

III.

NOTICE OF ANCIENT REMAINS IN MANOR PARISH AND OTHER DISTRICTS OF PEEBLESSHIRE. BY D. CHRISTISON, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

In the uncultivated moors and glens of Scotland we occasionally meet with signs of primitive occupation by man, which are so difficult to decipher, from their almost complete dilapidation, that the most zealous investigator may well be excused, if at first sight he turns from them with indifference or despair. Viewed singly or in detail, they may seem to be rather accidental freaks of nature than evidences of man's handiwork; and it is only when we find examples in somewhat better preservation than the mass, that we are convinced at once of their human origin, and of their archæological importance.

A group of such remains in the Manor district of Peeblesshire has long been known, as a matter of course, to Professor Veitch, who in the threefold capacity of lover of nature, poet, and archæologist, has trod every foot of his native county, and to Mr Linton, upon whose farm they are situated; but I believe they have not hitherto been described. I have lately paid two visits to the locality, but it is to the guidance of Mr

¹ Consistorial Records in the Vatican. [Maziere Brady.]

² Rymer's *Fœdera* [London, 1710], tome x. p. 565. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 584.

⁴ His arms are still above the window,—a lion rampant within a bordure charged with eight roses, a pastoral staff being in pale behind the shield.

⁵ Registrum Moraviense, No. 277, which also records that he was "Artium Magister."

Linton on the spot that I am indebted for a fulness of knowledge which it would have been difficult for me otherwise to have acquired, and archaeologists would be fortunate indeed if they more frequently met with proprietors or tenants who took as warm an interest in the antiquities of their district as Mr Linton does.

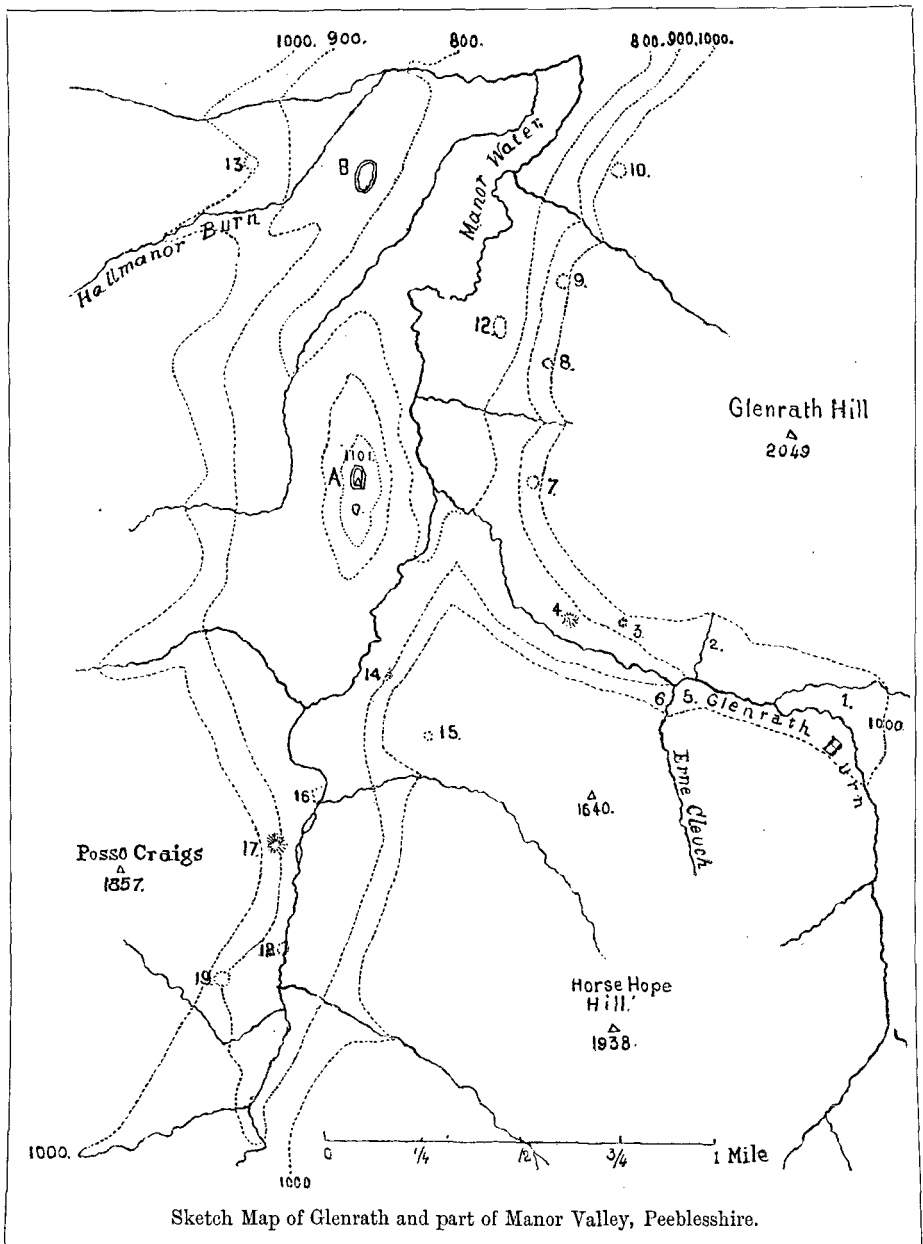
To show the position of the various objects to be described, I have prepared a map (p. 194) on the scale of two inches to the mile, omitting for the sake of clearness modern houses, and in place of shading the hills, marking only the contour lines of 1000, 900, and 800 feet, and the summits of the hills.

