ON THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH;—AND THE PROBABLE LOCALITY OF THE CONFLICT.


Read 4th December, 1856.

SECTION I. THE BATTLE.

The Battle of Brunanburh forms one of the most important events in the history of the Anglo-Saxons. The preparations for the conflict exhausted the naval and military resources of the Danish colonists, and its issue consolidated the power and raised the Saxon name to the highest dignity among the states of Europe. Of upwards of 100,000 combatants engaged on both sides, probably the greatest portion perished on the field or during the pursuit; for of the confederated forces led by Anlaf, only a shattered remnant survived to tell the tale of their defeat. At the period of which we speak, Athelstan swayed the sceptre of the Anglo-Saxons with an authority unknown to his predecessors. The Scottish, the Cumbrian, and the Welsh Kings acknowledged his superiority, and those of Northumbria were barely able to maintain their independence. Sihtric, the son of Ingwar, and grandson of Ragnar Lodbrog, was then the reigning King of Northumbria, and Athelstan, during the first few years of his reign, found it necessary to conciliate his friendship by giving him his sister in marriage. The Danish king appears to have inherited much of the ferocity and most of the ability of his ancestors; for the Saxon Annals speak of him as the murderer of his own brother, and in Irish history he is chiefly noted for his piratical depredations. He, however, formally embraced Christianity on the occasion of his marriage, but soon after repenting of his change of religion, he put away his wife and resumed his idolatry. Athelstan determined to revenge this insult offered to his sister, and prepared to invade Northumbria; but Sihtric died before the preparations were completed. Notwithstanding this, Athelstan soon drove Anlaf and Godfrid, the sons and successors of Sihtric into exile, and annexed these counties to his own dominions.

During the struggle for possession, Ealdred was driven from his petty sovereignty of Bebbanburh; the castle at York, which held out for Anlaf
was demolished; and on a subsequent occasion Scotland was ravaged to the borders of the Highlands, while Athelstan's fleet spread terror and dismay to the extremities of Caithness. Anlaf fled to Dublin, where he was acknowledged as chief of the Anglo-Danes established on the east coasts of Ireland; and Godfrid, after being given up to Athelstan by Constantine, king of Scotland, escaped from court and betook himself to a life of piracy on the seas. "But Athelstan," as Sharon Turner remarks, "was not permitted to enjoy his triumph unmolested. The Northern chieftains saw that the progress of Athelstan's power was advancing to their complete subjection. The states on the Baltic were still full of fierce and active adventurers, who had to seek fame and fortune in other regions; and descendants of Ragnar Lodbrog yet existed, both enterprising and popular."* Constantine was preparing for retaliation, and Anlaf was planning to regain his power in Northumbria. "In Wales, the princes humbled by Athelstan, were ready to co-operate for the diminution of his strength. The Anglo-Danes, in Northumbria and East Anglia, beheld with displeasure the preponderance of the Saxon sovereign, and the petty state of Cumbria had no choice but to follow the impulse of the potent neighbours that surrounded it. All these powers confederated against Athelstan, and the united mass of their hostilities was increased by fleets of warriors from Norway and the Baltic. England had never been assailed before with a confederacy of so much power; formed with so much skill; and consisting of so many parts. Athelstan prepared to meet the storm with firmness and energy; and, to multiply his own means of defence, he circulated promises of high reward to every warrior who should join his standard. Thorolf and Egils, two of those navigating Vikingr whose weapons were ready for any enterprise, heard the tidings as they sailed by Saxony and Flanders. They came in the autumn with three hundred companions, to proffer their services to Athelstan, who gladly received them; and Rollo assisted him from Normandy."†

"Anlaf commenced the warfare by entering the Humber with a fleet of 616 ships. The governors whom Athelstan had left in Northumbria, together with their forces, were soon overpowered. Gudrekr fell, and Alfgeirr fled to his sovereign with the tidings."‡ This sudden and formid-
able invasion found Athelstan comparatively unprepared for effective resistance. He consequently had recourse to negotiations and fictitious offers of money in order to buy off his assailants, and to gain time, till all his own forces could be assembled. When all his preparations were completed, Athelstan closed the intercourse with Anlaf by informing him that Northumbria could not be ceded; but that he might withdraw from the country un molested upon restoring the plunder he had secured, and acknowledging himself a subject of the Saxon king. Anlaf rejected the terms with disdain, and on a council of war being held it was decided that the Welsh and Danish leaders, Adalis and Hryngr, should make a night attack upon the advanced portion of Athelstan's army under the command of Alfgeirr and Thorold. "At night Adalis and Hryngr embodied their forces and marched on the Saxon camp. Werstan, Bishop [of Sherborne, who had replaced Athelstan in this portion of the camp] was the victim of the surprise. But Thorolf and Alfgeirr, who commanded in the district, roused their warriors and supported the attack. Adalis assaulted the division of Alfgeirr, and Hryngr directed himself to the allied vikingr. Vanquished by the impetuosity of his assailant, Alfgeirr fled from the field, and eventually the country. Adalis, flushed with his victory, turned on the others. Thorolf directed his colleague Egils to meet him; he exhorted his troops to stand close, and if overpowered to retreat to the wood. Egils obeyed, though with a force far inferior. The battle became warm. Thorolf fought with all the fury of valour, which was the pride of the day; he threw his shield behind him, and grasping his huge weapon with both hands, he prostrated his enemies with an irresistible strength. He forced his way at last to the standard of his adversary; he reached and killed him. His success animated his followers, and Adalis, mourning the death of Hryngr, gave way, and the combat discontinued."* 

