

RECENT ARCHÆOLOGICAL RESEARCHES IN ROME.

By J. H. PARKER, C.B.

DURING the winter of 1875-6 the Government works of excavation were suspended for some months, in consequence of the great expense caused by the inundation in the Colosseum ; but in the spring of 1876 they were resumed, and the works in the Via Sacra, which had been suspended, were continued for a time under the direction of Signor Fiorelli, and the whole of the space in front of the temple of Antoninus and Faustina was cleared out, bringing to light the remains of the steps recorded by Palladio as being there, and also showing the pavement of the old Via Sacra at the bottom of them. This clearly shows that it was continued along the western side of the Forum, *under* the existing road, but nearly 20 ft. below it, and that it passed under the arch of Septimius Severus. The paved street down the middle of the Forum must therefore be the Via Nova of the time of Augustus, which came down from the Porta Romana at the south-west corner of the summit of the Palatine, at first upon steps and then in a zigzag road ; part of the pavement of the time of the Empire at the top, near the gate, was visible in 1870, but was destroyed by Signor Rosa, in the expectation of finding earlier work under it, though nothing of any importance was found ; a small part of the pavement at the bottom also remained behind the *podium* of the temple of Vesta when first excavated in 1874, but that is not now visible.

The platform of the Basilica Julia, of the time of Augustus, on the western side of the Forum, extends from the temple of Saturn in the north, near the Tabularium, to the celebrated three columns at the south, which are therefore identified by the words of Augustus himself with the temple of Castor and Pollux. At the north end of this platform are old walls and arches of travertine, of the time of Julius Cæsar, passing from west to east in the direction which

would cross over the platform of Augustus, exactly agreeing also with the words in his will, commonly called the *Monumentum Ancyranum*. Signor Rosa has also inserted upon this platform a number of brick bases, cutting through the pavement of the third century to insert them, because he thought this must have been the original plan.

On the eastern side of the Forum, near the column of Phocas, are the two marble screen-walls, with fine sculpture of the time of Trajan and Hadrian, which commemorate the great donation of those emperors to the Roman people of the whole of their public debt to the State. These walls stand in the Comitium, towards the middle of which is the base of an equestrian statue of the fourth century, probably that of Constantine. Further to the south and at the south-east corner of the Forum are remains of the Rostrum and Temple of Julius Cæsar in a line with that of Castor, and between them are remains of the fountain of Juturna, on the spot where the miraculous horsemen watered their horses, according to the legend.

Down the centre of the Forum, by the side of the ancient street, are six brick structures, about 10 ft. high, and not much more than that square, in each of which there is a doorway. These are called by Signor Rosa the bases of gigantic columns, but they are all hollow, and such a column would go through instantly; they were probably for wine-shops, and the columns were on the line going from east to west, now occupied by the modern road, and not from north to south; a fragment of a gigantic column is still lying there under the road, which is supported by a brick vault.

In continuing the line of the Via Nazionale, where it cuts off a corner of the Quirinal Hill, at a great depth, in order to avoid the steep ascent and descent, the workmen have cut through some building of the second century of considerable importance, apparently either thermæ or some great Villa, which occupied the ground before the Thermæ of Constantine were made there. This new road is here cut down at least 20 ft. below the present level of the soil; a little further to the south an additional storey has been introduced under the villa of the family of Antonelli; and there a doorway, now in the cellars of that house, is built of stones of the time of the kings, and supposed to have been the Porta Fontinalis; but if so, it has evidently been rebuilt of the old

materials, the jambs of the doorway are of a different kind of tufa from the arch, and a brick arch of the time of Constantine has been built over it to support the weight of the house above. The remains of a Villa (?) or Thermæ (?) of the second century, found on the summit of the hill, are at a considerably higher level than that doorway. The walls of this villa are of the time of Hadrian ; and there seemed to have been a street, with shops, and staircases to the houses above. At the end of April, and in the first week in May, a very remarkable mosaic was found against the wall of a cliff right across the line of the new road, and at such a level as made it necessary to cut through it. Here was a mosaic picture of the second century against a cliff, with narrow cascades of white marble at intervals, the effect of which when the water was running over them must have been very good ; there is nothing quite like it at Pompeii, or anywhere else that is known at present. What is most singular is that there seems to be no history of any such villa or thermæ on this site before the time of Constantine, and this work is not of his time, though situated on the site of part of his Thermæ, through which the modern road will cut. Whatever this large building was, it has been partially destroyed when the great Thermæ of Constantine were built. Nothing very distinct has been made out at present ; some think they were merely ornamental constructions in the garden of a Villa ; but a lofty wall against a cliff cased with marble, and cascades at intervals, and with niches for statues, seems of more importance than this. As it is destroyed almost as fast as it is brought to light it is difficult to see what it was. Some say there was an *ambularum* or avenue between this villa and a nymphæum.

The face of the wall is ornamented with red and yellow pumice stone, and the niches with shells, as at Pompeii. Candelabra are represented in mosaic, and these divide the compartments, and on each side of them the cascade of white marble, cut into steps to give brilliancy to the water ; there are also festoons of the vine in ribbons hanging from the capitals. The mosaic picture represents cars drawn by winged figures of victory and small genii drawn by hippopotami. Under these are views of gardens, with flowers of different kinds. The name of T. AVIDIUS QUIETVS has been found on a metal pipe, and the same name has been found

in the excavations in the *Exquilæ* near the church of S. Antonio the abbot, on bronze ornaments. He appears to have been a patron of the fine arts, as ornamental works of art have been found in his garden and baths—statues of Mars, Hermes, and busts, and two fountains in marble ornamented with bas-reliefs; all works of art found here are placed in the new museum on the Capitoline Hill. Some portions of this building are to be preserved, with the approbation of Prince Rospigliosi, the proprietor of the palace to which they have hitherto belonged. The other parts are as carefully removed as is found practicable.

