

EXCAVATIONS AT RICHBOROUGH.

RVTVP IAE.

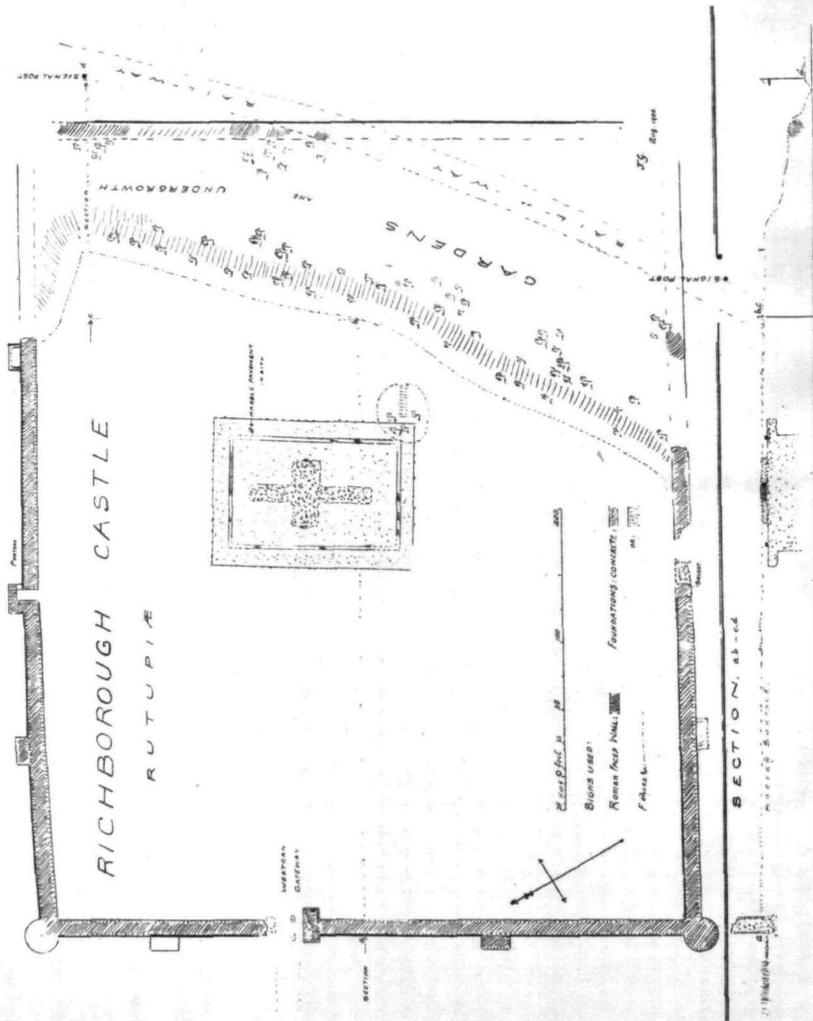
BY JOHN GARSTANG.

DURING July of the present year (1900) excavations were made for the trustees on the site of the Roman fortress RVTVP IAE at Richborough in Kent. The Rev. Canon Routledge made the preliminary arrangements; and he with his co-trustee, the Rev. Canon Flower, rendered every facility possible for the progress of the work.

The trustees having in view the complete excavation of the site, it was deemed advisable to keep the plan of work consistent from the beginning; so with the advice of several archæologists, and the approval of the trustees, it was decided during the time at present available to confine work to planning the outer fortifications, excavating about all towers and gates, and conducting an examination of the unique feature of the interior already known to exist—the concrete bed and cruciform structure upon it.

The Plan already published of the fort was found to be generally correct. The wall-towers are rectangular and external; the corner towers round, about 18 feet in diameter, external also. A gate existed about the middle of the western side, and the postern through the north wall is still well preserved. Finally, the site of the eastern wall was found at the foot of the slope, giving a rectangular form to the enclosure, 600 feet by 450, with an area of just over six acres.

SOUTHERN WALL.—Three of the walls still rise to a height for the most part of more than 15 feet, in some places as high as 23 feet, so that breaks in them are conspicuous. Of these one occurs on the southern side near the bank, 260 feet from the south-west corner. Even the foundations proved,



on excavation, to be discontinuous. The spot had obviously been plundered for stone, and this fact alone suggests that some feature existed there unlike the rest of the wall. Some further light is thrown upon this point by the condition of the western gateway, one-half of which was found completely removed. The position in the wall also agrees with the conjecture that a gateway of some form originally led into the enclosure at that spot—a supposition further borne out by the presence there of a large stone, hollowed for the reception of a square beam.

As on the opposite side, the towers against this wall seem to have been without foundations.

