

# ON RECENT DISCOVERIES IN NEWGATE STREET,

BY

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IN the autumn of 1874 I received information from my friend, Mr. F. A. Burt, that in the course of works then under his superintendence in Newgate Street a portion of the City wall had been exposed, and that he had observed indications of other walls with foundations of a massive character. Soon afterwards some correspondence appeared in the daily papers from the pen of Mr. E. P. Loftus Brock, F.S.A. Secretary to the British Archæological Association, in which the remains discovered were described as relics of Roman London. A paper by this gentleman, accompanied by illustrations, and one by Mr. T. Morgan, F.S.A. entitled "Roman Remains at Newgate," has since been published in the *Journal of the Association*.\* In both these communications the authors give various reasons for their opinions, and view the discoveries with interest from the illustrations they would afford, if proved to be of the high antiquity assigned to them, to the vexed question as to the date of the western extension of the City wall, the precise period when Newgate was erected, and the relation which the present thoroughfare would have to the Watling Street of Roman times.

From the date of Mr. Burt's communication to the time when the excavations were completed I paid constant visits to the works, and on more than one occasion had the benefit of the lengthened experience in such matters of Mr. Alfred White, F.S.A. and Mr. John G. Waller.†

Our investigations, however, led us to form a different opinion as to the antiquity of the remains, and eventually we came to the con-

\* *Journal of the British Archæological Association*, vol. xxxi. p. 76, and vol. xxxii. p. 388.

† See Mr. Waller's remarks on these Discoveries in *Journal of Archæological Institute*, vol. xxxii. p. 327

clusion that nothing had been discovered which could in any way be associated with the Roman occupation of the city either in relation to the wall itself or the extensive range of buildings which had evidently occupied the site.

The excavations were situate at the western end of Newgate Street, at the corner adjoining Giltspur Street, and at but a short distance from the site of the old "Compter," removed a few years since. The remains were first observed in clearing away the cellars of the houses which separated this building from Newgate Street and covered a considerable area. They were on the north side of the street, and appeared at a short distance from the surface. The City wall ran behind the houses, forming at this point an angle, whence it branched off beneath Christ's Hospital in the direction of Aldersgate. Adjoining the wall was a long arched vault or passage, and upon the City side of this a well, approached by a doorway leading to a flight of perhaps a dozen steps. This staircase was arched over, being covered by what is technically termed a bonnet arch. In addition, there were walls and cross walls several feet in thickness, all extremely massive, and with foundations of great strength and durability. These walls were chiefly composed of ragstone, oolite, chalk, and firestone, with an occasional brick or tile, and the vaulted passage of two rings of stonework formed by squared blocks of large dimensions. The width of the passage was from 7 to 8 feet, the stones composing the arch measuring from 2 to 3 feet wide and nearly 2 feet high. The side-walls of the passage were faced with carefully squared blocks laid in little, if any, mortar, and of immense size, some of them being from 4 to 5 feet long by 2 in height, and all such as would be selected in the construction of a building devoted to uses requiring more than ordinary strength. At the junction of the passage with the external wall the outer facing of the arch was visible ; it had been carefully worked, and upon it appeared a hollow chamfer of a decided medieval type, a circumstance which alone strongly militates against the Roman theory. The mortar also was such as may be usually found in medieval buildings, but presented none of the characteristics either of Roman mortar or Roman concrete. Nor were there any such unmistakeable substances found attached to the tiles, the rubble, or the stonework which made up the section of the City wall. Roman mortar is not easily mistaken ; so hard and so durable is it that it is frequently easier to break the stones themselves than the cement which

holds them together. In the Roman walls found at the erection of the Cannon Street Railway Station so solid was the masonry that it was with the greatest difficulty that sufficient could be removed for the introduction of the new brickwork, and much of that enormous building rests upon foundations such as no modern architect could improve. The preparation of Roman mortar required considerable care. Its composition is referred to in the writings of Vitruvius\* as a matter of importance. This author wrote in the first century, and, in treating of the art of building as practised by the Romans, describes, under the title of *Emplecton*, walls constructed of two faces of masonry filled in with cement, which cement consisted of pounded bricks or tiles, rough stones or flints, and lime well incorporated, and he goes on to observe that there are few places which will not furnish materials with which may be constructed most strong and durable walls. In good descriptions of work there were sometimes layers of cross stones, *diatoni*, placed at intervals in regular courses, and of sufficient size to extend through the entire thickness of the wall from side to side, and so act as girders to bind the whole together. In inferior work, and where these binding courses were dispensed with, *diamicton* was the term employed; in other respects its character was the same—viz. external walls of masonry or brickwork, with the centre filled in with concrete rubble.

Pliny also treats of the composition of mortar and of concrete.† He is careful to preserve the proportions of lime and sand, and adds the observation that if one-third be made up of broken earthenware it becomes more solid and durable than any like substance. Such mortar may be at once recognised by its salmon-coloured hue, owing to the quantity it contains of pounded brick or tile, a feature which led Fitzstephen the Chronicler,‡ writing in the reign of Henry II. to speak of that used in the Roman foundations of the Tower of London as having

\* L'Architettura di M. Vitruvio Pollione in Napoli, ed. 1758, book viii.

† C. Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiæ, liber xxxv. 47. Quid non excogitavit ars? fractis testis utendo sic, ut firmitus durent tuis calce addita quæ vocant Signina, quo genere etiam pavimenta excogitavit. The "Opus Signinum" took its name from Signia in Italy, celebrated for its tiles.

‡ "Habet ab oriente arcam Palatinam, maximam ex fortissimam, cujus et area et muri a fundamento profundissimo exurgunt; cæmento cum sanguine animalium temperato." *De situ et nobilitate Londini*. This description, as remarked by Mr. Roach Smith, is as inapplicable to Norman mortar as it is characteristic of the Roman.

been tempered with the blood of beasts. It is possible that this test of colour may not be infallible, but, so far as I am aware, in all descriptions of undoubted Roman work in London, reference is made to the presence of this particular kind of mortar. In a clay district bricks and tiles would naturally be plentiful, and among the ruins of Roman London they usually appear in profusion. Their appearance in masonry of unquestioned antiquity is frequent enough. In the walls at Cannon Street, in the buildings in Thames Street, the old sewer in Knight-riding Street, and in the structures found a few years since in Bucklersbury, were numerous illustrations of their use. Examples of uniformity of construction have been observed at these places resembling in all particulars work of similar age existing in Rome itself.

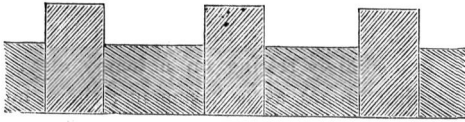
In the foregoing we note a form of building which finds ample illustration both in Gaul and Britain. With us, Richborough Castle is a notable example, as are other of the fortresses erected for the protection of the Saxon shore, not to speak of extensive remains preserved in other parts of England. The style was one of the last introduced into this country. Its application was all but universal, and was probably kept up long after the Roman occupation. The practice of the arts would be but little affected by the withdrawal of the legions, and accordingly in many of our early buildings we find illustrations of different forms introduced into this country by the architects of Rome.