In making the drains and foundations of houses for the new city, a great number of works of ancient art were continually found, and remains of several buildings; these are, for the most part, destroyed very soon, but a record of them and drawings are preserved by the municipality, and published in their "Bulletino Archeologico." In the "*Exquilæ*," the old burial-ground of the time of the Republic, and afterwards public gardens, an enormous work has been done by a speculating building company; the earth has been all carried away from a space of at least half a mile square to a depth *below* what it was in the time of the Empire. This level space of ground had long been market gardens, and the price of vegetables has thus been doubled in Rome by the demolition of these gardens, which was not at all necessary. It extends from the arch of Gallienus, near the great church of S. Maria Maggiore, to near the Porta Maggiore and from the great *agger* of Servius Tullius (now almost all carried away) to the outer wall of Rome. In this space stands the fine building called Minerva Medica, which has also been cleared out to the original level. Between this and the Porta Maggiore, a very remarkable tomb has been found, the original part of which is of the time of Sylla, but it has been added to in the time of Hadrian. It is proved by numerous inscriptions to be the tomb of Statilius Taurus (who built the first stone amphitheatre in the time of Sylla) for his family and his freedmen and descendants. One of the freedmen is mentioned as having been employed in the amphitheatre. The lower part of the tomb is full of *columbaria*, or pigeon-holes to receive the cinerary urns, according to the fashion of that time, and the wall between these *columbaria* is painted with a series of small fresco pictures, beautifully exe-

cuted in the best style of art, representing the old legendary history of Rome and fitting more closely the *Aeneid* of Virgil than to any other author. These paintings must have been executed when Virgil himself was living, as he died B.C. 19, and the amphitheatre was opened B.C. 30, eleven years before his death.

In the month of June, at the *Mons Justitiæ*, near the railway station, two more parts of the great *agger* of Servius Tullius were carried away; here as in several other parts, there had evidently been a wall on each side of the *agger*, or great bank of earth. We know that there was also a wide and deep *fosse* on each side of it, doubtless because the earth was thrown up from these trenches, and not brought from a distance; a great bank of earth 50 feet high, and at least 50 feet wide at the base, faced by a wall 12 feet thick, and in which each stone was four feet long, two feet wide and deep, and a ton in weight, would be no mean defence, even now, against modern artillery. It is remarkable that the most modern inventions in the art of defence are bringing us back to the most ancient.

We have seen also that a row of houses had been built upon, against, and into, this great bank on the inner side in the first century of the Empire, and another row on the outer side in the time of King Theodoric, when there was a temporary revival in Rome. Photographs have been taken of houses of both these periods. In some of the houses of the first century fresco paintings have been found, chiefly of Pagan subjects, but a Christian chapel was also now brought to light built on the plan of the Greek cross, with a cupola in the centre, but all dug out in the earth of the *agger*, not visible externally. In this have been found fresco paintings of figures of Christ and the Apostles, and Angels fishing; also, in another part, a farm. All these paintings have been detached from the wall by Signor Principi, and will be preserved in one of the museums. But the building¹ has been

¹ I was refused permission to have a plan and section, drawings and photographs of this remarkable chapel, because the Municipality intend to publish it themselves in their "Bulletino Archeologico." There can be little doubt that this chapel, dug out in the great *agger* or bank, was made by some wealthy Christian family in the third century, for concealment in time of persecution. The

plan of the Greek cross shows that they followed the Greek Rite, and that the Roman deviation from it was not introduced until after the time of Constantine. As some members of the Municipality are bigoted Romanists, the Anglo-Catholics will watch with curiosity whether they publish *the whole truth* in this instance.

destroyed by the Municipality during the summer of 1876, to make more room for carriages in front of the railway station.

In carrying on the Via Nazionale, near the wall with paintings and mosaics before mentioned, and near the southwest corner of the Quirinal Hill, they have found the pavement of an old street between brick walls, and with a high flight of steps of travertine stone, doubtless connected with the Thermæ before mentioned.

On the Via Latina, between two and three miles from Rome, just beyond the well-known painted tombs, considerable excavations have been made by Signori Silvestrelli and Hofer; they found some of the old pavement of the road, with tombs on each side of it, in which were numerous inscriptions. These will be published shortly.

A little further on they have also found remains of *thermæ*, and a sort of cave wine-shop, with the amphoræ for the wine; this cave has a ceiling formed of tiles, with terra-cotta pipes or channels either for water or wine. About a quarter of a mile further on, and not far from the well-known Osteria del Tavolata and the Tor Fiscale, by the side of the grand arcade of the aqueducts, on a farm belonging to Prince Torlonia, they have also made fresh excavations, and have found two sarcophagi and a head of Titus. This is also on the Via Latina.

On the Via Salaria, about a mile from Rome, in the vineyard where Garibaldi was residing last winter, near the catacomb of Priscilla, a long passage cut in the tufa rock has been found, and water seems to have flown through this into a deep well; it was a branch of an aqueduct, probably the Virgo, of which another part was found and published in my photographs in 1872, half filled up with the deposit of clay left by the water which came from the muddy swamp called the fields of Lucullus.

The very curious fresco pictures in the tomb of Statilius Taurus have now been detached from the wall, and will be placed in the museum of the Municipality in the Capitol. Bad copies of them had previously been placed there.