

A ROMAN VILLA AT FRILFORD.

[NOTE.—The following paragraphs describe a small Roman villa excavated about twelve years ago by Mr. A. J. Evans and the late Professor Moseley at Frilford in Berkshire, about eight miles south-west of Oxford. They were written by Mr. Evans at the time of the excavations, but neither they nor any other adequate accounts of the villa have appeared in print. It appeared to me, when Mr. Evans lately showed me the MS., that the villa deserved describing in print, and that Mr. Evans' description was an admirable one: I therefore obtained his consent to its publication, with some slight alterations, as follows.—F. HAVERFIELD.]

Frilford is already a classic site in the annals of English archæology. In May, 1865,¹ Mr. Akerman and Dr. Rolleston first called the attention of the Society of Antiquaries to a remarkable ancient cemetery in a field between Frilford and Garford, which, from its old name Frilford Heath or Frilford Field, seems to have been at one time part of the common pasture-land of the village. The name Frilford itself, in its old English form Frigeleford, was connected, with great probability, by Mr. Akerman with that of Woden's consort Frigga,² so that the original signification of the name would be the ford of Frigga's lea or meadow, or an old ford across the river Ock, which lies in the immediate neighbourhood of "Frilford Field."

In a further communication to the Society of Antiquaries in 1870,³ Dr. Rolleston contributed the results of his continued researches into the Frilford remains, and his paper on the subject is, I suppose, the most exhaustive attempt ever made to reconstruct the obscure history of the English Conquest of Britain on the firm basis of archæological evidence.

The high interest of the Frilford cemetery lies in the fact that it was continuously used by the Romano-

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, Second Series, Vol. III, p. 136.

² Mr. Akerman suggests an original form, Frige-leah-ford.

³ *Archæologia*, Vol. XLII, pp. 417-495.

British and pagan Saxon inhabitants of the spot. The earliest class of graves here found are more or less oriented, with the bodies extended at full length. In some of these have been found leaden coffins of unquestionably Roman fabric, and containing in several cases Roman coins, in one or two instances (according to the well-known practice) placed in the mouth of the skeleton, and dating from Constantine the Great to Valens, Valentinian, and Gratian. Besides these characteristic Roman interments there was an abundance of other graves, in some cases showing traces of wooden coffins and belonging to the poorer Romano-British inhabitants. In some of these also were coins ranging to Valens' time. The Romano-British character of these interments was shown not only as Dr. Rolleston has pointed out—by the character of the skulls they contained—but by the discovery of an unmistakeable Saxon urn “15 inches above a skeleton occupying one of these graves.”¹ The Anglo-Saxon interments were of three kinds: cremation urns such as the above; shallow un-oriented graves containing skeletons and various relics such as fibulæ, spear-heads and umbos; and, finally, deeper graves, oriented like the Romano-British, but having stones set round the edges of the grave and containing Anglo-Saxon insignia together with the skeletons. The latter class of graves probably belong to the period of transition from heathendom to Christianity—the orientation pointing to missionary influences.

Since 1870, when Dr. Rolleston's valuable paper was published in the *Archæologia*, fresh discoveries of graves, partly due to quarrying operations, have continually been made, and Dr. Rolleston himself was able to add considerably to his observations, which happily exist in a manuscript form. Since his death, Professor Moseley, his successor in the chair, but now also lost to us, has from time to time had an opportunity of investigating fresh interments, including those of several skeletons² enclosed in leaden coffins, but the cessation of quarrying operations has latterly stopped the course of discovery.

