

III.—*An Inquiry respecting the Site of the Battle of Mons Grampius.*

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THE Battle of Mons Grampius, fought between the Caledonians¹ on one side, and the Romans under Agricola on the other, has long been an interesting subject of inquiry. Yet notwithstanding all that has been said and written upon the subject, few seem satisfied that the Site of it has been ascertained with that accuracy which modern history requires. Nor is this at all to be wondered at; for Tacitus, to whom we are indebted for the account of the battle, in writing the Life of Agricola, has gone but little into detail, in the geographical description of the country. He has merely laid down particular headlands, as it were, and left us to steer our course the best way we can between them. Yet notwithstanding these difficulties, there are still several sources of information open to us, from which we may draw pretty accurate conclusions.

In reading the Life of Agricola we become acquainted with the character of the General, and are thus enabled to form an estimate of the style of his operations; for the Historian has represented him to us as consistent in all his plans; cautious, though enterprising; leaving as little as possible to chance; and not likely to overrun a country, unless with a view of making a permanent conquest of it. Much may also be gathered from the Roman camps and stations still in existence, or of which, though now obliterated, we have authentic accounts. But in tracing the march of Agricola, one of our surest guides, I conceive, will be the topography of the country; for, however much the art of war may change from age to age, mountains, rivers, and other natural obstacles must always continue in a great measure to regulate the march of armies. As to tradition, I am not inclined to give more credit to it than it

¹ I have called them CALEDONIANS, to distinguish them from the more Southern Inhabitants of the Island, although Tacitus designates them by the general name of BRITANNI.

deserves; at the same time I am not disposed to reject it altogether. We oftentimes, I think, find it correct as to leading facts, although it is seldom to be depended on when it descends into particulars.

In prosecuting the present inquiry, then, it will be necessary to take a brief view of the operations of Agricola, from the time of his assuming the command in Britain as Legate. This occurred, according to the calculation of some, in the year 78, and to that of others, in the year 79. He arrived late in the season; and, although the summer was far gone, he immediately commenced operations, and subdued the island of Anglesey. The second Campaign he assembled his army in the beginning of summer, and directed his march towards the north. He kept near the sea-coast, and seems to have met with little resistance. The Historian eulogises his skill and personal activity in choosing his camp-ground, in examining the woods, and arms of the sea, through which he had to pass, and his address in managing the natives, and in establishing strongholds among them without opposition.

The following winter he is represented to have pursued the same line of policy, and to have rivetted the chains of slavery upon the inhabitants, more by the blandishments of civilisation than by the sword. He induced them to erect public edifices, as well as private houses, and gave them a taste for the luxuries of life. Where this occurred is not exactly known, but it was most probably about Carlisle, or between that and the Solway Firth.

The plan of the next Campaign has excited so much diversity of opinion, and is of so much importance in tracing the march of Agricola, that I shall insert the Historian's own words. *Tertius expeditionum annus novas gentes aperuit, vastatis usque ad Taum (æstuario nomen est) nationibus: quâ formidine territi hostes, quamquam conflictatum sævis tempestatibus exercitum, laccessere non ausi; ponendisque insuper castellis spatium fuit. Adnotabant periti, non alium ducem opportunitates locorum sapientius legisse; nullum ab Agricola positum castellum aut vi hostium expugnatum, aut pactione ac fuga desertum. Crebræ eruptiones: nam adversus moras obsidionis, annuis copiis firmabantur. Ita intrepida ibi hyems, et sibi quisque præsidio, inritis hostibus, eoque desperantibus, quia soliti plerumque damna æstatis hibernis eventibus pensare, tum æstate atque hyeme juxta pellebantur.* Accordingly, some writers, in following the text, have supposed that Agricola actually advanced as far as the Tay this summer; that from thence he returned to the coast of Galloway, opposite to Ireland, and afterwards marched into

Aberdeenshire to fight the battle of Mons Grampius. A glance at the map will at once demonstrate the absurdity of such marching and countermarching, and a view of the country itself, the utter improbability of it. It would be a libel on the memory of Agricola to suppose him capable of executing such a movement.

I am aware how hazardous it is to attempt to alter the text to suit one's own views; but if at the same time we find it impossible to reconcile an Author with himself, we may naturally suppose that some mistake has occurred. In the present instance, Camden, Sir Henry Savile, Greenway, Brietius, and other commentators, have foreseen this difficulty, and supposed that the River in question is the Tweed. But the Tweed is not an estuary, and therefore does not answer the Historian's description. I am inclined to think, then, that the Tine is the River here alluded to, which is a very remarkable estuary, extending from Newcastle to the sea; and the change of a single word, *Tinam* for *Taum*, will solve the difficulty; and from their similarity, the latter may easily have been substituted, in transcribing, by mistake, for the former. The Vatican manuscripts of Tacitus, consulted by Brotier, are described as having *Tanaum*, except one, which in the margin had *Taum*.² I am aware that Horsley endeavours to prove that the Tine is the *Vedra* of Ptolemy, but seems neither to have satisfied himself nor any one else. It is called the Tine in the Saxon Chronicle of 875, and we have no proof of its ever having gone by any other name.³ The first thing that strikes us in this Campaign is the Historian's expression, *vastatis nationibus*, which seems directly at variance with Agricola's courtesy towards the inhabitants the preceding winter; so that we may reasonably suppose there must have been some cause for this change of conduct on his part; and upon referring to the preceding events, we may perhaps be able to find some clue to it.

² "MSS. Vatic. *ad Tanaum*. Sed in margine MS. Vatic. 3429, *Taum*." Tacitus Brotieri, vol. iv. p. 208, 4to edit. A later editor of the Life of Agricola (Dronke, in 1824) says: "Ad *Taum*. Ita Cod. Vat. 3429, in textu; in margine *Taus* sive *Tanaus*; Cod. alter 4498, *Tanaum*." A still later editor (Becker, in 1826) quotes the reading of the last MS. as *Tonaum*. It appears that some of the Vatican MSS. consulted by Brotier cannot now be found.

³ Ptolemy has omitted the Tine in its proper place, and designates the Tay by that name. It may therefore have occurred, that those who were desirous of rectifying this mistake in the geographer, and restoring its proper appellation to the Tay, may have substituted *Taum* for *Tinam* in the text of our Historian, although the latter was the river described by him.

The Brigantes were at this time the most powerful tribe in Britain. Their territory is generally supposed to have extended from sea to sea; but the principal part of it seems to have comprised Yorkshire and Durham, and to have been bounded by the Tine. A few years before, they revolted under the famous Boadicea, and having destroyed the Ninth legion, they gained great advantages over the Romans, and advanced as far as London, where they were ultimately defeated. When Petilius Cerialis was appointed Legate in Britain, he marched against them in person, into their own country. *Sed ubi cum cætero orbe Vespasianus et Britanniam recuperavit, magni duces, egregii exercitus, minuta hostium spes. Et terrorem statim intulit Petilius Cerialis, Brigantum civitatem, quæ numerosissima provinciæ totius perhibetur, adgressus; multa prælia, et aliquando non incruenta; magnamque Brigantum partem aut victoria amplexus, aut bello.*

Now this account is any thing but conclusive as to their complete subjugation, the more so as the historian does not revert to it afterwards. Agricola served under Petilius Cerialis in that expedition, and must therefore have known the state of things; and, as far as we are able to judge, it would not have been prudent in him to have left them behind him in that condition. The Ninth legion was by this time re-organized, and composed part of his army; so that the meeting between that portion of it and the Brigantes, we cannot suppose, would be very cordial. I am therefore disposed to construe the passage as follows: *Vastatis nationibus, usque ad Tinam, (nomen æstuario est) tertius annus expeditionum aperuit novas gentes.* These *novæ gentes*, I conceive, lay between the Tine and the Firth of Forth. Great difference of opinion has existed respecting the point where Agricola entered Scotland; and Birrenswark Camp, near the Solway Firth, has generally been fixed upon as one of his first stations. General Roy supposes that he advanced in two columns, as none of the camps remaining is sufficient to have contained his whole army. One of these columns, he thinks, passed by the Eildon Hills, which he takes to be the Trimontium of the Romans; and any one who has seen the three tops of these hills, which are so conspicuous a land-mark, will probably agree with him in that opinion. From the Eildon Hills Agricola probably

⁴ Richard of Cirencester, in speaking of this people, says, "*Gentem hanc, ab imperatore Claudio primum infestatam, deinde ab Ostorio legato directam, postea a Ceriali fractam, et magnam partem debellatam, ex historia colligitur; cum vero sponte se Agricolo dedisset, pacem illa datam esse percepimus.*"

advanced to the camp at Channelkirk, and from the Soutra Hills he would have a commanding view of the Firth of Forth, which he would perceive to run far inland, and which would naturally induce him to shape his march towards the isthmus between the Forth and Clyde. There is a station on the heights to the eastward of Dalkeith, still called by the country people *The Roman Camp*, which is exactly such an one as he may be supposed to have chosen in this line of march.

The Historian proceeds: *Quarta æstas obtinendis, quæ percurrerat, insumpta; ac, si virtus exercituum at Romani nominis gloria pateretur, inventus in ipsa Britannia terminus. Nam Clota et Bodotria, diversi maris æstibus per immensum revectæ, angusto terrarum spatio dirimuntur: quod tum præsiidiis firmabatur; atque omnis propior sinus tenebatur, summotis velut in aliam insulam hostibus.*

The Fourth Summer, then, was employed in securing the country which he had overrun. If, therefore, in the preceding Campaign he had overrun the country between the Forth and Tay, he must have secured that also; but the Historian distinctly states that it was shut out, as if into another island.

