



## Notes and Queries

RELATING TO BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON.

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*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.*

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### Notes.

**CHESHAM.**—At a recent meeting of the British Archæological Association, a paper on "The Church and Parish of Chesham, Bucks, otherwise Chesham, Leicester, and Woburn," was read by the Rev. C. H. Evelyn White.—*Athenæm*.

**THE MONEY PIT ON CASTLE HILL, LITTLE WITTENHAM.**—A singular tradition is preserved in the village that a treasure of some kind was buried ages ago at a spot called the Money Pit in the trench on the eastern side of Castle Hill. The following version of the familiar legend is given by the Parish Clerk, who, when a child, heard the story from some of the old people:—"At a very remote period a certain person desirous of securing the treasure for himself that had been secreted at the spot referred to, forthwith proceeded to search for it. After digging to a considerable depth he came to an iron chest upon which sat a bird like a raven; this uncanny apparition croaked out 'The man to own the chest is not born yet,' whereupon the scared treasure seeker fled." No further attempt was known to have been made until the middle of last century, when a shepherd made a persistent search for several days, but in vain. The narrator moreover affirmed that the pit always sank, although it had often been filled up with earth by himself and others, and that only nettles would grow there. He also said that human remains had frequently been discovered in the embankment near the entrance on the same side of the camp.—**WILLIAM COZENS, The Chestnuts, Benson.**

**THE SUTTON PAPYRUS IN THE READING MUSEUM.**—When travelling in Egypt last year Mr. Arthur W. Sutton acquired at Thebes a valuable inscribed sheet of papyrus which he has now generously presented to the Reading

Museum, where it will form a very interesting addition to the Egyptian collection. The papyrus was found on the breast of the mummy of Meht Hent, a priestess of the temple of Amen at Thebes, not, as papyri are usually found, rolled up, but laid open on the breast of the body. It is said to have been found in the tomb of Rameses II., but it is described by Dr. Wallis Budge as belonging to a period about B.C. 1200, or 100 years or so after the reign of Rameses II.—the supposed Pharaoh of the time of Moses. In form and style this document is exceedingly rare. It is inscribed in the hieratic character (not hieroglyphic), and written in white ink with a version of the hundredth chapter of the Theban Recension of the "Book of the Dead." The only other known document similarly inscribed is in the Museum at the Louvre in Paris. The papyrus has been carefully mounted at the British Museum and framed, and Dr. Wallis Budge, Keeper of the Egyptian Department of the British Museum, has kindly supplied the following translation of the text, which has been written by Steele and Son, Museum writers, on the margin of the mount:—

"The Book of making perfect the Spirit and of causing it to embark in the Boat of Ra along with those who are in his following.

"The priestess Meht Hent saith:—

"I have brought the divine Bennu to the East and Osiris to the city of Tattu. I have opened the treasure houses of the god Hap, and I have made clear the ways of the Disk, and have drawn the god Seker along on his sledge. The mighty and divine Lady (i.e., Isis) hath made me strong at her hour. I have praised and glorified the Disk, and I have united myself to the divine apes who sing at dawn; and I myself am a divine being among them. I have made myself a counterpart of the goddess Isis, and her power hath made me strong. I have tied up the rope of the boat, I have driven back the fiend Apepi, and I have made him to walk backwards. Ra hath stretched out to me both his hands, and his mariners have not repulsed me; my strength is the strength of the eye of Ra, and the strength of the eye of Ra is my strength. If the priestess of Amen, Meht Hent be separated from the boat of Ra then shall he (i.e., Ra) be separated from Abtu Fish."

In the vignette, which is drawn on the centre of the papyrus, underneath the text, the boat of the Sun-god is represented, and in it are the deities Isis, Thoth, Khepera, Shu, Osiris, and the spirit of the deceased priestess.

There are no rubrical directions accompanying this text, but the papyrus of Nu, published by Dr. Wallis Budge in the "Book of the Dead" the following rubric to chapter C. is given:—

"[This chapter] shall be recited over the design which hath been drawn above, and it shall be written upon papyrus which hath not been written upon, with [ink made of] grains of green abut mixed with anti water, and the papyrus shall be placed on the breast of the deceased; it shall not enter into (i.e., touch) his members. If this be done for any deceased person he shall go forth into the boat of Ra in the course of the day every day, regularly and continually, [into the boat of Ra] as a perfect "Khu," and he shall set up the "Tet" and shall stablish the buckle, and shall sail about with Ra into any place he wisheth."\*

"All that this rubric directed was performed for the priestess Meht Hent, and thus thirty two centuries ago this pious lady was laid to rest in full confidence and hope of everlasting bliss because on her breast was laid 'The Book of making perfect the Spirit and of causing it to embark in the boat of Ra along with those who are in his following.'"

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\* "The Book of the Dead," Vol. II., p. 304. Kegan, Paul, Trench and Co.

**Replies.**

Is it possible that the gentleman mentioned by the Rev. J. E. Field, is referring to a publication issued in 1846 ? It is entitled "*The History and Description of the Great Western Railway*," including its geology and the antiquities of the district through which it passes, etc., with views of the scenery and antiquities in its vicinity, illustrated by drawings by J. C. Bourne. The fine plates relating to Berkshire are :—

Slough and Windsor Station.

Maidenhead Bridge.

Sonning Cutting.

Basildon Bridge.

Chancel of Cholsey Church.

Piscina at North Moreton.

Leaden Font and Piscina at Wittenham.

Leaden Font at Woolstone.

Effigies in Wantage Church.

Tower Arch, Steventon.

Norman Doorway, Faringdon.

South Porch, South Transcept Porch, and Door under South Porch at Uffington.

The writer makes no mention, however, of a leaden coffin at Didcot, and closes his account of the architectural features of the Church with the statement that "the general state of this edifice is discreditable."

There is also in the letterpress a very full account and description of the effigies in Aldworth Church.

It was just about this time that Mr. Allen was occupied with his work of spoliation on the Hendred Downs. Speaking of the barrow known as Cwichelm Law the writer says : "The farmer upon whose land it stands, a better agriculturist than antiquarian, has already carted away one half of the soil for manure."

At Goosey we are told, "over the altar are some wretched devices, royal badges, mixed with emblems of the Crucifixion ; some of the trumpery that escaped the besom of the Reformation." Were the writer still living, he would be glad to know these have disappeared.—W. H. HALLAM, Lockinge.