Of the many beautiful and sequestered glens and "hopes" of Tweeddale, none is more beautiful than Glenrath, a branch of Manor Vale, upon which it opens directly opposite to Woodhill, a remarkable isolated eminence rising 300 feet above the vale, and crowned with the ancient stone fort which bears the name of "Macbeth's Castle" (A on the Map). The glen branches off from the vale at first eastwards for a mile and a half, and then, turning sharply southwards for two miles, is lost among the hills, 2000 to 2300 feet above the sea, among which its tributary streams take their origin.

The lower division of the glen is open, the steep and lofty hills on each side, strewed with long "scolithers,"¹ leaving between them a space of comparatively level ground, at least two to three hundred yards in width, through which the stream meanders with but little fall. Situated at the head of this division is Glenrathhope (1 on the Map), a solitary cottage, in which dwells the shepherd and his family, constituting the whole population of the glen. This is a good point from which to begin our survey of the remains in question.

In front of the cottage, and stretching westwards for about half a mile down the north side of the valley (1 to 2), there is a beautiful, dry, grassy strip of land, about two hundred yards in width, with a fine southern exposure, and sloping gently to the stream. It is on this slope that the remains are most abundant, particularly on the margin next to the hills, which rise very abruptly from the edge of the gentle

¹ The local name for "sheets of easily moved stones on a hillside," known in Cumberland as "screes."



slope. Here the remains of some eight or ten circular enclosures, or foundations, if I may call them so, can still be made out. The diameter of the enclosures varies from three or four to as much as twenty or even thirty yards. The "foundations" are elevated only a few inches above the ground. Their surface is more or less stony, and in the better preserved ones there are the remains of what appear to have been an outer and inner single row of larger stones, with in some cases smaller rubble between. These larger stones are, however, of no great size, the biggest of them not exceeding a foot or two in height when set on end, which they frequently are. Fig. 1 gives a view of a well-preserved example,



Fig. 1. Circular Foundation, Glenrath.

in which, however, no rubble is visible. The internal diameter is 6 yards, and the width of the enclosing foundation nearly 2 yards.

But in addition to these tolerably well-defined structures, it appeared to me that there were many short and slight mounds, more or less stony on the surface, and curved in form, which in themselves would attract no attention, but which, taken in connection with the more complete structures already described, in all probability are merely fragmentary relics of the same nature. If this observation be correct, the importance of the remains as a whole is much enhanced, as they

must originally have been so thickly set as to be almost continuous for half a mile.

