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ST. ALBANS ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.

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A

DESCRIPTION

OF

THE ROMAN THEATRE



VERULAM.

BY

R. GROVE LOWE, ESQ.

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*READ AT THE MEETING HELD APRIL THE 12th, 1848.*

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PUBLISHED FOR THE SOCIETY,

BY

GEORGE BELL, FLEET STREET, LONDON;  
AND WILLIAM LANGLEY, ST. ALBANS.

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1848.

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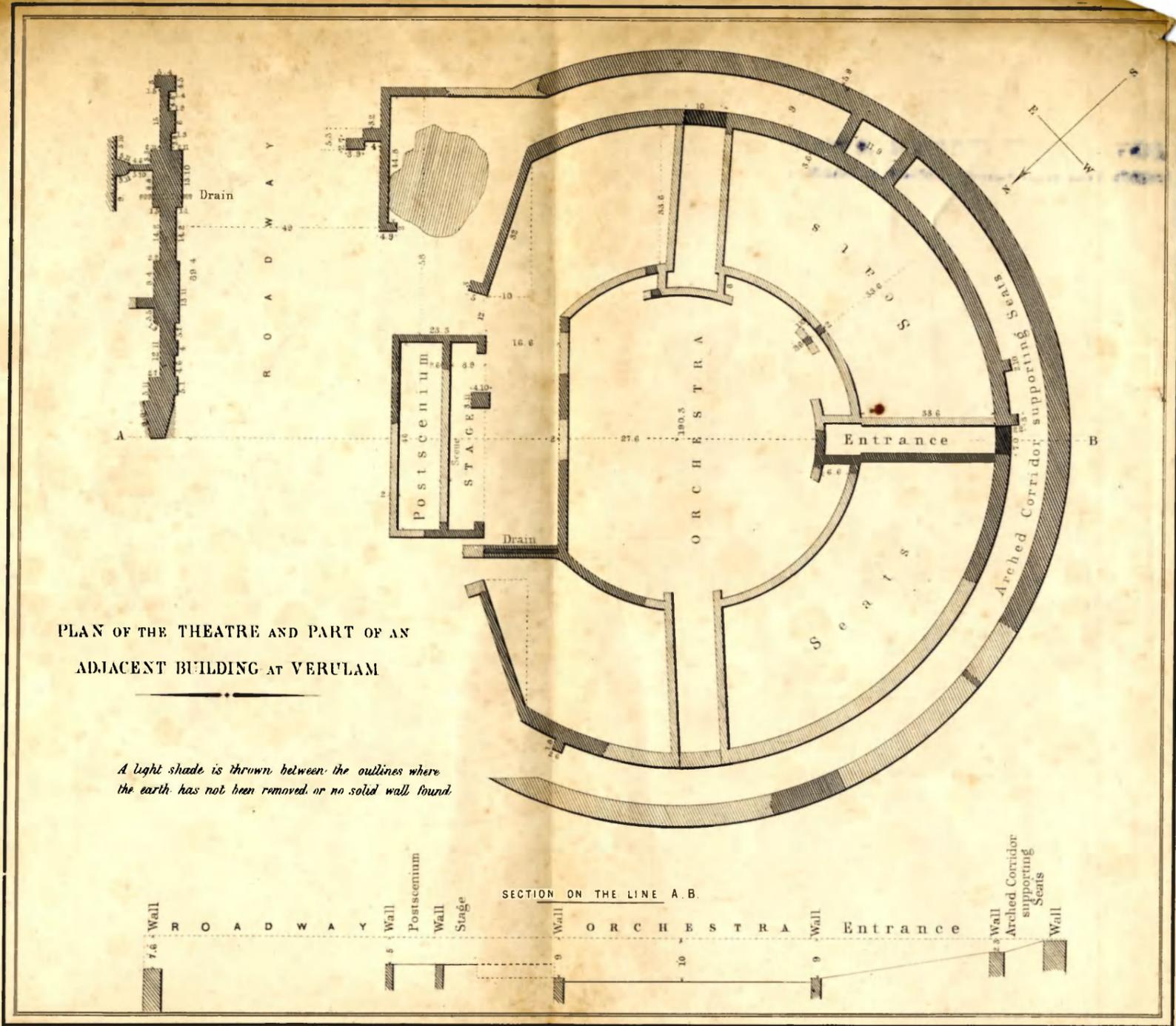
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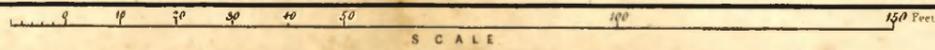
Silent faces of the great and wise

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Drawn by R. Grove Lowe.



