

NOTICES OF CERTAIN BRONZE RELICS, OF A PECULIAR TYPE
ASSIGNED TO THE LATE CELTIC PERIOD.

THE later part of the period during which the use of bronze, of fine quality and wrought with much artistic skill, appears to have prevailed in the British islands, brings under our notice objects of highly curious fashion, admirably designed, suggestive also of an age comparatively advanced in the arts and also in the cultivated taste of social refinement. It is remarkable that, in some instances, it is scarcely practicable to assign any probable intention or purpose to certain elaborate relics of this age and character. They not unfrequently present to the archæologist exceptional types, that supply scarcely any indication to suggest the uses for which they may have been destined. We are often disposed to ascribe conjecturally to some anomalous object, possessing much perfection and beauty in workmanship, a purpose associated with sacred rites or religious observances; but it is, however, scarcely needful to insist on the necessity of great caution in the endeavor to associate with any hallowed use such mysterious relics of remote antiquity, to which no obvious or secular purpose can be safely ascribed. We no longer hear of mistletoe-sickles, sacrificial pateræ, tiaras with other so-called "Druidical" appliances and insignia often paraded in the theories of early antiquarians in the British islands. With all deference to the judgment of others whose opinions I hold in high estimation, I must frankly confess a certain reluctance to accept, in some such cases, whether as regards Pagan or Christian subjects of investigation, the *ignotum pro sacro*, in our endeavors to solve questions that still present difficulties to the archæologist.

Amongst the perplexing anomalies of bronze, occurring chiefly in North Britain and in Ireland, there are perhaps none that present so interesting and mysterious a subject of speculation as the little group of spoon-like objects to which I am desirous to invite attention. They have already been described and figured in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, by

the Rev. E. L. Barnwell;¹ the recent acquisition, however, of several remarkable examples has encouraged me, with his friendly concurrence, to bring before the Institute the evidence that may aid us in seeking a solution of so singular an enigma, and to record, as far as possible, the facts connected with the discovery of the relics in question.

These spoon-like objects have occurred, so far as I am aware, exclusively in England, in Wales, and in Ireland. A pair has recently been brought to light in Westmoreland, but no specimen has hitherto, as I believe, been found in Scotland, where very many remarkable antiquities of bronze, that may be assigned to the same period as the spoons, have been discovered. I have been unable to ascertain that any object of similar form and decoration has occurred on the Continent; nor have I even found any relic either of classical antiquity or of more remote date, that may be classed with these peculiar spoons, or be regarded as intended for the like purpose, whatever that may have been. It is probable that, according to their normal fashion, they were made in pairs; one of each pair appears to have had, near the right side and at about mid length, a circular perforation, about a sixth of an inch in diameter; this was punched through the metal, mostly of inconsiderable thickness, especially towards the edge. The counterpart, never perforated in like manner, has in every instance transverse lines, somewhat suggestive of resemblance to a Christian symbol, coarsely scored across the shallow bowl, in which also, in one specimen, there are two perforations differently placed and of much smaller size than those occurring, as before described, closely adjoining the right-hand margin. One of the little holes in that instance is plugged with gold; it may be supposed that the second was originally closed in like manner. In some of these spoons the cavity is so shallow that it would be almost impracticable to convey any liquid to the mouth; whilst, moreover, the invariably sharp-pointed fashion of the supposed spoon renders it little adapted for the ordinary uses of such appliances. These mysterious spoons, if indeed

¹ *Archæologia Cambrensis*, third series, vol. viii. p. 208. This memoir was published in 1862. See also some supplemental notices by Mr. Barnwell, *ibid.*, vol. x. p. 57. Mr. Franks has briefly adverted to the spoons in his inventory of

"Late Celtic" relics, *Horæ Ferales*, p. 184. He describes them as "oval plates, slightly concave, and not unlike a modern sugar-spoon; the upper part is decorated with the usual scroll pattern."

destined for any of the purposes for which a spoon is now or may obviously be employed, were probably cast, possibly in a bronze mould, and are to be assigned to a period, in which numerous early examples exist, characterised by the highest technical perfection in the founder's art. It will be seen by the accompanying woodcuts that the general form and workmanship are almost the same in all examples on record; the details are considerably varied. They are, however, characterised by a certain peculiar type of ornamentation, to which one of our most sagacious archæologists, Mr. Franks, has ascribed the designation "Late Celtic," distinctive of a period of singular interest in the series of our National Antiquities, and to which I propose to advert more fully hereafter.

Of the remarkable objects that are the special subject of the present notices, the first example was made known to me some years since by Mr. Roach Smith, in his highly instructive collection of antiquities found in the Metropolis and happily secured for our National Depository in 1856. A second specimen, likewise obtained in the city of London, came subsequently into my own possession; the interest thus excited in regard to these curious "spoons" was renewed by examination of certain Irish examples that were sent to the Industrial Exhibition in connection with the Royal Dublin Society in 1853.

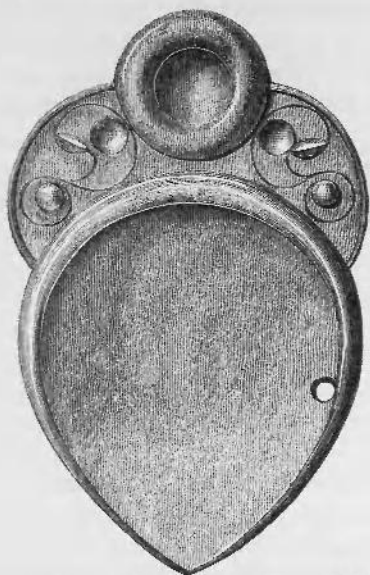
I proceed to notice the series of specimens that have become known to me during the investigation of this remarkable little group of our early antiquities.

1. A well-preserved specimen of highly finished workmanship, formerly, as already noticed, in the Museum of London Antiquities collected by Mr. C. Roach Smith, and now preserved in the British Museum. I have been informed by him that it was found in the Thames, the depository that has yielded such remarkable relics of "Late Celtic" character. It is figured in the privately printed Catalogue of the collection, p. 82, and described as follows, amongst Roman and Romano-British Antiquities:—"Ornamented Plate, in Bronze, the use or application of which is by no means obvious. It measures $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 3 inches."² It

² Catalogue of the Museum of London Antiquities, &c., p. 82. In the woodcut there given the perforation at the right-

hand edge of the spoon has accidentally been omitted.

BRONZE RELICS OF THE LATE CELTIC PERIOD.



1.—Found in the Thames. British Museum (Roach Smith Collection).
Scale, Two-thirds original size.



Reverse of the handle.

2.—Found in Brickhill Lane, London. In possession of Mr. Albert Way.
Scale, two-thirds original size.

may deserve notice, that on examination the lower portion of the deep concave handle appears somewhat worn by friction, as if the thumb had pressed more strongly on that part in holding the spoon. The raised ornaments on the sides of the handle seem to have been partly hammered up, but the object, as also those hereafter to be described, has, as I imagine, been cast in a mould. The material is a fine yellow bronze, resembling that of many ancient relics that have been obtained from the Thames.³

Having recently submitted this object to the examination of a person on whose skill and intimate acquaintance with technical processes in metal-working I have great reliance, he assured me that it is very certain that it was cast; the faulty portions were punched up, as the work of the hammer is distinctly seen on the reverse where the metal had not penetrated into the cavities of the mould. He was unable to decide how the surface was produced on the obverse, probably, however, from a highly finished bronze mould; and then, if the casting was not perfect, it may have been beat into the hollows of the mould, in those parts where a sharper or greater relief was desired.

2. This specimen was found, as stated, in London, in Brickhill Lane, Upper Thames Street, about April, 1822; it is now in my possession, having been purchased from Mr. Purdue amongst various London relics. It is of pale-colored bronze; the surface dull, and coated with a kind of granulated encrustation, wholly unlike the fine lustrous patina that is seen on antique bronzes. The handle appears to have become disunited from the shallow bowl, and the injury has been carefully repaired by a plate somewhat ornamentally formed, affixed by numerous small rivets, ten in number, at the back (see woodcuts). The dimensions are as follows:—length nearly $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches; diameter of the handle, $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch; of the bowl, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The reverse of the circular handle is ornamented with peculiarly combined curves that appear to accord with types of decoration, characterising, as it is believed, certain bronze relics which belong to the latest times of the Celtic period in Britain. This specimen, it will be observed, has, at the edge of the right side, the small perforation that occurs in several instances, and here pierced so

³ Arch. Cambr., third series, vol. viii. p. 210.

near to the edge that a small portion of the metal possibly has broken away ; this may, however, have been lost through accidental carelessness of the workman in drilling or punching this hole a little too close to the margin.⁴

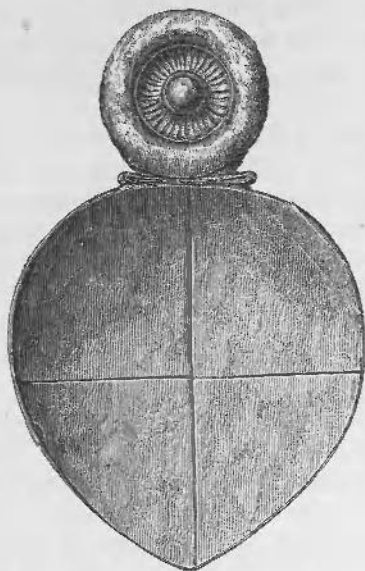
3, 4. A pair found in 1861, at a spot somewhat south of Ffynogion, in the parish of Llanfair, Denbighshire, among sand thrown up by the excavators in the construction of the railway between Denbigh and Corwen. They were noticed by Mr. Hugh Jones of Cae-Groes, Ruthin, as he walked along the cutting ; when found, these two relics were firmly attached face to face by the incrustation of *ærugeo* on the metal, so that it proved difficult to separate them without injury. Unfortunately, the precise depth or the spot where they had lain could not be ascertained ; the workmen, in throwing up the sand out of the cutting, had not noticed them ; they may have remained for some time until accidentally noticed by Mr. Jones ; the superincumbent soil appears to have been washed away by heavy rain which fell about that time, and exposed them, so that they attracted his attention, slightly projecting above the rubbish. At the margin of one of them there is a small fracture that had at first been supposed to be an accidental injury ; on more careful examination, however, it appears that this, as in other examples, is the small perforation before noticed, made in or very near the edge. The two objects above described appear to form a pair, of which, however, one only is thus perforated ; it is believed, as stated by Mr. Barnwell,⁵ that they are castings from the same mould ; the metal is described as a bronze containing an unusual proportion of copper, as indicated by the colour. They are encrusted with a green oxide, which is merely superficial, and may scarcely be called a patina, such as occurs upon coins. Upon one of them, here figured,⁶ lines are engraved transversely, forming a plain cross somewhat rudely cut, and not formed in the mould. These have been regarded by some antiquaries as indicating a connexion with some sacred usage in Christian rites ; but, as Mr. Barnwell has truly remarked, "if intended for the purpose of consecration one might have expected a little more care bestowed upon the execution" of

⁴ Arch. Cambr., third series, vol. viii. p. 211.

