry, who came with Hu Gadarn into the Island of Britain ; for he would not have lands by fighting and contention, but of equity and peace. The second was the race of the Loegrys, who came from the land Gwas Gwyn, near the mouth of the Loire, and were sprung from the primitive stock of the Cymry. The third were the Britons ; they came from the land of Lydaw, on the coast of Gaul, and were also sprung from the primordial line of the Cymry. Three tribes came under protection into the Islands of Britain, and by consent and permission of the nation of the Cymry, without weapon, without assault. The first was the tribe of the Caledonians, in the north ; the second was the Gwydellian race, which are now in Albany or Scotland ; the third were the men of Galedin, who came in naked ships into the Isle of Wight when their country was drowned. Three usurping tribes came into the island, and never departed out of it. The first were the Coranied, who came from the land of the Pwyl ; the second were the Gwydellian Phicti, who came into Scotland over the sea of Locklyn or Denmark; the third were the Saxons."

Now the very form of these triads is sufficient to prove that they are unworthy of admission into the canon of real history. But this much is certain, that at the time of the Roman invasion, the whole eastern part of the island was inhabited by a people whose language and manners, in some degree, differed from those of the aborigines, who had retired to the interior and the western coast, and that the greater part of Somersetshire was at that time in the possession of the Belgæ—probably a tribe of the Coranied —who came from the land of the Pwyl, who had conquered it from the Hædui, Cangi, and Danmonii, perhaps not very long before the time of Cæsar; or, as Mr. Guest supposes, the men of Galedin, who had repaid the hospitality of the Cymry by taking from them a considerable part of their territory. Now the learned Davis, whose work I have been quoting, supposes that pure Druidism retired, with its original professors, before the invading tribes; and he is certainly in some degree borne out by the fact of druidical remains being far more common in the western districts, such as Wales, Cornwall, and Cumberland, than in the eastern counties; and also by the fact that the great establishment of Druids, in the time of Agricola, was not at their great temples at Stonehenge and Abury, which were then either in the hands of the Belgæ, or close to their border, but in the Island of Mona, the extreme western point of North Wales. Now there are many druidical remains in different parts of Mendip; and I am informed that there is one at no great distance from this place. The same author supposes that the Hædui, who certainly were settled in this country before the Belgæ, were a tribe of the Loegrys; and if so, it is probable that these druidical monuments are of more ancient date than the Belgic invasion; and from the peculiarity of

its construction, I cannot help thinking that the camp on Worle Hill may be of the same very remote antiquity.

Now it is said that Hamilco was sent by the Senate of Carthage to discover the western shores and ports of Europe, as early as 420 B.C.; and that the Islands of Britain are mentioned by the name of Æstryminides Islands, infested by the Æstrum or Gadfly; but Davis states that the same word, Clêr, (which in British signifies Gadfly), also means a learned man or teacher; and that Hamilco probably discovered, not the islands of the Gadfly, but of the Druids. The expeditions of the Carthaginians to the western shores of this island were undoubtedly undertaken for the purpose of obtaining tin and other minerals; and it is certain that the mines of Mendip were worked by the Belgæ before the Roman invasion, and probably before them by the Hedui, or other aboriginal tribes. May it not then be at least possible that the fortifications on Worle Hill may mark the site of a town inhabited in times of extreme antiquity by persons connected with this traffic, and that from them the primitive Britons may have looked down upon Carthaginian or even Phœnician ships taking in their cargoes of the mineral wealth of Mendip, hundreds of years before the Belgic settlement at Bleadon or the port of Axium were in existence?

