



Green Lane—An extension of the old Salt Way which may, just possibly, be of Roman origin.

200 A.D.

THE REIGN OF THE EAGLES

That road constituted the first major impact of Man upon the parish. Running from east to north-west it linked the garrison at Chester with the settlement at Holditch and both with Uttoxeter and the towns of the East Midlands so offering a route to London and ultimately, to Rome. Along it flowed the current of Roman provincial life clinging closely to the security offered by a main road through a forest wilderness.

Among the travellers passing through the region were those conveying salt from the salt fields of Cheshire to the settlements at Rocester and beyond. Evidence of their passage and that of their medieval successors lingers in the name of Salter's Lane whilst the unswerving line of Green Lane above Sheepwash is locally held to be evidence of a Roman origin.

Villains also abounded for, if most of the local artisans were truly 'worth their salt', a number were not. Among those must be reckoned the forgers who produced the bad money tokens unearthed in a garden at Lightwood in 1960. Buried to escape the military police sent by Probus to stamp out the practice of forgery around Caverswall and Trent Vale, the hoard was never retrieved. The fate of the coin is unknown but the thrill of a detachment of legionaries hastening through the parish in his pursuit lingers on.

The cluster of hovels hidden in the forest north of the road saw little of Roman provincial civilization consequently the hammer blows which shattered the walls of Rome were little more than whispers on the wind in Caverswall. Movement through the area, along the road, climbed to a peak of fervour and then gradually died as the military presence withdrew. Trade, travel and commerce slowly ossified, communities drew in upon themselves, languished and shrank. Bushes reached out into the cleared verges of the road, trees began to sprout and spread whilst fingers of grass rose skyward from seeds which had lodged by chance in the surface of the road. Imperceptibly silence returned with only a ribbon of vanishing road and a network of fast disappearing forest trails to speak of the transitory nature of man's first occupation.

