

WYGGESTON'S HOSPITAL, LEICESTER.

MR. J. H. PARKER, F.S.A., upon visiting this hospital, said it belonged to a class which they were losing one after another, and which they would soon lose altogether, he feared. They were a very interesting class of buildings, and belonged to the same style of buildings as the infirmaries of the monasteries, which had almost entirely disappeared. The arrangement of them was exceedingly simple and good for the purpose. The chapel in which they were assembled was at one end of the building, and was so arranged that the inmates could at all times attend service, however great invalids they might be. It was an hospital for old and infirm people, whose respective cells were arranged in two rows one above the other, both opening into that chapel. They could all hear mass performed in every part of the building by just opening their doors, as well as see the elevation of the Host, which was an important part of the service in former times. Whether with or without the Roman Catholic service it appeared to him an excellent institution that persons on a bed of sickness, or who were unable to go to Divine service, should be able to hear it in their own rooms. That was an exceedingly good arrangement in his opinion, and he was sorry to say those buildings were being continually destroyed. That one was threatened with destruction, and there was another at Stamford similarly menaced, besides two or three others he knew of, because, it was said that manners and customs had changed. But at the same time the Catholic religion admitted that Christians should have the advantage of hearing divine service when they were not able to attend church. That was a very good building of the sixteenth century. There was nothing remarkable to say about it: it belonged to the genuine English Perpendicular style, and it would be a great pity to destroy it. If it were not available for its original purpose it would make a very good school-room, and he saw no reason for destroying a building of that kind. There they had a building upon the whole sound and in a fair state, belonging to the 16th century, in the English Gothic style, and he could conceive no reason whatever for its destruction; it would be a disgrace to the town if it were destroyed. He drew attention to the marble slab in front of the pulpit—formerly the site of the altar, which had been replaced by the pulpit—an alteration which Mr. Parker warmly deprecated. He noticed that the brass had been taken from the slab to the memory of the founder, and condemned its removal.

MR. T. INGRAM informed Mr. Parker that the brass was still in existence, properly preserved.

Mr. Parker replied that in that case he thought it should be replaced on the slab; its value was destroyed by being removed.

He further called attention to the beautiful details about the building; remarking that even if it were used as a school-room they would be preserved, and there was a good deal worth preserving.

THE JEWRY WALL.

Upon viewing the Jewry Wall, Leicester, Mr. JAMES THOMPSON was called for, who said there were one or two theories put forward with respect to the origin of these remains. The rude fragment before them had always been known as the Jewry Wall from this circumstance—it had always been considered that in Leicester and other ancient towns in the country, there was one part of the town to which the Jews were compelled by their Christian neighbours to resort and there confine themselves. In mediæval times so strong was the antipathy of Christians towards the Jews that they compelled all the Jews to seek some part of the town in which to dwell—the least eligible place was considered good enough for the Jews. He believed that site took its name from that circumstance. In the paper he should read that evening he should show that it was at least 600 years ago since the place ceased to be the resort of the Jews; because 600 years ago a charter was granted by Simon de Montfort that no Jew or Jews should thereafter to the end of time inhabit or remain in the town of Leicester. There could be no question that the walls were of Roman origin, for similar walls were found throughout the country—at Silchester and at Wroxeter; at the latter place excavations had revealed important information concerning the outlines of the ancient Roman city. But there were architectural paradoxes about the Jewry Wall which those who had devoted considerable attention to the subject were still unable to solve. There were on that side the remains of four arches of different widths and height; but if they could have seen the other sides, before the adjoining factory was built, they would have seen two arches only, the arches they then saw not being all carried through. It had been found on examination that the piers of the arches did not extend in the direction of the adjoining church, and consequently that fabric had never extended towards the church. At the lower part of the foundation there were what appeared to be the remains of the original wall of the fabric. As to the purpose of the building, his own conclusion—from an examination of the building and from arguments which had suggested themselves to him,—was that in the early period of the existence of that building it was the western gateway to the ancient Roman town of Leicester. Subsequently, in all probability when the place became enlarged, the wall on the western side of the town was taken down, and the intervening space between the wall and the river was built over and occupied, the river—which was wider then than now—forming the defence on that side. But that structure

was made of such obstinate materials that it was not easy to pull it down, and possibly no immediate purpose would have been answered in its removal; so it was left and might very possibly have formed a portion of another building at a later period of the Roman occupation of the town. He thought there was evidence that the wall at different times had served different purposes. In confirmation of the theory that it formed originally the western gateway, Mr. Thompson pointed out on a map of Leicester the positions and defences of the town, showing the north, south, and east entrances, and that the "Jewry Wall" was the only possible place where the town could be entered on the western side.

