



## Miscellanea.

---

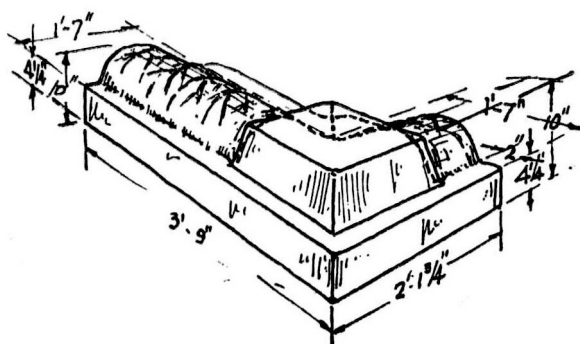
### ROMAN BURIALS ON EATON ROAD.

IN June, 1929, a new road was cut on the east side of Eaton Road, to which has now been given the name of Eccleston Avenue. At a point thirty-two feet from the main road a stone of peculiar form was revealed in the centre of the new roadway at a depth of two feet. Some days later the lower portion of a shattered urn of red ware surrounded by burnt bones and ashes was struck at a lower level in the boulder clay twenty-five feet east of Eaton Road. Most of the burial had already been removed to the tip when the writer arrived on the scene and recognised the nature of the find. From there it was collected with some difficulty and a mass of material of at least 15lbs. was handed over to the care of our Honorary Curator, Professor R. Newstead. The remains were those of a young adult, and the urn of a well-known first century type.

In the two side-walls of the new cutting thirty-seven feet east of Eaton Road, a break in the clay was observed by the writer, who lost no time in excavating a trench across the new roadway to a depth of 5ft. 6in. below the original surface. A mass of coarse rubble and cobbles two feet or more thick, bedded in grey silt, had at some time been inserted in the clay subsoil. No datable object was discovered in the silt.

Two years ago, however, a mass of similar silt had been found by the writer at a like distance from Eaton Road in cutting a trench in search of burials in a garden fifty yards

away to the north. The silt there contained part of the rim of a mortarium dated to the early second century.



Some weeks later in a trench just north of Eccleston Avenue a second stone was encountered apparently *in situ* above the rubble foundation previously explored to the south. In form it was a facsimile of the first stone, but was already broken when first found. Both stones will be preserved in the Water Tower grounds. No exact parallel to these two stones has been found in Britain and Dr. Lehner, of the Provincial Museum at Bonn, informs me that he knows of nothing similar in Germany. The most probable suggestion is that the rubble foundation supported a boundary wall or a row of tombstones and the moulded stones projecting from it at ground level served to divide the several graves. In order to test this theory further excavation in Mr. Schroder's garden a hundred yards northward was undertaken with good results. Another cremated burial in an urn of first century date and parts of two other urns were discovered. The row of burials had probably been doubled at this point as two rubble foundations five yards apart were found. Their thorough exploration was prevented by excessive rainfall.

W. J. W.

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE IN URSULINE CONVENT  
SCHOOL GROUNDS.

IN excavating a heating chamber for a new wing of this school in June last a section of a great wall eight and a half feet in thickness, with two massive buttresses, came to light. A second brass of Hadrian found by a workman, and shown to me in the street, led me to visit the site, where I found the solid ashlar being rapidly demolished with crowbar and hammer. Some of the stones were of a size unsurpassed in Roman Chester. Two mortaria stamps were obtained: VERANIUS and ORICAM . . . On the south-west side of the wall, in a bed of sand at a lower level, much first century pottery was found. The wall was constructed of huge blocks of sandstone with a filling of sandstone rubble, and rested on footings of the same material set in puddled clay, the buttresses being of similar construction on the side which sloped down to the river. Ceramic evidence fixed the date of the structure as of the first century, and the wall and buttresses presented a parallel to the exterior wall of the amphitheatre recently excavated at Caerleon, but were more monumental in character. At one end of the section exposed there had probably been an entrance to the arena spanned by a barrel vault. These were perhaps the remains so quaintly described by Ranulph Higden in his *Polychronicon*, "In this citee beeth weies under erthe with vawtes of stoonwerk wonderliche i wrought, thre chambres workes, greet stoones i-graved with olde men names there-ynne."

In the year 1737 part of a plaque of slate was found in *macello*, which most probably means in Fleshmonger's Lane, now known as Newgate Street, barely fifty yards away from the north-eastern end of the amphitheatre. It figured in bas-relief a fight between a secutor and a retiarius—one of the most popular contests of the Roman circus. An engraving of this relief from a copper-plate was published in 1743 by the Society of Antiquaries, London, at the instance of its owner, a well-known collector, Richard Mead, M.D.

(*Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. i, No. 65). It is not impossible that the plaque had once formed part of the decoration of the amphitheatre.

As soon as it was realised that the remains were probably a section of the external wall of an amphitheatre, an attempt was made by Mr. P. H. Lawson, F.S.A., to plot its extension northward on the assumption that its dimensions corresponded more or less with those of the contemporary structure at Caerleon. By a fortunate coincidence two trenches were opened for the boundary walls of a new road across the site, and it was seen that the colouration of the subsoil corresponded with the plotting. Where the arena had been, the filled-in soil was black, where the seating bank had stood, the soil was red from the disintegrated sandstone. A test-hole on the presumed site of the exterior wall showed an error in the plotted structure of not more than one foot. The great stones of the wall had long since disappeared, but the rubble foundations were still *in situ*, identical in every respect with those previously explored. Outside the wall were the well-preserved remains of the roadway surrounding the amphitheatre.

W. J. W.