On the lower margin of the slope, towards the river, the remains are much more scattered, and are of a different character. They consist of small low cairns, grass or heather grown, with stones half embedded or lying loose on them. Some show traces of a stony ring encircling them, and occasionally in these there is a slight hollowing in the centre, which in a few becomes a cup-shaped cavity, two or three feet in depth.

These two classes of remains, the curved foundations and the cairns, do not lie entirely apart, but a few of each kind are found mingled with the main bodies of the other.

I have described somewhat minutely the chief group of these structures, but I may briefly mention that others exist in considerable numbers on some higher ground behind the cottage, and on a slope similar to that of the first group, which stretches for an additional half mile down the same side of the valley (2 to 4). Here a foundation of exceptional form attracted my attention. It consists of two straight parallel mounds, 40 feet long and 6 or 8 apart, open at one end, closed by a curved mound at the other, with a transverse mound near the closed end. Connected with this second group there is a by no means conspicuous knoll, which has somewhat the appearance of having been smoothed artificially. It is very flatly conical, and has a small flat cairn on the top. It is called *Harley Knowe* (4). In this locality also is a curiously shaped ruinous wall (3), which consists of two slightly curved lines, about 70 yards long in all, meeting at an angle, situated at the foot of the hill, and a third curved wall running up among the steep "sclichers." On each side of the third wall, partly on the hill, partly on the level, a circular foundation may be made out. It is difficult to assign any purpose for this wall, which is certainly not a modern dyke, and which Mr Linton assures me is quite unsuitable for any purpose connected with sheep farming. The number of cairns or stone-heaps in the mile below Glenrathope is about seventy.

On the south side of the valley remains of a totally different kind are found. They comprise relics of lead-smelting operations (5), and a considerable number of ruinous, rectangular stone enclosures without mortar (6), all situated at the mouth of Erne Cleuch.

Stretching southwards from the cottage (1) for some distance along the upper course of the stream, there is a haugh, in the middle of which is an oblong cairn, about 6 feet in length, which is worthy of remark, because the haugh elsewhere is almost entirely free from stones.

This concludes the list of remains in Glenrath itself, but immediately on turning out of it northwards into Manor Vale, we find on the hillside, about 200 feet above the stream, a level shelf about 60 yards by 30 in extent, enclosed by an oval rampart (7 on the Map), which has evidently been plundered of the mass of its stones to fence a wood covering the level site and a portion of the neighbouring hill. Within the oval ring, and at one end of it, there is a small circular foundation about 10 yards in diameter. It is difficult to attribute a defensive character to this structure, as the hill rises steeply and at once from its eastern side, and completely commands it from a distance of a few yards. I was informed by Mr Linton that three similar enclosures can still be traced farther north on the hillside, at about the same level (8, 9, 10), all four being within a space of a mile. Mr Linton remembers when the three last mentioned were much more distinct, but they are now almost ploughed down. In one of them he found a portion of a quern. Another enclosure with a strong rampart and trench, and more of the nature of a fort (12), existed in the haugh near the farm-house, but it is now nearly obliterated. In it Mr Linton found a whorl ornamented round the edge with a series of small incised rings, with a little hole in the centre of each ring; also part of a quern. He also informed me that a sixth circular enclosure still exists on the hill-slope on the opposite side of the Manor (13), not far from the "Ring Knowes" Fort, besides faint traces of others.

