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MEDIÆVAL REMAINS AT ROCHESTER.

BY A. A. ARNOLD.

Arch beneath the approach to Rochester Castle.

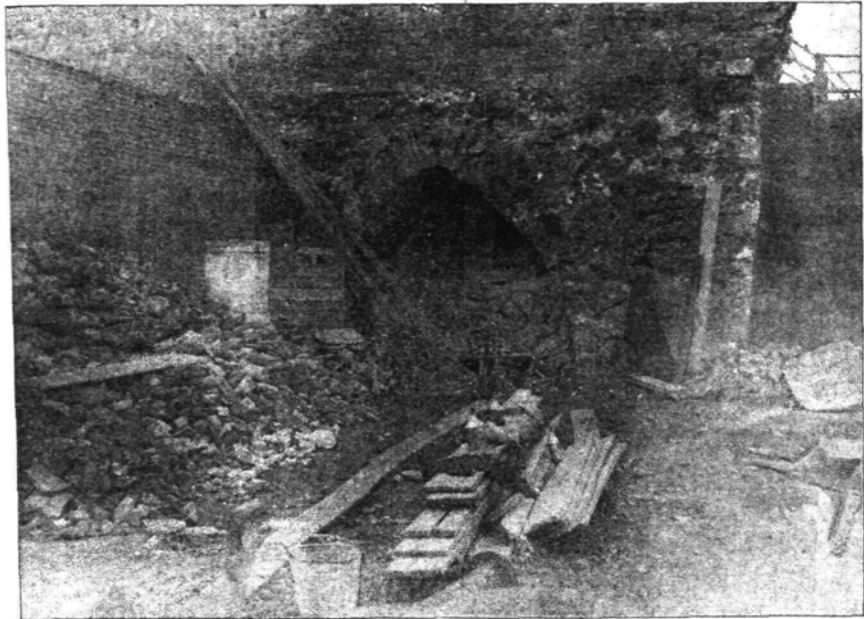
MANY of the members of the Kent Archæological Society present at the annual meeting held at Rochester in 1886, will remember the "Notes for a Perambulation" of that ancient city, written by the Hon. Secretary, Canon Scott Robertson; but probably few penetrated to the place he there described as an "enclosed rubbish-yard," at the top of Two-post Alley, or inspected the remains of a small pointed arch which he mentioned as one of the arches which supported the road to the main gate of the castle.

In the course of the summer of 1888, this yard was cleared from the accumulated rubbish, ruinous old wooden buildings, and fragments which had covered it; and so a better view was obtained, for the first time, of what remained of that arch and of this part of the old castle ditch. It is now again entirely hidden from view; a very substantial and handsome building—the Rochester Liberal Club—having been built, which covers the whole site.

When the site was cleared, some photographs and drawings were made, and the accompanying illustrations prepared from them will give a better idea of the remains than any description which I could offer.

In the *History of Rochester*, published by Fisher in 1772, the writer of that most careful and valuable work says, in his description of the castle:

"Three sides of the castle were surrounded with a deep broad ditch, which is now nearly filled up. On the other side runs the River Medway. The entrance into this fortress is from the north-east. Part of the portal still remains. On each side of this is an angular recess, with arches in the outward walls that command the



ARCH NO. 2, IN CASTLE WALL.



ARCH NO. 1, UNDER CASTLE BRIDGE.

IN THE MOAT OF ROCHESTER CASTLE.

"BY PHOTO" SPRUE & CO. LONDON

avenues to the bridge of the castle to the right and left. Over the gateway and the recesses was a large tower, from this entrance is an easy descent into the city, formed on two arches turned over the castle ditch. This descent from the castle terminated in a street which, in the *Registrum Roffense*, is called Venella, and was the grand avenue from the High Street to the castle, which no doubt procured it the name of Castle Street,* which it appears by a Court Roll to have retained so low at least as 1576."

The descent from the castle, as will be seen from the above extract, was a steep roadway formed on two arches turned over the castle ditch, and the lower of these arches is shewn as No. 1 in our Plate; the remains of the more central and probably the more spacious arch under the roadway, spanning the moat, have altogether disappeared. The lower archway, shewn in our illustration, was formed of large blocks of chalk, with some rag-stone.

