

A SUFFOLK FIND.

G. Arrius Domitianus, in three hundred and ten, A.D.
 Centurion, Twentieth Legion, pensioned off with his "tabulae,"
 Deserved right well of his country and his Emperor Constantine
 For his work and his wounds and his service, and his twenty-five years
 in the Line.

Finished with fields and forays, and orders by word o' mouth,
 Reckoned he'd build him a Villa, pleasant and facing South,
 Stiffened by dews and dampings, battled, and scarred, and hard,
 Stood on a hill by the Ickniel Way and planned him his life's Reward.

Then gathered he serfs and workmen, measured and marked his site,
 Sank him his flint foundations and fashioned his colite.
 Mortared and chipped and levelled, timbered, and dug, and drained,
 Tiled and leaded his roof-tree to cover his head when it rained.

Worked out his rooms and his angles, passage by corridor crossed,
 Burrowed his floorings and walls for heat from his Hypocaust.
 Cut him his tessella squarings, colite, tile and slate,
 Chalk, and lias, and bricklets, flowered and ordinate.

Filled it with pots from Deva, goblets and lamps and jars.
 Bronzes and busts and bottles, and stuff from the Kanabas.
 Flagons and spoons and strigils, and silicate Samiam ware,
 Polished and glazed and scarlet; and combs for his lady's hair.

But the pride of his soldier's fancy was a vessel of Arretine,
 Rosy, and wrought and varnished, and figured in Barbotine.
 Worthy a Consul's table, the gift of a King-to-be,
 Lovingly handled and hardened and lettered with "G.A.D."

Stones from the Nidermendig he furnished, to grind his corn,
 And gat him some clay tetinæ for his darling, his latest born.
 And when it was done and finished he gloried, and set by the door
 A boulder engraved by the mason with the badge of the "Charging Boar."

And Vilbia came, and the children, and they lived, and loved and were free
 In a far-off day by the Icknield Way in Three hundred and ten A.D.
 For they farmed and they fished and they sported, and made them an
 English home,
 And seldom Domitian's thoughts flew back to the Temples and streets of
 Rome.

But he planted him pleasant gardens, and delved with his pick and spade,
 And walked in his arbour'd pathways, cunning, and truly laid ;
 And tended his British roses, and talked with his family,
 And cheered his soul with a sparkling bowl of " Vinum de Ledebure."

So he counted his season's ending, and spoke to his wife one day,
 " When I'm called by the Gods put me under the sods by the side of the
 Icknield Way.

And plant thou a stone by my ashes, and let there be graved thereon
 My name and my Legion's number, and my rank of Centurion.

And hold thou that corner-rose-plot with these monies, for ever in fee,
 For many and choice are the flowers that bloom there as garlands for me.
 And get thee Long Marcus, the Mason, to grave on a second stone,
 That the Roses around it are sacred and marked for my tomb, as mine own.

And the seed of our children's children, my Vilbia, hear me now
 Beloved, shall tend them and cherish the Roses that I endow.
 And so, when thy course is finished, and my ashes are close to thine
 May there never be lacking a rose-bud for memory, wife of mine."

So he died. And his Vilbia mourned him ; and oft, as she sat, she prayed
 To the Gods of her mighty nation, and this is the prayer she made :
 " Oh ! Holy, most Holy Spirits that watch o'er the peaceful Dead,
 Consider my husband, Arrius, friend of my board and bed.

Deign, oh Gods ! Deign to be generous to him, in the hours of night,
 That I may perchance behold him, out of the Infinite.
 And grant me, most noble Spirits, this boon of your clemency,,
 That easy and swift be my passage to the place where he may be."

And the heat of five-score summers, and the chill of a hundred snows,
 Passed. And beyond the fringe of Rome gathered her Northern foes.
 She called, and her far flung Legions trickled in from the Outer Line.
 And ever the Vandal's shadow hung o'er the threatened Palatine.

Reft of the Empire's Cohorts, robbed of her Roman men,
Woodland, garden, and mountain, meadow, and field and glen;
Open and wide lay Britain; fenceless, soft, and afraid,
Waiting the Saxon's slaughter, bared for the Norseman's blade.

Came Viking and Jute and Angle, Pict, and the Barbar horde,
Pagan and wild and cruel, wasted with fire and sword.
Murdered and raped, and stayed not to wipe their bloodied hands;
Trampled the British roses and ravaged the British lands.

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Monarchs and Governments, thrones and courts, wars, laws and brave
pageantries
Flashed and were gone; and the bells of Time clanged down the centuries.
And the dust and drift of a thousand years and half a thousand more
Covered Domitian's garden, and the sign of his "Charging Boar."

And the sticks and stones of the Villa that stood by the Icknield Way,
And the tessella floors, and the corridors, and the hypocausts, where were
they?
Carted by Monks and Barons for Abbeys and feudal halls;
Scattered, or burnt, or pillaged, or quarried for farmers' walls.

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But George Albert Durrant, of Hitcham, in the fine October days
Was ploughing a Suffolk Upland with a pair of his cross-bred bays.
He was half way along the furrow when his eye caught an oyster shell,
And "I wonder how that came there," quoth he, then his foot struck a
stone and he fell.

He picked himself up, and he grumbled, and called to his horses "Woa!"
And turned to look at the stubborn lump of flint that had used him so.
It wasn't a flint but a shiny red piece of pot, marked with "G.A.D.,"
And he scraped with his thumb, and he cried "That's a rum 'un, that
fare to belong to me!"

And he took it straight to the Vicar, did George, when his work was done,
And shewed him as well the oyster shell that he'd found lying there in the
sun.
And the Vicar looked wise, but he opened his eyes, and said, as he scrubbed
it clean,
"George, I have in my mind you've discovered a "finde," and it's figured
in Barbotine!"

So George and the Vicar went up and along, as I've heard the neighbours
say,
And prodded the plough in the sweat of their brow, the whole of a livelong
day.
And the sun shone low from a western glow on the gossamer threads in
the ridges ;
And George and the Vicar were tired and hot, and very much troubled
with midges.

But at last the Vicar's prodder came " thud " with a hollow sound
On a piece of the flint foundation of Arrius, under the ground.
Then gathered they serfs and workmen, measured and marked the site.
Set out their tapes and peggings, laid bare the colite.

And the Vicar, he left his garden to delve with his pick and spade,
And still with his digger he works like a nigger on the Villa that Arrius
made.
But the pride of George's parlour is a piece of red pottery,
Shiny and fine, from Arretine, and lettered with " G.A.D."

H. GASKELL.