

THE EARLY POTTERS' ART IN BRITAIN.¹

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1. *Introduction.*

The importance of potsherds in archaeological and historical research can hardly be exaggerated. Fragments of pottery are practically imperishable. Even in the case of coarse ware which has not been baked or only imperfectly fired, although the vessel returns to clay, its form is often indicated by the streak of earth of different texture and colour. Generally, however, a vessel that has passed through the kiln resists the action of changes of temperature and moisture even in our climate, and Roman or mediaeval rubbish pits yield up their broken vessels much as they were when they were thrown in.

When Norman work is found associated with architecture of later date it is often too hastily inferred that a church or other building of Norman age once stood there, whereas the true explanation is that a ruined castle or ecclesiastical edifice in the neighbourhood has been resorted to as a quarry, and its dressed stones have been used for the new building with the beautiful mouldings turned inwards so that only the flat surfaces were exposed, till some recent restoration has revealed the character of the block, and it is carefully built in again so that the mouldings can be seen, to indicate the supposed Norman original of the building.

No mistake of that kind can occur in the case of pottery. Each fragment truly tells its own tale.

Pottery is a fragile material. The pitcher got broken on the way to the well and the earthen cooking-pan cracked in the flame or slipped on the burning wood, and the useless pieces were thrown out of the way into the ditch or other usual receptacle for household rubbish.

¹ Read March 5th, 1902.

There they remained until the necessity arose for clearing the channels, when they were thrown out to form part of the surface soil, or in many cases until modern excavations have accidentally exposed them. In such places potsherds are abundant and representative of all the common types of ware used in a household of the period. That period may be of very long duration, and often must be regarded as a succession of periods during which many changes have passed over the place.

It is not objects of rare occurrence that are of most value for classification or the determination of stages in unwritten history, but those objects of which we are almost sure to find traces if they ever existed. From this point of view pottery is the most valuable of all, seeing that from the nature of the case fragments must be common wherever pottery has been in common use.

In most cases pottery has distinctive characters which may be recognized even on small fragments. Similar requirements produced similar results, and therefore the pottery must bear a constant relation to the habits and customs of the people who made and used it. Sometimes it is found to have been modified as time went on. Sometimes a new type is adopted by or imposed upon a conquered people, but among people of low civilization it would appear that in ancient times as now domestic appliances were but slowly changed.

There is much to be learned from potsherds as to the conditions which have prevailed in any district. The character of the pottery must depend upon the nature of the clay, and we have to enquire whether the potters found it on the spot or had to go far afield for any of it. We can see whether they selected a clay free from fluxes, or "race," or chips of stone. We can judge from fragments whether the potters understood the results of underbaking or overburning; what skill they had in manipulation and what taste in ornament.

Potsherds are in archaeology what characteristic and representative species are in geology. They tell us the succession and geographical distribution of the people who made and used the ware. There is nothing else that gives us such trustworthy and generally available

data by which to trace the story of migration and conquest as the fragments of common pottery left where broken—an imperishable record of an episode in history.

Yet where can we find the fragments of pottery of various districts arranged geographically, and in accordance with their associations, in such a manner as to enable us to compare the general *facies* of new finds with that of which something has been already established?

The opportunity is passing away for ever, as the destruction of this kind of evidence is going on apace. New residences are being built over the homes of the ancient folk, and there is only a limited number of sites where such evidence can be obtained in the future.

In the short contribution which I offer to the Institute, my aim is to point out by reference to special examples the value of the evidence derived from potsherds; to suggest a modification of commonly received views in respect of the classification of some ancient pottery; to insist upon the continuity of the potters' art in Britain from the earliest times; and to explain the apparent sharp break between the pottery which is grouped under the head British and Roman ware, as well as between the Roman and pre-Norman English ware, and between the Saxon and mediaeval.

2. *Nomenclature.*

The word British is a convenient name for all ware of the character manufactured and used in this country previous to the Roman occupation, with the exception of that which has been described under the title "Late Celtic."¹

Roman is used to designate all that type of pottery which was brought in by the Romans and soon entirely superseded the native ware.