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A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
ROMAN THEATRE OF VERULAM.

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WITH a view to the preparation of a description of Verulam, in which, I had previously believed, there were no remains of any structure, except the external defensive walls, my attention was last autumn directed to part of a road, which, till about twenty years ago, was the high road from London to Holyhead, but is now a private road from St. Albans to Gorhambury, the seat of the Earl of Verulam—perhaps at this point it runs on the ancient Watling Street. I observed four or five flints embedded in mortar in the bank on the north-east side, and, on closer examination, an appearance that the road was, in one spot, actually composed of the foundation of a building. The flints appeared to have formed part of the walls of a road-side house or barn; but finding, on reference to old maps, that no building had for some centuries stood on that site, I conjectured they were of Roman construction. With Lord Verulam's kind permission, I commenced an excavation, which, in the following week, was adopted by this Society. Foundations were then laid open, which are shewn on the north-east side of the plan of the theatre. The carriage-wheels at one spot rolled on the foundation of a wall, unprotected by any layer of gravel: the road having been formed probably in the Saxon period over these remains, they have been protected from any further disturbance. The removal of the accumulation of road-materials, hardened by the traffic of so many centuries, was a very laborious operation. These foundations are 327 feet from the road to Hemel Hempstead, and a quarter of a mile to the north of the centre of Verulam.

As soon as that excavation was completed, I was informed that fragments of walls had been struck upon in ploughing the adjoining field; one of them was partly laid

open, but that excavation was discontinued, in consequence of finding a labourer employed in taking up foundations in the same field, which, from their width, appeared to have belonged to some public edifice. Two of the fragments were then laid open, and ascertained to form concentric curves; and as soon as their radius could be measured, more than half a circle was observed to be defined by a gentle undulation round a slight hollow in the field.

This excavation having excited the attention of antiquaries, it was visited by Mr. Roach Smith, the distinguished Secretary of the British Archæological Association; and that Society, and afterwards the Archæological Institute, forwarded a contribution to the expense.

After the walls had been traced beyond a semicircle, much interest was excited to ascertain if they had belonged to a theatre, or amphitheatre: there was a difficulty in coming to either conclusion, no Roman theatre having been previously known to exceed a semicircle, and the form of amphitheatres being, not a circle, but an ellipse. At length one of the cross walls passing from the innermost of the two outer walls to the stage was discovered, which clearly shewed the building was intended for theatrical exhibitions. The great depth of the earth, and the inadequacy of pecuniary resources, prevented a perfect exploration of the third circular wall, and of an inner wall, which have only been laid open at a few points.

Having commenced the excavations, and superintended the whole operation, it has befallen me to delineate and describe the result.

In consequence of the land on the north-east side of the road not being the property of Lord Verulam, and being in pasture, the first excavation was not pursued in that direction; consequently, so small a part of the foundation of the building in the road has been laid open, that its purpose cannot be ascertained. Its outer or south-west wall is parallel with the stage of the theatre, and at a distance of 49 feet from its most north-eastern wall. It commences opposite the centre of the theatre, and extends south-east 89 feet, being 6 feet less than the semi-diameter of the theatre. The top of this foundation-wall is 7 feet 6 inches below the presumed level of the corridor of the theatre. At 30 feet from its south-eastern end it is perforated with a sewer, the bottom of which, being 5 feet

below the lowest part of the theatre, it may have been connected with its drainage. It contained bones of animals, mixed with sharp, coarse sand, evidently transported by a rapid current.

The foundations of all the theatre, except the innermost wall and one of the side rooms, have been laid open or satisfactorily traced. Where in the plan a shade is shewn between the outlines, the foundations have not been disturbed lower than was necessary to obtain the first course of Roman tiles. Where walls are shewn by outlines only, the earth has not been excavated, or only loose building-rubbish has been met with.

So early as in the writings of Tacitus, Verulam is mentioned as a municipium ;—York obtained the same rank ; and probably many other of the Roman cities in Britain had equal privileges. There may have been a power in the governing bodies of these places to impose, for public purposes, taxes on the towns or districts subject to their jurisdiction ; or the rank and central position of Verulam may have induced the imperial or colonial government to select it for the display of theatrical entertainments in this country. Either of these reasons may account for the existence of a theatre at Verulam. No other Roman remains, evidently of a public building, have been discovered in this their neglected colony.

