

THE VALE OF LYVENNET

INTRODUCTION

The river Lyvennet rises on the northern side of the range of hills stretching eastwards across Westmorland from Shap Fells. It runs through the parishes of Crosby Ravensworth and Morland, receives the tributary stream of the Leith, and falls into the Eden near Temple Sowerby. The distance from its source to its outfall is less than ten miles measured in a straight line; but the little valley is full of varied interest, to which each age has contributed a share. Half way down the stream, and out on the west, lies Reagill, and in it, Wyebourne; and Wyebourne was the home of John Salkeld Bland, who, nearly fifty years ago, compiled this manuscript history of "The Vale of Lyvennet."

John Bland's grandfather was a yeoman farming his own land at Reagill. He had a family of two sons, Thomas and William, between whom he divided it; Thomas, who was an artist and sculptor of no mean ability, remaining at Reagill, while William established himself at Wyebourne, a mile away, married, and also had two children; one being John Bland himself, the other a daughter, now Mrs. Dufton, to whom the thanks of this Society are due for use of her brother's manuscript, and for her kindness in supplying information about the family.

John Bland was only six months old when he lost his mother, from whom, perhaps, he inherited a constitutional delicacy from which he always suffered. He was educated at the well-known school at Reagill, and afterwards at Croft House, Brampton. Early in life he began to show a gift for drawing, but he never received lessons; his aptitude, like that of his uncle, was purely a natural one.

He also studied botany, geology and chemistry. Before [page iv] he was twenty-two he had made a geological map of the district; this came before the notice of some of the leading authorities of the day, and received high praise from them; it is interesting, therefore, as it affords us proof of the high standard of merit reached by his work. He afterwards went over to America for a time; an expedition comparatively rare in those days. During the summer of 1866 he made studies from nature of about a hundred wild flowers, painted in water colours, and had just finished mounting them before his death. For his weakness of health had shown itself in attacks of pneumonia when he took cold; finally consumption set in, and he died on January 4th, 1867, aged twenty-seven years.

But the work in which we are most interested is his manuscript "The Vale of Lyvennet." The book consists of ninety-one pages about 12 by 10 inches, filled with drawings and plans, of which there are about two hundred, large and small; with a written description of each. Infinite pains have been spent upon it. He has taken each object of local interest in turn, recorded minutely what is known about it, and accompanied it with at least one drawing. The work has not been quite completed, as the last three pages,

and pages 79 (a beautiful half-page drawing of Flass House), and 82, lack text; there are a few blanks left for measurements, and several spaces for pictures. It is, of course, the pictures that give the books its unique character, for they make everything a reality to the reader. The drawings themselves are beautiful; but even apart from them, a better account of the valley could hardly have been made, either in material or arrangement. And it is not unworthy to add that the text is written in the most delicate penmanship, almost as finely executed as the drawings themselves.

But his studies were not confined to antiquities or art, nor his reputation to his native valley. Mention has already been made of his geological work. The map was submitted to the Manchester Geological Society at a [page v] meeting on December 30th, 1862, with a paper entitled:- “On the Carboniferous Rocks in the neighbourhood of Shap and Crosby Ravensworth: a section of that series which lies on the northern and eastern extremities of the Lake District.” He also submitted a section from Wasdale Crag to the valley of the Eden near Appleby – distance about ten miles; which, with the paper, was printed in the Society’s Transactions, vol. iv., p. 44.

Mr. Bland was unable to be present, and the paper was read by Mr. E. W. Binney, F.R.S. Mr. Binney, who was one of the most eminent geologists of the day, afterwards made the following remarks: - “I became acquainted with Mr. Bland last year, in going over that district to look over some property. He showed me this map, and it occurred to me that I had not seen any map of a limestone district so well worked out by a local man. Mr. Bland has devoted many years to the examination of the becks and gills of his district, and has formed this section. I think the paper a very valuable one, because it shows how the limestone begins to be separated by coal measures.”

Mr. Joseph Dickinson, H.M. Inspector of Mines, President of the Society, added:- “I could have wished for the map to be published as well. I do not think we could hand over our funds for a better purpose.” But the expense was a serious matter, and the map, now preserved at Reagill, does not appear ever to have been published. The paper is written in a much more matured style than the present work, possibly because he is writing of matters that can be ascertained with greater certainty; he expresses himself in the manner of one who has a complete mastery of his subject.