I regret to say that no exact measurements were taken, but the width of the arch in its broadest part may be approximately stated at 12 feet, and the height about 8 feet. It was impossible to get more than a few feet into the interior, which was filled with rubbish. The ditch, on the south side of this road or causeway, now forming the site of the new Liberal Club, had been to a great extent levelled, and wooden buildings had been standing there for probably a century and a half; they were altogether removed in 1888.

The excavations which I have mentioned exposed not only the arch under the Castle Bridge, but also another arch supporting the remains of the castle wall, at the rear of the site. It is one of those arches often described as "an arch of construction," of which other examples are to

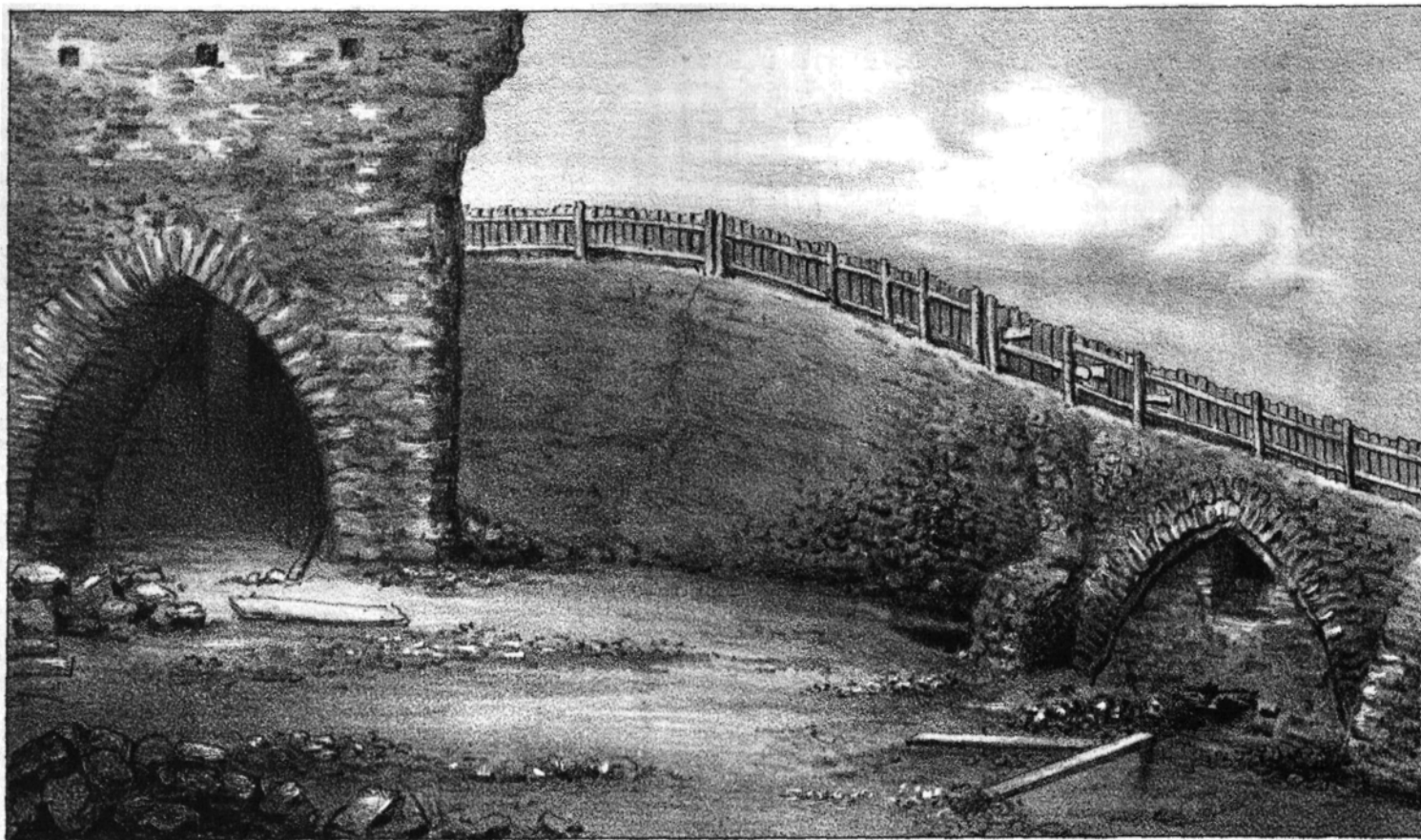
* The Castle Street was afterwards called Castle Lane; the portion leading to the street has for many years been a way for foot-passengers only, and posts having been erected—probably to prevent other traffic—it has acquired the euphonious appellation of "Two-post Alley." The upper part of the thoroughfare, nearer to the castle, where it widens towards Boley Hill, forming a shoulder or "epaulement" to the works (see the annexed map), obtained probably from that circumstance the name of Epaule, or commonly Epple Lane, by which it is sometimes, even now, called. The lane near, now known as King's-head Lane, leading from the King's Head in the High Street, past the ancient enclosed burial-ground to Boley Hill, is undoubtedly the lane which, in the grants from Ethelbert to the Church of Rochester (see Hearne's *Textus Roffensis*, pp. 63 and 85), is called Doddingherne.

