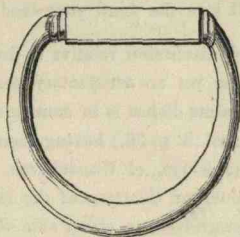


EGYPTIAN SIGNET RING,

Exhibited by Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., page 137.



This magnificent solid pure gold Ring is engraved on both sides, in intaglio, for the purpose of sealing with. In the oval or cartouche is the name of Amenophis, whom several writers are agreed was the Pharaoh who ruled in Egypt when Joseph was prime minister. It is accompanied by the Ibis, the sacred bird of the Nile, and other hieroglyphs. Its weight is one ounce six pennyweights and twelve grains, and was discovered in one of the great tombs at Memphis, by Mr. Salt, whose exertions in the cause of historical research are well known through his writings on Egyptian Archæology. The mummy from which it was taken was sold to the King of Holland, and forms one of the great treasures of the Royal Museum.

ALMS OR OFFERING DISHES.

Of the brass dishes exhibited by Mr. Mayer, (see vol. ii. page 116,) one measured 21 inches diameter, in the centre of which is embossed in relief, the subject of the return of the spies from the land of promise, with the following inscription round it, in old Dutch :—

WYLT - GHY - LANGHELEVEN - SOO - ERT - GODT - ENDE - HOVVET - ZYN - GHEBAET.

Wilt thou live long so honour God and keep his commandments.

A similar style of dish, 18½ inches diameter, has the Temptation in the Garden of Eden embossed in the centre; the serpent entwined round the tree is presenting a branch with an apple and leaves upon it to Eve, whilst Adam, standing on the other side the tree, holds in his hand also an apple. Inscription :—

ADAM - EN - EVA - WEL - VSEERT - HEBBEN - ONS - STERVEN - GELEERT.

Adam and Eve well instructed have taught us to die.

Another dish, 16 inches diameter, has figures of St. George and the Dragon in combat upon it. The Hat worn by St. George is of about the period of Charles the first of

England. The inscription, beginning at the top over the head of St. George, runs thus :—

AL - BEMINT - DEN - HEER - VWEN - GODT - BOVEN.

You shall love the Lord your God above.

There has been much learned discussion relative to the purpose for which dishes of this description were used, but as yet no satisfactory result has been arrived at. The general opinion that they were alms dishes is in some measure corroborated by one of those exhibited to the Society (vol. ii. p. 56,) having been devoted to that purpose in the family of its possessor, the Kings, of Woodchurch, Cheshire. The custom was that, after the burial of the master or mistress of the family, the poor old people of the neighbourhood arranged themselves on either side of the Church porch, and then received the doles left by the deceased, which were placed in, and distributed to them from, the dish. The last time at which it was used was on the occasion of the death of Mr. King, of Woodchurch, the father of Mrs. Robin, of West Kirby, who remembers it to have been also so used on the death of her mother and grandfather.