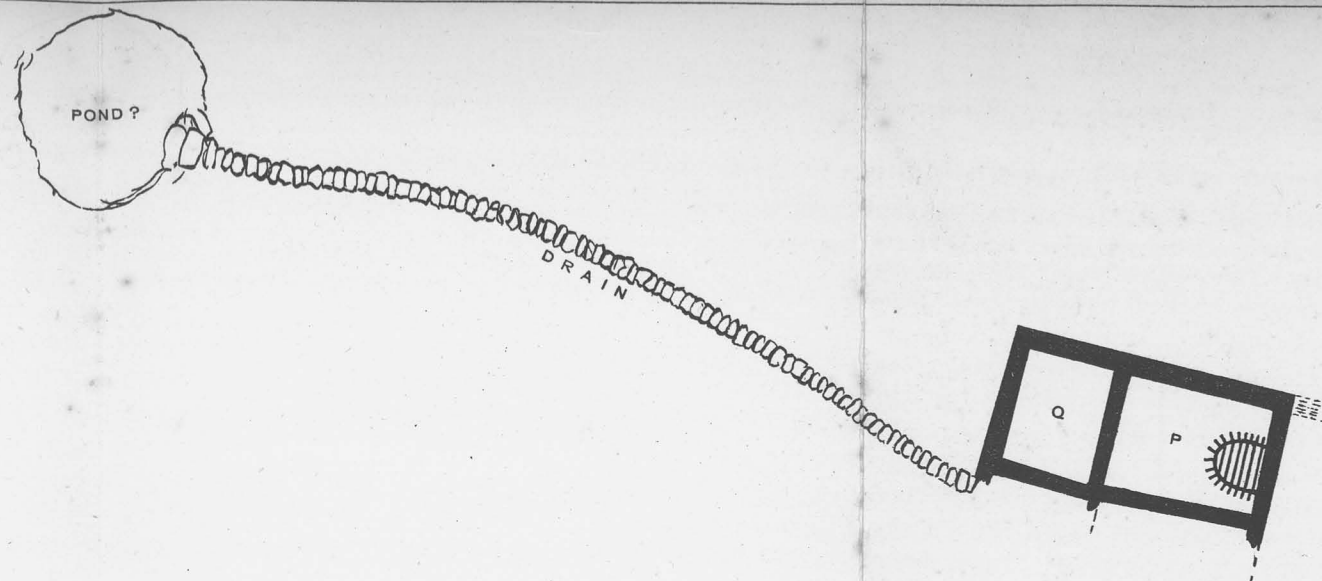
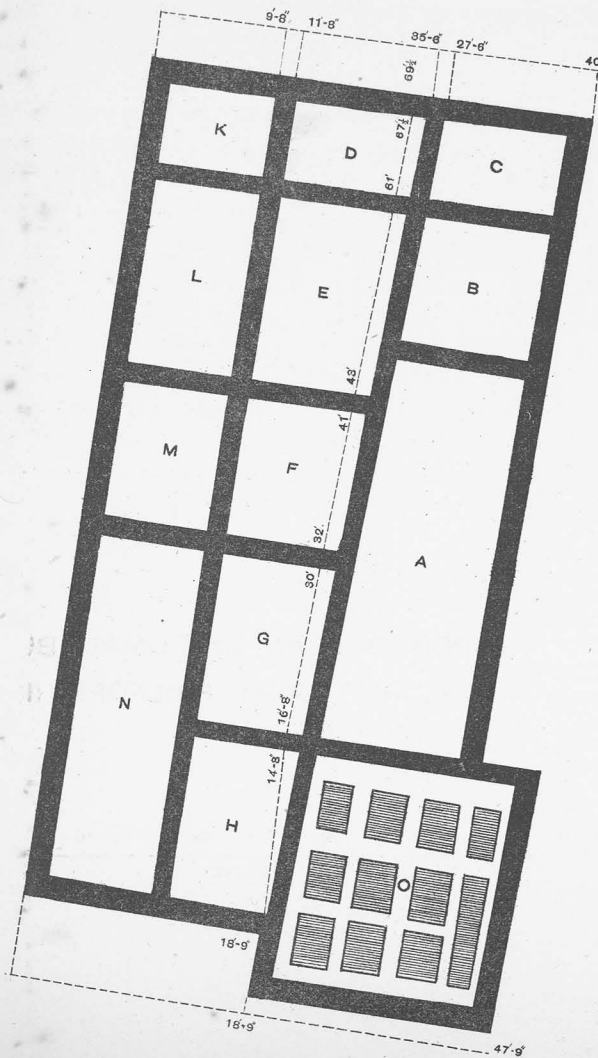
¹ *Archæologia*, Vol. XLII, Plate XXIII, Fig. 1.