That Worle Hill was occupied by something more than a military station, appears probable when we come to examine the remains actually existing upon it, which will I hope, be a more satisfactory employment than guessing at their date and origin. Of this very remarkable fortification Mr. Rutter, in his delineations of Somersetshire, gives the following account: "Worle Hill is an insulated ridge, about three miles long, but not more than a furlong

in breadth, and includes a view of not less than thirty churches from its elevated summit; the western end projects into the Bristol Channel above the town of Weston, and is formed into one of the most remarkable fortifications in England. The length of the space enclosed from the inner rampart on the east, to the point of the hill on the west, is about a quarter of a mile, and the medium breadth is about eighty yards, making an area, as supposed, of fifteen or twenty acres. On approaching the camp from the east, about a quarter of a mile distant from it, is a barrow of loose stones, five feet high and fifteen feet in diameter, which appears not to have been disturbed since its formation. Before arriving at the outer rampart, seven ditches are sunk across the ridge of the hill, out of which it is probable that the stones were drawn which formed the ramparts, besides which, the whole ground, for a considerable distance in front of the camp, is still covered with loose stones. There are two ramparts, about fifteen feet high from the bottom of the ditch, composed entirely of stones loosely placed, without a blade of grass or plant of any kind; these ramparts, with their corresponding ditches, cross the hill in a part where it is about a hundred yards broad, and then, turning westward, are continued as far as the security of the station required. Those on the north are soon rendered unnecessary by the rock, which is there precipitous; those on the south are gradually blended into the natural declivity of the hill, which is nearly as steep as the rampart itself, and like it is composed of loose stones. There is no indication of any building in the area, except a square excavation about five feet deep and seven feet square, the sides of which are built with loose stones without mortar. It has the appearance of the mouth of a large square well, which might have been filled up when the place was aban-

doned. Within the area of this camp are several curious circles, difficult to explain, about twenty or thirty feet in diameter, principally towards the western point, but one is nearly in the centre, composed of separate stones, surrounded by a slight shallow excavation or ditch. On the north side of the camp there is a subterranean passage from the top, through the rock, to the lower part of the hill, which is now almost filled up with stones."

Since this description was written, the trees with which not only the rest of the hill, but unfortunately the area of the camp also has been planted, have grown so much, as to render it impossible to perceive the plan of the fortifications at one view. It appears however to me, to be easily made out as far as the mere fortification is concerned, though the earth works which exist on the south and west sides of the hill have been so much interfered with, and in some parts mutilated, as to present only a maze of inextricable confusion. There can be no doubt that these ramparts were originally not as we now see them, shapeless heaps of stones, but dry walls, erected on the sides of the trenches, from which their materials were taken, and were probably much higher than they are now. This however does not apply to the trenches to the east of the main fortification, where there is no appearance of walls, and which were probably dug to render the level ground on that side difficult to an invading force, while the stones taken from them served to strengthen the fortifications of what I may perhaps be allowed to call the keep of the place, which is a rectangular space, strongly defended on three sides, immediately within the eastern rampart, and divided from the western part of the fortification by a trench cut in the solid limestone. At the south-west angle of this rectangular fortification, we find the traces of the main entrance to the

NORTH WESTERN ENTRANCE WITH FLANKING OUTWORKS. WORLE HILL

place, which was apparently defended by a strong flanking outwork—whether a tower or no I will not venture to guess—the materials of which lie in a vast heap on the eastern side of the entrance; there appears also to have been a smaller entrance at the north-eastern angle, where the defences are evidently crossed by a pathway. From the western rampart of this part of the fortification, to the extremity of the hill, the ramparts are perfectly evident on the south side, while the precipitous character of the rocks on the north, renders fortification on that side unnecessary. At the north-western extremity there appears to have been a third entrance, defended by an outwork and rampart, and several smaller walls appear to have extended along the south side of the hill. From the great entrance a strong rampart extends to the east, below the principal fortification, to the distance of a few hundred yards, and, turning to the north, crosses the ridge of the hill, to the east of the trenches before mentioned, dividing apparently the main fortification from the sort of outer enclosure formed by a similar rampart, which, having followed the shape of the hill for some distance, turns with a somewhat acute angle, and extends across the hill. The outer entrance to the enclosure appears to have been at the south-west corner, and it seems to have had communication both with the internal fortifications and the level ground to the east, by means of narrow gates in its ramparts. The whole of this extensive fortification is thus divided into four compartments, of which the strongest by far was that to which I have given the name of the keep, from the analogy it bears to that portion of a Norman castle. That extending from the west is also very strongly fortified wherever the nature of the ground admits, while the defences of the eastern enclosures are

not very strong. That between the eastern enclosure and the keep appears to have been purposely made rough, and crossed with deep trenches, in order to render the approach to the rectangular fortification as difficult as possible.

