

Act, in order that if any of these should disclose any risk of the destruction of sites or objects of scientific interest, representations may be made on behalf of the Association to the planning authorities and to the Ministry. In addition to natural features, or possibly buildings, which may be worthy of preservation on scientific grounds alone, it is clear that there must be many areas worthy of protection on grounds of amenity, and at the same time of sufficient scientific interest, whether geological, botanical or otherwise, to justify adducing arguments from the side of science in their favour. The first step taken by the Council of the Association was to communicate with all the local societies in correspondence with the Association, inviting their attention to the subject of planning and asking for information on any instances in which the Association might usefully take action: only a few have as yet come to hand. The whole subject will come under consideration at the Norwich meeting of the Association, when it will be dealt with by Prof. P. G. H. Boswell in an address as chairman of the Conference of Delegates of Corresponding Societies. Meanwhile the Council has appointed a panel of some sixty prominent members representative of geology, geography, botany and zoology, any of whom may be called upon for advice in connexion with proposals for preservation, and all of whom have been asked to bring to the notice of the officers any examples which may have come under their personal notice.

Roman Villa near Lydney

A NEW Roman villa on the River Severn near Wollaston, between Lydney and Chepstow, of which the discovery and partial exploration is described in *The Times* of March 8, illustrates the perennial character of the human response to an enduring need. A fire-platform and lighthouse in alignment mark the channel through the Guskar Rocks guarding the creek, on which the villa is situated, in a manner which might stand in a modern sailing direction. Before the examination of the site the existence of the creek, which had silted up, was indicated only by a stream in a depression; but evidently it must have been, with Lydney harbour, a port of call of importance, probably in relation to the iron-workings of Ariconium (Weston-under-Penyard) to the north. In any event, the villa with its sea-frontage was not only the centre of a wide settlement, still unexplored, but it is remarkable also for the unusual amount of iron it has yielded among its relics. The earlier villa, upon which a second was superimposed, was erected about A.D. 130 in the reign of Hadrian. It stood about 250 yards from the shore. It was of considerable size and contained nine rooms and a corridor and had a bath system along the sea front. One hundred and seventy years later it was destroyed, possibly, it is thought, by an Irish raid. After a lapse of twenty years, the second, a smaller building, was erected. It contained only four rooms, but it also had a bath system. This villa lasted for about a century. The details of the buildings and the associated relics have provided a number of noteworthy features, and

the further examination of the site, which depends, as usual, upon funds being raised, will undoubtedly well repay the expenditure of time and money.

Irish Folk-lore

THE appointment by the Irish Free State of a Commission on Irish folk-lore is an extension of the active interest already shown by the authorities in the antiquities and history of Ireland that will be welcomed by all students of her traditions and ancient culture. The Commission is to be comprehensive in scope. It will arrange for the collection, collation and cataloguing of both oral and written folk-lore material, and also, if thought desirable, for the publication of such material. The scheme for collection which has been drawn up includes provision for a body of collectors who will travel through the country for the purpose of taking down by means of recording machines not only tales and songs, but also, among the older members of the community, their recollections of life in the country-side in their young days. Subject to the approval of Dail Eireann, a sum not exceeding £3,250 a year, for a period of five years, will be devoted to the work of the Commission. Although Ireland, in comparison with other parts of the British Isles, has not been badly served in the matter of attention from the collector of local lore and legends, it has always been known that extensive tracts of tradition and custom remained untouched; and notwithstanding the sophistication which has affected Ireland in common with other countries of recent years, the remoter districts still retain much of their primitive character and tradition. In addition to its work of collection, the Commission's activities will afford an opportunity for that systematic treatment of the material for which adequate opportunity has not hitherto been available, but which in dealing with conditions in Ireland is highly desirable.

British Museum Acquisitions

AMONG the notes on recent acquisitions by the British Museum in the *British Museum Quarterly*, 9, No. 3, particulars are given of sources from which came part of the sum required to make up the initial payment for the Eumorfopoulos collection of Chinese and Far Eastern art, and progress is reported in the allocation of the collection to Bloomsbury and South Kensington. A contribution of £5,000 was received from the National Art Collections Fund, £5,000 from Sir Percival David and £1,000 from the Universities' China Committee in London. The bequest to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum of three quarters of the residue of the estate of the late J. R. Vallentin for the purchase of works of art for the two museums was also allotted to this use. It is stated that the collection is so large that it will be possible to place a certain number of pieces on loan in some of the leading provincial museums. When, however, the scheme for a Museum of Oriental Art comes into being, it is intended to recall these loans, and the whole collection will be brought together again to form an important part of what, it is hoped, will be the finest museum of oriental art