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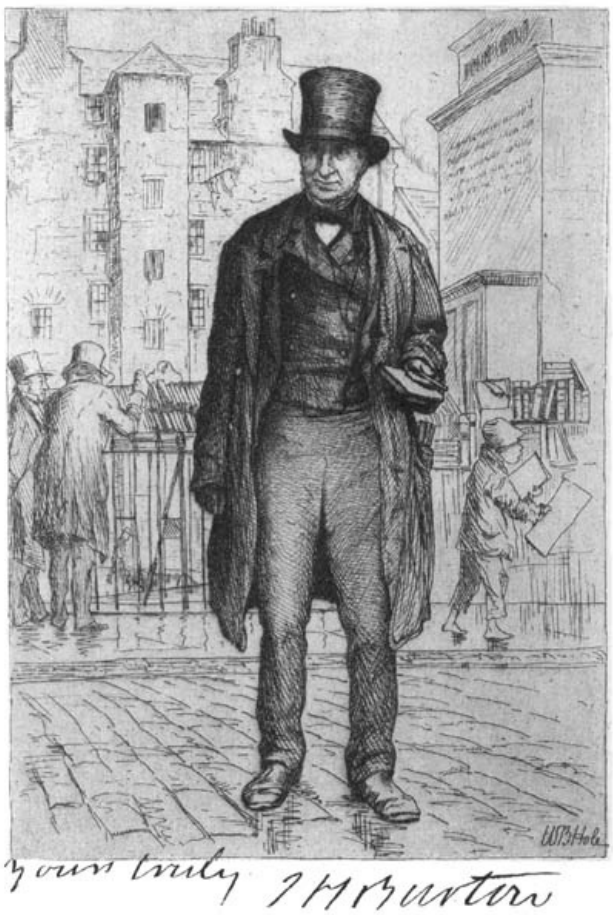

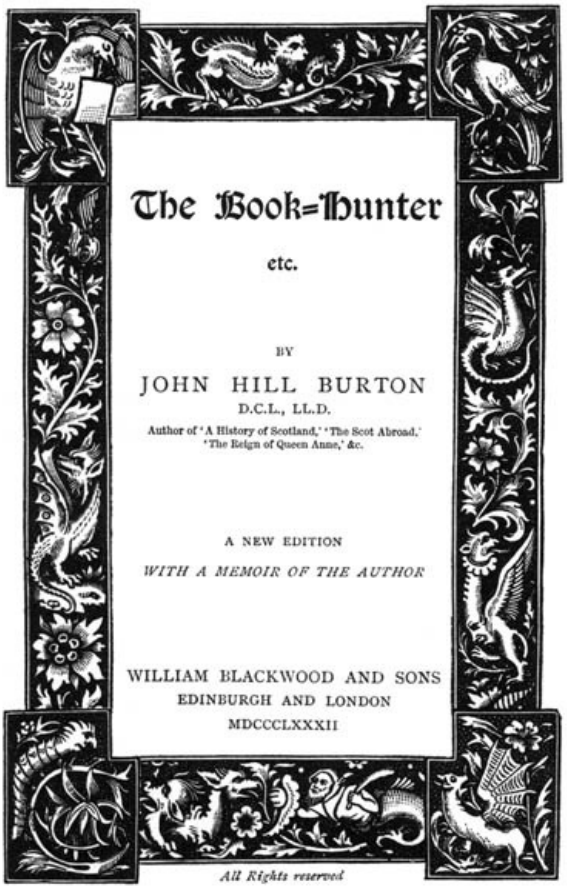

The Book-Hunter

etc.

BY

JOHN HILL BURTON

D.C.L., LL.D.

Author of 'A History of Scotland,' 'The Scot Abroad,' 'The Reign of Queen Anne,' &c.

A NEW EDITION
WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXXII

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

The learned Author of 'The Book-Hunter,' very shortly before his death, gave his consent that the Work should be reprinted.

This has now been done from his own copy, with any slight additions or emendations which it, or the notes of literary friends, supplied, and in a form which, it is hoped, will be acceptable to all lovers of choice books.

A Memoir of Dr Burton, by his Widow, has been prefixed, and a copious Index added.

The portrait of the Author has been reproduced from a characteristic photograph, and etched by Mr W.B. Hole, A.R.S.A. The View in the Library, and the Vignettes of Craighouse and Dalmeny, have been drawn by Miss Rose Burton, and engraved by Miss E.P. Burton.

45 George Street,

EDINBURGH, *May 1882*.

THE AUTHOR'S ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The Author, in again laying his little book before the public, has taken advantage of some suggestions kindly contributed by the critics who reviewed the previous edition, and he has thus been enabled to correct a few inaccuracies which they have courteously characterised as mere errors of the press. Productions of this indefinite kind are apt to grow in the hands of an author; and in the course of his revision he was unable to resist the temptation to throw in a few additional touches here and there, as to which he can only hope that they will not deteriorate the volume in the eyes of those who thought well of it in its old shape.

1863.

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The Avenue, Craighouse.

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

ABERDEEN.

Parentage—Patons—Grandholm—Jersey—"Peninsular War"—School and schoolmasters—Flogging—College—Competition for bursaries—Home life—Aunt and grand-aunt—Holiday rambles—Letter.

John Hill Burton, the subject of this notice, was born on the 22d of August 1809, in the Gallowgate of Aberdeen. He was wont to style himself, as in his childhood he had heard himself described, "The last of the Gallowgate bairns;" the Gallowgate being an old part of Aberdeen devoted chiefly to humble trade, no one, in modern times at least, even distantly connected with gentility living there. [ii]

His father, William Kinninmont Burton, is believed to have been an only son, and no kith or kin of his were ever seen or heard of by his children. The only relic of their father's family possessed by them is a somewhat interesting miniature on ivory, well painted in the old-fashioned style, representing a not beautiful lady in antique head-dress and costume, and marked on the back "Mary Burton." William Kinninmont Burton held a commission in the army, though he had not been originally intended for a military life. He was, it is supposed, engaged in trade in London when the military enthusiasm, excited by the idea of an invasion of Great Britain by Napoleon, fired him, like so many other young men, into taking up arms as a volunteer. In the end of last century he came to Aberdeen as a lieutenant in a regiment of "Fencibles," or some such volunteer title, and there captivated the affections of a beautiful young lady, Miss Eliza Paton, a daughter of the laird of Grandholm, an estate four miles distant from Aberdeen. Of this lady and of her family a few words must be said.

So small was the value of land in Scotland in the beginning of the century, that it is safe to suppose the estate of Grandholm yielded less than one-third of its present rental. The

circumstances and social position of the family were, besides, seriously lowered by the extraordinary character of the then laird. John Paton, grandfather of Dr Burton, was a man not [iii] devoid of talent, and of a strikingly handsome gentlemanly appearance and manner. He married, early in life, a beautiful Miss Lance, an Englishwoman, who, after bearing him ten children in about as many years, fell into a weak state of health, of mind as well as body. The laird nursed his wife devotedly for a long period of years, cherishing her to the exclusion of all other persons or interests. His children he regarded as the enemies of his adored wife, and consequently of himself, and his conduct to them from first to last was little less than brutal. When the enfeebled wife at last died, the husband's grief verged on madness.

He would not allow her body to be buried in the ordinary manner, but caused a tomb to be erected in a wood near the house of Grandholm, where the corpse was placed in an open coffin, and where the bereaved husband could go daily to bewail his loss. The distracted mourner rejected all attentions from children, relatives, or friends, yet apparently dreaded being left alone, for he advertised for a male companion or keeper to bear him company. The writer has often heard Dr Burton amuse himself and his audience by describing the extraordinary varieties of struggling humanity who applied for the situation. Ultimately, it is believed, none of them was selected, and the laird fled from his natural home, and from that time till his death lived chiefly in London, leaving his large young family to take care of themselves as they best could. [iv]

The three sons went successively to India or other foreign parts, and died there, one of them leaving a son, whose family are the present possessors of Grandholm.

Of the seven daughters—several of whom were very handsome—two only were married, namely, Eliza, who became Mrs Burton, mother of the historiographer; and Margaret, who espoused rather late in life a Dr Brown, and continued as a widow to inhabit an old house belonging to the Grandholm family in Old Aberdeen till June 1879, when she died at the age of ninety-eight.

The young family, thus deserted by their natural protector, fell chiefly under the authority of his eldest daughter, Mary—said, of all his children, to most resemble the laird himself.

Among this lady's nephews and nieces there linger strange traditions of the violence of her temper, and of the intensity of her loves and hates. It is hardly necessary to say that none of the females at least of the family received any particular education.

Mary was a woman of strong natural abilities, and of an excellent business faculty. She managed the very small resources left at her command with consummate skill, and in her later years made of Grandholm a hospitable, cheerful, old-fashioned home for those whom it pleased her to receive there. Her sister Eliza's marriage had not pleased her. There was much to justify her objection to it; William Burton, not then holding a commission, was entirely without pecuniary resources. [v]

His strongest talent seems to have been for painting, and by such occupation as he could get in drawing and painting in London he was barely able to maintain himself. The old grandfather and his lieutenant, aunt Mary, have been described to the writer in the darkest colours as having constantly interposed between the true lovers, William Burton and his beloved Eliza Paton, who, in spite of all advice to the contrary, soon became his wife. What the laird of Grandholm and his daughter Mary did was no doubt done in the harshest manner, but their actions themselves seem hardly blamable. When William Burton found it impossible to maintain his wife in London, she was received again into her paternal home with her infant, William, John Hill Burton's elder brother. The wife, of course, earnestly and constantly desired to rejoin her husband. The father and sister declined to facilitate her doing so by paying the expense of her return journey, concluding that if her husband was unable to meet that outlay, he was not in a position to maintain her beside himself.

