

On some Roman Remains at Long Sutton, Somerset.

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THE Roman remains to which I refer have been found recently in a large field, bounded on the north by the road from Somerton, and from Ilchester to Long Sutton, and running down towards the village green. This field is being gradually quarried over for road stone; the stone lying in two layers, separated by intervening clay. A few bronze coins of the emperors immediately preceding Constantine have been found from time to time; and frequent fragments of pottery, including both second rate Samian ware and rougher material of local manufacture. Amongst other fragments we recognise a portion of the ear of a large amphora. Above the upper layer of stone and in the surface soil were found two urns containing calcined bones; they stood about nine inches in height, with a well-turned rim and rather a rotund body. Locally these urns are of considerable interest, as they are of exactly the same size, figure, material, and ornamentation as the fragments of pottery which occur in such large quantity, associated with clinkers, ashes, and other rubbish, in the mounds in the Huntspill levels below Cossington, which were rightly described by Mr. Stradling, in the first volume of the *Proceedings*

of this Society, as the rubbish heaps of Romano-British potteries. We now know from the discovery of these urns, with human ashes and their associated coins, at Long Sutton, the approximate date of the potteries, and the reason for turning out such vast quantities of vessels of one material and design. It is a proof of the large population of the district during the occupation of the Romans, and is evidence that by this date the Roman influence was so strong as to have made cremation the general custom. Many of the mounds near Cossington have been destroyed, but about thirty can yet be identified; some of the mounds being from thirty to fifty feet across. Certain areas of the natural stone in the field at Long Sutton were noticed to show signs of calcination, as if the sites of funereal fires.

Two other burials found in the field are of peculiar interest: they are those of two adults,—one certainly that of a man. One of these graves or tombs was carefully examined, and was found to have been made by removing the upper layer of stone and the clay, down to the surface of the lower layer of stone, which formed the floor of the grave; the sides were roughly formed of upright slabs of lias, and similar slabs covered the remains. The skeleton was lying on its back and fairly orientated; the feet toward the east. From the feet to the cervical vertebræ the bones of the skeleton were in fair order and juxtaposition, but the head had been removed, and was found lying to the right of the pelvis. The other burial, found previously, was not so carefully examined, but the workman described it as buried with the skull between the legs. Nothing was found in the grave beyond the bones and a few iron studs, possibly those of sandals. The burial without cremation, and the orientation, seem to suggest that the remains may be those of Christians who had suffered decapitation, whether in martyrdom or otherwise. Amongst other Roman relics found in the field is a small rectangular flat slab ($2\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{11}{16}$) of Lydian stone; or Lydite, the material used by jewellers for testing the fineness

of gold by the "streak"; it is bevelled on all four edges. At the British Museum there is a similar slab, but of marble, which is not nearly so hard a stone, which has been identified as a stone used by the Roman apothecaries for rubbing down into powder hard minerals, such as hæmatite, which were used as medicines in the ancient pharmacopœia. This is no doubt a stone used for the same purpose. A small pair of shears or scissors, similar to those shewn in the London Guildhall Museum, and to one found recently at Glastonbury, is also of interest.