² In three instances Prof. Moseley found a coin in the mouth of the

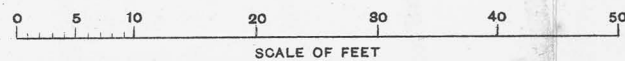
skeleton: (1). Of Valentinian I; (2) probably of Valens much defaced; (3) a barbarous imitation of a coin of Constantine the Great.

On the present occasion, however, I wish to direct attention not so much to the cemetery itself as to some remains of the Roman period, which evidently stand in close connexion with it. The discovery of this extensive cemetery containing remains both of the Romano-British and heathen Saxon periods afforded itself sufficient proof of the contiguity of a settlement in early times. As a matter of fact, fragments of ancient pottery and other similar traces of former habitation are scattered about the surrounding fields. Especially is this the case in a field just behind the "Noah's Ark Inn," and near the bridge over the River Ock, to which it descends by a gentle slope. This field is literally strewn with fragments of Roman tiles and pottery, and coins of Imperial Roman date have not infrequently been found here; and in this field or the immediate neighbourhood were found two fibulæ. Beyond this there is an old ford across the stream, and the remains extend to a copse, where they are described as specially plentiful. The copse itself is known by the name of Blackington. These remains lie a little to the south-east of the ancient cemetery and to the left side of the road going from Frilford to Wantage.

Nearer Frilford itself, and about two hundred yards distant from the cemetery, Dr. Rolleston had already excavated what proved to have been two Roman rubbish-heaps, the cavities containing which represented no doubt a part of the quarries used to supply the material for some neighbouring villa. In the pits were discovered "for a depth of ten feet or more an aggregation of fragments of pottery of the most varied patterns and degrees of fineness, mixed up with similarly fragmentary bones of the ox, sheep, pig, and dog, and with other articles such as knives and coins, which, like the bones and sherds specified, would be expected in the rubbish-heap of a great house." The site of this great house Dr. Rolleston was unable to discover, but I am at present able to describe the site of a Roman dwelling-house about a mile to the west of this spot in a field which borders on the road from Frilford to Kingston-Bagpuze. The circumstances of the discovery are as follow: Mr. Aldworth, to whom this field also belonged, had for some years noticed the abundance there of surface remains in the



GROUND PLAN OF ROMAN BUILDINGS
EXCAVATED AT FRILFORD (BERKS).



shape of tiles and potsherds, and had been led to regard their occurrence as indicating the immediate neighbourhood of a Roman villa.

At Mr. Aldworth's request, Professor Moseley and myself went over to examine the ground, and the results of a preliminary dig were sufficiently encouraging to induce us to undertake a more extensive excavation. The result has been to lay bare the complete ground plan of a Roman dwelling-house and a portion of an adjacent building, the greater part of which, however, has been destroyed by the plough. The foundations of the first form a small parallelogram $69\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 40 feet, with a somewhat projecting hypocaust chamber in the south-eastern corner. The house contained thirteen rooms, or twelve deducting a part which in all probability was simply a portico. The rooms were all small, the largest, that at the south-western angle, being about 29 feet by 9 feet; the smallest (*k*) no more than $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 9 feet. The walls, built of rubble masonry, were 2 feet thick. Most of the rooms had been paved with a kind of concrete in which brick dust formed a conspicuous ingredient, but it was only in the hypocaust chamber that there were traces of a tessellated pavement. It was in this heated chamber also that the greater part of the fragments of wall-painting were discovered.

In observing the ground plan of this building we are at once struck with a curious feature. The three central rooms E, F, and G have no visible access to the light, and the question arises, How was their lighting effected? That they had skylights is not to be supposed, nor is it necessary to assume that they obtained their light by rising above the roof of the rest of the building. The simplest explanation appears to be that the space A was a covered portico, and that the windows of the three rooms E, F, and G opened on to it. It is to be observed that the northern wall of A is carried a little beyond the end of the partition wall between the rooms E and F as if just to allow space for a window in the south-eastern corner of the small room E.

