

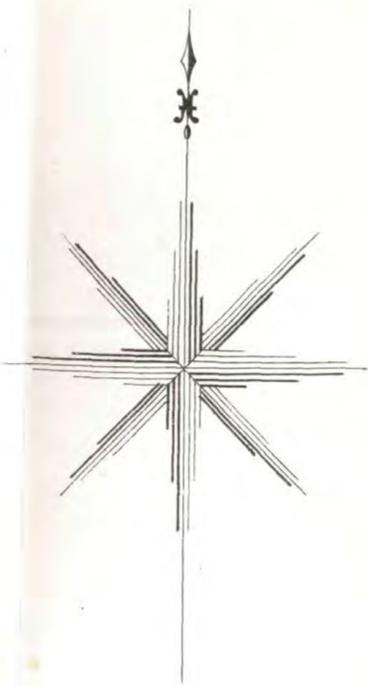
THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT IN BIGBURY WOOD,  
HARBLEDOWN.

THE intrenchment, in the Parish of Harbledown, represented in the accompanying map, is not noticed by any of our county historians or antiquaries, and at the present time its existence appears to be known to very few of the neighbouring inhabitants. It is somewhat remarkable that so large a work should not have been hitherto brought into notice, situate, as it is, at the distance of only a mile and a half from the capital city of the county, and in a district referred to by several writers as the supposed scene of some of Cæsar's most vigorous military operations, immediately after his landing in Britain. But readiness in the use of the pen is not always accompanied by a taste for topographical explorations in woods and bye-ways. Bigbury is undoubtedly the site of a British Settlement of high antiquity, in all probability of pre-historic origin, but of the date of its occupation there is no certain evidence.

The situation is high, and it commands a wide extent of country, except towards the south-west, where a prolongation of the hill contracts the view. At the distance of half a mile to the south-east, adjacent to the ancient manor-house of Toniford (now a farm known as Tonsford), the river Stour is crossed by a ford, which probably was the chief place of passage

until the founding of the city of Canterbury changed the direction of the traffic. The extreme length of the intrenched site, from east to west, is three-eighths of a mile; and the breadth, from north to south, a quarter of a mile. The outline of the work is very irregular, adapted to the peculiarities of the ground, without any attempt to alter the natural features. The external line of circumvallation consists of a double bank and trench, the inner line of a single bank and trench.\* The space between these two lines of embankment, on the north side of the hill, is very steep, but in other parts the inequalities of the ground, though considerable, are neither so great nor so abrupt. The original entrances were at the east and west ends, at B and C, between which the whole length of the enclosure has been traversed by a road which may be traced westward, nearly in the track of the present road, to Chartham Hatch, and from thence to South Street in Boughton Blean; eastward it still exists, in part reduced (within these few years) to a footway, and at the distance of about a mile falls into the turnpike road to Canterbury, the direction of which it appears to have regulated as far as to St. Dunstan's Church, whence it was probably continued, on the left side of the river Stour, down the valley, to Sarr and the Isle of Thanet. This road was certainly in use for a very long time after the intrenchments ceased to be maintained as fortifications, for they are broken through at the eastern part in several places by deeply worn tracks, which appear to have been relinquished, each in succession for a new one, as the continued traffic rendered them inconveniently hollow and wet; the

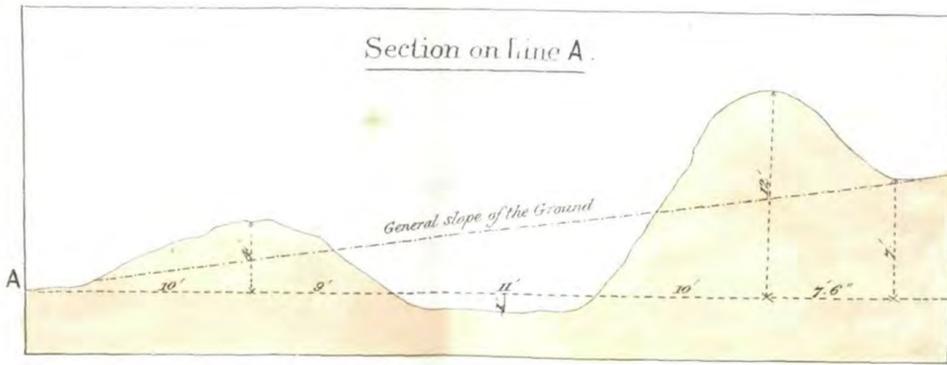
\* The brown tint on the map marks the embankment.



# Ancient Entrenchment

in

## HOWFIELD & BIGBURY WOODS.



Scale - 8 Feet to One Inch - 0 8 16 24 32 Feet.

Scale  $\frac{1}{2500}$  or 25.344 Inches to a Mile.

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 Chains.

deepest is that which appears to be the primitive way, and this seems to have been originally sunk below the level of the trenches, for the sake, probably, of increasing its capability of defence. At the eastern entrance, B, there are no very decided traces of advanced outworks, but at the western, C, there are clear indications of additional works having existed, outside the general line of intrenchment; and the natural shape of the ground has here, perhaps, been in some degree altered, to create the narrow isthmus which now connects the fortified site with the western range of hills.

At D, the embankments were levelled a few years ago, when the wood in that part was grubbed. The dotted lines, at E, mark the position of an abandoned gravel-pit, wherein was found, not many years ago, a deposit of various iron things, most of which were unfortunately dispersed and lost without being examined by any one interested in such objects; of those which were saved a notice will be found in vol. iv. of our 'Archæologia Cantiana,' p. 33.

R. C. H.