Chester provides almost the only exception to the prevailing rule. Its walls are cited by Mr. Roach Smith, F.S.A.\* as affording an example of civic fortification not exceeded in antiquity by that of any Roman mural remains in this country. One reason for this is the absence of the alternating courses of stones and tiles which characterise the walls of Wroxeter, Colchester, Verulam, York, Lincoln, Caerleon, and other towns, and a certain accordance in style with work known to be of earlier date. This deviation at Chester has sometimes led to the opinion that no portions of its Roman walls are yet extant, whereas in the solid masonry of which they are composed and the method adopted in their construction the contrary is shown to be the case.

In places where tiles were not accessible the fashion was still adhered to by the use of such materials as were at hand. At Silchester the bonding-courses are of large flat stones, and at Caerwent, where the walls are constructed from the limestone of the locality, we find the

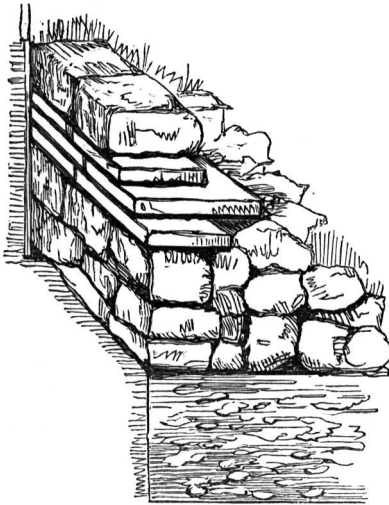
\* Chester: its Roman Remains. *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. vi. p. 28.

bonding courses of red sandstone, which, contrasting with the other, would, when fresh, produce the usual appearance of tiles. The Pharos at Dover presents an interesting illustration of how the masons, having run short of the tiles which were there so plentifully used, hewed pieces of the Folkestone rock into the form of tiles and inserted them instead. The frequent occurrence, too, of ridge or roof tiles among those used for the bonding-courses, indicates how the practice was but one of fashion, and might belong to any period.



The portion of the City wall recently removed in Camomile Street, Bishopsgate, affords one of the best illustrations which we have of the manner in which the tiles were laid. In this case their use was as much for ornament as imparting strength to the ashlar facing. They did not extend through the entire thickness of the wall as did the *diatoni* of Vitruvius, but simply appeared upon the facing in the

manner indicated by the accompanying woodcuts, viz. two or three rows placed one above the other in the form best known as "header and stretcher," or Flemish bond.



previous to their commencing the work; hence the regularity of the plan, uniformity of execution, and the massiveness of structure.\* On the

\* *Archæologia*, vol. xxx. p. 522.

10th February, 1842, he communicated to the Society of Antiquaries of London a description of certain foundations discovered in the course of excavations for building the French Protestant church at the east end of Bull and Mouth Street, Aldersgate Street, in December, 1841. The portion of wall exposed to view ran east and west, and its continuation under the present pavement indicates the exact spot where stood the entrance into the City in this direction, this being the northern gate, until about a century ago, when Aldersgate, which had sustained material damage in the Great Fire of 1666, was taken down. At the depth of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the present surface, immediately resting on a loamy clay, was found a layer of angular flint stones as a basement; these, no doubt, were closely rammed down. This mass is now infiltrated by an unctuous brown clay, probably the effects of percolation from the circumjacent earth; these flints are continued to the height of 1 foot 6 inches; above which are placed layers of angular uncut stones, imbedded in grouting or mortar used by the Romans in the construction of buildings intended to be permanent. This stone is chiefly the Kentish ragstone or green sandstone of geologists, abundant in the neighbourhood of Maidstone, interspersed with dark brown ferruginous sandstone, an upper division of the same geological series. This portion extends in height 4 feet 6 inches, and is covered by two courses of tiles laid horizontally; these tiles are  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in thickness, and about 18 inches by 12 inches square, and are imbedded in the same kind of mortar or grouting which has been mentioned. Above these tiles is another portion of wall constructed of the ragstone, only extending in height 2 feet 6 inches; over this are two courses of tiles, surmounted by another course of Kentish ragstone, the pieces of which it is composed being smaller in size than those below, but constructed in a similar manner, and terminating 18 inches under the present pavement. This foundation wall is about 10 feet in height, and gradually becomes narrower in the different ascending stages, the flint basement being  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet in width, the first division of the wall above the flints 9 feet, the next part above the tiles 7 feet, the next stage decreasing, until at the present level it is only 6 feet in width." In this description by Mr. Saull no reference is made to the facing of the wall; the squared blocks being absent on either side probably accounts for the difference in the width, which is usually about 8 feet. About four years ago excavations were in progress at the other end of Bull and Mouth

Street, and the City wall was again disclosed. Some 70 or 80 feet of it was uncovered, and this differed but little in structure to the portion described by Mr. Saull.\* Through the kindness of the late Mr. Thomas Renton, Surveyor to Christ's Hospital, I had the opportunity of inspecting the wall as it was removed. It was his opinion that the fabric altogether was of a later date than the Roman age. The blocks of chalk and ragstone had been embedded with but little care in a badly-made mortar, very different from that usually found in Roman masonry. The lime, he told me, appeared to have been thrown in in splashes, and with but little mixture with the sand, which had clearly been obtained from the locality.

One of the earliest references to London Wall is that mentioned by Fitzstephen, who speaks of a wall having once existed on the river bank, but which had in his time been long since subverted through the ebbing and flowing of the fish-abounding Thames. Indications of this wall have been discovered, and in it illustrations of Roman workmanship. Comparatively early as it is, this wall nevertheless belonged to a late period of the Roman occupation, from the circumstance of its having been to a great extent constructed from the remains of buildings also of Roman date. It was the discovery of its foundations, some years ago, that led Mr. Roach Smith to the opinion that the ancient city was inclosed by a mural defence on the riverside as well as on the others. "The workmen," writes Mr. Smith,† "employed in excavating for sewerage in Upper Thames Street, advanced without impediment from Blackfriars to the foot of Lambeth Hill, where they were obstructed by the remains of a wall of extraordinary strength, which formed an angle at Lambeth Hill and Thames Street. Upon this wall the contractor for the sewer was obliged to excavate to the depth of about 20 feet, and the consequent labour and delay afforded me an opportunity for examining the construction and course of the wall. The upper part was generally met with at the depth of about 9 feet from the level of the present street, and 6 feet from that which

\* In the illustration given by Mr. Saull, the bonding-courses are represented as extending through the entire thickness of the wall. It is of course impossible now to say whether the drawing is accurate in this respect. The description, however, and measurements given harmonise in essential characteristics with those recorded in all other examinations of the City wall from Tower Hill to Aldersgate.

† Illustrations of Roman London. C. R. Smith, F.S.A. 1859, p. 19.

marks the period of the Great Fire of London; and, as the sewer was constructed to the depth of 20 feet, 8 feet of the wall in height had to be removed. In thickness it measured from 8 to 10 feet. It was built upon oaken piles, over which was laid a stratum of chalk and stones; and upon this a course of hewn sandstones, each measuring from 3 to 4 feet by 2 and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet, cemented with the well-known compound of quicklime, sand, and *pounded tile*. Upon this solid substructure was laid the body of the wall, formed of ragstone, flint, and lime, bonded at intervals with courses of plain and curved-edged tiles. This wall continued, with occasional breaks, where at some remote time it had been broken down, from Lambeth Hill as far as Queenhithe. On a previous occasion I had noticed a wall precisely similar in character in Thames Street, opposite Queen Street.