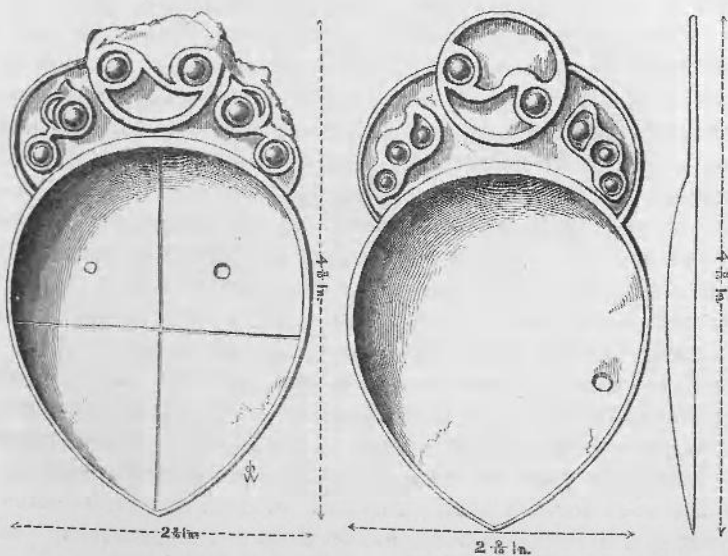
⁵ Ibid., vol. x. p. 58.

⁶ This specimen is slightly fractured : in the woodcut the injury is not shown.

BRONZE RELICS OF THE LATE CELTIC PERIOD.



3, 4.—One of a pair found at Llanfair, Denbighshire. Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Scale, two-thirds original size.



5, 6.—Pair found at Penbryn, Cardiganshire. Ashmolean Museum. Scale, two-thirds original size.

these cross-lines. The dimensions are as follows :—length, 3 inches ; diameter of the handle $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch ; of the bowl, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.⁷ These valuable relics, which are especially interesting as forming, doubtless, a pair, and having been found together, were presented by Mr. Jones, the finder, to Mr. Barnwell, at that time resident at Ruthin, and by Mr. Barnwell, in 1863, to the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland ; they are now to be seen at Edinburgh. I cannot refrain from the expression of regret that it should not have been agreeable to him to give the preference to the National Depository in London, where only one example of these remarkable objects is at present preserved. It must, however, be admitted, that they presented a certain special interest as compared with several remarkable relics found in North Britain, that supply well-characterised examples of the late Celtic period to which it is believed that the so-called spoons belong.⁸

The relics found in Denbighshire have recently received, at my request, special examination by my friend Mr. Stuart, for the purpose of ascertaining whether, as I imagine to be the case, these spoons were produced from moulds, and were only slightly finished up by the tool. I had, moreover, been very desirous to invite the attention of so eminent an authority as the author of the “Sculptured Stones of Scotland” to these perplexing objects of bronze, that present in their decoration a certain analogy to some of the details occurring on the remarkable monuments that he has so admirably illustrated. Mr. Stuart, whilst admitting with regret his inability to aid my inquiry in regard to the intension or the date of these singular “spoons,” if indeed, as he sagaciously observes, they really may have been objects of that description, stated his opinion that the Llanvair specimens had been cast. The ornament on the handle alone, that appears to have been stamped or hammered up from the back, which is hollow, may not have been reproduced from the mould. There is no engraved line in any part, with the exception of the cross lines in

⁷ I am indebted for these particulars to the interesting memoir by Mr. Barnwell, *Arch. Camb.*, ut supra, p. 208.

⁸ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. v. p. 110. The bronze horse-furniture found in Annan-

dale, a scabbard found near the Pentland Hills, and an armlet found at Plunton Castle, co. Kirkcudbright, figured *Arch. Journ.*, vol. xvi. p. 194, are there cited as specimens of Late Celtic work in the Edinburgh Museum.

the bowl of one of the spoons; and he concluded that there is no tooling, unless the radiating lines of the central ornament on the handle may have been slightly sharpened by the chisel or burin.

5, 6. A pair found about 1829 in the parish of Penbryn, Cardiganshire, and now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. I am indebted to the Rev. E. L. Barnwell for the following particulars regarding the discovery. Near the road from Cardigan to Aberystwyth, there is an earthwork of considerable size, with double ramparts; it is called Castell Nadolig, or Yndalig, or Castle Christmas. Between this entrenchment and the sea there is a small square camp, near the edge of the cliff; formerly a paved way formed of large stones was to be seen for a mile northwards from Castell Nadolig, and this road is known as "the Sarn," a term generally supposed to indicate a Roman way, although in some parts of North Wales it seems to designate any ancient track. The earthworks of Castell Nadolig present peculiarities, as Mr. Barnwell observes, not usual in Roman camps; from its position, commanding the line of communication from north to south, and, taken in connection with the rectangular work on the coast, Mr. Babington, after careful examination, concluded that, if not originally formed by the Romans, there can be little doubt that the Castell had been occupied by them. The smaller work commands the part of the coast called Llongborth, whither, according to tradition, the Roman galleys were wont to resort. About 1829 the tenant removed a heap of stones in a part of the Castell supposed to occupy the site of the *prætorium*; under these were found the two relics here figured, which were presented in 1836 to the Ashmolean Museum by the Rev. Henry Jenkins, B.D., of Magdalen College, now Rector of Stanway, Essex.¹ There are many vestiges of antiquity in the neighbourhood, such as the Gaer, somewhat to the south; an erect inscribed stone, near Penbryn, between the Castell and the sea; on this slab, noticed by Camden, may be read,—CORBALENCI IACIT ORDOVS.²; a

⁹ Arch. Camb., ut supra, p. 214.

¹ They are described in the Catalogue of the Ashmolean Museum by Mr. P. H. Duncan, p. 147, as follows:—"Two heart-shaped and slightly hollowed pieces of brass, 5 in. by 3 in., found in a British encampment at Penbryn, in Cardigan-

shire.—Rev. H. Jenkins, Magd. Coll. 1836."

² Figured, *Archæologia Cambr.*, vol. vii., third series, p. 306; it is noticed also by Edward Llwyd, and by Meyrick, *Hist. of Cardiganshire*.

tumulus ; urns deposited under a large slab, and other remains have also been described, which supply evidence of early occupation in these parts of the coasts of Wales. An *aureus* of Titus, it may also be mentioned, was found not far from Castell Nadolig. I have carefully stated these particulars, for which I am chiefly indebted to Mr. Barnwell's memoir, previously cited ; they may possibly suggest to archæologists more conversant than myself with the relics of the earlier periods, some hypothesis in regard to the use or date of the mysterious objects of bronze under consideration. It is not known whether any other relic was found at Castell Nadolig ; the pair of leaf-shaped "spoons" remained apparently unnoticed in the Ashmolean Museum until their existence became known accidentally to Mr. Franks in 1862. It will be seen that the ornamental designs on the handles are slightly varied, and although they bear a general resemblance in style to those on other specimens here figured, the ornament is characterized by a certain peculiarity, in which Mr. Barnwell was inclined to recognize some similarity to the "spectacle ornament" occurring on sculptured stones in North Britain.³ The upper part of one of the handles is slightly damaged. The dimensions are as follows :—Length, nearly 5 inches ; breadth, 3 inches. These relics are described by Mr. Barnwell as of orange-yellow colored metal coated with green patina ; one has a perforation, as in other specimens, near the right margin ; the other, with cross-lines engraved on its concave side, appears to have had two small perforations, more distant from the margin than in any other instance, one of these is now plugged up with metal, that appeared, as I was informed by Mr. Franks, to be gold. Through the kindness of Professor Phillips, whose friendly readiness to aid our researches the Institute has so frequently experienced, it has been ascertained that this little plug, which had been noticed by Mr. Barnwell as of brass, is actually of the more precious metal. Mr. Barnwell has called my attention to the remarkable flatness of these two specimens, which in that respect differ much from that in the British Museum and the pair that he presented to the Antiquaries of Scotland ; he points out that

³ The Sculptured Stones of Scotland, by John Stuart, vol. ii., preface, p. 26, and appendix to the preface, p. 8. See

also a notice, by Professor Westwood, of the first volume, *Archæol. Journal*, vol. xiv. pp. 185, 191.

from their great shallowness they appear wholly unadapted to hold any liquid. This feature is, however, more strikingly obvious in other examples, described hereafter, especially in those found in Westmoreland.



7. One of a pair found at Weston, near Bath. Scale two-thirds original size. In possession of Mr. James T. Irvine, F.S.A. Scot.

7, 8. A pair found in 1861 in Somersetshire, about a mile to the north-west of Bath, and near the road towards Bristol. Unfortunately the precise circumstances connected with their discovery have not been recorded; for the following particulars, and also for the kind permission to publish these highly interesting relics with the series of examples that I have now brought together, I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. James T. Irvine, F.S.A. Scot., of Coombe Down, near Bath.