THE VEN. ARCHDEACON TROLLOPE pointed out, with a view to the better understanding of the building, that the rough masonry now presented to the eye was not the original face of the building, which projected at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 feet beyond the present face. They would see from the excavations just made that what he said was true. What the character of the original facing was he could not say. It was quite possible it consisted of very large stones. He might mention in connection with that a discovery made at Lincoln. In the course of some excavations they came across the remains of a Roman arch which had been long destroyed, and some of the stones revealed the fact that they had been fixed together with clamps, no mortar or cement having been used. They were pierced at each end, and pieces of iron were then put in and the hole filled up with lead.

REV. J. G. JOYCE said he had no doubt at all that the wall was originally the western gate of the city. It appeared to him to be the remains of a gateway which had been altered or rebuilt. At the lower end of it they would see the place where the first gateway was made, perfectly defined. The previous day they had pierced down to a depth of 15 feet, and without getting to the bottom of the ancient wall; but from that depth of 15 feet were to their astonishment thrown up pieces of modern brick, so that the ground must have been previously opened to ascertain the depth of the wall. (Several gentlemen remarked that was the case.) It seemed to him that the first gateway had been much lower. He could not, however, suppose that the Roman street was fourteen feet below the present level; as, if it were, the niches in the wall, which were probably intended for the reception of the figures of deities would have been entirely out of reach. He considered that had been a gateway, because a road coming from the Fosse-road into the town would go straight through one of those openings; and because a line drawn as far as they could ascertain from the angle on the north to the angle on the south would pass through the axis of that wall. Therefore, taking the two facts together, there could hardly be a doubt that that would be the proper site for the gate, and indeed that that was the gate.

MR. J. H. PARKER, F.S.A., said from his experience in Rome he was inclined to think the structure was part of a gate house, or a kind of barbican, but not a gateway. In point of construction it was of the time of Constantine, or the fourth century; being late Roman work.

MR. M. H. BLOXAM, F.S.A., agreed with Mr. Parker in attributing the work to the 4th century.

ROMAN LEICESTER. At a Meeting of the Section of Antiquities held on the Morning of 27th July.

THE REV. J. G. JOYCE, said he had been requested to say a few words on the Roman town of Leicester. The first thing to which he would call attention was the formation of the town *Ratae*, which appeared to have been built in the form of a parallelogram. One could now trace in the formation of the streets pretty clearly what it was. It was alluded to the previous day by Mr. Thompson, when speaking of the Jewry Wall, and appeared to have ranged direct north to south and east to west. The fact that it was a parallelogram involved a circumstance of great antiquarian interest. The Romans were a people who generally located themselves in some settlement which would be advantageous for opposition to their enemies, and that was fully borne out by his experience at the excavations which had been carried on under his superintendence at Silchester. There they could not find two sides the same length. The wall on one side was twenty-one feet high, and a piece of superb, massive masonry, but still built in a curious irregular fashion. It was quite evident that the Romans occupied Silchester at a very early period, and that in measuring out their settlement there they got into an altogether irregular figure, other encampments being of a rectangular shape. In Leicester they found something very different. It was clear that here the ground was measured by soldiers, who took their own standard, and measured from that to form an encampment. He had not had time to ascertain the relative lengths of the sides of this parallelogram. The town *Ratae* was entered by gates on four sides, and yesterday they saw the Jewry Wall, about which there was great doubt as to whether it was one of the gates or not. With great submission to the opinion of the high authorities who were then present, he still held to the opinion that it was one of the gates. [The speaker here displayed a map of the town, and showed where there formerly stood an ancient bridge, and stated that a person entering the town from the Fosse Road would cross this bridge, and come up a main street leading direct to the Jewry Wall.] He had made enquiries as to the discovery of any pavement in that neighbourhood, and he found that there was some tessellated pavement not far from the