Saxon is applied to that poor but often highly-ornamented pottery found in cemeteries with weapons and personal ornaments, which are referred to the

¹ Arthur Evans, *Archaeologia*, 2nd Ser., Vol. II (Vol. 52, pt. 2), pp. 315-383.

Teutonic people who came over in small bodies from the continent after the withdrawal of the Roman legions and formed a large part of the English people before the Norman Conquest.

Mediaeval includes the pottery that came in soon after the Norman Conquest, and lasted without much change down to the time of Elizabeth at any rate, and has by gradual modification developed into the common ware of recent times.

These terms are not ethnological. The use of pottery was known through long ages before the arrival of the Romans, and the Romans found many very different races in Britain when they landed. The Roman troops who were sent into Britain were themselves drawn from many different peoples. During the Saxon period, Engles, Jutes, Danes, and various Scandinavian and German tribes arrived among these mixed nationalities which had been welded together by Roman discipline, but we have not yet learned how to distinguish between the pottery in fashion among these various tribes.

The Norman Conquest did not bring in so many new elements as one might at first be inclined to suppose, for a mixture of Scandinavian, German, and Celtic, similar to that which had taken place in the British Isles, had long been going on along the continental shores from which the Normans came.

Nor have these names any strict chronological meaning. Although the British commenced before the Roman, the Roman before the Saxon, and the Saxon before the mediaeval, they overlapped one another, and it is quite probable that we may some day be able to prove that British, Roman, and Saxon types of pottery were being manufactured simultaneously in different parts of the country.

A victory, an invasion, or a reign which marks the commencement of a new condition of society may be capable of precise chronological definition, though its influence was at first felt over a very limited area, and though the old order of things prevailed on the outskirts for many a long year after the change had been established at the centre.

So it is with regard to pottery : the introduction of a

new kind of ware may have been sudden at the centre, but its extension into the outlying parts of the country very slow; after the Romans had come and gone, and while Saxon urns were being buried in the south and east of England, British tribes still preserved their own customs in the far-off north and west. We cannot classify ancient pottery on a strictly chronological basis.

We must therefore be allowed to use these words, British, Roman, Saxon, Mediaeval, which are quite convenient for our present purpose, in a somewhat arbitrary and elastic manner, as indicating a type of ware connected, it is true, originally with certain races and ages, but in the vicissitudes of history extending beyond the bounds of nationalities and chronological limits.

3. *British.*

We must not imagine that the tribes of Britain were savages. There were differences of race, culture, and discipline among them, but the people with whom the Romans first came in contact were already far advanced in constructive arts and enjoyed a high civilization. We know little of their houses and towns because they were built of perishable materials which were easily destroyed by fire and decay. How little remains even of our Roman villas save the stone or brick base, the tessellated pavement, or the plaster of the walls.

A difficulty arises from our having at present no means of recognizing ware introduced before the Roman conquest, which had been improved by contact with the Romans or other continental peoples more advanced in this respect than the inhabitants of Britain, who were in constant communication with the continent long before the Roman invasion, as we learn from Caesar, and as has been shown by Mr. Arthur Evans in the able paper¹ in which he gives an account of his excavations near Aylesford.

It would be a good thing if the learned author of that paper would rename the type of ware he describes in it,

¹ *Op. cit.*

seeing that "Celtic" is not sufficiently well defined to be of use for racial or chronological distinctions, and should be reserved as a linguistic term. If "early Celtic" has to become an equivalent for British, we know that it must include many tribes which no one would call Celtic. He might call it Aylesfordian or some other name that would indicate the type to which he refers.

British urns vary so greatly in form and ornament as to suggest that they were nowhere turned out in large quantities made to order after some conventional pattern, but rather that they depended largely upon the taste of the individual potter. Still there is generally a recognizable type running through them which is more evident to those who have been engaged in the work of excavation and have had opportunities of observing the characters of innumerable fragments of the commoner ware. Unfortunately it is not the common every-day pottery of one family, or tribe, or age, that we see described and figured, or find accessible in our museums, but some sepulchral urn more elaborately ornamented than usual. Some vessel of peculiar form is reproduced over and over again in illustration of British ware. It is a comparison of the fragments of common ware which the people used and broke every day, that is needed to help us to read the history of migrations and invasions, rather than a record of rare and exceptional types or a collection of only perfect and well-preserved specimens. There is often a repetition of similar types in one district which suggests the possibility of our being able with more care to arrive at a rough grouping, based upon form and ornament, which may have some relation to the distribution and mixture of nationalities.