be seen in Rochester; one especially in the city wall, near the gardens abutting on Crow Lane. The newly-discovered arch of construction is shewn as No. 2 in our Plate.

The new building of the Rochester Liberal Club covers the whole site, which was cleared and excavated; the lower walls effectually block up all access to the arch under the castle bridge, but not to that under the castle wall.

The entrance gateway to the castle and the portal mentioned in the *History of Rochester* have disappeared; but they are seen on the old map or plan which accompanies this paper. A great fragment of the wall, said to be thirty feet high, and about twenty feet in width, is recorded to have fallen on the 19th March 1806, with a dreadful crash, and to have entirely destroyed a coach-builder's shed below it, then occupied by Mr. Butcher (*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvi., p. 274), which at that time stood on this site. Another part of the entrance gateway was, I think, taken down about 1871, when the castle gardens were first taken by the City Corporation, and thrown open to the public as a recreation ground.

The moat or ditch round the castle is described, in the above extract from the *History of Rochester*, as "deep and broad;" and how true that description was may still be judged by viewing what is now left of it between the new Rochester Bridge Chamber (which stands probably on the mouth, or nearly on the mouth, of the ditch, where it joined the river) and the top of "Two-post Alley." Some handsome new houses, and the Rochester and County Club, have been lately built on the upper ridge overhanging the moat, and there is a rapid and deep dip between the back of these houses and the rear of the houses in the High Street. This is still more apparent on the highest point of this ridge, where, if the garden-doors (made in the thickness of the old wall) are open, it is seen that the descent to the moat is still very steep, and sharply defined. Even under the altered circumstances, this view gives a good idea of the depth and imposing proportions of the moat, as it must have been in the thirteenth century. The other part of it, above the castle bridge, passing along the back of Boley Hill, through



No. 2.

SPRAGUE & CO. LITHO. 22, MARTIN LANE, CANNON ST., LONDON, E.C.

No. 1.

IN THE MOAT OF ROCHESTER CASTLE—ARCHES: (1) UNDER CASTLE BRIDGE; (2) IN OUTER WALL.

the castle grounds known as "Baker's Walks," and so into the river at the west side of the castle, have been more effectually levelled; but for the greater part of this route the course of the moat can very easily be traced. What may be called the Boley Hill portion of the moat was levelled early in the last century, as we learn from the *History of Rochester*, p. 281.

Map of Rochester, dated 1717.

In order to illustrate this description of the moat and the Castle bridge, and their surroundings, I am allowed by the Wardens of Rochester Bridge to annex a copy of an old map in their possession. The original was revised in 1717 from a survey made some thirty-three years earlier, and it shews better, certainly, than any map I have before seen, the proportions of the moat, and the access to the Castle, the Castle bridge, Castle Street, and other points referred to in this paper. The map was merely designed to shew the houses and other possessions of the Bridge Wardens within the city, and is interesting in that respect; it also shews the South gate of the city,* which stood between the wall of Boley Hill House, now Mrs. Aveling's, and the opposite wall belonging to the gardens of the old palace of the Bishops of Rochester. The arch of this gate is marked in the earlier copy of the map made in 1684 at a different angle; namely, as crossing the road from east to west, instead of from north to south, nearly.

A precinct-gatehouse, beside the south-west entrance to the Cathedral, as shewn in the accompanying old map, is mentioned in books of the last century; but the memory of it has died out. In the *Kentish Traveller* (edition dated 1790), p. 148, we read:

* The author of the *History of Rochester* says in 1771: "The south gate was near Boley Hill, in the road to St. Margaret's; the hooks on which the gate hung are still in the wall at the north-east corner of Mr. Gordon's garden; the gate is about *nine* feet wide; the arch was taken down in the year 1770." The hooks are gone, but the wall at this point still shews where the gates stood. The late Mr. Phippen, in his *Sketches of Rochester*, 1862, absolutely denied that there was ever a "south gate" here. Our map would no doubt have convinced him.

