

CONTINUATION OF DESCRIPTION OF, AND REMARKS ON,
THE TEMPLE OF COVENTINA AND ITS CONTENTS.

READ 2ND AUGUST, 1877, BY JOHN CLAYTON, ESQ.

AT the monthly meeting of this Society, held on the 2nd December last, a paper was read descriptive of a well or receptacle for water, and its multifarious contents, which had been discovered in the month of October preceding, near to the station of Procolitia, on the Roman Wall, and which well or reservoir was, from its contents, supposed to have been within a temple of a water goddess bearing the name of COVENTINA, a divinity which had not previously been known or heard of.

The object of that paper was to present to this Society an accurate statement of facts, and to invite the expression of the views and opinions of antiquarians and scholars on the subject.

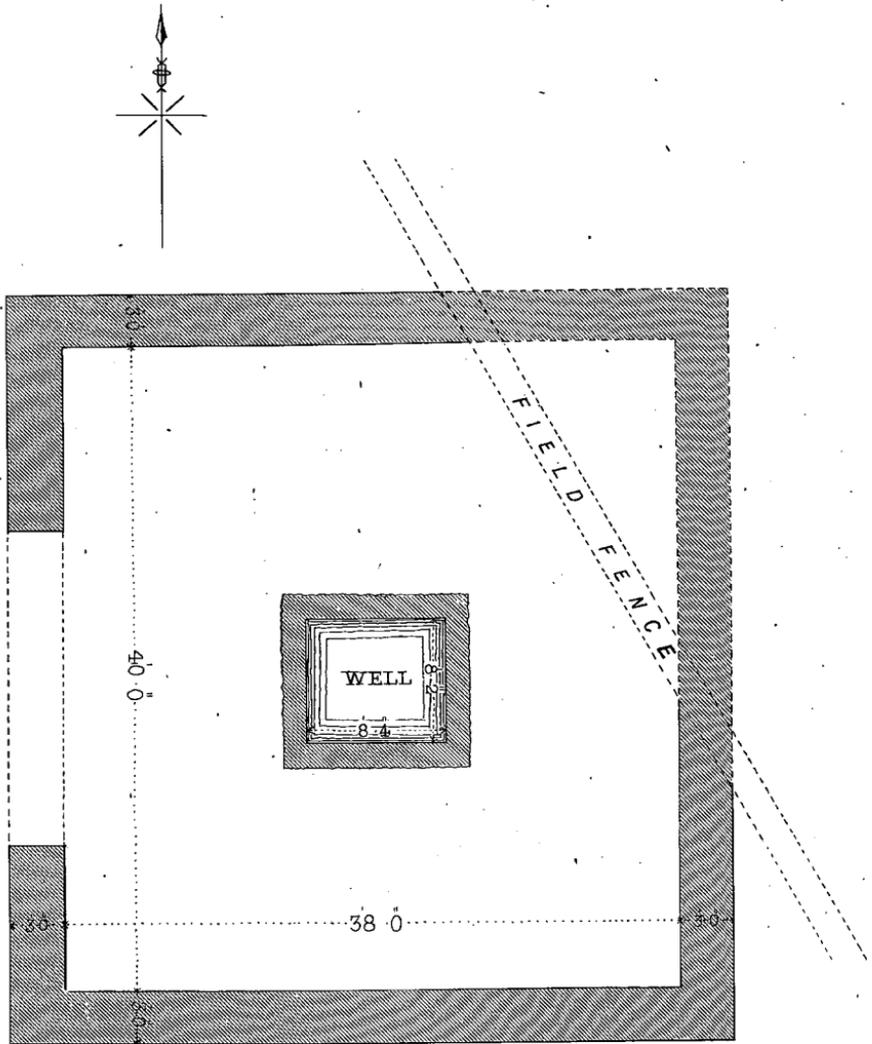
The invitation so given has been largely accepted, and during the present summer the remains of the temple in which the well is placed have been exhumed, so that we now have before us the materials necessary for arriving at our own conclusions, which it is proposed that we should now endeavour to do, with due respect to the opinions of others, without assuming to ourselves infallibility.

The wetness of the spring and early summer has delayed till this month the completion of the excavation around the well; the result of that excavation is to confirm the conjecture that the well had stood within a temple. The outer walls of the temple have been found standing to some extent, which put us in possession of a perfect outline of the building. A ground plan is now laid before the Society.

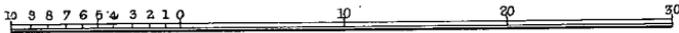
The question which presents itself for our consideration, in the first instance, would seem to be: By whom was this temple of the goddess Coventina founded?



GROUND PLAN OF THE TEMPLE OF CONVENTINA, AT PROCOLITIA



Scale of Feet.



It certainly was not founded by the native Britons, for at the time of its foundation (which will be found to be tolerably certain), a few years only had elapsed since "Wild in woods the noble savage ran." The views and appetites of the Ancient Britons at that time would be altogether mundane, and they would be most unlikely to give any of their attention to an *invisible* goddess.

So euphonious a name as Coventina would scarcely occur to the gallant Dutchmen, of whom were composed the rank and file of the First Batavian cohort which formed the garrison of Procolitia, and moreover, being troubled at home with a superfluity of water, they would have no predilection for a water deity.

The founding of the temple of Coventina must be ascribed to the Roman officers of the Batavian cohort, who had left a country where "the sun shines every day," and where, in Pagan times, springs and running waters were objects of adoration.

So far there can be little difference of opinion. The next question which arises, viz., the derivation of the name of the goddess Coventina, admits of a variety of opinions.

The goddess was a local goddess, and her worship has been confined to the locality; no altar has been raised to her divinity elsewhere than at Procolitia; the root of the name might therefore be expected to be found in some local object, or event, and in the Celtic language.