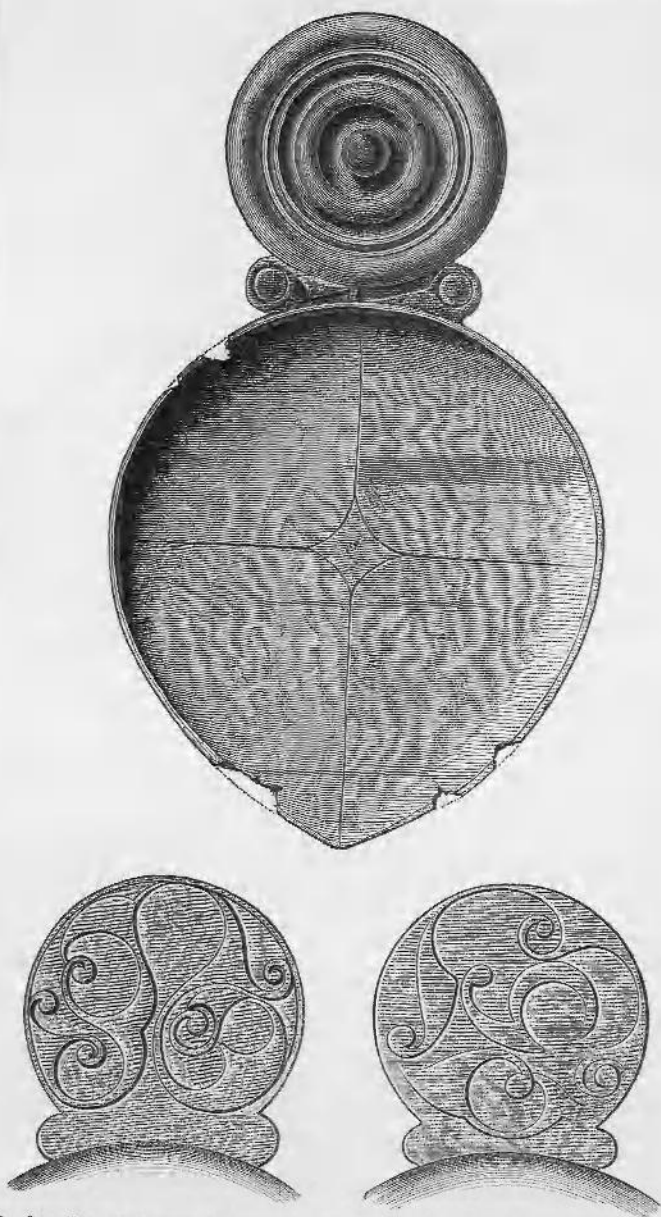
"A new road having been made from Weston Lane to the village of Weston near Bath, a lias quarry was opened for the purpose of obtaining stone. The spot is on the

south side of the new road, and on the western brow of a small hollow, down which a little rivulet flows towards the Avon, into which it falls nearly opposite Tiverton. The new road shortly after joins the *Via Julia*, the great Roman line from *Aquæ Solis* into Wales. In removing the 'heading' for quarrying the lias rock, at a depth of 7 ft. or thereabouts, as stated, the bronze relics were brought to light by one of the laborers, who gave them to the foreman, William Smith, from whom I received them.⁴ I made careful enquiry whether any other object was found, or any trace of

⁴ In a subsequent communication Mr. Irvine informed me that, in regard to the great depth (7 ft.) at which these bronze objects were stated to have been found, he had made fresh inquiries of the foreman before mentioned, who stated that they lay near the stream, in the ancient

hollow course of which the earth had doubtless gradually slipped down the sloping cultivated bank, at the upper part of which there was only a layer of 12 or 18 inches in depth covering the lias rock.

BRONZE RELICS OF THE LATE CELTIC PERIOD.



8.—One of a pair found at Weston, near Bath; and ornamentation on the reverses of the handles. Original size.
In possession of Mr. James T. Irvine, F.S.A. Scot.

wood, as of a box or the like, but I was assured that nothing else was discovered. The situation is so similar to the sites where remains of Roman villas occur, on gently sloping banks open towards the south and south-east, and adjoining some stream of pure water, that I am disposed to imagine that the vestiges of a Roman dwelling must exist not far from the spot."

In the great difficulty that has been found in regard to the intention of these objects, Mr. Irvine suggests that they may have served for some culinary or gastronomic purpose in Roman times. The frequent occurrence of villas, and of vestiges of every description that abound near *Aquæ Solis*, and have been carefully described by our friend Canon Scarth, could not fail to suggest to so observant and sagacious an archæologist as Mr. Irvine the probability that these objects, found not far distant from a great Roman way, might be assigned to the Roman period. It must, however, be considered that in no instance, as I believe, has any specimen been discovered in immediate proximity to relics of that age, or even to any site of Roman occupation.

The specimens from Somerset, unfortunately damaged at the edges, are of special interest for the perfection in their workmanship. The bronze also has assumed the highly-polished, dark-colored patina, resembling that of objects of classical antiquity, and rarely if ever equalled on the other relics under consideration. The dimensions are as follows:—length, $4\frac{3}{8}$ in. ; diameter of the handle, nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; of the bowl, rather over $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. The ornament presents slight variations, which seem to prove that the two objects, if, as I believe, they were castings, were not produced from the same mould, although they closely resemble each other. The curiously-involved designs on the reverses of the handles are not identical, although at the first glance it might be supposed that they are repetitions. In execution they are peculiar; there is only a very slight degree of rilievo in the ornament, in some parts only the field is slightly depressed, in others the effect is assisted by a certain slight rounding off of the edges of the design, a process frequently made available by artificers of a much later period and wholly distinct school of metallurgical manipulation, namely in the mediæval enamels, on the surfaces to which vitrified color was not applied; this has been termed

by some French writers on the art as practised at Limoges and elsewhere about the twelfth century, *sous-relief*.

It may deserve notice that the circular concentric mouldings on the obverse of the handle, as also the handles of four other specimens previously described (Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4), bear much resemblance to work on certain Roman or Gallo-Roman objects, for instance on bronze saucepans (*trullæ*?), of which examples found at Arnagill, near Swinton Park, Yorkshire, were published by Mr. Charles Tucker in this Journal;⁵ one, found in the Isle of Ely, was exhibited by Mr. Goddard Johnson at the meeting of the Institute at Norwich in 1847; and five, brought to light on the Castle Howard estate in Yorkshire, have presented to Mr. Oldfield the subject of a very valuable memoir published in the *Archæologia*.⁶

In these Roman vessels, and also in other objects of the same period, the circular mouldings seem undoubtedly to have been produced on the lathe. On the Celtic objects under consideration, they do not appear to have been thus worked; these concentric ornaments were doubtless produced in the mould, with the admirable precision that characterises the works of the skilful artificers of the period. It has, however, been suggested that the model, of wood possibly, from which that part of the concave mould was formed, must apparently have been turned on the lathe. The use of that mechanical appliance amongst the Celtic peoples presents a subject of considerable interest.⁷

9, 10. A pair found in 1868 on the pasture lands of Graben, a farm belonging to Mr. Kent, in the parish of Crosby Ravensworth, Westmoreland, and brought under my notice through the friendly mediation of Mr. R. H. Soden Smith, F.S.A. I am also indebted to the Vicar of that place, the Rev. G. F. Weston, for the following particulars regarding the discovery.

"The bronze objects were found by a farmer in this parish near a spring of water, while he was digging out the

⁵ Arch. Journal, vol. vi., p. 47.

⁶ *Archæologia*, vol. xli., pl. xv., p. 325, where notices of other specimens may be found. Mr. Ecroyd Smith has described examples found near Abergele, N. Wales. *Trans. Lanc. and Chest. Hist. Soc.*, 1868.

⁷ The cup of amber found at Hove, near Brighton, figured *Arch. Journal*, vol. xiii., p. 183; the vessel of bituminous

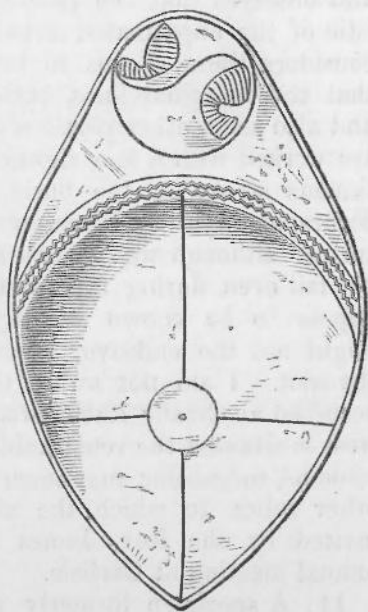
shale discovered by the Rev. R. Kirwan in a barrow, near Honiton, as described, *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, vol. ii., p. 625; the Kimmeridge coal-money, and several other relics of the like material, present remarkable evidence of the early use of the lathe in Britain.

soil in order to form a drinking-place for his cattle during the drougthy weather in the summer. There was a small mound near the spring about 2 ft. high and 8 or 9 ft. across, into which we dug in Mr. Soden Smith's presence. In it were found pieces of freestone which had evidently been subjected to the action of fire, and some traces of wood ashes or burnt earth, but nothing else rewarded our labors. Our supposition was that this spring was a place of frequent resort, for some cause that I am unable to ascertain, possibly on some ancient line of road, for purposes of refreshment perhaps to the weary traveller, and that cooking in some rude fashion had there often taken place."

These specimens are comparatively roughly wrought and inelegant in form, especially in the contour of the handle and the unskilful finish of the engraved ornaments. One of them (fig. 9) has the usual perforation, in this instance somewhat more than an eighth of an inch from the right-hand margin, and punched through the metal plate, as shown by a slight bur or ragged edge on its reverse. On the counterpart (fig. 10) is coarsely scored a circle with lines crossing the bowl, as in one of the Irish examples hereafter noticed. (See fig. 15.)

The flat handle is in each instance ornamented with engraved work forming curvilinear designs, of the so-called trumpet pattern, that are similar in their general character, but not identical. Across the upper margin of the bowl, in each, there is chased somewhat boldly a double line of zigzag tooling, that has the appearance of a corded pattern. There is a strongly engraved line close to the margin, on both obverse and reverse, and also on the edge, or thickness of the handle, extending as far as the shoulder or commencement of the bowl.