Without fully experiencing the truth of the sentiment of the historian Niebuhr, that “ he, who calls what has vanished back again into being, enjoys a bliss like that of creating,” many have shared with me an enduring interest in the laborious development of this characteristic monument of the mighty race, who, for more than three centuries and a half possessed this land, and in the imaginary restoration, from these “ remnants of things that have passed away,” of the structures that were raised upon them.

I cannot say, in the words immediately preceding my last quotation, that of these remnants, “ what we have seen, our sons shall see,” for much of the earth has already fallen in ; in a few days the whole will be levelled, and the plough pass over the undistinguished site.

A description of this theatre can only be rendered intelligible by prefacing it with some cursory remarks on the dramatic performances of the ancients, and on the requisite distribution of their theatres.

The earliest representations probably took place in natural hollows, which first suggested the form of the ancient theatres; and the Greeks, by whom a permanent theatre was first erected about 340 B.C., usually availed themselves of some site where the ground, sloping down to the stage, would reduce the labour of hollowing out the centre of the theatre, an important consideration in areas of such vast extent.

The performances took place during the national festivals; it was therefore necessary that the theatres should be sufficiently capacious to contain not merely the citizens, but the vast numbers who thronged into the city on those occasions. Actors of eminence were eagerly sought for, and the Athenian government imposed heavy fines on their performers if they were absent during the city festivals. They constituted the amusement of the entire day, during which there were three or four representations, and in the intervals the audience regaled themselves with wine and food. The admission was either gratuitous, at the cost of the public, or some aspirant for popularity, or was at a merely nominal price, so that the performance was accessible to the entire population; and the audience collected early in the morning, and sometimes even in the night, to secure places.

As the ancients lived so much in public, not only were the performances exhibited, but the action of the piece was supposed to take place, in the open air, which was also better adapted than a closed building for the introduction of many of the characters represented. It would have been thought incongruous to introduce in a roofed building the objects of their worship, their celestial gods, or the deities of their rivers, woods, and mountains. In the theatre at Tauromenium, now Taormina, Etna, seen rising above the scene, might have occasionally assisted the delusion.

At Naples there is now a roofless theatre, in which, consequently, the performances take place by day.

In some of the writings of the Fathers of the Church, Christians were forbidden to attend the theatres; but the performances being by day, and at intervals, they escaped many of the objections made to modern theatres, and were probably frequented by every class.

On many of the sarcophagi of the Christians in the catacombs at Rome masks are represented, types of the

resemblance between the course of human life and a part played upon the stage. A pagan, proud in his erring faith of his career of duties nobly done, had inscribed on his tomb, "While I lived, I lived well—my drama is now ended—yours soon will be—farewell, and applaud me!"

It is believed, however, that in Greece females were not present at comedies.

Thirty thousand persons could be seated in the theatre at Athens. The theatre at Ephesus was 560 feet in diameter. In one of the theatres in Greece the stage was six times wider than in the great modern theatre of La Scala at Milan. The expense of erecting such large theatres was so great, that Pliny mentions one at Nicæa, which, though not finished, had cost 80,000% of our money; an enormous sum at that period.

The applause or disapprobation of the multitudes congregated in such vast buildings must have been expressed with an impetuosity but faintly represented in modern theatres. A favourite method of disgracing an offending actor, was to compel him to take off his mask, in order to enjoy the expression of his shame.

The first theatrical performances at Rome were of a comic character—afterwards tragedies were introduced. Vast theatres were erected at Rome, but the senate only permitted their existence for temporary purposes. They contained no seats; it was considered more manly to stand, and it discouraged a waste of time. Stone theatres had been constructed in some of the Roman cities, where so great a jealousy was not felt at the introduction of Grecian customs. The first permanent theatre at Rome was constructed by Pompey; it would contain 40,000 persons; and to avoid the objection which existed to permanent theatres, it formed part of the temple of Venus Victrix, to whom the entire building was dedicated.

Augustus next built one for 30,000 spectators; another was afterwards built by Cornelius Balbus. These are the only theatres recorded to have been erected at Rome; but they were often attached to the baths. The theatres which existed in most of the principal cities in the Roman empire must have been very prominent objects, for at Pompeii the outer circular wall of the theatre rose above the ashes which entombed all the other buildings in the city.

In many of the theatres in Greece, the koilon, or area,

of the theatre is excavated out of the solid rock, and the seats in the gallery consequently still remain undefaced by time.

The Romans seldom placed their theatres in hollows. They left the orchestra, or centre, on the natural level of the site, and elevated the spectators' seats round it.

