

ROMAN REMAINS DISCOVERED AT AVENCHES, THE CHIEF CITY OF THE HELVETII.

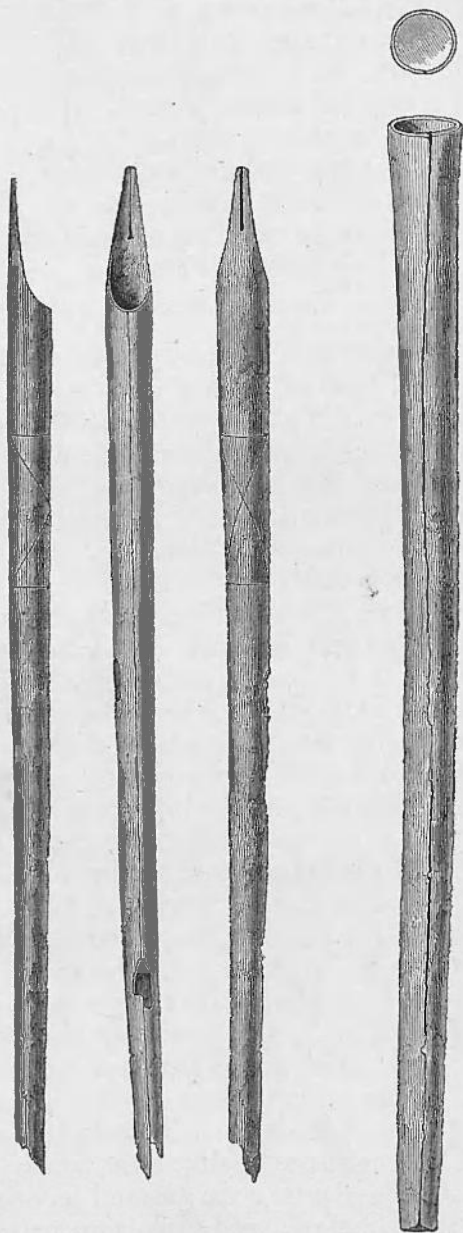
From Notes communicated by DR. FERDINAND KELLER, President of the Society
of Antiquaries of Zürich, Hon. Member of the Archaeological Institute.

IN a former volume of this Journal an account was given of a relic of unusual rarity found at Avenches or Wifflisburg, in the Canton de Vaud, namely, a bronze die for striking Gaulish or Helvetian gold coins.¹ The vestiges of public buildings, such as a theatre, an amphitheatre, temples, and tessellated floors, with the numerous minor relics usually found on Roman sites, give ample evidence, as was before observed, of the wealth and splendor of the ancient *Aventicum*, in all probability the most important place in the country of the Helvetii. After the invasion of the Romans, it appears to have been the capital of Helvetia and a very prosperous city, especially in the time of Vespasian, who founded as it is believed a colony of Veterans, designated—"Colonia Pia Flavia Constans Emerita," as shown by certain inscribed monuments there brought to light. Amongst these there is one found some years since, which cannot fail to be regarded with particular interest by the English archæologist as containing an allusion to one of the campaigns in Britain, and also to Claudius, whose expedition at the instance of the exiled Bericus forms so important a period in the subjugation of the Britons by the imperial legions. This inscription, commemorative of military distinctions conferred on a tribune of the fourth legion, the *hasta pura* and golden crown, is doubtless known to those who are familiar with the lapidary epigraphy of Switzerland. We may, however, be permitted to invite attention anew to so interesting a memorial, according to the reading given with the *lacunæ* supplied by the learned Mommsen.²

¹ Arch. Journ., vol. xix. p. 253.

² Inscript. Confoed. Helvet. Lat., ed. Theod. Mommsen, Mitth. d. Antiqu. Gesellsch. in Zürich, x. Band, p. 33, No.

179. Compare Orelli, &c. This inscription is now in the castle of Villars near Avenches.



Bronze Pen-case (*theca calamaria*) and Pen,
Found at Aventicum, in Switzerland.
(Orig. size).