As to the sources of his information, Mrs. Dufton says that his account of the manorial disputes was derived from a collection of old parchments in the possession of Mr. Salkeld of Meaburn Hill, his great-uncle; representative of a family which had been resident in the locality [page vi] since the reign of Elizabeth. To attack sixteenth century documents for information must have required a great deal of enthusiasm, especially in one with such a love of outdoor life; for these documents are dreary things, and, as Mrs. Dufton observes, they were very hard to read. Another instance of the thoroughness of his work is shown in the fact that he reproduces the heading of one of these in the old writing, an undertaking by no means easy; and an excellent reproduction it is.

He had evidently read a great deal, and had gone carefully through most books that describe his neighbourhood, and he collected and stored up what was related to him by his friends. His industry was extraordinary, and he is said never to have wasted a moment of time.

He probably owed much to Canon Weston, then vicar of Crosby Ravensworth, who took a kindly interest in his work, and used to invite him to the vicarage when he had visitors interested in science or archaeology. Among those whom he met were Canon Simpson, first President of the local Archaeological Society, who was then incumbent of Shap; and Professor Harkness, who once filled the Chair of Geology at Queen's College, Cork. He was also appreciated and helped at Lowther, where he saw the paintings by Lady Mary Lowther (wife of the famous "Sir Jammy," the first Earl) some of which he copied; while no doubt he learned a great deal from his uncle, Thomas Bland.

The latter, a man of varied talents, also deserves some notice here. He was famous for his Italian garden at Reagill, which he laid out and decorated with statues and oil paintings in the alcoves, all his own work; he was an excellent artist in black and white, and reputed to be a musical composer of merit.

His nephew tells us of his sculpture commemorating Charles the Second's halt at the head of the Lyvennet, and of the stone he set up to mark the place where the forefathers of the famous Joseph Addison had their home [page vii] in days gone by. But there is another work which can be seen by everyone; a pedestal and pillar surmounted by a figure of Britannia, executed by him, and erected at his expense, on the hill facing Shap Wells Hotel, to commemorate the accession of Queen Victoria. It was placed there in 1842; the railway close by was opened in December, 1846; so it stands within the view of all.

Mr. Bland did not attempt to immortalise himself by putting his own name upon it; it is a pity that persons visiting it have not been equally modest; for the pedestal, which bears bas-reliefs and an inscription, has been defaced by idlers for more than half a century, as their dated scratchings show.

He also celebrated this event each year by a large entertainment. This is mentioned by Whellan in his History of Cumberland and Westmorland, written in 1860, who says:- "A festival of a somewhat unique character is held here (at Reagill) annually, on the anniversary of Her Majesty's accession, on the grounds of Mr. Bland, which are richly ornamented with pictures, statuary, etc. A band of music is engaged for the occasion, and the day's amusements are interspersed with lectures, addresses, music, dancing, and other recreations." The gathering was actually held on the Friday nearest to the anniversary; on some occasions as many as 1,400 guests were present.

No memoir of Thomas Bland would be complete without some account of the

wonderful garden that he planned and made. John Bland has preserved one view of it in its old splendour; it is reproduced at the end of this book. The wall on the right of the entrance was known as "The Local Gallery," as paintings of local scenes, Shap Abbey, Lowther, Brougham and others, were mounted in alcoves there. Beyond, near the angle of the wall, was the "Shakespeare Gallery." Facing the entrance stands Sir Walter Scott; below three bas-reliefs, that on the right of the spectator representing Rob Roy, that in the middle Bois-Guilbert fighting on horseback, striking Athelstan down; the third, Prince Charlie.

[page viii] On the left of the entrance is a terrace with a statue of Music, holding a lute, emblematic of the Lyvennet; there are also statues of Addison, Burns, and Hugh Miller the geologist; for Thomas Bland, like his nephew, was interested in geology. This terrace stretches away to the left; against it, and facing the lower lawns beyond was a building for the musicians. The whole garden was lavishly decorated with paintings and sculptures; the last of the former were removed from the walls about three years ago. It seems almost incredible that one man should have accomplished so much work; but he had a marvellous facility for rapid work and simple execution. He could finish his work very finely, but seldom did so.

