

NOTABILIA MCMXII.

The most important archæological event of the year in this county has been the uncovering, between Hambleden and the Thames, of the remains of a Roman villa, homestead, or hamlet. This work was entrusted by the owner of the site, the Hon. W. F. D. Smith, to his neighbour and the actual discoverer, Mr. Alfred Heneage Cocks, F.S.A., who has devoted over eight months of unremitting care and attention to the work. It will take much time thoroughly to digest all the evidence that has come to light, and when that has been done the conclusions will probably be set out in a paper to be read before the Society of Antiquaries.

The walls, of which the lower parts seem to remain fairly complete, were taken down—*when* it would be hard to say—sufficiently to allow the plough to pass. They would seem to have been dwarf walls only, built of flint, carrying timber superstructures. No indications were found of this having been the residence of a wealthy man, as stated in some newspapers. Most of the buildings were devoted to agricultural purposes, and quite scientific drying floors were found in several places. A boundary wall enclosed a large area entered through a gateway, of which the piers were found. Numerous large midden-pits, a stone-lined well, human remains, and over 700 coins are amongst the discoveries.

All antiquaries, whether resident in this county or outside it, must be grateful to the owner for having allowed farm land to be broken up and defraying the very considerable cost of the excavations; they may also feel confidence that in Mr. Cocks's hands, in consultation with other experts, the investigation, so far as carried, has been as complete as possible.

During the making of a sunk garder at Chequers Court, on the south side of the mansion, the founda-

tions of the old Gate-house were uncovered, and an underground chamber below the portion of the building lying to the left of the drive through, towards the house, revealed. Mr. Lee called Mr. A. H. Cocks's attention to the discovery, who, with Mr. Niven, visited the spot recently. The gate-house seems to centre with the court-yard about which the old mansion was built. The chamber is well preserved and very well built, measuring 12 ft. by 8 ft., the greater length being parallel with the axis of the gate-house, and 8 ft. high. The whole is of fine Tudor brickwork, a barrel vault (which has been plastered) with two chamfered ribs; there are two small recesses on each side 2 ft. wide, 2 ft. 6 in. high, and 1 ft. deep, with, half-way up, a brick shelf cleverly keyed. At the further end is a similar recess, but loftier, as allowed by the barrel vault. At the end next the house there was apparently a wooden staircase. The recesses on one side have low arched heads, the other three have flat heads. The bricks measure on the face $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 2 in. high.

The room is apparently co-temporary with the original portions of the house. It is not where one would expect to find a wine cellar, but it was apparently made for this purpose.

Mr. Cannon, contractor for the work now going on, has made a plan of the foundations and chamber.

The excavations of Corstopitum, Corbridge-on-Tyne, begun in 1906, have been continued each summer since then. The site, which covers at least 30 acres, has already yielded many objects of interest; the lower portions of buildings not surpassed in importance by anything at Silchester, sculptures, about 5,000 coins, etc. The gold coins found in 1908 and 1911 have been deposited in the British Museum. Forty-eight of the former find are gold *solidi* in fresh condition, ranging from Valentinian I. to Magnus Maximus, and 160 found in 1911 from Nero to Marcus Aurelius. They were wrapped in lead, which served as a great protection.

The Roman city of Vriconium has been further explored. Three large houses have been uncovered. All seem to have had a sort of portico in front of them, facing the street, suggesting Chester "rows."*

Explorations in Holme Park, Sonning-on-Thames, have revealed the foundations of the ancient palace of the Bishops of Salisbury. Fragments of painted glass, pottery, and some well-preserved tiles have been found. The work was undertaken at the instance of Mr. Keyser, F.S.A., a member of our Society.

* *Morning Post*, October 1, 1912.