In the Attic theatres the spectators faced the south-west; but Vitruvius recommended that they should face the north, so as to avoid the direct rays of the sun, and that the heated atmosphere might not be confined when an awning was extended.

The theatre of Verulam was erected on ground gently sloping to the north-east, its site being, no doubt, selected with reference to the street which was its north-eastern boundary.

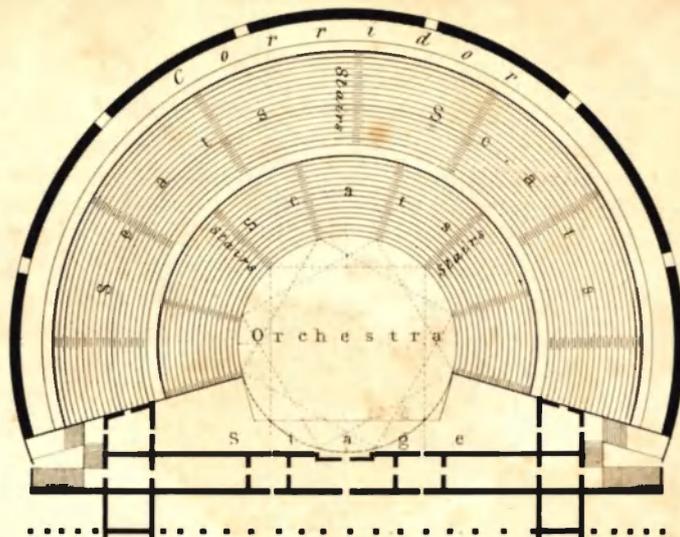
The outer walls, forming the corridor in the Greek theatres, contained rather more than a semicircle. There was an inner concentric circle, the diameter of which was one third that of the theatre.

The space included in this smaller circle was called the orchestra, or place for dancing, and was devoted to the chorus, being covered with boards for the purpose of their evolutions and dances. The width of the stage was double the diameter of the orchestra. Its depth was only one seventh of that diameter; but in some of the theatres were spaces at each side of the stage about twice that depth.

In the centre of the orchestra of the Greek theatre was placed the thymele, or altar to Dionysus (Bacchus), the top of which was level with the stage, which was about ten feet above the other parts of the orchestra. The thymele was surrounded by steps on every side. It was frequently occupied by the leader of the chorus; but at other times, according to the nature of the plays, represented an altar, a funeral monument, or other object.

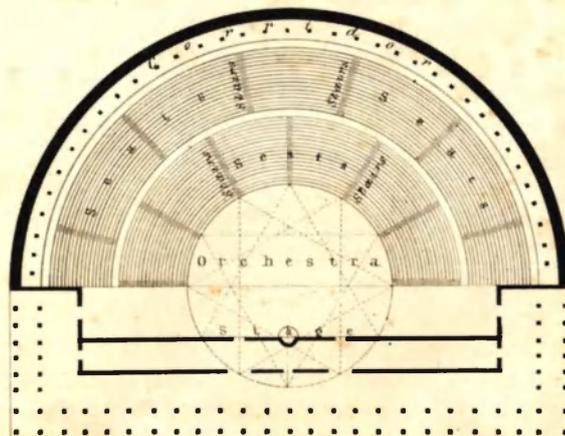
The flute-player attached to the chorus, and the prompter, were usually placed in front of the thymele, which concealed them from most of the audience. There were steps at each side of the stage by which the chorus might occasionally ascend and take a part in the action of the piece.

Actors who, representing ambassadors or messengers, made their appearance at entrances opening into the orchestra, might ascend the stage by the same means.



Plan of a Greek Theatre.

Plan  
of a Roman Theatre.





On each side of the orchestra were broad passages, by which the chorus entered the theatre.

The Roman theatres were modelled on those of Greece, from which, however, they differed materially, in consequence of the chorus not occupying so important a part in the Roman plays. They rarely exceeded a semicircle, and when they did, the curve was not continued beyond the semicircle, but the wall was carried on in a straight line; and the orchestra, instead of being devoted to the chorus, as in the Greek theatres, was occupied by the seats of the spectators of the highest rank in the state, or of those who derived from the eminent services of their ancestors a right of precedence. The stage was more capacious than in the Greek theatres, being in length twice the diameter of the orchestra, and in depth one fourth of that diameter, so as to afford space for the chorus on the stage, which was about five feet above the orchestra.