The Fifth Campaign was employed in securing his left flank, in the same manner as he had done his right the preceding one. He took shipping in the Clyde, and coasting the western shore, subdued Ayrshire and Galloway. *Quinto expeditionum anno, nave prima transgressus, ignotas ad id tempus gentes crebris simul ac prosperis præliis domuit: eamque partem Britannicæ, quæ Hiberniam adspicit, copiis instruxit.*

It is probable that Agricola did not employ the whole of his army on that expedition, but only a portion of it, as he might find it difficult to procure shipping for so large a body. It is also evident that he had not passed near that part of the country on his way north, otherwise he could not style them *gentes ad id tempus ignotas*.

In the Sixth Campaign Agricola made great preparations to carry on the war both by sea and land. Every thing here indicates that he was breaking fresh ground, and that he expected great opposition. *Cæterum æstate, qua Sextum officii annum inchoabat, amplexus civitates trans Bodotriam sitas, quia motus universarum ultra gentium, et infesta hostilis exercitus itinera timebantur, portus classe exploravit; quæ, ab Agricola primum adsumpta in partem virium, sequebatur egregia specie, cum simul terra, simul mari bellum impelleretur; ac sæpe iisdem castris pedes, equesque, et nauticus miles,*

mixti copiis et laetitia, sua quisque facta, suos casus attollerent: ac modo sylvarum et montium profunda, modo tempestatum ac fluctuum adversa, hinc terra et hostis, hinc auctus Oceanus militari jactantia compararentur. Britannos quoque, ut ex captivis audiebatur, visa classis obstupefaciebat, tamquam, aperto maris sui secreto, ultimum victis perfugium clauderetur. Ad manus et arma conversi Caledoniam incolentes populi, paratu magno, majore fama, uti mos est de ignotis, oppugnasse ultro, castella adorti, metum ut provocantes addiderant: regrediendumque citra Bodotriam, et excedendum potius, quam pellerentur, ignavi specie prudentium admonebant; cum interim cognoscit, hostes pluribus agminibus inrupturos. Ac ne superante numero, et peritia locorum circumiretur, diviso et ipse in tres partes exercitu incessit. Many opinions have been offered as to the point where Agricola crossed the Forth; and, in the absence of better information, perhaps a view of the country itself will be our safest guide in forming a conjecture as to what his plan of operations may have been. We may reasonably suppose, that before he crossed that river, he reconnoitred the country from the high ground on which Stirling Castle stands. He would from thence perceive that between him and the Firth of Forth, except in his immediate neighbourhood, there lay a vast swamp, ground ill adapted for the march of an army. The most favourable point for his crossing appears to me to have been where the ruins of Cambuskenneth Abbey now stand. The river there is only about 50 yards broad: it appears not to have altered its course, and forms an isthmus extremely favourable for his purpose. A little more than a mile north from this, and about half way to the Ochil Hills, a huge rock rises in the plain, called the Abbey Craig. This rock rises to a great height. It extends about half a mile from north to south; is convex and precipitous on the west, and slopes gradually down to the plain on the east side; thus forming a naturally fortified and remarkably strong position. I think it then probable that this was the first position occupied by Agricola after crossing the Forth; and had the Caledonians attempted to defend it, he might have intercepted their retreat, by marching round its base. From the summit of this rock he would perceive the Ochil Hills, rising very high and abruptly on his left, and extending away to the eastward; the swampy banks of the Forth on his right, and the plain between them the only way open for his march. In following this line Mr Ramsay of Tillicoultry showed me a bronze battle-axe lately dug up at a Druid's temple near his house, where there is said to have been a camp

and a road at the base of the Ochil Hills, which still goes by the name of the Roman road, and which he has converted into a walk for the purpose of preserving it. A little to the eastward some urns were found containing bones, on the lands of Harviston; and I was informed that some were also found to the westward, on the lands of Alva. From Tillicoultry Agricola probably advanced to Alloa, where the army would be in communication with the fleet. Proceeding eastward, tradition says that the fleet attempted a landing at Torryburn, and that the Caledonians advanced into the water to oppose it. About three miles north-east from this, and immediately on the south side of Carnock, there are two farms, called East and West Camp, still pointed out as Roman encampments. They are both on the same ridge, and probably formed only one camp, as they are not far distant from each other. One of them may have been for the infantry, and the other for the cavalry. West Camp is a most commanding position, and could hardly fail to be occupied by an army passing through that country. Immediately on the west of this is a flat-topped hill called Carniel. This hill is very steep on the north side, with a rivulet running past it. It is about 400 yards long; a large cairn stood upon it, and many urns and bones were found there five years ago. *Caer* is the old British word for fortress; Carniel, then, may have been a Caledonian fort, and the Romans may have occupied the adjoining camp whilst they were besieging it. No traces of any works are to be found either at East or West Camp; and if this conjecture be correct, they may have been levelled by the Romans themselves, after the capture of Carniel, to prevent the enemy from occupying them, as is done in our times. Many works have no doubt disappeared in this manner. Carniel and Carnock are so close together, that I am inclined to think they are but different names for the same place. A small hill in Scotland is often called a knock; thus *Caer-knock* would signify the Hill Fort. About a mile and a half north from this, at the base of Saline Hill, there is a small circular work surrounded by a double ditch, which is also called *The Roman Camp*, but of little importance. That Agricola did not go far from the coast, is evident from the soldiers and sailors often meeting in the same camp, and talking over their adventures *militari jactantia*. And although it requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose that the soldiers of Agricola could tell long stories, as well as those of the Duke of Wellington, yet the coast of Fife is an

⁵ See Owen's *Welsh Dictionary*.

exceedingly strong country; and, intersected as it must have been at that time with bogs and woods, it no doubt presented very considerable obstacles to the march of an army.

In this campaign Agricola sent on his fleet to explore the coast, which greatly alarmed the natives, *tamquam, aperto maris sui secreto, ultimum per-fugium victis clauderetur*. This clearly shows that it must have entered the Firth of Tay, as there is no other part of the coast to which this observation is at all applicable. By that manœuvre he got in their rear, placed them between two fires, as we would say in modern language, and intercepted their communication with the north-eastern provinces. In the mean time the Caledonians had assembled in great force; and some of Agricola's friends, not much liking the appearance of things, proposed a retreat beyond the Firth of Forth; but he did not follow their advice. It is difficult to trace his line of march from Carnock, but it is probable that he inclined more inland, keeping the Cleish Hills on his left. He seems to have been greatly harassed by the natives on this march, and could hardly fail to have passed by West Blair (now Blair-Adam). Blair⁶ signifies *locus pugnae*; but there are so many places of that name in this country, that we cannot attribute them all to him, although he may have a fair claim to the nomenclature of those that lay in his route. Following this line, we come to East Blair, and then to Loch Ore, an undoubted Roman station. As the camp there has generally been reckoned that in which the Ninth legion was attacked, it may be necessary to say something of it, although it was unfortunately levelled about twelve years ago, and a farm-stead now occupies its site. It stood on very low ground, and occupied a gentle eminence on the north side of Loch Ore, the lake forming the defence on the south, and the other three sides were surrounded by a marsh. It was about 250 yards long from east to west, and not nearly so broad. A considerable hill lies immediately on the north of it, and above that rises Benartie Hill to a much greater height, the northern base of which is washed by Lochleven. Upon viewing the ground where the camp stood, from the hill above it, last summer, when the corn was beginning to ripen, I could distinctly perceive the traces of three ditches at the north-east angle, running parallel to each other, from the corn being of a darker hue. A great many roots of trees were also lying at the farm, dug out of the neighbouring swamps, which proves them to

⁶ See Armstrong's *Gaelic Dictionary*, in voce Blar or Blair.

have been originally covered with timber. Gordon says that the circumference of the camp was two thousand and twenty feet, that there were three rows of ditches on the west side, with corresponding ramparts of stone and earth, and a turret on the side next the lake. The situation of this camp seems admirably adapted for a surprise, as the Caledonians might have assembled their forces behind the hill immediately above it; but upon levelling the trenches, although the burnt ends of the pallisades were found, no bones, or arms, or any trace whatever of a battle, were discovered.

About a mile and a half nearly east from it, however, there is a hill called the Harelaw, on the west side of which, tradition says, there was a great battle. This name is not uncommon in Scotland, and wherever it occurs a battle is said to have taken place. The one in question is a very advantageous position, and two ancient coins were found on the west side of it about twenty years ago; but although the man who found them is still alive, they were disposed of by his mother to a pedlar, and are now lost. The old road to Edinburgh passes by it; and a friend of mine who lives near it informed me, that in his younger days, when the country people were more superstitious than they now are, they were very unwilling to pass it before day-break. A large cairn stands upon the summit of it, about twenty feet high, and an hundred yards in circumference.

Sir Robert Sibbald,⁷ in describing this ground, says, "To the east of Loch Or there may yet be seen cairns of stones, such as were always raised where there were fights by our ancestors: yea, in the bogs adjoining, there were, not above a hundred years ago, found swords of brass, and brass heads of lances, some of which were kept in Sir Andrew Balfour's cabinet of rarities." Gordon also says, "Lately, in cutting some ditches immediately under the camp, for draining the Lake, the workmen dug up several antiquities which were evidently Roman, particularly the head of a spear." Now this must also have been at the east end, for the outlet of the Lake is there, by which it has been since drained; and cutting ditches anywhere else could not have had the effect of lowering its bed.

