

II.

NOTICE OF RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN CHEDWORTH WOOD, ON THE ESTATE OF THE EARL OF ELDON, IN THE COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER. BY JAMES FARRER, Esq., HON. MEM. S.A. SCOT. COMMUNICATED BY JOHN STUART, Esq., SEC. S.A. SCOT.

The discovery of Roman villas in these woods originated with an under gamekeeper, engaged in ferreting rabbits, and was first brought under my notice in June 1864, when a small chamber was cleared of rubbish, but the tessellated pavement was found to be almost entirely destroyed. It had been laid on flags, placed over buttresses of stone, forming narrow passages, in which many of the loose tesserae were found. This chamber was 17 feet long, and 13 feet wide. The passages were about 1 foot wide, and 3 feet deep. Further examination led to the discovery of loose tesserae, painted stucco, burnt stone, brick, and ornamental tile, and, finally, the walls of the ancient building. Up to the present time, the area of ground already explored is about $2\frac{1}{4}$ acres, independent of

more recent discoveries in other parts of the wood. Villas Nos. 1 and 2 stand at right angles to each other, and occupy a sheltered position, commanding a good view of the narrow but well-timbered valley of the Coln. Villa No. 1 faces the east, villa No. 2 the south. The ground has been covered with wood from time immemorial, and the underwood is felled about every twenty years. No suspicion of buildings seems to have been entertained, though in some places the top stones of the walls appeared, on close examination, above the surface of the ground.

Villa No. 1 had been built in the form of two sides of a square, looking east and north, with possibly a court-yard or garden within. Along the side, looking eastwards, runs a corridor, about 133 feet in length, and 9 feet in width. Two short flights of steps, much worn, lead from this corridor into various rooms, many of which, as well as the corridor itself, contain ornamental pavement. Twenty chambers or passages have been excavated, exclusive of the bath at the north end of the corridor, immediately behind which is a hypocaust in a tolerable good state of preservation. Ten of these rooms are on the south side of the square, and are inferior in character to those on the west side. Most of the rooms on the west side had been paved with tesserae, set in mortar. The largest room was 28 feet 9 inches long, and 18 feet 6 inches wide. It had been warmed by flues inside the walls. The furnace at the south end was filled with ashes and rubbish. Many fragments of pillars, stone easing-troughs, worked stones, and hexagonal roofing-slates, many of them still retaining large flat-headed nails, of course much corroded, were dug out of the ruins. Behind room 1, villa 1, a small recess, measuring 4 feet 4 inches by 2 feet 5 inches, contained fragments of two small stone statues, the sandalled feet of which were attached to the pedestal. The discovery of the Christian monogram—the *CHR RHO*—in another part of the ruins is, in the opinion of the Rev. S. Lysons of Hampsted Court, an indication of the former inhabitants having embraced Christianity. This opinion, however, may be modified by the discovery, subsequently, of a small altar, at the south-west corner of a chamber, containing an octagon reservoir, about 2 feet 9 inches deep, and capable of holding nearly 1100 gallons. A drain, 11 feet in length, conducts the water from a small spring, issuing out of the natural ground. A lead pipe carried away the water from the reservoir into a small trough, 15½ inches long by 13 inches in width,

and $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth, and from thence, through a drain at the south-east corner, underneath a buttress of stone, about 3 feet 6 inches square, where it appears to lose itself in the ground. Portions of coloured stucco yet adhere to the walls of this chamber. At the north end of the corridor before mentioned is a bath, 7 feet 2 inches long by 5 feet 4 inches wide, and 4 feet 4 inches in depth; the water was carried off by a lead pipe, which still remains in the wall, into an open stone drain crossing the corridor. Near the bath was a circular place like a well, but only a foot deep; it was 4 feet wide, and 2 feet 10 inches long. Behind the bath is a hypocaust in tolerable preservation; it is 21 feet long, and 18 feet broad. The pilæ on which the floor of the room was laid were 3 feet high. The bottom tile of each pila was 13 inches square; on this were placed ten other tiles, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches square. The covering tile was 13 inches, and the cap tile 18 inches square, and over all about 4 inches of concrete, in which the tesserae were set. The space between each row of pilæ was 15 inches wide, and tile flues in the walls conveyed the hot air into the room above.

Villa No. 2 stands almost at right angles to villa No. 1. Twenty-three rooms or passages have been opened out, though some of them may perhaps be more correctly described as baths, or possibly ovens. A corridor runs in front of all, as in villa 1. It is nearly 300 feet long, and 10 feet 3 inches wide; it may, however, extend still further in ground not yet excavated. This corridor, as well as many of the rooms, has been paved with tesserae; they are inferior in character to the pavement of villa 1. The pilæ are of single stones. The swimming bath is 12 feet by $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet. On each side of it is a small bath. These are approached by passages 6 feet long, the whole facing a mortared court, 20 feet square. A lead pipe, 20 inches long, and $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, took the water from the swimming bath into the small bath on the east side. There is another pipe, apparently of similar dimensions, still in the wall between the swimming bath and the small one on the west side. A hollowed stone drain runs behind several of the rooms. Ten of them are 24 feet 6 inches long, and vary in width from 9 to 24 feet. One is of pentagonal shape, and underneath it are stone drains large enough to admit a boy. No similar drains have been elsewhere discovered about these buildings. Many of the rooms had been paved, and warmed in the usual manner. The whole

has, apparently, been destroyed by fire. In one room a mass of molten lead was found; it weighed 67 lb., and had evidently poured off the roof of the building into a hollow place; and one of the large slates falling on it gave it the flattened appearance which it now presents. The interior of the rooms had been in most instances, possibly in all, plastered with mortar and painted. In one there was a rude cross and other marks on the wall. The colour had been red, but was much faded.

