

On the Traces of Camps and Ancient  
Earth-Works still Existing around  
Bath and in the Neighbourhood.

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**T**HERE are no traces of human labour so lasting as mounds or earth-works—none which in all the vicissitudes through which society passes in the lapse of ages, retain their characters with so little variation—none which so completely defy the hand of time, and provoke less the ravages of man. While lofty buildings are destroyed for the sake of their materials, when they have once fallen into disuse, and few edifices are suffered to continue unless they can be converted to other purposes, and so turned to profitable account—the earth-work continues the same, or with very little alteration, from the time that it was neglected, or abandoned as a place of defence, or forgotten as a boundary-line, or unused as a road, or ceased to be regarded as a place marking the repose of the dead, who it may be had fallen in battle.

In certain places where the land is adapted for the purposes of agriculture, there these land-marks of the history of former ages have gradually been effaced by the use of the plough, or the soil spread around with the object of improving the fertility of the land ; but as earth-works for the most part occur on high lands, or barren hills, or on moors unsuited for cultivation, they remain much in the same state as when they ceased to be occupied for defensive and other purposes, except that the gradual decay of herbage, and its reproduction, as well as the washing of the rain and winter floods, tend in some degree to bring them gradually to a level surface. The ditch becomes by degrees less deep, the mound less high ; but when turf has once covered it, the process is so slow that the earth-works of this country remain to the present time the truest monuments of the manners and habits of our forefathers ; and as such they must be regarded with the deepest interest, and are well worthy of the most careful investigation ; and happy it is that men have been found ready to give time and attention to their study, and have brought learning and research to bear upon their elucidation. These ancient mounds give life to history, which otherwise becomes insipid and wearisome. Who does not feel more enthusiastic and realize more vividly the scenes and events of bygone times, when he stands upon the very spot where the brave early defenders of this island first withstood attempts at subjugation ? Who does not read Cæsar and Tacitus with deeper interest, when he traces the connection of forts, and treads upon the very line of march, and stands upon the battle-ground, described by the historian ? Such investigations give health and recreation both to mind and body—they give study a vitality which it cannot otherwise possess ; and these historical monuments, however simple,

should be regarded as spots consecrated to history, and should be everywhere carefully preserved from injury. They are landmarks denoting the progress of society, tracing the gradual growth of a nation's greatness, pointing out how it has emerged from darkness into that light of civilization which by the mercy of God it now enjoys. By means of these earth-works, it is highly probable that we can trace the first settlement of colonists in this country. The lands most probably first inhabited were the Chalk Downs—the high lands running through Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, Derbyshire, and on into Yorkshire, as far as the sea on the east—all present traces of early occupation. Along the lines of uncultivated down land, you find a series of camps, which could communicate by signal, and at no great distance apart, which were no doubt the strongholds of the first inhabitants of the island, who used them as places of safety and defence for themselves, and for the protection of their cattle against the wolves and other beasts of prey which swarmed in the forests which then covered the low lands. The first occupants of the country no doubt seized upon the high lands, where they fed their sheep, and by degrees extended their dominion into the vales, and brought them into some degree of cultivation. I am inclined to think that the line of the chalk formation pretty fairly marks out the limit of first civilization. Yet, as it is to be feared every year makes these interesting reliques more scarce, by reason of the daily improvements in agriculture, and the increase of population—as waste lands are now so generally being enclosed, and spots hitherto uncultivated afford space to the spread of population—it is well that the pen of history should gather up what is left, and place it before the minds of men both as

it exists now and as it may have existed in times long gone by. With this feeling I purpose to ask your indulgence while I seek to trace out before you the vestiges of Ancient Earth-works which still exist on the hills around Bath and in its neighbourhood. They are many and very interesting, and have escaped hitherto the hand of man. Much, however, that concerns their history must rest upon conjecture. The light by which we read their former purposes is somewhat obscure, and I know, therefore, that I shall receive at the hands of this assembly that kind indulgence which should always be afforded to a work of this kind.

And first, I ought to touch upon that very interesting landmark of an ancient people now passed away—the WANSDYKE—traces of which are here and there still visible in Somersetshire.\* The general consent of antiquaries has fixed upon the Wansdyke as the last of the Belgic boundaries. It seems probable, from the examination of ancient earth-works in Hampshire and South Wilts, that the Belgæ made three distinct conquests, each of which is marked by a new boundary-line, the last of which is the Wansdyke. This subject has been very ably discussed by that learned and intelligent antiquary, Dr. Guest, the present Master of Caius College, who in a paper published in the *Archæological Journal*, accompanied with a map carefully noting the remains of ancient boundary-lines, has shewn that very satisfactory reasons may be given for this opinion. “This magnificent earth-work,” says he, “reached from the woodlands of Berkshire to the British Channel. Its remains have been carefully surveyed by Sir R. C.

