

### THE THORNGRAFTON FIND.

THE Roman coins, and the bronze vessel in which they were contained, now exhibited to the Society, constitute "The Thorngraston Find," described in Dr. Bruce's *History of the Roman Wall*, p. 416, 2nd Edition.

The imperial coins are of nine Emperors—Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vespasian, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian—being 53 in number—3 of them of gold and 50 of silver; and there are, besides these, 10 consular and family coins. The earliest of the imperial coins is a gold coin of Claudius, and the latest 4 silver coins of Hadrian. It may be worth while to devote a short space to the examination of the earliest and the latest of these coins.

Birago, the acute and laborious Italian numismatist, in his work upon the coins of the Roman Emperors, published at Milan in 1683, minutely describes all these coins. He ascribes to this coin of Claudius the date of the 50th year of the Christian era, the legend on the obverse contains a diffuse enumeration of the titles of Claudius:—

"Titus Claudius Cæsar, Augustus, Germanicus, Pontifex Maximus, Tribunitiæ Protestatis, Pater Patriæ."

On the reverse, in the language of Birago, is "Caput juvenile Neronis," with this legend—

"Nero Claudius Cæsar, Drusus, Germanicus, Princeps Juventutis."

This coinage took place when Claudius adopted Nero, then thirteen years of age, and gave him, amongst other titles, that of "Princeps Juventutis."

The four coins of Hadrian are fresh from the mint, and unworn by circulation, they mark the date of the deposit.

The legend of the obverse of all of them is the same:—"Imperator Cæsar Trajanus Hadrianus Augustus." On the reverse of the first in date is the legend—"P. A. R. P. COS. II."—which we read—"Pontifex Maximus, Tribunitiæ Potestatis, Consul II.;" with the figure of Piety, and the word "Pietas," in the field. To this coinage Birago ascribes the date of 118.

The remaining three coins of Hadrian are of his third consulate; and one of them being a duplicate, they contain only two varieties. Hadrian was designated a third time consul in the year 119, and Birago assigns to this coinage the date of 121, the year after Hadrian's expedition into Britain. He describes the figure on the reverse of one them as "Victoria cum Trophæo;" and that on the reverse of the other as "Figura sedens, dextra Pateram, sinistra Cornucopiam;" and below it are the letters "FEL. P. R.," (Felicitas Populi Romani). An inspection of the coins proves the accuracy of the description given of them by the Italian numismatist.

Inasmuch as there is no record of the "Thorngrifton Find" on the proceedings of this Society, a brief narrative of the circumstances of the find, and the subsequent history of its produce, may not be out of place.

Between the stations of Borcovicus and Æsica, the Roman Wall is built on a range of basaltic precipices; parallel with this range and with the Wall, and at a distance never exceeding a mile south of the Wall, runs a ridge of freestone in which quarries have been opened at different points by the Romans, for the purpose of obtaining the stones used in building the Wall; and these quarries were naturally closed when that work was done. The requirements of the country did not render it necessary to re-open them, until the country itself was opened by the formation of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway. The writer of these notes saw one of these Roman quarries, on this ridge of freestone, opened in the year 1844, bearing on its face the impress of the 6th Legion:—"Legio Sexta Victrix." In the year 1837, another of these quarries was opened out upon the hill of Borcum, a prominent feature of the freestone ridge referred to, at the distance of a mile or thereabouts from the Roman Wall, and something more from the station of Borcovicus.

On the 9th of August, 1837, Thomas Pattison, a quarryman employed in working this quarry for the purposes of the Newcastle and Carlisle

Railway, found in a crevice of the freestone rock, the bronze vessel now produced, with the coins which were in it, he bore off and kept the prize. He was induced to show the coins to our antiquarian friend, Mr. Fairless of Hexham, and, through him, to the late Mr. John Kirsopp, the magistrate there, who presented him with a sovereign on the occasion.

On these premises, the quarryman founded his calculation of the value of his prize. He argued, "If one gentleman gives a sovereign for an inspection of the coins, 1,000 gentlemen must necessarily give 1,000 sovereigns, and I shall still hold the coins:—*ergo*, the coins are worth more than £1,000." Having formed this estimate of the value, he came down to this town, to the late Mr. Brockett, the eminent coin collector, who did not confirm his notion of value; he then proceeded to Hartburn, and submitted them to our late inestimable colleague, Mr. Hodgson the historian, who examined the coins and classified them for the owner, and from this inspection supplied the description of them contained in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of December, 1837. The greenish leather, or vellum, in which Mr. Hodgson describes the gold coins as being wrapped, is still, as then, tough and strong. Thomas Pattison then proceeded to Alnwick Castle, for the purpose of treating with the late Duke of Northumberland for the disposal of the coins, and impressed with the importance of his mission, he desired a personal interview with His Grace; which failing to obtain, he returned home with his treasure.

These gold and silver coins, found, under the circumstances above stated, in the township of Thorngrafton, in the barony of Wark, clearly came within the legal definition of treasure trove; and the learned steward of that barony proceeded, as he was in duty bound, to vindicate the rights of its lord. He took the only course that was open to him, he brought an action of trover against Pattison, the finder. The defendant suffered judgment by default, he could not do otherwise, as he had no ground of defence; and on the 15th of December, 1837, the damages were assessed by a jury, assembled at Haydon bridge, at £18—which was proved to be the value of the coins.

This led to the publication of an able and very interesting tract upon the Law of Treasure Trove from the pen of the steward of the Barony of Wark, our valued friend, Mr. Fenwick. Early in the year of 1838, the quarryman, Thomas Pattison, to avoid the operation of the law, placed the vessel and coins in the hands of his brother, Edward Pattison, and fled into Wales—where the process of the law followed him, until he escaped from it under the Insolvent Act.