WESTERN WALL.—Between the circular tower of the south-west corner and the break which indicates the position of the main gateway, the foundations of a tower now razed project 10 feet 6 inches from the face of the wall, the width being twice the projection.

The gateway itself, which is almost in the middle of this side, is of great interest. One side of it has been quarried out in more recent times, so that only the concrete foundation to its tower remains. The other side was better preserved, and was accordingly completely cleared and left permanently open.

In so far as it had a tower on each side with a double-arched entrance, this gateway was of usual character; but it has several peculiarities. The tower (on its southerly side), so far as may be judged, was long and narrow, and had a flagged floor for walking on the basement. As in the earlier forts of the North, it flanks the entrance, and projects somewhat into the interior of the fort; but like the wall-towers of this fort, it projects also outward 8 or 9 feet. The tower must have been narrow—about 3 feet wide inside—or else the other side of the entrance cannot have been symmetrical, but must have had a smaller arch. Assuming, however, that the tower was thus narrow,—its outer wall is missing,—the flags which supported its pilasters, and the position of two concrete beds which indicated the spina for sustaining the centre of the double span, give the width of each gate as about 8 feet.

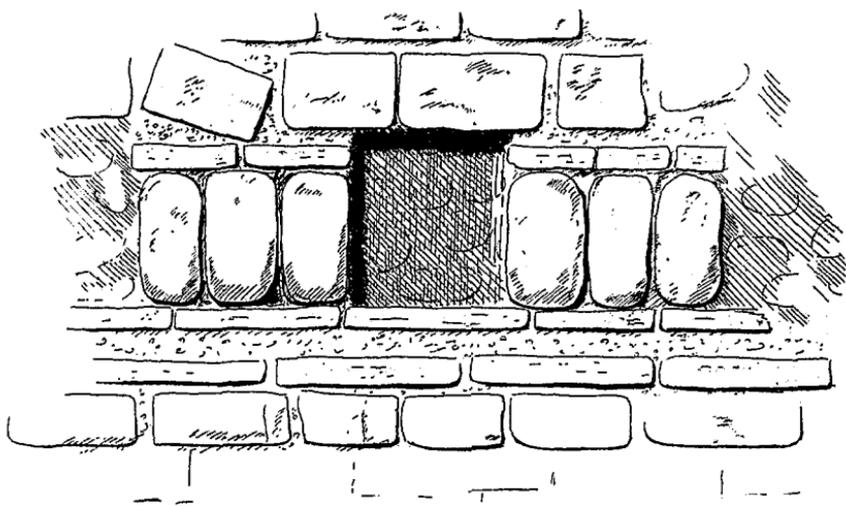


P L A N



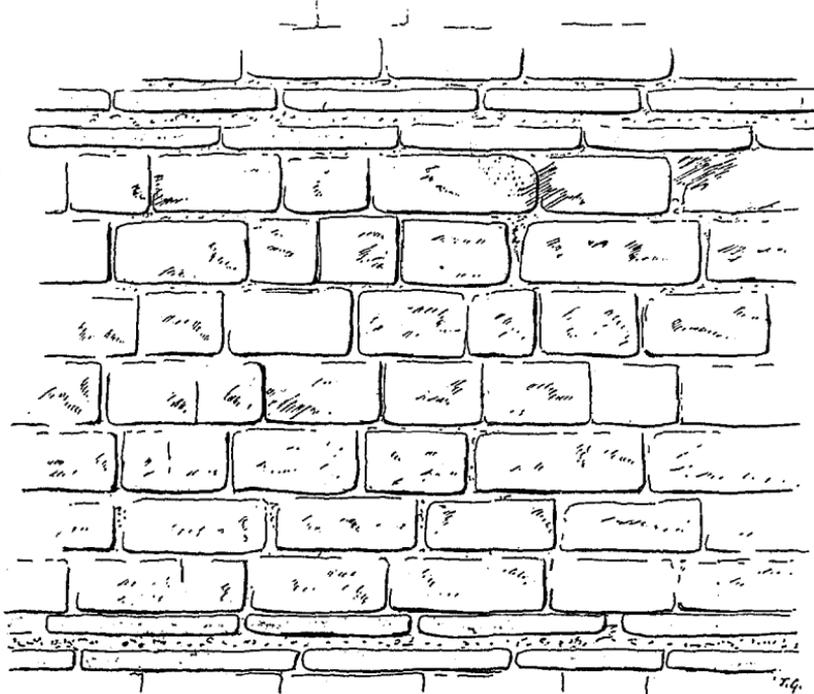
S E C T I O N

T H E W E S T E R N G A T E W A Y .



SOCKETS FOR JOISTS.