\* The etymology of this word is derived from the C. British, *gwahanu*, *separare*—and denotes a line of separation or demarcation; and not, as sometimes has been stated, from “Woden’s Dyke.”

Hoare. The conquests it was intended to include seems to have been—first, the Vale of Pewsey; secondly, the mineral district of the Mendip Hills; and thirdly, the country lying between this range and the marshes of the Parret.” Ptolemy gives Winchester, Bath and Ilchester, as the three principal towns of the Belgic province. But Bath was not included in the line of the Wansdyke; it lies just without it, and therefore is not properly a Belgic town; although the Belgic fortress on Hampton Down, which I shall proceed to describe, is on the Wansdyke, and lies immediately above the present city and the hot springs. This may have led the geographers into the mistake. “If,” says Dr. Guest, “we run a line along the Wansdyke from Berkshire to the Channel, then along the coast to the Parret, then up that river eastward till we strike the southern borders of Wiltshire, and then follow across Dorsetshire to the sea, we shall have defined with tolerable accuracy the northern and western boundaries which Roman geographers assigned to the Belgæ proper.” In the description which Collinson has given of the Wansdyke, he seems to have fallen into the error of mistaking for it a portion of one of the older Belgic boundary-lines. When he wrote his history, earth-works had not received that careful attention which they have since had, and if both he and Sir R. C. Hoare have spoken somewhat inaccurately, and sometimes made mistakes in not discriminating between roads and boundary-lines, or confused lines of a different date, we must only be very thankful that their researches in days past have opened a path for others to enter upon their investigations and carry their labours to a more certain issue. Dr. Guest observes that our ancient boundary-lines seem to admit of a three-fold division: there are—first, the boundary-lines which defined

the territories of the British tribes before the Roman Conquest ; secondly, those which were made by the Romanized Britons ; thirdly, the marsh ditches thrown up by our ancestors after the English colonization of the island. "Wansdyke," says Collinson, "exists to this day in many places in perfect preservation—one of the greatest curiosities of antiquity. It commences at Andover in Hampshire, and thence passes in nearly a straight direction to Great Bedwin, within the confines of Wilts, near which, upon its track, have been discovered celts and instruments of war." I cannot but think that this is an error in the historian of Somersetshire. The second Belgic boundary, according to Dr. Guest, "included the valleys of South Wilts, and then swept round so as to separate the downs of Hampshire from the woodlands which encircle Scott's Poor, and the remains of the boundary-line called the Devil's Ditch, near Andover, and at Walbury (which Collinson calls Wansdyke) must be assigned to this period, rather than considered portions of Wansdyke." On the confines of the Forest of Savernake it seems to take its beginning ; and on the wild Marlbro' Downs it appears, as Collinson observes, "in its pristine state, exceedingly deep, and flanked by a very lofty mound, attracting by its singular appearance the attention of the curious traveller." A curious feature in its course is that from the border of Savernake Forest it bends to the south, as if to avoid Avebury, and approaches close to, but does not include, Bath.

"It seems reasonable to infer from this," says Dr. Guest, "that when the line of demarcation was drawn, the Dobuni insisted on retaining their ancient temple and their hot baths ; and if this inference be a just one, another and a more important one seems naturally to follow :

assuming that the Belgæ were thus excluded from Avebury, is it not likely that they would provide a 'Locus Consecratus' at some central point within their own border—a place for their judicial assemblies, like the Gaulish Temple, 'in finibus Carnutum, quæ regio totius Galliæ media habetur?' (Cæs. BG, vi.) And may not Stonehenge have been the substitute so provided?" With respect to this wonderful structure, the same writer observes: "If the Belgæ were the builders, it follows necessarily that this temple was erected after the vale became Belgic territory—*i. e.*, after the Wansdyke had been raised," and therefore we regard Wansdyke as older than Stonehenge. Avebury, which is *outside* the Wansdyke, is probably much older than either, but as to its date it is impossible to conjecture.

Collinson, in his *History of Somerset*, considers the Wansdyke to be the work of Divitiacus, who is mentioned by Cæsar, who tells us that he was king of the Suessiones, a people inhabiting the country around Soisson, and in Cæsar's time (*nostrâ etiam memoriâ*) the most powerful chief in all Gaul. He tells us that he had not only obtained supremacy over a great part of Belgic Gaul, but also over a great part of Britain: "Qui quam magnæ partis harum regionum tum etiam Britanniæ imperium obtinuerit." "By what steps," observes Dr. Guest, "he had obtained this supremacy, we are not told; but we may surmise that it was by his aid that the Belgæ pushed their conquests into the interior of the island." If, as is probable, the British king who opposed Cæsar belonged to the Belgic race, then the Belgæ must have obtained possession of the vale of Aylesbury and the plains of Hertfordshire, previous to the year 55 B.C., and we may infer that they acquired these districts under the leadership of

Divitiacus, for we do not learn that Verulam had fallen into the hands of Cassivelaunus by any recent act of conquest. There exist some interesting lines of earthwork, which seem to have been made with a view to separate the new conquests from the country of the Trinobantes. They have been as yet only partially examined.

