

THE OLDEST BRICK IN EXISTENCE.

At one of the recent meetings of the Academy des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, in Paris, the keeper of the Louvre, Mr. Henzey, showed a brick which is undoubtedly the oldest in existence, dating, it is estimated, from the fortieth century B.C. The brick in question was discovered by the French savant and antiquarian, de Sarzee, during recent excavations at Tello, the ancient Sipulo in Chaldea.

The brick was somewhat curved, and had been baked, but was of such crude form that it evidently had neither been put in a press nor moulded. The mark of the maker was simply the imprint of the thumb. It was clearly made very soon after the discovery of the art of brickmaking, which art, as is universally admitted, marks the dawn of civilization.

Other bricks of a much more recent date were shown. Some of them bore the mark of the coat of arms of Sipulo, an eagle with the head of a lion. Others again were inscribed with the name of the reigning monarch.—Exchange.

OIL CEMENT OF THE ANCIENTS.

Samples of cement used in antique water conduits about Ephesus and Smyrna were recently subjected to chemical analysis, and the results have proved interesting from the archaeological as well as the engineering point of view. While the different samples were from the water-works that dated from several centuries before Christ to 300 years after, yet it was found that the general composition of all was quite similar. The chief constituent was carbonate of lime, but mixed with it was from two to eight per cent. of organic material. This was ascertained to consist of a mixture of fatty acids, and it is believed that the cement was the oil cement which Pliny and Vitruvius mention in their works. Experiments were made with a cement consisting of burned lime and olive or linseed oil, but it was not found to be permanent. On the other hand a mixture of two-thirds air-slaked lime and one third olive oil hardened readily and possessed great endurance, leading to the belief that this was the composition of the ancient cements which were analyzed.

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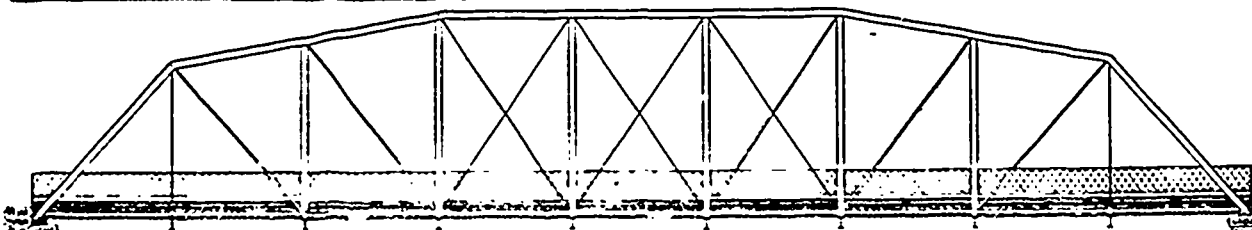
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