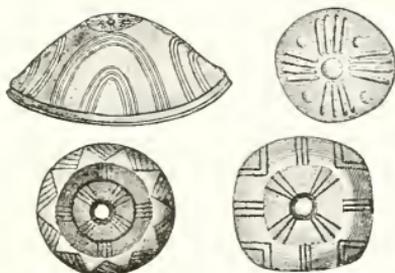


REV. W. W. SEYMOUR ON THE PRE-HISTORIC CROSS.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE late Rev. William Wood Seymour has devoted a stately volume¹ to an exposition of the significance of the cross in tradition, history, and art, reviewed by us some time ago in *The Open Court*,¹ and we believe it will be of interest to reproduce here some of its passages on the pre-Christian cross, with the accompanying illustrations.

“At Castione, near the station of Borgo San Donino, between



EARTHEN VESSELS FOUND AT CASTIONE.
(From De Mortillet's *Le Signe de la Croix*.)

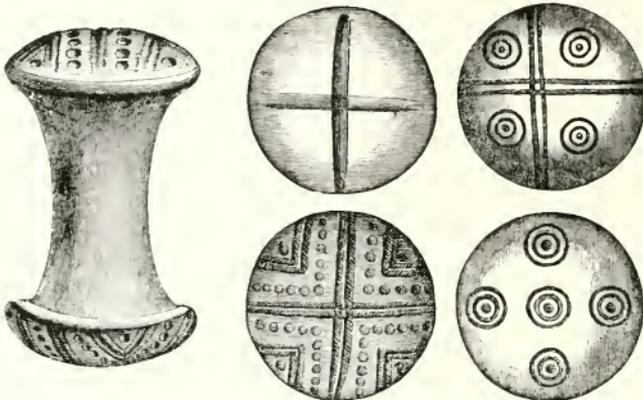
Parma and Piacenza, there is a mound upon which is a convent. Originally that mound was the bed of a lake which was filled with relics of this ancient people; among them are earthen vessels, and upon the bottoms of some were rudely engraved crosses, as represented in the accompanying engravings.

“At Villanova, near Bologna, one of their burial-places has been discovered. More than one hundred and thirty tombs have been examined. They are carefully and symmetrically constructed of boulders, over which the earth has accumulated. Within each

¹ *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

² Vol XIII., No. 1.

sepulchre was a cinerary urn containing calcined human remains, and sometimes half-melted ornaments. The urns were shaped like two inverted cones joined together, the mouth being closed with a little saucer. Near the remains of the dead were found solid double cones with rounded ends on which crosses were elaborately en-



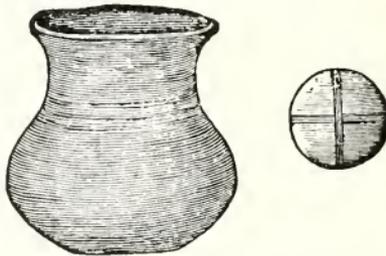
CYLINDER.

HEADS OF CYLINDERS.

Cylinders found at Villanova. (From De Mortillet's *Le Signe de la Croix*.)

graved. In the vases of double cones around their partition was a line of circles containing crosses.

“There is another cemetery at Golasecca near the extremity of Lago Maggiore. A number of tombs have been opened; they belong to the same age as those of Villanova, that of the lacustrine habitations.

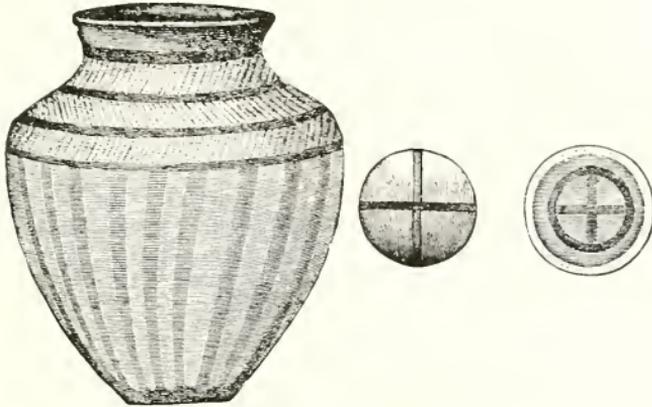


ACCESSORY VASE FOUND AT GOLASECCA.