Turning now southwards instead of northwards out of Glenrath, we encounter, about half a mile above the junction of the Glenrath Burn with the Manor Water, a singular enclosure at the foot of Horsehope Hill (14 on the Map, and fig. 2). The steep slope here is one vast "selther," or "scree" as it would be called in Cumberland, the component stones of which are of unusual magnitude, and it ends very abruptly on the river-haugh. On the lower part of the slope a wall has been constructed, which starting at the haugh runs about 40

yards up the hill, and bending round among the "selithers," returns to the plain, thus enclosing a horse-shoe space, open at the bottom, as there is now no trace of a wall in the plain. The wall, built without mortar, is very ruinous; but a few yards above the plain there is a tolerably well-preserved entrance, where the wall is still several feet in height, carefully built, and 6 feet broad at the bottom, with a slight batter upwards. Within the enclosure slight indications of small circular foundations may perhaps be traced on the rough stony surface, but not so distinctly as to be reliable. It is difficult to conjecture the



Fig. 2. Enclosure on Slope of Horsehope Hill.

purpose of an enclosure on so singular a site. That it should have been intended for defence is most improbable, as the steep slope of the hill almost hangs over it, rendering it, one would think, untenable against an attack with no more dangerous missiles than the stones which lie so conveniently to hand. The 6 feet thickness of the wall, however, favours a defensive purpose. I understand from Mr Linton that a great many stones were removed from this site forty-five years ago to make dykes.

A few hundred yards higher up the vale, and several hundred feet

above it, on Horsehope Hill, a cairn (marked A on the sketch, fig. 3), erected by Mr Linton, marks the site of a "find" of numerous bronze objects of great interest, some of them unique in form, now preserved in the Museum of the Chambers' Institute, Peebles. They were concealed under a large stone among the *scolithers* of the very steep slope of Horsehope Hill, but were brought to light possibly by the burrowing of rabbits or foxes. They were noticed by Mr Linton's shepherd, and collected partly by him, partly by Mr Linton himself. The site is certainly an extraordinary one for such a "find."

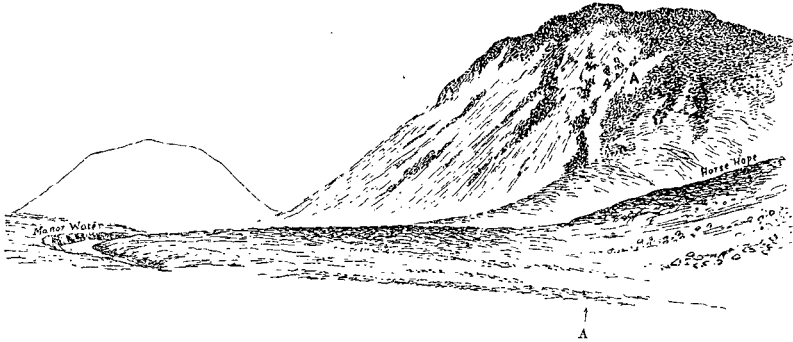


Fig. 3. Site of the Find of Bronze Objects on Horsehope Hill.

Opposite Horsehope Hill, on the other side of the Manor, there is a much dilapidated oval enclosure (16 on the Map, and fig. 4), projecting into a pretty extensive flat,—scarcely raised above the river bed,—from a haugh which is only a few feet higher. On one side this mound rests on the river, and is quite open, having no doubt been partially washed away by floods. On the other side an enclosing rampart, although now much levelled, can be well enough made out. Scarcely more conspicuous would be about a dozen circles, or parts of circles and curves, contained within the enclosure, were it not that they are strongly brought into view, as so often happens with similar remains, by differences of vegetation, the circles being overgrown with heather, and their interior with grass, or *vice versa*. A few large stones lying about indicate perhaps the original constructive material of these poor remains. Possibly the

whole of this oval mound, which measures about 60 by 50 yards, and the highest point of which is 8 or 9 feet above the haugh, may be artificial. May it not have been a small fortified village projected for additional safety into what no doubt in ancient times was a morass?