When we remember that we are dealing with such a number of different races, it does seem incredible that we should not have obtained more evidence than we have to help us in the discrimination and classification of objects in common use at any rate from the end of the neolithic age to the Roman invasion.

The rudest kinds of ware which were extemporized in a hurry to meet some special requirements were much the same in every age. They were merely lumps of clay pressed out into a basin shape, like the mud-pies which

children make. Some were merely squeezed into the required shape with the fingers without any lathe, while some look as if they had been made on a sort of plate which was turned with one hand, while with the other the clay was manipulated. At Ordessau, in the Pyrenees, this process is still carried out, and each housewife makes her own household pottery in this way. The vessels are then filled with and packed in dry fern which is set on fire, and the whole covered over with earth and sods so as to form a sort of smother kiln. The result is a ware much resembling the ruder kind of pottery of which we are speaking.

One of the characteristics of the rough-textured ware is the constant occurrence of calcined fragments of siliceous rock in it, which when burnt become more conspicuous. The British ware, being all coarse, generally contains them. We see the same thing, though not so marked, in the Saxon urns, which are also of coarse texture, but in their case it was sometimes found desirable to select a finer clay when it was intended to mould a good deal of detailed ornament on the surface. In the coarse Roman and mediæval ware the same thing occurs.

The simple explanation seems to be, not that the potters introduced the angular grit, but that they used surface clays which were more or less full of such chips, and that in some cases they had not learned how to get rid of the fragments of stone, and in others did not think it necessary to take the trouble to wash the clay for the manufacture of the rough kind of ware.

Another consideration, and one which should teach us caution in generalizing too rapidly in certain directions, is that we know very little of the domestic pottery of the pre-Roman inhabitants of Britain. Almost all the evidence we have is derived from vessels buried with the dead—to show respect for whom all the elaborately ornamented British urns referred to above were made. We have recently found near Cambridge, in the lower part of a most interesting earthwork known as the War Ditches,¹ fragments of coarse ware with flint flakes and

¹ *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, 1902.

scrapers, while the upper part of the ditch was filled with Roman remains. These fragments of pottery were not associated with any interments, and were scattered about just as would be likely in the case of potsherds thrown away into a ditch. A clearer case occurred a little further north on the property of Mr. C. P. Allix, of Swaffham Prior, where we found a series of shallow ditches with partly perforated quartzite pebble hammers, flint flakes, and scrapers, curiously like in size and form to those from the War Ditches, and coarse pottery, with white flint chips, also exactly like that from the War Ditches. The same type of pottery is found in the Lake Dwellings of Switzerland, and in the Cyttiau'r Gwyddelod, in North Wales, and has been recorded by Pitt-Rivers from the settlements which he explored in the South of England. But it is very rarely that we find remains of pottery of pre-Roman date except in connection with interments.

The characteristic type of British pottery is a high-shouldered vessel whose greatest diameter is at a short distance below the rim. It has never any considerable curve or bulge in the sides, and is often almost straight-sided in section, in this respect as well as in ornamentation differing from the Saxon urn, which has a tendency to be globular, often with squeezed-out curved protuberances.

Some British urns have a large heavy rim overhanging or adherent; while some have this rim developed in such a manner that the vessel looks like one urn placed on top of another, or like one of those eastern vessels formed out of a gourd constricted in the middle. This sort of thing makes us inclined to speculate as to whether we have not in some cases still preserved in Britain the characters of vessels brought by early immigrants from the Far East.

The ornamentation on British urns consists of geometric patterns, produced by rows of indents, criss-cross or zigzag lines incised on the clay when soft, and sometimes bands apparently made by impressed cord or other twisted fibre.

