

THE BRITISH OPPIDUM AT COBHAM.

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I CANNOT ascertain that this interesting earthwork has been noticed by any one of the Kentish topographers. It seems to have altogether eluded observation, until, a few years ago, I and my friend Mr. C. Warne, the historian of Ancient Dorset, noticed it, while walking along the old road by the north side of Cobham Park, near the Poultry Yard. From this point the outer vallum is easily discernible, as the boundary of the upper garden and plantations of Cobham Hall. Here, the northern portion of the *oppidum* is seen to advantage; and much in its original state.

In connection with the Society's visit to Cobham Hall in 1876, by the permission and aid of Lord Darnley, we were enabled to trace the extent throughout; and by a somewhat venturesome estimate, to believe it contained nearly twenty acres. It was surrounded by a foss, some twenty feet deep, and a double vallum. For full three hundred paces these may be traced on the north and east sides. On the west they are visible; but on the south they have been wholly levelled, some centuries since, for horticultural purposes. Still, by following the course of the extant portions the entire course of the ancient circular circumvallation is easily ascertained.

On the north-west side the foss and *valla* descend towards a ravine, in which is a large pond intersecting

the fortifications, but presenting in itself a barrier no less formidable, and an unusually commodious supply of water for the inhabitants and their cattle.

The road, from which I have said the outer vallum is to be easily seen, is very probably on the site of a British track-way, anterior to the Roman *via* which ran by its side, and which is still there to be traced; as it is also in the wood at Swanscombe, beyond Springhead, in the vicinity of which, there is every reason to believe, stood the *Vagniacæ* of the Itinerary of Antoninus.

On the other side of the Park, between the Park and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, in the centre of a field is a fallen cromlech. One large stone of it, a conspicuous object from the Railway, attracting the attention of Mr. Warne, we visited it together, when a close inspection confirmed the opinion he had formed of it at a distance.