6 3 2 1 0 in 1 foot.



TYPE OF MASONRY.

NORTHERN WALL.—Towers certainly existed on the north side, but they had little depth of foundation, and it is not possible to give their exact projection, but they were in each case 20 feet wide. They are symmetrically placed on each side of the postern through this wall, which occurs at 240 feet from the north-westerly angle.

This gateway is already well known. It has a threshold 3 feet wide, and the entrance-way over it has a width of only 4 feet 6 inches clear, which must have been further reduced by the gate posts. The most interesting feature about it, however, is the existence at a height of 15 feet above the modern surface (here about 18 inches above the Roman) of three squared holes in the end of the wall which comes from the east, for the reception of joists for a floor above the entrance. One of these holes is quite plain, and has a depth of 4 feet; the other two are become less obvious by the crumbling of the wall on each side. Now in a section of the wall on the west side, at a place where it stands 23 feet high, there is a notable recess at the height of 16 feet, and it seems possible that this may have been the level of the rampart walk, which was therefore continuous over the postern. The number of roofing tiles found in this entrance point also to the existence of a chamber. The wall, however, is so overgrown with ivy that it is difficult to make a satisfactory examination.

EASTERN WALL.—The position of this wall seems to be certain; in several places pieces of concrete were found *in situ*, which when planned indicate a line which completes the rectangular form of the enclosure. There were, however, great masses of concrete toppled or tilted out of line; and it therefore seems well to postpone further discussion of this point until advantage has been taken of the railway company's permission to examine the traces of it in their ground.

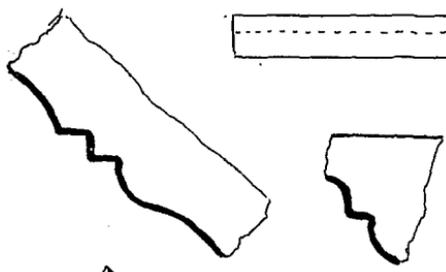
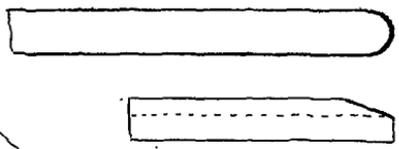
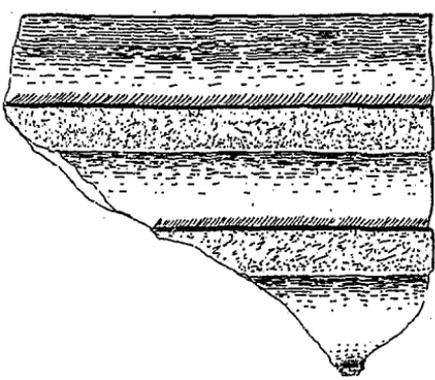
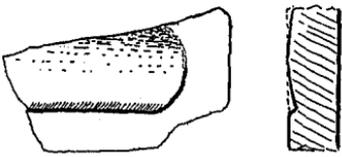
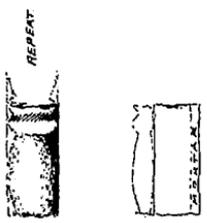
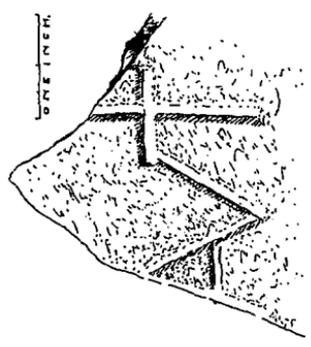
Everything points to this enclosure having been built in or after the latter part of the third century. In plan and size it is conformable with other large forts in the country, and its lower "sea-wall" is uniform with others on the coast. But the difference in its defences, the apparent absence of fosse or prætorium, the external towers, the paucity of

stone-cut inscriptions, all point to late work: and an approximate date may be obtained from the sudden increase in the coins of this period.

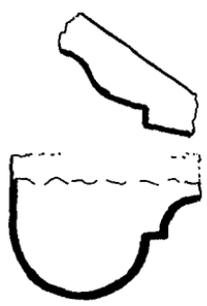
THE CROSS.—It is not the purpose of these notes to discuss the many conjectures that have been made as to the main use of this concrete bed with its cruciform centre. The huge foundation, its shape, the symmetry of what remains above it, all make it obvious that it was designed to support a structure of great height and weight. Yet had such building ever been erected, the ruins of it at least might have been expected to be found lying around. The cross itself has been several times laid bare before, and no fresh evidence can be gleaned from this re-examination of it, except that, from the nature of its concrete and construction, it seems to have been contemporary with the bed below. On its easterly side, moreover, where subsidence is most to be expected, there is no sufficient trace of any fallen building; indeed only one isolated piece of concrete was found. Yet as the ground on the other sides of it has not as yet been so exhaustively examined, nothing more than a distinct probability that the high structure was never erected, at least in stone, can be asserted on the present evidence.

