

DISCOVERY OF MEDIEVAL POTTERY AT HORSHAM.

IN A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUSSEX
ARCHÆOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS.

DEAR SIR,—

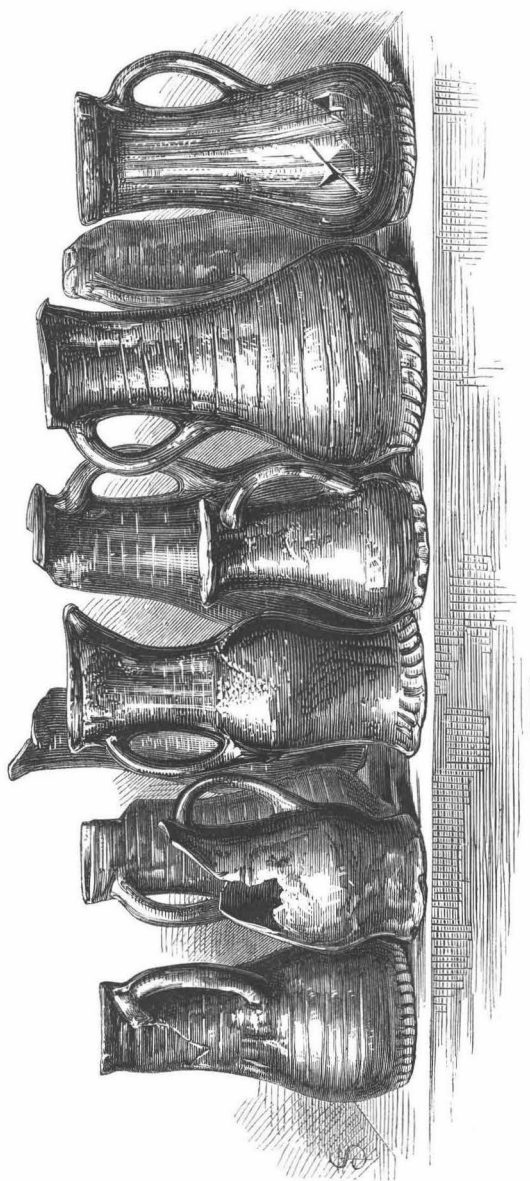
I have much pleasure in communicating to you an account of the discovery of some very ancient pottery, which probably dates from about the 13th century.

These interesting specimens of antiquity were dug up in one of the principal streets of the town of Horsham, the details of which I forward you for publication in your next volume of the Archæological Collections.

In the month of June last, 1867, I purchased some property situate in the West Street of Horsham; the dwelling-house being in a very dilapidated condition, I considered it advisable to pull down the buildings, and re-build upon the old site. The house was evidently very old, from the construction of the timbers. In taking it down nothing of any particular interest or value was discovered, except a few coins, and none of these were of later date than that of Edward I. (a small silver coin).

There being no cellar connected with the premises, I considered it a good opportunity to dig one, and accordingly gave orders for the work to be done.

In digging the cellar, at the depth of about four feet from the surface, several small fragments of green pottery arrested



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my attention ; they were sufficient to show (when fitted together) the shape of a pitcher, the handle of which was almost worn through by friction.

In digging down the sides of the earth for the cellar, the soil of which was a close, compact, reddish clay, I noticed a small line or stain of a blue colour, about three or four inches in length. Upon or over this the workmen had placed the concrete upon which to build the wall of the house.

On noticing the blue stain in the clay, I took the pickaxe, and examined minutely the direction and extent to which it might go. I found that the farther I examined the spot, the wider the blue soil became. I told one of the workmen that I felt confident that the ground had previously been moved, and I then gave directions to continue the search ; we had not gone far before we found that the blue stain of only a few inches in length, now widened into a space of about three feet square ; this we followed down, but nothing of any particular interest was discovered till we reached the depth of seven feet, when we there found a turned wooden bowl. This object, unfortunately, was too much decayed to admit of restoration ; the diameter of the bowl, when first taken out, was about twelve inches. We continued our search, and, after reaching the depth of ten feet, the soil being still the loose blue earth, occasioned by the decomposition of vegetable matter, we then discovered several glazed earthenware pitchers, varying in size and height, the largest being about twelve and a-half inches in height by seven and a-half inches in diameter, the smallest being seven and a quarter inches by four and three quarter inches diameter. Five of these antique pitchers were taken out on the evening of the discovery of them. Night coming on, we were obliged to give up the search till the following morning, and when the depth of fourteen feet was reached, five or six more specimens were discovered, some of which were entire and in a most perfect state of preservation ; one of them had evidently been used for warming some liquid over the fire, as portions of the sides of the pitcher had been flaked off by the action of flame upon it ; there is also a coating of carbon still adhering to the bottom and sides of the broken pitcher or jug.

