

Hoard of Roman Coins, discovered on the property of
W. W. Kettlewell, Esq., of Harptree Court, East
Harptree, on the slope of the Mendip Hills.

BY THE REV. PREBENDARY SCARTH, M.A.

DURING the course of the dry summer of 1887, the water supply of the village of East Harptree having run low, search was made for an additional spring, which might be brought as an increased supply to the village. This, it was thought, could be obtained from a piece of boggy ground about a mile distant south-west of the village. In cutting a channel, the spade of the workman employed in digging came upon a vessel of white metal, only six inches below the surface, which had been broken into two pieces, the lower portion fitting into the upper. When dug out it was found to contain a hoard of silver coins, some cast silver ingots cut into strips, and a silver ring having an intaglio of red carnelian bearing the figure of Mars carrying a trophy and armed with a spear. A drawing of the casket, as restored, containing the coins, and also of the ring and engraved stone, will be found in vol. viii (3rd series, pp. 22, 46) of the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1888, which contains a full description of the coins, by the Secretary of the Numismatic Society, John Evans, Esq., P.S.A., F.R.S.

The total number of coins amounts to 1,496, which are arranged by Mr. Evans in the following order:—

				A.D.
Constantine the Great	...	1	...	306—337
Constans	... ..	4	...	337—350
Constantius II	... ..	340	...	337—361
Decentius	... ..	1	...	351—353
Julianus II	... ..	718	...	353—363
Jovianus	8	...	363—364
Valentinianus I	165	...	364—375
Valens	199	...	364—378
Gratianus	60	...	375—383
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1,496				
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These were the products of mints in eleven different places, in some of which there appear to have been different “officinae,” or establishments. These are indicated by the letters P.S.T., *i.e.*, *Prima*, *Secunda*, *Tertia*; or by the letters OF.I., OF.II., OF.III.

The letters S.M., which precede the initials of the towns, may mean *Signata Moneta*; and the letters following, P.S., *Pecunia Signata*.

The mints from which the Harptree hoard were issued were as follows:—

ANT.	...	Antioch	...	...	22
SMAQ.	...	Aquileia	...	...	1
CONST.	...	Constantina (Arles)	...	...	27
P. CON.—P. CONST.		ditto	...	...	166
S. CON.—S. CONST.			...	...	183
T. CON.—T. CONST.			...	...	177
CD. CB. CA. CZ.		Constantinople	...	...	4
LVG.	...	Lyons	...	...	318
P. LVG.	...	...	...	...	114
S. LVG.	...	...	...	...	142

S.M.N.	...	Nicomedia	...	...	4
RP. RB. RT. RQ.		Rome	...	...	99
SIRM.	...	Sirmium (Pannonia In-			
		ferior, left bank of			
		river Save)...	...	...	6
SIS.	...	Silicia (Pann: Superior)			1
TSE.—TES.	...	Thessalonica	...	...	12
TR.—TRPS....		Trèves	...	...	207
Uncertain	...	...	...	...	18

More than three-quarters of the whole hoard were struck at the two mints of Arles and Lyons, and a seventh at that of Trèves. Fuller details will be found in the learned paper by Mr. Evans, already alluded to, and I cannot sufficiently express to him my thanks for the trouble he has taken in classifying this hoard, which was first placed in my hands by Mr. and Mrs. Kettlewell, and, with their approval, handed by me to Mr. Evans.

It is much to be wished that similar discoveries could at once be made known to the Secretary of the Numismatic Society, that the coins might fall into hands capable of classifying them, and drawing from that classification the historical information they contain.

The locality in which this interesting discovery took place is not far from the line of Roman road which traverses the Mendip hills, from the port at Uphill to the well known city of Sorbiodunum (Old Sarum). Along this line of road Roman stations exist, and in the neighbourhood of these many Roman coins, and also Roman pigs of lead, and other remains have been found, especially at Charterhouse on Mendip, which has yielded a rich harvest.¹ Coins of an early date have been found there, which show that the mining operations of the Romans reach back to the first occupation of this island.

