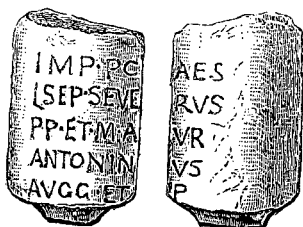


ROMAN MILESTONE IN NORTH WALES.

READ BY DR. BRUCE, WEDNESDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1883.

THE number of Roman milestones that have survived to our day in this country, notwithstanding the extent of the Roman roads, has not been great. Fortunately, however, the number has recently been considerably added to. In the spring of this year our revered Vice-President, Mr. Clayton, contributed a paper to our Transactions describing the discovery of two upon his own estate in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall, at Cawfields. One of these bore the name of Hadrian, the other Severus Alexander. Shortly after the reading of Mr. Clayton's paper, I was enabled to communicate to our Society an account of another milliary also to Hadrian, which had been recently found at Rhiwian Uchaf, in the parish of Llanfairfechan, North Wales. Since making that communication I have been informed by Mr. Barber, of Penralt, Bangor, of the discovery of another milestone in the immediate vicinity of the former, which bears the names of Septimius Severus and his two sons. The inscription on it is as follows:—



IMPP CAE
L · SEP · SEVERVS
PP · ET · M · AVR
ANTONINVS
AVGG ET P ·

The Emperors Cæsar
Lucius Septimius Severus,
Father of his Country,
and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus
Augusti and Publius [Sep. Geta].

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Mr. Barber in writing to me says, "The inscription is copied from a cylindrical grit stone, corresponding with the former milliary, but cut in two immediately under the lettering. It has just been discovered in the same field as the former, and not many yards from its burying place. This new discovery was buried also, and deep enough to escape the plough." This stone has evidently originally borne the names of Septimius Severus and his two sons. His eldest son bore the name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, but he was commonly called Caracalla. His younger son was named Publius Septimius Geta. This milestone has been put up after Caracalla had been associated with his father in the empire, but before Geta was. It will be observed that after the names of Severus and Caracalla we have the letters A V G G, signifying that they both held the office of Augustus. If Geta had then been Augustus, his name would have preceded these letters, and the reading would probably have been A V G G G; but as it follows them, and there are only two G's, we may conclude that he only held the position of Cæsar at the time this milestone was erected. These circumstances give us the comparative date of the milliary. Caracalla was declared Augustus A.D. 198, Geta received the title of Augustus A.D. 209. The date of the stone, therefore, must be prior to the year A.D. 209. Now, as Severus and his two sons came to Britain in the year A.D. 208, we may readily suppose that this stone was erected shortly after their arrival. This milestone has evidently been broken in the middle. It has a diameter of 1 foot 4 inches, but its height is only (irrespective of a fragment of its base) 1 foot 11 inches. The other milliary, which I formerly described, though it had the same diameter as this, was 6 feet 7 inches high. It will be observed, too, that we have only a single letter, P, of the name of Geta—Publius Septimius Geta. It is well known that Caracalla hated his brother Geta, and that very shortly after their return to Rome, on the death of their father, Caracalla had his brother put to death. But this did not satisfy him. A decree was issued ordaining that Geta's name should be struck out of all the memorials of the empire. It was struck out of the entablature which surmounts the arch of Severus at Rome, and in several of the inscriptions in our Society's possession, the same erasure is evident. In obliterating the name upon the milestone now under our consideration, it is not

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impossible that too much violence was used, and that the cylinder was broken in two. The milestone has been sent to the British Museum, and is now under the care of our esteemed associate, Mr. Augustus W. Franks.* I cannot help remarking, in conclusion, how strongly these stones point to the importance which the rulers of the Roman Empire attached to this portion of Britain. It would seem as if the mighty Emperors, Hadrian and Severus, could not advance to the subjugation of the northern parts of Britain until they had seen that all was safe in Wales.