Round every ancient theatre was a corridor, forming a space between the outer wall and an inner concentric wall. The external wall was raised to a considerable height, and sometimes contained in its inner side niches filled with metal vessels, to increase, by reverberation, the sound of the actor's voice. The wall of the scene completed the retention of the sound. Over the corridor were seats sometimes appropriated to the females, and the space between them and the orchestra was occupied by rows of seats concentric with the outer wall, and rising like wide stairs so that the spectators placed their feet on the next lower row, which was sometimes hollowed for that purpose.

In most of the large theatres stairs intersected the rows of seats; and wide spaces at intervals, between and concentric with the seats, gave the multitudes of inferior ranks, who occupied this part of the theatre, easier access to their places, and afforded standing room when the theatres were crowded. At the back of each of these wider spaces rose a wall forming a division like a lofty step between the rows.

The spectators in the galleries, where the seats were of stone or marble, frequently took cushions. The higher ranks in the orchestra of the Roman theatres had seats carried there by their slaves.

The scene was at the back of the stage, and painted by

professed scene-painters, and usually represented a street, or the front of a palace, or a wood, and could be changed to suit the locality of the play, or even during the performance. Until it commenced, there was a curtain before the *scena*. The curtain was at the back of the stage, and not, as in modern theatres, between the stage and the audience. As there was no roof to any part of the theatre, it was necessary that the curtain, instead of being let down from a roller, should be raised, the roller being under the stage. Behind the *scena* was the *postscaenium*, in which murders, and other parts of the action of the play, were sometimes supposed to take place. From the *postscaenium* were three doors through the *scena*, one for each of the three actors, three being the legitimate number on the stage. The king or principal character entered by the centre door. Celestial gods sometimes made their appearance even over the walls of the *scena*, for the ancient theatres were supplied with every variety of stage-machinery. At each side were erections contrived to revolve so as to change that part of the scene, and in which actors sometimes appeared in their own houses to address the other actors on the stage.

At the sides of the stage were entrances to rooms built for the convenience of the performers.

In the origin of the drama, the chorus were the only performers. Thespis, about 536 B.C., introduced in his own person the custom of relating some fable or adventure to give them time to rest. This was called the episode, and, other actors being subsequently added, it became the principal part of the performance, though in the Greek theatres always accompanied by the chorus.

Though the actors rarely exceeded three on the stage at the same time, an unlimited number of guards or attendants might be introduced. The chorus consisted usually of about twenty-four in comedy, and fifteen in tragedy. In the Greek theatres their leader, who was called the *Coryphæus*, was stationed in the centre of the orchestra. Sometimes they were divided into two parts, called *semi-choruses*, each having its own *coryphæus*, and sometimes into ranks of four or six. Their performances consisted in singing choral strains and executing measured dances. Their chant, sung in crossing the orchestra, was called the *strophe*; on returning they sang the *antistrophe*;

and the part sung in the centre of the orchestra was called the epode. The part taken by the chorus has no analogy in the present drama. They reflected what was passing on the stage, holding a sort of medium between the actors and audience; but their leader often, ascending the thymele, took part in the dialogue of the piece.

All the performers in Greece and Rome were males, and in tragedies the characters they represented were, with few exceptions, demigods or heroes, great in their acts or their endurance, delivering lofty orations in a measured style of declamation, and not engaging in impassioned dialogue, which is found so effective in modern tragedies. The actors always wore masks, which, of course, throughout the entire performance could only express the same unvarying passion. This must have been a great restraint both to the author and the performer. The masks for each character were well known, so that the audience at once recognised the character represented. Particular masks were assigned not merely to celebrated individuals, but to classes of character; for instance, in Greece, the parasite had a dark complexion, the rustic young man a pug-nose, &c. They generally covered not only the face, but the head down to the shoulders. The chorus in tragedy were generally without masks. At the latter period of the drama, the masks are usually represented with the mouth open, and the features exaggerated, sometimes almost to caricatures.

From some mechanical formation at the mouth, the mask increased the power of the actor's voice, and was thence in Latin called a *persona*, or resounder, from which we take the English word 'person.'

The theatres were so large, that the expression of an actor's countenance could not have been distinguished; and in the representations of heathen gods and demigods, and of goddesses by male characters, the delusion was better maintained by a mask, whose lineaments were drawn by the ablest artists, than by the homely features of an actor who might on the same day represent a Venus or a satyr. The performers, in tragedy, were raised on high shoes, and were padded to increase their bulk, which prevented the masks giving their heads a disproportionate size.