It is possible that the same monarch who settled the boundaries of the Catyeuchlani may also have pushed forward the Belgic frontier to the Wansdyke. The Cantii, the Atrebatæ, the Catyeuchlani, were probably all three Belgic races, and as regards the Atrebatæ, we are able to make this assertion positively. All three seem to have been subject to the Imperium of Cassivelaunus ; but there is nothing to lead us to the inference that the Southern Belgæ acknowledged his supremacy. As so few years separated the reign of this prince from that of Divitiacus, it is a reasonable presumption that he was, if not a descendant, at least a successor of the Gaulish monarch, and consequently that the limits of his dominion defined the British Imperium of his great predecessor. If so, the course of conquest which Divitiacus traced out must have nearly coincided with that followed by later invaders, by Cæsar, Plautius, and by the Norman William ; and consequently this celebrated chief could not have been the conqueror who reared the Wansdyke. Thus we see that Collinson appears to be in error on this point, at least if we admit the correctness of the above reasoning. As to the period assigned by him to the first entry of the Belgæ into this country, about 213 B.C., and 250 before Divitiacus, he may be correct, although the date can only be conjectural, as it may have been five, or four, or three centuries before the Christian Æra. It is clear from



Cæsar that for some centuries before Christ, the Belgæ were the most energetic and powerful, and, as Dr. Guest observes, among half-civilized races this means the *most aggressive* of the Gaulish tribes.

We will now proceed to trace the course of Wansdyke, and to point out the camps which lie in its course, giving a brief description of each as we proceed. According to Collinson, after quitting Marlbro' Down, it visits Calston, Edington, and Spye-Park, crosses the river Avon near Bennacre, and again, after being lost in tilled fields, meets with the same meandering river at Bathampton. Its course is then continued over Claverton Down to Prior-Park, English Combe, Stanton Prior, Publow, Norton, Long Ashton, and terminates at the Severn Sea, near the ancient port of Portishead, forming a line of eighty miles in length, in more than three parts of which it is yet visible.

I have mentioned the ancient Belgic settlement, which can still be traced on Hampton (or, as Collinson calls it, Claverton) Down, and which overlooks Bath and Bathampton. It is a fortified point of great interest, and has been one of great strength and importance. The vestiges which remain of it are very extensive, and can be traced without difficulty. A plan of it is given in Mr. Phelps' *History of Somerset*, which is far from accurate. A survey was made by the late Mr. Skinner, of Camerton, and is, as I understand, deposited with his MSS. in the British Museum. I applied there to have a tracing of it, but, by Mr. Skinner's will, his MSS. are not to be opened until 50 years after his decease, and there are, I believe, about 36 years still to run out.

It consists of a bold, projecting promontory, at the base of which winds the river Avon, and overlooks the valley extending to Bristol, and also that in the direction of

Bradford. To the west the view extends to the Channel, and to the south-east far into Wiltshire. Communication might be made by signal with the other camps along the line of Wansdyke and those on the Wiltshire downs. Directly in front of it, on the other side of the river, is another earth-work of great interest, called Little Salisbury or Sulisbury, but which is not in the line of the Wansdyke, and must therefore not at present come under notice. This promontory, or *lingula*, is cut off from the adjoining portion of the hill by a deep trench and mound, which can be very distinctly traced from the top of Bathwick-Hill to the verge of Claverton-Park; a wall runs on the whole length of it. The circuit enclosed is thirty acres. On the east side it is very precipitous, but the traces of it here have been much injured, and in places quite effaced, by the stone quarries which have been worked in years past. However the northern entrance and the road or track-way leading to it is very perfect, and this track-way may be traced through the settlement and the southern approach, which seems to have been about the place of the present handgate. The point towards Bath, and overlooking the rich vale through which the Avon flows before reaching the city has been scarped, and so rendered less accessible, while traces of a rampart are still visible. The divisions into which this settlement has been formed are very distinctly marked. From Little Salisbury, the hill opposite, a little before sun-set in the spring or autumn, you may very clearly discern the enclosures by the long shadows which the mounds cast. Each family or clan seems to have had its allotted space, which was enclosed by a mound, and no doubt either on or in front of that mound was a palisade. There are also remnants of hut circles to be seen at various points, several barrows are also contained within the enclos-