He afterwards returned to Northumberland, and died at his brother's house at High Onsett, near Haltwhistle, on the 20th of June, 1844.

The brother, Edward Pattison, an honest, industrious Northumbrian peasant, but incapable of appreciating the Law of Treasure Trove, had imbibed the same notion of the value of the coins which were entertained by the finder; and he has adhered to them with equal tenacity. Both of the brothers have fully established their title to be classed amongst those men who are "tenaces propositi." These coins have reposed for twenty years in the cottage of E. Pattison, and Mr. Fairless has been indulged with an occasional inspection of them; the honest simplicity of his character, and his earnest love for antiquities, won the confidence of the owner of the coins, who began by degrees to entertain a more rational view of their value; and on the 5th of November, 1858, the writer became by purchase proprietor of them.

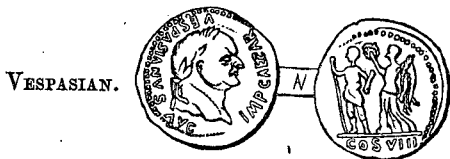
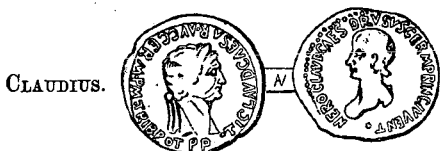
These coins are valuable only from their association with the Roman Wall and the neighbouring stations on it. A comparison of the stone of which the Wall and its mile-castles are built, with the stone of the quarry in which the coins were found, will show the identity of the two; this comparison will most readily be made with the massive voussoirs of the arch of the gateway of the Housesteads mile-castle, which have been so long excluded from the air by the debris above them, that they have great appearance of freshness. When the legions of Hadrian had completed the Wall, this quarry, which they had ceased to use, became an unfrequented spot, and has been chosen as a safe receptacle for this treasure.

The writer of these Notes felt it to be due to the Lord of the Barony of Wark, the noble Patron of this Society, to submit to his Grace's decision the question, *Who should be the future Proprietor of the Thorn-grafton Find?* That decision was promptly given, and was in accordance with the generous and exalted character of that nobleman.

JOHN CLAYTON.

\* \* \* The principal types comprising the Thorngraftern Find were engraved, from impressions in gutta percha taken by Mr. Fairless, at the expense of Mr. Fenwick, for Dr. Bruce's *Roman Wall*, and by the permission of those gentlemen, the cuts are used below.

GOLD.

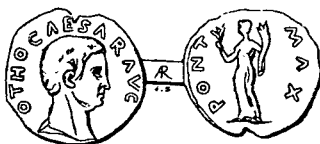


SILVER.

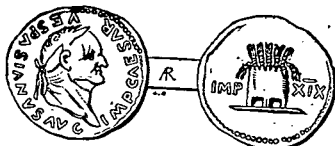
NERO. Same type as the second example in gold.



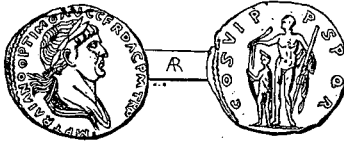
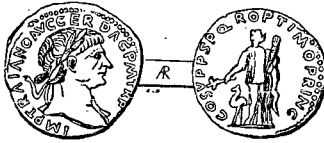
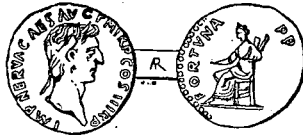
OTHO.



VESPASIAN.

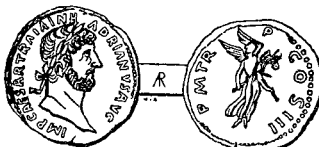


NERVA.

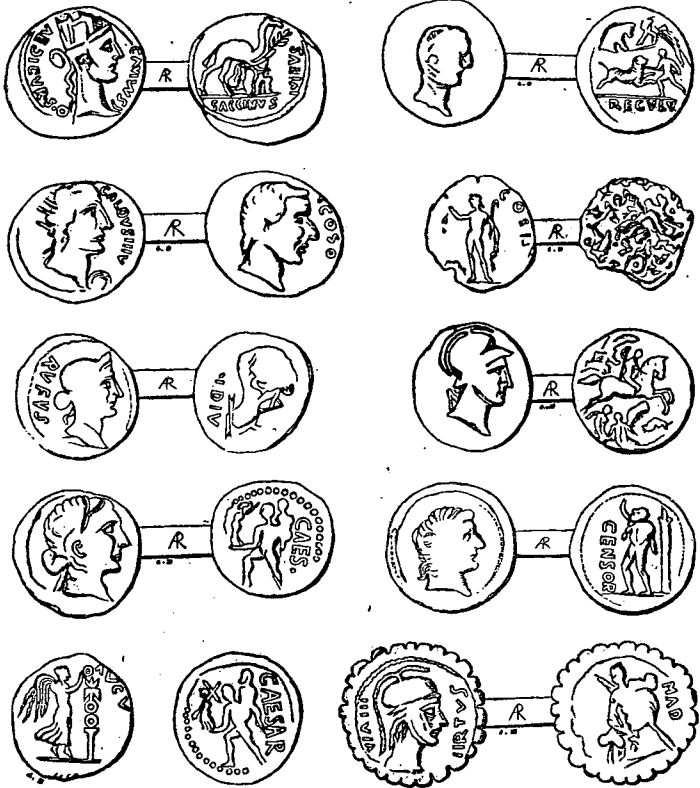


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HADRIAN.



## CONSULAR AND FAMILY COINS.



These Consular and Family Coins have been a good deal worn by circulation; more perfect specimens of them are in the collection of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, at Alnwick Castle, as may be seen by reference to the description of that fine collection by Admiral Smyth.