About a mile north-east from the camp, on the north side of the Lake, and not so far from Harelaw, near to Lochore House, there is another hill, or rather eminence, where some traces of fortification, and great quantities of stones, were

⁷ *Conjectures concerning the Roman Ports, Colonies, and Forts, &c.* Edinb. 1711, folio.

to be seen not many years ago. Before clearing the ground, a stone coffin, some urns, and many bones were found. I think it then exceedingly probable that these were the three stations occupied by Agricola when he formed his army into three divisions, to prevent his being surrounded by the enemy. His position would thus form a triangle, with the Lake on one side—a disposition well adapted for his purpose; and the topography of the ground suits that arrangement. The distances also favour that opinion; for had they been greater, his divisions could not have supported each other. And if the Caledonians occupied Benartie Hill, which it is probable they did, as by far the most commanding ground in the neighbourhood, they would thus overlook his position; and that they did reconnoitre it is evident, otherwise they could not have discovered the Ninth legion to be the weakest. Sir James Balfour says that the vestiges of a double trench existed there in his time; and if this was the position of their main body, it is not likely that Agricola would place his weakest division next to it, but, on the contrary, the most remote from it. I am therefore inclined to place the Ninth legion at Harelaw, or between that and the Loch. Sir Robert Sibbald also seems to have done so, and he had a better opportunity of judging than we have, when the cairns which he mentions existed there. The line of flight would thus be open to the Caledonians through Portmoak Moss, where, he says, the bronze heads of lances and javelins have been found. A bronze battle-axe and a flint arrow-head were also dug up there last summer, in making a new cut for the Leven; and a bronze spear-head, eleven inches long, was found there two years ago, which I have sent to the Antiquarian Society.

The account of the battle is as follows: “*Quod ubi cognitum hosti, mutato repente consilio, universi Nonam legionem, ut maxime invalidam nocte adgressi, inter somnum ac trepidationem cæsis vigilibus, irrupere. Jamque in ipsis castris pugnabant, cum Agricola, iter hostium ab exploratoribus edoctus, et vestigiis insecutus, velocissimos equitum peditumque adsultare tergis pugnantium jubet, mox ab universis adjici clamorem. Et propinqua luce fulsere signa: ita ancipiti malo territi Britanni: et Romanis redit animus; ac, securi pro salute, de gloria certabant. Ultrò quinetiam erupere: et fuit atrox in ipsis portarum angustiis prælium, donec pulsati hostes; utroque exercitu certante, his, ut tulisse opem, illis, ne exiguisse auxilio viderentur: quod nisi paludes et sylvæ fugientes texissent, debellatum illa victoriâ foret.*”

“*Cujus constantiâ ac famâ ferox exercitus, nihil virtuti suæ invium: penetrandam Caledoniam, inveniendumque tandem Britannicæ terminum, continuo præliorum cursu, fremebant: atque illi modo cauti ac sapientes, prompti post eventum ac magniloquies ant: iniquissima hæc bellorum conditio est: prospera omnes sibi vindicant, adversa uni imputantur. At Britanni non virtute, sed occasione et arte ducis rati, nihil ex arrogantia remittere, quominus juventutem armarent, conjuges ac liberos in loca tuta transferrent, cætibus ac sacrificiis conspirationem civitatum sancirent; atque ita irritatis utrimque animis discessum.*”

It appears, then, that in their night march to attack the Ninth legion, the Caledonians must have passed near another division of the Roman army, otherwise they could not have been observed by the scouts. Agricola followed them, and attacked them in the rear. And this is exactly what may have occurred if they descended from Benartie Hill, as I imagine them to have done; and tradition seems to coincide with that opinion, in placing the brunt of the action on the west side of Harelaw. From the Ninth legion being stated to be the weakest, I think we may infer that there were three legions in the Roman army; for had there been only two, we can hardly suppose that each of the halves of the other would be stronger than the Ninth. After the battle, both parties seem to have retired quite satisfied with themselves,—an event which rarely occurs in war; and as the Caledonians went off with unbroken spirits, it is by no means probable that they retired to a great distance, still less so that they went as far as the Grampian Mountains, and thus evacuated so large a portion of their territory, all in fact that was worth conquering, without a farther struggle. The Roman soldiers, on the other hand, talked of nothing but victory and conquest, and of marching to the extremity of Britain. Their General, however, seems not to have shared their enthusiasm, for here the Campaign suddenly closed,—rather a lamentable conclusion to so great a victory; and the Historian, as if with the view of diverting the attention of the reader, and of keeping the subsequent inactivity of the Roman army out of sight, introduces a story of a detachment of the Usipii sailing round Britain, and of the family distresses of Agricola.

From Lochore, I think we can trace that general to the camp on Dunearn Hill, a distance of not more than 10 miles due south; so that if this calculation be correct, this Campaign will only embrace a space from Stirling to Dunearn Hill, a distance in my opinion not too little, considering the natural dif-

difficulties he had to contend with, and that he had to fight every inch of the way. I have not found that this camp is called *Agricola's* by the country people, as stated by Chalmers, but simply the *Roman Camp*. That he wintered in Fife, is evident from the text; and I know of no other place we can fix upon for his winter quarters. It rises above Burntisland, which it commands, and the harbour of which would form an excellent station for his fleet. The hill itself is also one of the finest positions that is to be found anywhere. On the north side it is precipitous, very steep on the west and south, and slopes down in a ridge towards the east. It commands a most extensive view of the Firth of Forth, and all round. A hollow extends along the summit from east to west, in the centre of which there is a lake of about an acre and a half in extent, from which a rivulet descends on the south side. On the south-western summit there has been a stone fort, 158 yards in circumference. In digging the foundation for a flag-staff there, five years ago, the handle of a sword was found, with a small portion of the blade attached to it; but one of the workmen who found it informed me that the whole was so corroded, they could just discover what it had been. A more extensive work, also of stone, has joined this on the east side; and a third has extended along the north side of the last mentioned one, communicating with the lake; and as this work must have been unnecessary, when the whole hill was occupied, I am inclined to think that a garrison must have been left in these works when the camp was abandoned. Great piles of stones still remain on the spot, that had been used in their construction. On the north side of the first mentioned one there has been a large ditch, and a rampart extends across the west end of the hollow. On the east side two stone walls have extended across the ridge, about sixty yards apart, the foundations of which only remain. On the south side a rampart has run along the edge of the hill; and at the bottom of it, on the south-east side, there has been a ditch. Farther west there is a platform of earth, forty yards long, and about twenty feet high. On the west side of this the defence has been a stone wall, the foundation of which is still very distinct. Inside of this, on the face of the hill, the foundations of several houses are very perceptible. They have been sunk in the earth a certain depth, and appear to have been faced with stones, which still appear through the ground. Outside of the wall there is a rocky hillock, in the back of which a circular hut has been excavated. It has also been faced with stones, which still remain, and has every appearance of having been a guardhouse, while the summit of the knoll would form an excellent post for a

sentinel. On the south-west side a small rocky hill comes very near the camp, and may have been included in it, although a deep ditch has been cut between them. About a mile south-west from this there is another *Harelaw*, between which and the camp, tradition says, there was a great deal of fighting. A cairn formerly stood upon the top of it, and upon removing it a stone coffin and a bronze spear-head were found. The camp has been about six hundred yards long, and perhaps more, as many works may have existed at the foot of the hill, which the plough has now obliterated.⁸ It has been fortified with much labour, and more skill, perhaps, than can fairly be attributed to our Caledonian ancestors. It appears also to have been occupied a long time; and I am inclined to think that Agricola may have remained in it six or eight months. I am led to this conclusion from the preceding and subsequent events. The Historian does not say at what time of the year the preceding Campaign terminated; but as it suddenly closed in the midst of the operations, we may fairly presume that the season was not over; and as the battle of Mons Grampius was fought in the very end of the following year, a considerable period of inaction must have elapsed between those events, if I am right in my calculation, considering the short distance he had to march. In the preceding Campaign the Caledonians had carefully avoided a general action, and pursued a system of partizan warfare; and the skill with which they conducted it is well illustrated in that admirable attack on the Ninth legion. That attack, indeed, did not succeed to the full extent, not from want of skill in the plan, but from the fortune of war; and Agricola seems to have been aware, that in that system of warfare his army would at last be exhausted; for although he repulsed them, he could not give them a signal defeat. I am strongly impressed with the idea, then, that he remained so long in the camp at Dunearn Hill for the purpose of making up his losses, and that of increasing his cavalry; for in the

⁸ From the excellence of the situation, a British fortress probably stood there before the arrival of the Romans. And from Sibbald's account it appears that the camp was much more extensive, and the works in a much more perfect state, than they now are. He says that the small rocky hill between it and Harelaw was called the *Bonie* hill, from the number of human bones found there; that the walls were then about a man's height above the ground; that military roads led up to it on the south side. "Here were medals found, and in the burroughs or tumuli towards the east were urns found with burnt bones in them, and severall stone chests, made up of square stones, in which the antique instruments and ornaments were found. Upon the west part were severall hewen stones digg'd out of the ground."

following Campaign we find him so superior in that description of force to what was usually attached to a Roman army, that he must have had some specific object in view in that arrangement. That object, I conceive, must have been to bring the enemy to a general action, and in a country where his cavalry could act with full effect; and the subsequent movements appear to coincide with this opinion.

