

Earthworks in the Neighbourhood of Bruton.

BY THE REV. F. WARRE.

PEN PITS AND CADBURY.

THERE is a peculiar feature of the district which is the scene of our annual meeting for this year, which can hardly fail to attract the attention of every observant traveller who passes by railroad from Yeovil to Westbury; I mean that every hill-top, every inch of undisturbed pasture situated high enough to afford a tolerably dry habitation, bears the marks of human occupation. The slight defences of cattle enclosures may be traced on almost every elevated spot, and I doubt not the sites of the villages inhabited by the owners of the herds may be discovered near them. Lynchets on the smooth turf of the hill sides, bear witness to cultivation so ancient, that the vegetation has returned to its natural state—that produced by the disturbance of the soil having totally disappeared; series of terraces, probably marking the entrenched position of armies on the field of battle and military stations of greater or less strength and importance, give proof of primeval occupation, both peaceful and warlike, more positively than in almost every other part of the county which

I have visited. Now, it can hardly be, that if once observed, this peculiarity should not excite our curiosity as to who were the constructors and occupiers of these works, what people were the inhabitants of this district, and, if anything, what is known as to their habits and history; and the answer which would most likely be given to the enquiry would be, they are probably the vestiges of British occupation; and, as far as it goes, the answer is perhaps correct; for with a few exceptions of Roman and Saxon date, there can be little doubt that most of these earthworks were constructed and used by our British predecessors. But still it is a most vague and unsatisfactory answer, for perhaps there is no subject on which ideas less defined and more erroneous prevail, with the generality even of well informed persons, than the history of the inhabitants of these islands, down to the time of the completion of the Saxon Conquest; which, as it relates to this part of England, may be fixed as the year 702, when Ina founded the frontier castle of Taunton, as a defence to his Western border against the Bretwallas of Devon and Cornwall who, under command of their Prince or Regulus, Geraint, still held the heights of Quantock, Brendon, and Blackdown, backed by the fastnesses of Exmoor against the power of the Teutonic invaders. It is, of course, impossible to fix the beginning of this period with anything like accuracy; but the fact that, from the first dawn of the probable history of this country, to the year 702, is certainly not less than 1000 years, is enough to show that the idea usually formed of an ancient Briton—that is to say, a mere savage painted blue, and scantily clothed in skins, can hardly be a correct one during the whole of this period. Indeed I believe it would hardly apply to the last half of it at all, and would probably admit of great modification even in the

earlier part of the British period. Nothing can of course be known with certainty of the inhabitants of this island before the time of written history, nor is it a matter of very great importance whether the first inhabitants were of Celtic origin or not; but it seem probable that the south and west of the island was from very early days occupied by a Celtic race called by the Welsh bards *Loegrys*, related to, if not identical with, the Primeval *Cymri*. The first fact which seems of any historical interest with regard to this part of England is thus mentioned in the collection of *Triads* made by *Carodoc*, of *Llangarvan*, about the middle of the 12th century. Three tribes came under protection into the Island of Britain; the first was the tribe of *Caledonians*, in the North; the second was the *Gweddellin* race, which is now in *Alban* or *Scotland*; the third were the men of *Galeden*, who came in naked ships or boats into the *Isle of Wight*, when their country was drowned, and had lands assigned them by the race of the *Cymri*. These last are supposed to have been the *Belgæ*, and the date of their arrival is fixed with some approach to probability at about three or four hundred years before the commencement of the Christian era; and it is stated by the learned *Davis* that they had neither privilege or claim in the Island of Britain, but that the land and protection were granted under specified limits; and it was decreed that they should not enjoy the immunities of the native *Cymri* before the ninth generation. But whatever might have been decreed or agreed upon between these early *Belgæ* and the aboriginal Britons, it seems that before the Roman invasion in the year 50 before Christ they had obtained possession, by force of arms, of a very considerable part of the South of the Island, including *Hampshire*, *Wiltshire*, and part of *Dorsetshire*, and were at the time of *Cæsar's* invasion a