We do not know of any British potters' fields. The poor, ill-baked ware was not such as could be turned out

on a large scale, warehoused, and hawked about. Its texture suggests that it was made in small quantities everywhere, and probably by the people who wanted it, as among the peasantry of Ordessan (see p. 225).

It is clear that a better class of ware was being slowly brought into Britain before the Romans came, but the Romans swept across the country rapidly, stirring up old customs and institutions, and introducing among the natives the knowledge of a different and generally a better art. It would be very interesting to endeavour to find traces of the modification of native ware by contact with Roman art in Gaul, and to try to recognize the advance of this new art into pre-Roman Britain, but this is a hopeless task in the present state of our archaeological museums, where good specimens only are sought, and the evidence from carefully labelled and classified fragments is neglected.

Let us try to realize what happened when the Romans appeared upon the scene. First we know from history that there was a military advance and overthrow of all concentrated opposition. Then we learn from excavations that there was a perfect system of colonization, and that Roman coins good and debased were common, that houses were built in Roman fashion, brick and stone below, wattle and plaster above, with painted walls and tessellated pavements, not in fortified towns only, but up and down the country, along our rivers and hillsides, and, in fact, on all desirable sites. This means that instruction in all the arts known to the Romans was soon brought into this country, which continued in constant connection with Rome for four-and-a-half centuries.

Roman discipline and skill quickly assimilated the natives with whom they came in contact, and British pottery disappeared. There was not much to go. The Roman vessels were so much better that we may reasonably suppose that they not only at once commanded a wider market among the Romanized British, but that, although it was long before the Romans had subjugated anything approaching the whole of the country, the new ware was freely purchased in remote regions to which the Roman arms had not penetrated.

When the people who had made the common, rough, ill-baked ware once had an opportunity of acquiring the better pottery used by the Romans, or learning how to make it, they would never again take the trouble to mould and fire the inferior vessels with which they had had to be content. We should expect to find the two kinds in use side by side for a time. General Pitt-Rivers wrote to me in 1896, "We have four qualities of British pottery. The British distinctly overlap the Roman." In some places, as for instance in the *tumuli* at Upper Hare Park, near Newmarket, urns of Roman type have been found in secondary interments round the margin of a sepulchral mound of British (probably Bronze) age. Perhaps the explanation of this may be, not that the Romans buried in British *tumuli*, but that the natives, after they had adopted Roman pottery, still buried in the *tumulus* of their forefathers. This was in connection with the solemnities of interment in respect to which people are so conservative. The natives would not have broken all their old ware and bought a new set at once, but the manufacture of new ware of the old native type would be dropped as a better became available. The same people were still there. There was no extirpation or extermination of the native British, and in localities where rough ware was manufactured in late Roman and probably post-Roman times, as at Horningsea, near Cambridge, we do see here and there something of native feeling in the form and ornament given to the new and better pottery. If we are right in our inference that the pre-Roman British had no large manufactures of pottery, but that they made at home what they wanted for domestic purposes, or on special occasions for funerals, there must have been a large number of people acquainted with the ordinary methods of moulding and baking pots, and thus able to work intelligently under Roman foremen in the manufacture of the Roman ware.

There was no interval, no sweeping away of the old population with all their appliances. The making of pottery went on continuously, only the Romanized British took to making the new kind of ware as soon as they had learned how much better it was than their

own. Thus, although the manufacture of pottery was continuous, the transition from one kind to the other was rapid.

The bands of parallel indents, sometimes spoken of as "thumb-nail markings," were the commonest ornament on British pottery, and appear on the older and rougher mediaeval ware found in the Cambridge ditches,¹ and on some of the earliest mediaeval jugs we find seal-like markings exactly like those on the Saxon cinerary urns. All these traces of native fancy in the ornament point to continuity in the manufacture of earthenware from British through Roman and Saxon to mediaeval times.

An examination of the pottery of the Lake Dwellings² of Switzerland suggests that those seal-like stamps themselves came down from primaeval times on the continent.

4. *Roman.*

We have at present no means of recognizing pottery of Roman type introduced before the Roman invasion, nor is there any evidence of the British pottery having been modified by contact with continental peoples more advanced in this respect than the inhabitants of Britain.