A description of the gardens, and the statues in particular is contained in Anthony Whitehead's *Westmorland Legends and other Poems*. I would have been pleasant to say something of Mr. Whitehead, whose memories are so closely connected with the work of the Blands; but it is a delicate matter to write of a man in his lifetime; and he is still living, and bearing his ninety-one years very lightly. Two of his stanzas are quoted in this book, to illustrate the tale of Crosby Hall.

Thomas Bland worked at art for its own sake, cared nothing for fame, and would have hated notoriety. He had at least one excellent chance of becoming known to London art circles, for David Cox (the younger), who had seen some of his drawings, was interested, and wished to introduce him to his friends. He gave Mr. Bland several of his own water-colour paintings, and some correspondence passed between them; but the introduction fell through. He had, of course, many visitors, some of whom came to see him only from idle curiosity. These he could not endure. For their benefit he had a large oleograph of Garibaldi set up in his studio. If they fell into the trap, and admired it, they were summarily dealt with, for he could be brusque to those whom he did not care about. The Garden Beautiful was free to all: but [page ix] he would not sacrifice time or convenience to a bore – least of all, an admiring bore.

There is one story told of a trick which was played upon him: about 1855 he went to Kendal to hear a lecture on electricity. He was sceptical of the marvellous powers claimed for it, and refused to believe that it would be impossible for him to let go the handles of the battery when the current was turned on. Having the courage of his disbelief, he went upon the platform to try, and unsuspectingly put his top hat between his knees. Then the operator turned the current on strong, and it was only after that top hat

was fairly flattened in his struggles that he was released, amid the roars of the audience; whereupon he fled from the room and back to Reagill, a wiser man – with a ruined hat.

He seems to have been credited with a certain amount of eccentricity, though this may have been due to a commonplace reading of unusual gifts and vigorous originality; but it is certainly the case that he was highly esteemed as a man of warm heart and kindly disposition, which attracted all with whom he came in contact; and in his own neighbourhood his death was greatly deplored. He died on September 18th, 1865, in his sixty-seventh year, unmarried.

But John Bland's work, good as it is, has an additional value, because there was at the time no systematic effort in this field of research. The Cumberland and Westmorland antiquarian Society held its inaugural meeting on September 11th, 1866, only four months before he died, and for some six years not much was done. Thus he was the first to plan the important stone circle at Gunnerskeld. This, like its neighbour at Oddendale, belongs to a class, rare in Britain, which consists of concentric rings of stone. Mr. C. W. Dymond, F.S.A., in publishing a plan of Gunnerskeld circle, says:- "So far as my researches have extended, no plan of this megalithic group has ever been published, nor, save in a [page x] local guide book, have I ever seen it mentioned." The book contains a drawing, a ground plan and a description of each of these remains.

But he never lapses into dulness. Indeed, he pokes quiet fun at the antiquary pure and simple. Certain earthworks, he says, have been supposed by some antiquaries to be a maze; a dilemma in which antiquarians are sometimes found. Writing of Crosby Park, he has a gentle thrust at those who deal of venison and vert, and ancient deer parks and forests:- "These things," he says, "are past and gone, except to the dreaming poet and the prosing antiquary."

His sketches cover a wide range. He puts before us each object of which he writes; heraldry, old buildings, picturesque landscapes, down to the bracelets and rings found in Skellaw quarry. And each of these pictures is a work of art, for his was a genius that touches nothing it does not adorn. He had no mean imagination; there is a vivid picture of man on horseback, rider and beast recoiling in terror before the vision of the Headless Horseman of Gaythorn Plains, which is galloping across their track in the moonlight. He has a humorous picture of a "Ghost seen by Bet Whistle" – a dead pollard tree, which makes a most menacing apparition, though probably the ingenuity of the artist has something to do with it. And over the first page, majestic in flight, soars the Roman eagle.

It has been possible to reproduce only a limited number of his drawings: in making a selection (no easy task), some preference has been given to those which represent objects no longer existing.