The actors were called in Greece, hypocrites or answerers; a designation thence applied to feigned characters.

The Romans first invented, and the Greeks adopted from them, the luxury of covering the theatres with an awning, the extending of which over such large areas must have been at all times a task of exceeding difficulty, and was only practicable in calm weather. It was raised by means of ropes extended on masts inserted in perforated blocks of stone projecting from the external wall. The persons employed in raising it were called *velarii*. The awning led to another luxury, the diffusion of fragrant scents through the theatre. At Pompeii was found a notice on the walls that, at the next performance, there would be an awning and perfumes. Perhaps these promised odours may have been overpowered by the sulphurous breath of the eruption which overwhelmed their city; for Dion Cassius relates a legend that, at its commencement, the population of Pompeii were assembled in their theatre. When no awning was raised, the Roman ladies used umbrellas, and the gentlemen wore broad-brimmed hats as protections from the rain and sun.

Some few theatres, however, had roofs, as the smaller theatre at Pompeii, and, at a later period, two others in Greece.

Having concluded these cursory remarks, I will endeavour to describe, from our excavations, the theatre of Verulam. It was 190 feet 3 inches in diameter. The two outer walls are on the plan of the Greek theatres; they comprise 240 degrees of a circle; between them was a corridor 9 feet wide. The corridor did not afford a continuous communication round the theatre, for it was interrupted at the entrances by the stairs which crossed the corridor down into the lower part of the theatre, and also probably by walls where foundations are shewn on the south-eastern side, which was most probably the position of the stairs ascending to the seats over the corridor, but possibly of stairs descending to a passage to the stage under the spectators' seats, for the entry of characters appearing to come from the infernal regions.

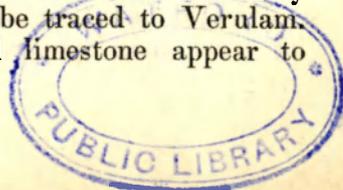
The stage contained only the limited space of 46 feet long and 8 feet 9 inches deep. According to the principles which prevailed among the ancients, it should have been about twice that length, and in a Greek theatre 9 feet, and in a Roman theatre 16 feet, in depth. In all the ancient theatres, as far as I can ascertain, the walls

connecting the front of the stage with the outer walls were in the same line; but in the theatre of Verulam they slant 10 feet, giving additional space to the theatre, by throwing back the stage farther from the centre than if the usual rules of construction had been observed. The oblique direction of these walls afforded a better view of the performance from some of the side seats.

Ten feet in width of the space between what appears to have been the front of the stage and the cross wall, 16 feet 6 inches from such supposed front, is gained by the obliquity of the side walls.

The use to which this space was devoted is not clearly apparent. As the external form of the building accords with the Grecian model, the internal arrangements were probably adapted to the entertainments represented in the theatres of that nation, and this space may have been devoted to the chorus, and so have rendered the limited area of the stage sufficient for the other actors, or, as usual in the theatres of the great cities of the Macedonian time, it may have formed a lower stage for mimes, musicians, and dancers. It is possible, however, that it contained the seats of persons of the very highest rank. The wall shewn on the north-west side of that space is only a covered sewer.

At the east part of the theatre at Verulam was a room with a coarse tessellated pavement without any pattern, composed of tesserae of Roman tiles about 1 inch square, laid on a very thin layer of concrete. This was one of the rooms usually found at the sides of the stage of ancient theatres for the use of the performers. The foundations of a corresponding room on the west side of the stage have not been found. The ground naturally sloped to the north, and has been raised by an accumulation of soil and building-rubbish, which may account for the failure of our endeavours to discover the foundations of that room, and of the portico and colonnade, which were usually placed at the back of the ancient theatres, as a refuge for the audience from rain. At this latter point, however, were dug up two fragments, parts of columns,  $24\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter, of the fossiliferous oolite called Caen stone, but found in some parts of England. These are the only pieces of carved stone which can be traced to Verulam. Many varieties of sandstone and limestone appear to



have been used in the construction of the theatre, as well as slabs of white marble  $\frac{1\frac{3}{4}}$  inch thick.

