

## ON A BASTION OF THE WALL OF LONDON IN CRIPPLEGATE CHURCHYARD.

*Read at a Meeting of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, at the London Institution,  
Finsbury Circus, on Monday, the 11th March, 1901.*

BY

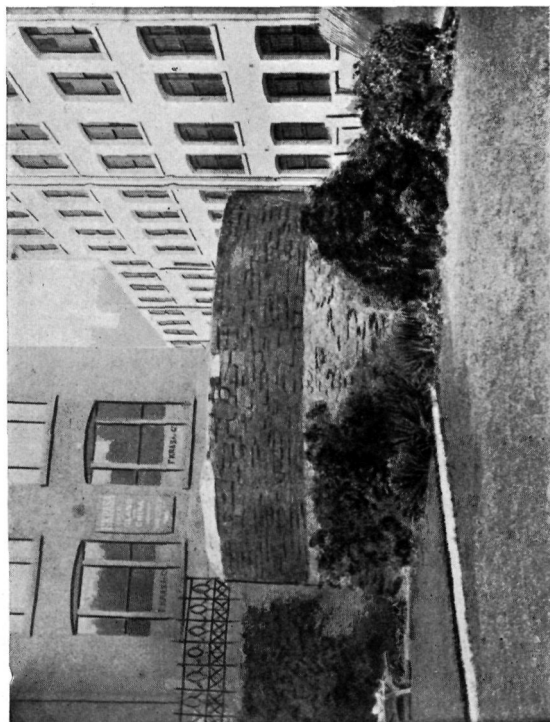
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THE Corporation of London having decided to repair this remaining bastion of the mediæval wall, the work of restoration was carried out under my personal supervision.

The wall had, at various periods, undergone a great amount of repairing; but, unfortunately, of a very injudicious character, large pieces of brickwork, interspersed with flints, tiles, and broken bits of slate, having been introduced, and as the face of the wall was originally built of rag stone, the bad taste of these earlier repairs was only too manifest.

The decayed brickwork having been removed, rag stone was very carefully built in to match the old work. In cutting out the decayed portions of the outer face of the wall, a miscellaneous collection of old and broken stones was brought to light, a portion of the head of a Gothic window and several pieces of grave stones having dates of the 17th and 18th centuries being discovered in the interior of the wall, clearly showing that any old stone was used that happened to be near at hand.



BASTION, CRIPPLEGATE CHURCHYARD.

As it was thought desirable to ascertain the condition of the wall below the ground level, an excavation was made down to the foundation, viz., 18 feet below the present level of the Churchyard.

The foundations (which are on the ballast) and, indeed, the lower portion of the wall to the height of about 4 feet, are in a good state of preservation, and judging by the appearance of the materials used, particularly the mortar, this portion is probably Roman work.

Above this height the work was of a different character, several kinds of stone had been used, intermixed with pieces of Roman tiles and flints, and in some instances the stones had been wedged up with several layers of oyster shells, the mortar being of an inferior quality to that found at a lower level, and there is not the slightest indication of this portion of the bastion being the work of the Romans, although full of their materials.

The chief characteristics of the wall are as follows:—The total height is 31 feet, being 18 feet below ground level and 13 feet above, the thickness of the top portion of the wall above the supposed level of the rampart is 3 feet, and 8 feet at the level of the ground. It is composed of an outer rubble face of rag stones, varying in size; and an interior of chalk, flints, sand stones, etc., grouted in with lime mortar of a vastly inferior quality to the Roman mortar.

This bastion being at an angle of the wall would, no doubt, in troublesome times be subject to many a fierce assault, and the repairs, probably, had to be

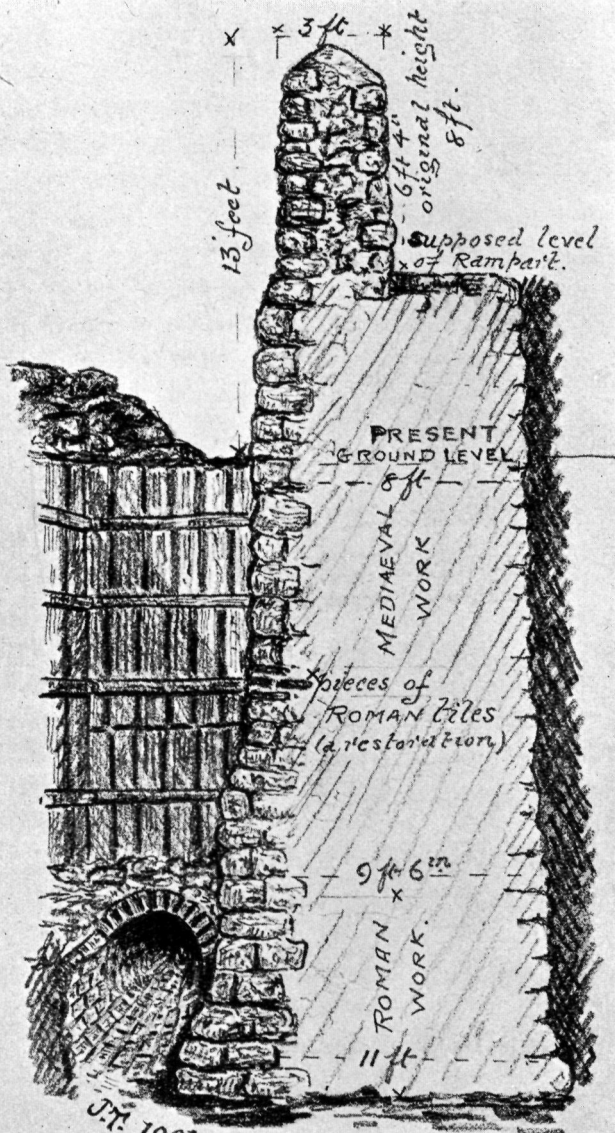
hastily done, this perhaps in some measure accounting for inferior work.

At the base of the foundation a rather curious discovery was made in the shape of an old red brick tunnel or drain, built in Roman cement, and splendidly constructed. It varied in height from 4 feet to 6 feet and was 2 feet 6 in. wide, and at intervals chambers had been formed to a height of 12 feet to 14 feet, covered over with large flat stones, these chambers or shafts were the same width (2 feet 6 in.) as the drain, and 4 feet to 6 feet in length. This drain or tunnel was examined for 200 feet in an easterly direction towards the site of Cripple Gate, where it had been broken up for the foundations of houses. Following the line of the bastion for a short distance towards the south, it was found to be bricked up; there were several branch drains into it, varying in height from 3 feet 6 in. to 6 feet. The main portion followed the line of the old City wall, and in what must have (at one time) been the ditch. There was not the slightest indication of any sewage having flowed in it—it was perfectly clean, excepting where the invert had given way, these cavities being filled with water.

I am inclined to think it was constructed for the purpose of *draining*, as the bottom was circular in formation, and was probably built in 1648, to take the water of the ditch, when the latter was filled in. Had it been built for any other purpose, I think the floor would have been *flat*.

In support of my supposition I quote the following :—

“More Dich from Bishopsgate to More Gate was arched over with a great number of brickworks,



J. H. 1901.

Section of Bastion.  
shewing position of drain

and then filled up and made plaine ground over it in the yeare 1638 and soe left.

“But the rest of the dich from Morgate to Crepplegate was arched over, as the other in 1648, and let by the Citty at great rates, but long leases of the ground, And one condition that they shall build such houses, as they have appointed them, and in such time, their are many faire houses built their already this yeare 1658.”—“Notes on London Churches, etc., 1631, 1658.” Harrison’s “England,” Vol. II, p. 211.

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