ure, and these, as far as I know, have never been examined. Near the track-way leading from the north into the camp, there seems to have existed an avenue of stones, which are all thrown down, and many of which have been removed to decorate gardens, by being formed into rockwork. The large stones now in the park at Bath, to the number of 30, are stated to have been brought from this part of the down. Here may have existed the spot for religious worship, and by the aid of imagination we may figure the religious procession with its priests and victims slowly winding along the avenue to the circle of stones near the foot of the hill. Here also was probably the place for the administration of justice. There are two enclosures contiguous to each other, and on each side an avenue of stones. Near this point also is the spring which probably supplied the camp, or at least this portion of it, with water. Betwixt the camp and the Avon a track-way seems to have run, traces of which may still be seen. On the side of the hill, and placed in cavities in the rock, skeletons have been found, placed in a sitting position, which seems to have been the most ancient form of burial. Three circular burying-places are marked in Mr. Phelps' plan as formerly existing, but of these at present no traces remain. Stone coffins containing skeletons have no doubt been found at the foot of the hill, but these belong to a period most probably much later than the Belgic settlement.

Outside the deep fosse and mound which separated the camp from the mainland, are the vestiges of a quadrangular earth-work, a portion of which has been removed for the purposes probably of agriculture. This is not more than 200 or 300 yards from the fosse, and from the two sides which remain appears to be Roman, but when or for what purpose it was formed it is difficult now to conjecture.

Certain it is that this is the point from which the settlement would be most assailable. Can this be the point from whence these bold subjugators of our island forced their way into this stronghold? Certainly these traces of man's handy-work in past times suggest stirring thoughts, and waken lively conjectures! We have the fosse road running at no very great distance from this point.

Upon the Ordnance Survey the Wansdyke is marked as crossing the down from this camp to the point where the road up Bathwick-hill falls into the road from Widcombe which runs on to the Brass-knocker-hill, and so joins the Warminster road. There are some faint traces of lines running in this direction, but not distinct enough to enable us to form any correct idea; they appear to me to be nothing beyond the remains of old track-ways leading to the camp. Nor are there now any traces of Wansdyke which can be discerned at the back of Prior-Park, which are said to have formerly existed, the plough seems so thoroughly to have done its work in levelling every vestige of this ancient boundary. Not so a little beyond the village of Combe Down, at a place called Cross Keys, where the mound is very distinctly to be traced, and carries a wall on the top of it, stretching towards the turnpike at Burnt House.

From hence it passes through Beech Wood to the village of English Combe, where it is very apparent, and can be examined with great facility. Just beyond the line of Wansdyke, where it passes Burnt House, a camp called Berewyke Camp is said to have existed; but no trace of it now remains, unless it be a portion of the earthen agger. I have carefully examined the spot several times, but cannot satisfy myself as to the present existence of the camp, although it is mentioned by the historians

of Somersetshire. The stone has been worked here to such an extent that it has completely changed the surface of the ground. It is said to have stood on the bold summit of a projecting point of hill just above Cottage Crescent, between the two roads leading to Wells, and near where the fosse road must have passed. It had certainly nothing to do with the Wansdyke or the Belgic settlement, and was probably an outpost of the Romans, such as we find on Lansdown, and probably at Combe Down, where the stone slab which is described in the *Proceedings* of the Society was found last year,\* and which seems to identify that spot as a Roman military station. Following the line of Wansdyke which may be traced, as it is stated, on Newton Farm, to the south of Newton-Park, we come to Stantonbury Camp, which seems to have been one of the Belgic fortresses in its line. The camp lies to the south side of it, and is placed on the summit of an elevated and insulated eminence, commanding a wide range of country, and could communicate by signal with the camp on Bathwick-hill, with that on Maes Knoll, and with a fortress of similar construction on Lansdown, of which I shall hope hereafter to take notice—although not lying within the Belgic boundary, and probably not a work of that people. The area of Stantonbury Camp is about thirty acres, and divided by a ditch into two portions: it follows the natural formation of the ground. The northern portion is nearly straight, having a bank and ditch, which is supposed to be a continuation of Wansdyke. The sides of the hill appear to have been scarped, and platforms may be observed near the entrances, where slingers could be placed for the purposes of defence. We observe this peculiarity in all the camps of this construction.

\* See *Proceedings of the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society*, Vol. V. for 1854.

The name of this fortress is connected with that of an interesting Druidical temple not very far distant, but situated nearer to the next camp, Maes Knoll, than to the camp at Stantonbury. We have Stanton Drew, with its temple similar to that of Stonehenge, only three or four miles distant. The two fortresses, Stantonbury and Maes Knoll, may have been for the protection of this seat of religious worship and administration of public justice. As Stonehenge served as a central spot for the worship and judicial assemblies of the people towards the east of the Belgic settlements, so Stanton Drew may have served this purpose towards the west. Stanton is, I apprehend, "Stone Town:" the word Bury, in its primary signification, denoted a place of defence. From these places of defence being situated on eminences, so that the approach to them should be more difficult, they obtained the name of Burgs, and Stantonbury would be the strong place or fortification of Stanton.