powerful, warlike, and partially civilized people, keeping up a constant communication with their continental relations, the Gauls, engaged in mining operations and trading in skins of beasts, possessing numberless flocks and herds, and in some cases coining gold money, and superior both in arts and arms to the aboriginal Britons whom they had displaced. That the aborigines, though in some points in communication with the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, were a race of warlike and untutored savages, can hardly be doubted, whatever proficiency their Druids and Bards had attained to in mystic philosophy, astronomy, and mechanics; and that even the Belgæ were in a very imperfectly civilized state is evident from the remains of their habitations, which were probably constructed much on the same plan as, though inferior in comfort to those of the Mandan tribe, described by Catlin. Mr. Petrie, in his very beautiful and learned work upon the Ecclesiastical Architecture and Round Towers of Ireland, has given a description of some houses probably constructed in the Celtic manner. The first is the building known to the peasantry as the Stone House of the Rock, situated on the North side of the great Island of Arran, in the bay of Galway, and is probably of the 5th century. It is stated by Mr. Petrie to be in its interior measure 8 feet high, and its walls are about 4 feet thick; the door-way is but 3 feet high and 2 feet 6 inches wide on the outside, but narrows to 2 feet on the inside. The roof is formed as in all buildings of this class, by the gradual approximation of stones laid horizontally, till it is closed at the top by a single stone, and two apertures in its centre served the double purpose of a window and chimney. The next is the house of St. Finan Conn, one of the early Saints of Ireland, who lived in the 6th century; this example exhibits the charac-

teristics of the Cyclopean style more than the other, the stones being mostly of enormous size. It is situated on Church Island, in Lough Ree, in the county of Kerry; though nearly circular on the outside, it is quadrangular within, and measures 16 feet 6 inches in length from North to South, and 15 feet 1 inch from East to West. The wall is 7 feet thick at the base, and at present but 9 feet 9 inches in height. The door-way is on the North side and measures on the one side 4 feet 3 inches in height, and in width 2 feet 9 inches at top, and 3 feet at bottom; three stones form the covering of this door-way, of which the external one is 5 feet 8 inches in length, 1 foot 4 in height, and 1 foot 8 in breadth. The other is one of the houses erected by the celebrated St. Feehin, who flourished in the 7th century, at his monastic establishment on High Island, off the coast of Connemara, in the county of Galway; this building, like the house of St. Finan Conn, is square in the interior, and measures 9 feet in length and 7 feet 6 inches in height; the door-way is 2 feet 4 inches wide, and 3 feet 6 inches high. That the quadrangular form of building was derived originally from the Romans, is evident from the following translation of a prophecy, ascribed to a certain Magus of the name of Con, taken from the ancient Life of St. Patric, supposed to have been written by St. Erin in the 6th century:—“Adveniet cum circulo tonsus in capite cujus ædes erunt adinstar æduim Romanarum ædes ejus erunt angustæ et angulatæ;” which, though very queer Latin, can only be rendered—a man having his head shaven in a circle shall come, whose church shall be like the Roman churches, narrow and angular. One of the earliest attempts at quadrangular building is the Oratory of Gallerus, the very great antiquity of which is proved by the existence of an upright stone close by, bearing an

inscription in the Græco-Roman or Byzantine character, such as was in use in the 4th and 5th centuries, and would hardly be found, even in Ireland, later than the 6th or 7th. Now this district was the battle-field of the Belgæ and aborigines for centuries, and no doubt the military works we see were, many of them, constructed and occupied by them. The boundary of their conquest to the West appears to have extended from the mouth of the Parret to some point on the Dorsetshire coast. There is a line of hill forts beginning on the coast to the West of that river, which I have succeeded in tracing nearly from sea to sea, and which I hope, on some future occasion, to be able to describe, and probably to identify, as frontier defences, constructed by the Dumnonii, against these powerful and unscrupulous usurpers.

