

TREASURE-TROVE.

Misunderstanding as to Treasure Trove has, and is, causing such incalculable destruction of antiquarian "Finds" of intrinsic value, that possibly the following information on the subject from the British Museum may be useful as propaganda to Members in contact with navvies, ditchers and excavators in general.

For fear of Treasure Trove, articles of gold and silver, when dug up, are too often secretly sold from hand to hand until all trace of their origin is concealed. From personal knowledge a find of Saxon silver coins was beaten into fragments with a hammer and then attempts made to melt them down. Also the offer for 2/6 of a stone Elizabethan Tiger ware jug from which the first finder had stripped the silver lid and for which he could have received £30 if he had not feared Treasure Trove.

H.A.H.

Objects of *gold or silver* which have been *hidden* in the soil or in buildings, and of which the original *owner cannot be traced*, are Treasure-Trove, and by law the property of the Crown.* If, however, the finder of such objects reports the find promptly, and it is decided that it is Treasure-Trove and therefore the property of the Crown, he will receive its *full market value* if it is retained for the Crown or a museum. If it is not retained, he will receive back the objects themselves, with full liberty to do what he likes with them; or, if he wishes it, the British Museum will sell them for him at the best price obtainable.

*Unless (as in some rare cases) the "Franchise of Treasure-Trove" has been expressly granted to a subject, in so far as finds in the particular locality are concerned.

The only way in which a finder can comply with the law and also obtain these advantages is by reporting the find promptly to the proper authority.

The proper authority is the Coroner for the District in which the find is made, for he is the authority who enquires "of treasure that is found" and "who were the finders" (Coroners Act, 1887, section 36).

Anyone therefore who finds such objects should report the find to the Coroner, either direct, or through the local Police, or by writing to the Director, British Museum, London, W.C.1, who will communicate with the Coroner.

Coins and other ancient objects of copper, bronze or any metal other than gold or silver are *not* Treasure-Trove and finds need not be reported to Coroners. But the British Museum is glad to hear of such finds and, if they are reported to the Director, will in suitable cases arrange for purchase or sale.

Any further information may be obtained by applying to the Director, British Museum, London, W.C.1.