

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN LONDON.

On February 3rd Mr. Frank Lambert, M.A., F.S.A., read a paper before the Society of Antiquaries on the discoveries made while watching excavations recently on behalf of the Corporation of London. The greater part of the paper dealt with the history of Moorfields, as revealed by earlier discoveries, the records at Guildhall, and the recent excavation of two large sites in Finsbury Circus. The origin of the marsh was clearly the blocking of the Walbrook by London Wall, through which, even in Roman times, the culverts were hardly sufficient to carry its water. In mediæval times the marsh attained a large size, but no serious attempts were made to drain it till early in the sixteenth century. These failed, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the alternative method of filling in the swamp and raising the ground was tried, and the whole of Moorfields was laid out as a public park. The progress of this work was followed in detail by quotations from the unpublished Repertories of the Corporation. Lower Moorfields was raised again in 1730. All these phases—the Roman level on gravel or grey clay, the mediæval swamp, the dry filling of the seventeenth century, and the brick and rubble filling of the eighteenth—could be clearly followed in the sections exposed during excavation. The mediæval swamp, between 1400 and 1500, had been used as a dumping place for rubbish, and contained many small domestic objects, and much wonderfully preserved leather.

The paper also described excavations in King William Street, where much burnt Roman material has been found, pointing to a great first-century conflagration; and in London Wall, where the Roman Wall proved to have been rebuilt in Roman times.