There is one feature of this very remarkable relic of antiquity to which I have not yet adverted; I mean those curious circles of from twenty-eight to thirty feet in diameter, which Mr. Rutter mentions as existing in considerable numbers towards the western extremity of the fortification, and considers them difficult to be accounted for. These, though no doubt many of them have been disturbed and nearly obliterated, by the planting of the area, may still be seen as described by him, and are undoubtedly the foundations of the huts in which the primitive inhabitants of the place resided more than two thousand years ago. Wherever the site of a British town is ascertained, the area of which has escaped mutilation either from tillage or planting, these circles are almost certain to be found. The most perfect specimens of which I am aware, are those on Dartmoor, whose fastnesses offered little temptation to foreign invaders, while the unproductive nature of the soil has preserved them from the ravages of the plough and spade. These primitive habitations appear to have been constructed by forming a circular excavation of a few feet in depth, the sides of which were built up of loose stones, without mortar, and the floor was probably formed of earth or clay trodden hard. These walls appear to have been raised but a small height above the surface of the ground, most likely on account of the instability of dry walls, unless built of far more substantial proportions than these seem to have been. A frame-work of wood seems to have been raised on

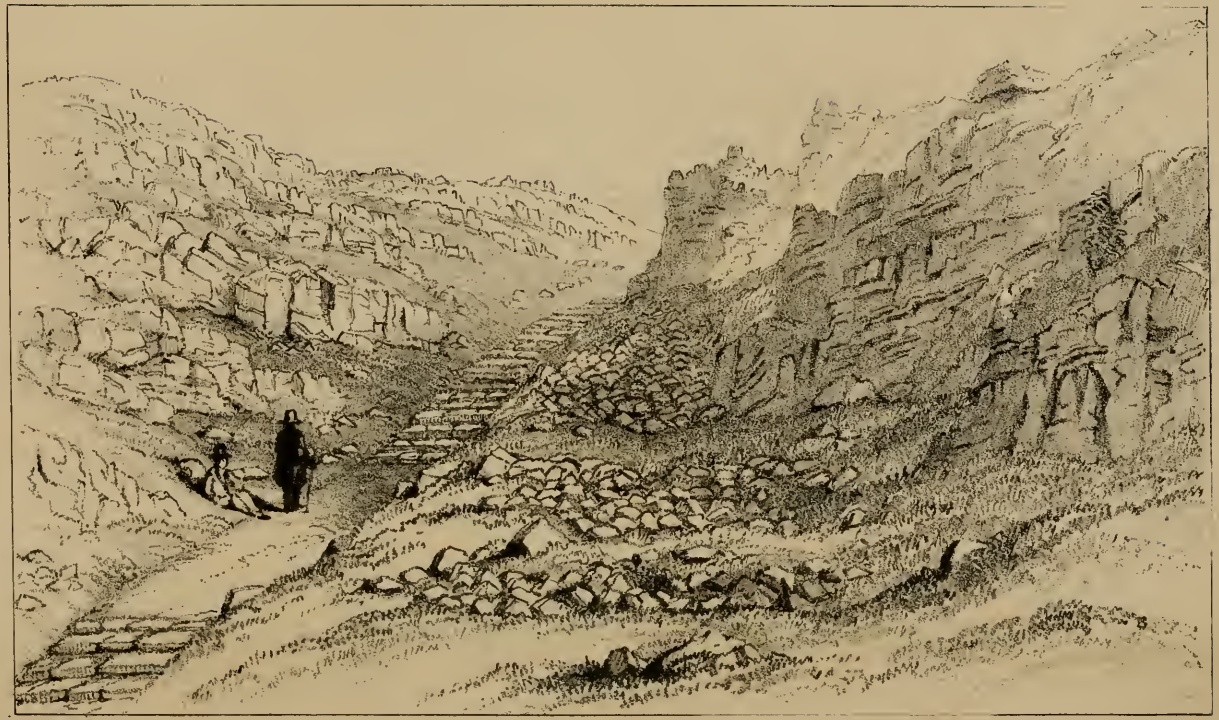
Woodley Lith. Taunton. On Stone by T.H. Hair