After some six or eight years of mutual longing for each other's society, separated by the distance of London from Aberdeen, William Burton succeeded in exchanging his position in the Fencibles for a lieutenancy in a line regiment under orders for India. There also he went unaccompanied by his wife. After brief service in India he had to return home in ill health. Then at last the husband and wife were reunited; first to live together for a time in Aberdeen—afterwards to go with their [vi] two sons to Jersey.

The eldest son, William, ten years older than John, afterwards went into the Indian army, and died in India, leaving a son and daughter.

John Hill Burton's earliest recollections dated from his stay with his parents in garrison in Jersey. This must have been about the year 1811 or 1812, when he was therefore two or three years old. He used to say he remembered the relieving of guard in Jersey; that he had an infantine recollection of a military guard-room by night; and remembered a "Lady Fanny," the wife, as he believed, of the colonel of the regiment, who showed some slight kindness towards him and other garrison children.

The greatest adventure of Dr Burton's unadventurous life occurred when he was returning with his parents from Jersey, in a troop-ship. The vessel was chased by a French privateer, and for some time the little family had reason to fear becoming inmates of a French prison. It was this incident which Dr Burton used in his later life to say entitled him to assert that he had been in the Peninsular War. The homeward journey from Jersey was to Aberdeen, which it is believed Lieutenant Burton and his family never left again till his death. His failing health obliged him to retire from active service on the half-pay of a lieutenant. His wife, from some writings to be hereafter mentioned, seems also to have enjoyed an allowance of £40 per annum from her father. [vii]

Besides William and John Hill, there were born in Aberdeen to William Burton and Eliza Paton three sons—two of whom died early, one of them being accidentally drowned in the Don at Grandholm—and one daughter. The surviving brother of Dr Burton is a retired medical officer of the East India Company. The sister, Mary, remains unmarried.

The little household established in Aberdeen about the year 1812 knew the woes of failing health and narrow means, part of the latter doled out to them by an unwilling hand. Lieutenant Burton's health continued to decline till his death, about the year 1819. His son John was then ten years old, and had begun his school education.

His recollections of schools and schoolmasters were vivid and picturesque. The one schoolmaster —almost the only teacher—to whom he acknowledged any obligation, was James Melvin. To him, he was wont to say, he owed his good Scotch knowledge of Latin; and he delighted even till the end of his life in dwelling on Dr Melvin's methods of teaching, and on the fine spirit of generous emulation and eagerness for knowledge which inspired his pupils.

Both before and after the time of his studies under Dr Melvin he had experience of schoolmasters of a different type. The tales of flogging under these pedagogues were so absolutely sickening, that Dr Burton's family used to beg him to stop his narrations to spare their feelings. He had beheld, though he had never undergone, the old-fashioned process of flogging by *heezing up* the [viii]
culprit on the back of the school-porter, so as to bring his bare back close to the master's lash. The trembling victim, anticipating such punishment, used to be sent to summon the porter. He frequently returned with a half-sobbing message, "Please, sir, *he says* he's not in." The fiction did not lead to escape. Cromar was the name of the chief executioner in these scenes. Detested by his pupils, he was a victim to every sort of petty persecution from them, so that cruelty acted and reacted between him and them. On one memorable occasion he flogged John Burton with such violence as to cause to himself an internal rupture.

The offence which led to this unmeasured punishment was "looking impudent!"—and the look of supposed impudence was produced by a temporarily swollen lip; but the swollen lip was the effect of a single combat with a schoolfellow; and fighting was so rife, and so severely repressed, that it appeared less dangerous to meet the consequences of the supposed impertinent face than those of the battle. The unfortunate pupil of course continued to grimace, and the wretched schoolmaster to flog, till the pupil streamed with blood, and the master sat down from sheer exhaustion and an injury from which he never recovered.

Before John Hill Burton had completed his course at the grammar school he gained a bursary by competition, and began his studies at Marischal College. The open competition for bursaries at [ix]
Aberdeen was a subject on which he delighted to talk, often with tears of enthusiasm in his eyes. The entire impartiality, the complete openness of these competitions to the whole world, the spectacle of high learning freely offered to whoever could by merit earn it, seemed to Dr Burton, to his life's end, as fine a subject of contemplation as any the world could offer. During his last illness, a friend, who knew his strong interest in his Alma Mater, presented him with Mr M'Lean's 'Life at a Northern University.' He read it with the utmost delight, often reading passages aloud with great emotion, on account of the vivid picture they presented of the scenes of his youth. It was a rough hard life that of an Aberdeen College student fifty or sixty years ago.

Mr M'Lean says of his fellow-students: "As the most of them came from the country—generally from the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland—they brought with them all their native roughness and coarseness of manners. The great majority of those who had spent their lives in town frequented the neighbouring university,[1] where the entrance and other examinations were not nearly so severe. In general, the great bulk of the students were far behind in good manners, and that polish which a large town always gives. Their secluded habits when at college, and their [x]
intercourse only with their own number, prevented any improvement in this matter. On the whole, their conduct in the class, and their behaviour towards some of the professors, were anything but gentlemanly."[2]

Another quotation from Mr M'Lean may be allowed, as embodying the descriptions often given by Dr Burton of the motley crew of competitors for the scholarships and bursaries dispensed by the university: "Gazing round the room, I noted that my competitors consisted of raw-boned red-haired Highlandmen, fresh from their native hills, with all their rusticity about them. All the northern counties had sent their quota to swell the number, and even the Orkney and Shetland Islands were represented. Many rosy-faced young fellows were also to be seen, who had left their country occupations for a little, and who, if unsuccessful"—*i.e.*, in gaining a bursary—"would return to them, and work in their leisure hours at their favourite classics until another competition came round. Here and there were to be seen a few rather better dressed than the rest; whilst amongst the crowd the eye rested on many a studious, thin, cadaverous, hard-worked face, which made you look again, and feel in your heart that there sat a bursar. A more motley [xi]
crowd, as respects age, dress, and features, could scarcely be found anywhere; and yet over all there was an intellectual, manly look, a look of innocence and unacquaintance with the low ways of the world."[3]

Among this motley crowd John Hill Burton was no model student. He took his full share of the rough sport so well described in the 'Northern University'—wrenched off door-knockers and house-bells, transplanted sign-boards, &c. He was but a schoolboy in years when he left school for college, and his mother was frequently obliged to provide him with a private tutor, not so much to assist him in his studies as to keep him from idleness during his hours at home. Home

was, during these years, for a time sad, and was always quiet. During his father's lifetime it was diversified by frequent changes of abode within a very narrow circuit.

The writer has seen some half-dozen small houses, in a rather unlovely suburb of Aberdeen, all within sight of each other, which had successively been inhabited by Lieutenant Burton and his family; the poor invalid craving for the real change which might have benefited his health, and seeking relief, instead, in constant change of house. Mrs Burton was entitled to an abode at Grandholm as well as her sisters, and the little family went there occasionally, at least after Lieutenant Burton's death. The place, which is a rather interesting one, filled a considerable [xii] space in the affections of the children. Its inmates did not. Clearly sister Eliza never was forgiven for her unfortunate marriage. Affection for her husband and for his memory prevented her apologising for it, and her children were not of the sort to apologise for their existence. A series of petty slights, small unkindnesses, imbittered the mind of the poverty-stricken widow against her unmarried sisters, and her feeling was strongly inherited by her children.

A house in Old Aberdeen has been already mentioned as the abode of Mrs Margaret Brown, Dr Burton's last surviving aunt. This quaint old house had been purchased by Mrs Brown's grandmother, mother of the laird of Grandholm, and at the beginning of the century was inhabited by her maiden daughter Margaret, or, as she was oftener called, Peggy Paton. This lady lived to the age of ninety, and at her death left her house and fortune to her niece and name-daughter, Margaret Paton (Mrs Brown), who in her turn adopted a grand-niece, the daughter already mentioned of Dr Burton's eldest brother, William,—the same who, having nursed her aged aunt till her death, in the last year of his life so tenderly ministered to her uncle, the subject of this notice.

The second in the line of female owners of the old house, Peggy Paton, was, for the outer world, what George Eliot calls "a charicter"—one of those distinguishing features of country-town life which the march of improvement has swept away: a lady by birth, but owing little to schools or [xiii] teachers, books or travel: a woman of strong natural understanding and some wit, who loved her nightly rubber at whist, could rap out an oath or a strong pleasantry, and whose quick estimates of men and things became proverbs with the younger generation.

For her inner circle Peggy Paton was a most motherly old maid. She it was who, when she found her niece Eliza *would* marry Lieutenant Burton, mediated between father and daughter, and arranged matters as well as might be in an affair in which her good sense found much to disapprove, and her heart much to excuse. Not only to her niece Margaret, her adopted daughter, but also to her other nieces at Grandholm, motherless by death, and fatherless by desertion, did she fill a mother's part as far as these robust virgins would permit her. Sister Eliza's rough little children, or rougher great boys, always found kindness in the house in the Old Town, first in their grand-aunt's[4] time, and afterwards in that of her successor, Mrs Brown. [xiv] David, Dr Burton's younger brother, was lovingly tended by them during part of the lingering illness of which he died, and the youngest of Eliza Paton's sons remained an inmate of Mrs Brown's house that he might continue his education in Aberdeen, when his mother removed to Edinburgh.

For those who do not know Aberdeen, it may be proper to say that *Old* Aberdeen is as entirely distinct from New Aberdeen as Edinburgh is from Leith—in a different way. The distance between them is somewhat greater, about two miles; and whereas New Aberdeen is a highly prosperous commercial city, as entirely devoid of beauty or interest as any city under the sun, Old Aberdeen is a sweet, still, little place, hardly more than a village in size, in appearance utterly unlike any other place in Scotland, resembling a little English cathedral town,—the towers and spires of college and cathedral beautifully seen through ancient trees from the windows of Miss Peggy Paton's old house, to which that managing lady added a wing, and which possessed a [xv] good flower and fruit garden, wherein grew plenty of gooseberries, ever Dr Burton's favourite fruit. His birthday, 22d August, was, during his mother's life, always celebrated by a family feast of them.