We are now come to the point at which real history takes the places of tradition and poetry, and enables us to speak with something like certainty as to the state of the inhabitants of this country. About 55 years before Christ, Julius Cæsar led the Roman legions to Britain; and as early as the year 45 A.D., we find Ostorius Scapula taking possession of the country as far West as the estuary of Uxella, or the Parret; and before the end of the second century almost the whole Island, with the exception of the North of Scotland, had become subject to the Roman yoke. But, though deprived of their rude liberty, and in many cases reduced to miserable slavery, the Britons progressed rapidly in civilization. The Island was divided into provinces, governed by Roman officers, though in some instances reguli or petty princes seem to have held authority under sanction, and by permission of the conquerors; military roads traversed the country; cities and towns innumerable, many of them of great importance,

sprung up; villas—the beautiful remains of which, when from time to time discovered, bear witness to the elegant luxury introduced by their Italian owners—adorned the view; and agriculture far different from that of the ancient inhabitants, was exercised in the place of Druidical circles. Noble temples were erected, and habitations more suited to the wants of civilized men, superseded the rude circular huts which had afforded shelter to the original inhabitants, and the Britons became a Christian, civilized, and in many cases a highly polished people. But the days of Roman power were numbered, the great Northern hive poured out its countless swarms, and about the year 400 the last Roman legion was called away from this Island, to assist in repelling the barbarous hordes which began to threaten the very existence of the Roman Empire. Again we find ourselves at fault; the history of the interval between the departure of the Romans and the establishment of the so-called Saxon Heptarchy, is involved in obscurity, as great as can be well imagined. But this much we know, the Romans found the Britons a race of warlike and pagan savages; they left them, comparatively speaking, a polished and intellectual nation, though degraded by the domination under which they had lain for 400 years. Still, trained as some of them had been in Roman discipline, furnished with Roman arms, and partaking of Roman blood, had they not been weakened by internal dissensions, they would probably have been perfectly able to defend themselves from the barbarians who now harassed them on every side; but they appear to have degenerated rapidly from the state of civilization to which they had attained under the Romans. The inhabitants of the towns were, however, essentially Roman, their habits, their form of government, and their military discipline, were all formed upon the

Roman model, their religion was derived from Rome, and though not what they had been during the times of Roman occupation, they were a civilized and Christian people when the storm of Saxon invasion burst upon them with its overwhelming torrent.

Mr. Sharon Turner, in his invaluable *History of the Anglo Saxons*, says that we ought not to consider the Saxon-invasion as a barbarization of the country, inasmuch as they brought with them the germs of many valuable institutions, but, "Pace tanti viri," I believe that we shall have but a very erroneous idea of the state of things in this Island during the 5th and 6th centuries, unless we do consider it a very complete barbarization of the country. The early Saxons appear to have been as fierce and bloodthirsty a race of savages as ever laid waste a conquered land; the total disappearance of the Romano-British people, even their language being entirely lost in that part of the Island conquered by the Saxons; the state of the Roman remains found from time to time, almost every building having been destroyed by violence, and most of them by fire, the name of Flamdyn, or the flame-bearer, bestowed by the Welsh bards upon Ida the Saxon conqueror of the North, all bear witness to the exterminating nature of the war, which for full 200 years raged with unceasing fury through the length and breadth of the land, while the names of Hengist and Horsa, Vortigern and Vortimer, Aurelius Ambrosius, Caradoc of the Iron Arm, Natan Leod, and Arthur (Ida and Cerdric), fill us with doubt as to whether they are historical or purely mythical characters. With regard to the last two, I myself feel but little doubt; the death of Geraint ap Erbin is circumstantially related by the Welsh poet, and I see no more reason to doubt that Arthur Amherawdr, a manifest corruption of the Latin

Imperator (a very different person, be it remembered, from the fabulous hero of the *Morte d'Arthur*), held his courts at Camelet, fought at Cathbyrig and Llongborth, died at Camelford, and was buried at Glastonbury, than that Napoleon reigned at Paris, fought at Borodino and Waterloo, died at St. Helena, and now rests on the banks of the Seine.