(From De Mortillet's *Le Signe de la Croix*.)

“‘That which characterises the sepulchres of Golasecca, and gives them their highest interest,’ says M. de Mortillet, who investigated them, ‘is this,—first, the entire absence of all organic representation; we found only three, and they were exceptional, in tombs not belonging to the plateau;—secondly, the almost invari-

able presence of the cross under the vases in the tombs. When one reversed the ossuaries, the saucer lids, or the accessory vases, one saw almost always, if in good preservation, a cross traced thereon. . . . The examination of the tombs of Golasecca proves in a most convincing, positive, and precise manner, that which the *terramares* of Emilia had only indicated, but which had been confirmed by the cemetery of Villanova,—that above a thousand years



OSSUARY FOUND AT GOLASECCA.
(From De Mortillet's *Le Signe de la Croix*.)

before Christ, the cross was already a religious emblem of frequent employment.”¹

“The most ancient coins of the Gauls were circular, with a cross in the middle. That these were not representations of wheels, as has been supposed, is evident from there being but four spokes,



ANCIENT GAULISH COINS.
(From Gould's *Curious Myths*.)

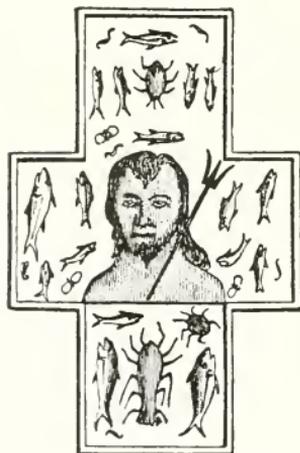
placed at right angles; and this symbol continued when coins of the Greek type took their place. The coins of the Volcæ Tectosages, who inhabited the region now known as Languedoc, were stamped with crosses, the angles of which were filled with pellets. The Leuci, who lived in the country of modern Toul, used similar devices. A coin figured in the *Revue des Numismatiques*, 1835, bears

¹De Mortillet, *Le signe de la Croix avant le Christianisme*. Paris, 1866. Chap. III., pp. 98-127. Gould, *Myths*, Vol. II., pp. 103-105.

a circle containing a cross, whose angles are occupied by chevrons. Some of the crosses are surrounded by a ring of bezants, or pearls. Near Paris, at Choisy-le-Roy, was found a Gaulish coin, the obverse bearing a head, the reverse a serpent coiled around the circumference, enclosing two birds; between them is a cross with pellets at the end of each limb, and pellets occupying the angles. Similar coins have been discovered in Loiret and elsewhere. About two hundred coins were discovered, in 1835, at Cremiat-sur-Yen, near Quimper, in an earthen urn with ashes, in a tomb, showing that the cross was used in Armorica, in the age of cremation.

“In 1850, S. Baring Gould exhumed at Pont d’Oli, near Pau, the ruins of an extensive palace, paved with mosaic. The principal

ornamentations were crosses of different varieties. The pavement of the principal room was bordered by an exquisite running pattern of vines with grapes springing from drinking vessels in the centre of the sides. Within were circles composed of conventional roses, in the middle a vast cross, measuring nineteen feet eight inches by thirteen feet. The ground work of white was filled with shell and other fish, and in the centre was a bust of Neptune with his trident. The laborers exclaimed, ‘*C’est le bon Dieu, c’est Jésus.*’ It may have been of post-Christian times, but, from the examples already given, Mr. Gould believes the cross to have been a sign well known to the ancient Gauls, and that this was their work.”¹