The incoming of Roman ware appears to have been rapid if not sudden, and there is no possibility of confounding it with anything that went before it. It has been so often and so fully illustrated that it is unnecessary to repeat the descriptions. Indeed, the variety is so enormous that it would be impossible to do so within the limits of a short paper.

There is no such thing as Romano-British pottery, because the British type disappeared at once before the Roman, and there was no grafting of Roman characters upon the old ware. Whether made by an Italian, a Gaul, or a Briton, a pot of distinctly Roman type is Roman.

The type of ware introduced by the Romans did, however, continue in use after the withdrawal of the Romans over a large part of the British Isles until modified during the gradual advance of the post-Roman invaders of

¹ *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, Vol. VIII, Jan. 25, 1892, Oct. 23, 1893, pp. 32, 255.

² Keller. *Lake Dwellings*, *passim*.

Scandinavian or German origin. There is therefore Romano-English, because there is a ware based on Roman type modified by the English, and when not much modified mistaken for Roman, except when attention is paid to the associated remains.

Samian is the most distinctive ware of Roman times. It was made first in Samos, then in the Abruzzi, then in Gaul, but, notwithstanding the evidence of the York mould, it is very doubtful whether it was ever made in Britain. It has become the name for a class of ware, no matter where made, as we now use the word china.

The presence of Samian indicates a period when the inhabitants of Britain were in easy and frequent communication with Southern Europe. The scarcity of Samian indicates one of two things—either the people were too poor to buy such costly ware, or they lived at a time when it was no longer a common article of commerce, that is, after the connection with Roman Europe had ceased. There are generally a few fragments somewhere in the deposit—just enough to show that it had once been in the district. In order to form an opinion as to which of these two reasons should be assigned, we should examine the character of the rest of the pottery found in the deposit, and if it is all coarse, common ware, we may infer the poverty of the inhabitants of that settlement, but if the pottery is of a fine ware and high class ornamentation, indicating wealth and refinement, we must refer the absence or scarcity of Samian to its being no longer imported. I am assuming that the deposit is not pre-Roman, in which of course no Samian can occur.

5. *Saxon.*

It has always seemed remarkable, if true, that, with the exception of cinerary urns, there should be no remains of pottery belonging to the six or seven centuries which elapsed between the final withdrawal of the Roman legions from Britain and the Norman conquest. It is most improbable, nay, incredible, that people coming into a country where well-made domestic pottery had been common for centuries should not have continued to use it, unless we suppose that their habits

did not require it, or that they brought with them something better of their own. But these suppositions are not borne out by observation and history, for we do not find around the places where the population of those long ages were gathered into communities, fragments of any new ware which could be referred to them, and we know from illuminated MSS. and other documentary evidence that they had drinking and cooking vessels.

We must bear in mind that the withdrawal of official Rome did not imply the withdrawal of all people of Roman extraction, whatever that may mean. Many of the Italians, and of all the various races from which the legions were recruited, had married and settled in Britain. Four-and-a-half centuries of occupation and constant intercourse had thoroughly Romanized a great part of Britain. Whether we consider the various tribes of the western part, to whom collectively the term British might be more properly applied, or those of the eastern part who seem to have been largely made up of pre-Roman invaders from Germany and Scandinavia, all were now Romanized, and later Teutonic invaders from the continent must have found their cousins of Britain far in advance of themselves in all domestic arts and appliances, as well as in the organization of municipal life.

The Engles, Jutes, Danes, and Saxons brought no pottery that could be accepted as better than that which the Romanized British had inherited from the Romans. The newcomers probably did not bring with them much pottery of any kind, but the conservatism which among all peoples and in all ages seems to prevail in regard to the disposal of the dead, made them manufacture vessels in the old style to hold their ashes. Some, however, must have been brought from a distance into East Anglia, as there are larger flakes of mica in the ware than are found in any of the clays of the district.