“One of the most remarkable features of this southern wall was the circumstance of many of the large stones which formed the lower part being sculptured and ornamented with mouldings denoting their use in the friezes or entablatures of edifices at some period antecedent to the construction of the wall. Fragments of sculptured marble which had also decorated buildings, and parts of the foliage and trellis-work of an altar or tomb of good workmanship, had also been used as building material. In this respect the wall resembles those of many of the ancient towns on the Continent, which were partly built out of the ruins of public edifices, of broken altars, sepulchral monuments, and such materials, proving their comparatively late origin, and showing that even the ancients did not at all times respect the memorials of their ancestors and predecessors, and that our modern vandalism sprang from an old stock.”

In some recent correspondence Mr. Smith tells me of his examination of the walls of many of the Roman towns in France, and how impressed he was with the very similar coincidence in the wall of London. The interesting sculptures from Sens were taken from the town wall, and others from Dijon and Bordeaux. At Bourges and Perigueux the remains of temples and other public edifices, columns, pilasters, friezes, entablatures, and of large and decorated sepulchral monuments, altars, &c., which have been taken out of the walls, constitute mainly the museums of those towns. As those in London, they point to periods of overthrow and of restoration, of a wide destruction of the towns, and of a rebuilding of the walls. One of the most extraordinary and extensive collections of ancient monuments used for



building the city walls occurred at Narbonne, when the Roman walls in the time of Francis I. were pulled down and the present walls erected ; the tasteful architect saved the sculptures and inscribed stones and placed them high out of harm's way in the new walls, where they have been saved but never fully examined and published.

In the remains at Newgate Street not a single illustration of Roman mortar has been forthcoming. On the contrary, it is unusually white, and lacks the hardness and durability which characterises Roman concrete, even in cases where the pounded tile is absent. As regards the presence of bonding-tiles in that portion of the wall which has been removed, the fact is in no way an evidence of high antiquity. Their use might well have been kept up long after the Roman occupation, and it is possible that in extending the City boundaries, which naturally would be necessary not only during the four centuries of Imperial rule but in that longer period of time for which we have to account, viz. from the departure of the Romans to the coming of the Normans, the form and fashion would keep in force, and in extending or continuing the City wall its original character would be retained and imitated as far as possible. The extent of the area inclosed is one of the strongest arguments against the great antiquity of the wall. Its circumference, according to Pennant, was 3 miles 165 feet. This would have inclosed a city equal to two-thirds the size of Imperial Rome. Two square miles would have been thus occupied, whereas the area of the eternal city embraced but three. Again, London was not the only important city in Roman times. York was the seat of government, and there were besides Canterbury, Chester, Lincoln, Gloucester, Colchester, and other places, yet none of these occupied a site equal to one square mile.

At a recent meeting of the Society at Christ's Hospital, Mr. A. White F.S.A. went very fully into the early history of this locality, and adduced many reasons in support of the opinion that the wall at Newgate was outside the Roman city. He remarked that within the space east of Walbrook the streets or ways ran straight and crossed each other at right angles, as was usual in Roman towns, but immediately we passed to the west of Walbrook this arrangement ceased, and we find the street at once takes a more northerly direction for some distance, but afterwards regains its westerly course to Ludgate, and this may be termed the western highway. There is every reason to believe that the Watling Street along which we pass in the early part of this route

is a part of and joins the Great Watling Street, which runs through England towards the north-west, and that the present Holborn and Oxford Street are part of the way which connected these two Watling Streets. One branch which passed through Ludgate could not have joined these two streets, but if we can render it probable that another arm ran off northward to Newgate the difficulty vanishes. In London, or indeed any other ancient town, it is very important to investigate the limits of divisions like the wards of London; their boundaries are very ancient and unchangeable, and probably date back even to the days of Roman occupation, and commonly such limits ran along the course of a highway. To the west of Roman London was situate an important castle, called in later times Castle Baynard, and like the famous fortress to the east of Roman London, which possessed the district of Tower Ward, the owner of this castle held the ward of Castle Baynard. Towards the Thames, and as far as our way through Ludgate, this ward consists of a nearly rectangular district; but when the eastern boundary reaches the present St. Paul's churchyard at its south-eastern corner it is deflected towards the north-west, running diagonally through the centre of the present cathedral, thence through what was the site of Newgate Market to the north-end of Warwick Lane, and if a highway formed the boundary we have a good connecting way between the two Watling Streets which would pass through Newgate. This would then be the highway from Roman London to the north-west of England, but curiously the western boundary of Castle Baynard ward runs along highways used to the present day, viz. St. Andrew's Hill (which was also the way from the ancient Wardrobe), Creed Lane, Ave Maria Lane, and Warwick Lane, and this line would appear to be an important junction of the great western fortress with the military way of Watling Street. Another reason which would render this district inadmissible with a Roman town was the existence of a large cemetery on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral; but if we had such a branching of an extra-mural highway as is suggested it would be the locality generally chosen by the Romans as a place for burial. The ancient church of St. Paul's was of small dimensions before the fire of 1087, and probably occupied the site of the present choir, and, as records \* inform us that ways were stopped up when the more magnificent Norman church was built, we have another indirect proof of the existence of our north-western branch of Watling Street, and a good reason for the ward boundary running through the present cathedral.

\* Stowe's *Survey*, p. 30; Thom's edition, p. 14.

The stoppage of the ancient thoroughfares caused by the rebuilding of St. Paul's is thus described by Stowe: "By means of this increase of the church territory, but more by inclosing of ground for so large a cemetery or churchyard, the high and large street stretching from Aldegate in the east until Ludgate in the west was in this place so crossed and stopped up that the carriage through the City westward was forced to pass without the said churchyard wall on the north side, through Paternoster Row, and then south down Ave Maria Lane, and again west through Bowyer Row to Ludgate; or else out of Cheepe, or Watheling Street, to turn south, through the old Exchange, then west through Carter Lane, again north up Creed Lane, and then west to Ludgate; which passage by reason of so often turning was very cumbersome and dangerous both for horse and man; for remedy whereof a new gate was made and so called, by which men and cattle, with all manner of carriages, might pass more directly (as afore) from Aldegate through West Cheape by Paules; on the north side through St. Nicholas Shambles and Newgate Market to Newgate; and from thence to any part westwarde over Oldbourne Bridge, or turning without the gate into Smithfielde, and through Iseldon to any part north and by west."\*

In addition to the cemetery on the site of St. Paul's, burials have been observed still further eastward, viz. at Bow Lane and Queen Street, Cheapside.† In Cornhill, to the north of Lombard Street, there was a place of sepulture. In Dr. Woodward's well-known letter to Sir Christopher Wren the writer describes interments in connection with a tessellated pavement on the City side of the wall in Camomile Street. Urns were found containing ashes and burnt bones, a lachrymatory of blue glass, and a coin of Antoninus Pius. The burials beneath the pavement show them to be of earlier date, and that the site was extra-mural at the time of deposition. Within the last few months a coped stone of a marble tomb‡ has been discovered near to the west door of St. Helen's church, Bishopsgate; associated with it was a coin of Constantine Junior,§ A.D. 317-340. It is not yet proved

\* Stowe's *Survey*, p. 30.

† Roman Antiquities recently discovered on the site of the National Safe Deposit Company's premises, Mansion House, 1873, page 50.

