

Meeting at Reading of the Library Association of the United Kingdom.

The Members of this Association have nought but praise and thanks to give to the people of Reading for their warm reception during their week's sojourn in our historic town. The Berks Archæological Society contributed its share to the proceedings of the week by inviting the members to meet at the Abbey Ruins, which were most ably described by the Rev. J. M. Guilding, F.S.A., and by entertaining the company to tea in the Mayor's garden. Our space prevents us from giving a detailed account of the proceedings, which have been fully described in the local press; but we may mention that Sir George Russell, Bart., M.P., and Lady Russell welcomed the Association, and a very complete and faithful account of the story of the glories and misfortunes of the Abbey was given.

A large party wended their way to Silchester on September 17th, to inspect the recent excavations, which were ably described by Mr. G. E. Fox, F.S.A. The operations have been of no little interest and importance, and give full promise of most satisfactory results. The North, South and West Gates have been thoroughly cleared, the double gateway and guard chambers of the last being particularly interesting. The workmen were in the act of uncovering some fine pavements when the visitors arrived. Articles of bronze, iron and pottery have been found in great abundance. There is still need of larger funds, and the Berks Society will gladly forward any sums which may be sent for the carrying out of this important work.

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With regard to the transcription of Parish Registers, Miss E. E. Thoys, who has had great experience in this work, will be glad to undertake the copying of any books which are entrusted to her.

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AFFILIATED SOCIETIES.—The Newbury District Field Club made an excursion on September 2nd to Silchester, Aldermaston House, and Ufton Court. A learned description of the history of the Manor of Aldermaston was given by Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A., and a well-filled and interesting programme was satisfactorily carried out.

PRE-HISTORIC CIVILIZATION IN THE THAMES VALLEY.—In the Anthropological section of the British Association meeting at Leeds, the question of pre-historic civilization in the Thames valley was introduced by Mr. H. Stopes, who submitted to the section a number of worked flints which possessed considerable interest. He was not aware that anyone had hitherto noticed their peculiarities. There were 45 celts, &c., of a rough and rude type that had been fashioned from polished neolithic celts and tools, 12 scrapers from the same source, and 17 polishers, making 74 in all. Sixty of these specimens had evidently been chipped to their present form; their condition was not the result of accident or normal wear and use. They all came from the upper Thames valley, between Oxford and Reading. With one exception they were all flint. None showed signs of recent fracture, and all had the white or brown surface acquired by exposure. These stones seemed to him to furnish evidence that at some time in the remote past our forefathers up the Thames had attained a comparatively high degree of civilization, indicated by perfectly made and polished tools. For some reason this more cultured race or tribe was vanquished by a more barbarous nation. These ruder people would not or could not use the more perfect tools of the conquered race. Not only did they need more skill to make; they also required greater intelligence to handle, to keep in order, and to mount. These ruder men had not the necessary intelligence; hence they took the tools and worked them back to a form they understood, and by so doing furnished us with the evidence of retrogression in the civilization of so remote a

past.

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS FOR SALE.—Dr. J. C. Cox calls attention in the *Athenæum* to the following entry in a catalogue of second-hand books just issued by a Birmingham bookseller:—"Oxfordshire: The Register book of the Parish of Duddcot (Didcot), Christenings 1575-1678; Marriages 1571-1674; Burials 1568-1679, written on 20 leaves of vellum, 8vo., 21s." Dr. Cox adds that the bookseller "ought to know that registers are a class of property that cannot be sold. The book can be recovered by the Rector of Didcot without any Compensation to the bookseller."

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The Maidenhead Field Club have made an excursion to Watlington and Chinnor, visiting also the "Icknield Way," Lewknor Church, Aston Rowant, Shirburn Castle, and other places. Mr. J. Rutland, the Secretary, conducted the party, but unsettled weather rather interfered with the enjoyment of the day.