Such were the scenes and circumstances of Dr Burton's childhood and early youth. As he grew old enough to begin those long walks which to the end were the great pleasure of his life, he made acquaintance with the beautiful scenery of the Upper Dee and Don. In holiday time his mother used to give him a small sum of money, at most one pound, and allow him to travel as far as the amount would take him. His legs were almost always his only conveyance; throughout his life he entertained an aversion to either riding or driving. His temper was too impatient, too energetic, to allow him to enjoy progress without exertion. After railways existed he sometimes used them in aid of his walking power; but all horse vehicles were odious to him, partly by reason of an excessive tenderness for animals. He could not bear to see a horse whipped, or any living creature subjected to bodily pain.

Wonderful are the accounts the writer has heard of the duration of that holiday pound: how Dr Burton and sometimes a chosen companion would subsist day after day on twopence-worth of oatmeal, that by so doing they might travel the farther; or how, having improvidently finished their supply, they would walk some incredible distance without any food at all, till they reached [xvi] either their home or the house of some friend.

In these holiday rambles Dr Burton made the acquaintance of several families either more or less related to him through his Grandholm kindred, or willing, in the old Scotch fashion, to extend hospitality to any wayfarer who needed it. In this way Dr Burton has described himself as the

guest of Mrs Gordon at Abergeldie, who, as he said, made a request that when he came to visit her he would if possible arrive before midnight. Invercauld, Glenkindie, Tough, and many other country-houses, were visited in the same unceremonious way.

The letter here given was written to his mother during one of these holiday rambles, when its writer was about twenty, and describes some of the scenes of the wonderful flood of '29, so graphically described by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. The Colonel H. was the son of Dr Burton's godfather, and a man of mature years at the time the Highlander and Dr Burton describe him as having "run away." The writer can offer no explanation of this rather amusing passage in the letter: it might either be a mere joke or refer to some family quarrel of the Colonel's.

"LAKEFIELD, *8th September 1829*.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have just arrived at Lakefield in the midst of determined and ceaseless rain. I expected of course to meet A.H. here, but it seems he ran away the other day, and will by this time be in Aberdeen. He wrote to Mrs Grant from [xvii]
Elgin, but she has not yet heard of his arrival in Aberdeen.

"In my way here I ran a risk of being violently used for his sake. As I was perambulating slowly the border of Loch Ness I met a tall, gaunt-looking man, who eyed me rather suspiciously, and stretched forth his hands in the attitude of one interrupting a stray sheep. I looked at the being in my turn, and began to be a little suspicious of his purpose, and to think of my dirk. The man approached nearer still in the attitude of making a spring. When he had come so close that I could hardly escape him, he roared out: 'Is't you 'at's the laad Colonel H. 'at's been runnan' awa'?' 'No,' said I, 'I am not.'

"The man continued to eye me rather suspiciously, and then went slowly away. I suppose he hoped to be rewarded for me. I have told you that I got rain. When I was proceeding to Huntly, as you are aware, in the coach, there came two or three heavy gusts of wind from the hills, carrying along with it a sort of soft drizzle, but nothing like rain, and the roads appeared dry. After I had passed Keith, however, the whole country had a drenched and draggled appearance, the burns were swollen, the corn was hanging like wet hair, the trees were drooping and black, and the country people themselves looked as if they had been held in water for the last six months. A heavy and unceasing rain came on. The clouds grew black and seemed to settle, everything had a ghastly and dismal appearance. I met a man, and asked him if it always rained here. 'Ou ay, sir,' replied he, 'it's the parish o' [xviii]
Rayne.' I was content with the answer, and asked nothing more. In a condition you may easily imagine, I reached Elgin and dried myself. The rain stopped, but the clouds did not clear. I went and visited the cathedral, and wandered about the ruins for an hour or two. It is a noble and beautiful building, but I will not begin to speak about it, as the post leaves in a few minutes. On Saturday afternoon I left Elgin for Forres, with the hope of better weather. During the walk I could hardly persuade myself I was out of Aberdeenshire, the country is so very like, but it is rather flatter. Next morning was clear and cloudless, and the sun shone bright over a country drenched and covered with water. I wished that day to reach Inverness, but a new difficulty appeared. I was told that the Findhorn was so swollen that no mortal man could get across. I saw the boatman going to his ferry-house, and I followed him to see how the matter stood. I soon came to a deep and rapid sweep of water, which appeared to spread far beyond two narrow banks which might have formerly bounded it. This I thought to be the Findhorn, but ere I went many paces farther another sight met my eyes—the real river itself dashing through the glen with an awful majesty, and carrying roots, trees, and herbage of every description hurriedly over its broad breast. In the midst of this scene of devastation appeared the ruins of a noble bridge, nothing but the piers remaining, and these dashing to pieces in the furious current. The stream I had seen at first [xix]
was the river flowing down the road. The river fell in the evening, and I crossed the ferry. I had two days of most delightful weather, and yesterday evening I had a sunset and moonlight walk by the side of Loch Ness, among the most noble scenery I ever beheld. The sky was perfectly clear, and without a single cloud.

"I must now finish, as the post is going away. If you see Joseph [*i.e.*, the late Joseph Robertson, a constant companion and attached friend], tell him I will write to him soon and have a deal to say to him, particularly of my discovering a sculptured stone in Elgin Cathedral. Notwithstanding the fineness of the evening, this day is determinedly rainy. If you see any of the H.'s, give Mrs Grant's compliments.—Adieu for the present; and I remain, my dear mother, your affectionate and dutiful son,

"J. HILL BURTON."

The writer has heard many farther details of the excursion of which this letter records the beginning. The temporary clearing up of the weather referred to was but a hollow truce in the tremendous elemental warfare of that memorable autumn. The flood described in the Findhorn was but a faint precursor of the wave sixty feet high, which, a week or two later, burst through the splendid girdle of rock which at Relugas confines that loveliest of Scotch rivers, and spread over the fertile plain beneath, changing it into a sea. At some points in Morayshire, the enormous [xx]

overflow of the rivers broke down the banks which bound the ocean, and permanently changed the coast-line of the country. The most striking and extraordinary part of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's description of this flood is an extract from the log of a sailing packet—a sea-going vessel—which directed its course over and about the plain of Moray, picking the inhabitants off the roofs of their houses, or such other elevations as they could reach.

Dr Burton had the good fortune to see the Fall of Foyers during this great flood, and had the temerity to cross its stream, which lay on his road, upon a remaining parapet of the fallen bridge!

CHAPTER II.

EDINBURGH.

Apprenticeship in lawyer's office—Grandfather's letter—J.H. Burton's letters to his mother, conveying first impressions of Edinburgh, and account of passing Civil Law trial.

On the completion of his studies, John Burton was apprenticed to a writer in Aberdeen. He has talked of this period as one of the most painful of his life. He was utterly unable to master the routine of office-work, or to submit to its restraints; and one of his most joyful days was that in which his indentures were, by mutual desire, cancelled. [xxi]

A piece of yellow old paper was found in Dr Burton's desk when he died. It was a letter written some fifty-five years before, and had probably lain there during all these years. As it refers to this period of Dr Burton's life, it may be given. It seems fully to bear out the writer's conception of the unsympathising character of the intercourse between Mrs Burton and her family. No stronger incentive to exertion could have been offered to a man of Dr Burton's character, than the desire to falsify the implied prediction of such a missive. With a view to its effect in this way it had probably been given him by his mother. It is an entire letter, and the whole is here printed.

"GRANDHOLM, *June 6th*.

"DEAR ELIZA,—I have this day received a letter from my father, part of which I think it necessary to transcribe to you, as the best mode of giving you his meaning.

"'The account of John Burton's being in such an idle unemployed way displeases me much. I wish you, Mary, would speak to his mother on the subject; tell her I would have acquainted her with my displeasure before now, only, on account of her misfortune in her family [this must refer to the death of her son David], I deferred what I ought to have done. Why was he taken away from his attendance at Mr Winchester's office? Doctor Dauney said he could not be better than with him, as there was plenty of business, such as was going. Tell her that as I have neither funds nor inclination to support idle gentlemen, or rather vagabonds, I have given directions to Mr Alcock not to pay up her next half-year's annuity, till he hears from me on the subject, and until she gives you satisfactory accounts concerning her son's return to Mr Winchester's office or otherwise. Tell her not to write to me, but to act as is her duty.'" [xxii]

The sister here continues, "I hope Mary [Dr Burton's only sister, the youngest child of his mother] continues well, and that you will not fail to give me an answer to this, as you see it will be absolutely necessary to give attention to the subject. Barbara continues very unwell.—I remain yours sincerely, M. PATON."

Whether the threat conveyed in this letter was executed, the writer has now no means of knowing. The expression of it alone was cruel enough—the threat to starve a poor mother into forcing a son to continue a business utterly repugnant to him. Mrs Burton, however, did not protect herself by the sacrifice of her son. She believed in her son's powers, and acted on her belief in spite of all opposition; and she had her reward. She lived to see her son gaining fame in letters, and to find in him the utmost devotion a son can show to a mother. He never forgot or failed to acknowledge his obligations to her. These were undoubtedly great. She not only gave him, in part personally, his education, but when that was finished, and she hoped to find peace for her declining years in the little home she had prepared for herself, she sacrificed that also to her hope of her son's advancement—her faith in his talents and perseverance. [xxiii]

With the death of her husband, perhaps also on account of that of her father, and the loss of her two little sons, Mrs Burton's pecuniary position seems to have become somewhat easier. Whilst her son John was destined for business in Aberdeen, she had built a small house for her own occupation in the neighbourhood. When he set his mind on the higher walk of his profession, and desired to come to the Scotch Bar, the necessary expense could only be compassed by the devoted mother selling her newly built house, and casting in her lot with her son. She, her young daughter, and an Aberdeenshire maiden (so primitive in her ideas, that she conceived the only way of reaching Edinburgh from Warriston must be by *wading* the Water of Leith), followed John to Edinburgh, and took up their abode in a very small house on the north side of Warriston Crescent in the year 1831.