The date of the latest coin found in the Harptree hoard

(1). See *Journal of Archæological Association*, vol. xxxi, p. 129, 1875.

would bring us to the time of the Emperor Gratian, about A.D. 376—383. The dates of the earliest Roman stamped masses or pigs of lead, are those of Claudius (A.D. 49) and Vespasian. We have, therefore, clear proof of the occupation of this portion of the country by the Romans for more than 300 years, and probably even later. The revolt in Britain, under Maximus, took place soon after the date of the latest coins belonging to the Harptree hoard, or about A.D. 387. It is not improbable that the disturbed state of the province at that period led to the concealment of the coins, which have continued in their hiding place for full fifteen centuries!¹

The hoard was found in boggy ground, always wet, near the source of a spring.² This spring may have been more plentiful in past ages. At any rate, it is interesting to know that other hoards of coins have been found, placed under the tutelary guardianship of the goddess presiding over springs, and that coins were often placed there as votive offerings.

The worship of springs is of very ancient date, and we have proof of it in this island, as at Bath, and in other places. An altar, together with votive coins, was found near the source of one of the hot springs; and in 1875 coins and offerings were found at the source of a small stream at Horton, in Dorsetshire.³

The sacred fount (*fons sacer*) was an object of veneration

(1). When Valentinian assumed the purple, A.D. 364, he took his brother Valens as colleague, and afterwards associated with himself his sons, Gratian, and Valentinian the younger. The condition of Britain at this period was very deplorable; Piets, Saxons, and Scots made continued inroads upon the Roman province. Gratian, when he became sole Emperor, A.D. 379, chose Theodosius, afterwards called the Great, as his partner in the empire. In the year A.D. 383, Theodosius shared the empire with his son Arcadius. At this time CLEMENS MAXIMUS, who had been sent into Britain to repel the incursions of the Piets and Scots, was proclaimed Emperor by the soldiers, and in order to support his claim passed over with his forces to the continent, thereby leaving the province but imperfectly protected. This was once more repeated in A.D. 407, under Constantine the Userper, 24 years later.

(2). It is marked as a spring on the 6-inch Ordnance map.

(3). See *Journal of Archæological Association*, 1876, p. 61.

in heathen times, and the rites peculiar to the worship of springs were called "Fontinalia."

A very interesting discovery of a large hoard was made in Northumberland, at Carrawburgh (Procolitia), on the line of the Roman wall. Here was a well cased with masonry. The discovery of the coins is thus described by Dr. Bruce:—"The surface of the well became grass-grown, and it was lost to sight, and almost to memory, when some lead miners, thinking to strike upon a vein of ore, began their operations here. Coming in contact with the upper courses of the stone framework of the well, they rightly thought that further search in that spot was vain;" but a well known antiquary, and one who has for years past devoted himself to the study of the Roman remains along the line of the wall, and to their careful preservation—Mr. John Clayton of Chester—hearing that the well described by Horsley (B.R.), had been found, gave directions that it should be explored. This examination revealed a mass of treasure deposited in the well. When the stones were removed, a mass of coins, chiefly of the lower empire, was discovered, as well as carved stones, altars, vases, Roman pearls, fibulæ, etc., lying in an indiscriminate mass. These seem to have been cast into the well as a place of security, and committed to the tutillary guardianship of the goddess COVENTINA, to whom an altar there found was dedicated, bearing the following inscription:—

DIE. COVE
NTINE. A
VRELIVS
GROTVS
GERMAN.

But not only was this altar found, but a sculpture also, having three female figures, two bearing an urn in the left hand, and with the right pouring the water from a second, above which each nymph is seated; a third faces the others, and holds the urn in the left and pours out water from another

with her right hand. Also upon another inscribed slab the goddess herself appears, reclining against her urn, which is pouring out a copious stream, and she bears a leafy branch in her right hand, underneath which is the following :¹

DEAE
COVENTINAE
T. D. COSCONIA
NVS. PR. COH.
I. BAT. L. M.