Great commanders, however, seldom choose to harass their forces by ineffectual skirmishing. They prefer to trust the whole to the chances of a single battle rather than incur the risk of ultimate defeat in a series of minor engagements. During the conflict just described, Anlaf was in hopes of deciding the contest by cutting off his antagonist by a night attack. He had ascertained the position of Athelstan's tent, and would no doubt have accomplished his object, if his design had not been penetrated by one of

his former followers. The result, although favorable to Athelstan, was sufficient to convince him of the valor and skill of the minstrel commander, and he proceeded to arrange his forces for a decisive struggle. Anlaf did the same. A night of rest, some say two, preceded the awful conflict. Athelstan formed his array of battle. In the front he placed his bravest troops, with Egils at their head. He let Thorolf head his own band, with an addition of Anglo-Saxons, to oppose the irregular Irish, who always flew from point to point; no where steady, yet often injuring the unguarded. The warriors of Mercia and London, who were conducted by the valiant Turketul, the chancellor of the kingdom, he directed to oppose themselves to the national force of Constantine. He chose his own West-Saxons to endure the struggle with Anlaf his competitor. Anlaf observing his dispositions, in part imitated them. He obeyed the impulse of his hopes and his courage, and placed himself against Athelstan. One of his wings stretched to the wood against the battalia of Thorolf; it was very numerous, and consisted mostly of the disorderly Irish.

Brunanburh was the scene of action; and Thorolf began the battle he loved; he rushed forward to the wood, hoping to turn the enemy's flank; his courage was too impetuous and indiscriminate; his eagerness for the fray impelled him beyond his companions. Both were pressing fiercely and blindly onwards when Adalis darted from his ambush in the wood and destroyed Thorolf and his foremost friends. Egils heard the outcries of alarm; he looked to that quarter, and saw the banner of Thorolf retreating. Satisfied from this circumstance that Thorolf was not with it, he flew to the spot, encouraged his party, and renewed the battle. Adalis fell in the struggle.

At this crisis, while the conflict was raging with all the obstinacy of determined patriotism and courageous ambition; when missile weapons had been mutually abandoned; when foot was planted against foot, shield forced against shield, and manual vigour was exerted with every energy of destruction; when chiefs and vassals were perishing in the all-levelling confusion of war, and the numbers cut down were fiercely supplied with new crowds of warriors hastening to become victims; the chancellor Turketul made an attack which influenced the fortune of the day. He selected from the combatants some citizens of London, on whose veteran valour he could rely; to these he added the men of Worcestershire, and their leader, who
is called the magnanimous Singin. He formed these chosen troops into a firm and compact body, and placing his vast muscular figure at their head, he chose a peculiar quarter of attack, and rushed impetuously on his foe.

The hostile ranks fell before him. He pierced the circle of the Picts and the Orkneymen, and heedless of the wood of arrows and spears which fastened in his armour, he even penetrated to the Cumbrians and the Scots. He beheld Constantine, the king of the Grampian Hills, and he pressed forward to assail him. Constantine was too brave to decline his daring adversary. The assault fell first upon his son, who was unhorsed, and with renovated fury, the battle then began to rage. Every heart beat vehemently; every arm was impatient to rescue or to take the prince. The Scots with noble loyalty, precipitated themselves on the Saxons to preserve their leader. Turketul would not forego the expected prize. Such, however, was the fury of his assailants; so many weapons surrounded the Saxon chancellor, that his life began to be endangered, and he repented of his daring. He was nearly oppressed; the prince was just released, when Singin, with a desperate blow, terminated the contested life. New courage rushed into the bosoms of the Saxons on this event. Grief and panic as suddenly overwhelmed their enemies. The Scots in consternation withdrew, and Turketul triumphed in his hard earned victory.

Athelstan and his brother Edmund, during these events, were engaged with Anlaf. In the hottest of the conflict, the sword of Athelstan broke at the handle, while his enemies were pressing fiercely upon him. He was speedily supplied with another, and the conflict continued to be balanced. After the battle had long raged, Egils and Turketul, pursuing the retreating Scots, charged suddenly upon Anlaf's rear. It was then that his determined bands began to be shaken; slaughter thinned their ranks; many fled, and the assailants cried out victory! Athelstan exhorted his men to profit by the auspicious moment. He commanded his banner to be carried into the midst of the enemy. He made a deep impression on their front, and a general ruin followed. The soldiers of Anlaf fled on every side, and the death of pursuit filled the plain with their bodies.

Thus terminated this dangerous and important conflict. Its successful issue raised Athelstan to a most venerated dignity in the eyes of Europe. The kings of the continent sought his friendship, and England began to assume a majestic port among the nations of the West. Among the Anglo-
Saxons, the victory excited such rejoicings, that not only did their poets aspire to commemorate it, but their songs were so popular that the following is inserted in the Saxon Chronicle as the best memorial or record of the event.*

Here Athelstan, king;
Of Earls, the Lord;
To heroes the bracelet-giver,
And his brother also,
Edmund Atheling,
Elder of ancient race,
They won a lasting glory,
With the edges of their swords,
By slaughter in battle,
Near Brunanburh.
The followers of Edward
Their board-walls clove.
With the wrecks of hammers
They hewed the noble banners.
To them it was natural
From their ancestry,
That they in the field
Against every foe,
Their lands should defend,
Their boards and homes.
Pursuing, they destroyed
The Scottish people
And the ship-fleet.
The dead fell;—
The field resounded;—
The warrior sweat.
Since the sun was up
In morning hour—
Gigantic creature—
Glad above the earth:—
God's candle bright—
The eternal Lord's—
Till the noble creature
Set in the western main.
There lay soldiers many,
With darts struck down.
Northern men there were
Over their shields shot.
And Scotland's boast,
A Scythian race
The mighty seed of Mars.
With chosen troops
Throughout the day
The fierce West-Saxons
Pressed on the hated bands:—
Hewed down the fugitives—
Scattered the rear—
With strong mill-sharpened blades.
The Mercians too,
Did not refuse,
The hard-hand play,
With those that Anlaf brought:
Over the raging sea,
In the bosom of his ships,
Who sought this land
For deadly fight.

