

FIG.
1

FIG.
2

FIG.
3



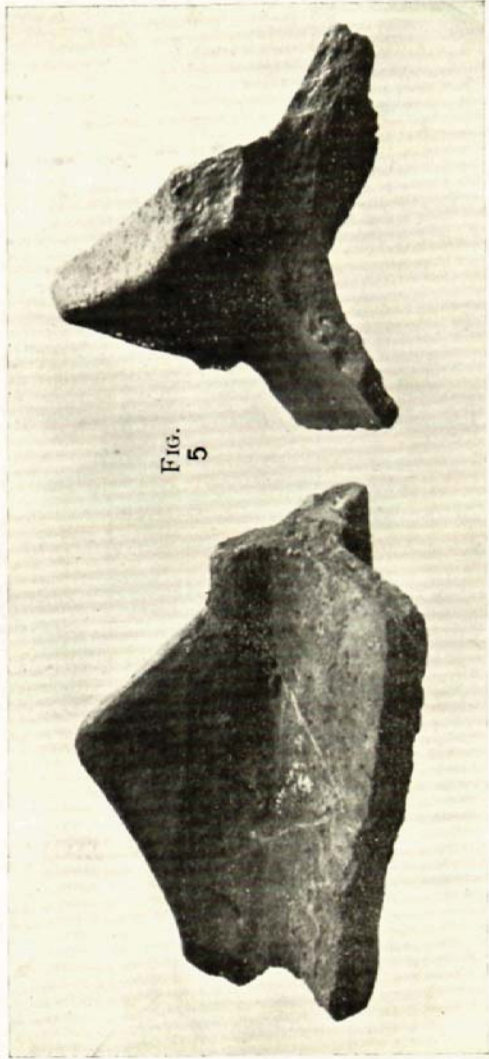


FIG.
5

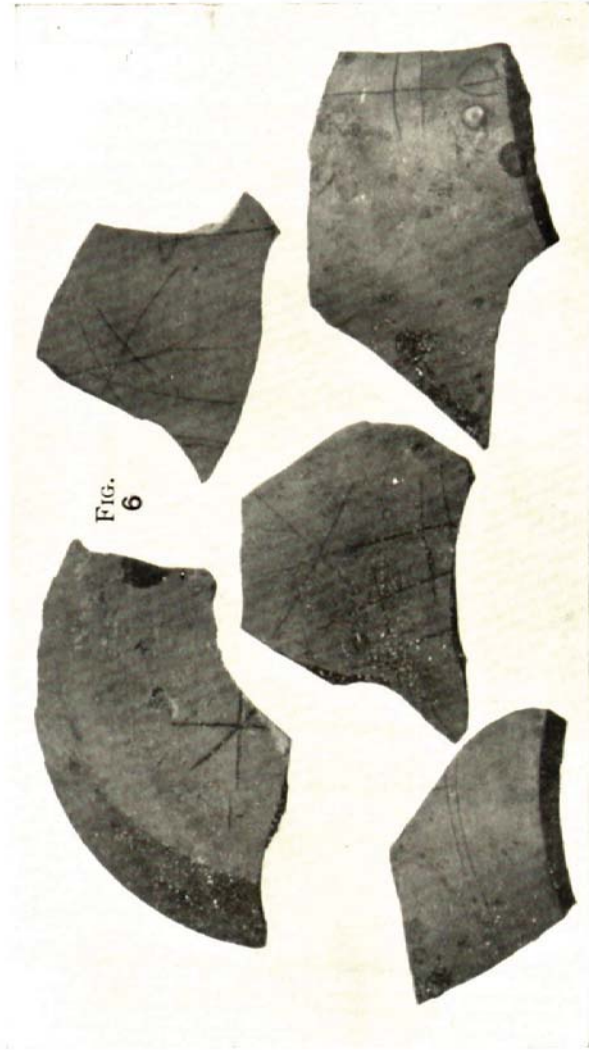


FIG.
6

UPON SOME RELICS DISCOVERED
NEAR THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT
CASTLE OF SOUTHAMPTON.