HUT CIRCLE ON WORLE HILL.

them, most likely filled with wattle or wicker-work, or perhaps merely interwoven with brush-wood, and the whole was finished with a roof either of thatch or turf, which might have had an opening in the centre, serving the purpose of a chimney. How these huts were lighted or ventilated it is of course, at this distance of time, useless to enquire.

It is a curious fact that Catlin, in his work on the American Indians, gives a sketch of the site of an ancient Mandan town, (which tribe, from some peculiarity in their language, he supposes to be of Celtic derivation,) representing a place which, if an antiquary were to meet with on one of our hills or downs, he would at once pronounce it to be a British village; and gives the following account of the construction of their lodges, probably not unlike that common among the Celtic inhabitants of Britain before the time of its occupation by the Romans. He says—"Their village has a most novel appearance to the eye of a stranger. Their lodges are closely grouped together, leaving but just room enough for walking and riding between them, and appear from without to be entirely built of dirt; but one is surprised when he enters them, to see the neatness, comfort, and spacious dimensions of these earth-covered dwellings. They all have a circular form, and are from forty to sixty feet in diameter; their foundations are prepared by digging some two feet in the ground, and forming the floor of earth, by levelling the requisite size for the lodge. These floors or foundations are all perfectly circular, and varying in size in proportion to the number of the inmates, or the quality or standing of the families which are to occupy them; the superstructure is then produced by arranging inside of this circular excavation, firmly fixed in the

ground, and resting against the bank, a barrier or wall of timbers, some eight or nine inches in diameter, of equal height (about six feet), placed on end, and resting against each other, supported by an embankment of earth raised against them outside; then, resting against the tops of these timbers or piles, are others of equal size and equal numbers, of twenty or twenty-five feet in length, resting firmly against each other, and sending their upper, or smaller ends, towards the centre and top of the lodge, rising at an angle of forty-five degrees to the apex or skylight, which is three or four feet in diameter, answering as a chimney or skylight at the same time. The roof of the lodge being thus formed, is supported by beams passing around the inner part of the lodge, about the middle of these poles or timbers, and themselves upheld by four or five large posts, passing down to the floor of the lodge. On the top of and over the poles forming the roof, is placed a complete mat of willow boughs, of half a foot or more in thickness, which protects the timbers from the dampness of the earth with which the lodge is covered from bottom to top, to the depth of two or three feet, and then with a hard and tough clay, which is impervious to water, and which with long use becomes quite hard." Now whether the Mandans be of Celtic origin or not, it is interesting to observe the similarity of customs among two nations in a state of nearly primitive simplicity; the one living on the banks of the Missouri in the nineteenth century; the other on the coast of the British Channel, perhaps some centuries before the commencement of the Christian Era; for with the exception of the covering of earth, which on the top of Worle Hill it would have been no easy matter to procure in sufficient quantities for the purpose, the construction of the British hut must have



From Nature and on Stone by T. H. Hair.

Printed by Woodley, Taunton.

been very similar to that of the Mandan lodges, and I cannot help thinking it possible that some of those circular barrows which are depressed in the centre, may not be sepulchres, as is generally supposed, but the remains of huts constructed as here described, the earth of which has sunk in when the timber which supported it became too much decayed to sustain its weight. Now the fortified area which I have described, would no doubt accommodate a closely packed population of from fifteen to twenty thousand persons, whose cattle might be tolerably secure within the outer enclosure, while the western extremity of the hill, protected by the massive ramparts of the rectangular fortification, occupying as they do the whole extent of the narrowest part of the hill, would afford an almost impregnable residence for themselves and their families. But it is not likely that the whole population constantly resided within these formidable ramparts; for there are traces of earth-works, and even some of these circles, to be found much to the east of the outer enclosure; and it is most likely that a straggling village at one time extended as far as Kew steps, to the east of which may be traced the remains of another rampart, which seems to have extended quite across the hill.