In dealing with the text, variations have been made as seldom as possible,

and then where the author might have wished an alteration, in accordance with later discoveries. Thus, the account of the settlement at Langdales has been curtailed, as its great mystery, a bank running from the pre-Roman village across the [page xi] Roman Way, has been explained by the recent discovery that the bank is modern. Part of the account of Harberwain is left out, as he takes Har, on the authority of a distinguished local antiquary, to be a man's name; and reasons accordingly. It really means high. Some of the quotations from Ossian are left out, as, though appropriately introduced, they divert attention from Mr. Bland's own work. The chapter on the history of Crosby Church, compiled from Charleton's History of Whitby Abbey, is omitted, as a recent account of the church has been published; while in the present book certain limits of size had to be observed. Incomplete sentences, where details of measurements are wanting, have generally been deleted.

This brief memoir attempts nothing more than a record of the life and work of John Salkeld Bland. If he should be forgotten, we should be the poorer for the loss; and yet his work was done so unobtrusively that a studied appreciation seems out of place. The publication of his book may cause his name to be connected in local literature with that of the Lyvennet. Perhaps this is the most fitting memorial for him – to be remembered as the character of the valley he loved so well.

CHAPTER I

WICKER STREET.

THE ROMAN ROAD CONNECTING THE STATIONS AT BOROUGH BRIDGE AND KIRKBY THORE.

The earliest historic record respecting the North of England was made by Tacitus, from whose works we learn that the Roman armies led by Agricola first advanced into this district and conquered the inhabitants then known as the Western Brigantes in the year A.D. 79, in the reign of the Emperor Vespasian.

The base of Agricola's operations was Chester, (Deva), the station occupied by the 20th Legion; with these he advanced northwards by the modern towns of Manchester, Preston and Overborough, and up the vale of Lune to Borough Bridge, at each place forming a station and connecting them by roads cut through the forests; the last station he placed in the only pass by which Westmorland could be conveniently entered from the southwest.* (*The route by Overborough, Borough Bridge and Kirkby Thore was the Maiden Way; but it is probable that Agricola's first advance to this district was made along the coast.) From Borough Bridge the road had gone nearly direct to Kirkby Thore, traversing the whole length of the vale of Lyvennet. Many antiquarians supposed it went to Brougham, but the name Wicker Street applied to an extensive hill on the west side of Crosby – a name significant of a Roman way – led to examination a few years ago and a road was found traceable from near Black Dub to Dale Banks, a distance of more than two miles, indisputably in the direction of Kirkby Thore: it is regularly formed and rounded in the middle, about thirty feet across, the ground being generally hard and dry; no trace of paved work is to be found.

The march of Agricola's army is said to have been straight as the track of a sunbeam, and his roads are generally considered to be carried in a direct line surmounting every obstruction. However this may have been in an open country, it is more reasonable to suppose that in a district like this they would overcome a difficult ascent by deviating to the right or left. In leaving Borough Bridge they have crossed the Lune twice, considerably to the right, in preference to going straight over the steep hills and numerous ravines of Loups Fell, which would have been almost impossible; then again, where are the first traces of the road, instead of ascending the steep cliff of the scar near Bousfield How, they have gone to the west, ascending and so coming by easier gradients to the top of Wicker Street. This is the most commanding point overlooking the vale of Lyvennet, and no doubt, as its name implies, it was an important point to the invading Roman armies, Wicker Street according to some authorities meaning "the gateway of the pass." It was from this point probably that Agricola's army first beheld our lovely valley; for he, after establishing a stronghold at the gorge of the mountain pass at Borough Bridge would either lead or send out a part of soldiery to survey the country northwards, a district abounding in forests and fastnesses in which roamed the fierce and revengeful Britons; their scouts

would of course avoid the craggy heights of Orton Scar, and following up the course of the stream from the north be led to ascend by the way along which the road was afterwards laid out: though we may reasonably allow that all the low districts were at that time densely wooded, yet it is highly probable that on the high lands were extensive openings clear of wood, or perhaps here and there patches of brushwood; such the character of the soil and its general void of wood at the present time leads us to imagine; the only brush now to be seen is on the top of the hill and known as Wicker Street Thorn, which, like the Shap Thorn and Johnny

