

MISCELLANEA.

ON ROMAN REMAINS IN THE CHURCHYARD AT
MILTON NEXT SITTINGBOURNE.

BY GEORGE PAYNE, JUN.

SOME few years since it was found necessary to extend the grave-yard, surrounding the church, at Milton; the north-western wall was removed, and a portion of the adjoining land, known as "Church Field," was taken in. Grave digging in the new ground at once brought to light numerous fragments of Roman pottery, glass and tiles, about four feet from the surface. Masonry of a very substantial nature was also exposed; and from the description given, by a trustworthy informant, the wall seems to have been of Roman work. The first notice received of the discovery was in March, 1872, from Mr. Parham, National Schoolmaster at Milton, who had procured a quantity of the broken pottery. These fragments consisted chiefly of Upchurch ware, in great variety of shape and pattern. From 1872 to 1878 similar remains have been exhumed, whenever the ground has been opened for burial purposes. The writer has preserved, in his private collection of local antiquities, several pieces of embossed Samian ware. On the central portion of a patera, the maker's name PRIMANI is stamped. Ornamented roof tiles, a minute vase of coarse black pottery, and the neck of a large amphora, of pale flesh colour, have likewise been preserved; the amphora must have been capable of holding many gallons. With such material before us, it is reasonable to infer that the spot where these interesting relics were found was the site of some Roman building. From its proximity to the church we naturally connect the discovery with that, or a former, edifice. The

sexton states that foundations, analogous to that previously mentioned, intersect a large portion of the old churchyard and are probably part of the same work. It is evident that a church was erected here at a very early period, for Hasted says, in the year 1070, William the Conqueror gave to the abbot and convent of St. Augustine, the church of Middleton (Milton), and the tenths of all the products accruing from that Manor, and the tenths of all its appurtenances of the land, wood, meadows, and water, excepting the tenths of honey paid in rent and money. Lambarde in his *Perambulation of Kent*, quotes a statement to the effect that Sexburga, the foundress of the Nunnery at Minster in Shepey, left her life at the door of Milton Church. Other accounts state that she died at Ely, where she had latterly resided, on July 6th, 699. In some notes left by the late Rev. W. Vallance, formerly curate of Milton, he says that in digging to the foundations of the north wall of the present church several Roman bricks or tiles were found. It will be seen from the foregoing account, how important is the discovery of masonry in this particular spot; and it was hoped that a slight excavation in the churchyard, to throw additional light on the matter, might have been permitted. The Council of the Kent Archaeological Society agreed to vote a sum of money to carry out such a work, but permission to excavate was refused. The Roman cemetery at Bex Hill, which yielded a rich store of leaden coffins, described in *Archæologica Cantiana*, Vol. IX., was situated beside Milton Creek, several hundred yards south of the church.

LEADEN COFFIN AT CRAYFORD.

ON the 4th or 5th of February, 1878, a leaden coffin was discovered by excavators employed in opening the Queen's Highway, between Crayford and Bexley, for the purpose of inserting large pipes required for the West Kent Drainage Works. From the accounts given of it there seems very little room for doubting that this was a Roman coffin. A rough

sketch of it made by the Rev. Geo. Savage, shews ornamentation of a beaded pattern, and of escallop shells. The lead however was unfortunately buried again, and the soil rammed down upon it, before any competent authority had an opportunity of inspecting it. Mr. Roach Smith, and his friend Mr. John Harris, have since been indefatigable in their efforts to get the lead dug up again; Canon Smith, rector of Crayford, and Mr. F. C. J. Spurrell have likewise moved in the matter; correspondence has been held with Colonel Lennard, the chairman, and Mr. Neave, the contractor, for the West Kent drainage works; yet all without avail. The exact spot of re-interment being somewhat doubtful, and great public inconvenience resulting from digging up the Queen's Highway, there seems to be at present little hope of recovering the leaden fragments.

Mr. Savage states that the coffin was lying nearly north and south, across the road, which runs east and west. The exact spot of its discovery was very near the boundary line, between the parishes of Crayford and Bexley, about 30 yards east of the gate which leads to the Iron Church of St. John, Bexley. Mr. Savage saw a portion of the jaw-bone of the occupant of the coffin. Some teeth in it were perfect, but the "wisdom tooth" was in the jaw and had not been "cut." The remains were those of a young female.

ROMAN COFFIN OF LEAD AT CHATHAM.

The Precinct, Rochester, 24th May, 1878.

MY DEAR SIR,

I heard yesterday from Mr. George Winch of Chatham, the Clerk to the Burial Board there, of a recent discovery in the cemetery of an interment, which Mr. Roach Smith has seen, and assigns to the fourth century. I had been away from home three days, or I should have had Mr. W.'s letter earlier, and would have let you know. I have seen the remains to-day, the body is evidently that of a man, and

apparently of middle age; the remains were found in a leaden coffin, bound at the edges with iron, and ornamented on the seams with a beadwork ornament. Among several impressions of an escallop shell, one, where the head rested, is particularly perfect. There were two small glass vessels inside, now in fragments; the lower jaw with the teeth nearly perfect, and a small quantity of hair, are preserved; outside the coffin were two ordinary yellow-ware vessels. The leaden coffin was evidently inside one of wood; the latter must have been of considerable thickness, I should think quite four inches. Several hollow nails were found, which no doubt had secured the whole together. I saw one nail, which was certainly six inches in length, or very nearly so. The greater part of the lead coffin, the bones and the nails, are at the Chatham Cemetery. The upper part of the coffin, with the ornaments I have mentioned, the remains of the glass vessels and the earthenware vessels, are at the Office of the Chatham Local Board in the Military Road, Chatham, where they will be preserved. Mr. Winch mentioned to me that Mr. Payne of Sittingbourne would probably make some notes; he had already seen the remains.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

A. A. ARNOLD.

The Rev. W. A. Scott Robertson.

SUBTERRANEAN SHAFT AT ELTHAM PARK.

IN February, 1878, at the residence of Thomas Jackson, Esq., Eltham Park, excavators seeking to remedy a leakage in the North Kent Company's Water supply, came upon a disused brick drain, 21 inches wide and 26 inches high, with semicircular arch. A man entering this drain found that it ended at the top of a circular shaft, 140 feet deep, and 49½ inches in diameter, which terminated in a huge chamber, excavated in the chalk. This chamber is of irregular shape,

but its extreme dimensions are 63 feet by 40, and its height $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Mr. Flinders Petrie estimates that about 1000 tons of chalk have been excavated from it. The circular shaft is lined with bricks, for a depth of 75 feet, and below that its lining is formed of chalk blocks. Mr. Jackson says that in a well, sunk not far from the shaft, no chalk was found until the excavation had reached a depth of 114 feet. Gravel and ferruginous sand occupy the upper 40 feet; clays, green sand, and a pebble bed, about 22 feet; then come 52 feet of pure white sand, beneath which is the chalk.

ACOUSTIC JARS IN LEEDS CHURCH.

*Leeds Vicarage,
Maidstone, August 13th, 1878.*

DEAR SIR,

There has been some pottery discovered in a wall in Leeds Church, now in course of restoration. The portion of wall, in which the jars are, is to come down; a portion has already been taken down, and the pots (eight in number) have been taken out of it, somewhat damaged in the removal. I can get the other part of the wall, in which are six more jars, allowed to remain for a few days, I think. Can you come over and look at them, and their curious position, before they are further disturbed? They are placed in a row in the wall, above the arches of the nave, equidistant from each other.

Faithfully yours,

A. P. MORRIS.

Rev. W. A. Scott Robertson.