It is singular that this incision

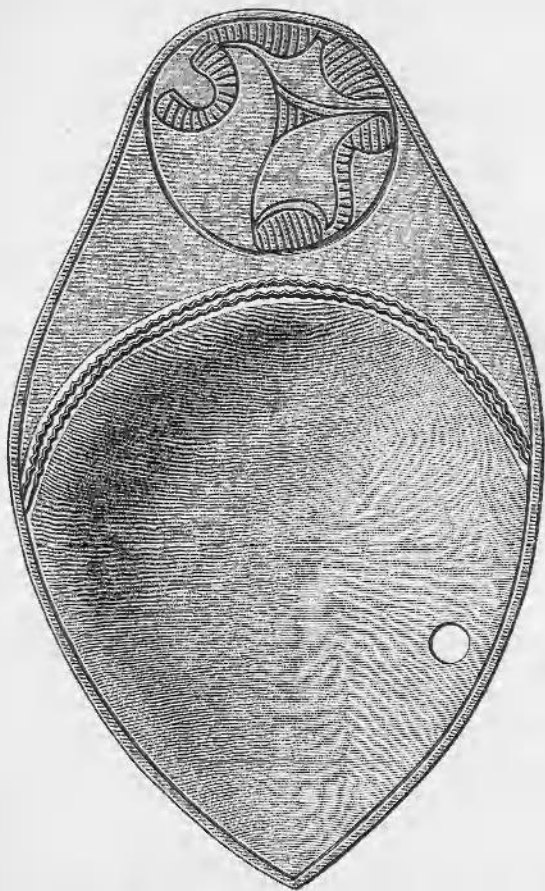


10. One of a pair found at Crosby Ravensworth, Westmoreland. Scale, two-thirds orig. size.

on the edge, which I have noticed in other instances, is here so strongly cut as to form, on the extreme upper part of the handle, a nick or groove of some depth, the intention of which is by no means obvious. Mr. Franks reminds me that these and some other details that I have noticed, even at the risk of appearing minutely tedious, are indications consistent with the elaborate finish by which all the works of the "Late Celtic" period are characterised. The metal is pale-colored, without any patina, the surface singularly granulated, possibly the result of fine sand-casting, and presenting in parts slight irregular scratches that may have been produced by some operation of roughly polishing or dressing the face of the metal, but can scarcely have been left by the file. The dimensions are as follows :—length, $4\frac{5}{8}$ in. ; diameter of the bowl, $2\frac{3}{4}$ in.

These objects were not found together ; they lay some seven or eight yards apart in the boggy ground that surrounds the spring, and at an inconsiderable depth, about twelve to eighteen inches. Mr. Soden Smith assures me that he particularly inquired whether the metal had undergone any scouring ; he believes that it had not been cleaned, and observes that the pale yellow color is very characteristic of the unpatinated bronzes of the period to which he considers these spoons to belong. It may deserve notice that the marginal lines, both on the obverse and reverse, and also some other portions possibly of the engraved work, are worked with a fine zigzag tooling, not by a steady, continuous stroke of the burin, a technical peculiarity that occurs, as described hereafter, in the Irish examples. The spring, although well known for its copious supply, that did not fail even during the drought of last summer, does not appear to be known by any particular designation that might aid the endeavor to trace ancient occupation near the spot. I am not aware that vestiges of antiquity have occurred at Crosby Ravensworth. About three miles to the west is situated the remarkable district of Shap, full of early remains, megalithic monuments, numerous barrows also and other relics, to which the attention of the Institute was invited by the Rev. James Simpson, on occasion of the annual meeting at Carlisle.

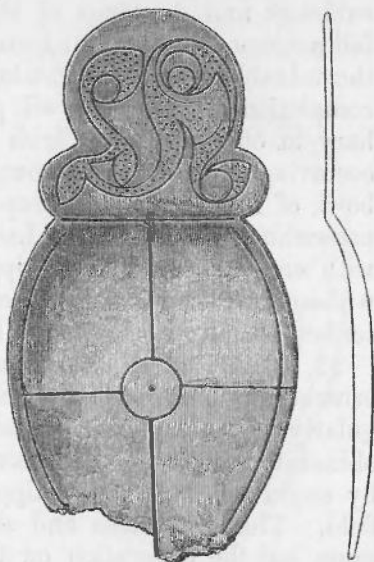
11. A specimen formerly in possession of Mr. C. Roach Smith, to whom it had been presented by Mrs. Blackett. I



3.—One of a pair found at Crosby Ravensworth, Westmoreland, in 1868. Original size.

have been informed by him that it was found in a turbary, as he believes, in Ireland. It was exhibited in the temporary museum formed during the annual meeting of the Archæological Institute at Rochester in July, 1863. It measures $4\frac{3}{8}$ in. by nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. The metal is somewhat less substantial than in other specimens previously described. This example, which I am permitted by Mr. Roach Smith's friendly courtesy to add to the series now brought together, bears a certain resemblance to those obtained in Ireland, in its somewhat slight and elongated proportions, in the general fashion of the ornaments engraved upon the handle, and in the absence of any relieve in that decoration. In these features it may also be compared with the spoons, before described, found in Westmoreland. (See woodcuts, Nos. 9 and 10.) It will be observed likewise that this relic resembles those in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy (Nos. 12—15), and also the pair from Westmoreland, in the

fashion of the cross that is engraved upon the concave surface of one of the spoons in each instance respectively; in each the lines forming the cross radiate from a small central circle. It is to be regretted that the place and circumstances of the discovery should not have been recorded. This interesting object has been presented by Mr. Roach Smith to Mr. Mayer, and I would express the hope that it may be ultimately deposited in the precious collections so generously given to the Free Public Museum at Liverpool. The highly instructive series of antiquities there preserved, through the good taste and munificence of Mr. Mayer, is already enriched by one of the most remarkable and unpublished examples of the "Late Celtic" period, the bronze vessel found in Merionethshire, in a turbary near



11. Found in a turbary in Ireland. Mayer Collection, Liverpool. Scale, two-thirds of the original size.

Trawsfynydd, and formerly in possession of Mr. Lloyd, of Penyglanau.⁵

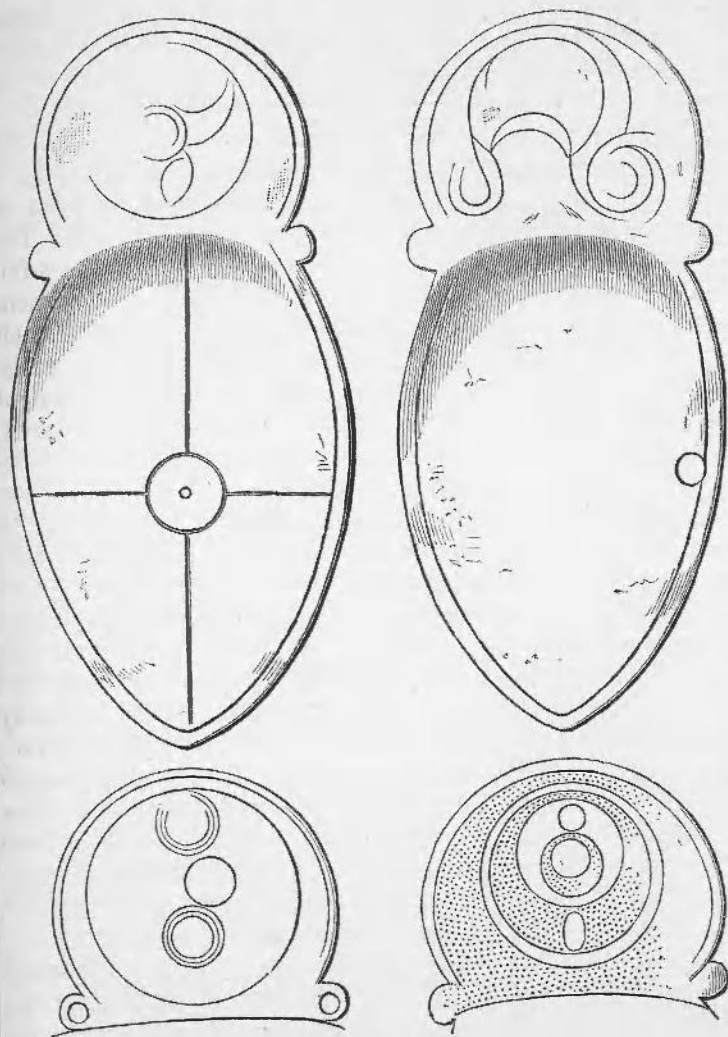
Two pairs are to be seen in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy; the precise circumstances connected with their discovery and the place where they were found have not been stated. I am indebted to the curator of the collection, Mr. Clibborn, and also to the late Mr. G. V. Du Noyer, for rubbings and drawings of these remarkable specimens; a full account may be anticipated in the concluding portion of the valuable descriptive catalogue by Sir W. R. Wilde. The completion of that work will present a most important auxiliary in our studies of Irish archæology.⁶ The specimens occurring in Ireland are comparatively flat, shallow in their bowl, of more elongated proportions, their ornament, whilst presenting features of the "Late Celtic" character, is wrought with engraved lines and stippled or punched ground-work, without any portions in relief, as in examples already described that have been found in England and Wales.

12, 13. On these Irish examples first to be noticed the ornament, consisting of circles inscribed somewhat irregularly within each other, and of curvilinear designs, much obliterated by use or the decay of the surface, is produced by engraved lines, with stippling or pounced work in the field. The dimensions and shape are in each precisely the same, but the decoration on the flat handle is considerably varied, both in the obverse and reverse, in each instance respectively. One has a circular perforation near the margin on the right side, the bowl being perfectly plain; the other has engraved in the centre of the bowl a small circle from which lines radiate at right angles, so as to present the appearance of a cross. The metal is of a yellow brass-like color. The dimensions are as follows,—length, including the handle, nearly $5\frac{5}{8}$ in.; breadth of the bowl, nearly $2\frac{5}{8}$ in.; of the handle, $2\frac{1}{8}$ in. Mr. Du Noyer, with the wonted sagacity of a minute observer, pointed out to me that the handle, in each of these examples, shows towards its left side, both on the obverse and reverse, indications of

⁵ Arch. Camb., second series, vol. i. p. 332.