The outer wall of the theatre was 5 feet 10 inches thick, the second wall 3 feet 6 inches, the scena 2 feet 6 inches, and all the other walls 2 feet thick. The external wall of the building in the road varied from 7 to 2 feet thick. They were all constructed with the same materials; the foundation was composed of flints and a few pieces of chalk, on which, on the natural level of the site, was laid a horizontal course of 2 or 3 Roman tiles. At one point this course has not been removed, and upon it remains a fragment, 2 feet high, of a wall of flints, cut and faced, so that 3 feet may have intervened, as in the city walls, between the bonding courses of tiles. Tiles were also used at the quoins. The mortar used in the walls was of the usual materials, lime and sand and small stones; but the sides of the walls in the road were filled in, where the earth had been removed in digging the foundations, with mortar partly, but in very varying proportions, composed of pounded tile, imparting to the mortar a pink colour. Loose pieces of the same coloured mortar were frequently met with in excavating the theatre; but it appears not to have been used in the walls. Mortar of this kind was commonly used by the Romans.

There is some difference in the construction of the external defensive walls, and those of the internal buildings of the city. The flints appear in the former to have been less carefully faced, and the interior is in a greater measure composed of water-worn fragments of flint. The materials were laid in all the walls with mortar of the same consistence as that now used, which was left at intervals to dry, so as to prevent bulging.

An entrance at the centre, opposite the stage, and another on the east side, have been partially laid open: no trace is discoverable of the corresponding entrance on the west side, in consequence of the foundation of the innermost of the two outer walls having been obliterated at that part of the theatre. The entrances immediately after passing through the arch or door in the outer wall descended down an incline, probably having steps (the innermost of the two outer walls being cut away to the depth of 2 feet 3 inches,) to the lower rows of the gallery. The seats over the corridor, and perhaps some of the upper

rows in the gallery, were over the entrances. The front entrance is 7 feet, and the side entrance 10 feet wide.

The space over the corridor being 12 feet wide, including the thickness of the top of the inner wall, might contain 3 or 4 rows of seats; 14 other rows of seats might be contained in the space 33 feet wide between the corridor and the outermost of the two inner walls. And the two innermost walls might have furnished room for two other rows, making altogether 20 rows, which would require an elevation of about 25 feet; so, the orchestra being 10 feet below the level of the corridor, the highest seat over the latter must have been 15 feet above such level.

The fourth wall is only shewn in the plan where it is laid open in three places, from 6 to 2 feet distance from the third circular wall. It probably formed a separation for some privileged class—the space it surrounded was the orchestra for the seats of the most distinguished persons.

The discovery of many fragments of roof-tiles suggested the possibility that there might have been a roof; but in that case we should not have found within the theatre the sewer alluded to p. 11.

All the walls of the theatre (except perhaps the exterior) were painted in fresco. The walls were first plastered with mortar, some of it the pink mortar I have described, one or even upwards of two inches thick in one coat. I have only met with one fragment composed of two coats. The mortar was reduced to a perfectly even surface; on this was laid a covering of the finest mortar, perfectly white, seldom thicker than card-paper; and on this, while both the coatings of mortar remained wet, were laid mineral water-colours, which adhered to, and dried with it, and in a slight degree added to the durability of the surface. The colours being native colours, and not artificially prepared, time and damp cannot affect them, and so, as long as the mortar retains its surface, the colours remain uninjured. Walls painted in fresco were generally covered with an encaustic varnish composed of Punic wax, tempered with a little oil. This being warmed with an iron pan, adhered to the mortar, which was then polished by being rubbed with a cloth; but I cannot perceive any trace of such a process on the fresco paintings of this theatre. The fragments found must have been for centuries exposed to the action of sun, and wet, and frost,

and for many centuries to the damp of the earth. After a lapse of fifteen centuries since these colours were used, most of them remain uninjured. They are chiefly red and blue verditer, but many other shades are used. The prevailing pattern ran in broad lines, and probably formed compartments, or panels, as usually found on ancient fresco walls. Some of the lines forming the panels are excellent imitations of porphyry.

The theatre was probably left to fall into ruins from the period when England ceased to be a Roman colony, early in the fifth century. The invasion of the Saxons commenced about 450. We can only conjecture the period of its destruction. At the building of St. Albans Church and Monastery in 793, and on the erection of the Churches of St. Peter, St. Stephen, and St. Michael, about 950, large quantities of building materials must have been required; but, with the exception of those used for St. Michael's Church, they were probably taken from the eastern part of Verulam. The great demolition of the city took place to prepare for the rebuilding the Abbey-church and Monastery, in 1077.

As is usual round all ancient buildings in England, there had been an accumulation of earth round the walls of the theatre previous to their demolition. For when on that occasion the workmen removed the lowest layer of tiles, which was about the natural level of the site, the earth immediately fell in, or was thrown over the foundations, which had not subsequently either been trodden upon, or exposed to the weather, the mortar being left quite sharp and uninjured. From these facts we may safely infer, that many centuries had elapsed between the desertion and demolition; though, from the good preservation of the painted mortar on the walls, we might have inferred that they had not for so long a period been exposed to the severe frosts of this latitude.