In this state of things, then, the Seventh and last Campaign opens. *Igitur præmissâ classe, quæ pluribus locis prædata, magnum et incertum terrorem faceret, expedito exercitu, cui ex Britannis fortissimos, et longa pace exploratos addiderat, ad Montem Grampium pervenit, quem jam hostes insederant. Nam Britanni, nihil fracti pugnae prioris eventu, et ultionem aut servitium expectantes, tandemque docti, commune periculum concordia propulsandum, legationibus et fœderibus omnium civitatum vires exciverant. Jamque super triginta millia armatorum adspiciebantur, et adhuc adstuebat omnis juventus, et quibus cruda ac viridis senectus, clari bello, ac sua quisque decora gestantes: cum inter plures duces virtute et genera præstans, nomine Galgacus, apud contractam multitudinem, prælium poscentem, in hunc modum locutus fertur.* Before the army moved, then, the fleet was sent on to plunder the coast and raise an alarm. The booty in all probability consisted principally in cattle and other supplies for the fleet and army, the articles in which the country was most likely to abound. Pursuing its course, I think we may infer that it again entered the Tay, as will appear from the sequel—*ultimum perfugium victis claudere.* After quitting Dupearn Hill, the next station that presents itself in the supposed line of march of Agricola is Markinch, at a distance of about 13 miles, which I conceive would bring him in presence of the enemy, as this is only 4 miles south-east, from the east end of the Lomond hill—*ad Montem Grampium pervenit.* *Pervenire* generally means to arrive at from a distance. But the Historian here writes as if the operations had not been suspended. In the opening of this chapter he does not even state that this was a fresh Campaign, and it is only as the narrative proceeds that we find that out. The hill upon which the village of Markinch stands is about 80 feet high, and is cut into six terraces, on the side facing the Lomond Hill, each of them 350 yards long. Terraces of this kind are not uncommon, and various opinions have been formed respecting them. As the ground before those in question forms an amphitheatre, some have supposed it to have been a playfield, and that the terraces were intended for the spectators.

Unfortunately for this supposition, the name *Inch* implies that the hill was originally surrounded with water; and a swamp, although an excellent defence for a camp, is not much adapted for a playfield. General Balfour of Balbirnie informed me that it was a bog until it was lately drained by him, and that it had every appearance of having always been so. Any one who has ever had the fortune to be encamped on the side of a hill, will see no great mystery in these terraces, well knowing that the first thing a soldier does before he pitches his tent, is to level the ground if it requires it; and that otherwise he cannot sleep with comfort. They would also afford firm footing in case of an attack, and the soldiers could discharge their missiles from several of them at the same time. It is then possible that this ground may have been occupied by Agricola, as it forms an excellent position, and would be in a great measure fortified to his hand by the surrounding bog.

But it may now be necessary to describe more particularly the position of the Caledonian army, the Mons Grampius of Tacitus, if our calculation is not erroneous. *Gran-pen*⁸ signifies in the ancient British language the precipitous or shelvy summit. *Gran-pen* was thus Romanized into *Grampius*, and hence *Grampian*. The term therefore is not confined exclusively to the chain of that name. Its being mentioned in the singular also, shows that it must have been a detached mountain, as I am not aware of the Romans ever having designated a chain of mountains by the singular number in Britain. The Lomond Hill extends about nine miles from north-east to south-west, in a semicircular form, the convex side being towards the north-west. Towards the eastern extremity rises the East Law, in a conical form, 1466 feet above the level of the sea, at the northern base of which lies the town of Falkland. This hill has been fortified with great labour, and very considerable skill, although the works are rather irregular. On the summit there are two works 150 yards in circumference. There have been four defences on the north side, the lower ditch of which is carried through the rock in one place. On the west side there is a ravelin, which would not disgrace a modern engineer; and on the south side there is a ditch, about 100 yards below the summit, and nearly 200 yards long, which has either been filled in at the east end, or never finished. The remainder of it is about six feet deep, and the earth is thrown

⁸ Owen's *Welsh Dictionary*. The Vatican MS. 3429, according to Brotier, reads *Montem Graupium*.

up in the inside to form a rampart, which is in excellent preservation. Mounds of earth are perhaps the most permanent of man's works, and, unless destroyed by violence, the lapse of ages has little effect upon them. The greatest circumference of the works is 560 yards, and a great quantity of stones lies on the north and west sides of them, which may have been used in their construction. This never can have been a permanent fortress, as it has no supply of water, and can only have been intended, as I conceive, for the defence of the position. Three miles nearly due west from this rises the West Law, 1721 feet above the level of the sea.⁹ Between the two Laws, and about half way below their summits, the ground presents the appearance of a plain, sloping gently towards the east, although very much broken. This I conceive to have been the position of the Caledonians. This plain slopes gently down towards the neighbouring country on the south side, which is still very swampy, and must then have been a bog, and impassable for an army. Along the edge of this bog there still exist what appear to me to be very distinct traces of fortification, particularly at the farms of the Glasslies, where there are the remains of three circular forts, surrounded by ditches, although much obliterated by the plough. On the north side of the plain a ledge of rocks extends almost the whole way, which makes the position very strong on that side, except on the north side of the West Law, where there has been a slide of the mountain called the Hoglayers, by which I conceive the Caledonians descended to the battle. A mile west from Falkland also, there is a part of the mountain called the Greenhill, which projects from the main ridge; and between that and the East Law the ground slopes gradually down to Falkland, which renders the ascent on that side comparatively easy. On the west side of the Greenhill there is also a narrow pass called the Arrities, on the west side of which there is a chain of small circular forts, amounting to eight or nine, one of which is filled with earth to the height of four or five feet; and in the gorge between these two passes there is an old fort in excellent preservation, called the Maiden Castle. It occupies an oval hill, and is 400 yards in circumference. The ditch runs round the base of it, and the earth is thrown outwards, owing to the steepness of the ground, the

⁹ Upon the summit there is a vast cairn, 112 yards in circumference. The depth of it is not known, but bones have been found at the depth of six or seven feet. And as the stones of which it is composed have all been brought from the base of the Law, the labour must have been immense, and may perhaps be attributed to this period.

scarp being in some places upwards of 20 feet high; and along the northern brow of the hill there are traces of huts having been excavated. On the east side of the Castle, and a considerable distance from it, there are five or six small circular forts, some of which have been built principally of stone. On the west side of the Arrities, above the rocks, there are very distinct traces of more huts, also built of stone, and sunk in the ground. There is another Maiden Castle 4 miles north-east from this, and a third on the Leven, 10 miles nearly south-east. The account commonly given by the country people of these is, that they were erected by the Danes for the safety of their women when they took the field. Had they substituted Caledonians for Danes, this account would have corresponded exactly with that of Tacitus, *conjuges ac liberos in loca tuta transferrent*. It is evident that these *loca tuta* were not far distant; for we find that immediately after the Battle, *satisque constabat scivisse quosdam in conjuges ac liberos*. About half a mile west from the West Law are to be seen the ruins of a stone fort, and south from it there are the remains of many huts. Half a mile farther west a deep ravine cuts the mountain in two, at the north end of which there is another stone fort. Between this last mentioned fort and the Hoglayers, at the northern base of the mountain, there existed until lately three rows of huts, built principally of stone, and sunk in the ground. But though they have been removed, and the ground cultivated, the hollows of the centre row are still visible. These may possibly have been occupied by the charioteers and cavalry, who could not ascend the mountain. At the eastern base of the West Law a bronze spear-head was dug up about 20 years ago, and half of a stone battle hammer was lately found eighteen inches under the surface; and a flint arrow-head was also found at the same place; a bronze spear-head on the east side of the Hoglayers, and another stone battle hammer a little to the westward. About a mile farther east, and nearly in a line between the two Laws, there are no less than eight Druidical temples close together, although the stones of most of them have lately been removed. These must have been erected on some extraordinary occasion. There, perhaps, *coetibus ac sacrificiis conspirationem civitatum sancierunt*, and there perhaps Galgacus may have delivered that address to his countrymen which Tacitus has ascribed to him, and which is reckoned by many the noblest piece of eloquence in the Roman language. With all due veneration for the memory of that gallant Chief, it would perhaps be unfair to suppose that either his Commissariat or Quarter-Master-General's Departments were particularly well or-

ganised. His army, therefore, probably moved by proclamation; and when the distant clans marched to war, it is very likely that a conspicuous landmark was given them, as a point of rendezvous. Such might be the Lomond Hill, commanding one of the finest views in the country, and to be seen at the distance of 70 miles.

There can be no doubt that Agricola would reconnoitre the position of the Caledonians when he came near it; and, as if finding it strong, and totally impossible to bring his cavalry into action against it, it appears to me that he conceived the bold project of turning it, so as to put himself in communication with his fleet—to place himself between the enemy and his resources, and thus compel him to come to a general action. Leaving Markinch, then, I am of opinion that he marched by his right, due north along the plain, until he passed the East end of the Lomond Hill; and then, turning sharply to his left, posted himself at the base of the Greenhill, opposite Falkland Pass, where he constructed those extensive Lines which existed quite entire until about 40 years ago. The only part of them now remaining is six ditches, an hundred yards distant from the base of the Hill. The greatest length of them is about two hundred and fifty yards, but they formerly extended fifty yards farther east. They lie upon the west end of a low ridge, which comes to a point, and do not run parallel to each other, but follow the nature of the ground, and approximate towards the west, and some of them join. Several of them are cut partly through rock, and are still about twenty feet deep, but were formerly much more. At their western extremity a narrow valley cuts the position obliquely, through which a brook runs; and only two ramparts have been carried across this valley, apparently for the purpose of forming an inundation. On the north side of this, three immense ramparts, with corresponding ditches, extended in a north-west direction about eight hundred yards. These were levelled about 22 years ago, but can still be traced in many parts. In front of the existing ditches, which formed the centre of the position, but a little to the right, and resting apparently upon the inundation, two parallel ditches and ramparts commenced, and extending due east about eleven hundred yards, terminated opposite the East Law, near to Falkland; but these works were not so large as the others, as the ground is more favourable. These Lines thus formed an obtuse angle, with the right thrown back from the mountain, and they appear to have been quite open to the rear. The centre is the weakest point, and the nearest to the mountain; hence the extraordinary manner in which it has been

fortified. It is evident that they must have been occupied with reference to an enemy on the mountain above them. This, I think, clearly appears from their proximity to it, from the defences being all on that side, and from its being altogether a forced position, and possessing no natural advantages. Hence the skill and extraordinary labour that have been requisite to make them defensible. As far as I am able to judge, it must have required the labour of as many hands as could be employed on them, at least a fortnight, to construct them. There are reports of pieces of gold having been found in levelling them, but I have not been able to trace them to any authentic source. These Lines are generally attributed to the Danes, but they appear to me to bear the stamp of a more skilful artificer; and I doubt much if ever the Danes had an army in this country sufficiently large to occupy them. There is a Danish camp two miles north-east from this, from which the neighbouring village¹⁰ is named. It is a circular work,—that primitive sort of fortification adopted by all rude people, the circle being the figure which contains the greatest number of men, with the least possible labour to construct it.

