

Lastly, we have an altar inscribed,—

DEO MAPONO,—

by four German soldiers, whose names are given, and which are nowise inconsistent with their nationality. They are apparently names of four private soldiers, who concurred in erecting this plain and simple stone, in grateful consciousness, as we may well believe, of a superintending Power, which had brought them through some sickness; they had all undergone together.

Such are the lessons of the interior life of Roman camps, conveyed to us by the chalice found at Rudge, and by the inscriptions on the altars we have here examined.

And we may infer that the town or station denominated Maia or Maie in the topography of Britain by the anonymous writer of Ravenna, was a place distinguished by some establishment for curative treatment of the sick and wounded. It is mentioned as if situated near to Aballava or Avalaria, a camp which there is much reason to infer was situate where Papcastle now stands.

RALPH CARR ELLISON.

ON THE ALTAR DEDICATED BY THE SPOUSE OF FABIUS
TO THE NYMPHS,

FOUND AT RISINGHAM, AND NOW AT ALNWICK CASTLE.

THE two hexameter lines which constitute the inscription upon this stone have hitherto not been completely read; and this is the only reason why it has been found impossible to understand them. It follows, of course, that no English version that has been attempted is at all worthy of acceptance.

On reperusing them in the Lapidarium one day in May or June, 1873, the oversight that had occurred in the reading and transcription suddenly disclosed itself to me. An abraded letter E had been missed, though the space which it occupied was shewn in the beautiful representation of the altar.

On the presence of that single letter being recognised the latinity becomes perfectly good and regular, and the versification correct; allowance only being made for a trifling license by which the word somnio is contracted into two syllables in utterance, and used as a spondee.

Instead of reading

SOMNIO PRÆMONITVS
MILES,—

let us restore

SOMNIO PRÆ MONITV SE-
MILES,—

And we are no longer mystified by an unreal and imaginary nominative. The incomprehensible soldier vanishes like vapour, and the grammatical construction of the remainder of the composition becomes easy and natural.

The relative clause, “*quæ Fabio nupta est*,” is seen to constitute the only nominative before us, and to represent and comprise its own antecedent, *illa*, or *fœmina*, as relatives in many instances do.

But it is time to advert to our new discovery, which is the name of the goddess Semilè or Semele, the former spelling being common in Latin, though the latter form, as in accordance with the original Greek, is the more accurate. This venerable goddess was the mother of Bacchus, and was held in high honour by matrons, who were wont to adore and consult her on occasions of moment.

By the present inscription we are informed that “From the monition of Semele in a dream, she who was the spouse of Fabius ordered this altar to be erected to those Nymphs whom she ought to adore.”

The Nymphs thus referred to are indubitably certain of the divine sisterhood who presided over conception and conjugal fertility.

It remains only to reproduce the text of the inscription as a whole.

SOMNIO PRÆ
MONITV SE-
MILES HANC
PONERE IVS-
SIT
ARAM QVÆ
FABIO NVP-
TA EST NYM-
PHIS VENE-
RANDIS.

And it is immaterial whether we read—Somnio, præmonitu Semiles, By a dream, the premonition of Semilè, or—Somnio præ monitu Semiles, Through the monition of Semilè, in a dream, &c. Let us take this last, and it runs—

Somnio, præ monitu Semiles, hanc ponere jussit
Aram, Quæ Fabio nupta est, Nymphis venerandis.

Taught in a Dream from Semelè on high,
 The Spouse of Fabius to the Nymphs drew nigh,
 To bless her as she would be:—She did raise
 This Altar to their worship and their praise.

I promptly communicated this new reading of the inscription in question to Dr. Bruce, to Mr John Clayton, and to Lord Ravensworth, being desirous that lines which had presented no little difficulty as theretofore known, should be well examined in their amended aspect. And if I remember right, nothing was urged that was adverse to Semilè.

I am hopeful therefore that the matronly goddess will stand her ground as she apparently is well entitled to do.

The position assigned to this altar was assuredly a domestic one. The lines, composed, we may infer, by the votary herself, indicate at once the delicacy of expression, combined with the easy command of language, that accord with a high position in the Roman society of Britain; and are truly an interesting literary relic.

RALPH CARR ELLISON.

May 27, 1874.

ANNE BROUGHAM THE CENTENARIAN.

THIS relative of the late Lord Brougham, "born in 1683, died in February, 1789, at the age of 106; having lived," says Burke, "in the reigns of seven sovereigns, viz., Charles II., James II., William and Mary, Anne, and the first three Georges."

Centenarians are rare. Although four-score years may often be overpassed, and even four-score years and ten, it is seldom that man or woman exceeds a hundred years of life. The busts and portraits which adorn the rooms of our Literary and Philosophical Society give instances of a near approach to the limit of five-score, but not one of them marks the full number. The picture of Lord Brougham is there, and his lordship reached his ninetieth year. His mother attained the same great age, and his maternal grandmother was still older. Her death, on the 25th of May, 1807, is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where her age is stated to have been 92. In Burke's Peerage it is 93. Two of the portraits in the reading room, those of Sir John Swinburne and the Rev. William Turner, (who died, the former in 1860, the latter in 1859,) give the ages of 98 and 97. Another of the original members of the