"The almonry of the convent was at the South West extremity of the church. It is now the house of the fifth Prebendary, and this stall is annexed, by Act of Parliament, to the Provostship of Oriel College in Oxford. *There was within memory a gate, adjoining to the gable end of this house, which enclosed this part of the precinct, now called College Green.*"

In the *History of Rochester* (edition 1772) we find two allusions to this gate. On p. 97, speaking of the house of the fifth Prebendary, it is said, "from the dangerous state of the adjoining gatehouse" it was removed. Again, we read on p. 99:

"*Besides the gate at the end of Dr. Clarke's house, there were three other gates, belonging to the precincts of this priory, viz., the Cemetery Gate, which seems to be that which is now called 'College Yard Gate.' . . . St. William's Gate was another avenue into the precincts. . . . The Prior's Gate was where the grammar school now (1772) is.*"

The remarkable tree* upon Boley (Bully) Hill, beneath which the local courts used to be held, is also prominently shewn upon our old map.

Dr. Thorpe, compiler of the *Registrum Roffense*, resided in a house, near the pump in the High Street, which is marked with the figure 9 in our copy of the old map.

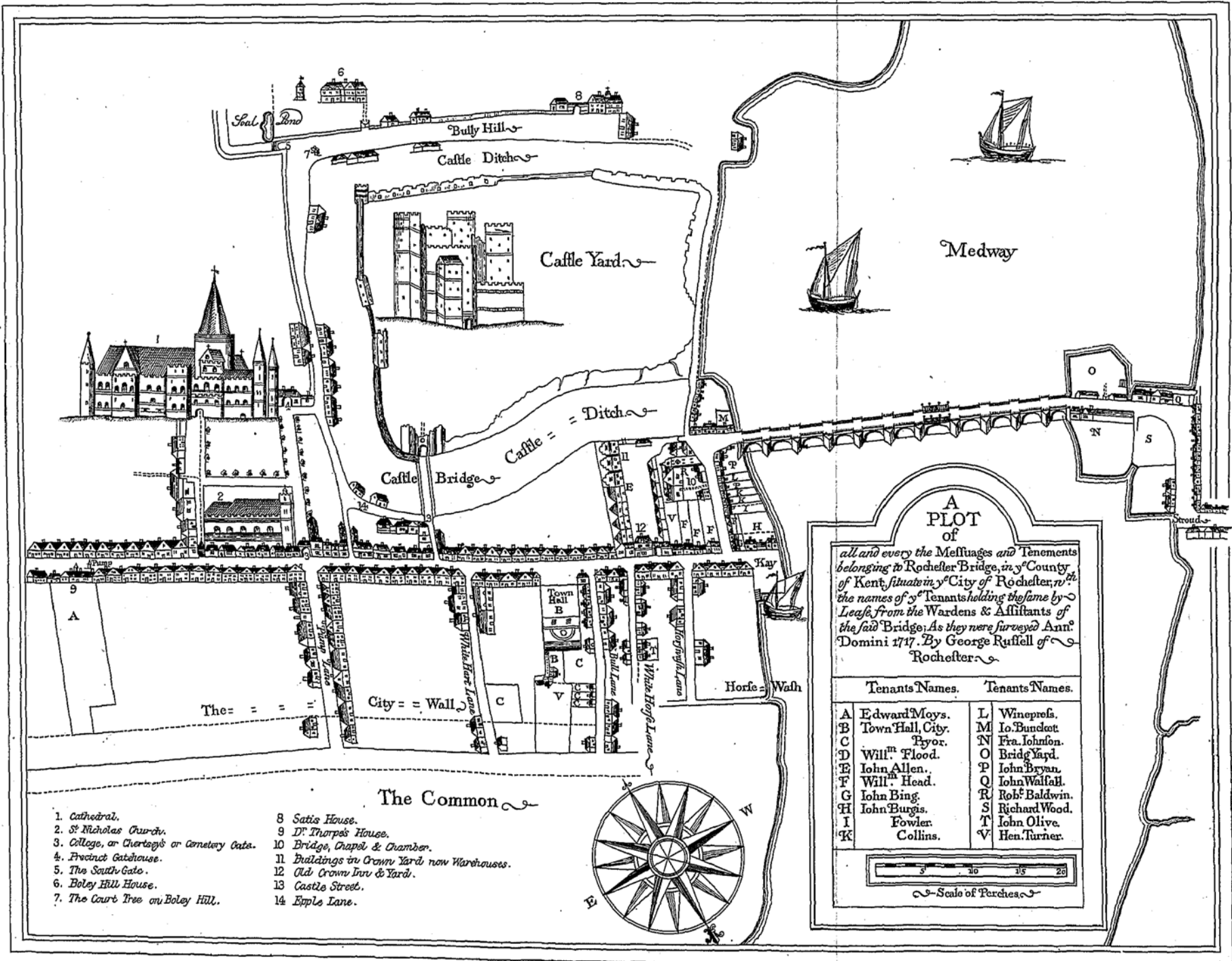
It will be observed that the old bridge shewn in the map stands further south than the existing modern bridge, which starts from a site near the word "Kay" in the old map.