Dr. Wake Smart, of Cranbourne, suggests a Celtic (or Keltic) derivation from "Gover," in the Celtic language "a rivulet or head of a rivulet;" he adds that the initial letters "g" and "c" are often interchangeably used, and that Roman ingenuity has supplied the rest of the name.

Our colleague, Dr. Hooppell (strong in Celtic lore), takes a different view of a Celtic derivation. "Cof," pronounced "Cov" in the Celtic language, means memory; and "Cofen," in that language pronounced "Coven," means a memorial. The temple might have been reared in memory of some event.

Our colleague, Mr. Carr-Ellison, in a very learned paper read at a meeting of our Society, held on the 6th February last, which will be recorded in our proceedings, and therefore need not be repeated, suggested a Greek derivation for the goddess.

Mr. Roach Smith, the distinguished antiquarian, contributes a

suggestion that the goddess derived her name from the Convenae, a people of Aquitania, in Gaul, inhabiting a country abounding in springs and in rivulets. The first cohort of Aquitani was part of the forces employed in building the Roman Wall, and has left in the station of Procolitia a record of its presence there.¹

From another source we receive a suggestion that the Roman officer who took the lead in the creation of the goddess and her temple, might possibly have named the goddess after some divine creature, the object of his adoration in Italy, who had declined to share his lot amongst the barbarians, "*divisos ab orbe Britannos*," but to whom he continued to be devoted.

None of these suggested derivations can be considered as conclusive, and the derivation of the name of the goddess may, without inconvenience, remain an open question; but from whatever source derived, the name of Coventina must be admitted to be a female name of harmonious sound. Mr. Frank Buckland recommends its adoption as the Christian name of infant beauties hereafter born on the banks of the Tyne.² The only objection to the name is its length, but as the Roman practice no longer exists which required the admirer of a lady to drink to her in a bumper for every letter in her name—

"Naevia sex cyathis, septem Justina bibatur."

the length of the name is less objectionable than it was in Roman times.

We have not yet heard of an instance of the adoption of the recommendation of Mr. Frank Buckland in the case of a young lady born on the banks of the Tyne, but we have heard of its adoption in christening a yacht.

The history of the temple of the goddess Coventina, from its opening to its close, is connected with the historical events of the period, in referring to which we may safely rely upon the authority of our great Roman historians, Gibbon and Merivale, who make no statement for which there are not sufficient grounds; with their aid, and with the information which we have obtained, and the light which is thrown on the subject by antiquarians and scholars, we will endeavour to trace that history.

¹ Vid. "*Lapidarium Septentrionale*," No. 158.

² See "*Land and Water*," No. 570, 23rd October, 1876.

The facilities for similar establishments afforded by the Polytheism of the Pagan religion, on which the French writer, Bossuet, tersely observes, "*Tout était Dieu excepté Dieu lui même,*" have afforded us means of learning much by comparison.

At the meeting in December last, our friend and distinguished fellow-labourer in the field of antiquities, Canon Greenwell, called our attention to the discovery of the temple of the water goddess SEQUANA at one of the sources of the River Seine.

We have now before us an able and full report of the discovery and excavation of the remains of that temple, by Monsieur Henri Baudot, President of the Commission of Antiquities of the Department de la Cote d'Or.

We collect from this report that, during the period of the Roman occupation in Gaul, at one of the sources of the river Sequana (now the Seine), there was reared a temple to a water goddess, to whom the name of Sequana was given.

We have lately found that, during the period of Roman rule in Britain, at one of the sources of a rivulet flowing into the River South Tyne, was reared a temple to a water goddess, to whom the name of Coventina was given.

So far the cases of the two goddesses are alike. We must pursue their subsequent histories separately, and we shall find that they throw light on each other.

In the month of May, 1836, the excavation of the temple of the goddess Sequana was commenced. The outline of the edifice was distinctly traced, and within the exterior walls were found cells or small rooms, which the French antiquarian terms "*cellae ou petites chapelles.*"

Altars and objects of sculpture were found scattered about the ruins of the building, and beneath the floor of one of the cells or little chapels was found a large earthenware vessel, bearing on its neck the inscription, "*Deae Sequanae Rufus donavit.*" This vessel is of the shape and size of those vessels which were used amongst the Romans for containing oil or wine, and with its then contents had doubtless been at some period presented to the goddess by an individual bearing the name of Rufus. This vessel, when found in 1836, was empty, save in respect of a small earthenware vase; and scattered around it were 120 thin plates of bronze and silver, chiefly representing parts of the

human body, and that class of objects to which antiquarians apply the term "ex voto." In the small vase were found 836 coins, of which 285 were illegible, leaving 551 which were deciphered, of which more than one half were coins of Tetricus and his son,¹ and the rest extended over the period from Augustus down to Gratian, both inclusive, with the addition of a single coin of Magnus Maximus, the assassin of Gratian, and the usurper who took possession of and held Gaul, Spain, and Britain for about three years. These coins are supposed to represent the state of the treasury of the priests of the temple at the time of its destruction. The Pagan priests, who looked upon religion as a trade by which they must live, were always ready to promote the erection of temples to popular deities, and to attract offerings to them.

No coins or other objects were found in the sacred well or in the running waters inclosed within the walls of the temple.

The French antiquaries do not hesitate to impute to the Christians the destruction of the temple of the goddess Sequana, and they seem to have sufficient grounds for that conclusion. They find in the ruins of the temple unmistakable marks of destruction by fire, and they find the altars and objects of sculpture purposely mutilated; and they give the date of the destruction as shortly before the close of the fourth century.

A reference to the events of history will assist us in forming a judgment of the correctness of the assumptions of the French antiquarians.

