

DISCOVERY OF A HOARD OF ROMAN COINS
AT SPRINGHEAD.

By the courtesy of Mr. S. J. West of Gravesend, I have been able to examine a small hoard of Roman coins found at Springhead, near that town.

In giving a brief account of this hoard, I make a few remarks on the locality, which, from time to time, has been remarkable for discoveries; among them is the rich sepulchral deposit found in 1801, and recorded by the Rev. Peter Rashleigh in the *Archæologia*. I also have contributed two plates of Roman remains found at Springhead, in the first volume of my *Collectanea Antiqua*. By the kindness of Mr. G. M. Arnold, I have revisited Springhead, and find that Mr. Silvester, jun., has carefully preserved these and others, together with some 200 to 300 Roman coins, which I have yet to examine. The late Mr. Silvester, sen., informed me that nearly half a ton of horse-shoes had been found, denoting either a forge, or a stock in hand for the horses which, both on public and private service, may have needed them, wherever they may have been made. From the specimens I have seen I think these horse-shoes were Roman.

Springhead, and the fields to the south and south-west, represent the *Vagniacæ* of the second Iter of the Itinerary of Antoninus. The distances from London to *Vagniacæ*, and from *Vagniacæ* to *Durobrivis*, Rochester, shew this to be the locality; and not

Maidstone, as has been asserted. To place the station at Maidstone would be to assume a great deviation from the straight line which this iter pursued, from the north of Britain to the Rutupian Port, or Richborough. The station *Noviomagus*, which intervened between London and *Vagniacæ*, must have been somewhere at ten miles from London and eighteen from *Vagniacæ*. Its site has yet to be ascertained.

At the upper part of Strood the Roman road to London must have made a curve to the left somewhat below the line of the present road, which, as we learn from a recent discovery, passes over the site of a Roman burial-ground. It gained the high ground of what is called "the old road," which leads by Cobham Park and by Singlewell to Springhead. It is to be traced parallel with this road on the left; and beyond Springhead in Swanscomb Wood, where it is well developed; and thence it falls into the high road to Dartford. In the High Street of this town, a few years since, during some excavations, Mr. John Harris of Belvedere saw it laid open at the depth of some three feet, paved with boulders.

The "old road" referred to has obvious signs of being British. Though, no doubt, in the summer seasons, it was used by the Romans, it could not have been, in some places, easily passable for large bodies of military; and thus the higher road was constructed, which would be elevated above any accumulation of snow. This adaptation is noticed in other districts. We found it in walking the Roman road from Ewell to Chichester.

Besides the discoveries mentioned, we have further evidence of *Vagniacæ* in some extensive foundations in the land adjoining Springhead. In very dry sum-

mers the lines of the walls may be distinctly traced in the parched corn and herbage. The angles of the walls and the doorways are thus marked clearly. The walls, which are extensive, are shewn to be about two feet in thickness; but in some places they are apparently wider.

The coins, 114 in number, found at Springhead, extend from Gordian the Third to Tetricus, and include Philip, Trajanus Decius, Valerian, Gallienus, Salonina, Victorinus, Marius, and Postumus. Of Postumus there are 82, chiefly in silver or billon; of Victorinus 22; of Gallienus 7; of Salonina 2; of Tetricus 2; of the others, a single coin each. They are all in silver or billon, and small brass. The latest are of Tetricus (Junior), indicating that the hoard was deposited when Tetricus gathered together his British troops and recruits for Gaul, to meet the legions of the Emperor Aurelian, and that the owner of the secreted hoard never returned. The coins of Postumus present 21 different reverses; and are generally in a fine state of preservation, shewing but little sign of wear from circulation. There is nothing of novelty and but little of rarity in any of the coins, unless it be that the name of Victorinus is, in one instance, given at full length, IMP. C. M. PIAVVONIVS VICTORINVS. P. F. AVG.; with a double-v in *Piavonius*, which I do not remember to have seen before.

Mr. West not only deserves warm acknowledgment for keeping together this hoard, and readily allowing its examination; but he is also to be commended, and I hope imitated, for forming a museum of works of ancient art and natural history, which is open to the public.

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P 2

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