We have no reason to suppose that Agricola made any attack on the position of the Caledonians, as the Historian is silent on the subject; nor, as I have already stated, do I conceive that to have been his object, but to draw them into the plain, that he might then act against them with greater facility; and these Lines being open to the rear, seem to favour that opinion. But whether it was from having failed in that object, or from want of provisions, and the necessity of putting himself in more immediate communication with his fleet, and drawing supplies from it, he appears to me to have moved from thence four miles in a north-west direction along the plain, to the camp at Pitlour, which is still called *the Roman Camp*, although very little of it remains. The Hill upon which it lies stands on the south side, and forms part of the Ochil range, to which it is joined on the north-east. The other sides are steep, and it rises about four hundred feet from its base, thus forming a very strong position; and I think it could hardly have been occupied had the enemy been in any other direction than that of the Lomond Hill. The summit is surrounded by a chain of rocks, upwards of three hundred yards in circumference, which forms a sort of citadel, and is still called *The Fort*. It has also been well fortified; and many of the stones used for that purpose have been brought from a

¹⁰ *Dunshelt or Daneshelter.*

distance. Upon clearing the ground for planting it this year (1828), the road leading up to it was discovered by Mr Skene, the proprietor, laid with stone, and the entrance on the east side cut through the rock, and the pavement inside of that quite entire. Upon digging, many human bones were found, both within and without the circumference of it; also the bones and teeth of horses. Perhaps an hospital may have been established there after the battle, for the wounded, as the nearest station; and these may be the remains of troopers who died there. A little below the summit, and on the side facing the Lomond Hill, the slope was cut into terraces, similar to those at Markinch, with this difference, that these seem to have been faced with stone. They are now all levelled but one, which is used as a farm road. Most probably the Roman fleet had by this time ascended the Tay as far as Caerpow, at the confluence of the Tay and the Ern, so as to command both these rivers; and it would thus be at the distance of only four miles and a half from the camp.¹¹ And as the Caledonians capable of bearing arms had all marched to join the army, the fleet could ravage the fertile coast of Fife, the Carse of Gowrie, and Strathern, at discretion. There appears also to have been a communication between the fleet and the army; for on the high ground a mile from the camp, and in a direct line between it and Caerpow, there is an eminence which has some appearance of having been fortified; and on digging near it a few years ago, the top of a handmill, and what appears to have been a sword, were found. Both these have been presented to the Antiquarian Society, by Mr Skene.

In the camp at Pitlour, Agricola would thus occupy the ridge of the Ochil Hills, and the Caledonians that of the Lomonds, four miles distant, with the plain of the Eden between them; and the Roman General seems to have waited patiently until the advanced season of the year, and the want of provisions, compelled his opponents to quit their position. He says, in his speech to his Army, "*Octavus annus est, commilitones, ex quo virtute et auspiciis imperii Romani, fide atque opera vestra Britanniam vicistis.*" Now this was only the Seventh campaign, and as the First commenced late in the season, this must have been still later, and in the very close of it. "*Neque enim nobis aut locorum eadem notitia, aut com meatum eadem abundantia.*" His provisions then were getting scarce; and I think we may reasonably infer that the Caledonians experienced the same privations in a much greater degree, from

¹¹ Galgacus seems to have had it in view when he says, "*imminente nobis classe Romana.*"

their army being more numerous, their supplies from the northern provinces intercepted, and from the southern coast of Fife being exhausted. "*Quod ad me attinet, jam pridem mihi decretum est, neque exercitus, neque ducis terga tuta esse.*" Hence it is evident that his retreat was compromised, and his credit at stake; and this I suppose to have been the case from the time that he turned the enemy's position. I think it also evident that he must have done so, as the enemy had remained stationary, and made no movement to threaten his rear.

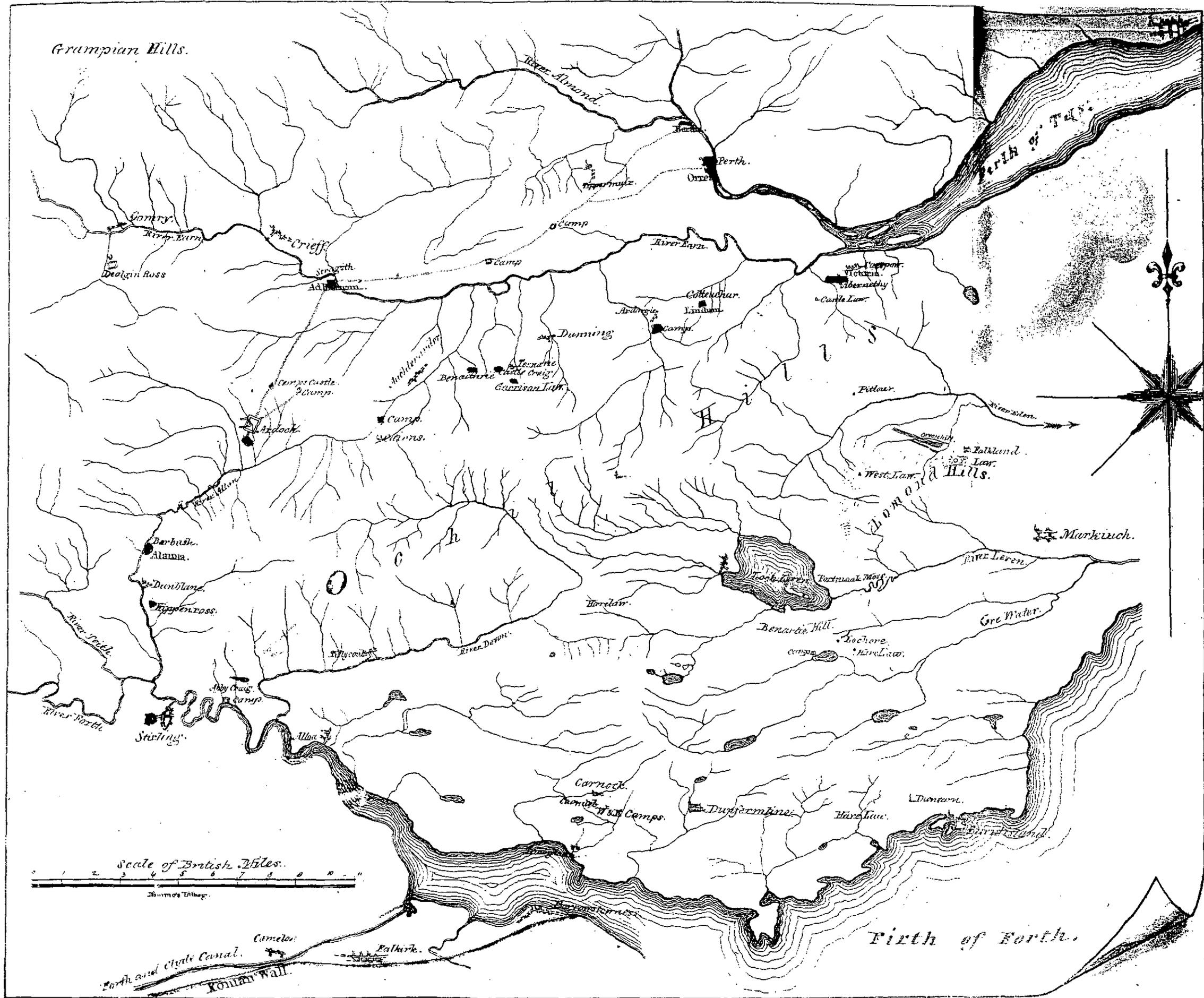
Before we come to the Battle, it may be necessary to say something of the relative strength of the two Armies. That of the Caledonians is stated to have been upwards of thirty thousand, besides the old men and youths. If therefore we calculate the whole at forty thousand, it may be near the truth. That of the Romans is not so easily estimated. There were at this time only three Legions in Britain—the Second, the Ninth, and the Twentieth—and they appear to have been all present; but we cannot suppose that they were any thing like complete, as it must have required at least half their force to garrison the southern parts of the island. General Roy calculates their army at twenty-six thousand; but that is perhaps too high an estimate. The Caledonian army was certainly more numerous this Campaign than the preceding one, and we have seen that Agricola then divided his force, to prevent his being surrounded by it; and one body, to surround another, must be at least double its numbers. The cavalry were three thousand, and the auxiliary infantry eight thousand. In the organization of a Roman army, the general rule was, that the auxiliary infantry should be inferior to the legionary soldiers in numbers, and that the auxiliary cavalry should exceed them. The usual proportion of cavalry attached to a legion appears to have been from four to five hundred. The force here was therefore much greater; so that if we suppose in the present instance the legionary to have equalled the auxiliary infantry, the whole army will not exceed nineteen thousand. The force on board the fleet may have been from three to four thousand. The account of the Battle is as follows:

"*Et adloquente adhuc Agricola, militum ardor eminebat, et finem orationis ingens alacritas consecuta est, statimque ad arma discursum. Instinctos ruentesque ita disposuit, ut peditum auxilia, quæ octo millia erant, mediam aciem firmarent; equitum tria millia, cornibus adfunderentur. Legiones pro vallo steterè, ingens victoriæ decus citra Romanum sanguinem bellandi, et auxilium si pellerentur. Britannorum acies in speciem simul*

ac terrorem editioribus locis constiterat, ita ut primum agmen æquo, ceteri per acclivè jugum connexi velut insurgerent: media campi covinarius et eques strepitu ac discursu complebat. Tum Agricola, superantè hostium multitudine, veritus, ne simul in frontem, simul et latera suorum pugnaretur, diductis ordinibus, quamquam porrectior acies futura erat, et arcessendas plerique legiones admonebant, promptior in spem, et firmus adversis, dimisso equo pedes ante vexilla constitit.