The Emperor Gratian was a sincere Christian, but being a man of inactive mind, and, devoting all his energies to hunting and shooting, he made no effort to advance the Christian, or repress the Pagan religion. In his lifetime he gave up the Eastern Empire to Theodosius, a zealous Christian, who deemed it to be his mission on earth to exterminate the Pagan superstition, which he did very effectually in the Eastern Empire. On the murder of Gratian, in the year 383, his assassin, Magnus Maximus, took possession of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, and held them for three years, when, ambitious of wider dominions, he invaded Italy with a view to dethrone Valentinianus, the youthful brother of Gratian, and his successor as Emperor of the West.

¹ The usurpation of Tetricus and his son continued from the year 268 to 273, when they surrendered themselves and their usurped dominions to Aurelius.—Vid. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. II., cap. xi.

Valentinianus invoked the aid of Theodosius, who came to his aid with the legions of the East; and after the destruction of Magnus Maximus and his army in the year 386, became, in fact, the master of the Western as well as the Eastern Empire. Theodosius lost no time in applying to the Western Empire the system which he had successfully pursued in the Empire of the East, and the historian Gibbon thus speaks of the result:—"The ruin of Paganism in the age of Theodosius is perhaps the only example of the total extinction of an ancient and popular superstition, and may, therefore, deserve to be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind."¹

In Gaul, the edicts of Theodosius seem to have been promptly acted upon. It is recorded in history, that "The holy Martin, Bishop of Tours, marched at the head of his faithful monks to destroy the idols, temples, and the consecrated trees of his extensive diocese."

The same process was adopted by the Bishops of other dioceses, as well as by the holy Martin, and the temple of the goddess Sequana was demolished.

In the temple of Sequana nothing escaped destruction but the large earthenware vessel and its contents, including the vase containing the coins, which had been, doubtless, placed by the priests of the temple in a place of concealment when they heard of the fate of Magnus Maximus, and the termination of his Italian expedition, by means of the intervention of Theodosius.

We are indebted to more than one correspondent for reference to (and we were ourselves aware of it) a recent discovery in France, at the town of Bourbonne les Bains, in the department of the Haute Marne. We have before us a full account of the discovery, from the pen of Mons. L'Abbé Auguste Doby. The learned writer tells us that the name of the place was at one time Aquæ Borvonis, and afterwards successively Borvona, Borbona, Borbone, and at length Bourbonne.

It appears that at various times, in the town of Bourbonne les Bains, and in the vicinity of the baths, there have been found altars and votive tablets to a God called Borvonis, and a female Deity called Damona; they are sometimes joined in the same dedication, and are sometimes the objects of separate dedications. The joint dedications

¹ See Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. V., cap. xxvii.

are expressed *DEO BORVONI et DAMONAE*; in the separate dedication to Damona, she is styled *AUGUSTA*.

The waters being thermal, the two Celtic words *bor* hot, and *wona* a fountain, are suggested as forming the root of the names of the god and the town.

In the month of January, 1876, in the course of some structural alterations connected with the thermal waters, there were found in a part of the structure which had been used by the Romans, 4,512 Roman coins, of which 4,214 were of bronze, 294 were of silver, and four of gold. No catalogue of the coins is given, but we collect that they commence with Augustus, and end with Honorius, the son of Theodosius. At the bottom of this deserted space were found votive tablets to Borvonis and Damona. The Pagan establishment at Bourbonne les Bains, seems to have escaped destruction for a few years beyond that of the goddess Sequana, a circumstance which might be due to respect for the sanitary qualities of the waters, and the absence of any temple to excite the passions of the destroyers of Paganism.

We now turn to Italy for precedents.

A correspondent of the "Newcastle Chronicle," who takes for his signature the initial letters of the formal words of dedication, *V·S·L·M*, and whose suggestions are those of a scholar and a gentleman, calls our attention to the Ode of Horace addressed to the Fountain of Bandusia, one of those terse and sparkling odes of the great Roman lyric poet, which, from youth to age, remain impressed on the memory:—

O fons Bandusiæ, splendidior vitro,
Dulci digne mero, non sine floribus;
Cras donaberis hædo,
Cui frons turgida cornibus

Primis et Venerem et proelia destinat,
Frustra; nam gelidós inficiet tibi
Rubro sanguine rivos .
Lascivi suboles gregis.

—Ode 13th, 3rd Book of Horace's Odes.

In the first stanza the poet addresses the fountain as brighter than glass, and worthy of offerings of sweet wine and flowers.

The second stanza is happily rendered in English by an accom-

DISCOVERED NEAR TO PROCOLITIA.



plished classical scholar, our noble President, the Earl of Ravensworth:—

“A wanton kid with crested head,
For love or war prepared in vain,
Shall, with his life-blood newly shed,
Thy pure and sparkling current stain.”

—*Vide* translation of the Odes of Horace by Lord Ravensworth.

The poet would seem to have contemplated the deposit in the stream of the blood only of the victim, which would soon be washed away, otherwise the fountain would soon have ceased to be brighter than glass. The priests or other curators of the fountain would doubtless utilize the flesh of the kid.

We are indebted to the same gentleman for a reference to the case of the river Clitumnus and its temple, and for an accurate translation of the descriptive passage in the Epistles of the younger Pliny, from which we learn that offerings of coins were seen glittering in the bed of the river Clitumnus, rendered distinctly visible by the purity and brightness of its waters, and this is the first example which has been brought to our notice of the deposit of money as an offering in the bed of the stream.

Virgil also speaks of the sacred waters of the Clitumnus, not as receiving the offering, but as used to sprinkle the victim for sacrifice.

“Hinc albi Clitumne greges, et maxima taurus
Victima, sæpe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
Romanos ad templa Deum duxere triumphos.”