‡ Now in the Guildhall Museum.

§ *Obverse*, CONSTANTINVS . IVN . C. Head of Constantine Junior to the right. *Reverse*, GLORIA EXERCITVS, two soldiers with standards; in the exergue TR . P.

whether this interesting relic is a memorial of an interment on the site, or whether the marble fragment had been simply brought to the spot as building material; future excavation can alone determine this, but the discovery is worthy of record. All these sites are within the present line of wall, and, to a great extent, they circumscribe the limits of the ancient city. The law of the Twelve Tables did not allow of burial either within the walls, or even in the space known as the *Pomærium*. “*Hominem mortuum in urbe ne sepelito neve urito,*” writes Cicero.\* In the reign of Hadrian it was enacted that anyone found guilty of burying a body within the city would be fined 40 aurei—about 30*l*. There were doubtless attempts to evade the law, but it nevertheless held good for centuries after the introduction of Christianity. It was confirmed by succeeding Emperors, and it is not until long after the time of Constantine that a recognised change is recorded.

In an admirable paper by the late Mr. Arthur Ashpitel, F.S.A.—the result of careful studies in Rome—as to the origin of crypts in Christian churches, this subject is well discussed. He quotes the permission given by the Council of Braga, A.D. 563, for men to be buried in the churchyard in cases of necessity, but on no account within the walls of the church. The desire, however, to lay their bones under a holy roof so grew on men that a council at Mayence “decided that no one should be buried in the church but bishops, abbots, worthy priests, or faithful laymen;” and at last we find the Council of Meaux “(Meldense) leaves it to the bishops and presbyters to settle who should be buried in churches and who should not.”†

From the foregoing we see the nature of the difficulties which beset us when we attempt to fix a date for the erection of the wall. Stowe ascribes it to the time of Constantine. Maitland ‡ fixes it some years later, viz. in the reign of Theodosius. It is evident, however, that the wall as we know it cannot belong to either period, but to one succeed-

\* *De Legibus*, 1-2.

† “On the Origin and Development of the use of Crypts in Christian Churches from the earliest periods.” *Transactions of Royal Institute of British Architects*, Session 1859-60.

‡ On the authority of Ammianus Marcellinus, the passage runs, “*instaurabat urbes et præsidiaria castra limites que vigiliis tuebatur et pretenturis.*” This oft-quoted reference is the only one worth consideration, but its application is rather to a restoration of the defences in the year A.D. 379 than to the erection of an inclosing wall. The Tower was a detached fortress, and there were of course others of like character.

ing the Roman occupation. It could well have been erected at any time prior to the Norman Conquest, and the most that can be said of it is that it was constructed after the Roman manner, and on a model which finds ample illustration abroad among similar forms of building belonging to the latest period of Roman architecture.

Through the kindness of Mr. J. B. Monckton, F.S.A. Town Clerk, I have had the opportunity of searching among the City records, and the result is the discovery of many references which point to the conclusion that the foundations disclosed are those of Newgate, and relics of that building when first adapted to the purposes of a gaol. The gate is not mentioned prior to the Norman Conquest; the first reference is that quoted by Mr. H. T. Riley, M.A. in his "Memorials of London Life." It is to be found in the Pipe Rolls 34 Henry II. 1188, when the sum of 66 shillings and 8 pence was paid for the land on which the gaol was to be built. The Court of Exchequer was established by William the Conqueror, and in these rolls—the great rolls of this Court—are preserved most valuable accounts of the royal and public expenditure. The erection therefore of a gaol is just such an event as would naturally be mentioned. This reference, unnoticed by historians, serves to illustrate the tradition quoted by Stowe in respect to Newgate. Howel in his *Londinopolis* calls it Chamberlains Gate, but gives no authority; the term doubtless originated in the fact of the gate being a prison, and so connected with the administration of justice in the city, for at the period of which Howel writes it was the practice for the office of mayor, chamberlain, and coroner to be held by one and the same person.\* In early times it was usual to employ the gates as prisons; for example, Cripplegate is thus referred to in the reign of Henry I. "in prisona nostra de Criplesgate." This gate was rebuilt in 1244 and again in 1491.

In 1399, royalty it appears transferred the management of the gaols and gates of the City to the corporation, for there is a charter to the citizens in the reign of Henry IV. granting the custody of Newgate, Ludgate, and all other gates and posterns of the city. Strange is it that after a lapse of nearly five centuries the control of the City prisons has again reverted to the government!

About the year 1414 a great change was contemplated with regard to Newgate; so disgraceful and loathsome was its condition that no less than sixty-four prisoners died, as did also the keeper of the gate. At

\* *Liber Albus*.

Ludgate also the keeper fell a victim to the bad air and want of proper accommodation. The want of room and the sad condition of the prisoners attracted the pity of the charitable Sir Richard Whittington, and he determined to rebuild the gate. For this all sorts of dates are given by historians. Pennant says the executors of Whittington rebuilt the gate out of the means which he bequeathed, and that this was done in the year 1412. Whittington's death took place in 1422, some say in 1425, others in 1442. There is a will preserved at Guildhall, but it is brief, and simply refers to city property. It is not complete, for it in no way deals with the property and charities which we know were bequeathed to the citizens. Whittington was a great favourite with King Henry V., so much so that he was appointed supervisor for alterations in the nave at Westminster Abbey, and there is an order from this monarch to the effect that there be no building upon or pulling down in the city without Sir Richard Whittington's advice. He evidently commenced the work at Newgate himself, but did not live to complete it. Accordingly, application was made to Henry VI. for leave to comply with the provisions of Whittington's will. The royal licence is entered of record at Guildhall, and it also occurs in the Patent Rolls of the period. It reads as follows:—

[Patent Roll, 1 Henry VI. part 4, m. 31.]

Rex omnibus ad quos &c. salutem. Sciatis, quod de avasamento et assensu consilii nostri, concessimus et licenciam dedimus, pro nobis et heredibus nostris, quantum in nobis est dilectis nobis Johanni Coventre, Johanni Carpenter, Johanni White et Willielmo Grove executoribus testamenti Ricardi Whityngtone nuper Civis et Merceri Civitatis nostre Londonie defuncti, quod ipsi in complementum ultime voluntatis predicti Ricardi gaolam nostram de Neugate in Civitate nostra predicta una cum porta ejusdem gaole prosterni, et unam aliam gaolam sufficientem ibidem cum bonis ejusdem Ricardi pro salva custodia prisonariorum nostrorum et heredum nostrorum reedificari facere possint, absque impeticione nostri aut eorundem heredum nostrorum, Justiciariorum, officiariorum, seu ministrorum nostrorum, vel heredum nostrorum quorumcumque. Concessimus eciam et licenciam dedimus, de avasamento et assensu predictis, pro nobis et dictis heredibus nostris, quantum in nobis est, dilectis nobis Maiori et Communitati Civitatis nostre predictae, quod ipsi omnes prisonarios infra gaolam predictam ad presens existentes remove, et tam illos quam omnes alios prisonarios qui per auctoritatem nostram vel dictorum heredum nostrorum custodie sue decetero committentur in alio loco sufficienti et congruo infra Civitatem predictam quousque predicta gaola de Neugate reedificata fuerit, poni facere et custodiri possint absque impeticione nostri, vel dictorum heredum nostrorum, Justiciariorum,

officiariorum, sue ministrorum nostrorum vel eorumdem ministrorum nostrorum quorumcumque. In cujus rei testimonium has literas nostras fieri fecimus patentes. Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium xij die Maij.