As regards this part of the Island, the great landmarks of this period are these. In the year 495 Cerdic and Cynric his son landed with five ships at Cerdorics; in the year 577, Ceawlin, the grandson of Cerdic, fought with the Britons at Deorham, slew three kings, Comail, Condidan, and Fainmail, took three cities, Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, and probably extended his conquest to the coast of the Bristol Channel, somewhere between Portishead and Weston-super-Mare. In the year 658, Kenevalch fought the Bretwallas at Pen, and drove them beyond the Parret, and in the year 702 Ina built the frontier town of Taunton, and established the Western boundary of his dominions, which, if not identical with, was probably nearly the same as that of the Belgic tribe before mentioned.

It is a curious fact that the varieties of the Somersetshire dialect seem to be closely allied to these successive waves of Saxon conquest; for the dialect of Taunton is as distinct from that of Bridgwater or Crewkerne, as that of the latter places is from the pronunciation of Bath or Cirencester. I have thus run through the great land-marks of the ancient history of this district, because it is my chief object in now addressing you, to induce some local antiquary to undertake a systematic investigation of the evidences of primeval occupation with which it abounds; and if these things are not borne in

mind, the difficulties and puzzles of the attempt, at all times necessarily sufficiently numerous, will be very much increased without any reason, and false inferences may be drawn from apparently conclusive data, which, however, may not really mean what they at first sight seem to indicate. Loegri, Belgæ, Romans, Saxons, and Danes have all been here, and all no doubt occupied the works they found ready constructed to their hands, when it suited their convenience so to do. And the finding Roman coins at Cadbury, no more invalidates its claim to have been a British fortress before their days, than it disproves the tradition that it was occupied by Arthur after they had left this Island. The same may be said with regard to the probably Romano-British pottery, found by Sir R. Hoare, at Pen Pits; in the same way the extreme antiquity of the fortifications at Worle Hill, is not made doubtful by my having found a Saxon dagger, and the ferule of a Saxon spear, in one of the hut circles; nor the claims of the Norman Walklyn to having built the transepts of Winchester, by the existence of Wyckham's and Edington's work in the same cathedral.

Having said thus much, I will now call your attention to three very important remains of primeval antiquity, all situated near this place. Pen Pits, the crux of antiquaries, Cadbury Castle, known as the Palace of King Arthur, and what I confess is to me a greater crux than either, the very curious earthwork in the neighbourhood of Milbourne Wick. And first with regard to Pen Pits. A plan is given by Sir R. Hoare, in his work on *Ancient Wiltshire*, and perhaps I cannot do better than use his words, and then make my own comments upon them. "It will be perceived," he says, "that the village of Pen stands at the South-west extremity of a large plain, sur-

rounded on most sides by steep and irregular ground. That part of the parish immediately adjoining the village bears the most cultivated and improved appearance; some other parts of the vale, watered by the river Stour, have also been brought into cultivation, but the greater proportion still remains in its wild and desert state, covered with brushwood, though stripped of its oaks and timber. The extent of land comprised within our plan amounts to about 700 acres, of which nearly half have been brought into cultivation. But I have no doubt but that the whole of this fine plain was originally excavated into pits; these excavations seem also to have extended along the Eastern banks of the river Stour, as far as the farm house at Bonham; and from the appearance of the ground on the opposite side, I have reason to think they were continued along the Western bank of the same river. These pits are in their form like an inverted cone, and are very unequal in their dimensions; in some instances we see double pits, divided by a slight partition of earth, and the soil in which they are dug is of so dry a nature, that no water has been known to stagnate in them. Various have been the opinions and conjectures of those who have examined these pits; first, that the ground was thus excavated for the simple purpose of procuring stone; second, that the Britons resorted to this spot for the querns or mill stones, with which, in ancient times, they bruised their corn; third, that they were made for the purpose of habitations, or a place of refuge in times of danger. It would be ridiculous, even for a moment, to suppose that so large a tract of land could have been excavated for the sole purpose of procuring stone, for these excavations generally cease with the upper stratum of sand, which covers a deep and fine bed of hard green stone. I have found this stratum of