BY CHARLES F. COOKSEY.

The Borough of Southampton has always been recognised as one of the most ancient and important in Britain. It is probable that it had its origin in and around the great artificial mound upon which was subsequently erected the "Castle of Hampton." This mound would appear to have been formed from the material excavated from the great dyke or ditch which ran from west to east, from the estuary of the Test, just outside the line of the existing northern face of the walls, to the impassable marsh or morass which stretched inland from the banks of the River Itchen. It has been generally supposed that the borough was not established until the time of the decay and abandonment of the Roman Station of Clausentum at Bitterne, on the east bank of the River Itchen. During the past few years, however, opinion has tended to the belief that the Test site has a claim to even greater antiquity than that of the one upon the Itchen.

Dr. Speed has expressed the view that both the mound upon which the Castle stood, and the other mound about a mile to the north, the reputed burial place of Sir Bevis of Hampton, near Bevois Valley, were Roman works. It is certain that in the immediate neighbourhood of both relics of the Roman period of occupation have been from time to time discovered. Under these circumstances it has become of the greatest importance, from an antiquarian point of view, that any excavations upon the area within the lines of the ancient

walls should be closely watched. An excellent opportunity for such an observation has occurred during the past few years, owing to the clearance of old and decayed buildings upon and around the Castle mound. Houses which, three or four centuries ago, were the pride of Southampton and the homes of her prominent citizens, have been swept away and their sites made available for artizan's dwellings.

It was during the cutting of the trenches for the foundations of these houses that the writer attended from time to time, to watch for any object of antiquarian interest which pick and shovel might disclose. At first the result was not encouraging, a few old English copper coins, fragments of rosaries and devotional medals, the latter telling of the haunt of expatriated Italians, were the only things of interest unearthed. Then a gun-metal farthing of Charles I., and fragments of Flemish ware vessels and Dutch tiles came to light. At the northernmost end of the excavation the ditch, which encircled the castle mound, was reached and was probed to a depth of thirteen feet before solid ground was touched. As the work proceeded and the excavations extended in a more easterly direction, that is towards the High Street, there was not so much debris from demolished buildings, and the finds became more interesting. Here was turned out half of a stone mould (Fig. 1.) for casting a small iron shot which would weigh about five or six pounds and which, curiously enough, would fit the old long bodied 17th century gun which is partially buried, butt downwards, close by at the junction of Simnel Street with French Street. The next find consisted of two fragments of a moulding in stone of perpendicular design, each consisting of a depressed quarterfoil enclosing a plain heater-shaped shield (Fig. 4): Here also was found a slab of stone (Fig. 3) measuring 14 inches in length, 11 inches in breadth and 4 inches in thickness, perforated with holes of $\frac{5}{8}$ inch diameter at regular intervals. The front of this slab is delicately carved into diamond shaped divisions, one to each perforation, and it is evident that it had formed a portion of a screen or a ventilating panel. Here also was found a curious little implement of bone, $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches long, $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch wide, tapering in thickness from $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch at one end to an edge at the other. The last inch of the thinner end is divided into eight

divisions by incised lines. It seems to have been used as a gauge of some kind, possibly by a tailor or seamstress, to regulate the width of stitching or tucks.