per breve de privato sigillo.\*

(*Translation.*)

The King, to all to whom, &c., Greeting. Know ye, that with the advice and assent of our Council we have granted and do give licence, for us and our heirs, as much as in us lies, to our beloved John Coventre, John Carpenter, John White, and William Grove, executors of the testament of Richard Whityngton, late citizen and mercer of our City of London, deceased, that they, in fulfillment of the last will of the aforesaid Richard, may cause our gaol of Neugate in our City aforesaid, together with the gate of the same gaol, to be pulled down, and another sufficient gaol there, with the goods of the same Richard, for the safe custody of the prisoners of us and of our heirs, to be rebuilt, without hindrance of us or of the same our heirs, our justices, officers, or ministers, or of any of our heirs whatsoever. We have granted also and given licence, with the advice and assent aforesaid, for us and our said heirs, as much as in us lies, to our beloved the Mayor and Commonalty of our City aforesaid, that they may remove all prisoners at present existing within the gaol aforesaid; and, as well those as all other prisoners who by the authority of us, or of our said heirs, shall henceforth be committed to their custody, in an other place sufficient and fitting within the aforesaid City, until the aforesaid gaol of Neugate shall be rebuilt, shall cause to be placed and kept, without hindrance of us or our said heirs, our justices, officers, our ministers, or of the same our ministers whatsoever. In witness whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent. Witness myself at Westminster the twelfth day of May in the first year of our reign.

By writ of privy seal.

We have here sufficient to indicate the extent of the alterations. Now, presuming that the foundations discovered at so short a distance from the surface to have been of Roman origin, they would not have been entirely removed, nor would a massive building, adapted to the requirements of a gaol, and constructed with the care and expense intended by Whittington, have been utterly destroyed—there would have been something left to indicate the two styles of work, viz. Roman masonry and that of fifteenth-century architects. With the exception, however, of comparatively recent work, for example, that subsequent to the Great Fire of 1666, all clearly belongs to one and the same period. The well, also, is an illustration of this. It evidently was connected with the water supply of the gate. No one would assign it to Roman times, and no mediæval architect would sink a well in a site involving the necessity of cutting away Roman walls. Several

\* See Corporation Records, letter-book K, fol. 13, Crowmer, Mayor.

springs are known to have risen in this locality, and their presence may have led to the construction of the well, but we observed that it had been carefully puddled at the bottom, therefore it may have been simply used as a cistern in which to store the water required by the occupants of the gate. In early times conduits were the only means by which water could be obtained by the inhabitants of the city. There were conduits attached to Newgate, Cripplegate, Aldgate, and others. In 1436 appears a grant to one Thomas Knolles of water for the supply of the prisons both of Ludgate and Newgate; and in 1474, in the mayoralty of Sir R. Drope, an order was issued for the pipes attached to the conduit, which ran from the latter to Aldgate, to be looked to and repaired.

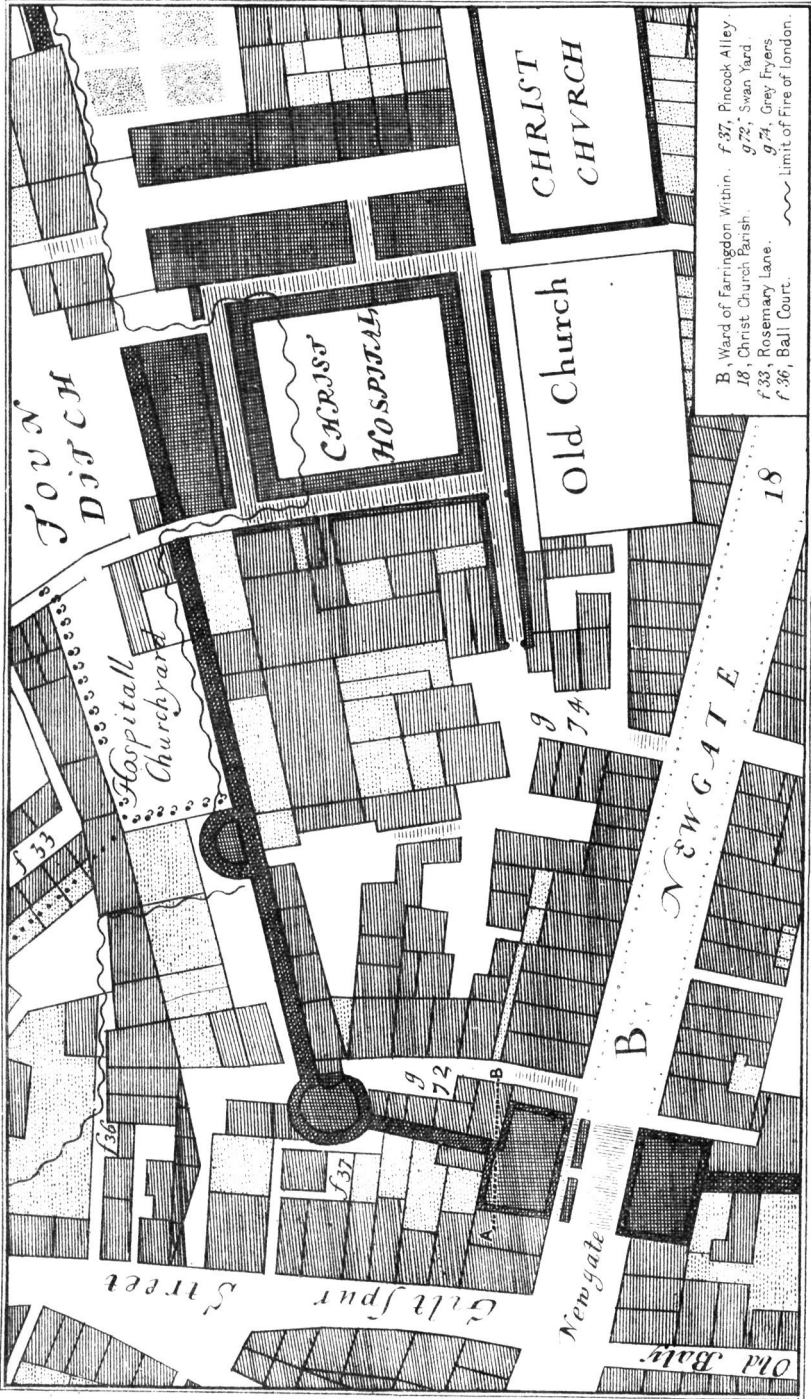
The rebuilding of the gate is thus quaintly referred to in the chronicle of the Grey Friars:—

“This yere Newgate was new made by Master Richard Whittington and he died the same yere.”