Five kings lay
On that battle field:
In bloom of youth
Pierced through with swords.
So also seven
Of Anlaf's Earls;
And of ships' crews
Unnumbered crowds.
The little band
Of hardy Scots
Was there dispersed.
There was made flee
The Northmen's chieftain.
By need constrained
He sought the prow,
Urged to the noisy deep,
And so his life preserved.
So too Constantine,
The valiant chief,
In hasty flight
His country sought.
The hoary warrior
Cared not to boast
Among his kindred
Of the blending swords.
Here was his kindred band
Of friends o'erthrown:—
On the folk-stead
In battle slain.
And his son he left
On the slaughter-field,
Mangled with wounds.
And young in fight
The fair-haired youth;—
He would not boast
Of the slaughtering strife;
Nor would the old deceiver.
No more could Anlaf,
With the remnants of their armies
Boast and say,
That they on the field
Of stern command,
Better workmen were;
In the conflict of banners;—
In the clash of spears;—
In the meeting of heroes;
In the rustling of weapons,
When they on the field
Of slaughter played
With the followers of Edward.
The Northmen sailed
In their nailed barks.
A dreary remnant
On the raging ocean:
O'er the deep water
Dublin to seek,

And Ireland's shores
Disgraced in mind.
So then the brothers,
King and Atheling,
Their country sought:
West-Saxon land:
In sight triumphant.
They left behind them
The corse to devour;
The sallow kite
The swarthy raven
With horned beak
And the hoarse vulture—
With the eagle swift
The greedy war-hawk too,
And that grey beast
The wolf which haunts the wood.

No slaughter yet
Was greater made,
In this our land
Of people slain;
Before this time
By edge of sword:
As books declare
Of writers old:—
Since hither first
From eastern shores,
Angle and Saxon came,
Over the broad sea
And Britain sought.
These mighty smiths of war
O'ercame the Welsh;
Most valiant Earls were they
And gained the land.*

In addition to the preceding, it may be observed that the praises of Athelstan formed the theme of many an ancient poem. Henry of Huntingdon characterises some of these as mere bombast, but William of Malmesbury, although mostly agreeing with him in opinion, has preserved a portion of two which appear to claim a higher designation. In the first of these, his childhood and accession are related in laudatory, but not extravagant terms; and in the other, his victory over Anlaf is celebrated in a strain not unbecoming so noble an achievement. Some little reserve may be necessary when it is stated that Athelstan’s forces mustered

“A hundred thousand strong;”—
nor can it be doubted that the poet has exercised his licence freely when he avers that—

“Anlaf, only, out of all the crew
Escaped the meed of death so justly due.”+

The prayer of Athelstan before the battle, is perhaps nothing better than an invention of our old historians: it however exists both in the original Saxon, and in a Latin version, which is probably contemporary with the prose narratives of some of the earlier annalists. Sharon Turner gives a few of the opening sentences only in his valuable history, from which I have so largely quoted, but through the kindness of Dr. Hume I am enabled to present a version of the whole, accompanied by another poetical fragment relating to the crowning effort of the Saxon King.

+ William of Malmesbury, p. 137. (Bohn.)
SONG, ON ATHELSTAN’S VICTORY OVER THE DANES AT BRUNANBURH.

(From MS. Cotton. Nero A. II., fol. 8, v°. Written in a bold Saxon hand, contemporary or nearly so with the event. (A.D. 938.) The song, or fragment, appears to have been taken down from recitation, by an ignorant scribe, and is hopelessly corrupt.) Printed by Mr. Thomas Wright, in the Reliquiae Antiquae, vol. ii. p. 179, (1845.)

Carta dirige gressus
per maris et navium
tellarisque spatum
ad reges palatum.
Regem primum salute
regnem et elitanum
clarus quoque commitis
militis armieros.
Quorum regem cum Æthelstanum
ista per fecta Saxonia
vivit rex Æthelstanum
per fecta gloriosa.

PRAYER BEFORE THE BATTLE.

FROM THE SAME MS.

Domine Deus omnipotens, rex regum et dominus dominantium, in cujus manu omnis victoria consistit, et omne bellum contentur, concede mihi ut tua manus cor meum corroboret, ut in virtute tua in manibus viribusque meis bene pugnare viriliterque agere valeam, ut inimici mei in conspectu meo cadent et corruant, ut incumbent Golias ante faciem tui David, et sicut populus Pharaonis coram Moysi in Mare Rubro, et sicut Philistim coram populo Israel ecciderunt, et Amalech coram corruerunt, sic cadant inimici mei sub pedibus meis, et per viam unam conveniant adversum me, et per septem fugiant a me, et conteret Deus arma eorum, et confringat framea eorum, et eliquisce in conspectu meo sicut cera a facie ignis, ut scient omnes populis terra quia invocatum nomen Domini nostri Jesu super me, et magnificetur nomen tuum Domine, in adversariis meis Domine Deus Israel.

SECTION II.—THE LOCALITY.

Such was the Battle of Brunanburh, and such its consequences to the Danes in Lancashire. It was still called great at the time when Ethelward wrote his chronicle for the instruction of Matilda, and although all our historians have borne testimony to its magnitude and importance, they have invariably remained silent as to the locality of the conflict.

The Saxon Chronicle states that the battle was fought near Brunanburh; Ethelward calls the place Brunandune; Simeon of Durham gives Wendune as the locality; Malmsbury and Ingulf name it Brunsford, or Brunford; Florence of Worcester agrees with the Saxon Chronicle; Henry of Huntingdon gives Brunesburh; and Geffrei Gaimar has the variations Brunswerc, Burnewest, and Brunewerche. In the Annales Cambria it is styled “Bellum Brune,” or the Battles of the Brun; and the same designation is found in the Bruty Tywysogion, or the Chronicle of the Princes of Wales. All these, no doubt, imply the same locality, but no distinctive place is
assigned by any of these authorities. William of Malmsbury says that the field is situated "far into England," and consequently must not necessarily be sought near the seashore, as some inquirers have recently suggested. Camden in his *Britannia* gives Brumford, near Brumridge, in Northumberland, as the place where "King Athelstan fought a pitched battle against Anlaf the Dane;" but Gibson suggests that it "must have been somewhere nearer the Humber;" although he finds a difficulty in carrying Constantine "and the little King of Cumberland so high into Yorkshire." More recently we find Bromborough in Cheshire, Banbury in Oxfordshire, Burnham and Bourne in Lincolnshire, Brunton in Northumberland, Brownedge in Lancashire, &c., suggested as probable sites; but so far as I am aware little else than unsupported conjectures are offered as reasons why we should prefer one of these localities to another, in our selection of that most entitled to credit.