Dr Burton was no great letter-writer. After he began, as he said, to write for print, he considered it waste of time to write anything which was not to be printed, except in briefest form. His letters to his wife and family during absences on the Continent or elsewhere, seldom contained more than a bare itinerary, past and future, often referring them for particulars to the article in 'Blackwood,' which was to grow out of his travels. [xxiv]

His mother was naturally the recipient of the writing which came before the days of print,—before the days of penny postage also. Almost every letter contains a history of how his mother's last reached him, as well as how he hoped to have that which he is writing conveyed to her without paying the awful tax of postage.

The next letters here offered belong to the beginning of his Edinburgh life, and relate to a feat of mental exertion equal to his bodily performances. He was at the time living in lodgings, for the purpose of passing his legal examinations preparatory to coming to the Bar; but he may be allowed to give the history of this part of his life entirely in his own words.

"Edinburgh, *3d Nov. 1830*.

"My dear Mother,—I have just arrived here, and as there is a friend of Mr Dauney's just about to set off for Aberdeen, I preferred letting you get a bit of a note or so to sending you a newspaper. Of course I have nothing to write you about but my own concerns. A delightful moonlight night for travelling, but the coach rather full: there were three nice children, with whom I contrived to amuse myself. All went on well till we came to Burntisland Ferry, where we had to proceed so far in an open boat. The sea poured in in a rather disagreeable manner; and while I thought every one was getting a good ducking but myself, a large miscreant of a wave contrived to escape every other passenger, and to settle right upon my shoulders. I [xxv] have not yet secured a lodging in Edinburgh, but have been wandering through all the streets admiring. Of the Old Town I think far more than of the New, it is so majestic and magnificent, and am resolved, if I can, to live in it.

"I dined at Mr Dauney's to-day. He has requested me to stay with him till I can get lodgings conveniently, but I expect to be stowed away to-morrow. I delivered Mr Innes's parcel; and remain, my dear mother, your most affectionate son, J. Hill Burton.

"*P.S.*—I would have written you a long letter, but do not wish to absent myself from table."

"11 Keir Street, Edinburgh,
Tuesday Evening, 9th Nov. 1830.

"My dear Mother,—I take the opportunity of Mr Innes's parcel, which leaves this to-morrow afternoon, to give you a more succinct account of my affairs than you could derive from my laconic epistle of last week. I must, however, preface by requesting you to write me as soon as you conveniently can, either by Innes or L. Smith's conveyance, as I am anxious to hear the state of your cold, and how James is succeeding at school.

"When I dismounted from the coach I was peculiarly struck by the sight of magnificent streets, with scarcely a human being to be seen along them. I expected to have found them of that crowded description so often characteristic of a metropolis; but to one who is accustomed to see our grand mercantile [xxvi] thoroughfare, the paucity of perambulators in *some* of the streets of Edinburgh appears rather peculiar. *Others* I found at particular periods to be thickly inhabited. My first course was to direct my course through the rain to G.B.'s dwelling, where I found him reading a large Bible. He appears to have carried fanaticism to a ridiculous pitch, unworthy of his education and station in life. He put into my hands a tract (composed I am afraid by himself), with injunctions to read it. I intend to send it to you as a curiosity. His brother Charles, whom I best knew, used to be a clever and sensible boy, very well informed; I hope he, too, is not also among the prophets. How few steer a middle course! G.B. cannot do the most trifling act without connecting it with religion. It is a mere disease. Others never think of it at all. I think it is Dr Johnson who says something to this effect: '——was mad, and showed it by kneeling down and saying his prayers on the street. Now there are many men who are not mad, yet I am afraid are worse than poor ——, for they never pray at all.' But to return—I inquired at Mr B. if he could recommend me to any cheap and respectable lodging. After applying some thought to the subject, he began to recollect that he did know of one or two. With regard to one the address was rather imperfect, as he knew neither the name nor the number, but had a guess of the street. The other I discovered, and now occupy, although he gave me both a wrong name and wrong number. [xxvii]

"Immediately on leaving B.'s I went to Dauney, who appeared glad to see me, and kindly asked me to dine with him. He has a very handsome house. Mrs Dauney is a

very agreeable person, and they have two children. He would not hear of my leaving him till I had got accommodated with good lodgings. The rooms I now occupy I did not enter till yesterday. They were inhabited by a person just about to leave them, and I had no recommendation to others so well situated. The person who keeps the lodgings is named M'Gregor. I have a room and closet, neat enough, for which I pay 8s. a-week, which includes coals. I could not have a place nearly so cheap in the New Town. The situation is delightful. It is behind the Old Town, and the windows look across towards it and the Castle, just as those in Union Terrace look towards Belmont Street. The view extends as far as the Firth of Forth.

"There are, moreover, other advantages. Heriot's Hospital and the old city wall are close by; and when I choose I may, in going to the New Town, pass through the West Port and the Grassmarket.

"I have been a good deal annoyed about my luggage, which has not yet been sent up, so that you may imagine some of my present drapery has been worn long enough.

"I directed a person, calling himself the Clyde Shipping Company's agent here, to get them sent up last Saturday, which was to be done 'pointedly.' I amused myself from day to day annoying the man, till at last his patience appeared determined to [xxviii] weather out mine, so I went to Leith to-day and saw after them myself—found the man had nothing to do whatever with the concern, and neither could nor did give directions. The clerk, after blessing himself the usual number of times, stated his opinion that it would have been better for both parties had they left his office some time ago, so I expect to see them early to-morrow. I will let you know of their safe arrival if before three. I read your poetry[5] all over, but did I begin to remark on it here I would exceed the limits which a narration of facts has left me. It has afforded me much pleasure in the loneliness, which, of course, I feel a little at first. However, I cannot say it makes me at all sad. There is something independent and free in the idea that none of the vast multitude you are among cares more for your life or welfare than the breeze that passes. I begin my studies to-morrow, and if I behave properly will have a good deal to do.

"By the way, I may here mention a somewhat important circumstance. The greater part of the entrance fee is paid immediately on passing the Civil Law trial, which you know I wished to do this spring. The whole fee is less than £300, and the part payable *then* is more than £200. The fees are to be raised, but the increase cannot be levied upon me; it only applies to those who have not commenced their studies at the period of raising. Speak to R. Alcock about this. I daily meet troops of [xxix] Aberdonians. I dined on Friday last with a young man, Fordyce, and yesterday with Mr J. Jopp. I calculate I have about fifty fellow-citizens connected with law here....

"*Wednesday, half-past two.*—Just got my luggage—cost 8s. All right, save that your jars have bolted, and played the very deuce with some of my books, two waistcoats, and a pair of drawers.

"Hoping your cold is better, I remain, my dear mother, your affectionate and dutiful son,

"J. Hill Burton."

"11 Keir Street, Edinburgh,
20th Nov. 1830.

"My dear Mother,—I have scarcely an instant's time to say a word or so in reply to yours.... It was not *one* of the jars which burst, but there was a general conspiracy among them all to slip out at the side of the paper.

"I do not board for anything, just get in a little bit of meat or anything I want, can take my own way, and am never annoyed. I breakfasted and dined last Sunday with Mr H. Constable, who is a very agreeable young fellow. He is the proprietor of the Miscellany.[6] By the way, I find out that if I do not pass my Civil Law trial before 1832 I shall be compelled to pay £50 to a Widows' Fund. Too bad to make [xxx] young fellows, who may never have a *widow* all their *lives*, pay so much. Determined, if I pay it, to get a widow immediately....

"Breakfasted to-day with the B.'s. At the theatre with Mellis day before yesterday. I hope Mary continues better.—Your affectionate son, J. Hill Burton."

"11 Keir Street, Edinburgh,
1st Dec. 1830.

"My dear Mother,—I have got something to communicate with regard to my prospects of entering the Faculty, which will not be of the most agreeable nature. I was told from the proper authority (I have already mentioned to you) that a Widows' Fund subscription is to be charged against those who enter after 1st January 1832. I have consulted the Act of Parliament, and find it is leviable against those who enter after 1st January 1831. The last examination this year will be on *Tuesday week*,—the last for passing which £50 and an annual payment of £7 is not charged. Now for this examination I intend to prepare myself, unless you inform me *immediately* that the money, £213, cannot be obtained. See Mr Alcock immediately, and explain this, but tell it to *no other person*, as I should not like it to be known that I had failed. I expect to know your intentions at farthest by *Monday*, as I must then give warning to the Faculty. You must be expeditious, as I can assure you *I* shall be. The subject is not difficult, and I think I may be able to [xxxi] prepare myself for an ordinary examination. Should I find it *impossible*, I will still reserve to myself, even after you send the money, the power of withdrawing. The Widows' subscription (as the Act states) is repayable to those who are rejected or die before joining, and I presume the entry-money is so too. If it is *not*, I should insure my life.

"If you consent to my arrangements, you must send me a certificate of my age—an extract from the Register of Baptisms, or something of that sort. I suppose Cordiner can give it you....

"Should I not pass my Civil Law trial immediately, I will still have the satisfaction of passing at some early period, avoiding an additional £60 which it is intended will be imposed, and from which no advantage, either real or fortuitous, is to be expected. Now the Widows' Fund, you know, when one has a widow, will be a very good sort of thing—£80 per annum, I believe. So if any lady wishes me to marry her, she had better advise me by all means to join the scheme. I know of no way of making one's own by it just now but by marrying some old advocate's widow who is on the list.

