

**THE WALL OF HADRIAN, WITH ESPECIAL
REFERENCE TO RECENT DISCOVERIES;
TWO LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE
LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, ON MONDAY
AND WEDNESDAY, NOV. 3RD & 5TH, 1873**

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J. COLLINGWOOD BRUCE

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THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

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ON MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, NOV. 3RD & 5TH, 1873.

By THE REV.

J. COLLINGWOOD BRUCE, LL.D., F.S.A.,

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF ROME.

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THE WALL OF HADRIAN.

FIRST LECTURE.

ABOUT the year 79 Agricola brought his legions into the North of England. At that time a large part of the country must have been covered with forests. This would particularly be the case in the most fertile districts, those by the sides of rivers and streams. Partly on this account, and partly for security, the early inhabitants of the land seem to have planted their camps and villages in very elevated positions. Large stones, laboriously brought together, formed their lines of rampart; on these were heaped earth and smaller stones, and the whole was, doubtless, crowned with a strong palisading of timber. The circular huts formed within these lines were of similar construction. In many instances the huts were partially sunk in the ground, forming a shallow pit, roofed over by branches of trees thrust into the earth and brought together at the top. Over this a rude thatch was probably laid. The floors of these

kraals were flagged over in a rough manner. Not unfrequently it may be noticed that the stones in the centre of the building are reddened by the action of fire. Whether the smoke arising from this hearth or the cold it was intended to exclude were the greater evil, it would be hard to say.

Our rude forefathers would live largely upon the spoils of the chase. In a variety of ways they slew and ensnared the denizens of the forest. There is no reason to suppose that they did not occasionally cultivate patches of some hardy grain. When the skull of a mature Ancient Briton is examined, the teeth are usually found to be worn low down; indicating that the millstone had imperfectly done its work, and that the culinary art had not yet succeeded in materially relieving the labours of mastication. If, as we have supposed, the corn was chiefly cultivated in high situations, the harvest would often be a deficient one, and our hardy Britons would one and all of them know—what few of us have ever known—the pangs of real hunger.

No coins of the British period have been found in the camps of the North of England. Trade, therefore, can scarcely be said to have existed. They would no doubt barter their commodities for the products of other countries, but this could only be done upon a small scale. I cannot help thinking that the fine leaf-shaped swords, made of bronze (into the composition of which tin enters), that are occasionally found in ground tenanted by ancient British tribes, have been introduced from abroad, probably Phœnicia. These swords,

and the bronze shields which belong to the same era, show a degree of artistic skill much surpassing that exhibited by the other articles found in ancient British encampments.

The other objects to which I refer are querns, pottery of a very coarse kind, and stone implements. The very poor results of an excavation made in early British ground, as compared with Roman, is very striking. We are painfully impressed with a sense of the great privations which the ancient denizens of our hills had to endure. And yet these men sought to increase the miseries of their fellow men. Tribe fought with tribe—one clan made war upon another. Else why these flint arrow heads, these hatchets, these strong fortifications, these demarcations of territory—such as the Black Dike—these huge lines of earth-work like those at Stanwick? It is very strange that in every state of society, whether he has much to lose or nothing to lose, man is a fighting animal.

But I pass on. Of what religion were they? They have left us no records. They seem to have been totally destitute of any species of writing. As, however, in special localities the Romans of the third and fourth centuries have inscribed on their altars the names of gods unknown to classical mythology, such as Cocidius, Belatucader, Mogon, Vitiris, and others, the idea has been generally entertained that these were local deities, the gods of the people of the land; and that the Romans, fearful of their vengeance, paid them court along with their own gods. In doing so the

Romans followed the example of the Israelites. "Ahaz sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus which smote him; and he said because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me." 2 Chron. 24, xxviii.

The only other trace of anything like religious feeling that, so far as I know, they have left us, is to be found in those peculiar circular markings made



on rocks in the vicinity of their camps, and on the stones forming their graves. Mr. Greenwell, of Durham, first called attention to this subject in 1852; the late Mr. Tate, of Alnwick, and the late Sir James Simpson, have subsequently prosecuted the inquiry. The late Algernon, fourth Duke of Northumberland, took great interest in this subject. He thought that, if properly investigated,

it might throw some light upon the earliest and obscurest page of our history. In order to draw



attention to the subject, he asked me to procure engravings of all the examples I could find, and