Dr. Giles, and others, merely vitiate the text of the *Saxon Chronicle* by writing the name Brumby instead of Brunanburh. Ingram in his map of Saxon England places the site in Lincolnshire, near the Trent, but without assigning any sufficient reasons; nor have other writers been much more careful. Turner merely observes that "the *Villare* mentions a Brunton in Northumberland," and Gibson states, what may still be seen in maps of a century old, "that in Cheshire there is a place called Brunburh," near the shores of the Mersey. The Lincolnshire localities do not appear to possess any better claims than similarity of sound in the initial syllable, and the same may be said of Brunton, Brownedge, and others. Brinkburn, in that county, is called Brincaburh by John of Hexham in A.D. 1154, and on such slight grounds the authors of the *Beauties of England and Wales* conjecture that "this is the true situation of Brunanburh!" (Vol. xii p. 190.) Some appearances of a fortification on the hill adjoining certainly lend a colour to this presumption; and similar slight indications of an encampment near Brumridge may have led Camden to decide in favour of this locality; but in the present state of our knowledge of these and kindred subjects we are entitled to demand something more than what these authors have produced, before we can admit that their conjectures are worthy of more than a passing consideration. The pages of a gazetteer, or the names on a map, may assist in detecting orthographical variations and coincidences; but they do not enable us to
prove, or pronounce, an identity, unless when supported by other and more positive evidence.

I therefore now propose to substitute the name of Burnley in Lancashire for any or all of these, and I hope in the course of this essay to render it extremely probable that the Battle of Brunanburh was fought in its vicinity.

The town of Burnley must have been considered of some importance even in Saxon times, for there is every reason for believing that Paulinus himself preached the gospel in the neighbourhood, and baptized his converts in the River Brun. A Saxon Cross still exists in Godly Lane, near St. Peter’s Church,* of a similar character and workmanship to those at Whalley and Dewsbury, which are generally admitted to attest the presence of the “Apostle of the North”; whilst Bishop Leap and Bishop House in the immediate vicinity of the cross, may be adduced as additional evidences of the archbishop’s visit. Lying as the town does upon one of the Roman roads between Rigodunum (Ribchester) and Cambodunum (Slack), and being itself a station, there could be little difficulty in the way of his arrival in this locality, although later travellers may have found the country wild and inhospitable. Local tradition also asserts that the church was intended to be erected on the site now occupied by the cross; but that whatever the workmen built during the day, was removed during the following night, by supernatural means, to the place where it was subsequently erected. Burnley would therefore be well known to the Saxons;—the nomenclature of the district attests their long occupation of the country;—its church would probably be one of the first to be erected after the conversion of the inhabitants to Christianity, and a burh for its protection would no doubt be erected on the steep cliffs of the Brun, by which the church is overlooked on the west.

But the proofs of Danish possession are not the less remarkable and conclusive. Almost every local name which is not Saxon, is either Danish or Norwegian in its origin. We have Danes House to the north of the town, and Saxifield, or Saxonfield Dyke, which is mentioned in a charter of the reign of King John, on the edge of a broad and easy slope within a short distance. New-Kirks are found both in Pendle Forest and in Rossendale; Thorpe occurs near Bacup; Laiths abound in all directions,

* See my History of the Parochial Church of Burnley, p. 10.
as Hey Laith, Moor Laith, &c.; By is found in Earby near Colne; Holme and Longholme are not far distant; Pinkow and Kellbrook are again not far from Colne. Shelford, Longridge Fell, Riddy-halgh, Musty-halgh, Haulgh-head, Brunshaw, Walshaw, Haggate, Narrowgate, Laund-booth, Scarth Rake, and a multitude of others might be pointed out as decidedly Danish names of places; whilst Winwall, (the place of contention), near Emmot Moor, and the Old Dyke, indicate intrenchments which have now almost wholly disappeared during the progress of cultivation; but taken together with Warcock Hill in the same neighbourhood, may carry us back in imagination to those dreaded banners, blazoned with the Danish raven, which floated aloft during the conflicts we have undertaken to illustrate. Toft and Garth occur in deeds without date; Beck, Biggin, and Tarn, are still heard daily in common conversation; nor would it be difficult to add considerably to the lengthiest of the published lists of these certain indications of Danish occupation.