"What you do, do quickly. Write me as soon as you can, and *definitely*, with bill for the money if possible—if not, a plain statement of its impossibility. I will work hard till I hear from you. How are you all? I am in good health, and remain, my dear mother, your affectionate and dutiful son, J. Hill Burton."

[xxxii]

"Edinburgh, *4th December 1830*.

"My dear Mother,—I this morning received your and Mr Alcock's letters, enclosing a bill for £200 and order for £33, and having no opportunity to-morrow, I take this occasion to acknowledge receipt and return thanks. Tell Mr Alcock I am afraid I will never be able to repay him his kindness in procuring me this sum upon my very cavalier notice. With regard to yourself, you know, I suppose, we have a pretty long account together, and the balance somewhat against me, as it will always remain.

"I suppose you will have received my hurried note of last night. I thought you had entirely forgot my £20 amid the other weighty matters you had to settle for me. I am still preparing and covering the Civil Law with rapid strides, but to make one's self master of a subject so intricate in a fortnight is something of a consideration; however, I do not despair. I am doing my best, and if I do not use my utmost endeavour, after what has been done for me by others, I will allow you to call me anything you please.

"Still I beg you will not make yourself too sanguine of my success. In the meantime tell *no one*, not even Robertson, what I am attempting, that in the case of my being remitted to my studies (that is the term), it may not be generally known. I give in my name for examination on Monday next—it takes place on Tuesday fortnight. But I do not know when I will be acquainted with the issue. Do not be afraid that I will confuse or disturb myself much about it. You know I have been accustomed to [xxxiii] such things, as eels are to be skinned.

"While writing, I have been interrupted by a porter who has come seething in with a large box. To open a parcel is a most interesting thing, and the imagination revels with pleasure over its uncertain contents; but the rich and varied stores of this have exceeded expectation. I am glad you sent the certificate of baptism. I do not consider it at all necessary to write by post, as this goes by a most careful hand; but should I not hear next week of your having received it, then I *shall* write by post. Perhaps I may enclose a receipt to Mr Alcock. He 'hinted,' it seems, 'the danger of placing so much money,' &c. I have not time to let my imagination run loose just now, or else I might have pictured to myself the thousand things which might be done with such a treasure; but I assure you I never should have thought

of anything (as things now stand) but the intended destination of it, and of *that* I shall have enough to think. But you know the fable, or story rather, of the Priest and the Hostler. I have not time to tell it you now, but perhaps Robertson can furnish you with it....

"I remain, my dear mother, your sincerely affectionate son, J. Hill Burton."

"Edinburgh, *15th December 1830*.

"My dear Mother,—If you had not been in expectation of such an event, I might have commenced my letter after William's manner, with saying, 'You will be [xxxiv] surprised to hear I have passed,' but as the matter stands, I must begin with—'I have the satisfaction of informing you, &c.' It is just about a quarter of an hour since I was examined, the time being deferred from yesterday to to-day. The questions were very easy, at least I thought them so, and I think I answered each. If there were any I did not answer, it was from abstracting my attention from the more trifling to the more difficult branches of the law. So far of my examinations are over; but you must hold in mind that if I do not pass my Scots Law trial in a year, the £50 must still be paid. One thing I have lost by preparation, the chance of gaining the prize in the Civil Law class. This is given by the greatest number of correct answers to one hundred questions. Ten of these have already been answered. *I* only accomplished *seven* of them, and consider I have forfeited my chance. Seven is a good proportion out of ten difficult questions; but as the person who gains the prize is seldom deficient by above two or three, I do not conceive I have a chance. You may now tell whom you please that I have passed, but need not be publishing it to all the world. Had I *not* passed, I should have been called a rash foolish fellow for attempting it; but as it is, it will be said I have done quite right. You may tell Robertson 'and them,' and Mrs Brown; and tell Mrs B. I will now have time to write her, and send a barrel of oysters.... Ask Robertson and Sim and Cordiner, and so on, to drink my health. I go to a party at Mr Constable's to-night, [xxxv] the only place (excepting Mr Dauney's) I have been engaged at since I arrived. I have had nothing whatever to interfere with my studies for this last fortnight. Tell James and Mary I can now have time to read their letters. On Saturday Mr G.B. called on me, asking me to attend a prayer-meeting, and finding I was busy, told me if I saw things in as clear a light as he did, I would see the vanity of attending to these earthly things. I trust, without irreligion, one may say he is mistaken. I write from Mr Constable's, which is near the Post-office. My dinner-hour is long past, and the post is just going, so I must bid you adieu. Write me soon, and inform me how you are pleased with the contents of this. My 'passage' only cost me 10s. of fee, and 2s. 6d. as fine for being absent from the Society. I hope you are all well, and remain, my dear mother, your affectionate and dutiful son, J. Hill Burton."

"Edinburgh, *17th December 1830*.

"My dear Mother,—I supposed you received my last letter, written somewhat hurriedly, but of which I suppose you were able to discover the principal fact. Since writing, I have been relaxing myself a little, and going about making a few calls, a thing I have neglected of late; but I beg you will not suppose this to be a hint that I am to grow idle. I intend, indeed, to be very busy all winter. I expect to hear from you soon, and to know what is doing in Aberdeen. I called upon Mrs H. [xxxvi] to-night, who told me my grand-aunt had been very unwell lately. I trust this is a mistake; but not having heard from your quarter for some days, the fact may be so, without my having known it.... I just despatched the oysters, and I would wish that you could send to Mr Dyce, and inquire whether they have come free of expense, as I left money with the seller to pay the coach-hire. I have not sent you any, as they are rather dear—8s. 8d. for a barrel with two hundred. Now, I presume you might buy the same number in Aberdeen for about quarter the sum.

"I live here in a sort of honourable solitude—few acquaintances, and few annoyances; it is just the sort of life I like. I am to have one or two of the young men I know to spend Saturday evening with me, and to discuss your nice plum-cakes which I have just cut. Among them is a young Pole—a Count Lubienski, a very agreeable and intelligent gentleman—a class-fellow.

"I may now, by the way, give you the history of my discoveries with respect to the Widows' Fund, &c., which I presume have proved rather mysteriously annoying to you. When I first heard the report of the matter, I called on the librarian and requested information. He told me that those who did not pass before 1832, had to pay it. *I* then said it was due at passing the Civil Law trials, and so, &c.; and then the man shrugged his shoulders, and allowed I had convinced him it was only [xxxvii] payable by those who did not pass their *Civil Law* trials before 1832, and I said no

more about the matter. Dining, however, with Dauney on Tuesday fortnight last, I heard an observation which led me to a different conclusion, so I procured the Act as soon as might be, and saw how the matter lay.

"Presuming I had a whole month before me, I determined to try the thing, notwithstanding the shaking of heads of those to whom I was *obliged* to communicate it.

"Finding, on inquiry, that there would be no opportunity of being examined after the 14th, I will allow I was a little startled, but still stuck fast, and had a sort of feeling I would be able to pass, as I do not like setting about what I cannot perform.

"Proceeding in my labours, I gathered confidence, and when the day came thought it would be rather hard were I rejected. There were four examined at the same time, and being before myself, I had to stand their statements of the difficulty and minuteness of the questions, and they stared not a little when I told them I had studied the subject for a fortnight and two days; for previous to that time I had been engaged in the *History* of Roman Law at college, and had commenced with the Principles. After the first question I felt myself secure; yet I will allow I felt a little easy (*i.e. relieved*) when each of the examiners shook hands with me, and told me I had given perfect satisfaction.

"The librarian tells me some are rejected in the Civil Law trials, but *none* in the Scotch Law, for which I must next year be prepared. I hope the saving will counter-balance the trouble of raising the money. I believe I shall enclose you my acknowledgment for the £200 (the £13 goes to the library, or something of that sort, which, though rather apocryphal in my nomenclature, shows the destination of the money). Tell the children[7] if they will write I will answer them soon, and enclose them something. Pray remember me to Mr Alcock, and repeat my sense of obligation to him. Tell Miss Seton I am now on the same shelf with her nephew. Remember me to the Misses Leith and all friends, Miss Johnstone and Mrs Wemyss, and all your not very extensive circle.... Write me soon; and I remain, my dear mother, your affectionate and dutiful son, J. Hill Burton. [xxxviii]

"*P.S.*—I understand that should I 'kick' before passing advocate, the money will be returned. This would not be the case, however, were I to prove fickle, so I must consider my steps taken, and all thoughts of the Aberdeen law as ended; however, I shall finish my apprenticeship in summer. Had I time, I should like to go a week or two to the Continent (Norway or so). J.H.B."

[xxxix]

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING OF LITERARY LIFE.

Particulars regarding passing of Civil Law trial—Letters containing account of first years in Edinburgh and beginning of literary life—First marriage—Wife's death—Publications during married life and widowhood—Political Economy.

If genius is to be defined as the power of taking a great deal of trouble, Dr Burton certainly possessed genius. His most remarkable power was that of mental labour. It did not seem to fatigue or excite him. In his best years his capability for mental work was limited only by the need of food and sleep, and he could reduce these needs to a minimum, and apparently without any future reaction.

He has told the writer that he did not go to bed at all during the fortnight's preparation for his Civil Law trial, described in the last chapter, but worked continuously, day and night, living almost entirely on strong tea and coffee. After his examination was over, he felt no actual fatigue or discomfort. He went to bed at his usual hour, but slept till the night of the second day was falling, a period of wellnigh forty-eight hours. He sustained no injury to health, and became entitled to style himself Advocate. [xl]

He never had much practice at the bar; and the need of earning a livelihood first led him to literary publication.