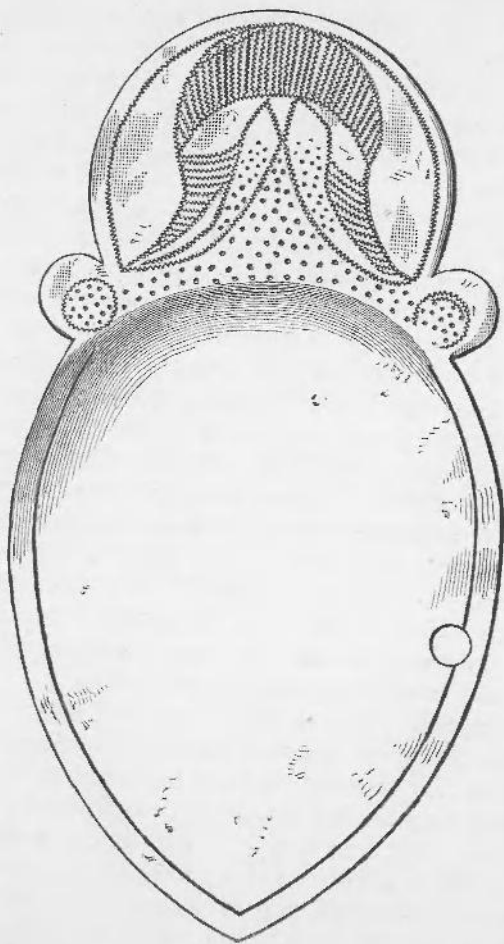
⁶ The "Ecclesiastical Antiquities" (not stone), typical articles from "finds" in Crannoges, &c., have been reserved for the third instalment of Sir W. Wilde's catalogue of the museum of the R. I.

Academy. This section will also include objects of which the precise uses have not been ascertained with certainty. The bronze spoons under consideration have mostly been classed, as we believe, by the savans of the sister kingdom, with objects of sacred or ecclesiastical character.



12, 13.—Found in Ireland. Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. Scale, two-thirds of the original size.

From drawing by the late George V. Du Noyer, M.R.I.A.



14.—Found in Ireland. Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, deposited in trust by the Royal Dublin Society. Original size.

From a drawing by the late George V. Du Noyer, M.R.I.A.

considerable wear with use. The engraved designs are much obliterated in that part, the result, as he believed, of handling; this may serve to indicate the manner in which these objects were habitually held between the thumb and finger.⁷ The metal is incrustated with a bright, polished green patina.

14, 15. The second pair, now preserved in the Museum of the Academy, has been there deposited in trust by the Royal Dublin Society. One spoon of this pair (fig. 14) has the perforation near the side, the counterpart (fig. 15) presents the central circle and radiating lines, in like manner as on the examples last described; they are produced by minute zigzag toolings, which I have noticed likewise in portions of the ornament of other specimens; it is remarkable to find such elaborate manipulation, where we might expect to see the steadily-sustained uniform stroke of the burin. I observed the same technical peculiarity in the marginal lines of the specimens found in Westmoreland (Nos. 9., 10.), but it is shown in a very remarkable manner in "Late Celtic" objects of a different description, for instance on the bronze mirror, to which I shall advert more fully hereafter, preserved in the Bedford Museum. On that highly elaborated example of Late Celtic skill, the whole of the intricate decoration is produced by delicate chevrony toolings. In the ornamentation of the pair of objects under consideration, the ground of the curvilinear designs on the handles is covered with punched or stippled work, forming minute circles or dimplings; Mr. Du Noyer assured me that the circle and radiating lines within the bowl had likewise been produced by a punch, whilst the marginal lines were deeply engraved. These minute details may not be undeserving of notice, as indicating the remarkable proficiency to which the metal-workers of the period had attained.

The dimensions are, in this instance, as follows:—length, 5 in.; breadth, of the bowl, $2\frac{5}{8}$ in.; of the handle, $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. The metal, according to Mr. Barnwell's description, is of a brown rusty color, a condition of surface not unusual in bronze relics found in Ireland, and produced probably by some

⁷ I believe that this curious pair was contributed to the Dublin Industrial Exhibition in 1853 by Mr. R. Murray, of

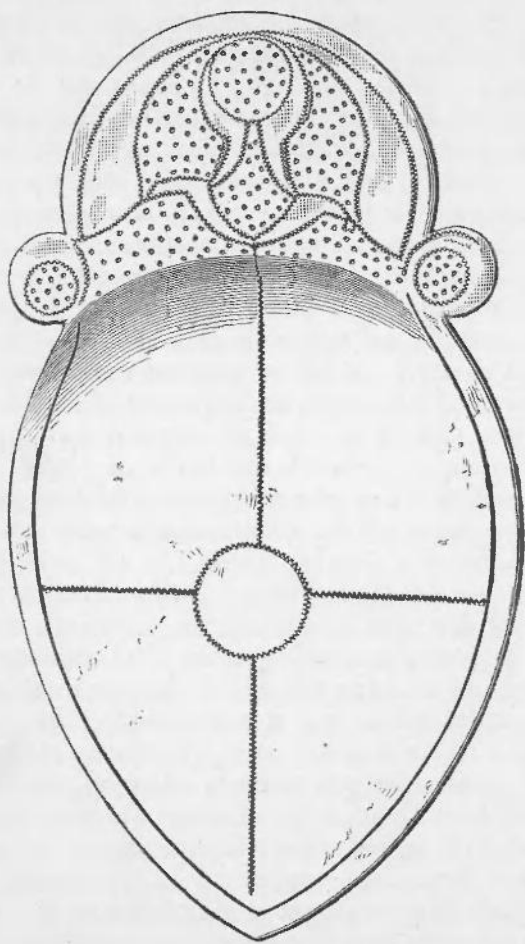
Mullingar, and that they are noticed in the Official Catalogue, No. 1886, p. 145 as "Patinas—two oval and pointed."

peculiar effect of the soil in which they had been deposited.

Having now endeavoured to relate the particulars connected with all the known examples, so far as it has been practicable to ascertain them, I proceed to offer a few remarks in regard to the period to which these objects may be ascribed, and the uses for which, as it has been imagined, they were destined. I have sought in vain for any circumstance associated with the discovery in any of the instances that I have recorded, and carefully endeavored to trace in the site or in the accompaniments of the deposit some of those trifling details that may serve to suggest the indication of its character or its date. I am not aware, however, that on any occasion in the discovery of one of these mysterious Celtic relics has any other ancient object been brought to light; it can scarcely be alleged that the position in which the deposit has occurred may afford reliable evidence. Some value, it is true, has been ascribed to the finding of such spoon-shaped relics in streams or near springs of water. This circumstance, however, must obviously be taken with caution as an indication of the purpose which any object thus discovered may have served. Its occurrence in the silt of the Thames, in some turbary or alluvial deposit, or in the accumulated debris that surrounds every site of long continued occupation, can fairly be accepted only as evidence that the habitations of successive races by which our island has been occupied were probably established near such localities. It is no marvel that the bed of our great Metropolitan river should present the most copious deposit of vestiges of every period, specially rich in those of the age that I have designated as "Late Celtic." The remarkable bronze decorations of shields, for example, rescued from the Thames at Battersea, and deposited in the British Museum by the Archæological Institute; the elaborate bronze shield also, brought to light in the river Witham, near Lincoln, and now in the armory at Goodrich Court, may be cited amongst numerous examples of the fluviatile treasures of the Celtic age.⁸ The endeavor to enumerate all the relics of that peculiar class which have occurred in the British islands would far exceed the limits of my present purpose; they will, as I hope, be fully illustrated at some future period by

⁸ *Horæ Ferales*, p. 191, plates xiv., xvi.

BRONZE RELICS OF THE LATE CELTIC PERIOD.



15.—Found in Ireland. Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, deposited in trust by the Royal Dublin Society. Original size.

From a drawing by the late George V. Du Noyer, M.R.I.A.

Mr. Franks, to whom this section of early antiquities has been long, as also to myself, an object of special interest. Meanwhile I would refer to the well-selected examples that have been figured by him in the *Horæ Ferales*. The remarkable series also brought before the Society of Antiquaries by Mr. Franks in 1858, may probably be in the remembrance of some of my readers.⁹ In this peculiar class of early remains the British islands are unrivalled, a few objects only, analogous in design, being found on the Continent. The relics in question, discovered in this country, consist of shields, swords, and daggers, personal ornaments, horse-furniture, and miscellaneous objects, some of iron, some of bronze, and frequently enriched with enamel. It may deserve notice that no relic that may be regarded with certainty as of a sacred or Christian character has hitherto, so far as I can ascertain, been brought to light. None is to be found in the classified Inventory of examples of "Late Celtic" Art, including a few brought to light in foreign countries, that has been given in the *Horæ Ferales*. I am unwilling to extend the present notices, already, as I fear, too diffuse, by citing many other precious relics of the same period not included in that list. I would advert, however, to the very remarkable one-handled, tankard-shaped vessel found in a turbarry at Trawsfynydd, Merionethshire, not far from the Roman remains at Tomen y Mur, supposed to mark the position of a station to which the name of Heriri Mons has been assigned.¹ This object is now in the valuable museum that has been generously given to the town of Liverpool by the munificent promoter of archæological science, Mr. Mayer. The bronze relic of extraordinary fashion found in Galloway, and now in the antiquarian collection at Abbotsford, must also be mentioned as an unique and most characteristic example. It is admirably ornamented with designs of the peculiar curvilinear or "trumpet" type, closely resembling some of those on the Celtic "spoons" that have been described in the foregoing memoir. The form of this relic suggests that it may have been placed on the head of a small

⁹ Proceedings Soc. of Antiqu., vol. iv. pp. 144, 166.

¹ This unique specimen of "Late Celtic" was shown at the Meeting of the Cambrian Archæological Association at Dolgellau, in 1850. Arch. Camb., N. S.,

vol. i. p. 332. It was formerly in possession of the late Mr. J. Lloyd of Pen-y-glanau, who collected numerous relics of interest in the locality, now unfortunately dispersed.

horse ; there are circular apertures, apparently eye-holes, at the sides ; from the forehead project a pair of long horns recurved inwards, measuring about 12 in. in length. I am indebted to the Secretary of the Antiquaries of Scotland, Dr. J. Alexander Smith, for the description of this very peculiar relic, of which he will give a full account in their Proceedings.² Lastly, I would invite attention to certain highly curious relics not included by Mr. Franks in his list above cited, namely, certain bronze mirrors, of which the reverses are engraved with elaborate designs that exemplify, in a most instructive manner, the peculiar types of Celtic ornamentation to which I have sought to invite attention as occurring on the "Spoons" now under consideration. In the absence of any other relics accompanying the deposits of these mysterious objects, as I have previously pointed out, it is by the character of the ornament alone that we can hope to be ultimately guided in establishing their date, and possibly also the uses for which they may have been originally intended.