The next earth-work which calls for our attention is the camp of Maes Knoll, which is also attached to the Wansdyke. This camp will well repay a visit: it is one of the most interesting I have examined, on account of the great height of the agger at the western end, and the depth of the foss. It is defended on three sides, by the nature of the ground; the form is irregular, being adapted to the shape of the hill, which is the extreme eastern end of the Dundry ridge. It is admirably calculated for observation and defence. At the spot where we find the huge agger and deep foss, the ridge is contracted to a neck of land, one hundred and thirty yards across. The agger rises forty-five feet above the level of the enclosure, is twenty-five feet broad, and slopes into the foss with a declivity of sixty feet. The escarpments of the hill on the south and

east sides are protected by earth-works. There is a spring of water within the rampart, and the surface of the hill enclosed by the camp occupies a space of thirty acres : various divisions and hut circles may be traced throughout this space. From this camp communication could be made by signal with the camps on Leigh Down, called Bury Walls, and Stokesleigh Camp, which are also supposed to be Belgic fortresses on the line of Wansdyke ; but of these very interesting remnants of our ancient history, notice cannot now be taken : they would require more time than can now be devoted to discuss their history and associations. The name Maes Knoll naturally attracts our attention, and on looking into the etymology I find that Maes, in Celtic British, and in Breton or Armorican, signifies prelium—battle ; and thus Maes Knoll would be “ Battle-Hill.” This, I think, is a better derivation than that given by Mr. Phelps, who derives it from Maes—detached, and Knoll—a hill, which certainly does not express its position, for it is connected with the Dundry ridge, and does not stand isolated, as Stantonbury.

We have other names in England compounded with Maes—as Maesbrook, Maesbury. At the former place was fought a battle between Oswald, king of Northumberland, and Penda, king of Mercia, in which Oswald was slain.

If from Maes Knoll we trace the course of Wansdyke to its western limit, we find that it descended the hill on which the camp is situated, crossed High Ridge Common, and after meeting the high road from Bristol to Bridgewater, forms by its vallum and ditch a deep narrow lane, according to Collinson's account, leading to Yanley-street, in the parish of Long Ashton. From Yanley it traverses the meadow, to a lane anciently called Wondes-ditch-lane, as appears by a deed, dated at Ashton 3 Edward II.,

in which William Gondulph grants to Adam de Cloptone a cottage with a piece of land adjoining, in Aystone, juxta Bristoll, situated on the eastern side Venelle de Wondesdich. Here it traverses the Ashton road at Raynes Cross, and, ascending the hill, enters the hundred of Portbury, in the parish of Wraxall, and terminates at the ancient port of Portishead, on the Severn Sea.

From this account it will be seen that the camps on Leigh Down were not on the south side of Wansdyke, but without its limit, on the north.

I ought here to mention the earth-work above the village of Tickenham, on the north side of it, called Cadbury Camp, which is of an oblong form, and contains about four acres. It is surrounded by a triple agger and a double fosse, and a track-way has led from it to the camps on Leigh Down. This camp commands a full view of the mouth of the Avon and Portishead, and may be regarded as one of the fortresses on the line of the Wansdyke.

Having thus traced the course of the Wansdyke, and considered those earth-works which lie upon it where it passes through Somersetshire, I ought to offer some suggestions as to the state of civilization of the people by whom it was constructed, and who fortified the heights by which it is strengthened and protected. These works give us no mean opinion of their intelligence and civilization. We cannot regard them as altogether barbarians. They seem to have been capable of great works, and must have had instruments to carry them out, as well as understanding to plan and arrange them. Huge mounds of earth were not thrown up without the use of iron or bronze implements. It has been suggested that Wansdyke is the work of two distinct people. This was the opinion of the late Mr. Leman, whose investigations of ancient earth-



works and lines of road entitle him to the greatest respect. This idea is stated by Mr. Phelps to have been confirmed before his death in a very satisfactory manner. On making a communication between two parts of the Down on St. Anne's Hill, the vallum of Wansdyke was cut in two, where the stratum of soil evidently displayed the height of the original dyke, and its subsequent elevation. Yet although this conjecture is plausible, and the fact in this particular instance confirms the idea, yet before we can adopt the theory, much more investigation would be required at various points; for Wansdyke may have been repaired and heightened at this particular point for reasons then existing; and the same people who formed this boundary-line, may at a later period have found it necessary to make it more accurately defined.

