

V.

NOTICE OF RECENT DISCOVERIES OF ROMAN REMAINS AT CADDER, ON
THE ANTONINE WALL. BY JOHN BUCHANAN, Esq., GLASGOW, COR. MEM.
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The beautiful estate of Cadder, situated about six miles north-west from Glasgow, is traversed by the mouldering and greatly dilapidated remains of the Antonine Wall. In the course of more than one journey along the entire course of this ancient military barrier, from the picturesque ivy-covered ruin of the mediæval fortlet of Dunglass, on the brink of Clyde, across the interior of the country to the shores of the Forth at Caeriden, I have frequently remarked

the sagacity and admirable skill with which the Roman engineers seized on every advantageous point, and conducted their line of defence to and along the successive rising grounds which command extensive sweeps of country, and impart such a finely undulating character to this range of landscape.

The section of the Wall now more immediately to be noticed, across the Cadder estate, forms an apt illustration. A long stretch of gentle eminences, covered with ornamental woods, is to be seen from Bemulie, the westmost farm on that property, eastwards in the direction of Kirkintilloch, overlooking the wide valley across to the cold gray fells of Campsie, deeply furrowed by many a wintry torrent. Through this valley the River Kelvin pursues a tortuous course from its hilly springs a few miles distant, turbulent in rains, and frequently overflowing the extensive haughs which skirt its margin opposite the Cadder rising grounds. Immediately before reaching Cadder from the west, the track of the Wall ran along rather broken ground; but to avoid the approaching haughs just mentioned, which must at that remote period have been a series of swamps and pools, the military engineers caused it to make a sudden wheel, or traverse, to the south, to catch and run along the crest of the Cadder slopes, and reach firm, commanding ground, on the southern side of the sedgy Kelvin. This rectangular deviation, intersected as it was by a broad and shallow stream, necessarily presented a weak point in the line of defence; to obviate which, and guard the passage of the river, a very large fort, protected by four rows of ramparts and ditches, was planted at Bemulie, directly above the transverse section of the Wall on the river brink.

This was the *fifth* of the Wall-Stations, counting from the Clyde, and commands a most extensive and beautiful prospect, including Castlehill, where so many Roman sculptures and inscriptions have been found.

The average distance between the Wall-Stations, throughout, is about two Roman miles. Accordingly, it has been hitherto assumed that the next fort, eastward from Bemulie, must have been near the parish church and antique hamlet of Cadder, near the eastern skirts of the estate. In consequence, however, of the improvements which, for a very long time past, have been made by the Keir family on this portion of their extensive domains, no satisfactory vestiges of the precise site of this Cadder Wall-Fort are now visible; and no discoveries of remains, tending to fix its position have been recorded. Even Gordon, who wrote as far back as *circa* 1726, and was a minute observer, failed to perceive any traces. But Hamilton of Wishaw, an earlier writer, speaks more decidedly. At page 32 of his "Sheriffdom of Lanark," in alluding to this part of the country, he states, "Near to the church of Cadder there are very lively vestiges of ane Roman incampment, and its fortifications."

Very lately, however, discoveries of various Roman remains have been made

at a place in the immediate vicinity, which I venture to think tend to indicate the precise position of this long lost Wall-Fort.

A few years ago, a new manse was built for the parish minister, close to the banks of the Forth and Clyde Canal, and about three hundred yards from the little hamlet, called by Gordon "the Kirkton of Cadder." The manse stands on elevated ground, about the same distance from, and on the inner or Roman side of, a remarkably well preserved fragment of the Antonine rampart and fosse, which are hid in a wood. Last year a new garden was assigned to the manse, and surrounded by a stone wall. This garden lies on the portion of ground between the manse, and close to the line of the Roman Barrier, here universally called "Graham's Dyke," or "Graham's Cast."

Now, in trenching this manse garden, the following discoveries took place:—

At the depth of about two feet, the workmen came upon the Roman causeway, running right across the garden from west to east. It extended about two hundred yards, and where they left off trenching was evidently continuous through the adjacent field, which I afterwards tested at one or two points. The causeway in the garden was completely rooted out in my presence; and I observed that it was composed of water-worn stones, evidently gathered off the surface of the ground, or from a neighbouring streamlet. Two or three parallel rows of larger stones ran along the edges, and the heart of the causeway was filled with a smaller class, most compactly rammed home, and requiring some force for their dislocation by the workmen's crow-bars. I fancied also that I could perceive in some places lines of depression on the surface of the causeway, like the faint ruts of wheels.

