

XII.—*Description of Two Ancient Camps on the Estate of Hay Newton of Newton, Esquire, East Lothian.* By WILLIAM WARING HAY, Esq. F.S.A. Scot.

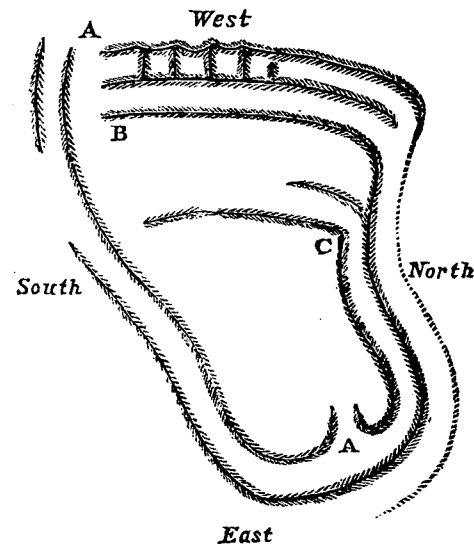
[Read, 31st March 1828.]

*Newton-Hall, 24th December 1827.*

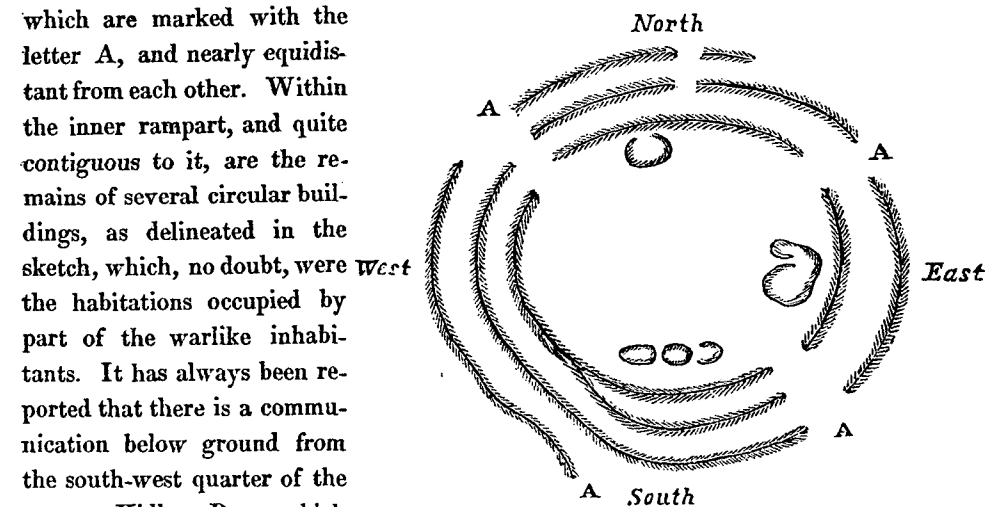
THE ancient camp, commonly called the Castles, on the farm of Latch, Newton-Hall, is situated on a promontory in the most northerly range of the Lammermuir Hills, and which, sloping to the eastward, is bounded by a small stream, Damadam Burn, on the south and east. On the west side, where there is no declivity, the adjoining ground is of equal height with that quarter of the camp. This camp occupies fully three Scots acres ;

