



## Notes and Queries

RELATING TO BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON.

---

*Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the three counties. Correspondents are requested to write as plainly as possible, on one side of the paper only, with REPLIES, QUERIES and NOTES on SEPARATE SHEETS, and the name of the writer appended to each communication.*

---

### Notes.

THE GYPSIES.—There cannot, I think, be a doubt that Mr. Money has post-dated the advent of the Gypsies into Europe, though he has authorities for the statement that 1517 was the year of their coming into the West. A writer in *Notes and Queries* (5th series, vol. IX., p. 511), gives in a condensed form much information regarding these wanderers. From his paper, it seems that the earliest mention of Gypsies in England is 1506, but he quotes the late Mr. Borrow for the statement that they arrived in this island in 1480.

In the Churchwardens' Accounts of Stratton in Cornwall, extracts from which were published by me in the XLVI. volume of the *Archæologia*, the following entry occurs under the date 1522: "Received of the Egyptcions for the church-house xx<sup>d</sup>." There was at Stratton, as in many other places, a church-house, probably in or adjoining the church-yard, where the parish fairs were held. At fair times it was let to merchants. These Gypsies may have been tinkers, and followed their trade in that place until such time as the pots and pans of the Stratton folk were mended; or they may have gone there for shelter during some period of severe cold. Skelton the poet appears to have known what Gypsies were like, for he seems to allude to the costume of their women in *Elinour Rummig*; it is, however, only fair to add that the Egyptian he had in his mind's eye may have been some painted or embroidered figure representing a scene in Holy Scripture, or in the legendary history of Saint George, Saint Mary of Egypt, or Saint Katherine. Speaking of the heroine of his poem, he says that her head was decorated—

"After the Sarazins gise,  
With a whim wham  
Knit with a trim tram,  
Upon her brayne panne  
Like an Egiptian."

I do not know of any good bibliography of the literature relating to the Gypsies, but in the index to the last edition of the Catalogue of the London Library, several important works relating to them are mentioned.

The following references may prove of service to those interested in these picturesque nomads:—

Archæologia, vol. XVIII., p. 227 ; XXVII., p. 38.

Historical MSS., Com. VI., 215.

Manchester Literary Club, VI., 10.

Le Brun. Sup. Anc. and Mod., I., 53.

The Antiquary, XIII., 217.

Hazlitt's. Brand's Antiq., Index.

Hereford MSS., Index, 14.

Depositions from York Castle (Surtees Soc.), 27.

Lecky. Hist. of Engl. in 18th Cent., III., 505.

Springs or Streams so-called : Young, Geology of the Yorkshire Coast, 25, 32.

Simpson. Adel, 33.

Poems relating to, Jerdan : Autobiography, III., B62.

P. J. Bailey. Festus, fifth ed., 1854, 100.

—EDWARD PEACOCK, F.S.A., Dunstan House, Kirton-in-Lindsey.

THE ANCIENT RECORDS OF ST. GILES', READING.—Dry, musty old books ! Yes ; but within these same Parish Registers are the complete record, birth, death, and marriage, of many a resident long since forgotten. It is surprising how much history is contained in Parish Records, but it has to be searched for, not always being apparent to the casual observer. In the earliest Register of St. Giles', dated 1559, there is nothing but the bare entry of names, and these often transformed by variations of spelling till they look like foreign names. From these Registers, Man gathered material for his "History of Reading." There was plenty more material over and above what he extracted. The Civil War is marked by the burial of soldiers slain. In the country it was the custom (at least so tradition says) to bury soldiers killed in battle on the boundaries of parishes, so that the funeral expenses fell equally on different parishes. In St. Giles' only ten soldiers were buried between 1642 and 1643. Those of the local force are probably those entered by name—William Slatter, soldier to C. Hilliar ; Morris Owen ; a soldier's wife ; two soldiers' children ; a soldier of Colonel Bowles ; John Saywell, soldier to C. Lloyd ; John Wilson ; Richard Lewis ; Samuel Wren. Then come two entries "a soldier," and last "a soldier ensigne." Most of the fighting took place in St. Mary's parish.

Of Reading as a military station surprisingly few records exist. Bit by bit I unearthed items for my "History of the Berkshire Militia," but there are many chapters imperfect ; yet, from the position of the town, it was always an important military post. Before a standing army was allowed, the county regiments were of vast importance, and were sent about wherever required for duty. From the Restoration of 1660 until 1759 there is a curious absence of military information.

To return to the Registers of St. Giles'. There are several remarkable points about them. In the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign the year was begun in January, a foreign fashion, but probably the clerk or vicar died, and then the English way of beginning the year on March 25th was again used. Hugh Dicus, one of the vicars of the parish, signed himself in a bold, open handwriting "rector and vicar."

St. Giles' parish occupies a third of the extent of Reading ; it is bounded on one side by Sonning, on the other by Shinfield, on the two others by the

Reading parishes of St. Mary's and St. Lawrence's. There were as many weddings in a month as in a country parish in a whole year, but perhaps it was because country folk came into the town to be married. Why did so many Welshmen come to Reading? That they did come is evident.

