

XXVII.—*An Account of some Roman Coins discovered near Brampton, in Cumberland, communicated by MR. WM. HUTTON, and MR. CHR. HODGSON, to JOHN ADAMSON, Esq., Sec.*

Hanover Square, 6th December, 1826.

DEAR SIR,

IF the few coins enclosed and the accompanying remarks are worthy the attention of the Antiquarian Society, your communicating them will oblige

Your's, very truly,
WILLIAM HUTTON.

It will be within the recollection of many of the Members of this Society, that in the early part of this year a considerable quantity of Roman coins was found near Brampton, in Cumberland. By the kindness of a friend a few of these coins came into my possession a short time ago, and having the means of communicating with the person who found them, it struck me that a short account of the circumstance, to accompany the few coins, might not be unacceptable to this Society, formed as it is expressly to examine into, and register, the Antiquities of the Northern Counties; and this the more especially, as no other account has been published, but the very meager one which appeared in the Newspapers of the day.

The discovery was made in April, 1826, by a person ploughing ground, which to all appearance had not been worked before. The place is situate about one mile South of Castle Steads now Walton House,—the Roman *Petriana*, the 13th station on the Wall. The name of the

spot is *Hawk Nest*, and the precise situation is on a high ridge of wet land near the top of the field. There was nothing in the circumstances under which the coins were found, to indicate more than ordinary care in depositing them. The vessel was only six inches beneath the surface, and was standing upright and nearly full of coins, no stones around it, nor any cover. The coins were computed at 5,000, they were of copper and brass, and weighed more than 14lbs. The vessel was of clay quite plain, and capable of containing about three quarts. No other piece of antiquity was found at the time, but in the adjoining field, where there are many large stones and other indications of buildings, many separate Roman coins have been found from time to time, and not long ago part of an iron sword, which being taken to some blacksmith near, was by him worked up with other old iron.

The fragments of the vessel (which was broken by a stroke of the plough), together with nearly all the coins, were taken to Naworth Castle, where I am informed they yet remain.

The finding of such hoards as this has been of the greatest use to the Antiquary. In these remote provinces there were probably no Banks or places of deposit in those days, consequently, when a man became possessed of more of the circulating medium than was necessary for present use, he was obliged to store it up. This we may suppose the individual to have done, whose hoard we are now considering, and, quitting his quarters (perhaps for some distant service), he secretes his spare money, making use of one of the common earthen vessels to keep it together, and intending no doubt to dig it up again on his return; this it is most probable never took place, and thus his treasure has been preserved through a period of more than 1500 years, furnishing matter for the investigation of the curious of our own days.

As this Society is the natural place of deposit for the Antiquities of the district, more particularly those connected with the Roman Wall,—I should (with deference) recommend that the Earl of Carlisle be written to upon the subject of these coins, and as in 5,000 there must be many that are alike, it is not improbable that his Lordship might present us with some of them; but, independent of any advantage that the Society's

cabinet might derive from such an application, I should strongly urge that such a measure be adopted in all similar cases of discovery within the district, which would show the Society to be properly alive to the purposes for which it was instituted, and could not fail of doing it good, by making it more generally known.

The four coins now sent, upon which the inscriptions are pretty perfect, and which appear to have undergone scarcely any change; are of the Emperors Valerianus and Gallienus, the former began his reign A. D. 252, and the latter A. D. 260.

Before closing these remarks I would wish to say a few words upon the state in which the coins were when found. As before observed, they were in a damp situation, and this exposure to moisture for a space of 1500 years might, beforehand, be expected to have operated considerable changes on the metals; and we find that most of the coins were adhering together in a mass when found, having undergone a very curious alteration. The great bulk of them were converted almost through their whole substance into brown oxide of copper, having sometimes a partial coating of green carbonate, which, where it has had room, has assumed a very pretty mammilated form; from this I would assume that the major part of the coins have been of copper, which being more easily acted upon than brass, has been altered, whilst many of the brass coins are much less changed, and some of them (as, for instance, the four most perfect now sent,) scarcely at all. These four coins, from their colour, hardness, &c. appear to be brass, with a large proportion of zinc, but time has not allowed me to ascertain the exact proportion. There are also portions of a yellow ochrey substance, which would indicate the presence of iron; this is very likely to have been brought by the moisture from the surrounding earth, or it may have been an accidental alloy in the metal of which the coins were formed.

The latter remarks are not strictly "Antiquarian," but I trust I shall be pardoned for trespassing on the time of the Society, as the changes which the metals undergo by long exposure to moisture is a curious subject, and one that is at present attracting considerable attention.

WILLIAM HUTTON.

Extract of a letter from MR. C. HODGSON, dated Carlisle, 9th April, 1826, and addressed to the REV. JOHN HODGSON.

“The field in which these coins were found is called the *Hawk's Nest*, and the *Hall-cust*, or *Hall Steads*. Till within the last 100 years it was in part of a forest, which was thick and continuous all the way from Brampton Old Church to the river Gelt. The place is two fields from the Old Church; and commands a view of Brampton, Castle Steads, Irthington, Bewcastle, Tindale Fell, Carlisle, the Solway Firth, the Scotch hills, and the Castle Carrock, Cumrew, and other fells. Mr. Bell, the occupier of the field, had the swamp at its head drained for the purpose of ploughing through it; and his son John, in performing that work close to the north side of the inclosure, struck off the top of the vessel which contained the coins, and so shattered it, that it fell into several pieces. The number of coins which it contained, will, I think, be not less than 5000; the largest of which are about seven-eighths of an inch, and the smallest about a quarter of an inch in diameter. This field and those adjoining it to the West have very uneven surfaces, as if some sort of buildings or earthworks had been upon them; and great quantities of stones, as well as flags and paving-stones, have from time to time been taken out of them. I should also mention that in ploughing in this field a few years since, about 200 horse shoes were found; and that in a meadow below, a little to the South, there is a considerable tumulus, now planted with oak, and another in an adjoining field, nearer the Turnpike road.”