The two letters next offered refer to the following years of his life, when the little family was reunited in Edinburgh. Their mother's absence on a visit to relations in Aberdeen gave occasion for the letters.

"3 Howard Place, South,
14th July 1833.

"My dear Mother,—I take the opportunity of Spalding's[8] going to Aberdeen to write you a few lines. James received the other day two letters—one from you, and one from Mary.

"The latter mentioned you had sent a letter for me, which has not yet arrived. I hope to receive it soon, or that you will write me another, giving a more particular account of your health than the letters to James have stated.

"I am at all events glad to hear yourself say you are not worse, and hope that a little such exertion and variety as you must meet will tend to strengthen you. We have been going on just as usual; perhaps I have been a little more idle than usual during the past week, being the last of the session. I have had one or two friends in to dine, but did not give them very splendid entertainments. James is most particular in his care of the cat, and we both prowl about occasionally looking for gooseberries. [xli]

"I caught a hedgehog the other evening, which has been let loose in the garden. I have been unable to discover his place of abode, but we sometimes meet him taking an evening stroll through the walks. He is an object of great interest to the cat, whose curiosity, however, he seems decidedly to baffle....

"I am sorry to hear Robertson is unwell, but I suppose he is able to write, and he must really be at the trouble of sending me a letter before I can trouble myself farther about his trunks.

"I shall be engaged to-morrow and next day in the Justiciary Court, and shall be otherwise very busy during the rest of the month....

"By the way, could you ascertain anything about the next Circuit? You might perhaps send a note to Daniel (Alexander Daniel, Esq., advocate, Farquhar's Court, Upperkirkgate), asking him to call on you and see if he can get me a case or two....

"With kindest remembrances to grand-aunt and Mrs Brown.—My dear mother, your affectionate son,

"John Hill Burton."

The fondness for animals and for gooseberries were lifelong tastes. That for animals did not extend to taking much trouble about them; but Dr Burton had none of a student's nervousness about slight noises or interruptions. He would have thought a house dull without the sounds of birds or other pets in it, and one of his favourite amusements was to watch the ways of animals. He had examples, in his acquaintance among dogs and cats, of heart and conscience in the two species respectively, too trivial for notice here. [xlii]

Dr Burton has stated in the letters previously quoted some of the studies which he pursued at college in Edinburgh. His contribution to Mrs Gordon's 'Life of Professor Wilson' furnishes a lively picture of college life and experience in Edinburgh. He attended the course of the late Sir William Hamilton, and gained some distinction in the study of moral philosophy and metaphysics, so much that his appointment as assistant and successor to Sir William was seriously considered by himself and others. Had he become Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, he would no doubt have discharged the duties of the situation well. At that time of his life, great versatility, along with extraordinary diligence, was the chief characteristic of his mind. In later years he did not pursue the study of mental science.

Before the period in Dr Burton's life which we have now reached, he had contributed many articles to the 'Aberdeen Magazine,' published by his kind old friend Lewis Smith. These were lately collected and republished by Mr Smith; but, to judge from such specimens as the writer has seen, they are not, on the whole, of a character to increase Dr Burton's present reputation. [xliii] He seems to have tried his hand at every kind of composition—romance, drama, poetry. In the last mentioned he had most success. His sentimental verses are pretty. His romances are so much crowded with incident as to be almost unintelligible. He was true to his own peculiar taste in novels. If a novel was recommended to him he used to inquire, "Is there plenty of murder in it?" He disliked almost equally the philosophical novel, and the domestic or social novel. Of the former he used to say he preferred to read *either* philosophy or fiction; he could not endure them combined. To hear even a sentence of the best social or domestic novel read irritated him intolerably. He would ask, "How any one could feel interest in the talk of a set of ordinary silly people, such as one must meet with every day. It was bad enough to hear them talk when one could not help it."

Quantities of early works, never printed, are still preserved by his family. The habit of writing —*not* letter-writing—seems to have begun as soon as he could use a pen, and while his orthography—never a strong point—was excessively weak. "The Rosted Baron" remains a popular work in a small circle. It is a tale, crowded, as its title indicates, with blood and flames. The idea may have been taken from the burning of Frendraught. It was written when Dr Burton was quite a boy, and is now one of a heap of manuscripts in a childish hand on very yellow paper remaining in his repositories. [xliv]

"3 Howard Place, South,
24th July 1833.

"My dear Mother,— ... I was extremely glad to receive your letter by post this morning, showing me that you are able to go about, and that you are enjoying yourself as much as possible. James[9] and I have been getting on very well and

very comfortably.

"I am obliged to delay our proposed jaunt till Monday next, as I find it impossible to get my work finished before Friday, the day I had fixed on. You are aware that I have long delayed an article on Criminal Trials for the 'Westminster Review.' I have now set about it seriously, and am resolved not to stir until it is finished, which I hope may be on Saturday. I have likewise some things to finish for Chambers before I go, and then I think I shall be able to enjoy a few days of a stravaig.... I got a slight interruption last night; just as the twilight came on, Alex. Smith came in. Now I had been living like a hermit for some time, and though he has been more than a fortnight returned I had not seen Smith for ten days. The matter was irresistible. We set to and got very jolly together. He complained of having low spirits, but they were soon elevated, and before he went away he was leaping over the chairs, and very anxious to leap out at the window. I received on Monday the enclosed letter from Miss H. to you, and wrote by way of answer that I should send it to Aberdeen intimating my intended visit. By the way, a [xlv]
circumstance of some consequence occurs to me at this moment. If you remain for three weeks in Aberdeen and then leave it, you will do so just about a fortnight (I think) before the Circuit. Might it not be as well to remain until that period, when I might attend the Circuit and bring you back? I do not know at this moment the day of the Circuit, but the newspapers will inform you.

"You may tell Robertson [the before mentioned 'Joseph'] that his clothes may rot where they are until he chooses to write to me himself about them. I suppose James will write you a household statement some time or other soon. If you wish to amuse yourself with reading the lives I wrote in the last number of the Biography, [10] they are Archbishop Hamilton, Sir William Hamilton, Dr Robert Henry, Edward Henryson, J. Bonaventura Hepburn, Roger Hog, John Holybush, and Henry Home of Kames.... The gooseberries appear to dwindle as they ripen. I am afraid few will remain for you, but you will find a sufficient number where you are. I intend to *walk* to Dunkeld, and to take two days. Al. Smith may come a bit with us.... All my little stock of news is exhausted. Pray remember me to my grand-aunt, Mrs Brown, and my aunts; and I am, my dear mother, your affectionate son,

"JOHN HILL BURTON."

This letter describes the beginning of the life of literary labour which John Hill Burton's was to [xlvi]
the end. He would not have liked to see it described as labour. He even disliked the word work as applied to his own pursuits, and he did indeed work as easily as most men play. He was unconscious of his own powers of mental application: his mind worked with as much ease as his lungs breathed. The great bulk of his earlier writings must be quite irrecoverable now. He wrote school-books, specially a set of historical abridgments for the use of schools, under the name of Dr White; he also compiled much of the information in Oliver and Boyd's 'Almanac,' and almost all the letterpress of Billings's 'Ecclesiastical and Baronial Antiquities.'

Dr Burton's whole resources at this time were derived from his pen. He has described this mode of life as a somewhat anxious but by no means unhappy one. The anxiety lay in that in which all sorts of business share—the finding work, looking for employment. The employment once found was agreeable to him. He rapidly acquired a power of mastering almost any subject on which he had to write, though he always looked forward with hope to the time, which eventually came, when he might live securely on a fixed income, free to write from the fulness of his mind and not from outward pressure.

The house in Howard Place was carefully managed by his mother. On a life spent entirely in town proving unsuitable to her health, Dr Burton took for her a little cottage at Brunstane, which [xlvii]
served as country quarters for the family for several years.

In 1844 Dr Burton married Isabella Lauder, daughter of Captain Lauder of Flatfield, in Perthshire. He then occupied a house in Scotland Street, and his mother and sister left him to reside in the little cottage called Liberton Bank. There his beloved and revered mother died, in 1848. His sister still lives in the cottage with a little flock of young relatives which her kindness has gathered around her.

Dr Burton's first appearance in independent authorship was in 1846, when he published his 'Life and Correspondence of David Hume.' This work at once gained for him a recognised position among men of letters.

In 1847 he published a volume containing the Lives of Simon Lord Lovat and Duncan Forbes of Culloden. This is an eminently readable work, as are all his minor productions. Literary persons did not consider its merits quite equal to the promise given in its predecessor. During these years much of the spare time left by the need of frequent publication was filled by the task of editing Mr Jeremy Bentham's literary remains, to which Dr Burton was joint editor along with Dr (afterwards Sir John), Bowring. He published, as a precursor to the greater work, one styled 'Benthamiana; an Introduction to the Works of Jeremy Bentham.'

In 1849 he wrote for Messrs Chambers a little book entitled 'Political and Social Economy: Its Practical Application.' May the writer here be permitted to state that she considers this small and [xlviii]
little-noticed work the best of all her husband's productions? Though the subject is usually

considered particularly dry, there is an ease, rapidity, firmness, and completeness in this little book, which carries the reader on in spite of himself or his prejudices.