Its position in the reign of Queen Elizabeth is indicated on Aggas's map, but it is in the valuable plan published in 1677, by the sworn surveyors, Ogilby and Morgan, that its situation is most accurately shown. This plan is preserved at Guildhall, and I am enabled, by the kindness of my friend Mr. W. H. Overall, F.S.A. to illustrate these observations by a facsimile of that portion of the map which includes the locality referred to. So accurate is it, that, had it been necessary to have prepared a ground plan of the recent excavations, it would have been difficult to obtain one which would indicate more clearly than does this the position of the discoveries made. It is at the angle where the building abuts upon the City wall that the vault or passage way was seen. South of this a break will be observed in that portion of the gate which defines the way for foot-passengers. This space probably marks the line where the subway crossed the street. Its length has not been definitely ascertained. Some 30 or 40 feet have been explored, and, when constructing the arches to support the present pavement, Mr. Burt informs me that he could see that this passage, which was nearly 8 feet high, continued its course beneath the street. It was, in all probability, but an underground connection between the towers of the ancient prison.

In 1555-6 the gate was damaged by fire. The accident occurred through the negligence of the “keeper's mayde,” “who left a candle where a great deal of straw was; the same was set on fire and burnt all the timber work on the north side of the said gate.” In 1628-30 sub-





FROM OGILBY'S MAP OF LONDON, 1677,  
 preserved in the Library of the Corporation of London at Guildhall.  
 The line A...B indicates the site of the recent excavation.

stantial repairs took place. An order from the Court of Common Council, dated 2nd March, 1628, speaks "of the want of reparation or new building of part of the city gate and gaol of Newgate." This repair was however not for long. The gate was destroyed in the Great Fire of 40 years later, but afterwards rebuilt and devoted to its original purpose, being used as a debtors' prison. Upon a tradesman's token in the Beaufoy Cabinet is a delineation of the building; the figure gives an exceptional interest to the token, which is one of those struck in 1669 as a monetary medium amongst the prisoners. Newgate is mentioned in 1718 as having battlements, and is thus figured by Pennant and others. The fact is recorded that a stone weighing 200lbs. being indeed the sculpture of the royal arms, fell down with considerable force. In 1766 the whole building was demolished. The journals of the time record how the statue of Whittington and his cat was taken down and placed with others in the new prison in the Old Bailey, and the same newspapers intimate as a caution "that the person who is now taking down the gaol of Newgate ought to put a scaffold upon each side of the gate to save passengers from the danger of having their brains beaten out by the stones, which, in spite of every caution, are liable to fall on the head." The new prison was erected from the designs of Mr. George Dance, architect, the first stone being laid by Alderman Beckford in the year 1770. Ten years later it was attacked and burnt to the ground by an excited mob during the Gordon riots.\*

Some few antiquities have been found in the excavations. There is both Roman and medieval pottery, and a few other relics; they however in no way illustrate the antiquity of the site, having probably been brought to the spot among the quantities of rubbish employed for levelling and filling-in, both prior to and subsequent to the

\* On the afternoon of the day on which Newgate was destroyed a man servant in the employ of a lady resident in Spring Gardens, St. James's Park, rushed into the room in great excitement and apparent alarm, holding out some large keys, exclaiming, "What am I to do with these, ma'am?" In answer to her inquiries he stated that they had been thrust into his hand by one of the ring-leaders of a mob which he had just met in the street. Fearing that the man might be compromised if it was discovered that he had had in his possession the keys of a prison just destroyed by rioters, she advised him to say nothing about it to anyone, and to get rid of his troublesome windfall by throwing them into the water in St. James's Park. This advice he followed, and when the water was cleared out some few years since the keys of Newgate were found at the bottom.—Notes and Queries, 5th Series, iii. 27 Feb. 1875.

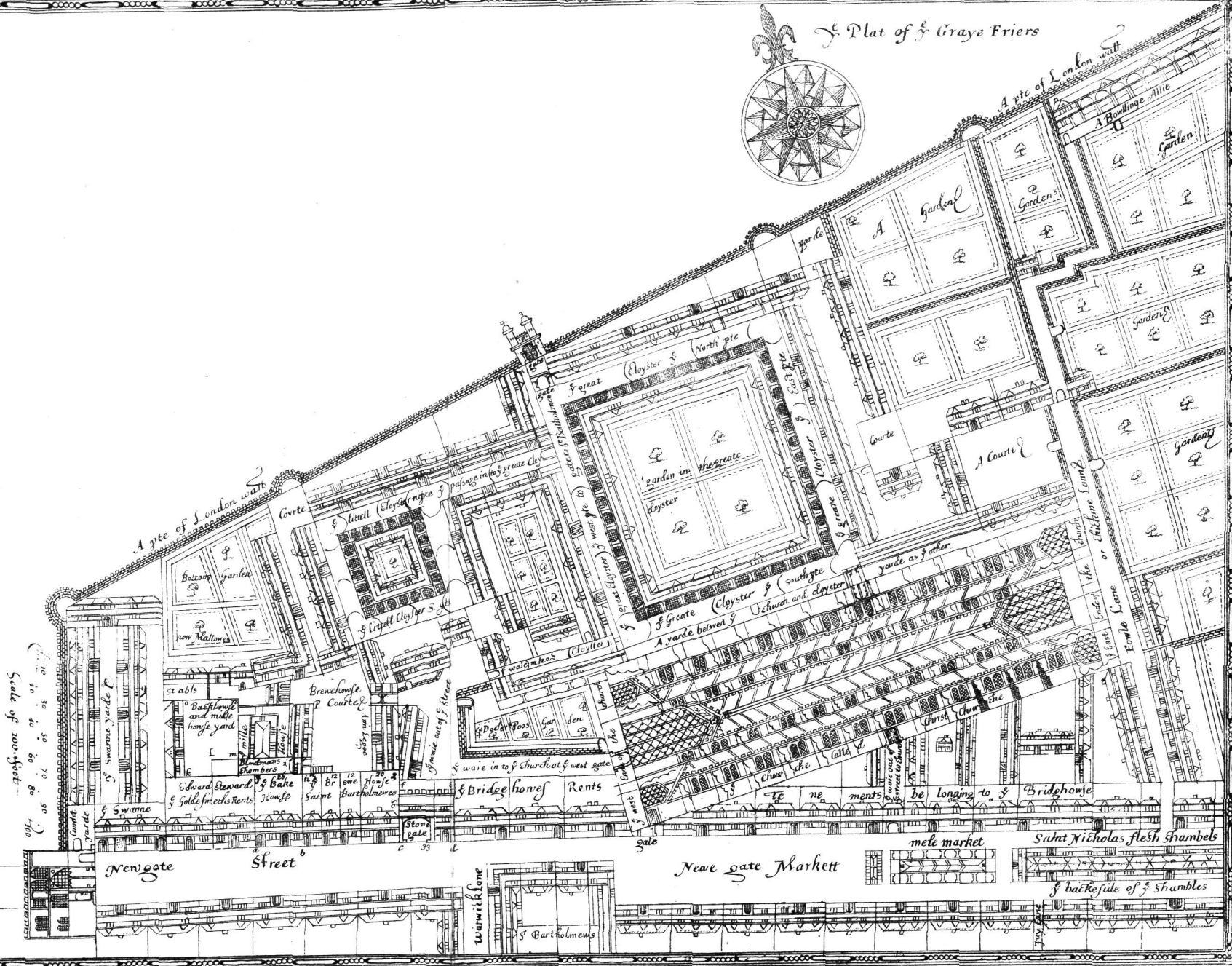
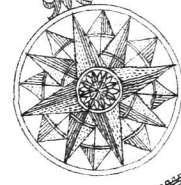
fire. The mere presence of Roman remains when excavating a city like London is but a weak argument; their value is but little unless proof can be given that they actually belong to the site in question. In addition to this, the town ditch was here a receptacle for all kinds of refuse. This was 200 feet long and 40 feet deep, and when filled in must have taken vast quantities of earth. Frequent mention of this fosse appears in the City records. In 1553 the portion between Aldersgate and Newgate was filled up and levelled. It is thus recorded in the Chronicle of the Grey Friars: "In this yeare the town deche from Newgate and Aldersgate was stopped up with brycke and made playn with earth."