No pottery of any antiquarian interest was discovered till the trenches were cut into the site of a Tudor House, which formerly stood at the north east angle of Simnel Street, at its junction with French Street, a house which was for many years previous to its destruction, in the occupation of the Potts family, who there carried on the venerable and fast disappearing trade of tallow-chandlers. Here, seeing that the ground could not have been disturbed for about 400 years, it was reasonable to expect that, if anything should be found, it would prove of no little interest. This anticipation was fully realised, and a quite considerable treasure rewarded the careful workmen who, very thoughtfully and intelligently, preserved every fragment they came across during their work. The cutting of a narrow trench is by no means a satisfactory way of examining a considerable area, but it was impossible to interfere with the workmen of the contractor, beyond inducing them to put aside such fragments as they came upon in the ordinary course of their duties. At one spot only, a few yards from the French Street end of Simnel Street, the excavators came across a mass of calcined earth tiles and pottery, as well as some thick coarse slates which had also been subject to intense heat. The mass was quite loose and the effect presented was as if a burning building had fallen in. Only a very small portion of this accumulation could be reached, and the first objects which claimed attention were some fragments of ridge tiles of red clay having a zig-zag or serrated crest with short wide open flanges. They appear to have been splashed with coarse green glaze, and below the crest, at its junction with the flanges, to have been further ornamented by a line of cuts in the unburnt clay (Fig. 5). With these five fragments was another of a coarse and clumsy description, slightly bent from the centre and having a rude thumb mark pattern along one edge. The rest of the find consisted of pottery, much of it being more or less ornamented with glaze. It is impossible to say with certainty how, or in what order, these fragments were deposited or discovered; but they are now described in what

seems to be their proper sequence in reverse order of their antiquity:—

- (1). Fragments of a flat-bottomed straight-sided lathe turned pot with a flat rim. Inside lined with a yellowish green glaze. Base 7 inches diameter. Material a greenish clay burnt to a pink tinge on exterior. No ornamentation. Marks of potter's fingers on inside showing on outside.
- (2). Portion of base of similar pot, but with bulging sides.
- (3). Fragments of a large double-handled jug of clay largely intermixed with chalk. Rim, handles, lip and bulge ornamented with a strong deep green glaze which appears to have been melted since the vessel was made and to have caused the adhesion of particles which gave it a rough granular surface. No portion of the base of this vessel was found. The diameter at bulge must have been about a foot.
- (4). Fragments of a large double-handled jug of hard clay, much mixed with chalk, similar in shape to above, but decorated with vertical bands or ribbon-like strips between which are lines of applied pellets of clay. The lip is very bold and is strengthened by a band or simple moulding around its edge and another half way down toward the bulge. The handles, which spring horizontally from the upright rim, are also ornamented with clay pellets and a band of rough horizontal lines impressed on each edge. No portion of the base of this vessel was found. Diameter at bulge about 14 inches.
- (5). Two fragments of base of strainer in almost white clay, lined green glaze, closely corresponding with that found in Potter's Lane, Basingstoke (Norman).
- (6). Three portions of a hard burnt purple coloured clay vessel without glaze, similar to New Forest ware, narrow flat rim with a single raised line round neck (Romano British).
- (7). A single fragment of a shallow patera in light grey ware (Romano British).
- (8). Fragments of a large vessel or amphora, in yellowish green ware (Romano British).
- (9). Five fragments of the base and sides of a vessel of a fine hard and heavy clay, of a pinkish stone colour, four of which have upon them curious devices, which appear to have been roughly scratched since burning. On no single piece is there a perfect figure, but by comparing the various details it is easy to see that they all formed portions of one symbol or device identical with those found on each face of a hexagonal stone in the Corinium Museum at Cirencester (Romano British), (Fig. 6).
- (10). Three fragments of a similar vessel, upon one of which, a portion of the base, is a part of a design similar to the above (Romano British).
- (11). Several portions of vessels of late Celtic character in which the clay is intermixed with pounded flint, and has in the sections that laminated appearance peculiar to this ware. All these vessels were lathe turned and the portions found consist of parts of rims and many other fragments—red, brown and black.

The ancient stone mortar and fragment of tracery shown (Fig. 4) and the early English column base (Fig. 2), were found on this site during the erection of the earlier blocks of workmen's dwellings.

In addition to the above are many specimens of all the various wares here described, but so fragmentary and ordinary that no detailed description of them is called for. All are deposited in the Hartley University College Museum for safe custody till a Municipal Museum is provided.

