

But we must not forget the *finis* which is thus interpreted by Schoolboys:—

F for Francis I for Jancis N for Nickley Boney  
I for John the Waterman and S for Signey Coney.

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I hear with much dismay that a large portion of the hospitium of Reading Abbey is doomed. Such destruction is deplorable. It appears that it is necessary to enlarge the Town Hall. So the old building which has witnessed so many scenes and changes, which entertained the crowds of guests who flocked to enjoy the hospitality of the Abbey, has to go and make room for "modern improvements." It is a sad pity.

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I have been reading the rules laid down for the guidance of the hospitarius or hosteller who entertained the guests of Barnwell Priory, Cambridgeshire, which are not devoid of amusement. He was required to have "facility of expression, elegant manners, and a respectable bringing up," and it is especially recommended that he should have a cheerful countenance and stock of fair words at his disposal should he "have no substance to bestow, for friends are multiplied by agreeable words."

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## Proceedings of Societies.

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BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—A very largely attended meeting of the members of this Society was held on April 25th, at the Abbey Gateway, Reading, under the presidency of Mr. C. E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A. (President). The Treasurer (Mr. Ravenscroft) informed the meeting that the Committee had arranged, by private subscription among themselves, to buy two small doors which once belonged to the famous "Oracle" in Reading. There was no question as to their being authentic, and they were exceedingly interesting specimens of early Renaissance work, showing also traces of the old Tudor carving which lingered so long into the Renaissance period.

The doors were carved on both sides. Mr. Ravenscroft proceeded to briefly refer to the work now going on at the Abbey Gateway, for which they were indebted to Dr. Hurry. Forty years ago, when Sir Gilbert Scott undertook the restoration of the Abbey Gateway, plain stone blocks were put in where sculptured work should have been, and they were now going to work in the same systematic way which was originally contemplated, those blocks being now dealt with so as to carry out the original intention of Sir G. Scott. In that work they had the kind assistance of Sir G. Scott's son, Mr. Oldrid Scott. Mr. Keyser then gave an exceedingly interesting lecture, illustrated by lantern slides, on Norman Doorways in Oxon and Bucks, which we hope to publish in the next number of the Journal. The lecture was illustrated by a beautiful series of magic lantern slides, some of which by the kindness of Mr. Keyser we hope to reproduce.

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**BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.**—The annual meeting was held at the Abbey Gate on May 9th, Mr. C. E. Keyser presiding over a fairly representative gathering. Mr. Keyser having briefly opened the meeting, asked the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield to read his report, which is printed in this number of the Journal. Mr. Keyser moved the adoption of the report, and the Rev. Alan Cheales seconded, and with their proposition suggested that the report be printed and circulated among the members of the Society. It was also embodied in the same motion that a revised list of members of the Society should be circulated. The proposition was adopted unanimously. Mr. Ravenscroft then submitted the financial statement, which showed a small balance in hand. The Chairman moved the adoption of the balance-sheet, and in doing so said a cordial vote of thanks was due to Mr. Ravenscroft for the splendid work he had performed on behalf of the Society. Mr. Messer, in seconding, also thanked Mr. Ravenscroft for his services to the Society; and concluded by suggesting that the balance-sheet should be printed and circulated. The proposition and suggestion were agreed to unanimously. On the proposition of the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, seconded by Mr. Theodore White, the Patron, Vice-Patrons, the President and Vice-Presidents were re-elected. On the proposal of Mr. Keyser, seconded by Mr. Chas. Smith, the Committee, comprising the following gentlemen, were unanimously re-elected:—Mr. R. E. Goolden, the Rev. A. Cheales, Mr. G. W. Webb, Mr. P. H. Cope, Mr. J. Messer, Mr. W. Ravenscroft,

Mr. Theodore White, and Mr. A. Ogilvie, the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield (hon. secretary), Mr. W. Ravenscroft (hon. treasurer), and the Rev. Alan Cheales (librarian). The Rev. W. H. Summers next delivered a very interesting lecture on "The Glimpses of Reading in the Civil War Period." Mr. Ravenscroft also exhibited a cannon ball—kindly sent by Dr. Hurry—which was found in the Abbey Wall, and which was supposed to have been lodged there on the occasion of the siege of Reading. A hope was expressed by the Executive of the Society that the people of Reading will show a greater interest in their doings.

