



FRAGMENT OF ROMAN WALL.

Discovered in Old Bailey, 1900.

ON A FRAGMENT OF THE ROMAN WALL DISCOVERED IN THE OLD BAILEY.

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BY

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BEFORE proceeding to describe the portion of wall recently unearthed in the rear of No. 8, Old Bailey, adjoining the Sessions House, I beg to be allowed to describe the course of the wall, built *circa* 360 A.D., and which transformed Londinium into Augusta; but, unfortunately, in describing the outline of the Roman City, it is impossible to make ourselves intelligible, unless we use names subsequently adopted.

This wall enclosed about 380 acres, being 5,485 yards in length.

The portion along the river from Blackfriars to the Tower, the banks of the Thames being strengthened with piles, was finished by bastions and other defences at the angles. Near the chief gates and on the long north side there were also bastions. The wall was built of rag stone, with alternate courses of thin bricks or tiles. There were two land gates and three water gates, also a gate to the bridge. The course of the wall was as follows:—From Blackfriars it went in a northerly direction, along the slope of the hill above the Fleet River, a water gate opening on the river at Ludgate. The principal gate on this side was at Newgate, almost on the site of the mediæval

gate, here the Watling Street emerged from the City. The wall then went in a north-easterly direction, between St. Bartholomew's and Christ's Hospitals, and formed an angle where Aldersgate afterwards stood, it then turned north for a short distance as far as Cripplegate Churchyard, where there was a bastion at the angle, and the foundations of this bastion still exist under the mediæval masonry. It then went easterly to Bishopsgate, the second great land gate which stood to the east of the mediæval gate; the Ermyrn Street from the north and the Vicinal Way uniting at this point. Thence trending in a south-easterly direction it reached the Thames, where now stands the White Tower. A little to the west stood Billingsgate, a superior port to that on the Fleet, and further west was Dowgate, a port at the mouth of the Wall brook.

William Fitz-Stephen, writing in the reign of Henry II, hath these words:—"The wall is high and great, well towered on the north side, with due distances between the towers. On the south side also the City was walled and towered, but the fish abounding river of Thames, with his ebbing and flowing, have long since subverted them." (Stow's Survey.)

Doctor Woodward, writing on the remains found in Bishopsgate in 1707, describes the wall as follows: "The foundation of the wall lay 8 feet below the present level, and from that up to almost 10 feet in height it was composed of rag stones, with single layers of broad tiles interposed, each layer at 2 foot distance. To this height the workmanship was after the Roman manner. And these were the remains of

the ancient wall, supposed to be that built by Constantine the Great. In this it was very observable that the mortar was (as usual in the Roman work) so very firm and hard, that the stone itself as easily brake and gave way as that. It was thus far from the foundation upwards 9 foot in thickness." (Strype's Stow.)

Mr. Craik, referring to the remains found in the Minories in 1841, writes :—"Behind the S.W. corner of America Square, the workmen came upon a wall $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, running a very little to the west of north, or parallel to the line of the Minories. The principal part of it consisted of five courses of squared stones, regularly laid with two layers of flat bricks below them, and two similar layers above, the latter at least carried all the way through the wall. The mortar, which appeared to be extremely hard, had a few pebbles mixed up with it, and here and there were interstices, or air cells, as if it had not been spread, but poured in among the stones."

In 1843 a portion of the old wall was unearthed in Play House Yard, Blackfriars, when a Roman monument erected to a "Speculator" of the 2nd legion named CELSUS, was discovered. On the same line of wall further north, Sir Christopher Wren, while building St. Martin's Church, Ludgate, found a similar sepulchral monument, in memory of Vivianus Marcianus, a soldier of the 2nd legion. ("Parentalia," p. 266.)

Remains of the wall on the south or the river front have from time to time been brought to light, notably at the foot of Fish Street Hill, at the end of Queen Street, and from Broken Wharf to Lambeth

Hill, an account of which, by the late Mr. C. Roach Smith, is to be found in the *Archæological Journal*, I, p. 114.

The portion of the wall from Ludgate to the river was removed in 1276, and a new one built (to enclose a larger area) further west, for the benefit of the Black Friars.

I will now proceed to describe the fragment of the wall discovered in the Old Bailey. This piece of wall, which is 8 feet high and 8 feet 3 in. in thickness above the foundation (which is 14 in. wider), was unearthed in March, 1900, about 18 in. below the pavement level, and at a distance of 99 feet 6 in. from the centre of the roadway.

The construction is as follows:—Commencing from the base of the foundation (which is on the ballast) there is 3 feet 6 in. in height of rubble work composed of large rag stones, then three courses of tiles “sesqui pedales,” viz., $17\frac{4}{10}$ in. by $11\frac{6}{10}$ in. by $1\frac{3}{10}$ in., and above these 2 feet 7 in. of rag stones of a smaller size, then two courses of tiles, followed by more rubble work. The interior of the wall is composed of rag stones, roughly tumbled in, and grouted with lime mortar of an excellent description; the whole forming a hard concrete mass. The inner face of the wall, where not mutilated, is in a good state of preservation, but the outer face (or side towards the Fleet) shows to a marked extent the action of the water of the mediæval ditch.

A very valuable and interesting analysis of the mortar, made by Mr. H. F. Hills, is given in *The Builder*, of October 20th, 1900, and this test proves

the mortar to be chemically and physically an excellent one, the proportion of lime to sand by volume being about one to two.

The Romans are accredited with the practice in preparing their mortar, of forming pits and burying the newly mixed materials for a lengthened period, which probably, and not unreasonably, may account for its strength.

In appreciating the works of the ancients, it must be borne in mind, as in other things, that we have the survival of the fittest, and that the bad work (if they produced any) has disappeared in the process of time.
