

IV.

NOTICE OF AN INCISED SEPULCHRAL SLAB FOUND SOME YEARS AGO NEAR NEWSTEAD, ROXBURGHSHIRE. BY JOHN ALEXANDER SMITH, M.D.

The sandstone slab (of which a rubbing was exhibited, see the accompanying woodcut) was found, some years ago, a little to the east of the village of Newstead, in the same field in which the Roman altar dedicated to Silvanus had been discovered, as Dr Smith was informed by Thomas Tod, Esq. of Drygrange (to whose kindness he was also indebted for being able to figure this altar and the aureus of Antonianus Pius, in the First Part of the Society's *Proceedings*). The stone was given by Mr Tod to the late Sir D. Erskine of Dryburgh Abbey, by whose orders it was fixed in its present position in the north wall of the choir of the Abbey. It had been considerably broken, and is now rather irregular in shape, measuring about



13 inches in length by $11\frac{1}{2}$ in breadth; there is cut on it a portion of a large-sized double-edged sword of ancient form, the guard being bent towards the blade; at the sides of the handle we have the letters "A. P.," apparently the initials of the person's name to whom the monument had been placed; probably a Pringle, as this was a common name in the immediate vicinity. On the right of the sword-blade is sculptured a mason's square; on the left a pair of compasses (?), either the symbols of the man's trade, or possibly that of his being a freemason; and below these we have on each side leaves apparently of ivy, or the more sacred emblem of the vine. The sword was generally placed on the tomb of a knight, but occasionally also on that of any one who bore such a weapon. And it may be remarked, that in the adjoining village of Newstead there existed a lodge of freemasons—the St John's of Melrose—claiming an origin from the first builders of the Abbey of Melrose, to which town the lodge is now removed, and where its meetings are still duly held. In placing this stone in the wall of Dryburgh Abbey, Sir David Erskine added below it another, on which he got sculptured the blade of the sword, carrying round the whole a wreath of leaves, and thus completing it according to his

idea of what it had originally been. The difference, however, between the old and the newly cut stone is easily distinguished.

Dr Smith took the opportunity of adding to the list of Roman coins found in this neighbourhood (see *Proceedings*, Part I., p. 33), a denarius of DOMITIAN, in good preservation. IMP. CÆS. DOMIT. AVG. GERM. P. M. TR. P. XIII. Laureated head of Domitian to right. R. IMP. XXII. COS. XVI. CENS. P. P. P. Minerva walking to right, protecting herself with the Ægis, and brandishing a javelin. It was dug up in a field, near Newstead, in July last.

January 23, 1854.

ROBERT CHAMBERS, Esq., in the Chair.

Among the Donations laid on the table were—

Three Roman Coins found near the Reculvers: by GEORGE SETON, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

A collection of various British and Foreign Coins: by Dr DANIEL WILSON, H.M.S.A. Scot.

Three Coins of Ceylon. Also, a pamphlet on Ancient Spanish Coins. "Note sur deux monnaies Ortokides." Tracts by the Donor. Eichhorn de Gemmis Sculptis Hebræorum, 4to. Johannis Olivæ in Marmor Isiacum Exercitationes. Romæ, 1719, 4to. Gros de Boze, Explication d'une Inscription Taurobolique. Paris, 1705, 4to. Caroli Patini Commentarius in tres Inscriptiones Græcas. Padua, 1685, 4to: by W. H. SCOTT, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

A Medal struck to commemorate the Exhibition at Cork in the year 1852: by R. SAINTHILL, Esq., Cork.

Very rude small Stone Patera found in the Forest of Birse, Aberdeenshire: by JAMES DRUMMOND, Esq., R.S.A.