“Virgil Georg,” Lib II., 146.

Many a traveller is drawn to the Umbria of the ancients by the attractions of its capital Perugia, and few of them have not seen and admired the glassy purity of its river Clitumnus, which still deserves the epithets “purus et vitreus” applied to it by Pliny, and continues “a mirror and a bath for beauty’s youngest daughters,” as described by Byron.

Our attention has been also drawn to a discovery which was made in the year 1852, at the Acque Apollinari, a watering place about thirty miles distant from Rome.

We have now before us a clear and minute description of that discovery, and its attendant circumstances, written by an able but modest Italian, who gives us only his initials; which appears to have been printed at Rome at the Tipografia delle belle Arti, in 1852, under the

title of "La Stipe Tributata alle Divinitá delle Acque Apollinari."
"The money paid in homage to the Divinities of the Acque Apollinari."

These waters are thermal waters, having medicinal properties, and are distant according to the Itinerary of Antoninus, thirty-four Roman miles from Rome, on the road to Cosa, in Etruria. They are still in repute for their medicinal virtues, and in the course of some alterations made in the modern building in the beginning of the year 1852, was discovered an abandoned receptacle of the thermal waters which was strewed with metallic objects, of copper or brass, apparently representing monies of very rude character. On the 22nd January, 1852, the Italian Savant from whom we quote, inspected them personally, and came to the conclusion that they were the tribute paid by the Pagans frequenting the baths to the Divinities, Guardians of the Fountain; and in support of that conclusion refers to the practice of the Roman citizens to pay tribute to the Lake Curzio for the safety of Octavius Cæsar, recorded by Suetonius, to the practice of the Egyptians (according to Seneca), to pay tribute to the Nile, and that of the Etruscans, to the Lake of Falterona, as well as of the Umbrians to the river Clitumnus, as described by Pliny. The Italian writer then proceeds to give us a general description of the "monies discovered," to the greater part of which he ascribes a prehistoric date, "ad una Eta anteriore alla nostra istoria," for the most part without inscription, and passing by weight; and he brings them down no lower than the fourth century after the foundation of the city of Rome. Whether the deposits were made before or after this abandoned reservoir ceased to be used for its original purposes cannot now be ascertained, but it seems improbable in this case, as well as in the case of Borvona, that waters, having medicinal properties, should have been polluted by enormous deposits of copper.

In this abandoned reservoir were also found a quantity of cups and other vessels of bronze, and some of silver; a correspondent of the newspapers describes them as vessels of gold and silver. Visions of Dr. Schliemann and Mycenæ have disturbed our notions of metals.

Having thus investigated the several cases which have occurred abroad which can be considered in any degree analogous to the present case, finally we must consider discoveries in Britain where the worship of water deities, and of springs and running waters seems to have been less popular than in warmer climates.

In the month of June, 1875, in a meadow near the village of

Horton, in the county of Dorset, on a gravel bed, over part of which flowed a streamlet, were found some perfect fictile vases, and a quantity of fragments of similar vases; and lying in the gravel amongst other objects 139 Roman coins, of which sixty-four were incapable of identification, and seventy-five were deciphered, the earliest being a coin of Augustus, and the latest a coin of Valens, A.D. 364, more than half of the whole number being of the Constantine family. The coins are described as first, second, and third brass and minimi, and as being generally in the worst possible condition, and many of them hopelessly illegible; we are indebted to the unerring eye and perfect knowledge of Mr. Roach Smith for the identification which has been effected.

Dr. Wake Smart suggests that "the objects so found are the remains of offerings to the Numen, Nymph, or Genius Loci, who was imagined to preside over the water of that spring."

But there are no remains of buildings indicating the existence in times past of any temple or other structure for the purposes of the worship of the divinity of the stream, or the receipt of offerings.

One of the correspondents of the newspapers refers to the excavation of the bridge of Cilurnum as productive of the discovery of a deposit of coins. This is altogether a mistake. The fact is that the eastern land abutment of the bridge of Cilurnum was discovered in 1860, and was excavated in that and the following year. No deposit of coins was discovered, but amongst the ruins of the fortifications and buildings connected with the bridge were picked up in different places some scattered coins not exceeding the average number produced by excavations on Roman ground. The excavation is recorded in the "*Archæologia Æliana*."¹

The last case in England to which our attention has been called is the discovery of Roman coins in October, 1873, on Lord Selborne's estate of Blackmoor Park, in Hampshire; a paper descriptive of which was read by his lordship in the Town Hall of Alton, in February, 1877. We have before us a copy of that paper from which we learn how ably an able man can deal with any subject, however new to him.

On the 30th October, 1873, were found at a depth of two feet below the present surface, on Lord Selborne's estate, two earthenware

¹ See Vol. VI., p. 80, New Series of "*Archæologia Æliana*."

vases or pots, containing 29,802 Roman coins, all of the lower empire. Of these coins 24,985 have been identified, extending over a period of about fifty years, viz., from Gordian III., A.D. 238, to Constans, A.D. 292. About 5,000 of the coins were laid aside as incapable of identification.

It is a singular feature in this hoard of coins, that of the 24,985 coins which have been identified no less than 14,254 are coins of Tetricus and his son.

It is not stated that these coins were near any spring or rivulet, or the remains of any temple or other building, and it seems probable that they constituted the hoard of some provident individual, who did not contemplate their passing into any other hands than his own.

Having thus before us all the information we can obtain, either at home or abroad, bearing on the subject, and likely to afford precedents for our guidance, we must now trace the history of the goddess Coventina and her temple, and its contents, and consider the peculiar circumstances of the present case, and how far the precedents referred to are applicable to it.