Again, it is not at all improbable that Athelstan himself visited the neighbourhood of Burnley. Baines in his History of Lancashire, vol. iv. p. 371, asserts, on the authority of the Mundana Mutabilia, Harl. MSS. 1727, fo. 336, that a deed exists in the Saxon tongue, granting the lands of Elston, or Ethelston, to Ethelston of Amounderness at the time when he was "lying in camp in this country upon occasion of war"; and in A.D. 936, both the Saxon Chronicle and Florence of Worcester bear testimony to his confirming a treaty of peace between the Welsh, Scots, and Northumbrians, whom he had subdued, "at a place called Eamot, on the fourth before the ides of July." He also expelled Guthfrith from Northumbria in A.D. 937. Where Eamot was situated the chroniclers do not say, but its derivation from Ea—water, and Munt—mouth, indicates the mouth of the water, and Emot, a hamlet and a large estate in the Forest of Trawden, near Colne, both answers to the etymological requirements of the name in the Hallow or Saint’s Well, which pours forth an abundant stream, and has besides given name to a family whose ancestry is too ancient for genealogists to trace. (See Whitaker’s Whalley, p. 397.) It can therefore scarcely be doubted that this is the place intended, and if so, Athelstan would be well acquainted with the nature of the country. We must consequently inquire whether the military defences of this portion of the English Appenines were such at that period as to warrant his presence in these districts when engaged in warfare against Anlaf and the Danes.
The existence of a line of fortifications between Colunio (Colne) and Mancunian (Manchester) on the lower range of hills which divides Lancashire from Yorkshire, has been known to antiquaries ever since Dr. Whitaker completed his History of Whalley in 1818. He supposed the line to extend from Colunio to Cambodunum, but this I conceive is a mistake; for neither the locality nor the Ordnance maps give indications of any fortifications farther east than those on Twist Hill; whilst on the other hand they represent the line as continuous in the direction of Manchester, from Colne, by Littleborough and Rochdale. Several of these intrenchments were unknown to the historian of Whalley; but a recent examination of the principal portion of these interesting remains, (October 25th, 1850,) in company with my friend Benjamin Chaffer, Esq., has enabled me to enter more fully into their peculiarities and situation. For the sake of clearness I shall take them in order from northeast to southwest, in accordance with the numbers on the accompanying sketch-map of the district.

1. Castercliff is a formidable looking fortification, at a short distance from Colne, in a portion of what was once the Forest of Mereclesden (Marsden), and is supposed to have been the castra aestiva of Colunio. Many Roman coins have been found in the valley below, and it is situated on the Roman road between Colunio and Cambodunum, and at the junction of this with the vicinal way from Rigodunum (Rochester) to Alicana (Ilkley). The intrenchments form a parallelogram measuring about 550 feet long by 520 feet broad; but the walls appear to have enclosed an area of about 380 feet in length by 340 in breadth. The camp has been protected on the southwest front by a deep gully and also by a double vallum and foss, which are still entire about the whole crest of the mound. We were informed that many hundreds of tons of stones have been carted away from the walls within the last thirty or forty years, all of which appeared to have been subjected to intense heat. Large quantities still remain half buried in the soil, many of them completely vitrified, and others presenting a singularly mottled appearance from having been only burnt half through. The burnt sandstone and lime form excellent manure, and at the time of our visit a luxuriant crop of corn and cabbages had just been gathered from the broad ditches of this Roman camp. A less elevated plateau of considerable extent bounds the northeastern slope, which is again protected
by a steep cliff sloping down to the Calder, near Waterside. This would afford a convenient space for the exercise of large bodies of troops, or for the protection of the cattle belonging to the garrison; and it has probably been used for such purposes by the successive masters of the fortification. Being almost inaccessible on all sides except the east, where they are skirted by the Roman road, these defences, when complete, must have constituted one of the strongholds of the North, since they overlook the whole of the Forest of Trawden, Emmot Moor, a great portion of Craven, with the valley of the Calder, and terminate the eastern limit of the ridge on which Saxifield is situated. Castercliff has evidently been the key of this portion of Lancashire in the hands of the Romans, and its importance would undoubtedly not be overlooked by the Saxons and the Danes.*

2. Crossing Gib Clough, and passing along the Roman road, portions of which still remain entire, a distance of less than a mile brings us to SHELFIELD, on the summit of which the late R. T. Walton, Esq., erected a tall granite cross. This erection probably stands in the centre of a large circular encampment, of which some portions of the ditch are indicated by the undulations of the surface, and by a swampy part of the ground on the western slope.

3. RING STONES HILL, at a short distance, formerly contained a large circle of stones, erected either for purposes of burial, worship, or defence; but they were dug up a few years ago, and have since been used for repairing the roads.

4. After crossing Float Bridge Beck, and Catlow Brook, we next arrive at BROAD BANK, near Ridihalgh, on the summit of which are the remains of a circular intrenchment, measuring about 150 feet in diameter. There is no appearance of walls, but both the vallum and foss are perfect throughout the whole circumference. This station occupies a very commanding position, overlooking the whole of the Valley of Thursden, with the heights of Boulsworth in the distance, but it does not appear to have been of a permanent character.

5. Passing through Thursden Valley, to a corresponding crest on the opposite ridge called BONFIRE HILL, at the distance of about a mile, we find another circular intrenchment, 130 feet in diameter, and very similar

* In the map, C indicates a camp, B a beacon, T a tumulus, and F an entrenchment.
in character to the last. This encampment is surrounded by an earthwork rampart, which is still comparatively perfect on three of its sides, and easily traceable on the fourth. The rampart measures 700 feet in length by 450 in average breadth; thus constituting a most formidable post in an almost inaccessible position to an attacking force. At a short distance, on what is now called Delf Hill, there is a circular tumulus of loose stones, about forty feet in diameter, and two feet in average height. Both the station and the tumulus occur on heights which overlook the Valley of Swinden; the slopes of Briercliffe lie to the northwest, and Burnley is visible in the distance.

6. Pikelaw, on the same ridge, has much the appearance of a large tumulus; but, as its name indicates, it has long been used for the purposes of a beacon. There are two circular tumuli on Beadle Hill, within a short distance, but they have almost disappeared in course of cultivation. They have been composed as usual of loose stones mixed with earth, and have not measured more than thirty feet in diameter when perfect.

7. From this point the line diverges a little to the west, and on arriving at Twist Hill, which overlooks Holden Clough, Rogerham, and Swinden Valley, we find the remains of a square camp, which has long been known as Twist Castle. How it came to have this designation is by no means clear. Dr. Whitaker supposes the name to have reference to the ancient forests which once covered the district, and to indicate the "boundary of oaks." Should this conjecture prove correct, the castle will probably have given name to the township of Extwistle, in which it is situated. Each side of the encampment measures about 150 feet in length, within the trenches; the remains of the foss and vallum are very distinct; the latter being elevated considerably above the surface of the moor; and spaces still remain for the Pretorian and Decuman gates. A smaller enclosure occurs at the southeast corner, measuring about sixty feet square; and at a short distance is a circular tumulus of loose stones, about 45 feet in diameter. A few years ago this was elevated five or six feet above the surface, but its height has been much diminished in consequence of the stones having been carted away to form the road to the new quarry near Monk Hall. No remains were found in the tumulus during the excavations, but this may perhaps be accounted for from the fact that as yet the top only has been removed. Twist Castle occupies a commanding position on the western
slopes, and taken together with the next in order, must have presented formidable difficulties to an attacking force.

