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CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Excavations at Ur, 1927-8; by C. Leonard Woolley | 415 |
| The Early Iron Age Site at Findon Park, Findon, Sussex; by Cyril Fox, Ph.D., F.S.A., and Garnet R. Wolseley, A.R.W.A. | 449 |
| A Neolithic Site at Abingdon, Berks. (Second Report); by E. Thurlow Leeds, M.A., F.S.A. | 461 |
| The Maltese Rock-Tombs; by Professor T. Zammit, C.M.G., M.D. | 478 |
| A Chambered Cairn at Allt-nam-Ban, Strathbrora, Sutherland; by W. Douglas Simpson, M.A., D.Litt., F.S.A. Scot. | 485 |
| Anglo-Saxon Sundials; by Arthur Robert Green, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. | 489 |
| Notes (<i>see list on next page</i>) | 517 |
| Reviews (<i>see list on next page</i>) | 530 |
| Periodical Literature; Bibliography | 542 |
| Index to Volume VIII | 565 |
| Title-page, Contents, and List of Illustrations. | |



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NOTES

Appointments, 517.—Palaeoliths found in England, 517.—Neolithic macehead from London, 518.—Socketed celt and Roman brooch from Chipping Sodbury, 519.—Early Iron Age objects from Harpenden, 520.—Early Iron Age finds in Somerset, 522.—The Richborough Excavations, 523. Roman remains at Bushey, Herts., 524.—The missing Hartlepool gravestone, 524.—Padlocks from the City, 524.—Excavations at Kouyunjik (Nineveh) during the winter of 1927–8, 526.—Bronze brooch from Yorkshire, 526.—Roman gravestone at Colchester, 527.—The Newbury Museum, 529.

REVIEWS

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Randall-MacIver, <i>The Etruscans</i> | 53 ⁰ |
| <i>Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum</i> . Mouret, <i>France: Collection Mouret</i> . Lambri- brino, <i>France: Paris—Bibliothèque Nationale</i> . Scheurleer, <i>Pays-Bas:</i> <i>Musée Scheurleer (La Haye)</i> | 53 ¹ |
| Winther, Lindø. <i>En Boplads fra Danmarks Yngre Stenalder</i> | 53 ² |
| Boyce, <i>The English-German Nation in the University of Paris during the</i> <i>Middle Ages</i> | 533 |
| Zachrisson, <i>Romans, Kelts, and Saxons in Ancient Britain</i> | 533 |
| Crawford and Keiller, <i>Wessex from the Air</i> | 534 |
| <i>The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Con-</i> <i>structions of Scotland: The Outer Hebrides, Skye, and the Small Isles</i> | 536 |
| Dörpfeld and others, <i>Alt-Ithaka: Ein Beitrag zur Homerfrage. Studien</i> <i>und Ausgrabungen der Insel Leukas-Ithaka</i> | 538 |
| Allen, <i>Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole</i> | 54 ¹ |

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*Appeal for contributions towards the cost of repairing
the Roman Villa at North Leigh, Oxfordshire*

THE ROMAN VILLA AT NORTH LEIGH, by far the best example of its class that has been discovered in Oxfordshire, is well known to many. Excavated in 1815-16, it was left open and during the course of a century it suffered considerably. In 1908 the late Prof. Haverfield obtained from the Duke of Marlborough a lease of the site for a nominal rent, and he raised a fund which enabled him to fence off the villa, roof over the principal mosaic pavement, and carry out some slight excavations in 1910 and 1911. He desired to prevent further damage to the ruins, and he was anxious that an interesting Roman monument within easy reach of Oxford should be freely accessible to Undergraduates of the University and other students of Roman history and civilization. He had the old plan re-published, and he took many parties of visitors to North Leigh himself. On his death in 1919 the lease of the ground passed, with his legacy, to the University.

It is estimated that the villa is visited by at least 400 people every year, most of them being Undergraduates and students who come to Oxford for Summer Schools.

The cost of general maintenance is borne by the Haverfield Bequest Committee. In the course of the last fifteen years, however, the foundations have inevitably suffered damage through exposure to the weather, and the mosaic pavement has been gradually disintegrating. It is urgent that something should be done to prevent further decay. Two courses are open. One is to fill in the whole site. To adopt such a counsel of despair would be highly regrettable. The alternative is to fill in the less interesting part of the site, while marking its plan on the ground, and at the same time to put the rest into proper repair. For the repair of the pavement alone an estimate submitted by a competent firm amounts to

£275, which is considered extremely reasonable by such an experienced judge as Mr. C. R. Peers, F.S.A., H.M. Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

A demand so heavy cannot be met from the relatively slender revenue of the Haverfield Bequest without paralysing its primary function of making grants in aid of excavations, and the Committee has resolved to endeavour to raise the necessary money by appeal to the educated public. Recognizing that the purpose in view is one which conduces to the advancement of education and of humane studies, two Colleges have already given the scheme their support. Brasenose College has given a grant of £10, while Christ Church has most generously promised to contribute £50 on condition that an adequate sum is raised to ensure the proper preservation of the villa and to keep it available for inspection. This lead will, it is hoped and believed, be readily followed by other educational bodies and by individuals who have at heart the cause of the humanities and who care for local history, and in that confidence the Committee makes this appeal to their generosity.

Contributions may be sent direct to me as Chairman of the Haverfield Bequest Committee at Brasenose College, Oxford.

J. G. C. ANDERSON

*Camden Professor of
Ancient History*

BRASENOSE COLLEGE
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