XX. *Remarks on an unpublished Inscription to the Emperor Tetricus, found at Bittern, near Southampton : in a Letter from CHARLES ROACH SMITH, Esq., F.S.A., to Sir HENRY ELLIS, K.H., F.R.S., Secretary.*

Read 27th May, 1841.

DEAR SIR,

City, May 19, 1841.

DURING a late visit to Bittern, the site of Clausentum, I observed in the garden of the Manor House,^a which (together with a lawn and plantations) now occupies a large part of the Roman station, an inscription to the Emperor Tetricus, which does not appear to have been published.

It is on a hard freestone of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $1\frac{1}{2}$, and a foot thick ; the back rough and unhewn, as if the stone had originally been affixed to some part of a building ; the sides somewhat damaged, but the inscription is nearly perfect, as the sketch below will shew.

^a The property of Mrs. Stuart Hall, to whom I am indebted for a most courteous reception on the above occasion.

A very similar but badly preserved inscription has been noticed and engraved by Sir Henry Englefield, in his "Account of Clausentum,"^b where it appears thus:—

and is read, . . AP. CA . . . CAIO. ÆSVLO. TETRICO. PIO. ET. AUGVSTO.

If this reading of the nomen be correct, it is irreconcilable with that in the inscription I now have the honour to lay before the Society and also with the coins of Tetricus, on which the word PESVIVS occurs so frequently, though never, as I am aware, with a diphthong, as in the present case.

Sir Henry Englefield observes, in speaking of the earlier discovered inscription, that it "is singular from the name of ÆSVLVVS preceding that of Tetricus, whose family name was Pivesus, or Pesuvius, or Pivesuvius; but neither the father nor son ever appear to have borne a name approaching to Æsulus, and though, from the great variety of spelling the name on different medals, its orthography appears to have been uncertain, yet Æsulus is too far distant from all the readings to render it probable that it was intended for any of them."

This questioned word, as will be perceived by my sketch, is spelt in our inscription, POESVIO or POESVVIO, which, though it slightly differs from the spelling of the words on coins, confirms its identity, while at the same time a comparative examination of the two inscriptions and the evidence of coins, prove that a P in Sir Henry Englefield's inscription has either been omitted by the carelessness of the sculptor, or, more probably, obliterated by time or accident, and that the I has been misread L. The first letter in the first word should of course be an M.

^b Published in "A Walk through Southampton," 1805.

We have on record numerous inscriptions of a dedicatory character which have been at various periods found in different parts of this country, but I am not aware of the existence of any others of this prince, nor of many of the other rivals of the Roman Emperors, who, throughout the third century, successfully assumed and maintained the sovereignty of the provinces of Gaul and Britain. The sway of many of these military chiefs was firmly established, and vanity on their own part, and flattery on that of their subjects, would never be backward in stamping their deeds on all occasions with the insignia of legitimate power and authority. Their coins, the least destructible of their monuments, attest extraordinary alacrity in recording their independence : but inscriptions on stone or marble, such as these of Tetricus, are of the rarest occurrence. Of Carausius and Allectus in particular, whose united possession of Britain lasted nearly ten years, we possess not an isolated instance of a sculptured record ; their numerous coins alone attest their good fortune ; which is set forth with the aid of historical truth, poetical imagination, and artistic skill. The reason of this absence of sculptured busts and inscriptions of Emperors whose coins are abundant, is obvious. The latter, by their nature, are comparatively indestructible, while the former are always the first, from their more conspicuous position, and less durable material, to suffer from time and from the more fatal effects of human ignorance and barbarism. When the chances of war reversed the fortunes of a rival Emperor, every memento of his former success was carefully and systematically erased by order of the conqueror.

That this was a regular and established custom we have the direct and repeated assurances of historians.

Eusebius^c relates that after Constantine had decreed the death of Maximian, the titles of the late Emperor were obliterated and his statues overturned. His son, Maxentius, retaliated on the murderer of his father, and destroyed the statues and monuments of Constantine, who, in the end, as Aurelius Victor informs us, was fortunate enough to be able to inscribe with his own name the public works erected by Maxentius. “ *Adhuc cuncta opera quæ*

^c *De Vita Constantini*, lib. 1, cap. xlvii.

magnifice construxerat, urbis fanum, atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacra vere."

It requires some explanation to account for this singular and remarkable fact; that while seeking in vain for records on marble or stone of the other usurpers, we should find two examples of the acknowledged authority of Tetricus, among other inscriptions found on the site of Clausentum, which are dedicated to the legitimate Emperors Gordian, to Gallus and Volusian, and to Aurelian, who recovered Gaul and Britain from the rule of Tetricus.

Tetricus retained possession of Spain, Gaul, and Britain, for four years, comprising the latter part of the reign of Gallienus, and the entire sovereignty of Claudius Gothicus, who was too busily employed in repelling the Goths from Thrace and Macedonia, to attempt the still more difficult recovery of the western provinces. This duty devolved on his successor, Aurelian.

Tetricus, though at the head of a powerful army, composed of faithful and tried legions and of auxiliary Franks and Batavians, on the very commencement of the decisive engagement near Chalons, went over to Aurelian, having first posted his troops in a position to favour the attacks of his adversary. For this treachery, Tetricus saved his own and his son's life, and gained the everlasting friendship of the conqueror, who eventually rewarded his treasonable confidence with the highest honours. Vopiscus,^e Trebellius Pollio,^f and other historians,^g agree in asserting that Tetricus was advanced by Aurelian to the highest offices of the state, in the full enjoyment of his titles and fortune, and the personal friendship of his former rival.

It appears to me extremely probable that among the unbounded favours lavished by Aurelian on Tetricus, may be included a special exemption from the usual fate of the conquered, of his statues and monuments, a very natural privilege in this case, and which would account for the association of the dedications to these two Emperors, at Clausentum.

The site of this station, since the time of Warner and Sir H. Englefield, has lost much of its particular character as described by those writers; but

^d De Cæsaribus, cap. xl. 26.

^e De Aureliano, cap. 39.

^f De Tetrico Seniore.

^g See Eutropius, lib. ix. cap. 9, and Victor, De Cæs. cap. xxxv.

it can still be identified both by its singular position on the river Itchen, and by the remains of the vallum which defended it on the land side. On the eastern side the ruins of a wall are yet visible, while in the gardens of the manor house are preserved several of the relics of architecture described by Sir Henry Englefield; and Mrs. Stuart Hall, the present possessor of the property, has collected many interesting fragments of pottery, glass beads, and various other remains, found chiefly in levelling the inner vallum. With these are also preserved several hundreds of Roman coins, extending from the time of Augustus to that of Gratian, the most numerous of which are those of the Emperor whose inscriptions are the subject of this communication.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES ROACH SMITH.

To SIR HENRY ELLIS, K. H., &c. &c.