



ROMAN INSCRIBED SLAB, CHESTERS (CILURNUM).

(3 feet 3 inches long by 1 foot 11 inches broad.)

XVIII.—A NEW ROMAN INSCRIPTION FROM CHESTERS.<sup>1</sup>

By F. HAVERFIELD.

[Read on the 26th May, 1897.]

This inscription records the provision of a water supply for the fort at Chesters while the *Ala ii. Asturum* was in garrison there, and Ulpus Marcellus was governor of Britain. It seems to possess two points of interest, both depending on Ulpus Marcellus.

The name Ulpus Marcellus occurs several times in Roman history. An Ulpus Marcellus was a distinguished jurist and statesman in the reigns of Pius and Marcus Aurelius—a period when lawyers frequently won high political advancement. An Ulpus Marcellus, *consularis*, is mentioned on a Benwell altar dedicated to Anociticus,<sup>2</sup> and now in the Black Gate museum (*Lapid. Sept.* no. 21, and pp. 24 and 25; *C.I.L.* vii. 504): the inscription implies, though it does not actually say, that this Ulpus was governor of Britain, and appears to have been erected between A.D. 161 and 169. A L. Ulpus Marcellus was governor of Pannonia inferior, probably somewhere between *circa* A.D. 105 and 180, and perhaps in the latter part of this period (*C.I.L.* iii. 3307).<sup>3</sup> An Ulpus Marcellus—a man, it would seem, of some eminence and ability—was sent specially by Commodus to crush a rising in Britain, a mission which he carried out successfully, probably about A.D. 183-184. Lastly, a Marcellus was consul in 158. These personages, it will be noted, were all active about, or after, the middle of the second century A.D., and it is impossible not to connect them together. In particular, the man mentioned on the new Chesters inscription seems to be identical with the Ulpus Marcellus who governed Britain about A.D. 161-169, and with the special emissary of Commodus in 184; for Commodus, no doubt, selected for the crisis a man who already knew Britain. The relations of this Ulpus Marcel-

<sup>1</sup> The slab was found in a room to the west of the north guard chamber of the smaller east gate of the camp. It was turned upside down, and made use of as a step.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> See woodcut of this altar on the next page. See also *Lapid. Sept.* nos. 124 and 146.

<sup>3</sup> The inscription is certainly later than *circa* A.D. 105, because it mentions Pannonia inferior, a division created about that date. Its dedication, *Honori et Virtuti*, rather resembles some coin legends of Pius and Aurelius, so that it would naturally fall within their reigns. Thirdly, the governor is mentioned as *legatus Augusti pro praetore* only. After about 165, the governors were consulars. This, however, proves very little, as governors with consular rank often describe themselves simply by the simple and ordinary formula.

lus to the governor of Pannonia and the jurist-statesman cannot be determined; the latter, however, would have been an old man, if alive



at all, in the reign of Commodus, and the British governor may, per-

haps, be his son. It should be remembered, in making these guesses, that although Marcellus is a common name, and Ulpii were frequent in the second century, it is improbable that many Ulpii Marcelli rose to really high office at the same period. We might demur to identifying two or three Ulpii Marcelli who were common soldiers: we need not demur when they are men of the first rank.

I conclude, then, that the new Chesters inscription was set up about A.D. 161-169, and I add it to the number of mural inscriptions which we can date to the period between Hadrian and Septimius Severus (A.D. 138-193). Such inscriptions are not rare. There is a Chesters military diploma of A.D. 146, a dated dedication to Cocidius at Birdoswald of about A.D. 154, a notice of repairs at Halton Chesters in A.D. 158, two or three fragments, probably relating to building or rebuilding at Chesters and Carrawburgh, and a rudely cut inscription from the Bankshead mile-castle—all belonging to the reign of Pius (138-161). There is, further, the dedication to Anociticus,<sup>4</sup> and the doubtless contemporary one to Antenociticus from Benwell, the new Chesters inscription, a dedication to the Dea Syria, and one or two fragments from Caerboran, and a dedication (?) from Great Chesters—all belonging to the reign of M. Aurelius (161-180). One sees, therefore, that, notwithstanding the erection of the Antonine Wall, the line of Hadrian's Wall was held, and apparently held in force. Indeed, one finds, perhaps not without surprise, that the inscriptions which belong to the reigns of Pius and Aurelius are more numerous, or, at least, no less numerous, than those which can be assigned to the era of Septimius Severus.

One further point may be noted. The new inscription gives us our earliest allusion to the *Ala ii. Asturum* at Chesters. Inscriptions indicate its presence there about 221 (*Lapid. Sept.* no. 121, *C.I.L.* vii. 585; *Ephemeris* iii. p. 133), and the *Notitia* testifies that it was still there whenever the British section of that work was compiled, perhaps about A.D. 300. The new find enables us to date its presence back to about A.D. 165. In all probability both it and most of the other auxiliary regiments on the Wall were placed there by Hadrian, and remained where he had fixed them until the fourth century; but this conclusion is rather conjectural, and we may welcome any fresh evidence, such as that provided by the new find.