The book was first published in two small paper-covered volumes. The writer by chance got possession of the first, which ended without even a full stop; she, then a young girl of not particularly studious habits, having read it, its arguments so filled her mind, that she could not rest till, out of her not over-abundant pocket-money, she had purchased the other volume. The author was then unknown to her. He was afterwards gratified by hearing this testimony to the value of a work which he himself did not esteem so highly as his others. It may not be counted impertinent to repeat it here, for this reason, that the little book in question was intended as a popular treatise, not addressed to the learned, but to the unlearned. It fulfils to perfection the idea of what such a treatise should be. There is in the style not the slightest approach to condescension, or that writing down to the meaner capacity which must always offend an adult student; while the first principles of the science discussed are stated with such lucidity, that his capacity must be mean indeed who cannot grasp them, and they are illustrated by statistics which will remain always interesting, even to the best informed. Probably the particular charm of the book arises from its having been written *currente calamo*. The information had been all [xlix] previously stored in the author's mind before he ever thought of writing it. When he began to write, it poured forth without effort or any reference to authorities. The book was written in some marvellously short time,—the writer fears now to say how short. It was counted in days. It would have been quite contrary to Dr Burton's principles to boast of rapidity of composition. His greater works are monuments of industry. Dr Burton's information on economic subjects had probably been acquired during his studies and correspondence about the abolition of the Corn Laws. He was interim editor of the 'Scotsman' at an early period of the Corn-Law agitation, and during his editorship committed the journal to Anti-Corn-Law principles. He was at that time in correspondence with Mr Cobden, whom he visited in Lancashire, and who tried to induce him to remove to that part of the world for the purpose of editing an Anti-Corn-Law newspaper.

Mrs Burton was fond of society, and her husband had not then become positively averse to it. His acquaintance in Edinburgh gradually increased. It included Lord Jeffrey and his family, Lord Murray, who remained a fast friend during his life, and all the remaining members of the old Edinburgh circle.

About the year 1848, the writer first saw Dr Burton, accompanied by his wife, as guests at one of those late evening parties given by Mrs Jeffrey during the last years of her husband's life—a very faint reflection of the earlier hospitalities of Craigcrook and Moray Place. [l]

In 1848 Dr Burton left Scotland Street for a house in Royal Crescent, better suited for occasional reception than the other. But in 1849 the heaviest blow of his life fell on him in the loss of his wife. His five married years had been a period of perfect domestic happiness. He found himself left with three infant daughters; their guide and his gone from him. He has described his sufferings at this time to the writer as fully realising to him the common phrase, "a broken heart." As each day passed, and each night returned, he rose and lay down with the feeling that his heart was broken. He of course shunned all society, and never again recovered any real zest for it. He sometimes thought of imitating his grandfather under like circumstances with a difference—he thought of flying, not to London, but to the backwoods of America, or some place where he should never see a white face, and becoming a "wild man," a savage—a personage of whom he always believed himself to share many of the characteristics. Only consideration for his little girls deterred him from such a course. Although an excessively affectionate parent, Dr Burton had no pleasure in the company of children, owing to his want of any system with them. He could not, according to the common phrase, "manage" children at all—a necessary art for any one who has much of their company. He secured the services of a former governess of his wife, a Miss Wade, as care-taker of his children; and, as soon as he could, removed from the house in [li] Royal Crescent to a small one in Castle Street, and afterwards, from a wish to let his children amuse themselves with little gardens of their own, to one in Ann Street. He has told the writer's father, Cosmo Innes, then his most intimate friend, that the first relief to his oppressed spirits was obtained from the nearest realisation of the "wild man" life to be found within his own country. He took long walks in all weathers, sometimes walking all night as well as all day, at times with a companion, oftener with none. The late Alexander Russel, then editor of the 'Scotsman,' was his companion in some of these rambles, Joseph Robertson in others, and Cosmo Innes in others. It was Mr Russel who accompanied him in the run across Ireland, which took place about this time, and of which his printed sketch is one of the liveliest of his minor writings. His pace was so rapid, and his powers of walking so inexhaustible, that with the lapse of years it became more and more difficult to find a companion who could keep up with him. He has described to Mr Innes one particular walk taken alone to the waterfall called the Grey Mare's Tail. The whole excursion was performed in pitiless rain and wind, which gave the waterfall every advantage, and it was while battling with the elements in climbing the hill to view it that Dr Burton felt the first return of his natural elasticity of spirit. He soon found also the best medicine of all in hard work. The years between the death of his first wife and his second marriage were [lii] the most active of his literary life, at least in the line of periodical literature. He contributed regularly to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' besides other periodicals. In 1852 he published narratives from Criminal Trials in Scotland. In 1853 a 'Treatise on the Law of Bankruptcy in Scotland,' and in the same year his 'History of Scotland from the Revolution to the extinction of the last Jacobite Rebellion.'

CHAPTER IV.

SECOND STAGE OF LITERARY LIFE.

Appointed Secretary to the Prison Board—Second marriage—Daily life—Death of infant child—First volunteers—Removal to Craighouse.

In 1854 Dr Burton was appointed Secretary to the Prison Board, at a salary of £700 per annum, and was thus relieved of the necessity, which had pressed on him for more than twenty years, of maintaining himself by his pen. On his appointment to this office he removed from Ann Street to the house then 27 Lauriston Place, the site of which is now occupied by the Simpson Memorial Hospital. In 1854 the situation was half rural. The house stood in a good old-fashioned garden of its own, beyond which lay a field containing some old trees; and the house possessed good [liii] offices, stables, &c., which were soon adapted to a workshop for Dr Burton himself, and rabbit and pigeon houses for his children.

The productiveness of the garden was marred by incursions of rabbits,—*not* the children's pets, but wild rabbits, however incredible that may appear, now that the situation has got so entirely separated from the country by new buildings. At that time there was no building between Lauriston Place and Morningside.

Dr Burton, while a widower, had become a more and more frequent visitor at the house of Cosmo Innes in Inverleith Row. The writer does not recollect ever seeing him there along with other company—he preferred finding the family alone. She has met him occasionally in company in other houses—memorably in that of the late Mrs Cunningham, Lord Cunningham's widow—but never, so far as she can remember, in that of her father. He was at that time considered a good talker—his company was sought for the sake of his conversation. His defect in conversation was that he was a bad listener. His own part was well sustained. His enormous store of varied information poured forth naturally and easily, and was interspersed with a wonderful stock of lively anecdotes and jokes. But he always lacked that greatest power of the conversationalist, that subtle ready sympathy which draws forth the best powers of others.

He was invaluable at a dull dinner-table, furnishing the whole *frais de la conversation* himself; [liv] but he never probably appeared to quite such advantage as in the family party at 15 Inverleith Row. His long walks with Mr Innes, sometimes on a Saturday, often on a Sunday, generally ended by his accepting the proffered invitation to dinner on his return. As he was the only guest, nothing could be more suitable or delightful than his amusing the whole circle during the whole time of his stay; and he has himself stated that his attention was first drawn to a shy and particularly silent girl by her irresistible outbursts of laughter at his stories, which outbursts in their turn encouraged him to pour forth story after story of his vast repertory in that sort.

On the 3d of August 1855 John Hill Burton married Katharine Innes as his second wife. He had by that time become accustomed to combine office with literary work, and, with the extraordinary activity and adaptability of his intellect, found them helpful to each other. About the time of his second marriage he conceived the project of his complete 'History of Scotland,' and directed his studies and investigations towards its execution, continuing, as his manner was, to throw off slight foretastes of his greater work as articles for 'Blackwood,' &c. His mode of life at that time was to repair to the office of the Prison Board, in George Street, about eleven. He remained there till four, and made it matter of conscience neither to do any ex-official writing, nor to receive ex-official visits during these hours. He gave his undivided attention to the duties of his office, but [lv] has often said that these made him a better historian than he could have been without them. He conceived it highly useful for every literary man, but especially for a historian, to get acquainted with official forms and business. He has himself expressed this opinion fully in his printed works. Returning from his office to dinner at five, he would, after dinner, and after a little family chat in the drawing-room, retire to the library for twenty minutes or half an hour's perusal of a novel as mental rest. His taste in novels has been already described. Although he would read only those called exciting, they did not apparently excite him, for he read them as slowly as if he was learning them by heart. He would return to the drawing-room to drink a large cup of extremely strong tea, then again retire to the library to commence his day of literary work about eight in the evening. He would read or write without cessation, and without the least appearance of fatigue or excitement, till one or two in the morning.

Always an excellent sleeper, he would go to bed and to sleep till nine or ten of the same morning, seldom joining the family breakfast, but breakfasting by himself immediately before going to his office.

In Lauriston Place three more children were born to Dr Burton, a son and two daughters. When the elder of the two little girls was hardly a year old the whole nursery sickened, first of measles, then of hooping-cough. Little Rose, the baby, being recommended change of air, the family went [lvi] to South Queensferry, and there the baby died, and was buried in Dalmeny churchyard. Some earlier associations had attached both Dr Burton and his wife to the neighbourhood; and during his latter years Dr Burton frequently alluded to this little baby, the only child he lost, being laid there,—and expressed a wish that when their time came, his wife and he should lie there also. His wish was carried out in his own case.

In July of the following year the first company of volunteers formed in Scotland exercised in the field at 27 Lauriston Place. Dr Burton sympathised strongly in the volunteer movement, and

joined the Advocates' corps. Though never seriously apprehensive of an invasion of our coasts, he considered it proper that we should increase our military strength while foreign nations were so enormously augmenting theirs. He drilled regularly with the volunteers while they continued to assemble in his field, and until an accident had temporarily lamed him. He marched past the Queen on the brilliant sunny day of the first great Volunteer Review in the Queen's Park in 1860, his wife looking on in the company of his old friend Sir John Kincaid, then an Inspector of Prisons.

27 Lauriston Place was considered sufficiently rural to obviate the necessity of going to the country, and during the six years of its occupancy the family seldom left it. Dr Burton gave his wife a little pony-carriage, by means of which sea-bathing could be had, when desired, from Lauriston Place. [lvii]

During the year 1860, the new buildings in the neighbourhood spoiled the situation of the house, so as to render it hardly habitable. The field where the volunteers had drilled was built upon almost up to the windows of the house. To escape these disagreeables, a cottage at Lochgoilhead was taken for August and September, and much enjoyed by the whole family. A complete removal was also determined on for the following Whitsuntide.