Close to this causeway, a considerable quantity of Roman pottery was turned up. It consisted of portions of amphoræ, vases, bowls, jugs, and large circular shallow vessels, apparently mortaria. Many of these were of the fine red Samian ware, highly glazed; and when cleaned, the beautiful crimson was as clear and fresh as if of yesterday. Several of these fragments had evidently been impressed when soft by the potter's stamp, within the usual small oblong border; but the letters were quite illegible. Among them lay a small bottle made of sun-dried clay, rudely shaped, with an attempt at ornament around the thickest part, consisting of a line of rude crosses or stars, with an indentation round the neck, as if for suspension. Probably this antique bottle, though associated with Roman remains, is of native manufacture.

Near this group of pottery were found a number of large iron nails, with very broad, round heads. These nails are 6 or 7 inches long, and though much corroded, are still thick. They closely resemble those figured by my friend the Rev. J. Collingwood Bruce of Newcastle, in the recent edition of his admirable volume on "the Roman Wall" (page 33) found within the ruins of the great

station of Borcovicus, in Northumberland. Alongside of them lay several *hones* for sharpening knives. These are very curious. They are about six inches long and one broad. The under part is rough and uneven, with a notch across, to steady it on some other object, during the sharpening process ; while on the upper surface there is another notch or indentation at the narrowest end, for receiving the thumb. This upper side is as smooth as velvet, and much worn down, or grooved, by the action of the knife. These curious hones are of a bluish colour, and have been rudely fashioned into their present shape.

A still more interesting relic, however, lay beside them. This was a small piece of stone, which I am inclined to think is a portion of an inscribed Legionary tablet. It is of freestone, and has evidently been broken off a larger slab. On a smooth, raised surface, there is what appears to have been the letters I I, and underneath this, a horizontal line, and the letter V.

Now, may this not be the remaining letters of an inscription indicating the presence of the Second Legion, Augusta? They were in the custom of contracting their inscriptions, and arranging the lettering, thus :—

L E G	as appearing on known tablets by them in this very
I I	neighbourhood. (See Stuart's <i>Caledonia Romana</i> , Plate
A V G	X., fig. 1, p. 324.)

As already said, all these things were revealed within the garden. But other discoveries were made in the field outside. These consisted of four small unfinished altars, and a thin, neatly-dressed square tablet, ready for an inscription. They were lying in a group by themselves, about the same depth of two feet under the surface as the remains of the causeway. The altars are about 19 inches in length, and merely *blocked* out of the mass of stone, roughly, into the general shape they were intended ultimately to assume. They have quite the Roman *cut*, are without ornament, but one side rudely smoothed to shew where the customary inscription was to be placed. More leisure and attention seem to have been bestowed on the square tablet, which is quite ready for the letters.

Though thus incomplete and uninscribed, these altars are not without some value, as shewing distinctly the Roman presence at this place. Some fragments of what appear to have been weapons—one of them very like a poignard—lay beside the altar, but all were greatly corroded, and crumbled to pieces on being handled.

It only remains to be noticed, that in the same field, but near the line of the Vallum, there existed, till very lately, an ancient well, of a square form, and faced with dressed stones. It held a strong spring of water, which was led by a conduit, north-westward, several hundred yards, to a singular-looking mound or tumulus, conjectured by some to have been an exploratory post outside the line

of fortification. This conduit has been repeatedly met with, and cut through, in the course of trenching, and other operations, at different points. This old well was used from time immemorial, by the rustics of the adjoining hamlet, and strange enough, went by the name of "the *Romany well*;" but having of late years become troublesome, it has been filled up, though the stone framework still exists in the ground. I have little doubt that this was the garrison well. There are two, precisely similar, within the distinctly-defined areas of the Wall-Forts of Kirkintilloch and Auchindavie, the very next stations to the eastward, evidently for the use of the troops there, just as I suppose this Cadder one to have been.

The *site* of all of these discoveries appears quite to answer that of a Wall-Station. It is nearly midway between those of Bemulie and Kirkintilloch, where a fort was to have been expected; it is on a rising ground bounded by the Vallum, with a good prospect to the north, and the causeway seems to have traversed what would be the centre of the Fort, as was the case at several of the other stations along the Wall. These considerations, coupled with the assemblage of so many promiscuous items, undoubtedly of Roman workmanship, all in one place, induce me humbly to think, that we shall not greatly err if we fix the *site*, but hitherto uncertain, Wall-Fort, at the picturesque new manse and garden, of Cadder parish, skirted by the Great Canal; and identify this locality with the "incampment" so briefly alluded to by Hamilton, nearly a century and a half ago.