The cavea of the theatre is filled with artificial soil 9 feet deep, some of which must have been brought there; though it is difficult to estimate how far it might have resulted from the levelling power of the plough and harrow, and wind and rain.

The only relics found during the excavations were, a brass fibula, or brooch, having apparently an enamelled centre, a few fragments of green glass, and a great variety

of broken pottery. Two pieces of the description called Samian ware, bear the manufacturers' names, commencing "Donat." and "Sev." The coins found have been arranged by Mr. Evans, of Abbots Langley, as follows :

Tiberius . . . . .	1	Urbs Roma . . . . .	4
Trajanus . . . . .	1	Constantinopolis . . . . .	4
Philippus (Pater) . . . . .	1	Crispus . . . . .	1
Gallienus . . . . .	3	Constantinus II. . . . .	8
Salonina . . . . .	1	Constans . . . . .	11
Postumus (Pater) . . . . .	1	Constantius II. . . . .	8
Victorinus . . . . .	3	Decentius . . . . .	1
Tetricus (Pater) . . . . .	10	Valentinianus I. . . . .	3
Tetricus (Filius) . . . . .	1	Valens . . . . .	6
Claudius Gothicus . . . . .	5	Gratianus . . . . .	2
Carausius . . . . .	3	Arcadius . . . . .	2
Helena . . . . .	1	Uncertain . . . . .	86
Theodora . . . . .	1		
Constantinus (Magnus) . . . . .	2		171
Populus Romanus . . . . .	1		

The building-tiles are generally about 16 inches long, and from  $11\frac{1}{2}$  to  $12\frac{1}{4}$  inches in width, and from  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches thick. The flue-tiles are 6 inches across. The scored tiles, and those with the sides raised for roofs, are only in fragments.

Having attempted an artistic description of the materials of the Roman city, I will take an imaginary view of their application at several successive periods.

The dwellings of the Britons were partly hollowed in the earth, and covered with flags, and the sides were formed of wood, or mud, or of stones loosely piled, for they were unacquainted with the use of mortar,—one of the most important discoveries of the ancients. Even the masses of stone which, arranged in circles, formed their places of worship, only adhered to each other by their vast weight.

When Verulam became a Roman station, the British inhabitants beheld with astonishment flints and burnt pieces of moulded clay, cemented together, rising as lofty walls, or suspended in arches, to construct in every varied form the costly and enduring edifices which adorned this favoured city.

A heathen temple rose—but the builders talked of the new faith which denied all the gods of the empire. Then followed the Christian basilica,—the temples of Thor and Woden,—the second triumph of Christianity.

Imagine that centuries have passed. Again view the

ancient city—a widely-extended scene of desolation,—column, and arch, and wall, glistening with bright garlands of ivy, and moss, and wild flowers, extend to the margin of the lake. From his palace of Kingsbury the saintly Edred mournfully contemplates in those shattered ruins the results of the ruthless devastation committed by his heathen ancestors.

Another scene.—The corn grows luxuriantly on the site of Verulam, from which every trace of ruin has disappeared. The displaced materials rise on the opposite hill in the proud forms of a church and monastery, whose vast proportions denote that the Normans have dominion in the land; and there monarch, and abbot, and peer, and monk, are prostrate at the shrine of the martyr of Verulam.

Other centuries have passed. The church alone remains—no abbot or monk is in the land—the cattle quietly graze the rich pasture of the sunny slope once covered by the monastic buildings. The materials, again displaced, wall in the domain of the old warrior, Sir Richard Lee, of Sopwell.

Again three centuries of repose—another change. At this moment the ruined wall supplies materials for the construction of another Christian church, but in a less stately form.

Such has been their varied fate during eighteen centuries of the existence of the human race: but these flints, enclosing sea-shells in their adamant growth, tell of an early era before their native bed of chalk—this fertile district of our land—slowly rose above the ocean; yet, in our voyage of life, the heaving of one billow occupies a longer space than even that period of unnumbered years “in the boundless deep of eternity.”

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At the same meeting (April 12th, 1848), a paper on the British Coins of ancient Verulam was read by Mr. Evans; and a letter from Messrs. Buckler, descriptive of the recent discoveries in the presbytery of the Abbey Church of St. Albans.