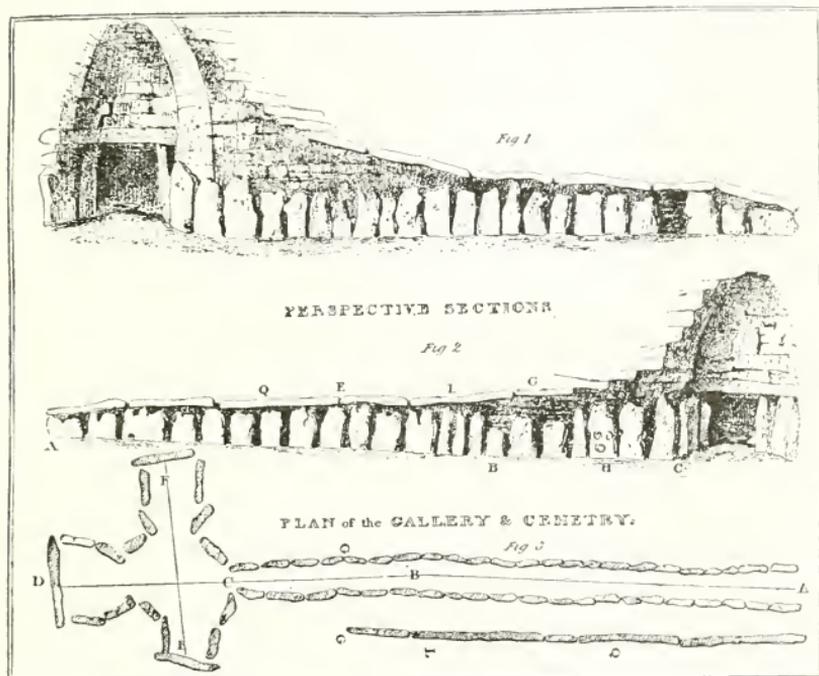
CROSS, WITH BUST OF NEPTUNE. FOUND NEAR PARIS.

(From Gould's *Curious Myths.*)

“According to enthusiastic Irish antiquarians, their cave, or rather subterranean mound, temples are more ancient than any other ecclesiastical remains in Great Britain. One of the best known is that of New Grange, near Drogheda, in the county of Meath. It is formed of vast stones covered with earth. The ground plan is cruciform, about eighty feet in length by twenty-one in the transverse. The height of the gallery, at the entrance about two feet, gradually increases until it becomes nine. The temple ap-

¹ Gould, *Myths*, Vol. II., pp. 76-86. An able writer in the *Edinburgh Review* thinks that Gould has been misled by the tresul, or trident, and that the figure is that of Proteus, not Neptune. Vol. CXXXI., p. 335.

pears to have been dedicated to Thor, Odin, and Friga.¹ Vallancy considered the inscriptions, in Ogham and symbolic characters, the most ancient in Ireland. He translated that on the right of the long arm of the cross, 'The Supreme Being,' or 'Active Principle.' On the same side, thrice repeated, are characters of a somewhat like import, signifying 'The Great Eternal Spirit.' On the 'covering stone' of the east transept is, 'To the great Mother Ops,' or 'Nature.' In front of the head of the cross is 'Chance, Fate, or Providence.' On the north stone of the west transept is, 'The



SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT AT NEW GRANGE, NEAR DROGHEDA.
(From Higgins's *Celtic Druids*.)

sepulchre of the Hero,' on a stone on the left of the gallery are 'men, oxen, and swine, probably signifying the several species of victims sacrificed at this temple in honor of universal Nature, Providence, and the names of the hero interred within.' Vallancy supposes that this tumulus was erected towards the close of the second century.² If not pre-Christian, it is at least the work of men who knew nothing of Christianity."³

¹ Wright, *Louthiana*, p. 15.

² Vallancy, "Col. Rel. Hib.," Vol. II., p. 221, quoted in Higgins, *Celtic Druids*, p. xliii.

³For full description see Fergusson's *Rude Stone Monuments*.

It is very strange that our author, the Rev. W. W. Seymour, believes that the discovery of Christ's cross on Calvary is historical. He reproduces four pictures from Veldener's *Legendary His-*



S. HELENA IN JERUSALEM.

(From Veldener's *The Legendary History of the Cross.*)



DISCOVERY OF THE CROSSES.

(From Veldener's *The Legendary History of the Cross.*)

tory of the Cross which in themselves are interesting, and maintains that the story itself as told in the legend is probable. There is no

need of refuting the legend or its various miracles; be it sufficient to say that contemporary authors of the Empress Helena know absolutely nothing of the discovery, and that the cross supposed to



TEST OF THE TRUE CROSS.

(From Veldener's *The Legendary History of the Cross.*)



S. HELENA DEPOSITS A PORTION OF THE CROSS IN JERUSALEM.

(From Veldener's *The Legendary History of the Cross.*)

have been discovered in the place and attested by miracles was a source of rich income to Cyril, a bishop of Jerusalem.