

British Museum authorities attach great importance to this "find," which they are anxious to secure for the National Museum. Mr. Romilly Allen says:—

"Through the kindness of Mr. Hastings Gilford, of Reading, we are enabled to give an illustration of a very remarkable carved bone plaque now in his possession. The carving was found in 1845, in the course of the demolition of a house on the north side of Horton High Street (now called Horton Street). It was a large white house standing about two yards from the path, and was approached by two or three steps lower than the pavement. The house was called Holly or Laurel House, and was the reputed residence of King Henry VIII., Cardinal Wolsey, or (as some said) Richard Cromwell. The plaque is of bone, rectangular in shape, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick. It appears originally to have formed the top of a casket, as there are two holes for a handle in the middle, and the marks of the places where the hinges and hasp were attached can be plainly seen on the back. The edges of the plaque are bevelled, and there is an acanthus border forming a frame round the figure subject, which is carved in considerable relief, but not much undercut. The figure subject consists of two scenes: (1) on the right, a king seated on his throne, and guarded on each side by a pair of warriors, each armed with a spear and shield; and (2) on the left, four scribes at work in a scriptorium. I am indebted to Mr. O. M. Dalton, F.S.A., of the British Museum, for pointing out that identically the same subject occurs on an ivory in the Louvre, at Paris, except that the two scenes are placed vertically, one under the other, instead of side by side. The ivory in the Louvre is engraved in Emile Molinier's '*Histoire Générale des Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie*' (Vol. I, '*Ivoires*,' pl. 13, and p. 34, and in the '*Gazette Archéologique*' for 1883, p. 109), and the subject of the carving is there stated to be King David dictating the Psalms to his assistants. King David appears to be holding a book or a scroll in his left hand, whilst his right is raised against the breast. The scribe at the left-hand upper corner of the panel is seated at a table writing from the dictation of the figure opposite. On the table is engraved MDXVI., presumably the date 1516, in Roman numerals, added at a period long subsequent to the execution of the original carving. The two scribes below are seated facing each other, with a chest for holding MSS., having the lid open, in the middle between them. The scribe on the left has a scroll bent over his knees, and the scribe on the right is writing on a tablet supported on one knee. All four figures are seated on low stools, and are bending over their work. The book-chest has four legs, resting on what is probably intended for a small mound of earth, highly conventionalised by means of a sort of volute, looking more like a wave breaking, or vegetation, rather than a mound.

"In the early Carolingian, Anglo-Saxon, and other Psalters, it is much more usual to find King David represented as seated on a throne and playing a harp, accompanied by his four assistants, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun (I Chron., xxv., 1), and Etham (I Chron., vi., 44), the names being in some cases inscribed over each, as in the Anglo-Saxon Psalter (No. F. f. 1, 23) in the Public Library at Cambridge, and in the ninth-century Bible of St. Paul's extra muros at Rome. Other examples of King David and his four assistants occur in the Psalter of King Charles and the Bible of King Charles the Bald in the Paris Library, and in the eighth-century English Psalter (Vesp. A. 1.) in the British Museum Library. For further information on this subject the reader may consult J. R. Allen's '*Early Christian Symbolism*' (pp. 69 and 150) and Prof. J. O. Westwood's '*Miniatures, Palæographia, and Bible of the Monastery of St. Paul's near Rome.*'

"Judging from the style of the art, the carving appears to be Carolingian, possibly not much later than A.D. 800. It would be interesting to learn how such a fine specimen of ecclesiastical art found its way to Reading. The photograph of the carving was specially taken for *The Reliquary* by Mr. A. E. Smith, of 8, Farringdon Avenue, London, E.C., and I ought not to forget to mention that Mr. Edward Bidwell first drew my attention to the existence of this remarkable relic, which he had heard of through a friend of Mr. Gilford's."

Queries.

SUPER-ALTAR OR PORTABLE ALTAR-SLAB IN A BERKSHIRE CHURCH.—These is a reference to the above in one of our Volumes. Will some reader kindly find this reference, or say where it is?—EDITOR.

WANTED.—(1) Baptismal entry of Elizabeth Browne, d. of — and Elizabeth Browne, c. 1635; (2) Marriage record of Elizabeth Browne, widow, and Robert Aldworth, c. 1642.—ARTHUR E. ALDORTH, Laverstock Vicarage, Salisbury.

BERKSHIRE POLL BOOK.—Could any of your readers tell me whether there is a Poll Book for Berkshire freeholders about 1705 date? I understand there are Poll Books for Wilts, Hants and Bucks, all of 1705; it seems reasonable to suppose there should be one for Berks.—L. J. ACTON PILE, 35, Holland Park Avenue, W.

FRANKLIN FAMILY.—Information wanted concerning this family. I have traced it to Shipton-under-Wychwood where Richard Franklin was married in 1717. I want the register of the birth of Richard. At Watlington Church there is a brass of William Franklyn 1485, but nothing is known of him.—FREDERICK H. FRANKLIN, Castle Hill House, Oxford.

A GENTLEMAN who has been an intelligent student of local antiquities all his life, tells me that he recollects very clearly having read about 50 years ago a printed placard or poster at some station on the Great Western Railway naming objects of interest at places along the line, and specifying particularly that a leaden coffin of Roman or Saxon date (I presume it must have been similar to those at Frilford) had been found at Didcot, either in or near the Church. A discovery of such interest ought not to be forgotten. Possibly there may be others who can give information about it; or a copy of the poster itself may possibly be forthcoming.—J. E. FIELD, Benson Vicarage.

THE "HELL FIRE CLUB" AT MEDMENHAM.—In "An Old Corner of Bucks" (*Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archaeological Journal*, Vol. X., No. 4), Mr. Dormer says that amongst the members of the Club was Francis le Despenser "who acted as Chairman," whereas Mrs. Climensohn in her article headed "Medmenham Abbey" in "Memorials of Old Buckinghamshire" (p. 23) gives the name of "Sir Francis Dashwood, afterwards Lord Le Despencer" as the founder of this dreadful Club; and in cataloguing the members of it, she commences the list with "The Principal, Sir Francis Dashwood afterwards Lord Le Despencer." The date on which Sir Francis Dashwood succeeded in right of his mother to the barony of Le Despenser was August 26, 1762 (although he had not the confirmation of the barony and the writ of summons until April 19, 1763). In what year did the Club commence, and at what date was it broken up?—F. T. WETHERED.