

HAS TRANSACTIONS 1907

### SEVENTH MEETING, 27th August, 1907.

CHAIRMAN—Mr. J. W. KENNEDY, PRESIDENT.

## A FAMOUS OLD BATTLEFIELD.—By the late Mr. A. D. MURRAY.

Newcastle.

condition, once stood on Dawson Riggs, has recently been removed, and, I believe, is in the Hawick Museum. When we remember that these Roman roads were in early times the only safely traversible roads in the country, we are not surprised to find these traces of ecclesiastical buildings and erections along their course. And it is certain that this has always been regarded as an interesting locality, the halo of tradition surrounding it, mainly, no doubt, in consequence of its connection with events recorded by Bede. The name, Abbey Sike, attaches to a spot on the high road, just where it skirts Dawson Riggs; and there is a tradition that a religious house once stood there, and that crosses and other stones have been dug up on the spot and taken away, but I could not gain any definite information on the subject. However, what it is very important to note is the fact that this mysterious Carraig work is seen crossing the flank of the hill, dipping towards the ravine, and making its way towards the Roman road; and that here, to all appearances, it ends its course—a course extending all along the backbones of the Lowlands, from the Cheviots to the westernmost outposts of the Cheviots.

Without entering upon the vexed and difficult question as to the date, origin, and purpose of this Picts' Work, I may say that it appears to me to have been almost convincingly demonstrated that it never was or could have been intended as a wall or barrier, and that it must have been a protected way—a road traversing a rough and dangerous country, and defended by the material dug from the earth wall, formed by the material dug from the ditch, which might possibly have been originally strengthened by stakes. Its purpose, then, almost certainly, must have been that of enabling armed forces to traverse an unfriendly country on their way to fields of battle or plunder beyond. That is to say, it may have been, and probably was, a road by which the Picts of the north, whose southern outposts were the Fensland or Fensland Hills, crossed what once had been the border Roman province of Valentia, to reach the more desirable territory of the Romanised Britons in the south, which all early history tells us they ravaged so unmercifully after the withdrawal of the Romans. One can quite understand why the work should

The following paper, by the late Mr. A. D. Murray, was contributed twelve years ago to the *Natural History and Antiquarian Society*. It was presented this. In the early years of the Hawick Archæological Society Mr Murray contributed several papers of considerable value. We are indebted to the office-bearers of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Society for permission to reprint the paper, which is as follows:—

Dawson Riggs is a low rounded hill, situated at the very head of Liddesdale, or rather in the watershed that divides the source of the Liddle from that of the North Tyne. It is overlooked by the great mass of Peel Fell, the uttermost hump of the Cheviot range, and itself overlooks the depression through which the railway passes from Leadwater to Saughbrees. The highroad that crosses from Liddesdale into the valleys of the Ruite, the Jed, and the Teviot passes the base of the hill on the north; and, as I have said, the railway skirts it on the other or southern side. It is a wild pastoral district, but very pleasant on a summer day, such as that on which I visited the spot. As a locality, related to the early topography of this island, it obviously possesses interest, from the fact that here the Carraig or Picts' Work, which crosses the Scottish Lowlands, originating about the base of the Fensland Hills, and following the great watershed between west and east, to all appearances as this spot, and can visibly be seen dipping towards the Cauldron Burn, which runs along the eastern base of Dawson Riggs, as if it were making further. Now, just over this ravine of the Cauldron towards Peel Fell. But it can be traced no further. Now, just over this ravine of the Cauldron towards the Cauldron Burn, which runs along the eastern base of Dawson Riggs, as if it were making as this spot, and can visibly be seen dipping towards the head of the North Tyne valley, crosses well-known Roman road, the Maiden Way, coming over the hill barrier. From its local name of the Wheel Causeway the hill gets its name of Wheel Fell, and on its summit are still visible some slight ruins of a small ecclesiastical structure, known as Wheel Chapel, which was originally dependent on Jedburgh Abbey. These are not the only mediæval remains, for a stone cross, which, in a dilapidated