

ON A ROMAN RING FOUND AT MILTON-NEXT-SITTINGBOURNE.

BY GEORGE PAYNE, F.S.A.

IN February 1889 relics of an interment were met with during excavations for brickearth, in fields occupied for the purpose by Messrs. Wills and Packham, at Milton-next-Sittingbourne. The site of the discovery lies about two hundred yards to the right or south of a footpath leading from the Milton National Schools to Kemsley Downs, and about three hundred yards to the north of the Roman cemetery, discovered some years since at Bex Hill,* in Milton.

The workmen state that the discovery consisted of a human skeleton, lying east and west, with head to the west, accompanied by a glass vessel, which was destroyed, a buckle of gilt bronze, an iron spear-head, and a massive gold finger ring, set with a red carnelian, on which is cut a winged Cupid driving a chariot drawn by two horses, thence called in Latin a "*bigæ*," and in Italian a *biga*. As this subject is not dissimilar to that which occurs on early Greek coins of Syracuse, it is probable that the ancient lapidary drew his design therefrom. The drawing, from which the accompanying woodcut of the ring is engraved, was kindly prepared by Miss S. Bowles. The subject



* *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. IX., pp. 164-173.

of the *intaglio* is engraved from a sealing-wax impression of the seal. From the presence of a spear-head with the remains, we infer that the interment was made during the Anglo-Saxon period. The interment of a Roman jewel with the body was a circumstance not unfrequent. This is not the first Roman *intaglio* that has been met with in the Milton locality. The writer's collection contains several molten rings, set with engraved stones, two only of which can be deciphered; upon one is a figure of Plenty, with a cornucopia; and upon another, which is of iron, is a figure of Minerva cut on a red carnelian. These were found on the Slay Hills saltings, near Upchurch, as were also two which have recently come into the possession of Mr. H. Wickham of Strood. The latter are of silver, both being set with red carnelian; one bears the figure of Perseus; and the other, a cock upon two ears of wheat. For the preservation of the Milton *intaglio* we are indebted to the liberality of Mr. Humphrey Wood of Chatham, who purchased it from a dealer in that town.