If we may, then, assume that the space A represents rather a portico or fore-hall than an actual chamber, we at once obtain a clue to the position of the entrance of the

house. Unfortunately, there is not enough of the walls remaining to give the position of the doors; but even were we able to fix their situation with certainty, we should be still unable to give such an account of the internal arrangement of the house as would satisfy a classical student. The truth is, that the various salient parts of a Roman house—the *vestibulum* and *atrium*, and *tablinum* and peristyle—so easily traced in the houses of Pompeii, have entirely lost their characteristic features in the country *villæ*, large and small, of our Romano-British predecessors. The Southern form of house, with the rooms opening into a central court only partly covered in by its surrounding peristyle, was little adapted to the inclement climate of Britain. The Romans were a practical people, and we may suppose that to some extent they followed the custom of the country, and adopted Gallic and British domestic arrangements.

In the present instance, however, so much is clear that the functions of the Roman *atrium* were reserved for the hypocaust chamber O. The *atrium* was the show chamber of the Roman house *par excellence*, and at the same time the true and original centre of household life. Here was the domestic hearth and the Lararium near it, and here (in the nobler houses) were the wooden cupboards containing the smoke-stained waxen images of the ancestors of the house. Here was kept the strong-box containing the money and valuables, and here were displayed the choicest art treasures of the owner. Here the women plied their spinning and needlework, and here too, on more solemn occasions, the dead were placed awhile to lie in state with their feet towards the door.

When, therefore, in the present case we find not only the heating apparatus of the house concentrated in this room, but the walls and pavement exceptionally decorated with tesserae and frescoes, we are justified in concluding that it served in a somewhat humble way the purpose of an *atrium* to the Romano-British householder. The pavement itself consisted of small cubes of white stone and terra-cotta, of two different sizes, and having been apparently only of two colours, could hardly have represented anything beyond a plain geometrical design. It had been entirely broken up by the plough. The wall-painting

showed a greater variety of colours: emerald green, ochreous yellow and orange, brick and rosy red, white, slaty black, and reddish brown. The greater part seemed to have been mere linear or banded ornament; but from a small fragment, apparently representing a part of an olive wreath, it would appear that there had also been other designs. From the position of some bits of painted stucco in the walls and hypocaust pillars, it is probable that the walls had at some period been rebuilt. The general agreement of many of the colours here found with the Vitruvius list of the principal colours used in house decoration¹ is remarkable. Here we have the emerald green "*ærugo*" or verdigris made from copper and acid; the ochre or pigment, the *minium* or rosy oxide of lead, the *rubrica*, a red earth coloured with peroxide of iron, the best quality of which, stamped with a goat, and hence known as *terra sigillata*, came from the Island of Lemnos, and was also used for colouring the bright red-ware of Arretium; the reddish-tinted burnt ochre, the *cerusa* or white lead, and the smoke-black or *atramentum*. Of the principal colours mentioned hardly any is wanting except the azure blue in the manufacture of which Alexandria, and afterwards Puteoli, excelled, and which was well represented amongst the remains of the Cirencester wall-paintings. Vitruvius justly comments on the taste of his contemporaries for gaudy colours in their house decoration, and there can be no doubt that the wall-paintings of many a "high-art" Roman salon would have appeared to a modern eye intolerably glaring.

The hypocaust for heating this chamber with hot air, which circulated below the floor, presents a remarkable though not unexampled peculiarity. The pillars which supported the floor are composed of roughly split slabs of the oolite of the country, and not, as is almost universally the case, of tiles (flat or hollow). Hypocaust pillars consisting of squared blocks and round pillars of stone have been found at Cirencester,² and pillars of similar construction have been occasionally found in France.³

The position of the hypocaust room at the southern

¹ *Vitruvius*, L. VIII, c. 6.

² Buckman and Newmarch, *Remains of Roman Art in Cirencester, the site*

of the Ancient Corinium, 2nd Ed. p. 64.

³ De Caumont, *Abeceaire d'Archéologie*, T. III, p. 69.

end of the house is very characteristic of Romano-British villas, and the adjoining portico which here fills the centre of the eastern house-front is another familiar feature. It represents in fact, in a rudimentary form, the more extensive *crypto-porticos* which in the great villas of Bignor in Sussex, and Mienne near Chateaudun—to take two conspicuous examples—ran round the whole of an extensive court, and which formed an imposing feature of Diocletian's Palace-villa of Spalato.