The very curious pass known by that name is one of the most remarkable features of Worle Hill. It consists of a flight of upwards of two hundred steps, leading from the top of the hill to the little village of Kewstoke, and probably beyond it to the sea, which 2,000 years ago no doubt extended farther on that side than it does at present, and I think may safely be pronounced to have been the great landing place of the British town.

A glance at the formation of the hill will serve to show that it would be very difficult to land any where to

the west of Kewstoke. Anchor Head is too small and too rocky, to have been the only approach to a town connected with the Phœnician, or Carthaginian trade, while the beach at Kewstoke would afford a safe and convenient locality for the small craft in use in those days. At the top of the highest slope of this pass may be traced a considerable foundation analogous to those on the hill, though not circular, which I conceive to have been a military work intended to command and defend the most practicable approach from the sea, on this side of the hill. It is popularly supposed to have been the residence of a British or Saxon Saint, of the name of Kew; but I am irreverent enough to consider that this very apocryphal worthy, if indeed such a person ever existed, had no more to do with Kewstoke, than Saint Conger had with giving name to the neighbouring town of Congresbury. Kongar means King, and Bury signifies town. I believe the large wood in the neighbourhood of Congrebsury is still called Kingswood, and that the name of the place translated into English, is simply Kingston; in the same way Kewch is Celtic for a boat, and Stoke means station; and Kewstoke signifies the station of the boats, which I believe were much more likely to give a name to the village and the stairs than any saint, whether real or imaginary.

I feel that I ought to apologize for the length to which I have extended my gropings in the dark, but I am sure that now I have done my best, or my worst it may be, to clear up the history of Worlebury Camp, I have left obscurity enough to satisfy, as I have said before, the most imaginative mind that ever took the unknown for the wonderful.

Since this paper was read, the following discoveries have been made within the area of Worlebury Camp, chiefly under my superintendence. Having obtained permission

from Mr. Pigott, the owner of the property, I commenced my labours on Thursday, October 16th, by clearing out a square space where there was the appearance of dry walls, thinking it possible that it might be the entrance to a well; in this however I was disappointed, as it turned out to be a rectangular excavation in the rock about sixteen feet long from east to west, and about thirteen from north to south; having a facing of dry masonry on the north, east, and west sides, that on the north about two feet eight inches in height, the other two sloping to the south with the natural declivity of the hill, the south side being only the natural rock without any facing of masonry, and only a few inches deep. The floor is composed of the solid limestone of the hill, and seems to have been very imperfectly levelled. For what purpose this chamber was constructed I cannot form a conjecture, at first I thought it might be a tank for water, but the floor being of mountain limestone, renders this improbable. On the following day I proceeded to clear out one of the hut-circles, of which there is a great number within the ramparts. It proved to be a rude excavation in the solid rock about six feet deep, and rather more in diameter, and with the exception of a few fragments of very coarse pottery, and a little wood having much the appearance of charcoal, contained nothing of interest. On the next day I was unavoidably absent, but the work was continued under the superintendence of Mr. Atkins, Dr. Tomkins, and Mr. Bailward, and on clearing a similar hole, at about five feet six inches below the surface of the ground, was found a skeleton lying on the right side, with the head to the north west. This skeleton, though in a very decayed state, was nearly perfect with the exception of the lower part of the legs, which had disappeared. On cleaning the scull three cuts entirely penetrating the bone,