A great quantity of broken pottery was found in excava-

ting, as were also several bones of animals, boars' tusks, &c., several small pieces of thin leather, a turned or grooved piece of wood, a piece of oak resembling a stirrup, about five and a half inches in height by three and three quarter inches at the base, tapering to about one inch at the top; another piece of wood was also found of a heart shape, but plain, three inches wide, tapering to a point: this was also of oak.

Among the relics, we found an earthenware bead, unglazed, the size of which is one and a quarter inch diameter by three quarters of an inch in height.

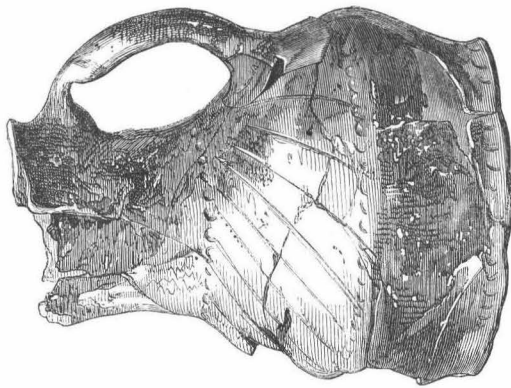
The whole of these interesting remains were, doubtless, stowed away to preserve them, they being carefully packed in heath, which must have been brought to the spot from the neighbouring forest (St. Leonard's), a distance of two or three miles from the town of Horsham. Among the heath we found several pieces of iron-stone, peculiar to the forest land.

From observation, my impression is that these interesting specimens of early art were manufactured near the site of the discovery, and this idea is further strengthened when, finding as we did, a quantity of melted iron slag, the refuse of the kiln in which the pottery had been burned; but another discovery will, I think, decide this point.

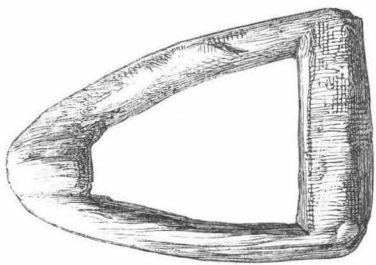
The handles of almost all the pitchers have a number of gash marks, or cuts, upon them, and this must have been done while the clay was in a soft state, and with a sharp instrument; the gash marks are about half an inch in length and about one-sixteenth of an inch in width.

On searching among the broken pieces of pottery, we fortunately came upon the very instrument with which the gash marks upon the handles had been made, and this appears to have been a broken razor blade; and on fitting the edge of the blade with the indentations, or cut marks upon the pottery, I found that it closely fitted, leaving no doubt whatever but that that was the very instrument used for the purpose of ornamenting the handles of the pitchers when the clay was in a soft state.

The finding of this instrument, with the pitchers, must undoubtedly prove that at an early period, a pottery or



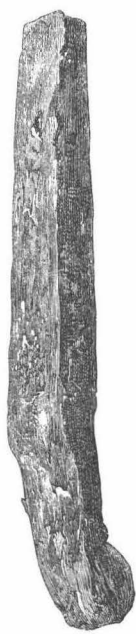
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manufactory of earthenware utensils must have existed in that immediate locality, and my opinion is that there must yet be near the spot of the discovery the kiln in which those interesting relics of early art were burned.

The gashing tool is three inches in length ; breadth at the heel half an inch, the shank or handle is bent round to hold by ; the thickness at the back of the razor is about a quarter of an inch and one-sixteenth.

I have shown the specimens to a potter, and his opinion is that the pitchers were burned in a close kiln, not being allowed to come in contact with the fire ; he considered that the clay of which they were made was dug in the neighbourhood, and that the workmanship is excellent, considering the time of their production.

The whole of the pitchers have been glazed—some of them of a green colour, while others have the shining lead-colour glaze upon them.

Believing that the few remarks I have had the pleasure of forwarding you, may be interesting to some of the readers of our "Collections," and may possibly throw some light upon the style of workmanship at that early age, I have given you in detail an account of the same, and, should further discoveries at any time be made in that particular locality in connection with this "find," I shall feel it my pleasurable duty immediately to communicate the same to you.

In conclusion, I beg to offer for the Society's acceptance two engravings of the objects discovered, which have been carefully made from photographs, under my own inspection, in his usually faithful manner, by Mr. Scott.

Believe me to remain,

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS HONYWOOD.

Horsham, April 14th, 1868.

M. A. Lower, Esq., F.S.A.