It is to be observed that both the hypocaust at the southern end and the corridor in much the same juxtaposition on the east side occur in a small *villa* discovered by Mr. E. C. Davey at Cranhill near Wantage, and described by him.¹ In this case, too, the ground plan was of the same rectangular shape, the longest sides (52 feet) being from north to south as the Frilford example; while those from east to west were no more than 36 feet. In the Cranhill villa, however, there were only five rooms besides the corridor.

Facing the eastern front of the house there appears to have been a gravel yard, and beyond this, at a distance of 88 feet from the north-eastern corner of the house, were foundations of a part of another building. Of this building only two chambers, P and Q, could be traced with any certainty, though beyond them lay a considerable fragment of wall, having at its southern end a curious square base. That the chamber P was used as a hot-water reservoir is evident, for more than one reason. The floor and so much of the walls as was still intact was coated with brick-dust cement over an inch in thickness, and strongly reminding one of a kind of cement or concrete still largely used by the Italians for their cisterns. On removing this floor a well-like rounded cavity was discovered on the eastern side of the chamber, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep and formed of large oolitic fragments, which showed evident traces of the action of fire. The object of this furnace cavity was to heat the water in the chamber above, and access to it must have been obtained from a *præfurnium* (now destroyed) to the east of the hot-water chamber.

Whether the chamber itself was used as a hot-water

¹ See below, p. 352.

cistern or actually as a bath it is not so easy to determine. It seems preferable, however, to believe that the actual bathing chamber is to be sought in an adjoining compartment. It is certain that from a point just outside the south-western angle of the chamber Q opened a drain which carried off the waste water to a kind of pond about 80 feet distant. This drain, the fall of which from the house was very slight, and indeed only perceptible on its thorough excavation, had been composed of pipe-tiles and during part of its course of a stone bottom, and was covered by a series of flat stones which formed a kind of slightly-curved paved path to the pond. In the pond, if we may call it so, were various fragments of tiles and sherds of broken pitchers, and in its neighbourhood was a fragment of a small stone column.

The remains of this hot-water reservoir and waste pipe suggest two interesting parallels. At Saintes, in France, were found in juxtaposition three reservoirs of the same kind, with furnaces of a similar character underneath, and beside them the remains of an irregular waste-pipe.¹ An equally remarkable parallel is presented by the Roman villa excavated at Wheatley, near Oxford, in which was a cistern of the same kind with a waste pipe and two furnace cavities below, communicating with a large hypocaust chamber.

This cistern is described as follows in the *Journal of the Archæological Institute*:—

“A cistern or boiler (measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet) was found over the south-west angle of the hypocaust. This boiler or cistern had the lower part of its floor and some height of the sides perfect, with an ovolo base moulding at the angle. It was lined inside with fine stucco or plaster $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, and outside this were 2 inches of mortar. It rested on large tiles supported by pillars of smaller tiles. Further heat from the furnace was communicated to this boiler by rows of vertical flue tiles or pipes behind the stucco of its sides. These are quadrangular, and measure 8 inches by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches; they are smooth and blackened with soot in the inside, but scored on the outside to make them adhere to the mortar. Many of these are entire and remain *in situ*. On the south side a leaden pipe, quite perfect, passes from the bottom of this cistern through the outer wall. This pipe probably conducted the hot water to the bath at the east end of the calidarium.”²

¹ De Caumont. *Abécédairé d'Archéologie*, T. III, p. 167.

² *Archæological Institute Journal*, II, p. 353.

At Cimiez, in the Alpes Maritimes, two cisterns or baths of much the same kind were discovered in 1875,¹ adjoining a large hypocaust chamber and surrounded with upright flues of tiles in precisely the same manner as at Wheatley, and as in that and the Frilford example provided with waste pipes.