Hall Trees is a guide mark for many miles round. Here by the side of the road is a square oblong enclosure of earth and stones which, after the construction of the road perhaps served as a *mons exploratorum* by which, and others such, the garrison at Borough Bridge could be warned of the approach of the enemy. The road from this point descends and crosses the Blea Beck; an embankment has been raised on each side and brought near together; quantities of huge boulders have been used to break it up and probably form a culvert. From here it crosses Slack Randy, passing near some entrenchments and curious stone circles called Yow Locks and descends Long Dale. In this field on the brow of the hill about Dale Banks is what antiquarians affirm to be a British village; it presents earthworks covering three or four acres of ground: these consist of irregular squares, circles, etc., formed of earth thrown up to the height of from one to three feet.*

(*For full details of the most recent excavations and finds, with plans, see reports on "A Romano-British settlement at Ewe Close, Crosby Ravensworth," by W. G. Collingwood, F.S.A., (1907-8) Transactions, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, N.S., vols. viii. and ix.)

Continuing the course of the road, it is traceable to the bottom of the hill, where it has crossed Odindale beck, after which all further traces have been obliterated by enclosures and the plough; the direction however is straight for Kirkby Thore, crossing the Lyvennet near Dairy Bridge, where there is an ancient paved wath, then past Lofters and over Castriggs in King's Meaburn township, across the Eden about two hundred yards above the present bridge at Bolton, where there are remains of an abutment, as of a bridge, with mason-work and grouting now overgrown with brushwood; thence in the direction of Kirkby Thore joining the more important road known as Watling Street from Bowes in Yorkshire. No remains of decided Roman character have ever been found in connection with this road, but this is accounted for by the fact that no settlement was made in the valley, it being but a thoroughfare along which passed and re-passed the Roman legions employed in the somewhat vain attempt to subjugate the wild Caledonians. It is possible this road or track was previously used, but of this we have no proof, but from that time up to the making of the present road over Shap Fell it was used as the great highway between the southern parts of England and Scotland.

CHAPTER II

EARTHWORKS.

THE SITES OF ANCIENT BRITISH VILLAGES.

The most important monuments left by the ancient Britons who inhabited this country previous to the Roman invasion are the several remains of villages. Caesar, in describing what the Britons call a town, says:- "It is a tract of woody country surrounded by a vallum and a ditch for the security of themselves and cattle against the incursions of their enemies." Strabo confirms this, and says further:- "That within the inclosures formed of felled trees they build houses for themselves and hovels for their cattle: these buildings are slight, and not designed for long duration." The vallum is expressed in Welsh by caer or dinas, the same with the Gaelic dun. Diodorus Siculus and Strabo tell us that the houses of the Gauls were wretched cottages, being constructed with poles and wattled work in the form of a circle with lofty tapering or pointed roof, and Caesar also says that the houses of the Britons were similar.

These it is true were of south Britain, but it is reasonable to infer that with little alteration those of the northern inhabitants would be similar. Some authors suppose the present Welsh pigsty to represent the form of the ancient British house. This is a circular building with a conical roof, and having a large circular enclosure attached.

In the district under consideration there are remains of earthworks which may be considered of this character. They generally consist of ridges of earth and stones varying in height from one to three feet, forming irregular squares, circles, passages, &c., covering a greater or less area of ground. In five of these are to be found small circular enclosures generally six yards in diameter, with a gap or opening on one side; each of the other larger enclosures have also an entrance and in some places a sort of street or passage communicates. The most extensive and distinct are the remains of Long Dale, which are skirted by the Roman road: in the middle part of these are seven or eight of the small circles. Another though much smaller is on Wickerslack Moor: this has five small circles, with two or three irregular squares and a large circle; a large area is also enclosed on the high side which is not cut up by any earthworks. In two of the small circles was found a rude pavement formed of large slabs of sandstone rudely laid down and fit together with smaller boulders of granite, &c., but no limestone; these stones bear evident marks of having been exposed to fire. The ground chosen for these enclosures without exception are upon the hard limestone rock, covered by a very thin layer of earth; this with the loose rock has been bared off and used to form the earthworks. They are also generally at a considerable distance from water.

