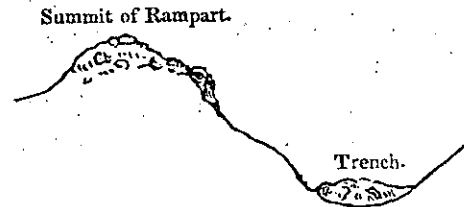


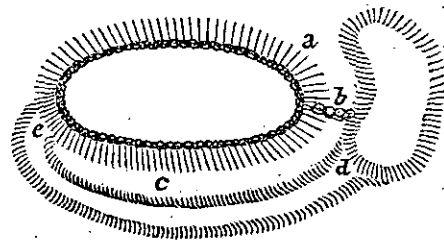
1. *Description of Barry Hill, near Alyth, by Sir George Mackenzie of Coull, Baronet, F. R. S. Lond. & Edin. and F. S. A. Scot.*

THE description of this place of defence given by Dr Playfair is generally correct, except in one or two particulars, where he has allowed conjecture to assume the appearance of fact. Of all the vitrified forts I have seen, it is the most interesting, inasmuch as the vitrified matter occupies a position relatively to the other parts of the works different from what I should have expected, whatever hypothesis in regard to its origin we may assume.

The rampart surrounding the summit of the hill has been of considerable height, judging from the great quantity of loose stones that appears to have been thrown down from it on all sides. The stones are of the same kind as the rock of the hill, a red sandstone conglomerate. I found a few masses of vitrified stones among the ruins of this rampart, and they resembled those from other vitrified forts in every particular, the stones being primitive rock, gneiss, granite, sienite, and hornblende rock. When I first observed these, I concluded that their presence had been accidental among the stones of the rampart on which the fires had been lighted. On going to examine what Dr Playfair has called a bridge, I found that this considerable mass consisted of primitive rock stones vitrified. It had not the slightest resemblance to a bridge, either in its form or apparent use. I was much surprised on observing its position, which is as in this section. It is in the bottom of the trench, between the summit and the outer rampart.



It immediately occurred to me, that it was probable that a greater extent of indications of fire existed; and on searching about *a*, on the north side, I found vitrified masses, and also at *c*; and as there is a low rampart extending all along the bottom of the trench, I think it will probably be found, on clearing away the turf, that the marks of fire extend along the whole of it, and that *b* is merely a portion of the general mass. That part of the trench at the end *b* appears to be formed by a natural rise of the hill beyond it. But from *d* to *e* appears to be an artificial rampart.



The singularity of Barry Hill is in the vitrified matter being in the trench. If it shall afterwards be found that the whole extent is composed of melted stones, this circumstance also will be remarkable, as it will indicate an intended collection of vitrifiable stones. But if detached vitrified masses only shall be found, then their presence may be presumed to have been accidental.

That the signal-fires should have been lighted in the trench, does not affect the general theory I have endeavoured to support. Convenience, and that the smoke might not annoy those within the area on the summit, might suggest this; and it occurred to me, that the smoke being made to ascend along a portion of the face of the hill, might contribute to enable the people at the distant station of Dunsinnan Hill to distinguish the fire on Barry Hill from any accidental fire on the hills behind it.

It may be observed, that on all the forts I have yet seen, excepting this one, there is no possibility of forming a similar trench near the summit, on account of the steepness of the summits; and it will be curious to observe whether the marks of fire exist at other stations, where the formation of trenches has been practicable, anywhere but on the summit. At the Ord Hill of Kessock the vitrified masses are a good way below the summit, along ledges of the rock: but no trenches appear, as the covering of soil over the rock is very scanty. There are several stations in different parts of Scotland, where indications of signal-fires have not been observed (because, probably, they have not been sought for), and where there appears a very regular series of entrenchments. From the sections of some of them that have been published, it is evident that the summits could not be defended by any other means—that is, they could not be fortified well by a single rampart, on account of the summit of the hill, chosen as the best from its position, being of an easy slope. On almost all the stations which nature has rendered strong, we find the defences multiplied only towards the approaches. From these considerations, there appears no reason for supposing that the vitrified forts were the work of a different people from those who formed the entrenched hill stations, or that all the stations were not chosen for the same purposes.

It may be asked, however, what was the use, on Barry Hill, of erecting a rampart or a heap of stones in the trench, where the fires were lighted? My first conjecture was, that the outer rampart had been formed after the other defences had existed a considerable time. It is not unusual to find the vitrified masses at a little distance from the outside of the inner rampart; and they do not always appear to have formed a part of the defences. Hence, had the outer rampart on Barry Hill not existed, there would have been nothing peculiar to this fort. I think it probable that much of this outer rampart has been formed by nature; and it is remarkable that the trench is open at *a*. But the same explanation which accounts for the vitrification in other cases does not apply to this case; for there does not appear any reason for not placing the fuel on the ground, unless we suppose that a heap of stones was employed to keep it more dry than it would be if left on the ground, especially in a hollow, or to give more free access to the air. But still difficulties meet our conjectures; for to avoid risk of the fuel becoming wet, it might have been placed on the top of the outer rampart or along its sides, or on the upper rampart as in other cases. The singularity of Barry Hill therefore remains in this respect to exercise ingenuity, and to excite a

desire to have the vitrified masses on the outer rampart freed from the soil which covers them.