I may now turn to the smaller remains brought to light during our diggings at Frilford. There was a considerable amount of the red-ware usually called "Samian," though it might perhaps be more accurately described as pseudo-Arretine. There was, secondly, some New Forest ware answering to the pottery found in the Roman kilns in the New Forest.² Of this, two principal varieties are found. That with a dark ground, upon which wavy or arborescent designs are laid on in white, is remarkable as occasionally showing naturalistic representations of ferns or other plants. A small specimen of this, with what may have been intended for a curling blade of grass, occurs among the Frilford fragments. As in the case of other Romano-British ware, this class of New Forest pottery finds its analogies in Gaul. At Montans, for example, near Gaillac in the Languedoc,³ was found a vase decorated with fern fronds—apparently of an *asplenium*—and sprigs of feather-moss (*hypnum*), which almost suggest some form of nature-printing. The appearance of such decorative motives, whether in Gaul or Britain, is an evident sign of a forest country.

The other common class of New Forest ware is of a thicker kind, more usually serving for platters, with a dull white or yellowish ground and bands or coarse patterns of reddish brown. I did not observe any fragments of this among the remains from the Frilford villa, but it is not infrequent on Roman sites in this neighbourhood, and I have obtained several specimens from a Roman site near Wood-Eaton. The presence of New Forest wares amongst the Frilford and other remains of this neighbourhood is explained by the existence of a direct line of road-communication to the south, to which

¹ *Bulletin Monumental*, 1875, p. 372.

² See *Archæologia*, XXXV, p. 91 *seqq.*

³ This specimen, taken from the

Bulletin Monumental, is engraved in De Caumont's *Abecedaire d'Archeologie*, T. III, p. 579.

I shall have occasion to return.* Amongst the Roman remains found at Cirencester both classes of this "New Forest" pottery are conspicuous, and though it would be unsafe in the present state of our knowledge to exclude the possibility of this ware having been made elsewhere, its conspicuous absence amongst the specimens of pottery from the Roman kilns discovered on the Minchery farm near Oxford, and the occurrence of both characteristic types amongst the remains of this neighbourhood, inclines me to regard it here as an article of import.

The third class of ware found at Frilford to which a special name can be given is the so-called Castor ware. So far as I am aware, none but fragmentary specimens were actually found on the site of the villa: a better specimen was, however, found in the cemetery by Dr. Rolleston, and its occurrence is not infrequent in the neighbourhood. From a Roman site near Islip I have several specimens, and very characteristic fragments were found in excavating a Roman site at Woodperry, near Stanton St. John.¹ The most typical kind of this ware is of a slaty-blue colour, presenting hunting scenes and scrolls in relief. Its principal manufactory seems to have been in the extensive Roman potteries on the banks of the Nen at or about Castor in Northamptonshire, the ancient Durobrivæ. In this case, however, we have distinct evidence that the most characteristic forms of "Castor" ware were also manufactured in this neighbourhood. In the Roman kiln near Oxford several pieces of this ware were discovered, and in one case a vase in an apparently unfinished condition, not having yet received the bluish-black lustre, which was, it seems, obtained by smothering the fire in the kiln.

Amongst other noteworthy fragments from this Frilford site may be mentioned a piece of dull red ware with a convoluted white slip on it. A class of ware of a reddish-brown colour, with white ornaments, occurs from the Oxford kilns, but the Frilford specimen is of an altogether different fabric.

In addition to these, there was the usual abundance of specimens of the commoner classes of pottery of red,

¹ Described in *Archæological Journal*, Vol. III, p. 124. The specimens are in the Ashmolean Museum.

pale yellow, and slaty-black colour such as are generally found on Roman sites in Britain. One piece, however, is remarkable for its form. This is a vase, the neck of which and one side is unfortunately wanting, with a small spout on its globular side. It is usual to describe vessels of this kind as babies' feeding bottles. They are found both in pottery and glass. It may, however, be suggested that vessels of this kind represent the ancient "guttus" which was used for oil, ointments or any liquid which was rather to be dropped than poured. It was also used for pouring libations in sacrifices,¹ the antiquity of the practice being shown by Egyptian wall-paintings on which kings and priests are seen pouring libations to their divinities from vessels of this character.²