I have desired to advert more particularly to the relics last mentioned, as presenting the most suggestive evidence that has come under my observation, in regard to the probability that the vestiges of the "Late Celtic" period, although not partaking of the character of Roman design, may occasionally be traced within the limits of Roman influence. I allude to the discovery of certain interments near Plymouth, described by Mr. Spence Bate in the Transactions of the Devonshire Association for advancement of Science, for 1864. Two objects of admirable workmanship, supposed to be mirrors, unfortunately in imperfect state (diameter about $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.) were there disinterred, accompanying unburnt remains deposited in graves partly excavated in the natural rock, and partly deposited with pottery, personal ornaments of bronze, and various objects of undoubted Roman-British character. The whole have been figured imperfectly, and on a very inadequate scale in the serial above cited. I have, however, seen

² This extraordinary object was exhibited at a meeting of the Antiquaries of Scotland in December, 1867. It was found in a morass at Torrs, co. Kirkeudbright, and was presented to Sir Walter Scott ; it is now at Abbotsford. Dr. Smith will shortly give, in the Proceedings of the Scottish Antiquaries, vol. vii.,

an account of this and of another object of bronze that bears the like Late Celtic decoration. This last resembles the lower part of the head of an animal, possibly an ox ; it was found in a morass near Banff, and is now in the museum of that town. Both are noticed in the New Statistical Account of Scotland.

in the possession of my friend, Mr. Franks, an accurate facsimile or "rubbing" of the engraved ornament, and I have thus been enabled to speak without hesitation of its strongly marked character as properly belonging to the Celtic period. Of these very remarkable objects that have not been noticed by him in his inventory already cited, three other examples are known to me, each of them characterised in a striking degree by the peculiarities of the "Late Celtic" ornamentation. One of these supposed mirrors is preserved in the Museum of the Archæological Society of Bedford. Through the courteous assistance of Mr. James Wyatt, of that place, to whose researches the student of palæolithic remains is so much indebted, I have been enabled to examine this admirably wrought Celtic specimen. It was found, as he informs me, in the excavations for the Warden tunnel, on the Midland Railway, about six miles from Bedford; Mr. Wyatt believes that Roman coins and portions of large amphoræ were found with it, but these were speedily dispersed and sold by the navvies; the bronze plate broken into several pieces, was, fortunately, regarded as of no value; it was rescued by the Rev. G. Mellor, and by him presented to the Museum. The site of the deposit is near places where various Roman relics have been found; and one of the workmen stated that a large bronze pan was likewise brought to light in the works for the tunnel. The supposed mirror presents on its decorated reverse one of the most typical examples of the trumpet-shaped decorations hitherto obtained; it is wholly produced by delicate zigzag work, executed with much delicacy and precision; the technical peculiarity of fine chevrons tooling has already been noticed; it resembles in a certain degree the elaborate decorations of some of the Irish Antiquities of gold figured in Sir W. R. Wilde's Catalogue of the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. The disk of the beautiful relic at Bedford is slightly kidney-shaped, it measures $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter; the handle, which may have been enriched with enamel, measures about 4 inches in length.³

These relics have appeared to claim special notice, not

³ This curious object was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries, and is briefly noticed in their Proceedings, Second Series, vol. i. p. 263, where the conjecture is stated that it might have served as a pendant of horse-furniture. A valuable

Late Celtic relic of another class was brought by Mr. Franks on the same occasion, an iron sword in a bronze sheath, the latter ornamented with scrolls and hatched lines. It was found near Stamford Bridge, Yorkshire.

merely as typical exemplifications of the ornamentation that in greater or less degree characterises the antiquities of the period, but on account of their having occurred in connection with Roman remains, and thus affording a proximate indication of the date to be ascribed to the class of objects under consideration.

Of the other two mirrors of similar description, one (diam. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.) is in the Museum so munificently presented by Mr. Mayer to the town of Liverpool;⁴ the other forms part of a remarkable deposit of bronze relics found in a moss in the parish of Balmaclellan, New Galloway, consisting of plates that had probably been attached to a box in which the more valuable articles had been placed; also a crescent-shaped plate, and the mirror (diam., the handle included, 13 in.) that have been figured by Dr. Wilson in his *Pre-historic Annals*.⁵ He points out the resemblance of the ornamentation to that of the head-ring found at Stitchell, and the Plunton Castle armlet, before cited as remarkable specimens of "Late Celtic" work.

To the valuable monograph in the *Horæ Ferales* I would refer any readers who desire to investigate the section of Celtic antiquities, to which I have thus imperfectly invited their attention, as immediately associated with the curious group of relics, the bronze "spoons" specially under consideration.

In connection with the foregoing remarks on such objects as may aid our conclusions in regard to the date, approximately, of the spoon-like relics, by careful comparison with certain other examples that bear most distinctly the stamp of analogous ornamentation, I cannot omit to mention the gold rings and Gaulish coins found in Belgium, at Frasnes, near Tournay. They were made known in this country by Mr. Roach Smith, to whose acute observations archæological

⁴ This specimen was purchased in Paris by Mr. J. C. Robinson, by whom it was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries in 1854 as a Celtic or Gallo-Roman mirror; the place of discovery unknown. *Proceedings, Soc. Ant.*, vol. iii. p. 118. I am informed by Mr. Franks that it was probably found in the bed of the Thames, in the neighbourhood of Barnes. I have a representation of it, by the kindness of Mr. Eeroyd Smith, curator of the collection at Liverpool; it is evidently an object of the same class as those found in

Devon and Bedfordshire.

⁵ Vol. ii. edit. 1863, p. 228; see also Mr. Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. ii., Appendix to the Preface, p. 10. Similar mirrors occur very frequently amongst the symbols on the monuments so admirably figured in that work. The curious circlet found in 1747 at Stitchell, Roxburghshire, is figured by Dr. Wilson, *ut supra*, p. 146. See also an account of the armlet, *ibid.* p. 147, and in this *Journal*, vol. xvi. p. 194, where it is figured.

science has been under constant obligations ; photographs were brought before the Numismatic Society through Mr. Evans, and the evidence obtained through this find was stated by him in a memoir published in the Numismatic Chronicle, with a plate by the skilful hand of the late Mr. Fairholt.⁶ The value of the discovery consists, as Mr. Roach Smith pointed out, in the fact that the gold coins give an approximate date to the ornaments by which they are accompanied ; the most remarkable being a massive penannular ring (diam. about 8 in.) enriched with scroll ornaments in high relief, of the "Late Celtic" character, somewhat modified as compared with such as have occurred in the British islands ; amongst these is here introduced the head of the ox, an object that appears to have been associated with some peculiar superstition. Mr. Evans has shown with most lucid precision the grounds of his conclusion that the gold imitations of the *stater* of Philip II., which accompanied the deposit at Frasnès, may be ascribed to about B.C. 80. In regard to the occurrence of a penannular collar in "Late Celtic" times, a very interesting example is supplied by one exhibited by the Rev. Edward Duke, at the meeting of the Institute at Salisbury, in 1849. It was found in Cornwall in 1802, in a stream-work, called Trenoweth, and was supposed to be of "Corinthian brass." I had been, however, assured that it is of gold. The punched and engraved decorations bear distinct resemblance to those of numerous relics enumerated by Mr. Franks, in his Inventory, before cited.⁷

The analogy that is to be traced in certain details of ornament, especially in early illuminated MSS. of ascertained date, and in elaborately enriched crosses or other unquestionably Christian monuments, for example, in the series of the "Sculptured Stones of Scotland," admirably illustrated by the late Mr. Patrick Chalmers, and by Mr. Stuart, has led some of our most reliable authorities to the conclusion that the "Late Celtic" remains referred to in the foregoing memoir, with the spoon-like objects also, so distinctly characterised by identity of ornamentation, should be assigned for

⁶ Numism. Chron., N.S. vol. iv. pl. v.; see also Rev. de la Numismatique Belge, 1864, p. 140.

⁷ This relic measures about 6½ inches in diameter. It is figured in the *Archæologia*, vol. xvi., p. 137, pl. x. Another

collar, engraved with designs of distinct "Late Celtic" character, was in the possession of Mr. Charles Hall of Osmington, Dorset, and is figured in the annual volume produced by the Anastatic Drawing Society, 1858, pl. 35.

the most part to a comparatively recent period of Post-Roman antiquity, namely, to the sixth, or possibly to the eighth century. It must, however, be carefully considered, that in the numerous objects of bronze comprised in Mr. Franks' Inventory, to which doubtless many might be added, including those that form the special subject of the present memoir, a marked difference is to be observed. Certain types of decorative design, the interlaced riband, the lacertine or zoomorphic, namely, a prevalent combination of animal forms, some peculiar whorls or spirals also, elaborate mæanders, with other varieties, profusely introduced in the rich illuminated pages of early MSS., or on the sculptured monuments, are scarcely if ever to be found on the relics of bronze. Those more complex and artificial, although less graceful, motives of ornamentation appear, as I imagine, to indicate a more recent period of art, modified doubtless in some instances by local taste or caprice.⁸

As regards, then, the probable date of the spoon-like objects, and of the other relics that bear the distinct impress of the same peculiar type of ornamentation, I am disposed to concur in the conclusions of my friend Mr. Franks who, more than any one, has devoted attention to this particular class of bronze antiquities, and to believe that "they are probably not more ancient than the introduction of coinage into Britain, from 200 to 100 B.C., and not much later than the close of the first century after Christ, when the Roman dominion in this country was firmly established. This date would account for the occasional discovery of such remains with, or in close proximity to Roman antiquities, and also for the influence that their designs seem to have exercised over certain phases of Roman colonial art, in which, however, their wild and studied irregularity of design are brought into subjection, though at the same time the patterns lose much of their charm and originality."⁹

It has been suggested to me, however, that the close resemblance of certain motives of ornamentation occurring on the "Spoons," as compared with those on the sculptured

⁸ I would here refer specially to Mr. Westwood's admirable works on Ancient Art in the British Islands, exemplified in MSS., and to his instructive memoir, *Arch. Journal*, vol. x. p. 283; *Paleographia Sacra Pictoria*, &c. Our lamented friend Kemble, in his address to the Royal Irish

Academy, in 1857, gave one of his masterly outlines of a complex subject, and has set forth in a striking manner his impressions of the peculiarities of Celtic design.