sand perforated in some places, and the frequency of stone dispersed about, proves that the workmen could not have been ignorant of the substratum, and which they would undoubtedly have followed, had stone been the object of their research. The conjectures as relating to querns is certainly ingenious, but will admit of some of the aforesaid objections; for, on finding a bed of stone suited to their purpose, would not the Britons, or indeed any beings endued with common sense, have followed that stratum, instead of opening so many thousand pits, over an extensive tract of land, in precipitous situations, and on the steep sides of hills in every part of this district? Where pits have been opened, or levelled, these querns, or mill stones, have been invariably found; they are made of the native green stone, and rudely formed. Those which have holes perforated in the middle were the upper stones, and were turned round the lower one by means of a handle fixed into the perforation. Similar stones have been found at Knook, and in other British villages. These at Pen have decided marks of the tool upon them, and appear never to have been used. The third opinion, as to their having been made for the purpose of habitation, carries with it much plausibility, but still furnishes objections. We know that the first houses were only pits, covered over with sods, turf, and boughs of trees; I am sensible also that no situation could be found better adapted to a British settlement, a dry and healthy plain, gently elevated above a valley, abounding with springs of never failing water; yet we do not find a sufficient quantity of charred wood, animal bones, or pottery, to justify us in fixing this spot as a permanent residence of the Britons. On the Eastern side of these pits is another work, thrown up on a steep neck of land projecting over the river Stour; it consists of an ele-

vated keep and an oblong out-work, unlike any of the camps on our chalk hills, and very similar to many I have observed in Wales. It would be a difficult matter to determine whether this fortress was constructed before or after these pits were formed, or whether it was an appendage to them."

Now it appears to me that this earthwork known as Orchard Castle, is a British construction of very early date, probably the ancient stronghold of the aboriginal Britons of the neighbourhood, before the Belgic invasion. It has most distinctly the three-fold arrangement which I have observed at Worle Hill, Dolebury, Castle Neroche, and Ham Hill, which I have elsewhere described as analogous to the keep and inner and outer bailies of a mediæval castle, and which I believe to have been the normal arrangement of the permanent fortifications of the aboriginal Britons; while those camps on the chalk hills, from which, as well as from those in its immediate neighbourhood, it is essentially different, are probably military works of a more temporary nature, owing their origin in most cases to the long struggle between the Belgæ and Loegrian tribes, and perhaps altered and strengthened in after days by any force which might have found it convenient to occupy them. One of them, Kenny Wilkin's Castle, bears evidence in its construction to the truth of the opinion which derives its name from Kenewalch, who, in the year 658, defeated the Britons at Pen, and drove them beyond the Parret, it being a large enclosure, defended by a single agger of considerable strength, without any additional works, either internal or external, in fact just such an entrenchment as we might expect a great army to construct for the temporary defence of a camp. Round this primeval fortress, Orchard Castle, no doubt a scattered

population resided; some in its immediate vicinity, some in villages at a greater or less distance, of one of which, with its cattle enclosure, I think I have observed faint traces on the Western extremity of the hill on which Pen Church is situated. These habitations would account for the few marks of domestic occupation which have been observed at the Pits, for no doubt a few hut circles may be discovered among these extensive excavations, but the idea that they are all the remains of habitations appear to me to be totally untenable. In the first place, they are so extensive that, had this been the case, they would have afforded accommodation for the inhabitants of the whole Island, instead of those of one district. In the second, their arrangement is perfectly different from that of any British town I have ever seen; instead of being situated in scattered groups, they are all crowded together in such a way as to cover almost the whole area, with a mass of confused hollows. And in the third place their shape—that of an inverted cone—is the last that would be considered adapted to human habitation. The only instance in which I have ever heard of its being adopted, being in certain mediæval dungeons, where the object sought after was the very reverse of comfort. There are a few curious excavations of this form within the area of Castle Neroche, but there is nothing to lead to the belief that they are hut circles.

