

NOTES ON TWO CURIOUS PADLOCKS IN THE CARLISLE MUSEUM.¹

By R. S. FERGUSON, F.S.A.

I have the honour to exhibit two padlocks with their keys, of a construction unusual in this country. They belong to the third or letter C class, into which General Pitt-Rivers, F.R.S., F.S.A., divides locks, namely "locks and padlocks fastening with a spring catch," or catches.² These locks and padlocks consist of a box, square or cylindrical in shape, having a bar, *d*, on the top and parallel to it, attached to one end of the box by a curved portion. The bolt, *a*, is provided with a perpendicular bar, *b*, at the end of which is a ring, *c*, which slips on the parallel bar, *d*.³ At the end of the bolt are two or more spring catches, *e*, like the barbs of an arrow head. Inside the box is a plate, *h*, with openings for the springs to pass through. The springs being placed into the hole, *f*, at one end of the box, at the same time that the ring *c* is slipped along the bar, *d*, collapse, and spring open again after having passed the openings in the plate, *h*, in the box. A slit in the end or heel of the lock, *k*, admits a pin or key, *g*, with a return end, having slits made to fit the springs. On this key being passed up, the springs are compressed, and the bolt can be withdrawn.

These padlocks are therefore hand drawn and not key drawn locks, *i.e.*, the key does not withdraw the bolt, which has to be withdrawn by hand, after the key has compressed the spring catches.

Two kinds of padlocks of this class were amongst the Roman antiquities discovered by Lord Braybrooke at Great Chesterford in Essex in 1854, and are engraved in our *Journal*, vol. xiii., p. 7, Plate II., Figs. 21 to 27. In

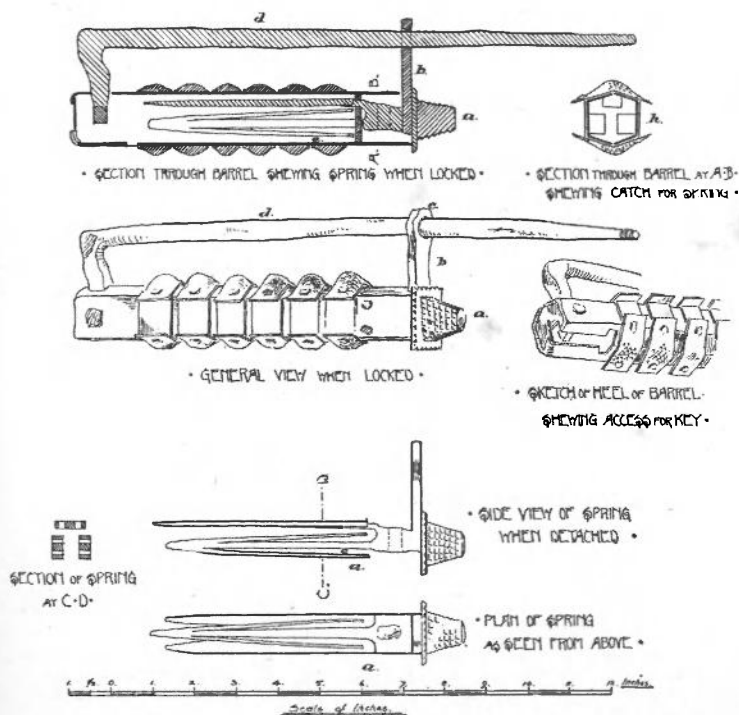
¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, July 3rd, 1895.

² On the *Development and Distribution of Primitive Locks and Keys*, by General Pitt-Rivers, F.R.S., p. 13.

³ There are sometimes two perpen-

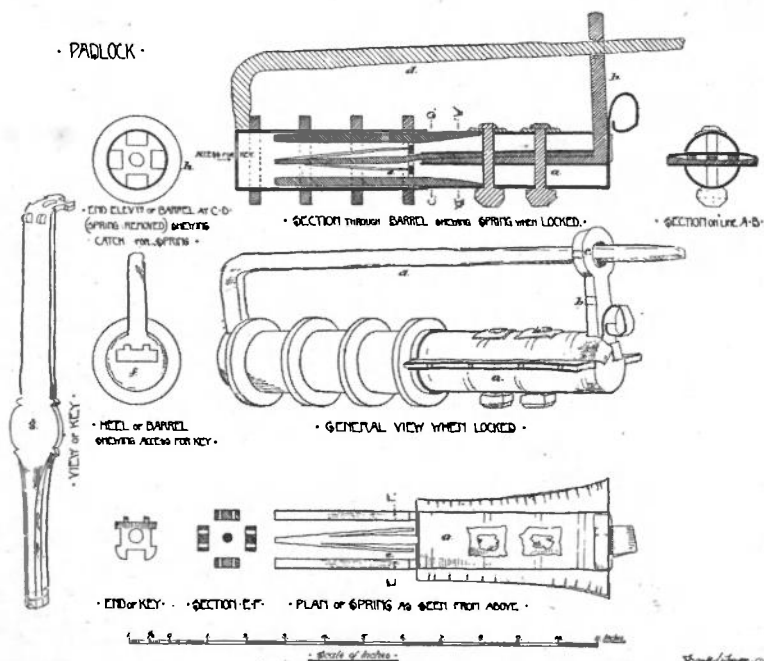
dicular bars, each with a ring. General Sir H. Pitt-Rivers seems to consider this the earlier form. *Ibid.*, p. 16. Those exhibited to-day have only one bar and ring.