⁹ *Horæ Ferales*, p. 189; see also *Proceedings Soc. of Antiqu.*, vol. iv. p. 45.

monuments in North Britain, appears to justify the conclusion that the date, in both instances, may be nearly the same. Mr. Irvine pointed out in regard to the specimen in my own possession (fig. 2) the similarity in design to that of the incised work on the slab found at St. Peter's Kirk, South Ronaldshay, and now in the Museum of the Antiquaries of Scotland.¹ The approximative date of the Scottish sculptures appears, according to the sagacious conclusions of Mr. Stuart, to be shortly after the establishment of Christianity in the Pictish country; some of them may be as he states, of the early part of the eighth century.² Mr. Westwood, our highest authority on the classification of the various types of ornament that prevailed in the British islands, is of opinion that the ornamentation on the "Spoons" may be assigned to about that period or a little earlier; he reminded me of the enameled disks found near Warwick, and published by me in this Journal, in 1845; they, doubtless, bear comparison with the designs in MSS. of the sixth or seventh century.³ The triple spirals and other features that occur in these and in other relics, appear to retain a considerable tradition of the peculiar Celtic motives occurring on the "Spoons," and characterising, as I imagine, with my friend Mr. Franks, the relics of a somewhat earlier age.⁴ These, however, are points of difficulty that I must leave to the judgment of those more intimately conversant than myself with the *incunabula* of art in the British islands.

In the endeavour to ascertain the date of the peculiar spoon-shaped Celtic relics, I have sought to trace any feature of resemblance amongst Roman or other early appliances of the like description found in Britain. The occasional occurrence of "Late Celtic" objects on Roman sites, although no instance has been traced of the deposit of any of the spoons near vestiges of that period, gave encouragement to seek

¹ Figured by Mr. Stuart, *Sculptured Stones*, First Series, pl. xcvi. Mr. Irvine adverted also, amongst other Irish examples, to the remarkable resemblance in the ornamentation of some bone plaques found in a Cromlech by Eugene O'Connell. The peculiar Celtic curvilinear designs and "trumpet" pattern, doubtless occurs on several of the Scottish monuments, and also in illuminated Irish and Scottish MSS. but almost invariably combined with interlaced ribands, lacertine, and

other animal forms, that are not found on the "Spoons," and rarely if ever on other "Late Celtic" bronzes.

² *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*. Second Series, Preface, p. 17.

³ *Arch. Journal*, vol. ii. p. 162.

⁴ A single example of a bronze ornament on which the Celtic complicated curves are found combined with interlaced ribands is a brooch figured in Sir W. Wilde's Catalogue, R. I. Acad., p. 569.

some suggestive resemblance in such examples of the *cochlear* as have been brought to light in this country. The ordinary forms are well known, they differ materially from the Celtic "Spoons," if indeed we may conclude that these last were actually for any such familiar uses as those for which ordinary spoons were intended, and for which some have regarded the broad, shallow form and inconvenient handle of the examples that I have figured as very ill adapted. Of the *cochlear* we find numerous specimens, of metal and of bone, figured in Mr. Roach Smith's Roman London, and in other works familiar to the reader; the most common form being that with an oval bowl and long, pointed handle; of this a good example, found at Colchester, was exhibited by Mr. C. Tucker, at our Norwich meeting; it has in the cavity or *pecten* the inscription in niello—AETERNVS VIVAS.⁵ Another inscribed example, peculiar in its short hooked handle, is here figured; it is of silver, and was found near Sunderland. The cavity, when perfect, doubtless bore the inscription—BENE VIVAS. I am indebted to the north country antiquary, Mr. Hylton Longstaffe, F.S.A., for this curious Roman relic, hitherto unpublished.



Silver Roman Spoon. Orig. size.

The *cochlear*, with a circular cavity and long handle, is also of frequent occurrence; it has been sometimes regarded as a spoon for incense; Caylus⁶ gives an example with the cavity perforated like a strainer, and Wagener figures one of bronze, of

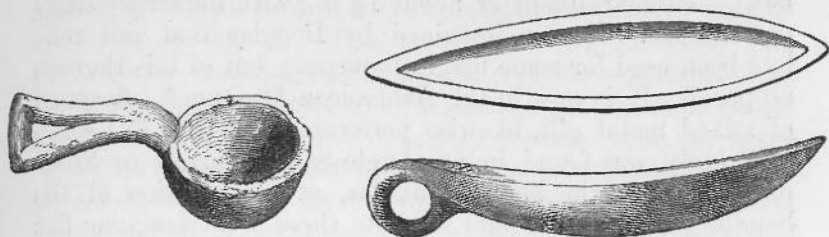
which the little bowl is marked with transverse lines, like a cross, and in that respect somewhat similar to the Celtic spoons, very different in form, described in the foregoing memoir. There are a few Roman relics of this description with singularly short handles, suited only for suspension; two

⁵ Figured in the Transactions of the Institute, Norwich, 1847; Museum Catalogue, p. xxviii, where several Roman spoons are noticed. A specimen found at Avanches, Switzerland, published by Schmidt, is inscribed VTERE FELIX.

⁶ Caylus, Recueil, t. v., p. 216; Wagener, Handbuch, 323. Many other

specimens of the *cochlear*, varied slightly in form, may be cited; see Archæologia, vol. x. pl. xi.; Akerman, Archæol. Index, pl. xiii.; Archæol. Journ., vol. viii. p. 40. Illustrations of Ancient Art, Pompeii and Herculaneum, by Archdeacon Trollope, pl. 28.

are here figured ; the first was found with Roman coins near Lancaster, a similar little spoon was also found at Caerleon.⁷



Found at Lancaster. Orig. size.

Found at Chesterford. Orig. size.

The second, of remarkably elongated boat-shaped fashion, was obtained in the late Lord Braybrooke's excavations of Roman remains at Chesterford. Both are of bronze.

The only Roman objects of this class known to me that bear distinct indication of Christian date, although probably not intended for any sacred uses, are certain very long-handled silver spoons, of which no example, so far as I am aware, has occurred in this country. They have been repeatedly found in Italy. The handle is usually united to the *pecten* by a flat shoulder, on the sides of which are usually introduced Christian symbols in niello. A good example that I examined in the Lambert Collection of antiquities found at Lyons bears, on one side, the Greek letter Rho, traversed at right angles by a cross stroke, probably a variety of the familiar Christian monogram. The handle is marked with the maker's name—MVNEHARI.

It is scarcely needful to remark that in these Roman types we find no resemblance to the "Late Celtic" spoons, either in form or workmanship. If we seek examples of the succeeding period, namely, about the date to which these last have been assigned by some archæologists, certain curious spoons with perforated bowls claim attention, associated with the remains designated Anglo-Saxon. In these likewise, however, no similarity is to be traced. In the excavation of a grave near Chatham, as related by Douglas in the *Nenia*, a silver spoon, partly washed with gold, was found with

⁷ Figured by Mr. Lee, Catalogue Museum at Caerleon, pl. xxxv.; Arch. Cambr., vol. iii. pl. v. A similar relic, found at Castle Field, Manchester, is in the Museum at Worsley Hall. Baines,

Hist. of Lancashire, vol. ii. p. 161. Battely figures a short-handled "cochleare mensurale" found at Richborough, of a type that I have not elsewhere noticed, Antiqu. Rutup, tab. xi. p. 126.

other ornaments, accompanying unburnt remains, as supposed, of a female; the handle is enriched with garnets; the bowl is circular, diameter about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., with numerous small perforations. It was imagined by Douglas that this relic had been used for some magical purpose, but of this there is no proof. It is now in the Ashmolean Museum.⁸ A spoon of mixed metal gilt, likewise perforated, but with five small holes only, was found in an Anglo-Saxon barrow at Stodmarsh, Kent; the bowl is circular, at the junction of the handle, which is plain and straight, there is a triangular flat piece of garnet, such as frequently occurs in ornamental work of the period.⁹ Saxon spoons of another form found at Southampton are figured by Mr. Roach Smith, *Coll. Ant.* vol. iv. p. 58.

Mr. Barnwell notices some spoons of bronze, probably cast, preserved in the Museum at Bourges. By his kindness I am permitted to give a representation of one of these, on a slightly reduced scale; instead of handles these objects have hooks, probably for suspension. Although of different form, these might doubtless serve for the like purpose, whatever it may have been, as the Celtic relics.¹



I cannot conclude these notices without offering a few remarks on certain conjectural explanations that have been proposed, in regard to the uses for which the "Late Celtic" spoon-like objects were possibly intended. I am, however, wholly unable to suggest any probable solution of the enigma. The obscurity in which the purpose of several remarkable relics of the same period is involved, seems to me in this instance to present an almost impenetrable mystery.

The supposition that the "Spoons" in question may be of early Christian use seems to have found ready acceptance,

⁸ Nenia Brit. p. 6; Akerman, *Pagan Saxondom*, pl. xxxiii. p. 67.

⁹ Figured in a memoir by Mr. Akerman, *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvi., pl. xvi. p. 180. The occurrence of a spoon with ancient interments in the British islands is rare; Douglas mentions "a metal spoon" found in the early burial places in Westray, one of the Orkney Islands.

Nenia, p. 76.

¹ *Arch. Cambr.*, third series, vol. x. p. 61. The place where these spoons are preserved is there given as Bruges, but Mr. Barnwell informs me that it should be Bourges. Notices and representations of spoons of all ages and countries are given by Mr. H. O. Westman, in a volume entitled "The Spoon." London, 1845.

suggested, as I imagine, by the occurrence of lines engraved transversely in the cavity of the object, in some instances radiating from a central circle or a lozenge-shaped compartment, as in fig. 7. This roughly scored marking, that occurs only on the spoons that are without a perforation at the edge, has doubtless at first sight a certain resemblance to the Christian symbol.² I may observe that, in every specimen hitherto examined, it appears to have been produced by the same hand and tool as the other engraved lines, and to be contemporary with the original workmanship. It is not, as I believe, an addition at some subsequent period, by which a pagan appliance might be, so to speak, hallowed for Christian uses. The occurrence of any sacred relic of such description in the British islands is so rare, that the interest of the Celtic spoons would doubtless be greatly enhanced were their association with the early times of Christianity satisfactorily established. In the present instance, however, this must I think be regarded as questionable. Had the skilful artificer by whom these spoons were fabricated really intended to mark them with a Christian symbol, I feel assured that it would never have been in so imperfect and rude a fashion; one only of the pair, it will also be observed, bears the supposed sacred emblem. We fail to find, in any instance, the introduction of any decisive evidence, such as would unquestionably occur on objects so carefully elaborated,—for instance, the sacred monogram composed of the letters Chi and Rho, the most prevalent symbol on the earliest Christian relics, the only symbol moreover hitherto found in this country on vestiges of so early a date as Roman occupation of Britain, and that which had become generally familiar through the coinage of Constantine and his successors in the fourth century. Had we found on any of the numerous “Late Celtic” relics an example of this or of any equally decisive indication of Christianity, there could have been no hesitation in assigning the “Spoons” to some early period after the introduction of the true faith into Britain.