It would appear at first sight that never again until quite recent times was there that prodigality in the use and abuse of earthen vessels that seems to have prevailed among the Romans. Unless we admit that some of what has been called Roman is really of Saxon date, we know practically nothing of the

domestic pottery distinctive of what we call the Saxon age in Britain, that is, post-Roman and pre-Norman. Domestic pottery there must have been—and, as the vessels with the distinctive ornamentation of what we call Saxon when found in graves do not turn up in large quantities all over the ground where the Saxons lived, we must explain this by supposing that some other ware, not generally recognized as Saxon, must have been in common use. Now let us see what evidence can be obtained that this was so.

We not unfrequently find upon ancient sites a layer of black pottery, some of a better class of ware and some ruder and less well-made, but all of the same type as the commoner pottery found in Roman settlements and associated with Roman pottery, coins, and other objects of undoubted Roman age.

Although the absence of Samian and the uniform character of the ware may have raised suspicion, the layers of black pottery have generally been referred to Roman times, and perhaps thrown away as being unworthy of a place in the museum. But this seems to be the line of enquiry along which there is most hope of finding the true explanation of the supposed scarcity of domestic pottery of Saxon age.

My friend the Bishop of Bristol called my attention to a very interesting proof that the inhabitants of the British Isles used Roman pottery after the Romans had left, and that pottery was sufficiently scarce to make it worth while to dig up and use the buried pottery of their pagan predecessors.

Ecgbert, who was consecrated bishop in A.D. 732, issued a form of prayer for the purification of vessels so found.¹

“ Oratio super vasa in loco antiquo reperta.

“ Omnipotens sempiternae Deus, insecrete officiis nostris, et haec vascula, arte fabricata gentilium, sublimitatis tuae potentia ita emundare digneris, ut omni immunditia depulsa, sint tuis fidelibus tempore pacis atque tranquillitatis utenda.”

At the other end of the age to which we refer under the head “Saxon,” we have further evidence. The

¹ *Pontificale Ecgberti*, Surtees Society, Vol. 27, p. 125.

Teutonized Romanized-British modified the Romanized-British ware as times went on, so that among the very earliest mediaeval remains we find the same kind of black and red household ware used for cooking, but now associated with modified forms of the same class of ware, and, a little later on, with the jugs and basins of the hard-burnt ware which is characteristic of mediaeval times.

Mr. R. Earle Way¹ says that, judging by the vast pits, now filled with water, from which clay has for ages been procured for the manufacture of pottery, from the mounds of refuse, from the remains of ancient pottery found in the neighbourhood, from the early fashions still reproduced, among which he recognizes Anglo-Saxon and Norman types, he thinks that it is not too much to assume that potteries have continued at Barnstaple ever since the Roman period.

The explanation which best reconciles the documentary evidence and the *a priori* probabilities with the results of excavation is that most of the common domestic pottery of Saxon and early mediaeval times has when found been called Roman.

6. *Mediaeval.*

Nothing like the Monte Testaccio has been left to us from Saxon or mediaeval times. It is only in modern times around large establishments of a public or private character that such a thing appears again, as, for instance, around a large hotel or a college, where about cent. per cent. per annum of the glass and china gets broken. It is true that we must make some allowance for the fact that in mediaeval times a large proportion of the vessels were made of wood, horn, or leather, that is, of less fragile but otherwise more perishable material, and the wooden platters, the drinking horns, and the blackjacks have long ago decayed away, so that in the trenches of our Norman castles, or the moats round our ancient manor houses, hardly a trace of anything of the kind is ever found.

There is documentary evidence that a great deal of earthenware was used for domestic purposes in mediaeval

¹ *Proc. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, XXXV (1879), 104.

times. At the feast on the anniversary of the death of Eleanor, wife of Edward I., the quantity said to have been broken was enormous. The forms are inferred from illuminated MSS. and sculpture. The tall jugs, with a long straight neck, if not Norman, must have come in very soon after the Norman conquest, and round pitchers, basins, and drinking cups, platters and dishes, all of much the same character of pottery, were in common use for some centuries after Norman times. Fragments of these are found in the ditches and laystalls of ancient towns. They were chiefly red or yellow vessels, sometimes ornamented with white or yellow clay slip, and more or less covered with a yellow or green lead glaze.¹ Some have devices or ornaments separately modelled and stuck on; some are made in the form of animals or men, but respecting the common cooking utensils there is, according to the usually received notions, a great dearth of evidence.