With regard to the idea that they are the marks of simple quarrying for stone, I can only observe that I know of nothing which would lead us to suppose that the Britons, either in this district or elsewhere, were in the habit of constructing stone buildings, beyond the dry piled masonry of some very early ramparts, and perhaps the lower part of their circular huts; at all events, the stone

dug here would probably have been used in the immediate vicinity ; and I know of nothing that would lead us to suppose that such has been the case. But, with regard to the idea that they are the holes from which stone has been dug for the purpose of constructing querns and other utensils of stone, I cannot think that the objections are nearly so conclusive. That they did make querns here in great numbers is certain, and the fact that those which have been found on the spot have not been used, and generally are unfinished or flawed, is fair ground for supposing that the majority were taken away, probably to a considerable distance, which is confirmed by my having found the fragments of a small grindstone, for tools, bearing the marks of use, during my excavation of the British fortified pass at St. Kew's Steps, which was formed of the same stone as those unfinished circular masses, which I obtained from workmen who had just dug them up from the bottom of one of the Pen Pits.

Sir R. Hoare's observation, that the Britons or any other persons possessed of common sense, having found a bed of stone suited to their purpose, would have followed that, instead of excavating a large tract of rough ground, will certainly apply to all people who can work with ease through solid rock, but that this was not the case, at least with the early Britons is evident, from the hut circles at Worle Hill, where they have always followed the natural fracture of the rock, and have invariably left off wherever it was solid ; and if the Britons of Pen, found separate masses of stone large enough for their purpose by excavating, however extensively, they were certainly more likely to do so than to work the solid stone with their very imperfect, and at the same time very costly tools. Now, if Orchard Castle be of the very early date which I suppose

it to be, and this system of excavation carried on as it probably was for the greater part of a thousand years, it appears to me that the peculiar appearance and state of the ground at Pen Pits may be accounted for with at least a semblance of probability. If it be urged that the stone is unfit for grinding corn, the teeth found in ancient British skulls afford an answer; the crowns, even in middle aged subjects being worn quite smooth, no doubt by the great quantity of sand mixed with the meal, ground with stone of too soft a texture.

CADBURY CASTLE.

Of Cadbury Castle, the second remarkable earthwork to which I wish at present to draw your attention, Camden gives the following account. "The River Ivell rises in Dorsetshire, and receives a little river, upon which is Camalet, a steep mountain of very difficult ascent, on the top of which are the plain footsteps of a decayed camp, and a triple rampart of earth cast up, including 20 acres (the ground plan says 60 acres and 32 perches). The inhabitants call it Arthur's Palace, but that it was really a work of the Romans is plain, from Roman coins daily dug up there. What they might call it I am altogether ignorant, unless it be that *Caer Calemion*, in Nennius's catalogue, by a transposition of letters from *Camelion*. Cadbury, the adjoining little village, may, by a conjecture probable enough, be thought, that *Cathbregion*, where Arthur, as Nennius hath it, routed the Saxons in a memorable engagement." And in the additions to Camden published with Gibson's edition, I find the following description: "Leaving the sea coast, our next direction is the river Ivell, near which is Camalet, mentioned by Mr. Camden, as a place of great antiquity. The hill is a mile in compass; at the top four