It was probably these foundations of Newgate that so puzzled the late Mr. A. J. Kempe, F.S.A. more than forty years ago. In the year 1835, when constructing a sewer in Newgate Street, the workmen came upon a wall composed of ancient grout-work which had acquired all the solidity of a natural rock. The wall was found in the centre of the street at about 10 feet from the surface and 90 from the south-west corner of the entrance to St. Martin's-le-Grand. The course of the wall was from east to west, and extended in length for upwards of 40 feet. It was about 8 feet high, so that its base rested on the natural surface of the soil. This wall was described in the daily papers of the time as being a portion of the City wall and of Roman origin. The absurdity of the reports was increased by an error in stating the dimensions given. Length was transferred to depth, so that at last the account given was that a wall had appeared in Newgate Street at a depth of upwards of 40 feet from the surface level.\* The wall, however, was not Roman but the south wall of the ancient church of St. Nicholas, which stood in the centre of old Newgate Market, from which circumstance it was distinguished as the church of St. Nicholas *Shambles*, or, as in early records, "Sent Nycolas Fleshshambulls."† It was dependent and pensionary on the adjacent highly privileged eccle-

\* See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1835, vol. iv. p. 584.

† At the Dissolution the church of St. Nicholas was demolished, and its ornaments and materials given by King Henry VIII. to the Mayor and Corporation of London for the use of the new parish of Christ Church, 13th Jan. 38 Henry VIII.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1835, vol. iv. "The parishes of St. Nicholas and St. Ewin, with so much of St. Pulcher's parish as is within Newgate, were made one parish church in the Gray Friars Church founded by King Henry VIII."—Stowe's *Survey*.

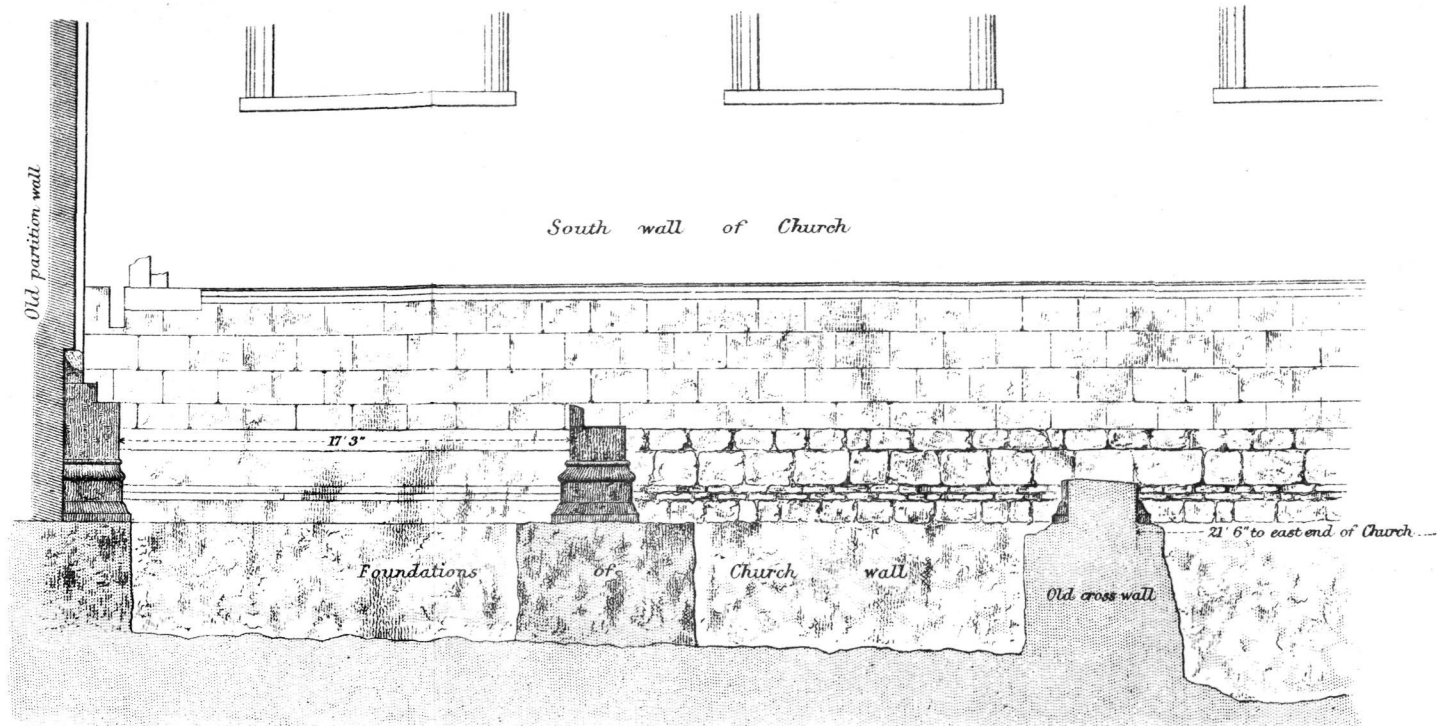
Plat of Graye Friers



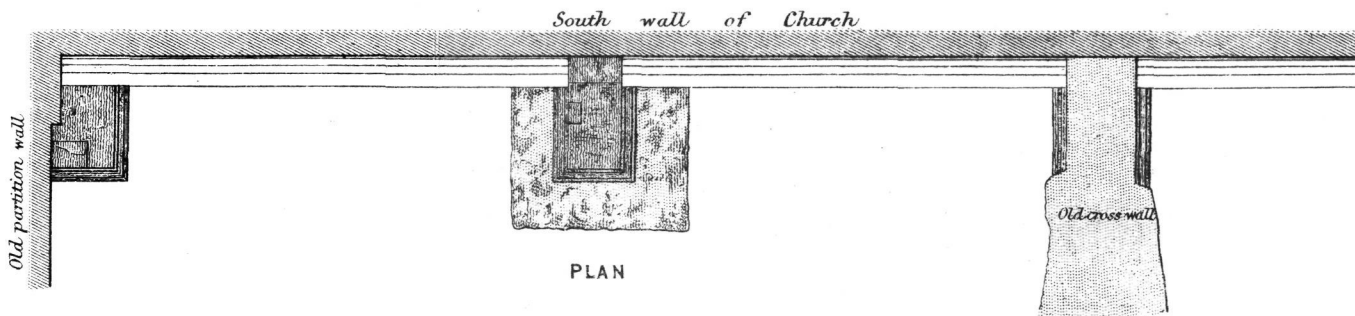
" YE PLAT OF YE GRAYE FRIERS " A.D. 1617.

from an unpublished drawing preserved at S<sup>t</sup> Bartholmew's Hospital.

J.P. & W.R. ENSLEY, LITH., LONDON



ELEVATION SHEWING PORTIONS OF THREE OF THE BUTTRESSES IN POSITION OF THE OLD FRANCISCAN CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCH, DISCOVERED IN EXCAVATING THE GROUND AT N<sup>o</sup> 20, KING EDWARD STREET, NEWGATE STREET.