It may not be amiss to mention that there exist in this kingdom several other instances of boundary-lines, the history of one of which we are acquainted with—*i. e.*, Offa's Dyke, which runs through the counties of Salop, Hereford, Montgomery, Denbigh, and Flint, and which is accompanied by another of earlier construction, namely, Watt's Dyke, which is carried through the counties of Salop, Denbigh, and Flint. These two great ditches run side by side for twenty miles. In some places they are within a few hundred yards of each other; in others they lie asunder, without any apparent reason, for three miles. Watt's Dyke is much inferior to Offa's. These dykes were intended as a boundary-line between the dominions of Offa, King of Mercia, and the Welsh. Having expelled the Welsh from the open country they possessed between the Severn and the Wye, and annexed the eastern parts of Wales as far as the former river to the kingdom of Mercia, Offa proceeded to separate the Britons from his subjects

by a high mound and ditch. The date of this work is probably about 776 A.D., and that of Watt's Dyke about twenty years earlier. This latter was broken through by an irruption of the people of Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire, and replaced by Offa's Dyke. There is probably a space of 1,000 years between the date of the construction of Wansdyke and Offa's Dyke, but boundary-lines of this nature seem to have been formed at all periods of the ancient history of our island. Thus, for instance, Dr. Guest in his discourse at the meeting of the Arch. Inst., at Cambridge, in 1854, in treating of the four great boundary-dykes of Cambridgeshire, considered them to be the boundary-lines of British princes. The Brent Dyke he assigned to the second period of the great Belgic Conquest, about B.C. 90, and the Pampisford Dyke to about A.D. 30. The Fleam Dyke and Devil's Dyke are much later, the former being probably the Saxon lines of East Anglia in the war of the 7th century, between the Mercians and East Anglians, whilst the latter may be a Danish work of the close of the 9th century.\*

Wansdyke, although so much earlier than Offa's Dyke, is a finer construction, the ditch deeper, the mound more elevated and abrupt. It is, however, inferior in these respects to Fleam Ditch and Devil's Ditch, in the county of Cambridge. Both of these latter works, however, were for the purposes of defence, and fortified the ground between two fens, or between a fen and a forest. Their length is very trifling compared to Wansdyke. The Devil's Ditch does not extend further than eight miles, and might therefore be kept continually guarded. The Fleam Ditch extends nine and a quarter miles. The Devil's

\* See *Archaeological Journal*, No. 44, p. 395.

Ditch is eighteen feet above the average level of the country ; on the western, upon which side is the fosse, it is as much as thirty-eight feet. The width, taken across the summit of the ridge, is twelve feet ; the width of the ditch twenty feet. It is at present eight feet deep, and was, perhaps, originally two feet more. The entire length of the inclination of the sides of the vallum and fosse, are for the former, on the eastern side thirty feet, on the western forty-six feet ; the slope of the ditch bank on the western side of the fosse is seventeen feet. If I recollect right, a rampart runs at the top of the mound.\*

These great works betoken a people advanced in the arts of construction and using implements not much inferior to the means and appliances of modern times.

Let us compare these works and the hill camps with the encampments of modern tribes, particularly with those of the New Zealanders : we shall see then how much superior were the works of our forefathers to those of modern date. Two very interesting models of New Zealand encampments are preserved in the United Service Museum in London. They are well worth examining, and give a good idea of what must have been a fortified British camp in Cæsar's time. By comparing his description with these models, and again with the remains of those earth-works that exist on the tops of hills, we are enabled to form a pretty accurate idea of what they must have been when inhabited.

Cæsar thus describes the capital of Cassivelaunus, and calls it "*Oppidum sylvis paludibusque munitum, quo satis magnus hominum pecorisque numerus convenerit. Oppidum autem Britanni vocant, quum silvas impeditas*

\* See Hartshorne's *Sal. Antiq.*, p. 167.

vallo atque fossa munierunt, quo incursionis hostium vitandæ causa convenire consuerunt." Again, he says that when he had approached this stronghold with his soldiers, "Locum repperit egregie natura atque opere munitum." He attacks it on two sides ; the enemy defend it for a short time, and not being able to sustain the assault of his soldiers, retire in haste from the other part of the camp, and he finds in the camp "magnus numerus pecoris."