• PADLOCK •



Handwritten signature and date:
June 26th 1896

PADLOCK FROM BOMBAY.
 In the Carlisle Museum.



“PORTCULLIS” LOCK.

In the Carlisle Museum.

one kind of the padlocks thus discovered, the bolt, *a*, has two perpendicular bars, *b*, each with a ring, *c*, at its end. In the other the bolt is a simple bar with the catch springs, and the parallel bar, *d*, of the box is curved over the mouth of the box and terminates in a ring, through which the bolt is passed before entering the box. A fragment of a lock on this principle, consisting of the box with its parallel bar attached to it, was found in association with some extended skeletons at Lagore, near Dunshaughlin, in the county of Meath in Ireland. It is figured in vol. vi. of the *Archæological Journal*, where it is described as an iron pipe, its use being apparently unknown to the writer. It was found in connection with iron leaf-shaped spear heads, broad double edged swords, bronze pins, and enamelled ornaments, and the post-Roman period of the find is attested by the presence of fallow deer among the associated remains.¹ Another was found at Swanscombe in Kent, and is probably of the fifteenth century. In this instance the curved bar of the bolt fits into a socket in the parallel bar: it is engraved in our *Journal*.² A portion of a lock on this principle has been found at Uriconium.³ A lock on this principle was found in Bermondsey in 1847, and is engraved in the *Journal of the British Archæological Association*.⁴ General Pitt-Rivers has found the keys, springs, and other portions of these tubular padlocks in the Romano-British villages at Woodcuts Common, and at Rotherley.⁵ Other instances are given by General Pitt-Rivers of this tubular padlock from India, from Cairo, from Russia, from Sweden, from Abyssinia, from Mogadore on the West Coast of Africa, from China, from Yarkand, Japan, from Hayti, and elsewhere.⁶ In instances from India and China the box of the lock is shaped like an animal, a lion, a horse, a fish, etc. The General concludes that "the spring tubular padlock of the Roman age in Europe is the same that is found throughout the whole region extending from Italy to China and Japan on east, northward into England and Scandinavia, southward into Abyssinia, and westward into

¹ *Archæological Journal*, vol. vi. pp. 101, 104.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xxxi. p. 78.

³ *Uriconium*, by T. Wright, F.S.A., p. 272.

⁴ Vol. xii, plate xiii. fig. 2.

⁵ *Excavations in Cranborne Chase*, vol. i. p. 73, plate xxiv; vol. ii, p. 136. plate cv.

⁶ *Primitive Locks and Keys*, 19-20.

West Africa, and Algeria, Spain, and on as far as the West Indies. But the principle of these tubular spring locks never obtained much in England, having been repressed by locks on the ward and tumbler principles."

The first lock that I exhibit is of iron and was presented to the Carlisle Museum by a lady who labelled it "An Old Indian Rat Trap." She had acquired it from a brother who had purchased it, as a curiosity, in Bombay. With the aid of a friendly blacksmith, I proved the rat trap to be a lock by picking it, and by making a key thereto. The box is square, that is squarish in shape, $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length and is strengthened by six embracing lockets: the parallel bar is 13 inches long. The bolt is provided with three springs of the barbed arrow head kind and has a pyramidal shaped head about an inch in height, which projects from the box, when the lock is locked, and the two together make $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches. An illustration of this lock is given in Plate I.

The second lock was recently purchased from a dealer by Mr. Robert Ferguson, F.S.A., for presentation to the Carlisle Museum. The box is cylindrical, of yellow metal, strengthened by four heavy iron rings; it is only $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, but the head of the bolts is a cylinder of the length of 5 inches, so that the two together make $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The parallel bar is 12 inches long. The bolt carries four barbed arrow head springs ranged round a central spike. This lock was purchased by the dealer from a clergyman near Bath, who called it a portcullis lock, but I can find no authority or reason for this name. The gate of the fortress of Moulton in India was closed by a lock somewhat similar to this, now in the Indian Museum,¹ and possibly such a lock may have been used to secure a portcullis, but I do not know of an instance. Or the name may refer to the way these locks close. I cannot trace the further history of this lock, which is represented in Plate II., but it is probably of Eastern origin.

I must conclude by expressing my acknowledgments to General Pitt-Rivers' valuable monograph, from which I have taken most of this little paper.

¹ Engraved in *Primitive Locks and Keys*, plate vi.