The long one-handed jug, glazed or unglazed, though in a more stumpy form known to the Romans, is perhaps the most characteristic piece of ware of mediaeval times. It came in earlier, as we learn from pictorial illustrations, but it does not occur in any quantity until after Norman times. You can pick up examples of it still in use all round the Mediterranean.

For two centuries more or less after the Norman conquest, these and other forms of jug were still manufactured, but the potters were so unskilful that they could not keep the bottom from sagging and becoming round and irregular, so that the jug would not stand. To remedy this they pinched the base before it was hard into a sort of calkin, or added on a piece to make the jug stand straight, and by-and-by this developed into a sort of frilled ornament round the base of the stand or vessel, which commonly appears down to the seventeenth century at any rate.

Round ancient towns, as, for instance, Cambridge, there were generally deep ditches, intended partly for defence and partly for sanitary purposes, but commonly used also as drains, which could be periodically flushed by turning

¹ *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, Jan. 25, 1892, p. 32; Oct. 23, 1893, p. 255.

in the water of some stream which ran at a higher level. Into these ditches, and on laystalls here and there, the rubbish of the mediaeval town was thrown, with all the bones of the animals eaten, the broken pottery from the houses, and the dust and refuse from the streets. Round Cambridge such ditches were constructed by King John, and again partly on the same lines in the time of Henry III.

From these ditches I have procured a great quantity of pottery, which, if found elsewhere and not associated with other mediaeval objects, would be without hesitation put down as Roman. All the common types of Roman cooking vessels are represented, but when we examine a large quantity we notice that there is some ware not quite what we find in a distinctively Roman station, such as Chesterford for instance. There is the protuberant side and strongly turned-back rim and the bulging base which I have noticed above as a common fault in mediaeval ware.

Elsewhere also at the base of and here and there throughout the oldest part of the deposits which we refer to mediaeval times, there is apt to be a good deal of black or red ware, very commonly showing marks of having been used on the fire. This kind of ware is found in layers by itself in many parts of the country. I had the advantage of digging with General Pitt-Rivers in "Caesar's Camp," near Folkestone, where he found some urns which might easily have been mistaken for Roman, except for their rounded base and the associated objects by which he proved them to be Norman.

The material of which these vessels are made is as good as, and in fact not to be distinguished from, that of the corresponding vessels found with Roman remains.

None of them have any kind of foot or stand because, as the condition of the fragments shows, these vessels were placed upon the fire.

They all seem to be modifications of the common Roman vessel with a constricted neck and turned-over rim, giving a crook- or crosier-like section. The Roman type is still common in early mediaeval times, but with it we find a number of other types which are not represented in Roman times. They differ chiefly in the form

of the rims, of which some sections are given (Plate I) in illustration of this point.

No. 1 shows the common form of the base, in which there is nothing remarkable except perhaps the tendency to bulge.

No. 2 is a specimen in which there is only a thickening at the rim. In all these figures the exterior of the vessel is on the spectator's left hand.

Nos. 3 and 4 have the top of the rim flattened parallel to the base of the vessel.

No. 5 has a kind of shoulder, where the direction of the side changes so as to produce a smaller opening than the greatest diameter of the vessel.

Nos. 6 and 7 are rims of shallow basin-shaped vessels, in form something like a *mortarium* with a flat rim.

Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, are various modifications of the above.

Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, are sections showing the most characteristic forms of these mediaeval cooking pots.

They are globular, with a flat or slightly grooved rim turned back at an acute angle (sometimes 45°) to the side of the vessel.