and evidently inflicted by some heavy and very sharp weapon, were discovered; the collar bone and the left arm, a little below the shoulder, also bore the marks of severe wounds, apparently from the same cutting weapon; there was nothing else of interest in this hole. On Monday however, on opening another circle very near this, at the depth of three feet six inches from the surface, they found the rock faced with dry masonry in a nearly circular form. From the top of this masonry to the solid rock at the bottom, was on the east side twenty-three inches, on the west twenty-seven, on the north twenty-four, and on the south twenty-three ; the diameter of this circular chamber was in the broadest part four feet six inches, and in the narrowest, three feet eleven inches, the total depth of the excavation being about five feet six inches. About four inches below the top of the masonry were discovered the remains of two skeletons, lying almost across each other, the head of the upper one nearly south, and that of the lower west-south-west; they were lying on their sides, with their legs drawn up. About six inches lower a third skeleton was found, the head lying nearly due north. One of these skeletons bore marks of great violence, the skull being gashed with a sharp cutting instrument, and fractured by a large stone which lay upon it ; part of the collar-bone was driven up into the arch of the under jaw, and the left thigh was severely wounded. Under this skeleton was a quantity of dark mould, then a layer of broken stones, then thin plates of lias, a stone not found on Worle-Hill, under which, immediately upon the rock, was a quantity of wheat mixed with a little barley, quite black, but whether from the action of fire, or from decay, is not certain. With the skeletons were a few horses' teeth, and mixed with the grain some

small bones, apparently those of birds. During the remainder of the week several other circles were opened, in most of which were found small fragments of coarse pottery, bones of various animals, some of which appear to have been burnt, pieces of blackened wood, but no masonry or anything of much interest. The deposits in all are nearly the same; first, earth washed from the surface; then, rubble and pieces of rock, to the depth of about five feet; then, black earth, with fragments of wood; then, broken stones, and, lastly, the solid rock.

On Saturday was found the skull of a pig, the back part of which, being close to the rock, showed that it must have been separated from the carcase before it was deposited in the hole; with it were many fragments of coarse pottery, some blackened wood, and a small piece of spar, which appears to have been rubbed down at one end, and might perhaps have been used as the head of a small arrow. In the early part of the week, a large circle of fifty feet in diameter, occupying nearly the centre of the place, was searched, but it proved to be merely superficial, the solid rock being but a very few inches below the surface. Near the centre of this circle were found many fragments of pottery, of very coarse and rude texture. On Monday, the 27th, we found some coarse fragments of pottery, bones of various animals, and a piece of spar similar to that before mentioned. On Tuesday, at about five feet from the surface, we found the jaw of a pig and a few bones, and a little lower a human under jaw, the atlas vertebra, the bones of one arm and hand, and those of the right foot, in a very perfect state. This hole was not nearly so dry as most of the others, and those bones only were preserved which had fallen in the least damp spots; enough however remained to shew that

the skeleton was lying on its face ; and about eight or nine inches below the jaw, lay an iron spike about four inches long, which appears to have been the head of a dart or javelin, with which weapon the man might have been killed, and have fallen forward into the excavation. Under the skeleton was the usual deposit of black mould, and pieces of stick, such as might have been used in the construction of a wattle roof, under which was a large quantity of wheat and barley, which seems to have rested upon a flat board, the two sorts of grain having been kept separate from each other by thin pieces of wood placed between them. With this grain was found a small piece of what I at first thought to be a coarse straw plait, but which, on closer inspection, appeared to be part of a sedge mat, or perhaps basket, in which the grain might have have been kept. The investigation of this curious store was not completed till Thursday, when another excavation was opened. In one corner was a ledge of rock, which might have served as a seat, on the left side of which were the fragments of a large earthen vessel, and on the right a small store of grain. Near the bottom of this hole was found part of a very small ring, apparently of bronze, and quite down on the floor, almost forced as it were under a projecting ledge of rock, apparently put away with great care, two rings of iron about an inch in thickness, and about the same in diameter. On Friday nothing was discovered, but on Saturday, in the last circle which has been searched, we found many bones of animals, a good deal of broken pottery, and just above the floor a piece of iron about eight inches in length, which, though quite rusted through, appears to be the head of a large spear. Besides these remains, we have found a great number of pebbles, all nearly of the same size, which, as the hill is nearly

three hundred feet above the sea, must have been brought there on purpose; and many pieces of red earth, apparently containining ochre, one of which appears to have been rubbed down into the form of a small egg.