C]IVL · C · F FAB · CAMILLO
 S]AC · AVG · MAG · TRIB · MIL
 L]EG · IIII · MACED · HAST · PVRA
 E]T · CORONA · AVREA · DONATO
 A] TI · CLAVDIO · CAESARE · AVG
 IT]ER · CVM · AB · EO · EVOCATVS
 I]N · BRITANNIA · MILITASSET
 C]OL · PIA · FLAVIA · CONSTANS
 EMERITA · HELVETIOR.
 EX. D D.

Portions of mosaic pavement, and numerous other valuable Roman relics have constantly been brought to light at Avenches. Under the direction of the active and intelligent conservator of the museum at that place, M. Caspari, recent excavations have been carried out with good results; foundations of dwellings have been disinterred; domestic implements, personal ornaments and other relics have been collected in great variety. M. Caspari relates in a short communication to the "Indicateur d'Histoire et d'Antiquités Suisses," that tessellated floors of large dimensions and in good preservation had been uncovered during the last year, and that Colonel Schairrer had presented to the museum at Avenches numerous antiquities found on his property within the area of the Roman city. He mentions particularly a fibula in form of a star, which seems to have been enameled, also several other personal ornaments, a bronze handle of elegant fashion to which is appended a ribbed vase of white glass; iron relics, tesserae ("marques de jeu") in bone and glass, iron *styli*, bronze pens for writing, and silver medals of Geta or Eliogabalus. A statuette of Jupiter, in bronze, and several other objects of value have likewise enriched the museum, which is well deserving of the examination of the archæologist who may visit Switzerland.

Amongst minor relics found in the course of excavation lately made by Colonel Schairrer, the bronze pens ("plumes en cuivre") have been justly regarded by Dr. Keller as objects of special interest, no example of a Roman *calamus* of metal having previously been brought under his notice in the course of his accurate and extensive investigations. Ancient ornaments and implements of the Roman period have occurred, however, abundantly at the numerous sites of

Roman occupation in Switzerland, and many of these discoveries have enriched the Transactions of the Antiquaries of Zurich, under Dr. Keller's intelligent direction.

We are indebted to the kindness of Dr. Keller for drawings of the bronze *calamus* with its case, both of which are here figured, found as above stated at *Aventicum*. The pen consists of a hollow tube formed of a thin plate of metal, the end adapted for writing being wider than the upper extremity, of which a portion has perished by oxidation, so that the length of the tube in its original state cannot be precisely ascertained. Inside the cleft extremity there are traces of gilding. The case (*calamarius* or *theca calamaria*), measures about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length (14 centim.), it is, like the pen, rather wider at one end than at the other. The bronze pen with the cleft point (*fissipes*, as designated by Ausonius), resembles in its fashion the metallic pens of our own times; it is similar to the *calam* figured in the Museo Borbonico, t. i. tav. xii., and by Grivaud de la Vincelle, Arts et Métiers des anciens, plates viii. ix. A pen-case has been described, as Dr. Keller informs us, by Martorelli,³ and the pen therein enclosed is noticed by that author as of metal. The ordinary reed, however, was probably the kind of pen most in use; it appears on various Roman remains, for example in a Pompeian painting, often copied, in which a double inkstand is seen with a *calamus* resting upon it.⁴ The best reeds, as we learn from Pliny, were obtained from Egypt and Cnidus.

In regard to the use of metallic pens in later times, Dr. Keller observed that he had stated erroneously, as he now believes, that the Irish scribes did not use pens of metal.⁵ It is certain that before the invention of printing bronze or brass pens were in use. Thus in the first edition of Cicero, printed by Fust at Mayence in 1465, the following statement is found in the colophon—"Hoc clarissimi M. T. Ciceronis opus Johannes Fust Moguntinus civis non atramento plumali canna neque ærea sed arte quadam perpulcra, Petri manu pueri mei feliciter effeci, finitum Anno M.CCCC.LXV."

³ Martorelli, de regia theca calamaria; Neap. 4to. 1756.

⁴ Figured in Rich's Dictionary, v. *Arundo*. Of the use of reed pens in the Middle Ages, see the *Nouveau Traité de*

Diplom., t. i. p. 536; Wailly, *Éléments de Paléographie*, &c.

⁵ Mittheilungen, &c. of the Society of Antiquaries of Zurich, vol. vii. p. 70.