The date of the foundation of the temple may, with tolerable certainty, be assumed to be the reign of Antoninus Pius; that emperor, though he protected from persecution both the Christians and the Jews, was himself devotedly attached to the ancient religion established in his country, and was in fact a sincere and devout Pagan.¹ It is natural that the spirit of the emperor should be infused into his subjects, and that the military prefect in command of the garrison of Procolitia, should be amended to erect a Pagan temple. In the selection of a divinity and a site for the temple, he probably had the assistance of the Pagan priests. The site fixed on was at that time a wooded glade, through which flowed a copious stream of pure water, and the divinity selected was a water deity. Thus rose from earth the temple of the goddess Coventina; it was built of stone, and by inside measurement, was 40 feet by 38 feet; the recent excavation has unearthed the lower courses of the outer walls of the temple, which are 3 feet in thickness. In the middle of the space inclosed by these walls was placed a well encased with substantial masonry. The dimensions of the well, since it

¹ See Merivale's "Romans under the Empire," Vol. VIII., cap. lxxvii.

was first opened, are diminished to a trifling extent since the well was emptied, in consequence of the walls having bulged inwards. The inside of the well now measures 8 feet 4 inches by 7 feet 2 inches, its depth is at present 7 feet; but it has originally been deeper, as a higher course of stones has evidently been removed, and the floor of the temple has evidently been higher than the present level of the ground. This must be ascribed to the wearing away of the soil by a constant stream of water flowing down the valley. The well, outside the masonry, is cased with clay of the thickness of about 2 feet, the effect of which would be to render it watertight. The depth of the well, as well as its structure, would seem unfavourable to the supposition that it was intended for or used as a bath. Inside the walls of the temple would be placed the votive tablet to the goddess, recording the name and rank of the dedicator, Titus Domitius Cosconianus. Around the temple and within its walls, no doubt, were ranged, as in the case of the goddess Sequana, the altars and vases inscribed to the goddess by individual worshippers; and the priests seem to have kept in store in the temple a collection of blank altars, some wholly and others partially finished, ready to receive the dedication of devotees. The temple having been thus established, together with its priests, seems to have prospered. Offerings came in, altars were inscribed and dedicated, and love-sick damsels cast into the well their spare trinkets in the hope of obtaining the countenance of the goddess in their views. To these interesting ladies we are doubtless indebted for the brooches, rings, and beads, found in the well. The waste of current money, if thrown to any extent into the water by way of offering, must have been most unsatisfactory to the Pagan priests, and is the most difficult feature with which we have to deal. Such a waste of current money did not take place in the case of the goddess Sequana, where the coins of three centuries, evidently the fruits of innumerable offerings, were found collected in a vase; and it is impossible to say that such a waste did take place in the fountain of Bandusia, in the thermal waters of Borvona, or in the Acque Appollinari, but it did take place, to some extent, in rivers and lakes, in the Clitumnus, the Nilè, and in the lakes Cirzio and Faltirona, which would be free from the inspection or control of the Pagan priests.

The opening of the temple of the goddess Coventina, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, would, no doubt, attract devotional offerings of money, which might possibly escape the grasp of the Pagan priests, and

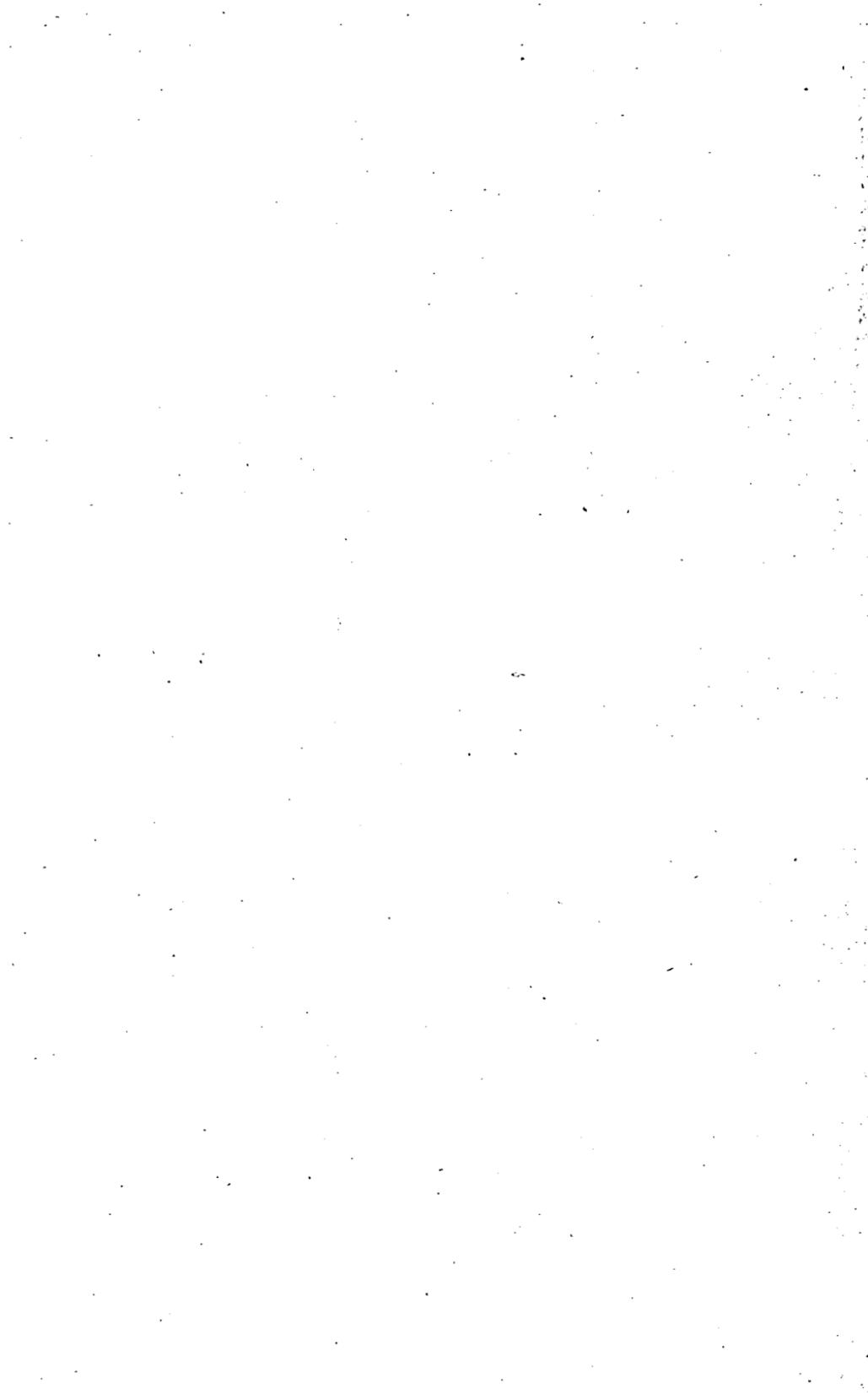
be thrown into the well. To this circumstance may probably be ascribed the deposit in the well of some portion of coins found in it, and this notion is favoured by the circumstance of there being found amongst the coins taken out of the well, coins of the third consulate (A.D. 140), and of the fourth consulate (A.D. 145), of Antoninus Pius, which have never been in circulation. Some of these are shown in the Plate which is here introduced.