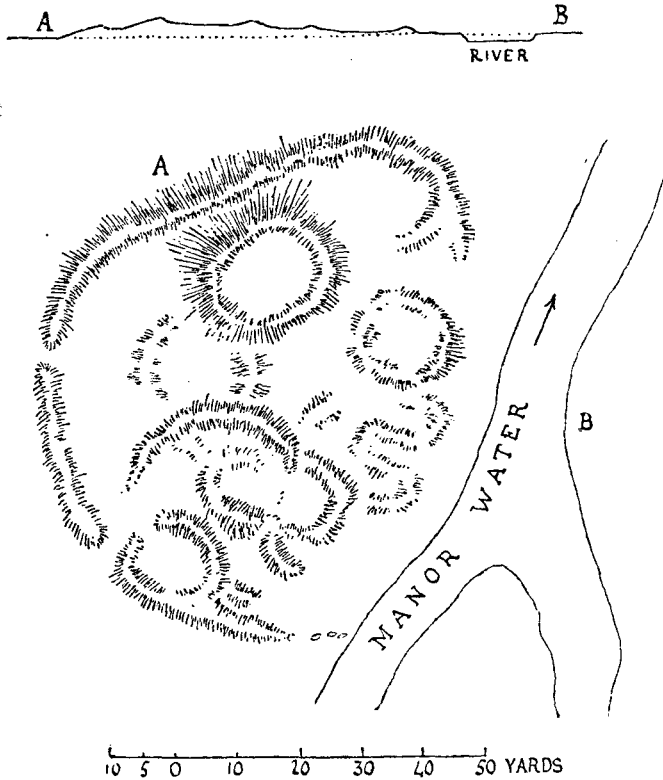


Fig. 4. Mound enclosing Circles above Posso, Manor.

The plan (fig. 4) has no pretensions to do more than give a general idea of the mound.

A short distance off, and rising from the same haugh, at the foot of the hill called Posso. Craigs, there is an inconspicuous knoll (17 on

the Map, and fig. 5), which, but for possessing a name, would scarcely deserve attention. That so inconspicuous an object in such a wild

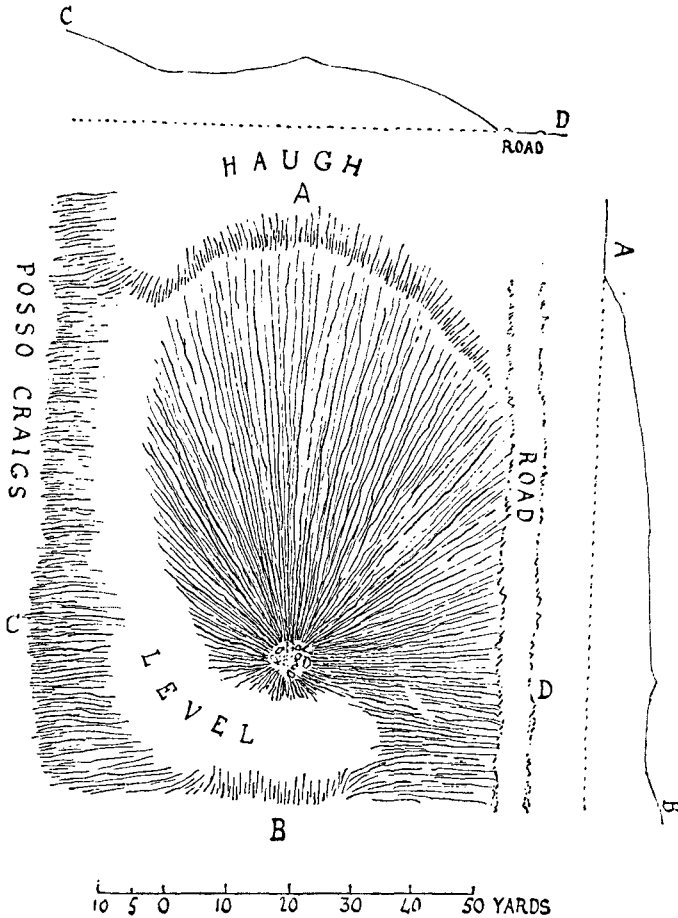


Fig. 5. Corse Knowe.

locality should have a name, however, seems remarkable, and on examination it is easy to persuade ourselves, as in the case of the

Harley Knowe in Glenrath, that this "Corse Knowe" has been artificially shaped and smoothed. The highest point is not in the centre, but at the end farthest from the haugh, and it is there crowned by a flat cairn.