and at the west end, which is the highest point of elevation, it is 860 feet above the level of the sea. The ramparts, composed of the usual materials of stones covered with earth, now a very compact turf of grass and heath, are in good preservation, especially on the west side of the camp, and, with the exception of the outer rampart, also on the north and east sides. The west end of the camp, on account of the ground in that quarter not possessing any natural barrier, is much more strongly fortified than in any of the other quarters. Three lines of ramparts are there almost entire; and from the letter C on the north side are the remains, if not of two, at least of another rampart parallel with them. On the north and east sides there have been three ramparts, although the first or outer rampart is so very indistinct that it is scarcely discernible. On the south side of the camp, where the ground is nearly a precipice, the remains of two ramparts are only now discoverable. Indeed, I doubt much if there ever were more than two on that side, although it is possible that by the action of the stream on the bank it may be worn down, and the traces of the first rampart thus obliterated. The length of the camp from east to west, but only within the third rampart at both these quarters, is 400 feet, and the breadth at the centre 150 feet. The third rampart on the west side at B measures 27 feet from top to bottom, and on the north side at C 30 feet. This, however, is merely the measurement according to the form, not the actual height of the rampart. The breadth of the fosse between the ramparts varies from 10 to 13 feet. There appears to be only one direct entrance to the camp, and that is at the letter A in the south-most corner. Those at A in the east end, and contiguous to C on the north side, are merely entrances to the interior from the intrenchments. Between the first and second ramparts on the west side are four pits nearly similar to each other, three of which are pretty well preserved. They are of the same depth and breadth as the fosse, which in that quarter is about 11 feet wide, but they are fully 14 feet long. Each pit is separated from that adjoining by a mound composed of the same materials as the ramparts connected with them, and of equal height. These pits appear to be coeval with the original formation of the camp; and it is probable that, on account of this quarter of the camp being destitute of any natural advantages, they were intended either as additional fortifications, or as places of security for the additional number of troops required for the defence of that part of the intrenchments.

No antiquities have been found in the camp; but at the distance of about 300 yards to the westward the remains of a stone pavement with several querns were discovered a few years ago. These are now preserved at Newton-Hall.



The camp on the Castle Law, Long-Newton, is three quarters of a mile directly west from that at the Castles. They are both distinctly seen from each other, and appear as in a chain of posts. It is situated on the same northerly range of the Lamermuir Hills as the Castles, but on the top of a hill of a much greater elevation. From the circular form of the ramparts, the Castle Law camp is known in the neighbourhood by the name of 'The King's,' a very common name among the peasantry for camps of this description. These intrenchments are seen at many miles distance; and on account of the greater declivity of the ground on which the east and north-east ramparts are placed, and which are covered with a beautiful green sward, they are particularly remarkable when viewed from those sides. The circuit of this camp contains nearly four Scots acres, (being three acres and ninety-eight parts); and it is 940 feet above the level of the sea. It measures within the ramparts 370 feet from east to west, and 337 feet from south to north. It is strongly fortified with three ramparts of much the same height with those of the camp at the Castles, and composed of the same materials: With the exception of the middle rampart on the north-east quarter, which is entirely defaced by the operations of the plough, the ramparts are in good preservation. The fosse is generally of greater breadth than that at the Castles. On the south quarter between the inner and middle rampart it is not less than thirty feet wide. There are four entrances,



which are marked with the letter A, and nearly equidistant from each other. Within the inner rampart, and quite contiguous to it, are the remains of several circular buildings, as delineated in the sketch, which, no doubt, were the habitations occupied by part of the warlike inhabitants. It has always been reported that there is a communication below ground from the south-west quarter of the camp to Kidlone Burn, which is the boundary from the south-west to the northern extremity of the hill; and in corroboration of such report, it is stated that upwards of fifty years ago, when the tenant of Long-Newton or his servants were ploughing that part of the hill adjacent to the camp, their horses' feet sunk repeatedly in a line from the south-west quarter to the Burn. An attempt was made a few years ago to discover this subterraneous passage, but without success. It is quite possible there may be such a communication; at the same time it is equally possible that the circumstance of the horses' feet sinking in the ground may have been occasioned by their treading on some graves or sepulchral urns. There is another

tradition connected with these intrenchments, which has been communicated to me. During my grandfather's lifetime, and at a period even prior to the supposed discovery of the subterraneous passage, the then tenant of Long-Newton, James Baillie, is said to have found in the camp an Urn containing a great quantity of ancient coins. The circumstances of this discovery are thus related :—Baillie, in company with a servant boy, was ploughing the ground within the intrenchment, when Baillie's plough struck upon the urn ; and the better to conceal the treasure it contained from the boy, who appears, unknown to him, to have been aware of the discovery, Baillie feigned sickness, and sent the boy down to Long-Newton for a dram of spirits. In the boy's absence, Baillie concealed the coins ; and of course, if they were of any value in gold or silver, they were soon committed to the crucible, the ruthless destroyer of too many of the interesting relics of antiquity.

