Echoes from the Past.

NOTES ON A MEDICO-MILITARY ROMAN REMAIN.

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In an interesting historical retrospect of the army surgeon in Britain, prior to the sixteenth century, which Captain Howell contributed to this Journal (vol. i., p. 111), he mentions the existence of a stone or tablet, found at Housesteads in Northumberland, evidently to the memory of a medical officer of a Roman cohort, doing duty in defence of Hadrian's Wall, which extended from the Solway to the Tyne. Recently, while looking through the papers of a deceased friend, I came across a fairly well-preserved rubbing as well as an excellent sketch of this very stone. From inquiries which I have made, it is interesting to know that the stone is still in good preservation, and in the safe keeping of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, being exhibit No. 188 on the north portion of the east wall of the museum in the Black Gate of the castle in that city. From a memorandum attached to the rubbing and bearing date 1841, it appears that this stone belonged formerly to the extensive collection of a certain Mr. George Gibson, and was brought from Housesteads in the year 1813. Housesteads yielded a peculiarly rich find of altars and other remains of the Roman occupation, being the site of the military post Borcovicus, which was the seventh from the Tyne, and the eleventh post from the Solway end of the great wall. The spot is apparently identical, in the present day, with the small town of Haltwhistle on the Newcastle and Carlisle line.

The monumental tablet is a stone measuring five feet and a half by two feet and a half. The inscription, in letters nearly three inches in height, may be expanded into the words: "Diis Manibus, Anicio Ingenuo medico ordinario Cohortis Prince Tungrorum vixit annos viginti quinque." The animal on the upper part under a semicircular wreath is a rabbit or hare. These animals were emblematical of Spain and Sicily, either of which countries might have been the birthplace of this young officer. The Tungrians formed a part of the Roman auxiliaries who served in Britain under Agricola; some historians refer to them as Belgian Gauls, but Tacitus refers to their geographical position in the words: "qui
To illustrate article by Lieut.-Colonel R. H. Firth, R.A.M.C.
primi Rhenum transgressi Gallos expulerint, nunc Tungri nunc Germani vocati sunt," from which it is legitimate to infer that they were Teutons. The first cohort of Tungrians was attached to the ninth legion, which was employed in the reigns of Vespasian and Domitian in Scotland to overcome the Caledonians and, according to Tacitus, played a conspicuous part in the hard-earned victory which Agricola obtained over Galgacus in the Grampians.

An excellent engraving of this stone is given, I believe, in Archæologia Æliana, vol. xii., p. 85, but I have not been able to verify the reference; mention, too, is made of the stone by Hodgson in his "History of Northumberland," while the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle have details recorded in their Transactions. As these various records are not readily available to all, it has occurred to me that the present opportunity should not be missed of reproducing in our Corps Journal the accompanying illustrations of this remarkable Roman remain, so peculiarly interesting to ourselves. One (fig. 1) is a copy of the drawing which has recently come into my hands, the other (fig. 2) is from a photograph taken of this stone as it now exists in the Newcastle Museum; for this latter I am indebted to Mr. Robert Blair, F.S.A., Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to whom for his courtesy and kindly interest in my inquiries I am under considerable obligation.