Continuing up the vale by the foot of Posso Craig, we pass many low mounds and heaps of stones, of which it is difficult to say whether they are natural or artificial, but about half a mile above Corse Knowe, and near the river, is the site of a large cairn, known as the Hare Cairn (18 on the Map), from which the stones were carted away in Mr Linton's father's time. The site is very distinctly marked by a well-defined circular slight depression, the bottom of which is covered with small loose stones, and it is about 70 feet in diameter.

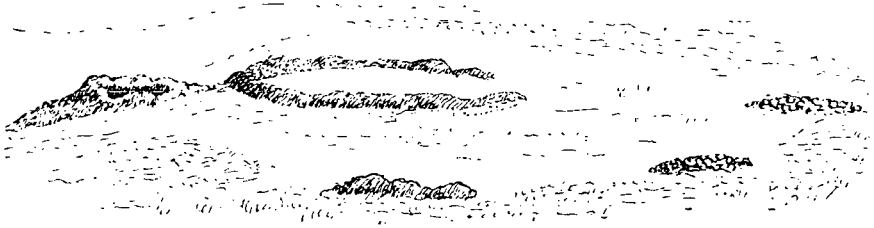


Fig. 6. Remains near Langhaugh, seen from above.

Passing on till almost opposite the farm-house of Langhaugh, we find a circular mound, a few inches to a foot in height, and 6 feet wide, enclosing a space about 24 by 20 feet (19 on the Map, and fig. 6, view from above); around it at a little distance are two low cairns and a fragment of wall, and much nearer is what appears to have been a circular half-underground chamber, which, as far as can be made out from its ruinous condition, has been about 6 feet in diameter internally, with a little ante-chamber attached, as shown in the enlarged view (fig. 7). Its present depth is 4 feet, and the ruinous, turf-grown, enclosing wall rises a foot or so above the present level of the ground. Large stones project from the interior, but they have been too much shifted from their position to show the original style of building. On the side towards the river the ground slopes steeply and at once from

the top of the structure to a level about 10 feet lower down. At the foot there are some signs of the slope having been retained by a row of stones, and it is quite possible that a considerable part of this slope may be artificial. Some large stones project from the "ring" of the neighbouring enclosure.

Close to Langhaugh farm-house are two groups of turf-covered foundations, but whether any of them are more ancient than the undoubted remains of the buildings, gardens, and enclosures of a feudal strength, with its dependencies, cannot now be easily determined.

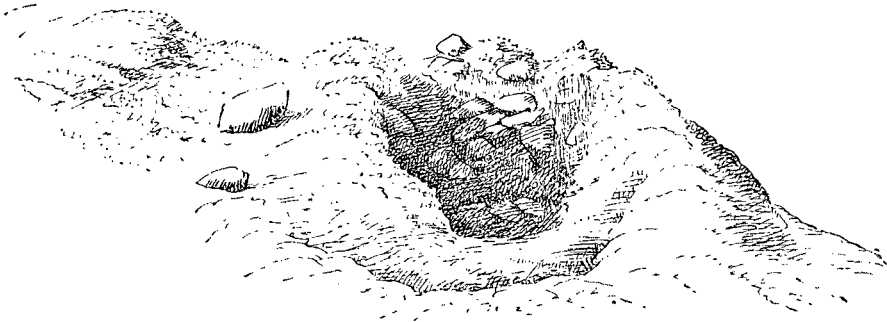


Fig. 7. Remains opposite Langhaugh Farm.

As to the significance of the extensive remains which I have described, our knowledge is so superficial that, until we ascertain more accurately what they are, it is almost vain to speculate as to what they have been.

Some of the low flat cairns may be nothing else than evidence of "lazy farming." Indeed, Mr Linton assures me that he has seen not a few similar cairns in his neighbourhood cleared away, and that they proved to be simply collections of stones, resting on the surface; he adds, that the wisdom of the "lazy farmers" was shown by the ground on which the cairns lay invariably proving not worth cultivating. But others of these cairns are not so easily accounted for. We have seen them apparently showing evidence of structure, possibly indicating the presence of half-buried chambers.