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EXCURSION TO COMPTON WYNYATES AND BROUGHTON CASTLE.  
—In conjunction with the Newbury Field Club the Society made their first summer excursion to the above places. The arrangements were made chiefly by the hon. Secretary of the Field Club, Mr. Watts, and the thanks of both Societies are due to him for his admirable plans. The two parties met at Didcot and proceeded by special train to Banbury, and thence by brakes to Compton Wynyates, the seat of the Marquis of Northampton. The party was favoured with the presence of Mr. Walter Money, who read a valuable paper on the history of the house, which we hope to publish. After lunching in the banqueting hall, and inspecting the house, the party drove to Broughton Castle and were kindly welcomed by Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox, who has shown a keen interest in preserving every possible relic of antiquity connected with the ancestral seat of the family now represented by Lord Saye and Sele, to whom the property belongs. A paper by Lord Saye and Sele was read by Mr. Money. Lady Algernon Lennox conducted the visitors over the mansion, which abounds with objects of great interest. Broughton Church was ably described by Mr. Keyser, who stated that it was built at the same date as the castle (about 1300). It contains several beautiful monuments in alabaster and stone of members of the Fiennes and other families who have lived at the castle, and some splendid brasses. After the visit to the Church the party returned to Banbury, and by the kindness of Lord Saye and Sele a hamper of Banbury cakes was sent to the visitors who much appreciated this kind fore-thought of his lordship. The Reading section bade adieu to their Newbury friends at Didcot, and both Societies much enjoyed their joint excursion.

NEWBURY FIELD CLUB.—The annual meeting was held on April 30th, when the President, Mr. W. G. Mount, M.P., gave his annual address, and was again elected President. Mr. Watts was re-elected Secretary and heartily thanked for his valuable services to the Club. Mr. Money alluded to a document which he had discovered at Whitchurch, Hants, entitled "A Purveyance of the Royal Household of Queen Elizabeth," which he is preparing for publication.

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READING LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.—The twentieth annual meeting was held in March, when the report was presented, Mr. Shrubsole, the retiring President, heartily thanked for his services, Mr. Gosling elected President, and Mr. Theodore White and Mr. Aubin White Secretaries. A lecture on "Signs and Signboards" was given by Mr. C. S. Smith.

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OXFORDSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—We have received the transaction papers and report of this Society for the last year. The Society has suffered heavy losses in the death of the President, Sir H. E. L. Dryden, Bart., an enthusiastic antiquary who had a wide knowledge of many branches of archæological study; in that of a former president, the Rev. Edward Marshall, the author of a long list of local histories; and of John Hill Gough, Esq., a valued member of the Council and the writer of the history of Souldern. The annual excursion was made to Fyfield, Pusey, Buckland and Carswell, of which a full account is given, and excellent illustrations of Fyfield Church, before and after the disastrous fire, and of the celebrated Pusey and Borstal Horns. There is also the last contribution of the late Rev. Edward Marshall, on "Consecration Crosses in Churches." The transactions contain a valuable paper on "Notes on Bolney Church and Manor," by the Rev. M. T. Pearman.

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A JOKE that can only be realised sixty-six years after date can hardly be said to come within the bounds of humour at all. A certain gentleman with antiquarian tastes, named Francis Douce, died in 1834, and ever since, until the other day, a mysterious box has been reposing unopened at the British Museum waiting for the stipulated year 1900 to arrive to reveal its contents. Possibly the British Museum authorities have possessed their souls in patience all this time, comforting themselves with the reflection that blessed are they who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed. At any rate now the box has been opened, the departed antiquarian's little joke can be understood, the joke being that there was nothing in the box of the slightest value!