



# The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.

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## Gossip of an Antiquary.

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The volumes of the Victoria County Histories are beginning to multiply. The first volumes of the Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Sussex and Durham have just been issued, and during the present month the first volume of Berkshire will appear. All the matter is in type, and ready for printing off. Early next year Volume II. will be issued. Volumes III. and IV. will be devoted to topography, and for these especially will the aid of local workers be greatly needed.

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The Buckinghamshire volume will be especially interesting to our readers. It is edited by Mr. W. Page, the general Editor of the series. Mr. Clinch tells of the story of early man, recording the discoveries of palæolithic and neolithic implements, and describes at length the turf-cut crosses at Bledlow and Monks Risborough. Mr. Reginald Smith, of the British Museum, deals with Anglo-Saxon relics, and Mr. Horace Round and the Rev. W. Ragg have written the important section on the Domesday Survey. The Ecclesiastical History of the county with a full account of the Monasteries is the work of a learned lady, the description of the actual remains being reserved until the topographical section is reached.

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The discovery of the remains of St. Edmund's Chapel at Reading is an interesting event, and an account of the relics that have been found are described in this number by the Hon. Curator of Later Historic Archæology at the Reading Museum.

The report of the Reading Museum and Art Gallery is agreeable to an antiquary's ears. It mentions among the additions made during the year a fine series of Palæolithic implements from India and Egypt, consisting of axes, knives, and scrapers, and a number of Neolithic implements. To the British antiquities an addition has been made of an urn, of hand-made pottery, richly ornamented with dotted lines in a diagonal pattern. It was found at a depth of four feet in a gravel pit at Theale. It was no doubt originally part of a sepulchral deposit of the early British age. Vessels of this character are rarely found in this neighbourhood ; it is therefore very welcome to the Museum. Another sepulchral urn, but this of the Roman-British age, has also been obtained ; it contains calcined human bones, and was found near Silchester. Of the Saxon age, a sword, with part of a wooden scabbard attached, and a battle-axe, both from the Thames, have been purchased ; also, of the same age, a bronze brooch, of annular form, found at Grazeley. To the Silchester collection there was no addition last year, owing to the relics being held over until May of the present year, when an exhibition of the "finds" for the last two years will be held at Burlington House, after which the whole of the relics will be forwarded to Reading, where they will have a permanent home. This report would have gladdened the heart of the founder and first curator of the Reading Museum, the late Dr. Stevens, to whom it owes so much.

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Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt are again at Oxyrhynchus—for the last time, as Dr. Grenfell stated at the annual meeting of the Egypt Exploration Fund. Last season, it seems, the stream of papyri which the Oxford explorers unearthed 'became quite a torrent, recalling the palmy days of their first excavations in 1897.' Among the more important of the new classical papyri were fragments belonging perhaps to the *Tyro* of Sophocles and the *Oineus* of Euripides, and of the latter's *Alcestis*, *Iphigenia*, and *Electra*, with interesting variants from the mediæval MSS. Other authors conjecturally represented are Epicharmus, Philemon, Menander, Theophrastus, and Anaximenes. Dr. Grenfell also announced the discovery of a fragment of a discourse on Greek music by a fore-runner of Aristoxenus.

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The Right Honourable Augustine Birrell's new collection of *Essays* is called *In the name of the Bodleian*—the title of the first,

which is very characteristic. It points an excellent moral, which I make no apology for quoting :—

‘Ignominious to relate, this glorious foundation stands in need of money. Shade of Sir Thomas Bodley, I invoke thy aid to loosen the purse-strings of the wealthy! The age of learned and curious merchants, of high-spirited and learning-loving nobles, of book-collecting bishops, of antiquaries, is over. The Bodleian cannot condescend to beg. It is too majestic. But I, an unauthorized stranger, have no need to be ashamed.’

When he wrote, Mr. Birrell had the rich men of the United States in his mind’s eye : and he explained that a gift

‘would be acknowledged by return of post in English and Latin, and the donor’s name would be inscribed, not indeed (and this is a regrettable lapse) in that famous old register which Bodley provided should always be in a prominent place in his library, but in the Annual Statement of Accounts now regularly issued. To be associated with the Bodleian is to share its favours and partake of the blessing it has inherited. “The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things he shall stand.”’

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*Four Biographical Sermons on John Wesley, George Whitefield, St. Columba, Joseph Butler*, by the Rev. Henry Lewis Thompson, Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, have been issued as a memorial, a brief memoir being contributed by Catharine Thompson and Stephen Paget.

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The memory of another Oxford clergyman, the Rev. W. B. Duggan, M.A., Vicar of St. Paul’s, is to be kept green by an account of his life and work, under the title of *An Oxford Parish Priest*, written by the Rev. George Lewis.

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Among Mr. Frowde’s new publications is *A History of the Post-Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire, with an account of the Families connected with them*, by Mrs. Bryan Stapleton. The object of this work is to show how Benedictine, Franciscan, Jesuit, and secular priest have worked together with the laity during the storms of three centuries to preserve the pre-Reformation Faith in the county of Oxford.

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The Head Master and boys of Reading School are to be congratulated on their spirited performance of the Tragedy of “Ion” on March 28th. It was a happy thought which suggested the representation of the play, and excellently was it carried out. The chief end in view, the notice states, was to awake an interest in Reading in the writings of one of its most famous citizens : but

surely such an interest existed before. The title was borrowed from the well-known Tragedy of Euripides, which we read in our youth, and which gave the first hint of the situation of the foundling youth educated in a temple and assisting in its services ; but otherwise there is little resemblance between the two tragedies.

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Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd was born in Reading in 1795. He was educated at Reading School, and he represented Reading in Parliament (1835-41, 1847-49) till his elevation to the Bench. As an orator his utterances were weighty rather than winged, as a Justice of the Common Pleas his work was thorough rather than brilliant, and as a Member of Parliament he did much quiet and useful work, though his language was too ornate to suit the fastidious palate of so critical a body. But it is emphatically as a man of letters that Talfourd deserves to be rescued from the waters of oblivion. He numbered Wordsworth, Lamb, Hazlitt, and many other brilliant essayists of the day among his intimate friends, and he himself contributed to many Magazines, but he was above all a dramatist, and though the demands made on his energies and thought by his profession left him but little time for literary work, in his "Ion" he has left what deserves to remain an imperishable memorial of his genius.

## Proceedings of Societies.

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BERKS ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—On account of the turmoil of a general election, it was not possible to hold the usual meeting in January. On February 1st Mr. Andrew Oliver lectured on "Flemish Brasses in England," giving an exhaustive study of all the examples which have been discovered in this country. His lecture was illustrated by lantern slides. On February 15th, at the fourth meeting of the winter session, an admirable and learned lecture was given by Mr. W. F. C. Anderson, Secretary of the Berkshire Education Committee, on "An Antiquary's Studies in Dalmatia and Montenegro." The lecturer conveyed his hearers to a little known part of the Continent, and ably described with the help of excellent lantern slides the antiquities of the shores of the Adriatic and the