² I might here advert to other objects of early antiquity that bear cruciform markings, and which we have no reason to regard as of Christian date. Such are the gold pellets found with Celtic relics in Scotland. Wilson, *Prehist. Annals*, vol. i. p. 464, vol. ii. p. 261; *Archæol. Scot.* vol. iv. p. 217. I have described

several urns bearing cruciform designs, found with early British interments, that seem to belong to pre-Christian times. *Arch. Journ.*, vol. xxiv. p. 22; *Arch. Cambr.*, third series, vol. xiv. p. 256, 278. On this curious subject see De Mortillet, *Le Signe de la Croix avant le Christianisme*.

A single object of Roman times has been brought to light, so far as I am aware, in this country, bearing that symbol, namely, a silver bowl ornamented with foliage and the conjoined Greek letters above mentioned; it was found in Northumberland at *Corstopitum* near the Roman Wall.³

There are various peculiar ritual usages, both in the Latin and the Eastern Church, connected with the use of a spoon; such an appliance was doubtless long employed in this country. To some of these Mr. Barnwell adverts in his remarks on the Celtic spoons.⁴ As regards the supposed use of these last in the administration of the Eucharist, he has pointed out the improbability that any appliance would be employed formed of metal so liable as bronze to become corroded by the wine. The injunctions of the Canons, with many evidences of ancient usage in this respect, have been often cited, and claim careful consideration. It was enjoined that the chalice should be of pure molten material, gold or silver, glass or tin; horn was forbidden, especially wood, "propter porositatem." It is probable that such restrictions may have been recognised from an early period in regard to the materials of which all appliances provided for the most sacred of Christian rites should be formed. The objection to glass is stated by Lyndwode to have been its fragile nature, whilst the sacred vessel should not be "de cupro, quia provocat vomitum, nec de aurichalco, quia contrahit rubiginem." The occasional neglect of any such regulations, probably enjoined, not only in regard to the chalice, but also to minor objects of sacred use, may be inferred from the reiterated prohibition. Mr. Nesbitt, to whose intimate knowledge of Christian Art we have often been indebted, reminds me that a "calix æneus" was used by St. Columbanus, towards the close of the sixth century; a bronze chalice of Irish-German character of the eighth century is preserved also at the Convent of Kremsmünster on the Danube.

³ This vessel, weighing 20oz, has probably perished. An account of the discovery, with a drawing of the bowl, is preserved in the Minutes of the Society of Antiquaries. The discovery is slightly mentioned by Dr. Bruce, *Roman Wall*, third edition, p. 342, and also an altar found at Vindobala on the Wall, and supposed to have borne the Christian monogram. This, however, is doubtful. It is figured *ibid.*, p. 128. Two other

remarkable instances of the use of the Chi-Rho may be cited, namely, the Roman mosaic, found in 1796 at Frampton, Dorset, and published by Lysons, and some roughly inscribed stones obtained in recent excavations at Chedworth, Wilts. On the tessellated floor the symbol accompanies a head of Neptune, with figures of several heathen deities.

⁴ *Arch. Cambr.*, third series, vol. x. p. 58.

It has been suggested that the Celtic spoons would be more suitable for aspersion in baptismal rites; for such a purpose the liability to corrosion would cause no objection to the use of bronze. I am not aware whether any evidence of the ancient use of such an object may be found, especially in early times when immersion was the prevalent practice. In some places at the present day a shell-like object is doubtless employed; I am informed by the Earl of Limerick that he recently noticed this practice in the south of France. He obtained at Cannes one of these modern baptismal spoons; it is a shell polished and engraved, and it has a perforation resembling those in the ancient bronze spoons. An appliance of this description is likewise to be found in our own country, occasionally even in certain places of worship of the Established Church.⁵

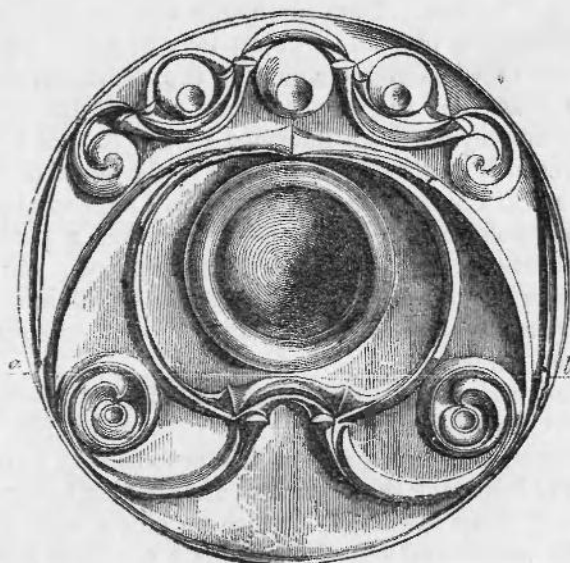
A friend, who has closely investigated the details of sacred archæology, on whose knowledge also of such subjects I have great reliance, is of opinion that the spoons may have been used in administering the Eucharist after having being dipped in the wine, "*vino intinctam*." Such an object, with the hole at the side, seems well suited for lifting a sop from a shallow vessel, allowing the wine to drain off, and then placing the sop in the mouth of the communicant. He suggests that the shallow bronze pans, found in Ireland, that have a cavity in the centre, and are enriched with the "trumpet pattern," of the same period as the ornamentation of the spoons, may have been used for the "intinction." The objection to this conjecture, as he points out, is the fact that the spoons are usually found in pairs, one of the pair being without the perforation. I am indebted to the Royal Irish Academy, through the friendly courtesy of Mr. Clibborn, for the accompanying illustration; six of these remarkable relics have been found; their details and workmanship are minutely described by Sir W. R. Wilde.⁶ The woodcut is a reproduction from two imperfect specimens, by the skilful pencil,

⁵ A silver shell or spoon-shaped object, as I have been informed, is used in baptisms at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, in lieu of aspersion by the hand. Dr. Husenbeth has told me that such objects of silver or mother o' pearl, and natural shells are commonly used in Roman Catholic churches; they are supplied by Messrs. Hardman, Evans, and other

manufacturers of sacred appliances.

⁶ Catal. Mus. R. I. Academy, p. 637. See also Mr. Franks' notice of these objects in his inventory of "*Late Celtic*" relics; *Horæ Ferales*, p. 183. No similar disk has been found in England; a specimen is preserved in the British Museum. It has been supposed that they were ornamental portions of shields,

I believe, of my lamented friend Dunoyer; it may not be strictly accurate in all the curious design; the line *ab* indicates the restored portion.



Bronze disk; L to Celtic period. Mus. Royal Irish Acad. Diameter, about 11 inches.

In regard to these mysterious disks, it must be observed, that Rabanus Maurus, the learned opponent of the doctrine of transubstantiation in the ninth century, enjoins that the wine should not be consecrated in a *catinum*, nor in a *crater*, but only in a chalice. Hence it may fairly be inferred, that a pan or shallow vessel had occasionally been employed in the Eucharist; elaborate bronze objects such as that above figured may have been adapted for such uses.

Mr. Clibborn informs me that several persons who have examined the bronze spoons in the Museum of the Irish Academy, the Bishop of Brechin, and other visitors also conversant with the ritual of the Greek Church, have considered them to be identical with the *labida* used for the administration of the bread after being dipped in the chalice. The form of this spoon is shown by Goar, from whose *Euchologium* the accompanying woodcut has been copied.⁷

⁷ Goar, *Rituale Græcorum*, p. 152, in his ample notes on the *Ordo* for the mass, attributed to S. John Chrysostom. I am indebted to Mr. Barnwell for this representation of the eucharistic spoon of the

Oriental rite. He remarks very truly that it seems as conveniently formed for the purpose, as the broad, shallow, Celtic articles are inconveniently adapted.

This ancient usage of the Eastern Christian was, doubtless, adopted at a certain period in some churches in the British Islands. It is highly probable that the little spoon



The *Labida*, used in the Greek Church.

found about 1849, under St. Martin's Cross, at Iona, may have been intended for such ritual use. It was in the possession of the Duke of Argyll. In the Exhibition of Irish Antiquities, at the meeting of the British Association at Belfast, in 1852, a small gold spoon found in the river Bann was shown. The stem is spiral, the little oval bowl measures five-eighths of an inch in length. It was supposed to have been used for some eucharistic purpose.⁸

I have thus adverted to certain suggestions that I have received in regard to the intentions of the Celtic relics. The investigation has led me, I fear, into details that may appear tediously prolonged. It has been my desire to invite attention to a section of that remarkable class of early remains, the peculiar interest of which was so highly appreciated by our lamented friend, Kemble, in his eloquent address to the Royal Irish Academy in 1857. Canon Rock, with the friendly readiness always shown by him in contributing to our instruction or gratification, has promised to give us the results of his enquiries into the supposed connexion of the Bronze Spoons with early Christian rites: so perplexing a subject of sacred archæology cannot fail to find, through the erudition and sagacity of the author of "The Church of our Fathers," a most efficient exponent.

ALBERT WAY.

The Institute is indebted to the Cambrian Archæological Association, to the liberality also of their treasurer, the Rev. E. L. Barnwell, and of another member, both of that society and our own, for the illustrations of the foregoing memoir.

⁸ Ulster Journal of Archæology, vol. i. p. 81, where the Irish example is figured. The spoon, in possession of the Duke of

Argyll, has been described as of gold: it is of bronze, length about 4 inches.