A HOARD OF ENGLISH COINS FOUND IN SWITZERLAND.

By Bernard Roth, F.S.A., Vice-President.

While spending this summer vacation at Brunnen, on Lake Lucerne, I heard by chance that my landlord, Mr. Fridolin Fassbind, of the Waldstaetterhof Hotel, had some old English coins which had been found in the neighbourhood.

It appears that about thirty years ago a hoard of upwards of one hundred reputed English coins was found in a field near the main road passing through Morschach, a charmingly situated hamlet some 675 feet above the lake of Lucerne, close to Brunnen. As far as I could ascertain, only five of the coins have escaped destruction, nearly the whole hoard having been melted down for the sake of the metal. Mr. Fassbind possesses three specimens, which he kindly lent me to exhibit this evening, and the proprietor of the Roessli Hotel at Brunnen has the other two specimens, which I inspected. Mr. Fassbind's coins are:

1. A groat of Edward III., of the London mint, with annulets.
2. A half-groat of Edward III., also of the London mint, with annulets; and
3. A penny of Richard II., of the York mint, with lis on the king's neck. The coins are in a fairly good state of preservation. The other two specimens I examined at the Roessli Hotel are a London groat of Edward III. (now mounted, unfortunately, as a brooch) and a York penny of Richard II.

The question arises, how did these early English coins come to be hidden near a small village above the lake of Lucerne. The most
probable explanation is that they belonged to some English soldiers who were in the pay of the Dauphin of France when he invaded Switzerland in the year 1444. The celebrated battle of St. Jacob on the Birs was fought near Bâle on August 26th of that year. The Dauphin had 40,000 troops, which included many English mercenaries: they were attacked by 1,600 Swiss, who fought very heroically, leaving 1,300 of their own men dead on the field of battle. The French commander was so disgusted that he forthwith returned to France. The anniversary of this battle is still celebrated annually in Switzerland with great fêtes. I cannot find any reference to this Swiss hoard of English coins in the Numismatic Chronicle, or elsewhere.