The temple and the worship of the goddess Coventina would seem to have been maintained for more than two centuries and a half. In the reign of Constantine the Great, the Pagan religion received its first heavy blow. But Constantine was no theologian, and introduced the Christian religion into the Roman army, solely from motives of policy, as he found his Christian more reliable than his Pagan soldiers.

The temple stood and the priests flourished during the reigns of the succeeding emperors, including that of Gratian, with whom the collection of coins found in the well terminates. There are found none of the coins of Magnus Maximus, issued during his usurpation for three years of Britain, Gaul, and Spain. In the year 386 the edicts of Theodosius for the extermination of the Pagan superstition, which had been enforced in the Eastern Empire were extended to the Western Empire. The temple of the goddess Sequana, in Gaul, was sacked and burnt, and the altars and objects of sculpture in it were broken and defaced. The priests of the goddess Coventina seem to have foreseen the approaching storm, and to have saved from plunder the contents of their treasury, and from desecration the votive tablet and altars and other objects then in the temple, including a dozen blank altars prepared for the purpose of receiving inscriptions, by depositing them for concealment in the well; there is not a fracture or a scratch on any of them, and amongst the altars so deposited were carefully placed two votive vases of fragile material and delicate workmanship, which are quite undamaged. The priests of the temple were probably glad to escape with their lives from the danger of the persecution of Theodosius. The fluid state of the interior of the well would naturally lead to mixture and confusion in the objects deposited.

In the absence of positive proof the date and circumstances of the fate of the Temple of Coventina can only be matter of conjecture. So far our conjecture has been founded on the precedent of the fate of the Temple of the goddess Sequana. The peculiar position of the Temple of





Coventina, under shelter of the fortress of Procolitia, on the line of defence against an aggressive foe, renders it not improbable that the deposition in the well as a place of safety may have been occasioned by a successful inroad of the Caledonians; or it may be supposed to be possible that in this remote part of the Roman Empire the worship of the goddess Coventina might possibly survive the edicts of Theodosius for a few years, and her temple might be preserved until the Romans abandoned Britain, and the brave Batavian cohort, after holding a post of danger in the face of the Caledonians for more than two centuries and a half, marched with the Sixth Legion¹ to confront on the soil of Italy the invading hordes of Attila.

In either of the latter cases the contents of the military chest might be added to the contents of the treasury of the temple, and swell the number of the coins.

The value of coins is due to the light they throw upon history, and it will be obvious that they have not been useless in the present investigation. In the paper read in December last it was stated that the series of coins taken from the well of Coventina commenced with Claudius and ended with Gratian, but that probably earlier and later coins might be found on further examination. No later coins than those of Gratian have been identified, but earlier coins have been found; viz., coins of Augustus, Agrippa, Tiberius, Drusus, and Germanicus, and three silver coins of a still earlier period, viz., three of the coins of Marcus Antonius the Triumvir, which were coined by Mark Antony in honour of the legions which adhered to his cause, very shortly before the fatal battle of Actium, from which, "yielding to the timid tear in Cleopatra's eye," Mark Antony (a brave man) fled before the fortunes of Octavius. The battle of Actium dates thirty years before the Christian era, and Gratian, with whose coins the collection ends, became emperor A.D. 367, and was assassinated A.D. 383, so that the coins in Coventina's well may be considered as extending over 400 years. Many of the emperors during that period will be found represented in the series. That re-

¹ The Sixth Legion, having its head-quarters at York, unquestionably remained in the North of England till the final departure of the Romans from Britain, and was the legion to which Claudian refers:—

"Venit et extremis Legio prætenta Britannis,
Quæ Scoto dat fræna truci, ferroque notatas
Periegit exsanguis Picto moriente figuras."

presentation, however, would have been more complete, but for an untoward circumstance. For a whole Sunday during the time occupied in emptying the well, a party of thirty or forty men, chiefly miners from the lead districts, were in full possession of it, and carried away two or three thousands of the coins. In the peaceful and well ordered county of Northumberland, where all classes are united in respect for, and in support of, the laws of their country, such a raid could not have been anticipated, and the presence of a single policeman would have prevented it. The perpetrators, it is believed, were under the impression that "the coins belonged to the Ancient Romans," and that there could be no harm in taking them. On account of numismatists, this interruption to the series is much to be regretted, but we may console ourselves by the reflection, that the coins which remain are sufficient for the purposes of history, and that to the world at large it is a matter of indifference whether coins are rare or common, or even whether *Latin bronze* coins of Otho have been found elsewhere than at Birmingham, in which seat of manufacturing industry they have been occasionally produced.