The remains of ancient camps are very numerous throughout the whole range of the Lammermuir Hills. A person cannot traverse a few miles without seeing some of these interesting memorials ; and indeed on the Newton estate they lie at much shorter distances from each other ; for, besides the two camps I have described, there are the remains of another only a quarter of a mile south from that on the Castle Law. This third camp is situated on a smaller hill, called the Witches' Knowe. They are memorials of the valorous deeds of our ancestors, and ought to be interesting to us all, since they seem to attest the warlike exploits of the brave inhabitants of Caledonia, who, when the greater part of the known world submitted to the triumphant arms of Rome, scorned to bend beneath her yoke, and dared to insult her majesty, even although then ruled by an emperor, one of the most renowned for military skill and bravery the Roman Empire ever possessed—I allude to Septimius Severus, who finally withdrew the Roman armies from Scotland, and resigned to the North Britons the whole of the territory included within Antoninus's Wall, which was placed between the friths of Forth and Clyde, and Adrian's Rampart, leading from Solway Frith to Newcastle ; besides being obliged, in further security of the remainder of the Roman dominions in Britain, to erect that famous barrier against the attacks of the Caledonians, the remains of which are still known by the name of Severus's Wall. These remains also corroborate the historical proofs of the numerous conflicts with the Danes and Norwegians, equally glorious for our country ; and though last, not least, they recall to mind the independence of Scotland, in spite of English aggression and haughty Edward's treachery.

It is to be regretted that the delineations of ancient camps in the county maps both of Scotland and England are very inaccurate ; for it matters not to most of map-makers what may be the original form or extent of ancient camps, they being almost invariably delineated in the shape of a molehill. The exact form is an important characteristic, which ought never to be omitted. The ancient warlike inhabitants of our native land, well aware of their deficiency in military tactics, compared with those of the scientific tyrants of the world, invariably selected such situations for their own camps as, being strong by natural position, would, if fortified by some art, be rendered inaccessible even to a dis-

ciplined enemy. The ancient native camps are in a variety of shapes, their forms being adapted to their situation—the two camps, for example, already described, and especially that at the Castles, and that also on the Witches' Knowe, which latter, though not of sufficient importance to merit a particular description, is yet sufficiently obvious. It included at least two acres of ground—has been strongly fortified—and the form completely adapted to the natural shape of the hill on which it is placed. The forms of the Roman camps were square, oblong, or oval, neither of which apply to those before mentioned. It is certainly impossible, from the shape alone, to decide which are native and which are Danish or Norwegian camps ; but, taking into view that these northern nations seldom encamped at any distance from the sea coast, and never were in possession of any of the fastnesses in the south of Scotland, it is very improbable that any of the camps on the Newton estate, which are at least thirteen miles from the nearest part of the sea-coast, are of Scandinavian origin. That the Danes and Norwegians made predatory incursions into the interior of the country, we have abundant proof. The numerous graves in Woodhead and Reidshill, together with the grave in the Haining Hill described at the last meeting of the Society, are, if I am not mistaken, pretty strong testimonials of a stout opposition to the Scandinavian enemies, and that probably by the hands of the warlike occupants of the camps I have described ;—for these camps are not more than three quarters of a mile from the Gallery Knowe, Woodhead, and Reidshill Park, and only half a mile from the grave on the Haining Hill. At any rate, that the Danes or Norwegians were enabled to obtain a footing so permanent in the south of Scotland as to afford them an opportunity for erecting such extensive fortifications as those composed of the chain of camps, some of which I have thus attempted to describe, is highly improbable.

W. W. HAY.