

ROMAN REMAINS RECENTLY FOUND AT CANTERBURY.

BY GEORGE DOWKER, F.G.S.



A STATUETTE of terra cotta or white clay representing a woman, seated in a wicker chair, nursing twin children, was found (in 1887) by the men who excavated the foundation for Messrs. Hammond's new Bank, in Canterbury, at the north-west corner of St. Margaret's Street. A very similar figure, found in a mortuary urn at St. Dunstan's Roman Cemetery, is now in the Canterbury Museum, No. 79; and another example of a like statuette, but with one child only, is figured in Mr. John Brent's *Canterbury in the Olden Time*, plate vi., a description of which appears on page 41 of his book; in the latter

case the specimen was found in Sun Street, in the year 1867. Similar figures are described, as Roman, in Mr. Roach Smith's *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. vi., page 48. He observes: "They will remind the numismatist of the coins of the Roman Empress, inscribed, 'Fecunditas,' and 'Fecunditas Augusta.'" The Dame

Abunde of the old mediæval tales was thus anticipated. Mr. Brent's example had an inscription on the back, which he thought was the potter's name. The specimen just found, now in Mr. Wm. Mason's possession, is about seven inches in height; the colour was originally white, but it is much disfigured with black charcoal, probably from the matrix from which it was excavated; it was also cracked, but has now been repaired with plaster of Paris. The statuette is very rudely modelled, the breasts being represented in a conventional way, and the arms are diminutive and ill-formed.

The soil beneath the Old Bank, by its mixture of charcoal, tiles, and *débris* of building material, suggests the idea that a large fire had taken place there. In the soil were found a gold coin of Tiberius Cæsar, and bronze coins of Trajan, Hadrian (1st brass), Vespasian (1st brass), and two with illegible legends; also a spindle wheel and some Samian pottery. The site can be seen on Mr. Pilbrow's Plan of Canterbury (reproduced in *Archæologia Cantiana*, XV., p. 340) at the angle between the numbers 53 and 54. Mr. Scott Robertson, in his Index to Mr. Pilbrow's Plan, states that Mr. Pilbrow found "a wall built entirely of Roman tiles beside Hammond's Bank."*

Between the old Bank and Mr. Poole's adjacent house was found a large vaulted cellar (having steps down to it from the street) 14 feet wide, with walls $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick of Kentish ragstone. It was vaulted with squared chalk, and was 8 feet in height. It extended 30 feet or more back from the road. This vault has the appearance of having been attached to an hotel, and is just opposite a Chaucerian inn which stood at the corner of Mercery Lane.

* *Archæologia Cantiana*, XV., p. 349.

In W. Gostling's *Walk about Canterbury* mention is made of a mile-stone denoting 56 miles from London, situated against the wall of St. Mary Bredman's Church, which is next adjoining to Mr. Poole's premises; the stone was removed (according to a note added to the text in a new edition printed in 1825) in 1790.*

Mr. Pilbrow recorded the finding near this place of a large Roman amphora, 10 feet below the surface, with coins of Carausius in it. Also Roman foundations of buff-coloured Roman tiles, opposite the western angle of St. Mary Bredman's Church.†

An excavation, for a drain or a gas pipe, was lately made within the precincts of the old WHITE-FRIARS, near the centre of the playground of the Middle Class Schools; and at about 4 feet from the surface the workmen came to a tessellated floor, made of red-brick tesserae laid in Roman cement. Only four or five square feet of this floor was exposed. It was covered with dark black earth. Another excavation, a few yards off, shewed fragments of Hypocaust tiles. It is unusual to find Roman remains in Canterbury so near the surface; and this may have been the suspended floor of an Hypocaust.

I brought the matter to the notice of the Dean of Canterbury, Chairman of the School Trustees; and although he and the Trustees did not see their way to excavating further, it is nevertheless to be hoped that this site, being an open space, may be further examined at some future opportunity.

Some time back, Roman pottery was met with in excavating for a new house belonging to Mr. Godden,

* *Gostling's Walk*, 1825, chap. viii., p. 57.

† *Archæologia Cantiana*, XV., p. 349.

between the Chatham and Dover RAILWAY STATION, and the road which skirts the ditch of the city walls.

In 1885, while excavating foundations for the new LONDON AND COUNTY BANK, in High Street, at 15 feet from the surface a *dark silty soil* was met with, and in it were skulls of three oxen, allied to, if not identical with, *Bos longifrons*.

I am informed by Mr. Wilson's foreman, that when a settlement occurred under the wall of the cellar of MR. FRIEND'S HOUSE, nearly opposite Rose Lane, it was found that the *subsoil was a bog* into which you could thrust a pole to a great depth.