Yow Locks, another of these villages, is on the open moor called Slack Randy; here only one or two small circles can be traced; but the ridges are very marked, many of them being formed of large boulders rolled together. These are very plentiful near; there are two peculiar oval enclosures formed solely by large boulders, the longer diameter of each being nine yards. Another village may be

seen in a field near Gilts; though very irregular, yet it affords traces of eight or ten of the small circles.

How Arcles, a little above Wood Foot affords a large circle, but only one or two of the small ones; these may have been obliterated by the plough. Bellmouth, probably a corruption of Bermont, is another between Reagill and Sleagill; part of this is quarried away, and about twenty years ago a human skeleton was found behind one of the outer earthworks. Another on Wickerslack Moor has only one small circle attached to a larger one, and enclosed by a large irregular square.

The new road cuts through it, and the plough will soon obliterate all trace of it, as it doubtless has done of many others in the now cultivated parts of the country. At Harberwain is another though in a great measure obliterated, yet still exhibits a few squares, &c.; connected with it is a rampart of earth; this seems to have been for some extraordinary defence.

Other entrenchments are still to be found more or less obliterated by the advance of agriculture; some of a strategic character which will be afterwards noticed, and others again that will forever puzzle enquiry for what purpose they were raised and by what people.

To the most ancient inhabitants many authors ascribe the origin of the various stone circles to be found in different parts of the country. There are two remarkable ones in this district, one in Gunnerskeld bottom, and another near Odindale Head. The former is situate on a level area elevated a little above the bed of the stream. It is a circle of large granite boulders eighteen in number, some of which are still standing upright seven feet high, while many have fallen one way or the other. The circle is thirty-eight yards in diameter; and within it is another formed by thirty-one stones much smaller in size and eighteen yards in diameter; within this has been apparently a mound, most of which is removed for the sake of the stones and the earth has been thrown into a heap outside; there are still some large stones left and three in the centre are situated as though they may have formed part of a cromlech. There is no record of anything having been found, and the word Gunnerskeld is of too modern a character to throw any light on the matter.

The one near Odindale Head is similar, at first sight inspires a truly Ossianic feeling. It is situated on a hill of "dark brown heath," it is formed of an outer circle of thirty stones not so large as those at Gunnerskeld, twenty-five yards in diameter, within which is another circle of twenty-one stones closely packed to each other seven yards in diameter; within this are a number of other stones irregularly laid, similar to Gunnerskeld. It was opened in presence of Rev. J. Simpson, but nothing was found excepting a small portion of black carbonaceous matter. A peculiar feature is that there is an upright stone placed outside the inner and within the outer circle on the south-east side. On the north side about seven yards distant is the remains of another circle, fourteen yards in diameter, having another within of four yards, but many of the stones have been removed.

Respecting the origin of these circles authors differ considerably, some considering

them to be the temples of the Druids, within whose mystic bounds sacrificial rites were performed; while others attribute them to a later people, the Pagan Saxons, Angles or Danes.

Odindale, like Gunnerskeld, is a name significant of the latter people. Odin was the one great god of the Gothic nations, from whom they all claimed descent, and to whom, of course, their greatest honours were paid.

There are also other circles much smaller in size and each on elevated ground, one near Threaplands is formed of seven granite boulders, and is five yards in diameter; some of the stones are six feet in length. Another on Harbyrn Rigg is six yards in diameter and formed of eight stones and another outside. On Wicker Street is another formed by eleven stones five yards in diameter, and near to it is a small one of four stones, three yards in diameter. Another on Harkeld is formed by ten stones, and is six yards in diameter; in digging in this one, a few inches deep was found a stratum of charred bones. The one on Harbyrn Rigg has three stones in the centre, but no trace of ashes: some of the stones are six or seven feet long, and have all originally been placed upright. These we may also attribute to the ancient Britons, probably the monuments erected around the funeral pile of important personages whose names and fame they have failed to record, but yet, in the words of the poet, "have spoken to other years."