8. Leaving Twist Castle, and crossing Swinden Valley a little to the west, we arrive at Slipper Hill, near Wasnop Edge in Worsthorn. There are here the remains of Ring Stones Camp, an ancient enclosure much the same in character with the one just described. It is oblong in form, measuring about 200 feet in length by 160 feet in breadth, and has a smaller enclosure of about 50 feet square on the northeast side. The foss appears to have been upwards of twenty feet in breadth, and the elevation of the vallum is still considerably above the general surface. On a crest above are the remains of a beacon, and a circular tumulus is situated at a short distance, which although now almost obliterated, has originally measured about fifty feet in diameter. The name Ring Stones has probably been derived from the tumulus, or it may be from a circle of stones which has been removed at some former date, or again, from the death of Hyrnygry during the night attack. This last conjecture is rendered very probable from a remarkable tradition which is still prevalent in Worsthorn, to the effect—that the Danes constructed these defences—that a great battle was fought on the Moor—and that five kings were buried under the mounds.

9. Following the same direction, and crossing the River Brun through Thornden Clough, we next arrive at the Red Lees Intrenchments, which are described by Dr. Whitaker as certain "strange inequalities in the fields," having the appearance of foundations or temporary earthworks. They command the valley of the south branch of the Calder, and also a considerable portion of that of the Brun; their dimensions are such that the progress of agriculture has not yet been able to efface them.

10. The crest at High Law, within a short distance of Red Lees, was formerly crowned with a small fortification and several tumuli, but the greatest portion of these remains were removed so early as 1695. In that year many medals and coins, mostly belonging to Legions I, II, VII, VIII, XV, and XIX, were found here (during the removal of the stones and earthworks,) which were presented to the author of the Ducatus Leodiensis, by Charles Towneley, Esq., of Towneley, brother to Richard Towneley, Esq., the mathematician and philosopher. Thoresby describes them as having
been found "near Mere Clough, on the skirts of the wild moors that border upon Yorkshire; where a considerable heap of stones, &c., evidence the ruins of a Roman Fort or Station, as I am informed by Mr. Towneley, who generously sent me above twenty Consular and Imperial coins that he had procured from the workmen." (Museo Thoresbyanum, pp. 7, 8.) I have recently seen a coin belonging to the emperor Probus, which was found at Overtown in the same locality.

11. We now diverge a little to the east, and crossing the entrance of the gorge of Cliviger, we find EASDEN FORT on the opposite eminence. It is a small angular fortification, overlooking the passes to Todmorden and Halifax. The winter torrents have well nigh washed away the cliff on which it is situated, but enough remains for its identification as one of the series. Above Copy Nook plantation, at no great distance, are several oblong tumuli, which are still mostly entire. Tradition states that a battle was fought here, on Oliver Hill, during the Civil Wars, and that these are the graves of the slain; it is however much more probable that these tumuli cover the remains of more ancient warriors than those engaged in the struggles of the Usurpation.

12. Thieveley Pike, an ancient beacon on the crest above, looks down upon the OLD DYKE at no great distance on the Rossendale slope, and also commands a full view of BROADCLOUGH DYKE, a formidable and gigantic intrenchment near Bacup. It measures more than 1800 feet in length, is situated at the edge of a gentle slope, and has a trench at least 54 feet broad at the bottom. What can have been the object of such an extensive earthwork can of course only be matter for conjecture. From its position, it is capable of protecting a large army in front, but it is easily accessible from the east, and must have been abandoned by its defenders whenever the enemy had turned their flank. Its construction can only have been suggested by temporary necessities, since it has evidently been abandoned in an unfinished state. The forest of Rossendale in the times of the Saxons and the Danes, would have a real existence, and its sturdy oaks, of which the remains are still dug up in every field, might recall to mind the wood near which Adalis made the night attack, and where Hyryngrr and the Bishop of Sherborne fell, had not Worsthorn Moor a better claim to be considered as the theatre of these events. Dr. Whitaker conjectures that the name is derived from Wrdeston, or Wrtheston, the town or place of
Wrthe, "a genuine Saxon name, probably of the first proprietor," for such is the orthography in a charter of the time of Edward III. But it is not improbable that Worsthorn may after all be Worstan's Moor. The death of so high a dignitary of the church would be looked upon as a principal incident of the night attack; the field upon which he fell would naturally be associated with his name; and the tumulus near Ring Stones Camp, as tradition states, may contain the ashes of one or more of the opposing chiefs.

Such then are the remains of this line of fortifications, within the distance of little more than nine miles. For number and importance, they are probably unequalled in any part of the kingdom. Those at Castercliff, Twist Castle, and Ring Stones Camp, I take to be decidedly Roman in their origin. In the hands of such disciplined forces, they would effectually serve to keep the Brigantes in subjection, and the Sistuntii in security; the stations would be easily accessible to troops from Eboracum and Alicana; from Mancunium and Cambodunum; and from Coccium, Rigodunum, and Ad Alaunum; since they lie upon the vicinal way between Heptonstall and Colne, and upon the Long Causeway, which still exists as a high road between Halifax and Burnley, and is known as the "Danes Road" in one part of its course.* After the departure of the Romans, these fortifications would be kept up by the Roman-British troops as a protection against the inroads of the Scots and Picts, and would again of necessity be taken possession of by the Saxons when they undertook to defend the country against their devastating incursions. When the Danes began to contend with the Saxons for the mastery, they would naturally be compelled to attack these strongholds of Northumbria, and the slopes to the east and west of this ridge of hills would form the battle-fields for their possession. To these fierce invaders then, or their opponents, I am disposed to attribute the formation of the circular encampments along the line, as well as the Dykes at Saxifield, Thieveley, and Broadclough. Circular earthworks for the defence of their camps are known to be almost peculiar to the Saxons, the Danes, and their more northern allies; who nearly always chose the tops of hills on which to construct them; and they were always protected by a vallum and a foss.† Their mode of sepulture too corresponds with the general character of the tumuli found on the slopes adjoin-