Ac primo congressu eminus certabatur: simul constantiâ, simul arte Britannii, ingentibus gladiis, et brevibus cetris, missilia nostrorum vitare, vel excutere, atque ipsi magnam vim telorum superfundere: donec Agricola tres Batavorum cohortes ac Tungrorum duas cohortatus est, ut rem ad mucrones ac manus adducerent; quod et ipsis vetustate militiæ exercitatum, et hostibus inhabile parva scuta et enormes gladios gerentibus; nam Britannorum gladii sine mucrone, complexum armorum, et in arcto pugnam non tolerabant. Igitur, ut Batavi miscere ictus, ferire umbonibus, ora fœdare, et stratis, qui in æquo obstiterant, erigere in colles aciem cœpere; ceteræ cohortes, æmulatione et impetu commistæ, proximos quosque cedere: ac plerique semineces, aut integri, festinatione victoriæ relinquebantur. Interim equitum turmæ fugere, covinarii peditum se prælio miscuere; et, quamquam recentem terrorem intulerant, densis tamen hostium agminibus, et inæqualibus locis hærebant: minimeque equestris ea pugnæ facies erat, cum ægre diu stantes, simul equorum corporibus impellerentur: ac sæpe vagi currus, exterriti sine rectoribus equi, ut quemque formido tulerat, transversos aut obvios incursabant.

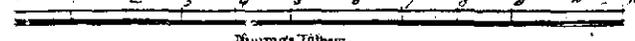
Et Britannii, qui adhuc pugnæ expertes summa collium insederant, et paucitatem nostrorum vacui spernebant, degredi paulatim, et circumire terga vincientium cœperant: ni id ipsum veritus, Agricola quatuor equitum alas, ad subita belli retentas, venientibus opposuisset, quantoque ferocius accurrerant, tanto acrius pulsos in fugam disjecisset. Ita consilium Britannorum in ipsos versum: transvectæque præcepto ducis a fronte pugnantium alæ, aversam hostium aciem invasere. Tum vero patentibus locis grande et atroæ spectaculum: sequi, vulnerare, capere atque eosdem, oblati aliis, trucidare. Jam hostium, prout cuique ingenium erat, cateroæ armatorum paucioribus terga præstare, quidam inermes ultro ruere, ac se morti offerre. Passim arma, et corpora, et laceri artus, et cruenta humus: et aliquando etiam victis ira virtusque: postquam sylvis appropinquarunt collecti, primos sequen-



Grampian Hills.

Perth of Forth.

Scale of British Miles.



Perth and Clyde Canal.
Roman Wall.

Firth of Forth.

tium, incautos et locorum ignaros, circumveniebant. Quod ni frequens ubique Agricola, validas et expeditas cohortes indaginis modo, et sicubi arc-tiora erant, partem equitum, dimissis equis, simul rariores sylvas equitem persultare jussisset; acceptum aliquod vulnus per nimiam fiduciam foret. Ceterum, ubi compositos firmis ordinibus sequi rursus videre; in fugam versi, non agminibus, ut prius, nec alius alium respectantes, rari, et vitabundi in-vicem, longinqua atque avia petiere: finis sequendi nox et satietas fuit: cæsa hostium ad decem millia: nostrorum trecenti sexaginta cecidere; in quis Aulus Atticus, Præfectus cohortis, juvenili ardore et ferociâ equi hostibus illatus."

A Battle which lays a Nation prostrate becomes an interesting object in History, and lives in the memory of Posterity when minor events are forgotten. And however circumstantial the Historian may be in his description of it, we generally wish that he had been more so. Unfortunately, in the present instance he has been very concise: but, if I mistake not, the progress of the Battle may be very distinctly traced, from the wrecks of it which have come down to our own times, although most of them have been removed within a recent period. All that Tradition says of it is, that a great Battle was fought there, and that the Eden ran with blood for twenty-four hours after. It is called the battle of Merlsford,¹² which is a ford of the Eden about half way between the two armies. Above that ford the River runs in a narrow valley, the sides of which are steep, and present considerable obstacles to the passage of an army; but below that it can be passed with ease. The River itself there is an inconsiderable stream except in floods, and is accordingly not mentioned by the Historian. (See the annexed Plan.)

The Caledonians appear to me to have descended from their position, as I have already stated, by the Hoglayers, and through the fields of Urquhart, towards Merlsford. The ground there answers the description very exactly, descending in three successive ridges, between the Lomond Hill and the Eden, although the lower one is not continuous as the others, but is broken into several eminences. Agricola, if we may judge from the shortness of his speech, seems to have lost no time in descending from his camp at Pitlour to meet the enemy. The right of his first line, eleven thousand strong, appears to me to have been posted a little to the eastward of the house of Wellfield, with the

¹² *The Ford of Thieves, Mackay's Gaelic Dictionary.*

left extending towards the Eden. It would thus be on a level with the Caledonians on the lower ridge; and, from the nature of the ground, and the subsequent movement, I am inclined to think that he must have had more of his cavalry on his left wing than on his right. His second line, composed of the legionary soldiers, was probably posted on the ridge below Kinragie, about half a mile from the first; and he may have left a small garrison in the fort at the camp. That the second line was at a considerable distance from the first, is evident; and although this disposition of Agricola would have been destruction to him against a well-disciplined army, it was perhaps the best he could have made under the existing circumstances. He seems to have been well aware that his adversaries would endeavour to outflank him, and he deployed his first line accordingly. Had that been defeated, the enemy would most likely have arrived in confusion at the second; and had that in its turn been obliged to give way, it could have retired upon the strong camp in its rear, where there was hardly a possibility of its being forced.

The Caledonians, I conceive, crossed the Eden at Merlsford, and attacked the first line in its position, where the carnage seems to have been considerable; for at (A), close by Mr Cheape's house of Wellfield, a large cairn stood until twenty-six years ago, about one hundred and thirty yards in circumference. Upon being removed, it was found to contain urns, bones, stone coffins, many remains of arms completely oxidized, and a deer's horn. About one hundred and fifty yards south-east from that a good many bones were dug up this season (1828), and a stone coffin containing a skeleton, four feet under ground; and farther on towards the left of the line urns were dug up a good many years ago. When that part of the Caledonian army was repulsed which had crossed the River, it seems to have retired to the westward, along the northern bank; and there, I take it, we find the *locis inæqualibus* mentioned by the Historian. A person of distinction seems to have fallen there, as a large stone formerly stood on the spot; and upon removing it a stone coffin was found under it. That part of the Caledonian army which had remained on the eminences on the south side of the River then appears to have descended, and, crossing the Eden also at Merlsford, *circumire terga vincetium cæperant*, when Agricola advanced four *alæ*, or cohorts of auxiliary cavalry, from his left, probably about two thousand men, which crossing the river between Merlsford and the east side of Corston Mill, and bringing forward their left shoulder, thus charged their adversaries in front and in flank, when the slaugh-

ter seems to have been great. The handle of a sword, with a small portion of the blade attached to it, was turned up by the plough near Corston Mill about twenty years ago; and at (E), where a barrow formerly stood, bones were found; and some distance east from it a bronze battle-axe was also found a few years ago. At (D) there is a tumulus, which I have dug into, but found nothing; although, from its position, it seems to have been connected with the Battle. At (C) a labourer employed by my Father about forty-two years ago, in digging a ditch to fence a piece of planting, found so many skulls and human bones that he went away and left the work. These men, I conceive, must have been killed by an attack from the south, as the bank of the River there is steep and rocky, so that they could not have been attacked from the other side.

Farther west, at (F), a very large cairn stood, containing upwards of two thousand cart-loads of stones. Upon removing it about thirty years ago, a pit six feet long, two broad, and of the same depth, was found, quite full of burnt bones; and near it another, two feet square and two deep, full of the finest sand. An urn was also found, near the surface of the cairn, full of bones. A very fine Druid's temple stood on the south side of it, consisting of seven very large stones. All these were blasted with powder and removed, except the half of one of them, which still marks the spot. The Battle in the mean time seems to have raged with great fury along the northern bank of the River; for a little west of Wellfield, at (B), another cairn stood about forty years ago. It was not so large as the others; but, from the care with which it was erected, some persons of note were supposed to have been buried there. It was sunk in the ground, and rose about four or five feet above it, and was surmounted by a Druid's temple of seven stones. It was found to contain urns and bones.

Farther west, at (G), a vast cairn stood until about forty-two years ago, and there the last stand of the Caledonians in a body seems to have been made. Upon removing this cairn many bones were found, and great quantities of iron. Many of the pieces were very small, so as to be called *knives and forks* by the workmen. Others again were very large; too much so, one might almost suppose, from the account I have had of them, even for the *enormes gladios* of the Caledonians. None of them have unfortunately been preserved, as they were probably completely oxidized, and reckoned of no value. Great numbers of beads were also found in the cairn, and distributed about the country at the time as curiosities. A few of these are still preserved, and serve to

convey rather a favourable idea of the state of the arts at the time. Some of them were of a long elliptical form, and made of jet; others were made of a bluish glass, and shaded with spiral or circular lines; while others were white, enamelled with red and blue spots, the colours of which are as vivid as ever. The custom of burying their weapons, and also trinkets, with the dead, we know to be a very ancient one, and it seems to have come originally from the East. Several stone coffins have also been found between this cairn and the Eden.