Now the question naturally arises,—to what date and to what people are we to ascribe these curious relics of antiquity? and though we have as yet made but small progress in our investigations, I think we even now possess data sufficient to justify us in hazarding a guess; for a mere guess at present it must be, as to both these points. I am inclined then to think, that they are relics of two distinct dates, separated from each other by an interval of several hundred years. From the extreme coarseness and rudeness of the pottery, as well as the state of almost decomposition in which, while wet, some of it appeared to be, I am inclined to think that the greater part of it, together with the iron rings, (which were found put away with great care at the very bottom of the corner of one of the excavations, and the use of which, unless they were analogous to the ring money, which we know to have been in use before the introduction of coin, it would be difficult to understand,) are the relics of the early inhabitants of the place, whether Hædui or Belgæ, and more ancient than the time of the Roman invasion. As far as I can judge, with the exception of one very diminutive fragment of black ware, nothing has been found in the slightest degree indicative of Roman occupation; not a fragment of brick, not a single coin, have we met with; from which I conclude that the place was deserted from the time that Ostorius Scapula took military possession of the country from the Avon to the Parret, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, —that the British inhabitants, reduced to slavery by their conquerors, and having learned to construct better habita-

tions than subterranean huts, had left Worle Hill for Axium, on the other side of the bay; and that their original habitations, having fallen into decay, soon became open holes, the wattle or brushwood roofs of which, having fallen in, afforded the material of the layer of dark mould mixed with pieces of stick, which we have almost invariably found in every one we have opened.

In the course of four hundred years, under the Roman tyranny, the Britons became a degraded and enslaved, though highly civilized people; nor, if we may depend upon the lugubrious history of Gildas, was their situation much, if at all, improved under their own chieftains after the departure of the Romans from their country. On this miserable, though civilized and christian people, the flood of Saxon invasion burst like an overwhelming torrent, and a contest for life and death took place between the invaders and the Bretwallas, or British Welsh, as they are called in the Saxon Chronicle, which raged through the greater part of the fifth and sixth centuries. At length, in the year 577, Ceawlin, the West Saxon conqueror, overran this part of England, gained a great battle at Dyrham, slew three British chiefs, Conmail, Farinmail, and Condidan, and took the cities of Bath, Gloucester, and Cirencester. Now one of the skulls found, bears the marks of wounds such as no Celtic weapon that I have ever seen, could have inflicted; nor is the short stabbing sword of the Romans at all more calculated to give such awful gashes, while the Saxon broad sword is the very weapon for the purpose.

Again, neither the primitive Britons, nor the early Saxons, were slaves; but the Romanized Britons were reduced to the most abject servitude; and, as I have before said, their situation was but little improved after the departure of the

Romans. Now the cartilage between two of the lumbar vertebræ of one of the skeletons discovered, (evidently not of an aged person,) is ossified, which I am informed could hardly have been caused in a person of no great age, except by toil so severe and constant, as to render it probable that it is the skeleton of one who worked under the lash of a task-master. In the south rampart, there is an evident appearance of a breach, and at no great distance from it these skeletons were discovered. It seems therefore to me not improbable, that some of the unhappy Romano-Britons, in the year 577, took refuge in this stronghold, and that the corn and pigs may have been part of their slender stock of provisions; that the place was taken by storm, and that in the desperate contest which ensued, some of the slain fell into the open holes which marked the sites of the primitive huts, and their bones being in some degree sheltered from the weather, have been preserved to the present time, while those left upon the surface have yielded to decomposition and entirely disappeared, that in the lapse of twelve hundred years, the holes have, partly by accident, and partly by design, (when in later days the hill became a sheep walk,) been filled up with earth and stones, till the only vestiges remaining of them, are the low circular mounds and slight depressions which are found in such numbers within the area of the fortified town, a few of which have now for the first time been explored.