Another sherd of red and rather Arretine-like pottery, with deeply impressed ornaments in the form of a radiated half-circle, is noteworthy from its exact resemblance to a specimen from a Roman site near Islip, which was apparently stamped by the same tool. It is probable that this and other common classes of pottery are to be referred to local kilns, and I have recently obtained from Abingdon a remarkable tool, said to have been found near the "Noah's Ark" at Frilford, which of itself bears interesting witness to the existence of a Roman pottery in the neighbourhood. This is a Roman potter's punch, with a simple but elegant geometrical design. It is of bronze, with a perforation at its smaller end, showing that it was probably intended for suspension on a small ring along with other stamps engraved with different patterns. A potter's punch of somewhat similar form was discovered at Arezzo, and a bone tool of the same kind, which had been used for stamping the ornaments on old German urns, was found on the Rhine. It is to be hoped that further researches will result in the discovery on the Frilford site of pottery actually stamped with this punch.

¹ Cf. *Pliny*, XVI, 73, 2. In the case mentioned the "guttus" was of beech-wood. Glass vessels would not be applicable for a sacrificial purpose. On the other hand, earthenware vessels were of universal use for this purpose. *Pliny* remarks (l. XXXV, c. 46): "In sacris

quidem inter has opes non myrrhinis crystallinisve sed fictilibus probibatur simpuviis."

² See Ernst Botticher, *Die Libirgefässe*; in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1883, p. 159 seqq.

Amongst the other relics discovered may be mentioned—

1. Fragments of glass : in one case a part of a glass cinerary urn of the usual shape ; in another case possibly a fragment of window-glass ; while a third fragment probably belonged to a small glass bowl.
2. Large flat-headed nails and an iron object of uncertain use.
3. The iron cap of a wheel, found in the hypocaust chamber.
4. Clay spindle-whorls.
5. A pair of bronze tweezers.

The coins found in the ruins were—

- 1 Trajan, *Æ.* 1.
- 2 Constantine the Great, *Æ.* 3—one struck at Lyons.
- 1 Constans, *Æ.* 3, struck at Treves.
- 1 Valens, *Æ.* 3, struck at Arles.

The bulk of the coins (amongst which there was nothing remarkable) belonged, as will be seen, to the fourth century of our era ending with Valens, who assumed the purple in 373 A.D. This shows a close agreement with the date of the bulk of the Roman coins found in the cemetery, and generally on the Frilford site. The majority of these belong to the age of Constantine ; and the latest Emperors represented are Valens and Valentinian, Gratian, and Magnus Maximus, who began to reign in 383 A.D.

Amongst the local traces and traditions betokening the existence of an ancient settlement on what was once Frilford Field, Dr. Rolleston has already mentioned a haunted thorn-tree on the site of the old cemetery. I may add to this that through the field which borders that in which the Roman foundations were excavated a path-like line can be traced in the peculiar colour of the grass and crops, which, according to the local belief, runs from an old tree on the Fyfield side of the road to the White Horse Hill above Uffington, and is known as the "Fairies' Path." The direction of a path across the fields from Fyfield is also to be noted. Throughout the northern part of its course it runs in a straight line almost directly towards the Roman villa, though there

is no existing reason for a path taking this direction. There can be no doubt of the Roman character of the road line which runs from Bessilsleigh through Frilford, and passing the neighbourhood of the ancient cemetery, proceeds, with arrow-like directness, to Wantage, a Romano-British site on the Port and Ickleton Ways. Mr. Davey, the Wantage antiquary, had also come to this conclusion.¹ From Wantage onwards, this ancient road-line is continued direct towards Silchester, and in this part of its course is still known as the "Old Street." It is also possible that the road from Frilford, through Kingston Bagpuze towards Faringdon, may represent an ancient avenue to the Romano-British settlement at Frilford. Beyond Kingston it approaches an encampment called Aggister, which, curiously enough, is not indicated on the Ordnance map.² The encampment itself consists of a very small oblong embankment only 120 paces long by 40 broad; its rectangular form, however, and its name (the latter part of which is possibly a corruption of "Chester") might indicate a Roman origin. There are apparent traces of an outer line of circumvallation to the north and east of this rectangle.