Still farther west, at (H), a very fine cairn stood. It was sunk five or six feet under ground, and raised about four feet above it. Many burnt bones were found in it, and some urns of superior workmanship, which were wantonly destroyed by the workmen, to the great regret of the proprietor, the late Mr Arnot of Arlarg. Another cairn stood opposite to this, at (I), on the south side of the river, one hundred yards in circumference; but I have not been able to find that any thing was discovered in it when it was removed.

On the high ridge north and west from (H) I conceive the woods to have been where the Caledonians made their last stand, and where they killed some of their pursuers. Some urns were found at (L) seven or eight years ago, full of bones; one of which I saw. It was preserved several years, and broken by accident, after which not only the bones, but also the urn itself, crumbled into dust. At (M) six or seven vessels were found a few years ago, consisting of culinary pots, and a kind of small tripods, all of bronze. Advancing westward from (N) there is a fine spring of water called Romanty Well, where the wearied Legions may have slaked their thirst; and farther on is a farm called *Blairhead*, which is said to signify *the end of the Battle*.

This Battle, then, seems to have rolled from east to west, over a tract of three miles, and to have formed as it were two distinct actions; and the line of flight of the fugitives appears to have been to the west and north-west, which was probably the only one open to them.

About a mile north-west from Wellfield a silver coin of Domitian, and a handmill, were found a few years ago, both of them in excellent preservation, and the latter of very good workmanship. At (K) also, about seven years ago, eighteen or twenty battle-axes and spear heads or javelins were found together in a bog, on the lands of Gospartrie, all of bronze. The spears or javelins, whichever they may have been, are small, with a socket for the handle. Several stone battle-hammers have also been found on the field. We have seen that the dead were interred in four different ways. Some were merely placed in

the ground; others were deposited in stone coffins formed of flat stones; many were burnt, and cairns erected over them; while others were burnt, and their ashes deposited in urns. We know that the Caledonians frequently burned their dead. The Romans also appear in many instances to have erected cairns over their dead in this country; and in so doing they may have conformed to the custom of the natives, to protect their remains from insult. The Caledonians seem to have been as scrupulous in the performance of the funeral rites as the Romans. The erection of these cairns must have cost much labour; but as it was the custom for each passenger to add a stone, many of them no doubt increased in size from age to age, in proportion to the fame of the deceased. It is still a proverbial expression when one commits an action not creditable to him, to say, *It will not add a stone to his cairn.*

This Inquiry ought perhaps to close here; but, for the sake of connecting the subsequent movements with what has been already stated, I shall pursue the narrative a little farther.

“Et nox quidem gaudio prædâque læta victoribus: Britannii palantes, mixtoque virorum mulierumque ploratu, trahere vulneratos, vocare integros, deserere domos, ac per iram ultro incendere: eligere latebras, et statim relinquere: miscere invicem consilia aliqua, dein separare: aliquando frangi aspectu pignorum suorum, sæpius concitari: satisque constabat sævisse quosdam in conjuges ac liberos tamquam misererentur. Proximus dies faciem victoriæ latius aperuit, vastum ubique silentium, secreti colles, fumantia procul tecta, nemo exploratoribus obvius: quibus in omnem partem dimissis, ubi incerta fugiæ vestigia, neque usquam conglobari hostes comperitum, et exacta jam æstate spargi bellum nequibat: in fines Horestorum exercitum deducit. Ibi acceptis obsidibus, præfecto classis “circumvehi Britanniam” præcepit: datæ ad id vires, et præcesserat terror: ipse peditem atque equites lento itinere, quo novarum gentium animi ipsa transitus mora terrerentur, in hibernis locavit. Et simul classis secunda tempestate ac fama Trutulensem portum tenuit, unde proximo latere Britannicæ lecto omni redierat.”

After the Battle, Agricola, I conceive, followed the fugitive Army through the Ochil Hills, and crossing the Ern at the fords below Duplin, to have advanced to Perth, where his fleet had probably preceded him, and which I imagine to have been the limit of his conquests.

The Historian makes no mention of his having erected any Forts for securing the country that he had conquered; but to suppose that he did not do so, would be to suppose that he had abandoned the system which he had hitherto pursued; and as we know that fortresses did exist in this part of the country, they may perhaps be attributed with more probability to him than to any of his successors.

The station of Bertha is generally supposed to have been at the junction of the Tay and the Almond, and Orrea must have been near it. General Roy supposes them to have been the same. Subsequent inquiries, however, seem to favour the opinion that there were two stations there, one at the confluence of the Tay and the Almond, and another where the town of Perth now stands. The situation of the latter is well adapted for a station, as the tide does not flow, and the river is not navigable above it. The Roman road from Ardoch divided into two branches at Tippermuir, one of which led to the junction of the Tay and the Almond, and the other direct to Perth. The latter was only taken up about twelve years ago. Sibbald¹³ says, "It is observed by Burton, in his Commentarie upon *Antoninus* his *Iter*, that the Saxon Kings had their seats where the Roman colonies and forts stood; and the same is to be observed as to the seats of the Kings of the Scots and the Picts, that when they took themselves to fixed aboads, they lodged with their family and their attendants where the Romans had colonies or garisons. So to keep by the tract of land which is the subject of this discourse, the Scots Kings had one of their seats where *Bertha* stood of old, which being inundated by a spate of water, King *William the Lyon* transferred his seat from thence to the Roman station upon *Tay*, which he called *Perth*.—And after the Scots had made themselves masters of the country which the Picts possessed, they took for their royal seats the same mansions the *Pictish* Kings had, which were the colonies and forts of the Romans. Thus we find the prime seat of the *Pictish* Kings was at *Abernethie*, where some ruins of ancient buildings may yet be seen; and that it was a Roman colony or garison, the medals found at *Potie*, in the neighbourhood of it, put it beyond all doubt." I am therefore inclined to place *Orrea* at Perth. *Strageth*, upon the *Ern*, must have been a considerable station; and General Roy, with much reason, I conceive, supposes it to have been that of *ad Hiernam*. It lay half way between Perth and Ardoch, and

¹³ Conjectures concerning Roman Ports, Forts, and Colonies, &c. 1711, folio, p. 10.

the military road passed through it, which has been constructed with as much care as the *Via Appia* itself. Part of it has been made much in the same manner as the modern roads; the foundation being formed of stones, with ten inches of metal over them. The rest of it has been paved with large flat stones bedded in sand, considerable portions of which still remain between Gask and Strageth. Small forts have also been erected along the roadside; the largest of which may still be traced near the house of Gask; and one of the smallest, as also a portion of the road, in their original state, in the corner of a wood near Innerpeffery. These forts, I conceive, indicate the road to have been insecure for travellers, and on the frontier of an enemy's country. Agricola then marched back his army into the country of the *Horestii*. Ptolemy makes no mention of this people; but Richard places them in Fife, and their northern boundary may have been the *Ern*. The venerable Bede and Richard of Cirencester both inform us that Agricola founded *Victoria* after his return from the campaign against Galgacus. Ptolemy in his map places this city as nearly as possible on the field of battle already described; but although I have made every possible inquiry on the subject, I cannot find that any trace of ancient building has ever been discovered there. Richard, however, in speaking of the towns of the *Horestii*, after mentioning *Alauna* and *Lindum*, says, "*Et, re non minus quam nomine reliquis gloriosior, Victoria, ab Agricola ad flumen Taurum XX. miliaria ab ejusdem in mare exitu, edificata, memorie proditum dicunt.*" In his *Itinerary* he also places it thirty-two miles from the Wall; so that estimating Roman and English miles as 12 to 11, this brings us to Caerpow, at the confluence of the Tay and the Ern, which I have supposed to have been the station of the Roman fleet during the battle, and within a mile of Abernethy, where Horsley and many antiquaries have placed this city. Sibbald says, "And these colonies upon the south coast of Tay were that called *Victoria* in *Ptolemy*, where *Agricola* had his camp when he fought with *Galdus*, who is called *Galgacus* by *Tacitus*."

We may reasonably suppose that Agricola bestowed great pains in fixing the site of a City the very name of which was to hand down his fame to posterity; and he certainly could not have chosen one combining more natural advantages than Caerpow. Its situation, in a plain between the Ochil range and the Tay, is precisely such an one as the Romans generally preferred for their towns. It lay in the heart of a fertile country, commanding the navigation of the *Ern* and the *Tay*—a great advantage when all was hostile beyond.

Its situation was favourable for commerce, and it possessed the rare advantage of being both a naval and military station at the same time.

Caerpow and Abernethy probably joined. Tradition says that the latter was a great city, and that it filled the plain. The foundations of houses have been dug up there. Sibbald also says that ruins existed there in his time, and that a Roman road led from thence to Ardoch, and another to Perth. The fortress stood in the lawn at Caerpow, about a quarter of a mile from the Tay; and a considerable portion of it remained until a few years ago. It was built in the usual substantial manner of the Romans. The extent of it cannot now be ascertained, but it was probably considerable, as the wall was five feet in thickness. When it was demolished, which was no easy matter, a bath with its appendages was discovered, of very beautiful workmanship. The floor of it, I was informed, still remains entire, either of mosaic or tessellated work, but it is covered up with earth. Many bones were also found there, and what appears to have been an enamelled bronze bracclet; but the enamel came off in cleaning it. A wall also appears to have extended from thence to the Tay, which can be traced from the grass withering over its foundation in dry seasons. A few years ago five very large urns were dug up between Caerpow and Abernethy, full of bones. They were all broken but one, which is still preserved in the hall at Caerpow. It is about two feet high, conical at the bottom, swelling out at the middle, and the top is surrounded by a deeply indented cornice.