The extent of the old Crown Inn and its yard is well shewn upon the old map; on our copy of it the Crown Inn is denoted by the figure 12.

Satis House is shewn (No. 8 on our copy of the map) as it must have been when Queen Elizabeth visited Mr. Watts there. It was altered and "restored" by Mr. Brooke.

Boley Hill House (No. 6 on our copy of the map), formerly occupied by the Gordon family (mentioned in the note above on the last page), is now the residence of Mrs. Aveling.

* See *Archæologia Cantiana*, XVII., pp. 183, 186, 187.



1. Cathedral.
2. St Nicholas Church.
3. College, or Chertsey's or Cemetery Gate.
4. Precinct Gatehouse.
5. The South Gate.
6. Boley Hill House.
7. The Court Tree on Boley Hill.

8. Satis House.
9. Dr. Thorpe's House.
10. Bridge, Chapel & Chamber.
11. Buildings in Crown Yard, now Warehouses.
12. Old Crown Inn & Yard.
13. Castle Street.
14. Apple Lane.

A
PLOT
of

all and every the Messuages and Tenements belonging to Rochester Bridge, in the County of Kent, situated in the City of Rochester, with the names of the Tenants holding the same by Lease from the Wardens & Assistants of the said Bridge, As they were surveyed Ann. Domini 1717. By George Ruffell of Rochester.

| Tenants Names. | | Tenants Names. | |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| A | Edward Moys. | L | Wineprofs. |
| B | Town Hall, City. | M | Io. Bunctott |
| C | Pyor. | N | Fra. Johnson. |
| D | Will ^m Flood. | O | Bridge Yard. |
| E | John Allen. | P | John Bryan. |
| F | Will ^m Head. | Q | John Wallfall. |
| G | John Bing. | R | Rob ^t Baldwin. |
| H | John Burgis. | S | Richard Wood. |
| I | Fowler. | T | John Olive. |
| K | Collins. | V | Hen. Turner. |

Scale of Paces.

Foundations of a Wall of the Priory.

In a separate paper in this Volume reference is made to the assistance rendered to the Kent Archæological Society by Mr. Banks of Rochester, the City Surveyor. In the following instance we are also indebted to him. He carefully measured and made a plan of the foundations of the mediæval wall, which was found under the vacant piece of land between the High Street and the south side of the choir of Rochester Cathedral. It was thought, by some, that the foundations of the old *City Corn Cross* might be found there, and so in 1887 an examination was made. If any fragment of the *Corn Cross* had been found, it might probably have been rebuilt by the City, as the Queen's Jubilee Memorial. There was, however, no vestige of the Cross. What Mr. Banks did find was the lower part of the wall, of stone and chalk, "*de petra et calce*," which was built by the Monks of St. Andrew in pursuance of the licence granted in the 19th of Edward III. near the gate of St. William, between the city and the garden of the Priory (see Thorpe's *Registrum Roffense*, pp. 552-3). Mr. Banks uncovered this work for a length of about eighty-five feet. It lies fifteen feet from the outer side of the new retaining wall against the High Street, the top is about three feet below the present surface. Mr. Banks describes it as a rubble wall, built of rough irregularly shaped pieces of stone. The base appeared to be composed of large blocks of chalk; the rubble work, of which about three feet remains, was about five feet high, its base being about eight feet below the surface; both the chalk and the rubble are set in mortar, and the chalk base spreads a little wider than the rubble wall.