In 1729 a terrible epidemic of smallpox broke out: all that year the deaths are entered as caused by that fatal sickness. How terrible it really was before vaccination was discovered we cannot realise. Those anti-vaccinators who strive so hard to evade the law should visit St. Giles' and see the Burial Register for 1729; but even that sad record does not tell one half the suffering and misery of such an epidemic. Those who survived were mere wrecks of their former selves—pitted almost beyond recognition, disfigured for life. Science has taken away the dread of smallpox formerly existing, but in an epidemic even modern science is powerless to cope with fanaticism.

Reading was not without its doctors in 1648, in which year died Nicholas Bowden, gentleman master of the Chirurgeons, at the good old age of 73 years.

Mortuaries (namely, fees for funeral sermons) were paid up to the present century. These were eventually forbidden by Act of Parliament.

To enumerate all the names would mean a long list, longer than I have time to write, to say nothing of the inclination, so I will just write down from memory a few which I noticed in glancing through the volumes:—Truss, Gutteridge, Blunden, Bowles, Jacques, Whistler, Kenricke, Keys, Millard, Huntley, Slade, Sladden, Conaway, Pennington, Zinzan, Long, Wheble, Batchelor, Manley, Blaggrave, Forest, Atkinson, Tudor, Tidcombe, Jones, Brimer, Cheney, Bishop, Jemmatt, Champion, Arnold, Goffe, Venn, Winn, Powell, Gray, Godsgrace, Milksoppe, Lunn, Alloway, Ilsley, Lovell, Newell, Goswell, Justice, Yewstis, Netherclift, Ball, Hellier, Collier, Dean, Davis, Monke, Stephens, Bartlet, James, Mylamb, Hersey, Malthus, Lewis, Bateman, Greenaway, Collet, Wren, Sherwood, etc., etc.

In the year 1800 apparently some French Refugees came to the town, there to find a last resting-place, for among the burials are:—Henry Duparier, a child; Rene Antoine Jarret de La Mainie, French Priest, rector of Nogent Le Bernard in the Bishopric of Mans and Provence in Maine, age 74; and another entry is that of Emanuel Du Rocher Du Luengo, Viscount de St. Riveul. Also Rev. Francis Hierome Gaultier de La Villeaudray, Dean and Prebendary of the Church of St. Thugal, in the town of Laval, in the Province of Maine in France, in his 54th year. Poor souls! Fugitives from home, dying in a strange country.

Among the curious Christian names, St. Giles' can show some worth recording. The women rivalled the men. Such freaks of nomenclature are, of course, rare. None of these, however, are due to the clerk's vagaries in spelling which wrought such havoc with surnames. Weltham may be a mis-spelt Welcome; but Sherlock, Shunamite, Vihanna, Grecian, Castell, Antonino, Amariah, and Rasbery. This last name is especially interesting. I have only seen it three times—first in a deed among my father's papers of 1760, in which John Hocker and his wife Resbury are named; secondly, the marriage at Yattendon, in 1732, of John Hocker, batchelor, and Resbury Hiley, widow; and lastly, in 1782, at the burial of Rasbery Hocker, brought from St. Lawrence's parish to be buried at St. Giles'. Of unusual names for men, Avery, Vernall, and Ginter are all I have made notes of; doubtless there were others I may have overlooked.—  
EMMA ELIZABETH THOYTS.

LINES CUT ON A BEECH TREE AT THE EAST END OF CASTLE HILL,  
LITTLE WITTENHAM, BERKS :—

As up the hill with labouring steps we tread,  
Where the twin clumps their sheltering branches spread,  
The summit gained, at ease reclining stay  
And all around the wide spread scene survey ;  
Point out each object, and instructive tell  
The various changes that the land befel.  
Where the low bank the country wide surrounds  
That ancient earthwork formed old Mercia's bounds ;  
In misty distance see the barrow heave  
There lies forgotten lonely Cwichelm's grave.  
Around this hill the ruthless Danes entrenched,  
And that fair plain with gory slaughter drenched.  
While at our feet where stands that stately tower  
In days gone by uprose the Roman power ;  
And yonder, there where Thames' smooth waters glide  
In later days appeared monastic pride.  
Within that field where lies the grovelling herd  
Huge walls were found, stone coffins disinterred ;  
Such is the course of time, the wreck which fate  
And awful doom award the earthly great.

*Note.*—The letters are now obliterated and the author nearly forgotten, who is, however, supposed to have been Mr. William Thompson, a London coach-builder, when on a visit to his friend, Mr. John Vick of Dorchester, Oxon, about the year 1847.—W. COZENS.

## Replies.

WHAT IS YELMING ?—The person who serves the thatcher arranges small bundles of straw, yelms, in a long forked bough, fastened when full with a hook, which is called a jack ; this is carried up the ladder to be ready for the thatcher.  
—WM. COZENS, Benson, Oxon.