ing. Small ones, composed of earth and loose stones, were formerly very abundant, and on Catlow, Extwistle, and Worsthorn Moors, rude earthenware urns are occasionally found a foot or two beneath the flat surface, surrounded by a few small stones set upright, and mostly filled with pieces of charcoal and calcined bones. After the destruction of the burh at York by Athelstan's forces, as already mentioned, I know of no locality in Northumbria able to compete with this line of defences in a military point of view. From beyond Castercliff to Manchester, each crest can boast of either its burh or its beacon. The signal fire on Boulsworth, immediately above the principal fortifications, answers to that on Pinhow; Pikelaw to Thieveley; Homildon to Pendle and Portfield; Billinge to Mellor; Cridden to Rochdale, Littleborough and Manchester; and thus whilst each hill top and slope bristled with troops, and sounded the alarm of war, the whole country could readily be roused to arms for the protection of their "hoards and homes." Whoever held these mountain fastnesses, most certainly secured the possession of some of the most populous and fertile districts of Northumbria. Their magnitude and importance in those times of comparatively rude warfare, would neither be unworthy of the presence of Athelstan himself, nor could Anlaf, after the expulsion of Alfgeirr, have chosen a more secure line of defences when providing for the contingencies of the Battles of the Brun.

The Saxon Chronicle is entirely silent as to the fitting out of Anlaf's expedition. It substitutes poetry for prose in its description of the battle, and thus has preserved to our times one of the noblest lyrics of the Anglo-Saxon bards. Florence of Worcester calls him "King of Ireland, and many other Isles," and further asserts that he entered the mouth of the Humber with a powerful fleet. Simeon of Durham, describes the naval force as consisting of 615 ships, but says nothing respecting its destination. (See the Monumenta Historica Britannica, p. 686.) Later annalists generally agree in supposing that the principal portion of the expedition was fitted out in Dublin; nor do they find any difficulty in bringing it round to the mouth of the Humber. Mr. Wright, in Tallis's History of England says, the fleet sailed "round the north of Scotland," but Hume is of opinion that it merely hovered about in the Irish sea. Without doubt, Anlaf would find it expedient to join the naval forces of his northern allies with a powerful division; the estuary of the Humber would form the
most convenient harbour for their debarkation; and hence we may reason-
ably conclude that Florence and his copyists are correct in the main. But
it must also be remembered, that at this period, the coasts of Lancashire
and Cheshire had long been in the hands of the Danes; Wirral occasion-
ally presented the appearance of a vast camp; Kirkham was one of their
strongholds in Amounderness; the estuaries of the Dee, the Mersey, the
Ribble, the Wyre, and the Lune, were familiar to the leaders of these
daring mariners; and the "Danes Pad," through the Fylde district, formed
one of the principal roads by which they penetrated into the interior of
Northumbria and Mercia.

It is therefore, not at all probable, that so skilful a leader as Anlaf
would omit to send large detachments into the mouths of the Ribble and
the Wyre. These ports lie almost opposite to Dublin, and would be much
more easily accessible than the Humber; the troops would be necessary in
order to effect a junction with the Cumbrians and the Welsh; whilst the
ships there stationed would afford the best means of passing

"O'er the deep water
Dublin to seek;"

in case of defeat. The confederate forces would then effect a junction with
Anlaf by passing along the Roman roads which intersected the district,
after he had penetrated "far into England," and I venture to presume
that the whole of his army was ultimately concentrated in the neighbour-
hood of the line of fortifications here described. Athelstan and his
forces would take up corresponding positions in the front; the existing
Dykes may have been formed as temporary lines of defence; and the
great battle was most probably fought on the slopes of SAXIFIELD, or
SAXONFIELD, immediately in advance of the principal encampments. Dr.
Whitaker in his History of Whalley, has preserved the local tradition which
prevails in Burnley and its neighbourhood, of some great engagement
"during the Heptarchy" at Saxifield, but he did not consult the older
historians for any confirmation of its truth. The frequent discovery of
bones, some of them apparently human, still serves to keep alive the
popular story, and pass it down to each succeeding generation. Such
remains were lately met with in large quantities when digging the cellar
at Lower Saxifield House; and not long ago a large number of small
tumuli, popularly termed "the graves," were levelled by the farmers for
purposes of cultivation. Iron arrow-heads are sometimes found in the
mosses, and in 1802, a massive gold ring, weighing 1½ ounces, was found near Holme.* But the most important discovery remains to be noticed. In 1840, upwards of 9,000 coins, a number of bars of silver, armlets, broken rings, &c., were found enclosed in a leaden chest near the track of the Roman road from Coccium (Walton) to Cambodunum; which is now well known to numismatists as the "Cuerdale Find." The coins were all minted between A. D. 815 and A. D. 930, and consequently "the treasure must have been buried during the first half of the tenth century."† Some of these coins were Arabic or Kufic; about 1000 were French; others were minted in North Italy; 2,300 belonged to the Anglo-Saxon Kings, of which 860 were of the reign of Alfred; 3,000 were of a peculiar character, bearing the inscriptions Siefredus Rex, Sievert Rex, Cnut Rex, Alfden Rex, and Sitric Comes. All these are the names of "mighty Scandinavian chiefs, who in the ninth and tenth centuries, ravaged the western lands," but Cnut's were the most numerous, numbering in all about 3000 pieces. The Sitric, here mentioned, fell in battle in England about A. D. 900; Alfden perished at Wednesfield, in A. D. 910; Sigfrid ravaged the English coasts in A. D. 897; and Cnut was a son of the first Danish monarch, who is said to have fallen in battle somewhere on the coasts of Britain. It has been remarked that no similar coins have been found anywhere else in England, except a few of Cnut's at Harkirke, near Crosby, in Lancashire; and hence the conjecture seems reasonable, that the "Cuerdale Find" formed a portion of Anlaf's treasure, which his followers abandoned and buried during their hasty retreat to the ships stationed in the estuaries of the Ribble, the Mersey, and the Wyre. Dane's House may possibly have formed Anlaf's head-quarters, either before the battle or after his defeat, and hence its name; for the "ship-fleet" destroyed by Athelstan's forces, as stated in the Saxon Chronicle, would probably be those left at the mouth of the Humber; since, he is represented by some historians as passing through Beverley on his return from the field of battle; or it may have been at the mouth of the Wyre, where human bones have been found, and where local traditions place the scene of a conflict with the Danes at the prows of their vessels.

