

III.

NOTE OF AN ANCIENT STRUCTURE DISCOVERED AT THE LAW OF MAULDSLIE. BY D. R. RANKIN, Esq., CARLUKE.

On the 4th of April, 1869, while engaged in the formation of a cottage garden out of gravelly and rocky matter, on the highest point of Law Hill,—about 700 feet above sea-level, and adjacent to the stone cist and stone granary formerly reported on ("Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries," vol. vii. 1867),—the intelligent and industrious owner of

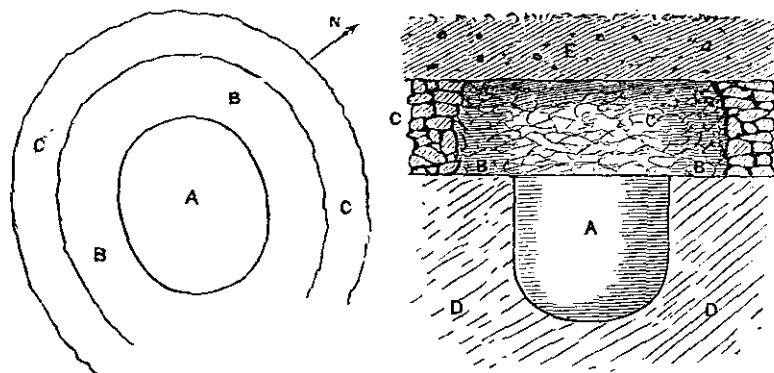


Fig. 1.—Ground-plan.

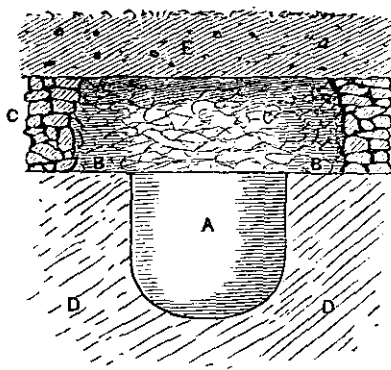


Fig. 2.—Section.

Figs. 1 and 2.—Ancient Building, with excavations in the rock, discovered at the Law of Mauldslie.

E, fig. 2, Sand and Gravel. DD, Solid Rock.

the cottage came upon a structure, which was cleared out and developed fully. This structure is distant 21 feet eastward from the position of the cist, on the sloping side of the hill, and, according to the apparent plan of operations, must, so far as the retaining wall is concerned, yield to the pick and shovel.

The structure consists of three portions—1st, a retaining wall of good rubble work, without cement, 3 feet high, and measuring in circular extent 24 feet (C C in plan); 2d, a passage on the rock within this wall, 2 feet wide (B B, figs. 1 and 2); and 3d, an oval excavation (A A, figs. 1 and 2), in the solid rock (D D, fig. 2), 5 by 6 feet wide, and 5 feet deep, bounded by the passage.

On examination, it is evident that the space for the wall was cut out as the building proceeded, bit by bit, because the natural beds of gravel and sand (E, fig. 2) above the wall remain undisturbed.

If the passage and excavation in the rock had been covered by artificial means when in use, it is certain that on the eastern side, where no wall appears, that the ground did not admit of a passage, or of a wall, unless raised above the surface; thus accounting for the absence of both. The probable entrance would be on the south-east side, where the wall is straight. That the wall and passage were mere adjunctives to the excavation in the rock is clear enough; but what might the use of this artificial cut in the rock be? At a first glance, it might be pronounced a well; but the position on a hill, sloping in all directions, and covered only by 5 feet of sand and gravel beds, would admit of no feeder. Might it not be a cistern? There would be more than one objection to this view; because, 1st, sandstone rock is a better filter than a holder of water; but if a cistern, what was the use of 24 feet of wall and passage around it, when a short straight passage would have answered the purpose? and 2d, if water had to be supplied by hand there would have been an undue expenditure of power—a thing which was not disregarded in the earliest times. Why not a store where space was needed to reach every point?

As to the finish of the excavation in the rock, although there is no mark of chisel or sharp instrument, the perpendicular lines are good, and the rounding off at the bottom equally so.