The number of coins found in the well amounted to about *sixteen thousand*—four being gold, the rest silver and bronze—ranging from Mark Antony to Gratian. It may be noted that the date of the latest coin of this hoard corresponds with that of the Harptree “find,” and carries us also to the revolt under Maximus, who withdrew so large a force from Britain that he left the garrisons on the wall, and other parts, too weak to hold the country against their formidable neighbours. Here the military chest seems to have been consigned to the well, and the custody of COVENTINA, on some sudden irruption of the Caledonii or other dwellers beyond the wall.

At Harptree the hoard may have been either the accumulation of a private individual, or may have been treasure under the care of the officer appointed to guard the Roman mines in the Mendip district, and to keep the Roman road secure.

The coins in the Harptree hoard are remarkably well preserved, and do not seem to have been long in circulation; and the finding of pieces of cut silver, five in number, would lead to the supposition that they were intended for coinage.

Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Kettlewell, on whose property this interesting hoard was found, twenty-five coins of rare type have been handed over to the national collection in the British Museum.

(1). See *Hand-book of Roman Wall*, by J. Collingwood Bruce, LL.D., 2nd edition, 1884, p. 106, and pp. 114, 115.

I cannot but express my thanks to that gentleman and lady for having called my attention first to this very interesting discovery, and then having permitted me to place the coins in the hands of the Secretary of the Numismatic Society, from whose careful and valuable investigation, published in their proceedings, I have been able to draw so largely in this paper.¹

Among the coins found in the well of Procolitia (Carrawburgh) were a very large number of the second brass coin of Antoninus Pius, struck on the 4th Consulship of that Emperor (A.D. 145). On the reverse of this coin, which has the legend BRITANNIA above, there is the seated figure of Britannia on her rock. She sits disconsolate; she has no helmet on her head, no sword, no spear in her hand, her banner is lowered, her head droops, and her shield rests on the earth! In the exergue are the letters S.C. This coin, of which 318 were counted, must have circulated in Britain, a sad token of her humiliation! But such coins were not uncommon under imperial rule.

In the collection of coins made by M. le Vicomte de Ponton d'Amécout, at Paris, were two similar coins, not relating to Britain; but the one to Germany, the other to France. They have the head of Constantine the Great, crowned with laurel, on the obverse side; and on the reverse, GAUDDIVM ROMANORVM. In the exergue, ALAMANNIA,

(1). See *Numismatic Chronicle*, vol. viii, 3rd series, pp. 22—46.

At Saintes, the ancient Mediolanum Santonum, is a fountain named after Sainte Eustelle, a daughter of a Roman governor of Saintes, who, according to the legend of the place, was sought in marriage by many suitors, but had resolved to devote herself to a religious life, having been converted to the Christian faith by Saint Eutropius. One day, when hard pressed by her suitors, she stamped on the ground, and a *spring* issued forth. This fountain is still visited by women, and on the 21st May, which is kept in her honour, girls come thither and throw *pins* into the water. If these are found at the bottom in the form of a cross, a husband is expected within the year.

St. Euthropius suffered in the Decian persecution (A.D. 249—251), and is said to have been secretly burned by St. Eustelle. (See *L' Histoire Monumentale de la Charente Inferieure*, pp. 48—50; quoted in an article on "The Antiquities of Saintes," by Prof. Burmel Lewis; *Archæological Journal*, vol. xliv, p. 172, 1887.

and *Germany* sitting on the ground in an attitude of sorrow, and at her back a trophy. This is a gold coin.¹ Also another, with the same head and legend, and on the reverse, GAVDIVM ROMANORVM. In the exergue, FRANCIA and *France* seated on the ground in an attitude of sorrow and behind her a trophy; also of gold.² These coins commemorate the subjection of these countries to the Roman power in the time of Constantine.

The Franci are first mentioned in history A.D. 240, and had frequent wars with the Romans, and at length settled permanently in Gaul, but it was not until the time of Clovis, A.D. 496, that the kingdom of France was firmly established.

The examination of these coins brings vividly before us the early condition of our present great nationalities, and through what vicissitudes they have passed.

(1). See Catalogue, No. 674.

(2). *Ib.*, No. 675.