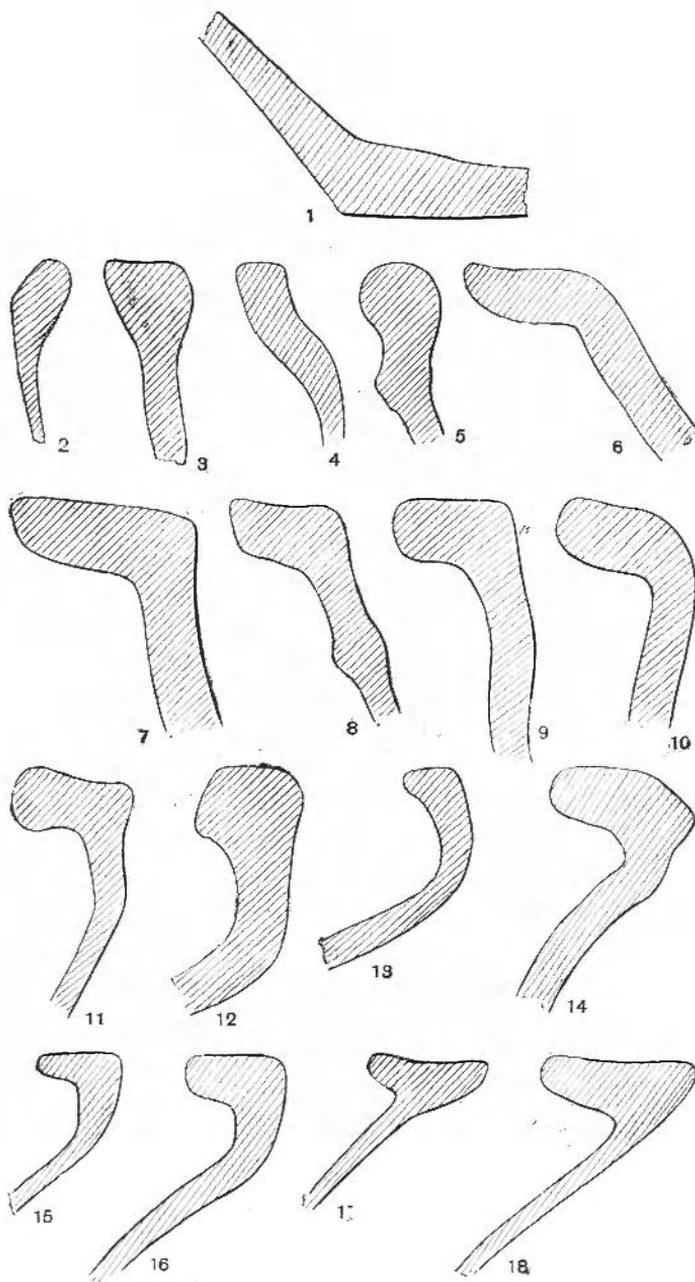
In fact, while we have much which is indistinguishable from Roman, the general *facies* shows a mediaeval modification, enough to suggest that we are dealing with something different from the distinctively Roman ware.

When I have produced a selection of this pottery, and shown it to men conversant with Roman types, the suggestion has been that I was wrong in my assignment of the ware to mediaeval times, and that I had got some Roman pottery by mistake.

But it occurs everywhere in the mediaeval ditches, where it is associated with other mediaeval remains.

Where there were only small quantities of this ware scattered over the surface, and under conditions which offered no independent evidence of its true age, what looked like Roman was put down as of Roman age, and there was still little evidence of mediaeval pottery before the Norman conquest, but now the question must be regarded from an entirely different point of view.

The Romans taught the pre-Roman natives how to



SECTIONS OF RIMS AND BASE OF MEDIAEVAL POTTERY.

make a better kind of ware which entirely superseded their own and lasted on into mediaeval times.

But the Scandinavian and German invaders found a better ware than their own already in existence in the country, and adopted it, adding to it a few vessels of their own fashion and a more universally employed glaze.

- Soon after the Norman conquest a great change does take place in the character of the pottery in common use in the British Isles, but the change was gradual, and does not seem to have coincided with the Norman conquest, or with any other marked episode in our history. The hard-burnt crocks and brocks and cruses and numerous other varieties of jug were introduced soon after Norman times, but were not common in this country till long after the Norman conquest.¹

Through the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries we find the ware in domestic use gradually modified and more or less affected by the advent of china from the east, cullen ware from the low countries, and many another article for use or ornament, but this does not come under the head of the early potters' art.

¹ *Archaeologia*, Vol. 47, Figs. 42, 43, 44.