Considerable progress has been made by Dr. Bruce, Canon Greenwell, and our colleague Mr. Blair (a skilled numismatist), in the identification of the coins, and an early visit to them of Mr. Roach Smith, the most accomplished numismatist of the age, is expected.¹

Amongst the numerous individuals who have given us the benefit of their views and opinions, one individual only has entered upon a criticism of the readings of the inscriptions presented to the Society in the paper of December last, and we gratefully receive criticism as a test of truth.

The readings in question, it will be remembered, were sanctioned by Professor Hübner, of the University of Berlin, one of the learned men selected for the compilation of that great German work, the "Latin Inscriptions of the World," and by our colleague, Dr. Bruce, of whose high qualification and eminent fitness to deal with the subject, the fruits of a whole life devoted to it, we are every one of us fully sensible.

The critic referred to is a gentleman of Liverpool, who addresses

¹ Mr. Roach Smith has since, with the assistance of Mr. Blair and Dr. Bruce, made a thorough examination of the coins, and the result of that eminent antiquarian and numismatist's examination is now appended to this paper.

a letter to the editor of the "Newcastle Daily Chronicle," which appears in the publication of that newspaper of the 27th December, 1876. The critic begins with the announcement of the grave fact, that "with the readings and expansions of the inscriptions he is by no means satisfied."

The gravity of the situation thus produced is, however, much mitigated by the statement which follows of the grounds of dissatisfaction, which we will proceed to examine.

The first in order of the objects of criticism are the inscriptions on the two unique fictile vases presented to the goddess as offerings by Saturninus Gabinus; these inscriptions have been incised by some sharp pointed instrument on the clay of which the vase is composed whilst still wet, and the letters of the inscriptions are divided amongst the panels of the vases.

We must not forget that in reading these inscriptions we are reading the manuscript of a potter and not of a scholar.

The critic deals first with the vase No. 1, and asks "what meaning does Mr. Clayton put upon VOTV MANIBVS SVIS?"¹ It is obvious that the potter has omitted the final letter of *Votum* for want of room on the panel of the vase on which the syllable is written, and it surely cannot be necessary to remind this gentleman that the Latin word *Votum* is used to express the object offered to the deity, as well as the vow to offer it, or to ask him to open his Virgil for an example.

"Lustramurque Jovi, votisque incendimus aras."

Vide "Virgil Æneid," Lib. III., 279.

With this knowledge no one can have any difficulty in reading, and understanding this inscription.

The critic takes exception to the form of some of the potter's letters, which we need not notice, and then gives us his own construction of the inscription as "*a dedication to the goddess by a vow to her shades!!!*" This is "what the critic makes" of VOTV MANIBVS SVIS.² There is not,

¹ The precise language of the critic, transcribed from his letter appearing in the "Newcastle Daily Chronicle" of the 27th December, 1876, is this, "*What meaning does Mr. Clayton put upon VOTV MANIBVS SVIS, especially when it follows a dedication to the goddess? 'To Coventina Augusta, by a vow to her shades,' is, to say the least of it, very singular. . . .*"

² If the critic had been a grammarian, he would have known that MANIBVS SVIS belonged not to the goddess, but to the dedicator the potter, and then it might have occurred to him that the potter would have more occasion for his hands than for his shades in manufacturing his pots.

and there cannot be the slightest difficulty or doubt as to any part of this inscription, as will be made apparent by a repetition of its letters and of the reading:—

COVENTINA AGVSTA VOTV
MANIBVS SVIS SATVRNINVS FECIT GABINIVS.

The reading—

COVENTINAE AVGVSTAE VOTVM MANIBVS SVIS SATVRNINVS FECIT
GABINIVS.

The translation is obvious to the meanest capacity—"Saturninus Gabinius with his own hands made [this] offering to Coventina Augusta."

This is "the meaning which Mr. Clayton puts on VOTV MANIBVS SVIS."

The peculiarity of the separation of the first from the second name of the dedicator by the interposition of the verb FECIT confounds the critic.

This peculiarity, however, may be easily and satisfactorily accounted for. From the skill displayed in the construction of the vase, the dedicator must have been a skilled artist, and must have acquired some celebrity in the exercise of his craft; he would probably be known in the Roman camp as "Saturninus Fictor," Saturninus the potter, and his second name would be little used and little known. The dedicator, writing on the soft clay, probably in the first instance concluded the sentence with "Saturninus fecit," but it then occurred to him that he was not sufficiently identified, and that his second name must be added. He was unwilling to attempt to erase what he had inscribed on the clay and felt that he answered his purpose by placing it after the verb.

The vase No. 2 next passes through the process of criticism. The critic says "Mr. Clayton does not give the inscription on this vase." What Mr. Clayton says of this inscription is that "it was a barbarous abbreviation of the inscription on vase No. 1." The critic persists in his objection to the form of the potter's letters, but he tells us that he collects from this inscription that Saturninus was the donor, and Gabinius the maker of the vase, which he says "accounts for the

position of the verb 'fecit' on the inscription on vase No. 1 between the two names of Saturninus and Gabinius"!!!¹

By means of a transcript of the letters taken from the vase itself and a proper reading and expansion of those letters we shall be able to ascertain whether this inscription was rightly treated by Mr. Clayton as an abbreviation of the inscription on vase No. 1, or whether the light thrown upon it by the critic is a true light.