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 SCALE OF FEET 20 30

siastical foundation, the collegiate church and sanctuary of St. Martin's-le-Grand.

Proceeding in its course, the sewer came in contact with other walls near to the site of the gate itself. These it was also said were probably the foundations of the City wall. They were, however, only eight feet from the level of the roadway, and are now seen to have formed but a portion of the same series of buildings the foundations of which have been so recently discovered, viz. the underground vaults and chambers of the old gaol of Newgate.

Leaving the main thoroughfare and turning off into King Edward Street, we may refer to other recent excavations which in their results serve to confirm the correctness of the opinions as to the comparatively recent date of the remains at Newgate. Near to the foundations of a house which abutted on the wall of the present Christ Church the workmen came upon massive architectural fragments, which on investigation proved to be no other than the bases of some of the original stone buttresses belonging to the ancient church of the Grey Friars. Through the kind interest taken in the matter by the late Mr. Renton I am enabled to give an illustration of the fragments found. The elevation is drawn to scale, and shows the exact position of the three buttresses which have been discovered. They belong to a series of twenty-six which, as seen by early plans, were once attached to the ancient church. The authorities of St. Bartholomew's Hospital possess an extremely interesting series of maps and plans relating to the locality as it existed prior to the Great Fire of 1666. Access to these has been courteously permitted to Mr. Alfred White, F.S.A. and myself, and to the kindness of W. H. Cross, Esq. Clerk to the Hospital, I am indebted for the opportunity of publishing one of these drawings. It shows at a glance the whole of the site referred to. The original was drawn in 1617, and has defined upon it buildings indicated in a MS. survey of the year 1546. In this plan the line taken by the City wall is shown, as are also the positions of its towers and bastions. The Gaol of Newgate is defined, and near it the Conduit Yard, the latter the site of the recent excavations. The site of the old Meal Market is shown, situate between Ivy Lane and Warwick Lane, thoroughfares possessing names which have survived to the present day. We note also the church of Christ Church with its long nave, the aisles, and the buttresses, to which reference has been already made. The east end of the church marks the course pursued by Fowle Lane, Stinking Lane, or Chick Lane.

Here was Butchers' Hall, which in later times gave to this thoroughfare the name of Butcher Hall Lane, afterwards to be improved into the modern King Edward Street. In the plan are also indicated many sites which formed part of the possessions of the monastery, and the description of which, taken from the register of the Grey Friars, is preserved in the Cottonian Library,\* from which extracts have been published by Stevens in his Additions to Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

The garden indicated on the plan marks the southern side of the play-ground at Christ's Hospital. It was the ancient garden of the monastery, and the name survives among the boys to the present day. The water from the pump there, long famous for its sparkling purity, continues worthy of its reputation. The portion of the modern play-ground, still termed "the ditch," marks the course of the ancient fosse which ran through the east part of the property.

The first chapel, which became the choir of the church, was built at the cost of Sir William Joyner, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1239; the nave was added by Sir Henry Waleys, Mayor during several years in the reign of Edward I; the Chapter House by Walter the potter, citizen, alderman, and sheriff, in 1270 and 1273. He also presented all the brazen pots necessary for the kitchen, infirmary, and other offices. Water was supplied at the cost of William the taylor. The dormitory was erected by Sir Gregory de Rokesley, Mayor, 1275—1282; the refectory by Bartholomew de Castro, another citizen. The infirmary by Peter de Helyland, and the study by Bevis Bonde, King of the Heralds.†

A more magnificent church was erected a century later, when first the choir was rebuilt, chiefly at the expense of Margaret of France, the second wife of Edward I. who assigned it as her place of interment, and the nave was added from the benefactions of John of Brittany, Earl of Richmond, and his niece, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. This was 300 feet long, 89 feet wide, and 64 feet high.

All the columns and the pavement were of marble. This church

\* Vitellius F. xii.

† These names are incorrectly given by Mr. Trollope in his History of Christ's Hospital; they appear as William Walleis, Walter Porter, Gregory Bokesley, Bartholomew Castells, Peter Haliland, and Roger Bond; the latter is called by Stowe Bevis Bond, Mr. Nichols suspects from a misreading of the words *bonis Bonde*, which like the other proper names appear in red ink in the original MS.; Mr. Trollope's alteration Bevis to Roger is not explained.

was completed in the year 1327, having been 21 years in building. It suffered considerable injury from a storm in 1343, and was then restored by the King out of regard to the memory of his mother.

The library was a later addition to the house, and owed its foundation to the liberality of Sir Richard Whittington. It was built in 1421. As recently as the year 1827 this old library was pulled down, and among the relics preserved were two of the carved stones, bearing upon them the arms of Whittington, and which had been inserted in the original building. One of them went to my father's collection, and the other is still preserved at Christ's Hospital. It is now found that the stone upon which these shields were carved is identical with that of the buttresses belonging to the old church, and further, has so much in common with that employed both in the buildings at Newgate and in the nave of Westminster Abbey that the resemblance must be more than a coincidence.\*

Apart from this there is little about these buttresses worthy of record. They represent a wonderful series of buildings long since passed away, interesting as fragments of a church once within our city that was of such importance as to be honoured as the last resting-place of no less than four queens, two duchesses, four countesses, one duke, besides 663 persons of quality. A catalogue of the ancient monuments was preserved, and from it Stowe and Weever derived their materials, but the original may be best consulted in the fifth volume of the *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, quoted by our lamented friend and Vice-President, Mr. J. G. Nichols, F.S.A.

In conclusion, I may observe that it will sound like heresy to question the antiquity of these remains at Newgate, and still worse to assert that any portion of London Wall belongs to a period subsequent to the departure of the Romans in the beginning of the fifth century. There is, however, nothing in its construction that militates against such an opinion. The evidence, indeed, all tends the other way. Authors who have written on this subject would wish us to believe in a complete degeneration of this country at the cessation of the Roman rule. It may be well to inquire what the population were about during the interval of time which elapsed prior to the coming of the

\* I am indebted for this information to our worthy Secretary, Mr. G. H. Birch, M.R.I.B.A. to whom I submitted specimens of the stone; that found in Newgate Street was pronounced by a competent authority, Mr. H. Poole, to be identical with that at Westminster.



Normans. The Saxons are said not to have walled their towns, yet we find among their laws the same provisions for the conservation of walls and bastions as had been previously in force. In a commercial and ever-increasing city like London, were the people idle? were the arts and sciences, the trades and manufactures, brought to a standstill by the proclamation of independence by Honorius? did the walls erected for the citizens' defence never require extension, rebuilding, or repair for 600 years? and, if so, who were the architects, and on what models did they work? Antiquaries sometimes resemble the geologists of the old school,—a difficulty must be surmounted by a catastrophe. The story of the gradual growth and development of our city up to the time when we have the advantage of historic records must be cautiously handled when defining broad lines of demarcation such as are involved in the terms Roman, Saxon, or Norman, for it is difficult to conceive how the laws, habits, manners, and customs of a people resulting from centuries of education are to be subverted by a mere change in government. It would seem that the Roman element has been never lost; every opportunity that arises for investigation affords evidence of this, and no illustrations can be given where this is more clearly shown than those found in studying the history of our own city.

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