

NOTE ON DISCOVERIES AT ST. MARTIN'S,
CANTERBURY.

BY CANON C. F. ROUTLEDGE.

I HAVE been in such constant communication with Mr. Brock that I have little to add to his interesting account of the recent discoveries in St. Martin's Church. I am glad, however, of this opportunity of placing on record a few new facts. In addition to the Roman plastering which I had discovered on the *south* side of the nave (extending to the present baptistery, and traced as high as 4 feet from the ground), I have (in January, 1883) uncovered similar plastering on the *north* side—thus clearly shewing that the original building occupied much the same extent as the present one. The theory that St. Martin's Church originally ended in an apse must, I think, be given up, in face of the discoveries recently made in removing the external modern plaster on the north side of the chancel. It was then found that the wall of Roman bricks extended in a straight line, almost up to the present east wall; and there are no signs whatever of any semicircular inclination inwards. The plan of the building as it existed at the beginning of the fifth century was probably exactly like what it is at the present time; similar, in fact, to the churches



at Killaloe and Boarhurst. The wall of the *nave* is

built in regular courses of Roman brick, the wide intervals between those courses being filled up with Kentish rag and rubble. This wall is coated internally with Roman plaster, made of pounded brick. The *chancel* is built of Roman bricks, laid closely and evenly on one another, with no signs of Roman plastering. Looking to these different styles of building, I am inclined to hazard the conjecture that the nave was an old Roman villa or temple, which was turned into a church (somewhere about the end of the fourth century) by the addition of the chancel. I hope, at no distant date, to examine more closely the west walls both of the chancel and the nave.

The square opening at the south-west corner of the chancel was 6 feet high (not 5 feet 6 inches as Mr. Brock states). I have very little doubt myself that it is a Roman doorway. Supposing the semicircular-arched opening, near it, to be also of a late Roman date, we may refer for the occurrence of square and semicircular doorways in the same building to the instance of Jublains in the department of Mayenne, to which Mr. Roach Smith has called my attention.*

I may take this opportunity of recording the fact, that the so-called "Queen Bertha's tomb" in St. Martin's was opened on January 12th, 1883. Beneath the covering slab of oolite, a coffin of stone was discovered, hollowed out into the shape of the body, and having a small semicircular opening (about 9 inches in diameter) for the head of the corpse. This opening had been bricked off from the rest of the tomb, probably when the tomb was last opened in 1844, and was thus made into a receptacle for fragments of

* *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. iii., p. 111, plates xxviii. and xxix.

bones and other human remains. The rest of the stone coffin was filled up with flints, bricks, and rubbish. The bones were pronounced by a surgeon who was present to be probably those of an elderly man, about seventy, of small proportions. This opinion would harmonize with one which I had previously broached, that the tomb is probably that of the restorer of the church, about the end of the thirteenth century.

I may add that Mr. Brock is mistaken in saying that the bones discovered in the curious leaden wrapper at St. Pancras were those of a *child*: they were clearly proved to be the bones of a full-grown person; and, as the leaden wrapper only measured about 2 feet 6 inches in length, it is probable that the coffin contained the relics of some Saint, or other distinguished person, which had been collected together, and placed in a specially sacred part of the church, as close as possible to the walls of the actual edifice.