The letters are somewhat barbarous in shape and much inferior in distinctness to those which we find in the inscription on vase No. 1; but, substantially, there is no doubt about their meaning and effect, nor can there be substantially any doubt about the reading and expansion.

The letters are—

V CV GST SATVRNI GABINIVS.

The reading—

VOTVM COVENTINAE AVGVSTAE SATVRNINVS GABINIVS.

Translation—

An offering to Coventina Augusta—Saturninus Gabinius.²

It is but an act of justice to the literary reputation of the potter to say that though he omits several letters in both inscriptions he introduces into neither of these a single wrong letter.

The critic next takes in hand the votive tablet.

The votive table is dedicated to the goddess Coventina by T. D. COSCONIANVS, the Prefect in command of the First Cohort of Batavians. As the inscription given supplies only the initial letters of the two first names of the Prefect they can only be expanded by reference to the names occurring elsewhere. We are indebted to the world-wide experience of Professor Hübner for the expansion of Titus Domitius. With this, however, our critical friend "is not by any means satisfied." In the first place, he insists upon the Prefect having four names instead of three, which addition he effects by converting a full stop, which follows the first initial letter "T" into one of the horizontal strokes of the

¹ If the critic had been a scholar, he would have known that the interposition of words between the two names of the same individual not unfrequently occurs in the classics, and an example will be found in the first Ode in the Fourth Book of the Odes of Horace. The poet interposes several words between the two names of his friend, Paulus Maximus, without disturbing the sense.

² There is some doubt whether what appears to be the letter "v" may not be what is called a leaf-stop. This is, however, quite immaterial, as, if VOTVM is not expressed, it must be understood.

letter "F," he thus interpolates FLAVIUS, he converts Professor Hübner's Domitius into Decimus,¹ and, in happy self-confidence, gives us as the Prefect's names, "TITVS FLAVIVS DECIMVS COSCONIANVS."

The inscription on altar No. 1 is allowed to pass without comment. The altar No 2, which is dedicated by a German recruit, is not so fortunate as to escape criticism; but the only question seems to be whether the name of the dedicator, which on the stone is MA DVHVS, is to be read MANLIVS DVHVS, as expanded by Professor Hübner, or MADVNVS, as expanded by the Liverpool critic. If the recruit had been from Lancashire or Cheshire, the Liverpool authority would have been properly resorted to; but as the recruit was from Germany, a reference to an authority at Berlin would seem on this occasion to be more to the purpose; and whether the recruit used either one or the other name seems to be an immaterial fact.

No objection is offered to the readings of the inscriptions on the remaining altars, save to that on altar No. 8, which was offered with diffidence in consequence of the unskilfulness of the sculptor.

Whatever doubt may exist as to the right reading of this inscription, it is quite clear that the reading of the critic is wrong. His amendment consists in reading the first letter of what appears to be a proper name as the first letter of the initials V S L M, with which the dedication of altars almost uniformly concludes, overlooking the circumstance that the letter "V" occurs in a subsequent part of the inscription which is properly its place.

Having thus gone through the several objections taken to the readings of the several inscriptions sanctioned by Professor Hübner and Dr. Bruce, and placed before the Society on the 2nd of December last, we arrive at the conclusion that none of these objections are tenable.

The owner of the well of Coventina and its contents presents to the Society engravings of the principal objects described, from which the accuracy of the description may be tested, and also of some minor objects found in the well (already referred to, page 4), particularly a miniature bust in bronze of the goddess, which does justice to her features, which are somewhat flattened in the stone representation of them on the Votive Tablet. This bust is accompanied by two other

¹ The critic, if he be at all versed in Roman nomenclature, must know that Decimus like Titus is a prænomen, and therefore, here entirely out of place.

bronze busts found with it, busts personifying mirth and melancholy, L'Allegro, and Il Penseroso, the broad grin on the face of the one, and the length of visage of the other, are highly comic.

At our meeting of the 2nd December last the attention of the Society was drawn to an altar to Minerva, which had been found at Procolitia since the publication of the "Lapidarium Septentrionale;" this altar is dedicated by the prefect of a cohort, indicated by the letters COH. CI. The same critic in his letter to the press of the 20th of December last refers to a suggestion which he had made sometime previously to the effect that the letters "C I" must be expanded either "Celtiberorum" or "Cugernorum." However valuable may be this suggestion, we must be excused if we hesitate to accept it as conclusive. The First Cohort of the Celtiberi was in Britain in the reign of Trajan, A.D. 106, as is evidenced by the diploma of that emperor, of that date (vide "Lapidarium Septentrionale, page 5"), but it has left no other record of its presence in Britain, and at the date of the "Notitia Imperii" this cohort was in Italy stationed in the province of Venetia inferior.

The First Cohort of the Cugerni, who are sometimes called Cuberni, is named in the diploma of Trajan, and is also named in the diploma of Hadrian, A.D. 124 (vide "Lapidarium Septentrionale," p. 7), as one of the cohorts of the army serving in Britain under Aulus Platorius Nepos, and doubtless employed in building the Roman Wall. On an altar found in the well, the First Cohort of the Cugerni have inscribed on the face of the altar their national name at full length. In cases where the nationality of a cohort or an ala is expressed by a contraction it almost uniformly consists of three letters, as BAT. for Batavi and AST. for Astures; and it seems probable that if either of these two cohorts had been the cohort dedicating this altar, and had adopted the unusual course of expressing its nationality by two letters, those letters would have been either C E. or C U. and not C I. as on the stone.

Antiquarians in general are of opinion that two letters do not afford sufficient grounds for any conclusion, and we must hope that a stone may be found on which the cohort may give us more letters of its name.