Looking now at the modern settlements or paha of the New Zealanders, we find them very irregular in shape, but angular like a modern fortification. They are protected with a double palisade, the outer one short, the inner tall, and both composed of very stout palings, the angles having the strongest stakes; next comes a deep ditch, and then a mound of earth; within this mound is the habitable part, formed into smaller fortified portions by means of palisades, and each appropriated to a different clan or family. The huts are within these enclosures, lying in long ranges, and no doubt each including many inhabitants. The approaches are well protected, and the ditches or mounds are drawn so as to overlap, and the palisades in the same manner, add to which there are several blinds or simulated entrances so as to deceive an enemy. The whole shows considerable strength and skill; when we compare, then, the depth of some of our existing ditches and the height of the mounds, the platforms for slingers, and consider the palisades in most instances probably double, we shall see that in ancient times these camps were no insignificant places of defence, and justify Cæsar's expression "locum egregie natura atque opere munitum." They give us no mean idea of the intelligence, skill and bravery of the primitive inhabitants of this island.

Mr. Kemble, in his work entitled *The Saxons in England*,\* has this passage corroborative of the view I have taken. He says, "If we may implicitly trust the report of Cæsar, a British city in his time differed widely from what we understand by that term. A spot difficult of access from the trees which filled it, surrounded with a rampart and ditch, and which offered refuge from a sudden incursion of an enemy, could be dignified by the name of an oppidum, and form the metropolis of Cassivilaunus."

Such also among the Slavonians were the vici, encircled with an abbatis of timber, or at most a paling, proper to repel not only an unexpected attack, but even capable of resisting for a time the onset of practised forces ; such in our time have been found the stockades of the Burmese, and the pah of the New Zealander ; and if our skilful engineers have experienced no contemptible resistance, and the lives of many brave and disciplined men have been sacrificed to their reduction, we may admit that even the oppida of Cassivilaunus or Caratac, or Galgacus, might as fortresses have serious claims on the attention of a Roman commander.

With this observation I must conclude my present imperfect notice of the camps and earthworks in the neighbourhood of Bath, imperfect indeed, as it only treats of the portion to the south of the Avon, whereas those on the hills to the north are equally interesting and more varied. These may be treated of at some future period ; and although we have not here the very interesting boundary-line of the Wansdyke, yet we have in all probability the first of that chain of forts by means of which the Roman general, Ostorius, connected the two rivers the Severn and the Avon. This

\* See Vol. ii., p. 261.

I know is a controverted point, but I am inclined to think that Little Salisbury, or Sulisbury, is the first in that line, and this hill was probably the seat of the worship of the Goddess Sul, whose name is found in so many altars dug up in Bath. The late Mr. Skinner, of Camerton, has endeavoured to identify the Wansdyke with the vallum of Ostorius, and Mr. Phelps, in his *History of Somerset*, inserts a long dissertation, in which Mr. Skinner endeavours to identify Camerton with Camalodunum, which is generally supposed to be Colchester in Essex, or Lexden near to Colchester. The idea of this vallum he bases upon the words of Tacitus, which have led to so much conjecture and such learned inquiry. Ostorius, previous to his campaign against the Silures, or inhabitants of South Wales, drew a chain of forts between the Severn and the Avon, "cintosque castris, sabrinam et avonam fluvios cohibere parat."

Many suppose that the Avon here mentioned is the river Nen which flows through Northamptonshire, and between the counties of Cambridge and Lincoln, and then empties itself into the Wash. The name of this river, however, does not warrant the supposition, or, if the conjecture be true, it has wholly changed. Mr. Skinner, however, regards the following camps as guarding the conquests of the Romans up to the time of Ostorius:—

1. Clifton camp, on Durdham Down,
2. Stokesleigh, on Leigh Down opposite, beyond Clifton,
3. Borough Walls, contiguous to it,
4. Maes Knoll, which could communicate with Borough Walls and the heights in Wales,
5. Stantonbury camp.

I am inclined to think that these camps, if carefully examined, will give little indication of Roman occupation.

Their form is not that adopted by the Romans, who chose their encampments more in the open ground, and generally at the junction of two rivers ; but the earlier inhabitants or occupants of the country on the hill tops, or on a promontory, which they cut off from the remaining portion of the hill by a deep ditch. Mr. Skinner traces intermediate encampments, and observes that "by carrying on this line of connection between the camps on the hills facing the Avon, and extending it with intermediate stations and outposts to Farley Castle, above the Frome river, it prevented all possibility of invasion by the Silures, who used to pass over the Severn from the opposite side in light coracles, made of hides, which drew so little water that they could ascend high up the river and pass through the interval between the hill camps to invade and plunder the district." "The vallum of Antonine against the Caledonians in Scotland, and that of Hadrian in Northumberland, were arranged after the same manner."

Having lately had the satisfaction of examining the barrier of Hadrian, which stretches between Carlisle and Newcastle, and which is, perhaps, the most interesting Roman work existing in this country or in any other, I am compelled to come to a very different conclusion to Mr. Skinner. In the barrier of the lower Isthmus there are most unequivocal marks of Roman occupation, and I can discover scarcely any in the camps mentioned by Mr. Skinner, at least in Maes Knoll and Stantonbury ; and the form of that on Leigh Down and the Borough Walls appears not to be Roman.