As to the numerous, although almost obliterated, curved and circular

structures, their form naturally leads us to associate them with the prehistoric forts and the ruined foundations within them, as in all alike straight lines and angles are exceedingly rare, but whether there is really any such connection there is no evidence to show.

Poor as these remains are in themselves, and slight as may be the prospect of clearing up the mystery of their origin, I have thought them not unworthy of a passing notice, because—more especially if we may associate them with the forts at Woodhill and Hallmanor—they point to a former comparatively dense occupation, of which not even a legendary recollection lingers in the locality at the present day.

A great service would undoubtedly be rendered in this obscure quarter of archæology, if a careful plan could be obtained by a competent surveyor of such an assemblage of remains as still exist in Glenrath. We should then be able at least to form some idea of the relation of the various fragments to each other, and perhaps to build up some theory of their meaning and objects. This is one of many instances in which an endowment for field research in archæology would be of the utmost service.

I pass on to notice briefly remains of a somewhat different and better-defined kind found in various parts of Peeblesshire. They consist of circular enclosures, varying from 25 to 90 feet in diameter, bounded by a rampart or "ring," apparently of earth, 6 to 9 or even 12 feet in width rarely above 2 feet in height, and sometimes so decayed as scarcely to rise above the level of the ground. In general, even in the best preserved, examples, there is no entrance. For the most part, they occur in groups and in low marshy situations. The most remarkable of these groups is at the head of Broughton Burn, in a wide, shallow depression, about 1100 feet above the sea, overlooked from the east by the highest point of the Broughton Heights (1872 feet). Six "rings" are laid down in this locality on the 25-inch Ordnance map, but I discovered five more, making eleven in all. These are shown in the view (fig. 8), with the exception of one, which is hidden by the lie of the ground. Their internal diameter varies between 40 and 70 feet. In the best preserved one the "ring" is from 2 to 3 feet high and from 10 to 12 feet wide, and there is no entrance. Another is exceptional in having not only an

entrance, but an outer half-ring, forming a kind of ante-chamber. I have met with no other instance of departure from the simple "ring" construction. Two others have been converted into modern sheep-pens. It will be seen in the view that there is a tendency to grouping of the "rings" by twos. This may be accidental, but it occurs in other cases. Several of the "rings" are on ground which is still marshy, and which must have been much more so before the days of drainage. One of them is within a large space, enclosed on three sides by what appears to be the foundation of a wall, two sides of which are straight, and the third curved. The distance between the two farthest apart members of the group is 700 yards.

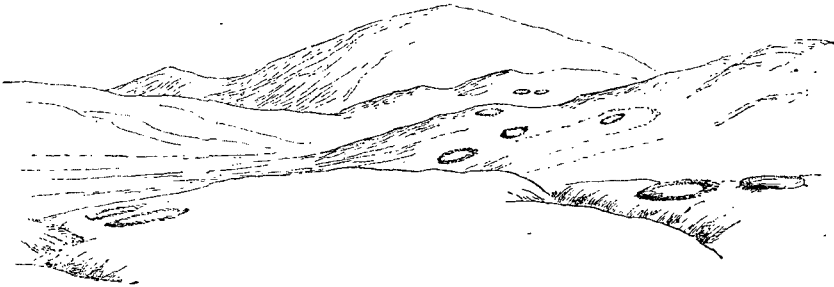


Fig. 8. View of "Rings" at the head of Broughton Burn.

Half a mile west of this group there is another of six in a very different situation. They are disposed in a straight line partly on the summit, partly on the western slope of a *col* of "the Mount," a somewhat isolated hill (seen, with its *col*, in the background, fig. 8), which rises 1385 feet above the sea, the *col* itself being about 200 feet lower. These six "rings" are all laid down on the 25-inch Ordnance map, besides another, surrounded by a large irregular enclosure, at the top of the Mount, but of these last I could find no traces in 1886.