trenches circling it, and between each of them an earthen wall. On the very top of the hill, is an area of 20 acres or more, where, in several places, as Leland observes, may be seen the foundations of walls, and there was much dusky blue stone which the people of the adjoining villages had in his time carried away besides coins; Stowe, tells us of a silver horse shoe there digged up in the memory of that age; and Leland describes it in a kind of ecstasy, "Good Lord says he, what deep ditches, what high walls, what precipices are here; in short, I look upon it as a very great wonder both of art and nature." How far it may be considered a wonder of nature, I cannot say; but that it is a wonder of primeval art, I think no one who sees it will deny. The high walls and foundations of wall as well as all traces of the internal arrangement of this great military station, have totally disappeared, but the outer fortifications of the hill are in a tolerable state of preservation. What outworks there may have been, cannot now be ascertained, as, with the exception of the traces of some platforms probably stations for slingers on the south-side, everything outside the main fortification has been obliterated by modern agriculture; but there are the vast trenches with their earthen walls, on some of which, I thought I could trace the remains of a low breastwork of dry masonry. There are at present three entrances, easily to be made out; the first, on the East side, is that now used as an approach to the field occupying the area within the fortification, and has been so enlarged and made easy of access, for the convenience of the tenant, as to have entirely lost its ancient character, so much as to render it almost doubtful whether it be original or not; but, on the whole, I think it probable that there was an entrance at this point. The next is at the South East angle of the place, and, having crossed the

outer defences, opens into the moat, between the inner agger and the one next to it; the path over the inner agger being steep and narrow, and probably strongly fortified. This opening of the road into the moat, is a feature very commonly to be observed in British fortifications, and seems to have been intended to lead an attacking force to points where they might be overwhelmed from above, and forced down the steep side of the hill by a charge of the troops who occupied the higher ground. This seems to have been the case in this instance, as in many places the top of the second agger is not raised above the level of the moat, through which the road led. At the South West angle is the main entrance, which leads through all the entrenchments, up to the area of the place. There are here evident vestiges of flanking works; and I think the whole descent was commanded by platforms for slingers. There also appears to have been a smaller opening on the North side, leading through the entrenchments to the spring which supplied the place with water, and is situated low down among the fortifications of that side; but the entrenchment on the North has been so tampered with by modern fences, that I cannot speak positively about it. At the highest point of the ground within the fortifications, there are still vestiges of what may have been the foundations of an interior fortification.

It certainly seems extraordinary that the learned Camden should have mistaken such a work as I have described for one of Roman construction, and still more so that he should have been led to this conclusion by so fallacious a guide as the presence of Roman coins, which would certainly be no proof that it was not of Romano-British construction, Roman money having been in circulation in these Islands long after the departure of the Romans

themselves, and still less, that it was not a Belgic or aboriginal British work, afterwards occupied by the Romans and Romano-British, which we may almost positively assert is the fact. Whether it be Belgic, or originally British, may be more difficult to determine; and the total obliteration of all works within the ramparts, increases the difficulty very much; but, on the whole, from the general plan and construction of the fortifications, being a series of concentric ramparts, without any independent outworks, with the exception of the platforms I have before mentioned, as well as from the absence of all trace of the three-fold arrangement which I have elsewhere spoken of, as analogous to the outer and inner bailies and keep of a mediæval castle, and which I am inclined to believe is the characteristic type of the original British fortified towns in this part of England, I am inclined to believe it to be a very strong military post of the Belgæ, probably intended as a sort of head quarters for their armies in this part of their territories; and to this opinion I am the more inclined from the marked difference observable between the plan of this fortification, and those to which I have alluded as occupying the strong ground from sea to sea on the West of the Parret, and being probably the line of frontier strongholds established by the aborigines, as a defence against the Belgic invaders. The name, too, of the place, *Cath Byrig*, which I believe means the military town, or the town of the battle, would seem, in some degree, to strengthen this opinion.

MILBOURNE WICK.

