

difficulties. Broken stones leaving us to deal with fragments, and supply by conjecture what is lost; obliterated or obscure letters, and sometimes perhaps, errors in the original execution from the ignorance or carelessness of the workmen, create difficulties which might often drive the utmost ingenuity and patience to despair. Well may we wonder that so much has been accomplished in the interpretation of ancient inscriptions, and reasonably may we be disposed to view with indulgence the attempts made even when they appear to us to be erroneous.

The subject is one naturally attractive to the scholar though putting his attainments to a severe trial, and although working on a transcript instead of the original may in some respects involve increased uncertainty, it is in other ways a saving of time and trouble, and by a very natural division of labour it often happens that the publisher and the interpreter of an inscription are different persons. Dr. McCaul has performed his part well. His interest being awakened in the Roman inscriptions which have been found in Britain, he applied himself zealously to their study and the result is, that he has corrected various errors, cleared up many obscurities, explained some things which had seemed unintelligible, offered some very ingenious conjectures where nothing more certain could be obtained, and in many ways afforded valuable aid and guidance to the student. We shall not here attempt to select examples displaying the skill, acuteness and various resources of the author, but we will take one or two almost without selection, illustrating the kind of information derived from these inscriptions which is the foundation of their claims on our attention. Among religious inscriptions we have altars dedicated not only to the well known gods and goddesses of the Roman Mythology, but occasionally to deities otherwise unknown, belonging apparently either to the conquered people, or to the Barbarians who fought as auxiliaries in the Roman armies. Among the gods unfamiliar to the classical student we may give as an example Nodons, Nodens or Nudens, to whom inscriptions are found at a Roman villa, the remains of which were discovered at Lydney in Gloucestershire. Respecting the origin of this name nothing satisfactory has been elicited, but the identity of the deity in his symbols and his functions with *Æsculapius* seems pretty well made out, his statues found at the same place having the dog, cock and rooster entwined with serpents, and representatives of limbs having been met with, which were no doubt offerings of those who had been cured. Two legible votive tablets to the god may be supposed to have been offered on recovery from disease. There is another inscription dedicated to him and making mention of his temple, remains of which are believed to have been found at Lydney, but the meaning of this is so obscure, that we confess even our author's ingenuity has failed to give us any satisfaction. It relates to a ring, possibly, as Dr. McCaul conjectures, the subject of a wager between *Silvianus* and *Senecianus* and there is a manifest reference to the power of this god over health, but the circumstances referred to remain altogether doubtful. It is a very remarkable fact, (pointed out by Dr. McCaul,) that an ancient gold ring found in another county, bears the name of *Senecianus* and may be the one referred to, though we seem to derive no help from such a supposition in explaining the inscribed tablet.

But besides meeting with deities either new to us or appearing under a new