

ART. XXI.—*Recent Roman Discoveries.*
Read at Kendal, Sept. 8th, 1886.

I.—SCULPTURED STONES AT HARRINGTON.

By the Rev. R. E. HOPELL, LL.D. in a letter to the
President.

Byers Green Rectory, viâ Spennymoor.

8 May, 1886.

DEAR SIR,

In the course of a brief visit to the county of Cumberland last month, I came upon a portion of a Roman inscription on a fragment of an altar, which has not, I think, been yet recorded or described. I, therefore, send you word of it, thinking you may like to mention it at the next meeting of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society.

It is the lower portion of a Roman altar, containing three lines of the inscription. It was taken out of one of the walls of Harrington church, which is situated about 5 miles from the Roman station of Moresby, last year, when the wall was pulled down for rebuilding. It stands now in the grounds of the Rev. A. F. Curwen, the rector of Harrington.

The uppermost of the three lines, and the former part of the second line, are very much obliterated. I should not despair of making them out in time, if I lived on the spot, and could examine the stone often, but my time was limited, when I saw the stone, and I had to give up the completion of the decipherment. About the rest of the inscription I have no doubt. It is easily read by a practised eye. It runs as follows:

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The sides of the altar are panelled but they do not appear to have borne any sculptured representations. The dimensions of the fragment are 16 inches by 11 inches by 10 inches.

There is another fragment of (apparently) Roman sculptured stone lying near to the above, also taken out of the walls of the church, but it bears no lettering. The size of it is 16 inches by 8 inches, and it may have been part of a votive tablet, or some memorial of a similar kind.

NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT.

It is much to be regretted that these stones have been carried off to Newcastle, a place with which they have no connection whatever, while the inscribed one was of great importance to the history of West Cumberland. The authorities of the Newcastle Museum have swept into their collection, from various parts of Cumberland, Roman sculptured stones to the number of about a dozen: true it is that some of these were acquired when the authorities of the Carlisle Museum were in a somewhat comatose state: that is not the case now.

It may be mentioned that in none of the Museums in Cumberland are there any Roman stones from Northumberland, except one doubtful exception, in the Carlisle Museum: that stone lay for over 10 years on a fence at a farm in Cumberland: it was purchased by a Cumberland gentleman and deposited by him in the Carlisle Museum: on investigation it turned out to have originally been taken out of a fence a short way across the Northumberland border and near Whitley Castle.

II.—A HUMAN HEAD OF PECULIAR TYPE IN POTTERY. BY THE PRESIDENT.

This was exhibited during the Pilgrimage along the Roman Wall by the Rev. E. H. Fitch, vicar of Burgh-on-Sands. It is the head of a jar, and was found about two years ago, when the new vicarage was in course of erection, at a spot close to the line of the Vallum of the Mural Barrier, and not far east of the eastern rampart of the station at Burgh. The jar was then perfect, full of grey dust, and closed



closed by a lid of lead, but the workmen broke the jar, dissipated the dust, and some one carried off the lid; the vicar secured the fragments of the jar, which were all, bar the head, pitched out by the housemaid at the first spring cleaning. The head is very peculiar: it presents the long almond eye and thin lip of the Mongolian combined with the woolly hair of the Negro.

III.—THE ROMAN CAMP AT MUNCASTER.* BY THE PRESIDENT.

In the autumn of 1885 Lord Muncaster set a gang of men on to excavate in this camp, and my brother and I by his lordship's kind permission had the opportunity of examining the trenches. A short length of the western wall showing a bold set-off was uncovered, but in every other place the stones had been carried away down to the foundations, and neither the angles nor the gateways could be found. As the autumn storms filled the trenches with water they were covered up, after an accurate plan had been taken. In the autumn of 1886, further excavations were made, at which Dr. Bruce and myself were present: several trenches were cut in the interior of the camps, and the trail of walls found; I use the term trail advisedly; for

* *Ante* vol. iii., p. 17.

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in most cases the very foundations of the walls had been carried away: at last Dr. Bruce and I advised his lordship that the place had been so robbed and plundered of its stonework, dressed and undressed, probably for the building of the neighbouring market town of Ravenglass, that it was no use to continue further excavating. Much broken Roman pottery, and bits of Andernach ware were found, but only one coin, that we know of, a much corroded and detrited legionary one.

During the excavations at Walls Castle in 1881* an inscribed stone was found, unluckily no responsible person was present: the labourer who found it, set off to carry the stone to his lodgings, but the way was long, the evening hot, and he sat down to rest, and meanwhile he examined the stone: seeing the letters to be English in shape, he forthwith concluded the stone was valueless, and chucked it into the sea. Diligent search was afterwards made for its recovery, but in vain.

N.B.—The Society is indebted for the woodcuts which illustrate this paper to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. That of the Cliburn stone executed before Mr. Watkin's examination of the photograph, is, in the last line especially, somewhat incorrect.

* *Ante* vol. vi., p. 216.