II.

NOTICE OF THE OUTFORT ON BARRY HILL, FORFARSHIRE, RECENTLY REMOVED. By T. A. WISE, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

Several hill-forts are situated on each side of the rich and extensive valley of Strathmore, where, in ancient times, the inhabitants took refuge with their flocks and most valuable effects, when threatened by their enemies.

On the Barry Hill is one of these forts.[1] It is a mile east of the town of Alyth, and is of an irregular form, and 676 feet in height. The ascent on the

[1] Archæologia Scotica, vol. iv., p. 184.

north, east, and west is very abrupt; and on the south, large ditches and winding roads appear to have strengthened the fort on this side. As the approach on the south-east side was most easy, it was defended by an outfort on the brow of the hill, and at 200 yards distance from the upper fort. Between the two there is still the remains of a large, apparently artificial hollow, in which the cattle of the inhabitants might have been placed in times of danger. It is this small *outfort* to which I now propose directing the attention of the Society, as it has been generally overlooked, and remained undisturbed for probably many centuries, until last year, when it was unfortunately destroyed in the course of agricultural improvements; and during its removal I had frequent opportunities of examining its original plan.

This outfort was oval in form, 35 yards long by 33 broad, with the long diameter, like that of the large upper fort, in an E.S.E. direction. This fortification consisted of an outer wall, the foundation of which was 12 feet broad, formed of large packed boulders, and upon this a wall had been built several feet high, which must have afforded an excellent protection to those within. In the formation of this wall no cement seemed to have been used, and in the course of time the stones had fallen down, and when I first saw it they filled up the outer ditch. This was 2 feet deep at the bottom of the wall, and sloped outwards and upwards for 6 feet, from whence the ground shelved outwards.

The northern and southern entrances of the fort were joined by a passage 3 feet 3 inches broad, which for some distance from the northern opening was bounded by a wall on each side, 2 feet high and 2½ feet thick. This was likewise built without cement, with its facing inwards. This passage intersected the fort in its long diameter, and joined the entrances. The space between the outer wall and the central passage was laid with undressed flags, rather under the surface of the surrounding ground. This space was filled with black earth and stones, with several large patches of charcoal and red powder, most probably brick-dust, or the remains of imperfectly-fired pottery; among which I could distinguish a few bones, much decayed. Numerous well-worn and broken querns were found among the stones, and a considerable number of small, flat, oval-shaped stones, which may have been used as baking stones. The only other article found was a stone vessel, known in Scotland as a stone ladle, or Druidical patera. It was on the table of the Society for inspection.

With such a foundation for a fortification, it would be easy, with palisades and other erections, to render the outwork very strong, while the large upper fort appears to have been made, before the discovery of gunpowder, almost impregnable, at the expense of much manual labour and great ingenuity.