From Victoria, then, the dubious celebrity of Abernethy may have arisen, the capital of the Pictish kings, as it has been called, and the seat of learning in the middle ages.

A chain of Fortresses has extended from Caerpow to *The Wall*, the erection of which I am inclined to ascribe to Agricola, for reasons to be hereafter stated, and of which I shall now give some account.

Advancing westward from Caerpow, the next station is the *Castle Law* of Abernethy. It stands on the west side of the glen of that name, on the northern edge of the Ochil range, in a high and commanding situation, overlooking Strathern and the Tay. It has been only about 150 yards in circumference, but very strong and well fortified. There is a lake or rather pool of water in the basin of the adjoining rock, which has been protected by a stone rampart. There is also an embankment to raise the water, and a work to defend the embankment.

The next station is the *Castle Law* of *Colteucher*, which has been a first-rate fortress in its time. It is naturally very strong, except on the south-west, where it has been defended by a double and perhaps a triple ditch and rampart. It stands in a very commanding situation; and, taking a birds-eye view of the country from thence, one might almost suppose that Agricola stood there when he fixed the neighbouring stations, as they are almost all within view of it. From the top of the rampart to the bottom of the first ditch is still about 100 feet. The circumference of the citadel is about 200 yards, but there appears to have been more extensive works on the north side of the hill, and the circumference of the whole may have been 700 or 800 yards. Great piles of stones remain on the summit of the hill, which have been used in the construction of the works. This corresponds with the situation of *Lindum* in Richard's *Itinerary*, 9 miles from *Victoria*. It belongs to *Lord Ruthven*, who, much to his credit, preserves it untouched.

About two miles south-west from Colteucher stands the fort of *Ardargie*, guarding a pass through the Ochil Hills. It is square, each side being about eighty yards in length. A ravine, through which a brook runs, forms the defence on the south-east. The other three sides are defended by a ditch about thirty feet wide. About half a mile north from this a small work formerly stood on an eminence, and which is still called the *Fort*. It appears to have been a look-out post to the former, which commands no view towards Strathern.

The next station is the *Garrison Law*, nearly three miles south-west from *Dunning*. It is very steep, and has been surrounded by a single ditch and rampart some distance below the summit, about five hundred yards in circumference, which must have made it almost impregnable. Not far from the base of the *Garrison Law*, in a north-west direction, there is a very remarkable and well-known mound of earth, resembling the bottom of a ship reversed, which has retained its Roman name, with little variation, *Ternavie* (*Terræ Navis*). West from *Ternavie* lies the strong little fort of *Castle Craig*. It stands upon a small rocky hill, detached from the Ochil range by a deep ravine. It is one hundred and fifty yards in circumference, and the ditch has been cut through the rock.

The next station is *Benathrie*, in a very elevated and commanding situation. It is two hundred and fifty yards in circumference, and has had a triple rampart of stones and earth on the south side, which is by much the weakest.

To the westward of this the northern slope of the Ochil range becomes

more gentle, and not by any means so defensible. The chain of Forts, accordingly, quits the northern brow of the hills, and descends into the plain. The next station is about two miles from *Auchterarder*, and four from *Ardoch*, at the entrance of *Gleneagles*. It lies upon a low ridge, extending from north to south,—has been about three hundred and fifty yards in circumference, and surrounded by a double ditch and rampart. The greater part of the rampart is now removed, but the outer ditch has been about thirty feet wide. This is mentioned by Sibbald as a Roman work, who calls it one of the out-guards of *Ardoch*, and it is still pointed out by the country people as such. One or two urns were found on the east side, just outside the rampart, and a bronze pot, and leaden chest about three feet long, in a moss a little to the south-west of it.

The next is the well-known station of *Ardoch*, which has been so often described that it is unnecessary to say much about it here. From the plan of the works, it is evident that they have been constructed at different times; and I am disposed to consider what may be called the *Citadel* as the original work. The ground possesses no natural advantages, but it is the weakest point in the chain of posts. The great road from *The Wall* to the north led through it, and it lies in the gorge, where the *Ochil* and *Grampian* ranges approximate. Hence its importance as a station, and the great labour that has been requisite to render it defensible, there being no less than five ditches on the east side. The inscriptions and other remains found there evidently show that it was much occupied by the Romans.

The next station is the *Knock of Barbush*, on the river *Alan*, a mile and a half north-east from *Dumblane*. This position is particularly well adapted for defence, and has been the most extensive in the line. Only a small portion of the works now remains on the north-west side, on the river; but a strong double ditch and rampart formerly surrounded the hill, from eight to twelve hundred yards in circumference, which were levelled about thirty years ago. This corresponds well with the site of *Alauna*, both in *Ptolemy's* and *Richard's* maps, the name of which seems to bear some affinity to that of the river on which it stands. From *Dumblane* to the Carse of Stirling the banks of the *Alan* are naturally strong.

The next station was at *Kippen Ross*, of which no trace now remains. The next is on the *Abbey Craig*, which is a small work one hundred and fifty yards in circumference, the rampart of which is still about thirty feet high. The station next to *The Wall* was probably where *Stirling Castle* now stands, although no vestige of it has come down to our times.

Such is the line of Fortresses, the erection of which, as I have already said, I am inclined to attribute to Agricola. I am led to this conclusion as they appear to me distinctly to mark what I conceive to have been the limit of his conquests. They all look towards the north, and seem to have been placed with a view of preventing the irruption of an enemy from that quarter. The stations at the *Tay* and the *Almond*, *Perth*, *Strageth*, *Caerpow*, *Ardargie*, *Auchterarder*, and *Ardoch*, I consider as decidedly Roman, and, with the others that have been mentioned, form a well-connected line throughout. The probability therefore is that they were erected at the same time and for the same purpose. They all appear to me to have been chosen and executed with consummate skill, and to bear the stamp of that Master-hand which, we are informed, never placed a stronghold in a position where it was surprised.

The camp at *Dealgin Ross*, where Gordon has placed *the Battle*, indicates nothing of the prudence of Agricola. It stands, or rather stood, in the centre of the little plain of *Comrie*, surrounded by lofty hills on all sides, thus forming as complete a *cul de sac* as can well be imagined. The general who led his troops thither probably paid the forfeit of his temerity; and the monumental stones standing between that and *Ardoch*, in the glen of *Blairnroan*, and an urn found there, look rather ominous. I think we may exonerate Agricola from having had any share in that ill-chosen position.

Much stress has also been laid upon a passage in the Speech of *Galgacus*, for placing it farther north, "*Sed nulla jam ultra gens,—nihil nisi fluctus et sawa;*" but I can see no difficulty in understanding it. There had been a general gathering of the Clans, and some of them may have come from the northern extremities of the island; and a native of *Caithness*, in addressing himself to his countrymen, would express himself in similar terms if he happened to be in Edinburgh or London at the time. *We are the last of the Island: beyond us there is nothing but rocks and waves.*

Before putting his army in motion for its winter cantonments, *Agricola* took hostages of the *Horestii*. We are not informed where this ceremony took place, but there is a large mound of stones and earth near *the Field of Battle*, called the *Courtknow*, which may have been erected to commemorate that event; and the situation of it seems favourable for making a lasting impression upon the vanquished people. He then dispatched his fleet from the newly founded city of *Victoria*, as I conceive, to circumnavigate Britain, and commenced his retreat. His order of march is not mentioned, but as his ob-

ject was to strike terror into the conquered people by a display of his force, and no doubt also for the greater facility of getting provisions, we may reasonably suppose that he retired in more columns than one. The natural order of march appears to me to have been in two columns; one passing through the glen of Abernethy over the field of battle, and so on by Kinross and Dunfermline to Alloa, where it may have passed the Forth in boats; while the other went west through Strathern, along the northern base of the Ochil Hills. And as they retired by slow marches, the troops might assist in the construction of the fortresses, leaving garrisons as they passed. From Ardoch the route would naturally be by Stirling, and so on behind *The Wall* to their cantonments. Thus terminating the last campaign of Agricola, and his military career in Britain.

December 1828.

P. S.—Since writing the preceding pages, I find that a considerable cairn stood a little to the south-west of (B). Many sepulchral remains have also been found at Harelaw, near the Crook of Devon; and tradition says that there was much fighting there. Urns have also been found at the base of the Cleish Hills, about two miles south-west from Loch Leven, placed with the top upwards, according to the Roman method of burial.

[NOTE.—It may be proper to notice, that a paper on the subject of the Battle of Mons Grampius, by the Rev. Andrew Small of Edenshead, was also read at a Meeting of the Society, 25th January 1830.—It is well known that in 1823 Mr Small published a volume in 8vo, under the title of “*Interesting Roman Antiquities recently discovered in Fife, ascertaining the Site of the great Battle fought between Agricola and Galgacus,*” &c. In this work he was the first in recent times to suggest that the site of the battle of Mons Grampius was to be looked for near the foot of the West Lomond Hill; and he pointed out various sepulchral and other remains discovered in that district, as corroborative of a supposed battle between the Romans and Caledonians having there taken place, and which he has described, but evidently with an eye wholly unaccustomed to trace military operations. With regard to Mr Small’s subsequent communication to the Society, it is not suited for publication in the Transactions (however anxious may be his desire to secure to himself the merit of a Discoverer in this wide field of Antiquities), as the chief part of his paper consists in additions and corrections made to his printed work, of which, we understand, he contemplates an improved edition.—*EDIT.*]