It seems probable that the "Old Street" found its destination beyond Frilford in the Oxford direction. It is true that at Bessilsleigh the continuity of the straight road-line from Wantage is abruptly broken. On the other hand, there is a straight road-line leading from near the north-eastern corner of Frilford Heath past Cothill, mounting Boar's Hill by the "Fox Inn," to the south-east of which fragments of rude Roman pottery strew two or three fields, and descending to the Thames Valley at Cold Harbour, where the Oxford City Fever Hospital now stands. From Cold Harbour a straight road runs due north to Folly Bridge, St. Aldate's, Carfax, and Cornmarket, in Oxford. The traces of this line of road are, however, obscure, and if of Roman date can only represent a local cross-country communication from Wantage and Frilford to the land east of the Thames. Thus much may be urged in its favour geographically, that, though

¹ "Discovery of a Roman Villa at Cranhill, near Wantage," *Archæological Journal*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 382-392.

² My attention to this camp was first called by Mr. Davey.

the road between Cold Harbour and Folly Bridge is liable to floods, it forms on the whole the easiest line of access from the uplands of Boar's Hill to Oxford and the country beyond.

The extensive Romano-British cemetery at Frilford certainly points to there having been a continuous settlement on this site during the third and fourth centuries. The buildings at present discovered derive much of their interest from their small proportions. We have not here, as at Bignor or at Woodchester, the spacious mansion of a large proprietor—a small town in itself. The tenements excavated at Frilford must have belonged to members of the humbler class of Romano-Britons. The size of country houses, according to Vitruvius, was to be nicely proportioned to the size of the holding and the amount of the produce. "For those of humble fortune," he further tells us, "there is no need of splendid vestibules and halls, for such pay their court in the salons and antechambers of others." "It is only the nobles, whose duty it is to fill the magistracy and civic offices, who require royal vestibules, lofty atria, and peristyles, plantations and extensive walks to show off their dignity to perfection." We may allow ourselves to believe that in this little Frilford villa—at least during the happier period of Imperial rule—there lived one of that yeoman class, which as we learn from Claudian's fine epigram on the Old Man of Verona, was not quite extinct even in the days of Stilicho—

*"Felix qui patriis aevum transegit in agris ;
Ipsa domus puerum quem videt, ipsa senem."*

On the other hand, the neighbouring remains of the second house, to which the bath belonged, show that this was not an isolated dwelling-house, and the parallel position in which they stand to one another may incline us to believe that they both possibly belonged to a "vicus" arranged in orderly lines like that discovered at Javols in Champagne. The cemetery itself affords a proof of the existence of a Romano-British village in the neighbourhood, and the character of most of the interments shows that the bulk of the population belonged to a humble class.

That a larger mansion may have existed in the vicinity

is probable enough. It is also probable that by the middle of the fourth century, with the development of the *latifundia* and the progress of that extra-legal beneficiary system by which the humbler proprietors became at once clients and voluntary tenants of wealthy and powerful patrons, the various holdings had passed under one lord. In the last days of Roman rule in Britain much the same state of society must have prevailed as we find described by Sidonius Apollinaris in almost contemporary Gaul. The military element was no doubt relatively far more influential; but side by side with it were great territorial lords, the "*honorati*" or members of the Senatorial order. From the fragmentary notices of Ammianus regarding the revolt of the Western usurper, Magnentius, the strength of whose faction lay largely in Britain, it appears probable that he derived his main support from a coalition of the two powerful classes of the West—the "*Honorati*," or Provincial aristocracy on the one side, and the "*Militares*" on the other, against the Constantinian bureaucracy.

But whatever may have been the agrarian condition of Frilford in the days of Magnentius or Magnus Maximus, we have here archæological evidence that shortly after their date, and according to appearances even *before* the end of the fourth century, Saxon colonists were in occupation of the spot, who, if they had not exterminated the Romano-British inhabitants, had at least imposed on them their religious customs in regard to their funerals and their form of culture, as regards the ornaments of their person and the character of their instruments and utensils. It will hardly seem probable, in the face of this evidence, that at Frilford, at all events, the new-comers took over their system of land tenure from the former inhabitants. On the other hand, the fact that the Romano-British cemetery continued to be used by the Saxon settlers may be taken to show a certain continuity in the indigenous element, while the flint arrowheads and scrapers which occur plentifully in the neighbouring field may teach us that the Roman settlement here was itself engrafted on an earlier British community.