The Vallum of Hadrian, between Newcastle and Carlisle, has been most ably investigated by Dr. Bruce, whose researches are contained in a most interesting volume, which has now come to a third edition. The form of each

camp has been successfully made out, and the name for the most part identified by remains which have been found, in one or other in the list of fortresses given in the *Notitia*. Altars and inscribed stones have been dug up in most of the stations "per lineam Valli," but I cannot hear of any along the supposed line of Ostorius, except a few remains, not important, found at Camerton. The finding of the inscribed stone last year at Combe Down, just opposite Midford Castle, where Mr. Skinner supposes a fort to have been placed, is, I believe, the only instance, and that belongs to a late period of the Roman occupation. It is probable that inscriptions were not common in Roman works until the time of Hadrian, and few have been found, of an earlier date; but still the form of the earth-works is *not* Roman, nor do they exhibit signs of Roman occupation, except it be the camp over Batheaston, called Little Salisbury, which seems to have been occupied by that people. This has been considered to be the first of a chain of forts communicating with the Severn, and running along the Cotswold Hills, which, if we regard the Bath Avon as the river Aufona, Antona, or Avona, mentioned by Tacitus, has certainly a better claim than the camps on the line of the Wansdyke between Bath and Portishead. The Romans appear in certain cases to have occupied ancient British intrenchments, with little alteration of their form; but in these *Roman coins* are generally found. It is not always an easy matter to assign a particular date to an earth-work which has been occupied successively by Roman, Saxon, and Danish invaders, after having been first formed by the aboriginal British tribes. Nevertheless, in a *connected chain of forts* the Roman mode of intrenchment will always shew itself in places. If rectangular works are not



to be found occasionally among the irregular works, we may conclude that they were not permanently occupied as a chain of forts by the Romans.

Leaving, however, this difficult subject, and reverting to the camps around Bath : we have on Lansdown the remains of an ancient British camp formed similar to that of Maes Knoll (being cut off from the other portion of the hill by a deep fosse and agger), and so placed as to communicate by signal with it and Stantonbury, and again with the camp on Leigh Down. This camp commands a view of the whole valley between Bath and Bristol, and is entered by a road from the west, and separated into two portions by a mound, apparently a continuation of the work. Each of these divisions has a mound in the centre, forming a long barrow, with a slight ditch. The road leads direct from the west and the east gates, where it crosses the ditch, which is about thirty feet wide, and has a mound outside of it on the one half. At 300 paces from this entrance we have a Roman camp, which has some curious works on the north side of it. The road to the camp which passes through the north and south gates is very distinctly to be traced. There is also another Roman camp about a quarter of a mile distant, but the turnpike road passes through it, and has destroyed its symmetry. From these two camps it may be inferred that the British earth-work was stormed and taken. On the other side of the hill we have the curious works which bring us back into the period of modern history, and tell of civil strife. We have the traces of the battle of Lansdown, in the works thrown up by Sir William Waller, which cost the cavalry of King Charles I. so many brave lives, and near to which is the monument to Sir Beville Grenville, who fell on this occasion. Looking from the western extremity of Lansdown,

we trace the Via Julia, and overlook the ancient Abone, where very interesting Roman remains have been found. We see the course that this line of road took to the Trajectus, the point where it crossed the Severn into Monmouthshire. Many barrows may also be traced on Lansdown; and here may have been fought the battle of Mons Badonicus, although Banner Down, separated by a valley from Lansdown, lays claim to this event. The Roman roads and villas lying around Bath would occupy another hour, but all these are well worthy the attention of the antiquary, and mark a period more recent than that we have been considering. We may see in these traces that remain, how first came the British camp of rude formation; then the Roman of more scientific construction; and after the camp came the road, by means of which the country was gradually brought into subjection, and supplies procured and communications kept up; and then followed the villas, which speak of quieter times and more ease, luxury, and civilization, when the Roman officer could have his country seat secure on the margin of the forest, and near the communication of some good road, and from whence he taught the rude peasant to cultivate the arts of peace, and employed him in agricultural labours, and in rearing more permanent habitations than the rude huts of his forefathers. Thus may we trace the gradual progress of civilization, and learn how true are the words of the good George Herbert:

“Prowess and arts did train  
 And tune men’s hearts before the gospel came;  
 Strength levelled grounds; art formed a garden there;  
 Then showered religion, and made all to bear.”

Happy is it for us that we live in the latter times, when we

see how gradually and progressively all this has come to pass. Let us, in reading these landmarks of history, not neglect the lesson they teach us, but let us learn from them gratitude and thankfulness, and compassionate sympathy for those who have not the blessings we so largely possess.

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