The Druids in their temples had generally a spring or stream of water near. This is the case with the one at Gunnerskeld, but not so with the other, unless we can associate Anna's Keld with it; which is, however, half a mile distant. This well is mentioned by Camden, who says that like Euripus of old it ebbs and flows with the tide.* (*The exact wording is:- "Near the head of which (the Lowther) is a well which, like Euripus, ebbs and flows several times in a day," a much less remarkable thing. Apparently Mr. Bland's informant has misquoted in conversation. The second edition of Camden's Britannia (1723) comments that this phenomenon is not infrequent in rocky country, and not usually lasting; and that there was then no ebbing fountain to be heard of near Shap.) However it may have been then, it is not the case now; but devoid of this interest its position is one of dreary grandeur, being situated in the midst of the dark brown heath. To what people we may attribute the saintly name of Anna is doubtful, but it has at some time been an important spot, from the fact that it is the source of Crook Syke, whose waters have run through the gigantic temple at Shap, now known as Carl Lofts; a temple like Avebury in the south dedicated to the dread worship of the serpent. # 9# This idea is that of Stukeley; it had, at the time, a very large following, but is now rejected.) It is now almost destroyed, but it is considered to have been one of the most important monuments of antiquity in the north of England.

As Mr. Bland arouses our curiosity as to the origin of remains of this kind, it may interest readers to have a short account of the various opinions which have been expressed on the subject. These have been based mainly upon researches in Wiltshire, more particularly at Stonehenge and Avebury; and if these relics prove their founders to have possessed much knowledge and ingenuity, it can hardly have been more marvellous than that embodied in some of the theories formed about them.

The first scientific report on Stonehenge was made by Inigo Jones, at the wish of James I.; he thought it was a temple erected by the Romans, after the Tuscan order. Charleton, physician to Charles II., held that it was a monument of the Danish period. Aubrey, about the same time, attributed it to the Druids. Next came Stukeley's famous theory. Stukeley, a man of great learning, had read of the Druids, and had seen the circles; then he found a grotesque story in Pliny about an egg, miraculously produced from the saliva of serpents, and regarded as a charm by the Druids. So, he reasoned, the Druids made the circles for serpent worship; and, according to his argument, the complete temple consisted of a diagram of a snake, miles long, done in boulders, the circles being the reptile's coils! To demonstrate this, Stukeley made a plan of the Avebury remains. The result was not very convincing; essential parts of the creature's anatomy were wanting; and a snake is nothing if not continuous. But he sketched in these missing parts out of his own head, and the thing was done. Somewhat similar results were got from a hurried survey of Shap, about 1725. Such is the groundwork of the popular belief in "Druids' Circles," and yet, at the time, it was received almost as a revelation. John Wood, of Bath, about 1747, introduced the idea that the numbers of the stones corresponded to certain astronomical cycles or periods of time. Rev. Edward Duke, writing in 1846, saw in the Wiltshire remains a vast plan of the solar system as known to the ancients; the small circles at Avebury were the sun and moon at the summer solstice; the avenue of stones on either side was the northern portion of the ecliptic; Silbury Hill, a mile south, the Earth. Four miles north of Silbury, Winterbourne Bassett circle stood for the planet Venus; south of it were Mercury; Mars; Jupiter, represented by Casterly Camp, nine miles from Silbury; and Saturn by Stonehenge, sixteen miles off.

The vastness of the scheme will be appreciated by saying that an equivalent of this in Westmorland would place Saturn at Tebay, Jupiter at Shap, and the Earth at Eamont Bridge; or, following the railway, the viaduct crossing the Eamont. Mr. Duke notices that all the points are in almost exact line due north and south; and that Stonehenge points directly towards the sunrise at the summer solstice. About twenty years later, a good deal was made of practically the same fact, that from the so-called Altar Stone within Stonehenge, the sun on Midsummer Day appears to rise immediately over a distant stone called the Friar's Heel; hence it is argued that Stonehenge was an observatory. This is the modern popular theory, possibly because of its simplicity. Fergusson, about 1870, published a most interesting argument that these circles were set up after the Romans left; his conclusion is not generally accepted, though his views are treated with respect. Those who think that archaeology must be dull, should read his racy satire at the expense of poor Stukeley. One of his suggestions is that Long Meg, or perhaps the Grey Yauds circle, may be a memorial of King Arthur's battle in the Caledonian Forest. The best opinion is that of Mr. W. C. Lukis, who thinks that the object, in the first instance, was that of burial-places; that they were formed before the Roman invasion; while Mr. Arthur Evans assigned to Stonehenge an approximate date of 450 B.C.