About a mile and a half north-east from the Broughton group, in the bottom of a sequestered little valley, between Ladyurd Hill and Woolshears Hill, is another set of four "rings." They are all in such a marshy spot that they are marked out by rushes growing on them. Between two of them is a prominent grassy mound 6 feet in length.

Near at hand are two rectangular foundations, covered with green turf, but with stones protruding. All these are laid down on the 25-inch Ordnance map.

The only other group known to me is about three-fourths of a mile up the valley of Flemington Burn, a tributary of Lyne Water, and overlooked from a height of 500 feet by the large Fort of Whiteside. Here are four "rings," of which two, well preserved, are on a beautiful little green haugh close to the burn. They are within 30 feet of each other, and are of about the same diameter, with rings 2 feet high and 12 feet wide. The other two are on a marshy slope on the south side of the burn. One is 36 feet in diameter, with a ring 3 feet high and 9 feet wide. The other is the smallest of the four, being only about 25 feet in diameter. There are traces round both of those in the marsh of a ditch or trench, which I have not observed in any others. Midway between those in the haugh and those in the marsh, and 150 yards from each, there is an irregular oval space, 90 by 70 feet, enclosed by a mound 3 feet high and 15 to 20 wide, showing large stones here and there. Not far off are the foundations of a rectangular structure. This group is not given in the 25-inch Ordnance map.

It is difficult to assign any purpose to these enclosures in their present condition, as even the best preserved among them are useless either for keeping out or for keeping in any kind of animal. In the Ordnance map they are all designated "old sheepfolds," and it is possible that they are nothing else. Yet there are some difficulties in accepting them as such. I am assured by Mr Linton that such groups as we have described, and particularly the one with 11 "rings," at Broughton, are not compatible with any ideas of sheep farming that he can form. The general absence of entrances seems also a remarkable deficiency in sheep-pens; and the situation of the majority of these "rings," in the middle of morasses, is surely peculiar if the structures were intended for such a purpose. But whatever their purpose may have been, they seem to be sufficiently ancient and mysterious to deserve a passing notice in this Society.

Probably of a different type from all the "rings" already noticed is a much larger one situated on a rather steep slope at the foot of the

western flank of Lochurd Hill. It is 220 feet in diameter, and although larger than some undoubted "forts," it is at once distinguishable from them by the perfect regularity of its form, and the absence of a trench. The enclosing mound, which is only about 2 feet high and 9 feet wide, is also regular and well finished to a degree never seen in the "forts." Close to it I noticed two small circles of heather, possibly indicating that a group of "rings" formerly existed here.

Finally, I may describe a unique structure at the foot of Common Law, in the remarkable depression which connects Kilbucho with Glenholm. It is situated on the only dry patch in the middle of a long, narrow, level marsh, is about 120 feet in length, and has the strange coiled form, shown in the plan and drawing (fig. 9), the inner part of

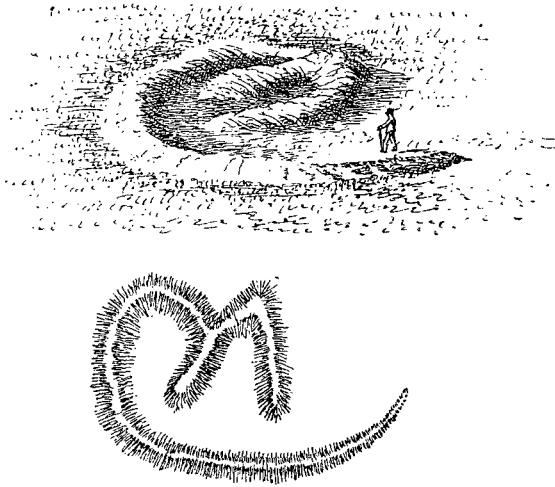


Fig. 9. View and Plan of Mound at Common Law.

the coil being subdivided so as to form two small chambers. The mound is apparently of earth, and in the outer part of the coil is remarkably steep and narrow at the top. This is also marked on the Ordnance map as an old sheepfold.