But the evidence in favor of Burnley is not yet exhausted, for the name itself must not be overlooked in estimating the probabilities. The

* See Appendix. † Worsaae's Danes in England, p. 49.
rivers Brun, as we have seen, traverses the locality where tradition says the battle took place, and it has given its designation to Burnley from a period beyond the reach of history. In some old charters, the name of the town is spoken of as Brumley; others give it as Brunley; and so it continued to be named until about the middle of the last century. William of Malmsbury, and Ingulf of Croyland, speak of the conflict as the battle of Brunford; and the ford across the Brun, near Burnley, which lies at the foot of the long declivity on which Saxifield is situated, had given the name of Heysandford to the property of Sir Oliver de Stansfeud, in the reign of Edward the First. Geffrei Gaimar gives the variation Burnwest, which is almost preserved entire in Burnwains, the name of a farm in the neighbourhood; and the Wendune, or Wendun, as Thorpe writes it, of Simeon of Durham, is well-nigh identical in sound with Swinden, which we have seen is the name of a valley, and also of a mountain stream of some considerable magnitude which intersects the line of fortifications.

The transition from Brunford to Brumley, Brunley, Brunanley, and Brunaburgh, appears to me so natural and consistent as to place it beyond reasonable doubt, that they can only indicate the same locality; and taking this similarity of name in connection with all that has been previously advanced, I am of opinion that the claims of Burnley have been fully sustained, and that it may now be considered as very nearly a certainty that the slopes of Saxonfield witnessed the crowning incidents of the memorable Battles of the Brun.

APPENDIX.

ON SOME FUNERIAL URNS FOUND AT CATLOW, &c., &c.

The remains of antiquity are not uncommon in this district, for in addition to the Roman Coins found at Castercliff, it may be mentioned that others have been met with at Emmot, Wheatly Lane, and Mereclough. A tumulus which was opened near Law House, Cliviger, in 1763, is said to have contained a kistvaen and a skeleton; another in the vicinity contained a rude earthenware urn, partially filled with calcined bones. In 1766, a glass vessel was found at Overtown, near Townley, filled with brasses of Constantine and Licinius; and in 1773, two enamelled fibulae of copper were found on the moor above Holme. Some years ago, Mr. Spencer, of Halifax, opened a portion of the tumulus on Twist Hill, when an earthenware urn was found of a similar character to that found near Law House. Mr. Richard Shaw, about the same time, discovered a portion
of what he conceived to be the neck of a jug, when excavating one of the small tumuli on Worsthorn Moor, but he has unfortunately lost the specimen. The most interesting discovery, however, was made at Catlow stone-quanty in March, 1854, when two or three earthenware urns were met with a little below the surface, when clearing for the flag-stone rock. The urns when perfect, measured about 14 inches in depth, and 9 inches in diameter at the mouth, with a considerable swelling at the centre, as represented in Fig. A of the accompanying plate. They are formed of very coarse earthenware, unglazed, and are very slightly baked. The outer and inner surfaces are of a brown colour, and are considerably harder than the inner substance of the pottery, which appears of a much darker hue, as if it had been saturated with some liquid. The clay has apparently been mixed with straw, small portions of quartz, and rough sand; and is on the whole not very dissimilar to the coarse red earthenware still manufactured at Causeway Side, in Cliviger. This pottery has existed from a very remote period, and the character of the workmanship, even now, affords sufficient proof that rude material and construction are not always indicative of extreme antiquity. In general appearance, all these urns are not unlike that found in the Isle of Wight, which is figured, No. 28, Plate xiv, in Akerman’s Archaeological Index, as Anglo-Saxon, but is described, page 132, with a doubt as to whether it does not in reality belong to the Celtic period. The urns contained large quantities of calcined bones, pieces of charcoal, and soft dark earth. Most of the bones are supposed to be human, but are mixed with others belonging to the horse, and some of the lesser animals. A rude piece of flint was found amongst the bones, but from its decayed state, it is not easy to determine whether it has been an arrow-head, or a small celt. Two ivory bodkins were also found at the same time, which are represented of the full size in Figures B and C; they are exceedingly friable, either from age or from having been subjected to the action of fire before being deposited in the urns. The ornamental work on the outside of the urns found both at Catlow and at Extwistle, is precisely similar, and has been formed by very rude means; all the streaks and punctures are coarse and irregular, nor do they appear to have been formed by any instrument less primitive than the point of a stick. The urns, when found, were very much broken by the workmen, who were more intent upon finding treasure than careful to preserve these memorials of antiquity. That most perfect is in the possession of Captain Sagar, of Southfield, and the other has been presented by him to the museum of the Burnley Church of England Literary Institution, and is at present under the care of George Smirithwaite, Esq., Surgeon, who has kindly permitted me the free use of his collection in illustration of this account. Mr. Mayer, of Liverpool, considers these urns to belong to the British period, and there can scarcely exist any doubt as to the correctness of his opinion.