I now come to the third object to which I wish to draw attention, the very curious earthwork in the neighbourhood of Milbourne Wick, which I mentioned as appearing

to me a more decided crux than either of the other two. This consists of a very strong and large embankment, without any trench, either external or internal, with the exception, on one side, of an excavation, from which earth has evidently been dug for the purpose of constructing the mound. It runs in a direction from North North West to South South East, and isolates the end of the hill on which it is situated, from the level ground extending towards the East. The space thus cut off is considerable, (I should suppose 50 or 60 acres), and is bounded on the North West by a narrow valley, and on the South by a broader expanse of low land, and on the West by a very narrow gully. The mound itself is 345 yards long, and at the Southern extremity nearly 30 feet high. At about 60 yards from this end there is an abrupt depression of about 10 feet. The height of the mound above the entrance, which is nearly in the centre, is about 20 feet; this entrance is about 5 yards broad, and is approached from the East by a platform across the excavation before mentioned. I can find no vestiges of fortification on any side of the enclosed area, nor any appearance of ancient work within it. At the end of the hill the valley divides into three narrow gullies, and, on the high ground between those which run to the South West and West, is a large enclosure of ancient wall-work, which seems to have been approached by a road leading from the South Western gully. On the height, to the North, is a small work, apparently military, so placed as to command the opening of these three narrow gorges. On the mound itself, about 25 yards to the South of the entrance, is a circular depression, which is not unlike that of a hut circle; and to the North of the entrance is a small barrow, apparently formed from the soil of the mound itself. Altogether it is a very

puzzling construction, and unless it may be the beginning of a large fortified town, the defences of which, from some cause or other, have never been completed, I cannot venture to give a guess as to its intended use.

TEMPLE COMBE.

There is one other earthwork, probably very far removed in date from those I have described, which I cannot leave unmentioned, and this is situated just beyond the East end of the Templars' Chapel, at Temple Combe. It is situated on the side of a low hill, which slopes gently to the lower pastures on the East and South. On these sides the earth is raised, so as to be on a level with the upper part of the field. On the platform thus formed is a moat, descending by two stages, having a broad flat platform between them, to the depth of about 10 or 12 feet; and within this moat is a square area, rather lower than the outer platform. It is popularly known as the Cock Pit, but as to what it was, or for what purpose it was constructed, I confess myself totally unable to give the slightest guess.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I feel that I ought to apologise for this very desultory attempt to describe some of the most remarkable features of a district, with which my acquaintance is very limited and superficial; but my chief object in this has been to induce some antiquary, or, I should say, antiquaries, in the neighbourhood to undertake a systematic research into the primeval treasures of this part of the county, and, if possible, to inoculate some of my hearers with that fondness for antiquity, which has been to me for many years a source of innocent, and I believe improving pleasure. Somerset is very rich in antiquities, and is, as yet, comparatively a virgin soil. My

active exertions in the field of archæological research are well nigh over; increasing age and failing health are sad drawbacks to a mere pickaxe-and-shovel antiquary, such as myself. I can no longer climb about a church with firm step and steady eye; I can no longer wrap my coat round me, and face without a shiver the cold blast from the Atlantic, raging among the Western hills; nor lie hour after hour on the bare hill side, under the burning sun, watching every particle of earth, as it fell from my labourer's shovel, without a wish for anything beyond a draught of water and a crust of bread; hand, foot, eye, and nerve are all failing, but I can assure those who I hope will follow out the search with more success than I have had, that they will find the pursuits of archæology pleasing and healthful alike to mind and body. The Roman historian has said, "Ego hoc quoque laboris premium, petam, ut me a conspectu malorum quæ nostra tot per annos, vidit ætas tantisper certè dum prisca illa totâ menti repeto avertam." I can safely say, for the encouragement of those who are inclined to enter upon archæological pursuits, that if I have done but little good by my labour, I have, at least, often forgotten the real troubles of the present, while engaged in the investigation of the habits, manners, and works of those who have gone before us.