But in another way the examination was more fruitful. It has been known that a low wall existed upon the foundation, running round the four sides about 12 to 14 feet from the edge. On the outer side of this wall, at all distances up to 10 yards from it, were found architectural fragments of white marble, moulded shells for columns and pilasters, slabs for pavements and facings, and straight mouldings for base and cornice, even ornamental carvings and embellishments. In one place, on the eastern side, a piece of marble pavement between this low wall and the edge of the concrete was found *in situ*. This was unfortunately the only direct evidence as to the nature of this surrounding structure, but by noting the position and forms of these valuable relics several other items are forthcoming.

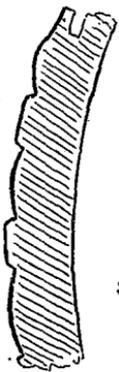
In all cases those fragments whose mouldings indicated the bases of column or pilaster were found near the low wall; other fragments from the shafts were more distant. The



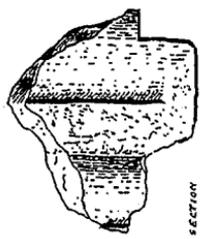
SECTIONS of MOULDINGS:
with
STRAIGHT EDGES.



1. 10 IN. 2 3 4 5 6 IN.



COLUMN 30 IN. RADIUS



FRAGMENTS of WHITE MARBLE.

wall thus bears a relation to the structure, and it seems natural at first to suppose that the colonnade may have been built upon it. But it is not of uniform height: in one place it is only 10 inches high, in another has become discontinuous, in another it is 30 inches high, with a tile course running through. The presence of pilasters also requires a supporting wall; and a feature on one large piece of moulded column, about 20 inches in radius, seems to suggest that some of the columns were not complete in circle, but were also built against the wall. All around the four sides red roofing tiles were plentiful. At the present stage, before every piece from the ground all around has been collected, it would be futile to attempt to piece these fragments together in detail. The architecture of pilasters is always a doubtful subject, and any restoration of a building not strictly obeying the rules of any order must necessarily be tentative; but sufficient has already been recovered to enable a general view of the structure to be realized.

There is a wall rectangular in form: on its outer side a marble facing, and against it a row of pilasters, or of pilasters and engaged columns, with uniform mouldings in base and entablature. A marble pavement 4 yards wide lay outside the wall; above the pavement was a roof, supported on the one hand by the wall, and on the other—since there is no trace of an outer wall—presumably by columns. The building thus reveals itself as a delicately constructed verandah, its roof supported on its outer side by an open colonnade, and enclosing on the four sides by its inner wall the basement of the structure designed to rise from its centre.

It may be urged that the architectural fragments may have been the embellishments of a tower, such as the Tour Magne at Nimes; but the absence of evidence of any inner construction, the presence also of the low wall and the marble pavement, is sufficient to render such a theory unacceptable at present.

Among several small objects of interest found in this vicinity may be specially mentioned, a fragment of an inscribed slab of white marble (. . . AVIT), and a silver ingot

(EX OFFI ISATIS), both found about 3 yards eastward from the edge of the concrete bed, at a depth of 2 feet.

INSCRIPTIONS.

1. AVIT (as dedicavit), on a slab of white marble.
2. EX OFFI } stamped on an ingot of silver (weight one Roman
ISATIS } pound, nearly).

Potters' marks on "Samian" ware.

3. SILVI PATRICI. Inside base, diameter $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches (external).
4. OF VITALIS " " 3 "
5. JANVARIS " " 2 "
6. (P) MARTIM " " $1\frac{1}{2}$ "
7. OF L C VIR(ILIS) " fragment.

COINS.

A certain number of the coins have been identified, but the examination is not completed. Their historical import, however, is already apparent. Out of several hundred only five are earlier than the third century, and the number continues representative up to the time of Honorius. A few *minimi* of pre-Saxon times are included also.

Several gentlemen are to be thanked for their various kindnesses. Mr. W. H. St. John Hope and Mr. G. E. Fox from the first have been interested in the work, and the latter visited the site during the excavation. Amongst other friends, Mr. T. Ashby stayed some days, and gave much assistance in fixing the survey-points. Mr. H. A. Grüber and Mr. J. G. Milne have looked through a large proportion of the coins; and Mr. Haverfield, with his usual kindness, has examined the inscribed fragments, and has made a close investigation of the nature of the silver ingot and the name upon it.