A limekiln, 9 feet deep and 10 feet wide, was found in the wood, behind villa 2. Fragments of cornices and other worked stones were dug up; they were partially calcined.

Future excavations may possibly render the task of assigning a definite period for the destruction of the villas more easy. Fire was probably the chief agent; and the absence of articles of intrinsic value justifies the presumption, either that the inhabitants had time to remove their property, or that the place was pillaged before destroyed. Mr Lysons is disposed to think that it was originally the palace of Arvirigus, king of the Dobreni (Gloucester),—more than a century ago a bath, the tiles of which were all stamped with the word *Arviri*, was found in the neighbourhood,—that it was subsequently occupied by another British king, Praciatigus (a stone bearing this name having been found in the ruins), who married Queen Boadicea, and that finally, after its destruction¹ by the Romans, it was occupied by some officer in command of the troops.

A descriptive catalogue of the various things found amongst the ruins would swell this paper to an inordinate extent. They were of stone, bone, iron, and bronze, pottery and coins. Remains of domestic animals were abundant, comprising horse, ox, sheep, and pigs, and also fragments of antlers of a large species of red deer, but they were generally in a decayed state. Large oyster shells were also mixed up with the debris. With the exception of two pieces of skull, found in separate places, no human remains have as yet been discovered.

The stone objects comprised fragments of pillars of various sizes, from between 5 and 6 feet down to a few inches, bases of columns, hexagonal tiles, steps, stone pilæ, and troughs; also stones with the *Chi Rho* or *Laborum* inscribed.

¹ Tacitus speaks of the laying waste the territory of Praciatigus.

Amongst those of bone were hair-pins, bodkins or needles, knife-handles, perforated discs, and some that are difficult to describe.

Iron and bronze implements were more abundant. Of the former were knives, horse-shoes, rings, a spoon, cup, chisels, spear or lance heads, and many miscellaneous articles; also three pigs of iron, the largest of which was 5 feet 4 inches long, and 10 inches thick. Of the latter, fibulæ, pins, spoons, needle, buckles, armlets, plain and ornamented finger-rings, twisted chain with swivel (possibly a bracelet), plates of bronze, punctured and ornamented, a stylus, steelyard with leaden weight attached, and other miscellaneous articles.

The pottery was generally in small fragments. It consisted of amphoræ, and vessels of different sizes, and probably for domestic purposes. Much of it was of a very coarse description. There were, however, some specimens of Samian ware, representing hunting pieces, and some that had been broken, and rivetted with lead. On one was the maker's name—GENIALIS F—(broken off); also a piece of a perforated vessel, like the rose of a water-pot.

Of the articles coming under the head of miscellaneous, the most interesting is a silver spoon, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch wide, with an arched swan's head handle, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch long. The words "CENSORINE GAUDEAS" are inscribed inside. Mr Franks considers that it belongs to the third or fourth century, and is very rare. It was found in a mass of rubbish behind villa 1. A perforated plate of lead $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, a lead vessel like an inkstand, fused lumps of lead, bracelet of Kimmeridge clay, large tusks of wild boar, and roebuck horns, were also found, together with fragments of glass in small quantities.

Two hundred and fifty-seven bronze or copper coins have been collected up to the present time. The majority of them belong to the Constans and Constantine family and Tetricus. Many of them are much defaced. Amongst the best preserved are those of Antoninus Pius, Victorinus, Allectus, Magnentius, and Valentinian. Only two silver coins have been found. They are both well preserved. One of them has the words "IMP. CÆS. MAUR ANTONINUS AUG. REV: MARETA AUG."

Partial excavations have been made in other parts of the same woods. There is reason to believe that they will prove highly interesting. In one place, discovered in opening out a quarry, a large platform of stones

of four courses, rising one above the other, and of quite Cyclopean character, has been laid bare. Hypocaust tiles, several of them having the impression of the feet of animals—deer, sheep, dog, &c.; and one with human finger-marks; also remains of pillars, and very large worked stones. A human jaw-bone, in which were two teeth, was found here. Traces of buildings not yet examined are to be seen at a distance of 200 yards higher up in the wood.

The "Capitol."—Only a few hours' labour have been devoted to this place, which was discovered the day before I left the county. It is distant about 170 yards from villa 1. Several small rooms were partially cleared, in one of which was found a stone, pronounced by Mr Lyrons to be "probably the centre compartment of a mortuary columbarium." The upper part of it, which is rather elaborately worked, seemed to have been intended to represent a scallop shell. A few coins, many hexagonal tiles, and fragments of pillars, justify the inference that a building of some importance has also existed in this part of the wood.

It is my intention to proceed with the excavations in all these places next summer. The pavement, wherever practicable, has been preserved, as also the walls of the chief rooms. Any things worth keeping will be deposited in the Museum now building in the wood.

As bearing on the interesting subject of Mr Farrer's communication, Mr STUART read a memorandum, communicated by Miss Hope Vere of Craigiehall to Professor Simpson, giving details of the discovery of another Roman villa at Seavington, the property of Earl Poulett in Somersetshire. As in the case of the other villas, the rooms had been paved with tesserae, of which specimens sent by Miss Vere were examined, as well as bits of the painted stucco of the walls.