An old house near the Braid Hills had been a childish haunt of his wife's, and it had been a childish dream of hers to repair that house, then a ruin, and live in it. The situation of the place seemed, and seems to her, the finest in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and the house was a historical one of no small interest.

The greatest part of it had been built in the year Queen Mary married Darnley (1565), but part of the building was very much older; a subterranean passage especially, of considerable length, well arched, too narrow for a sally-port, unaccountable therefore by any other theory, Dr Burton always believed as old as the Romans. Craighouse had been besieged by Queen Mary's son in person, and had stood the siege and resisted the king.[11] The then laird of Craighouse, whose name was Kincaid, ran away with a widow, who was a royal ward, and married her in spite of the king; whether with or without the lady's own consent no record condescends to specify. The laird was afterwards nearly ruined by a fine, of which a part consisted of a favourite *nag*, which it would appear King Jamie had been personally acquainted with and coveted. [lviii]

The distance of Craighouse from the town was not great—nothing as a walk to such walkers as Dr Burton and all his family; but it was enough to interfere seriously with evening engagements. Once home from business, it was an effort to return again to the town to dine or attend any sort of social gathering. The thing was not impossible, but its difficulty served as too good an excuse for Dr Burton's increasing unsociability. For a time, while some of the old circle still survived, Dr Burton saw them with pleasure at his own table, but he too early adopted a determination—which no one should ever adopt—to make no new friends. Almost all his old friends predeceased him, and he found himself thrown entirely on the society of his own family.

But to return. From a romantic wish to give his wife what he imagined she desired, Dr Burton returned from Lochgoilhead, leaving his family there, took all the steps for obtaining a lease of Craighouse in their absence, and on their return presented his wife, as her birthday gift, with the keys of Craighouse—a huge bunch of antique keys, some of them with picturesque old handles. Mrs Burton and all her family loved their beautiful home as much as any home ever was loved. They occupied it for seventeen years.

During the exceptionally severe winter of 1860-61, the most essential repairs were executed on the old house, and the family moved into it in March. [lix]

The 5th of March was long kept by them as a festival—the anniversary of the day on which they drove out to take possession of Craighouse in a spring snowstorm. They had resolved to get possession before the snowdrops, with which the beautiful avenue was carpeted, should be over; and they did—but the snowdrops were buried in snow.

Craighouse.

[lx]

CHAPTER V.

THIRD STAGE OF LITERARY LIFE.

Craighouse—Birth and marriages—Office and literary work—"Perth days"—Captain Speke—Library—Athenæum—Historiographership—Unsociability and Hospitality—St Albans—Strasburg—London—Stories, jokes, and nonsense-verses.

At Craighouse a second son was born to Dr Burton; his seventh and youngest child. There also his eldest and his third daughters married; the younger, Matilda Lauder, in June 1877, becoming the wife of William Lennox Cleland, of Adelaide, South Australia; the elder, Isabella Jessie, that of James Rodger, M.D., of Aberdeen, in April 1878.

The whole of the period at Craighouse was one of active literary as well as official life. Dr Burton walked daily to the Office of Prisons, no longer to perform the duty of secretary, but that of manager, at the same salary he had enjoyed as secretary. The transference of the principal part of the duty to London altered his position but slightly. Both before and after this change a monthly visit to the General Prison at Perth was part of his duty. His wife occasionally accompanied him in these excursions, and by experience can judge of the fatigue, or rather the exertion without fatigue, which he underwent in them. At home Dr Burton was never an early riser, but in travelling he willingly performed a first stage before breakfast. [lxi]

On his "Perth days," in going from Craighouse he was obliged to be astir by four in the morning. His wife usually drove him to the railway station in time to catch a train starting at six. Sometimes he would consent to be met again on the arrival of the latest return train at night and driven home; generally he preferred walking home, after a call at his office, to see if anything there required his attention. He thus arrived at Perth by breakfast-time; spent the whole day in passing from cell to cell of the many hundred prisoners there confined, interrogating each of them, and taking notes of anything requiring notice; and reached home not till nearly midnight, yet never appearing at all fatigued. Latterly he gave up this great effort and did not return till the following day, sleeping in a hotel at Perth on the occasions of his official visits.

In 1867 he published the first four volumes of his 'History of Scotland, from Agricola's Invasion to the Revolution of 1688,' and in 1870 other three volumes, completing the work, and, together with the portion published in 1853, forming a complete narrative of Scotch history from the earliest times down to the suppression of the Jacobite insurrection of '45.

As offshoots from his great work, he published, first in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' and then, with some additions, in volume shape, two pleasant books—the 'Book-Hunter' and the 'Scot Abroad,'—besides many other slighter works. During these years he was often obliged to refuse his pen for [lxii] fugitive writing, from unwillingness to interrupt his more serious tasks.

The following is a note declining, very characteristically, an application of the kind from his valued friend, Mr Russel, editor of the 'Scotsman':—

"*11th August 1862.*

> "My dear Russel,—What am I expected to do with the Cat Stane? Not to review it, I hope. I have had a sniff of it already in the proceedings of the Antiquarian Society. It is a brilliant specimen of the pedantic pottering of the learned body which enables me to append to my name the A.S.S., fraudulently inverted into S.S.A. Such twaddle always excites me into feverishness. I haven't nerve for it.
>
> "I see the grandfather of Hengist and Horsa is made out very clearly, but there seem insuperable difficulties in proving Hengist and Horsa themselves. This strikes me as a characteristic of the author's[12] profession. He has to deal with parents actual and possible, but the offspring are seen evanescently, often loom in the distance, and sometimes can't be got to exist even when most desired.—Yours truly, J.H. Burton."

Dr Simpson's really universal genius led him pretty deeply into archæology, in which he [lxiii] sometimes, as on the present occasion, showed more zeal than knowledge.

One of the first summers at Craighouse was enlivened by a long visit from the African traveller, Captain Speke. Dr Burton met with him in the hospitable house of his friendly publisher, the late John Blackwood, at Strathtyrum. Captain Speke was then preparing, or endeavouring to prepare, for the press, his book, the 'Discovery of the Source of the Nile.' The truly gallant Captain being more practised in exploring than in writing, Mr Blackwood suggested his going home with Dr Burton, that he might have the benefit of his advice in the formation of his materials into a book. The family at Craighouse became warmly attached to their guest. He endeared himself by his simple unassuming character, and a peculiar sweetness of temper. The sorrow at Craighouse was great on hearing, during the following autumn, of his most lamentable death. He who had escaped so many dangers—was so well accustomed to firearms—accidentally shot by his own gun while partridge-shooting near his paternal home!

While at Craighouse, Dr Burton's library gradually increased from being an ordinary room full of books, to a collection numbering about 10,000 volumes. From his earliest years Dr Burton had been a collector of books, and Craighouse led to the increase of his collection in two ways. The distance from the town was an impediment to the use of the Advocates' Library in his historical studies, and there was space at Craighouse for any number of books. There were always rooms [lxiv] which could be taken into occupation when wanted; and to his life's end it was a favourite

amusement of Dr Burton's to construct and erect shelves for his books.

In an article in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for August 1879, there occurs the following lively description of the impression made by the library on the mind of a visitor. Before the passage quoted was published, Dr Burton had left Craighouse for Morton House, but the description evidently refers to Craighouse:—

"We have had the privilege of dropping in upon him [Dr Burton clearly being meant, though not named] in what we might call his lair, if the word did not sound disrespectful. It was in a venerable, half-castellated, ivy-grown manor-house, among avenues of ancient trees, where the light had first to struggle through the foliage before it fell on the narrow windows, in walls that were many feet in thickness. And seldom, surely, has so rich a collection been stowed away in so strange a suite of rooms. Rooms, indeed, are hardly the word. The central point, where the proprietor wrote and studied, was a vaulted chamber, and all around was a labyrinth of passages to which you mounted or descended by a step or two; of odd nooks and sombre little corridors, and tiny apartments squeezed aside into corners, and lighted either from the corridor or by a lancet-window or a loophole. The floors were of polished oak or deal; the ceilings of stone or [lxv] whitewashed; and as to the walls, you could see nothing of them for the panelling of shelves and the backs of the volumes. It was books—books—books—everywhere; the brilliant modern binding of recent works relieving the dull and far more appropriate tints of work-worn leather and time-stained vellum. To the visitor it seemed confusion worse confounded; though wherever his glance happened to fall, he had assurance of the treasures heaped at random around him. But his host carried the clue to the labyrinth in his brain, and could lay his hand on the spur of the moment on the book he happened to want. And with the wonders he had to offer for your admiration, you forgot the flight of time, till you woke up from your abstraction in the enchanted library, to inquire about the manuscript that was in course of publication."

In spring Dr Burton generally spent some time in London, partly on official business, partly in literary research at the British Museum.

He was elected a member of the Athenæum Club without application or ballot, an honour which he valued highly. He delighted in the dignified and literary tone of the Club, and frequented it much when in London.

About 1867 the office of Historiographer-Royal becoming vacant, it was bestowed on Dr Burton, with a salary of £190 per annum, thus bringing his annual income to nearly £900, instead of £700. The compliment was enhanced by the fact of a Conservative Ministry being then in office. [lxvi] Dr Burton was a decided, though not aggressive, Liberal in politics.

Though personally more and more unsociable as years advanced, Dr Burton was excessively hospitable. He could not bear that any person, rich or poor, should leave his house unrefreshed, and he made both servants and children welcome to see their friends if these did not trespass on his time. A nervous inquiry in later years, if he heard of any guest being expected, was, "He, or she, will not meddle with me, will he?" Assured that the privacy of his library would be respected, any one was free to the rest of the house; and if they showed no disposition to intrude, Dr Burton would gradually become tame to them, and in some few instances appear to enjoy a temporary addition to the family circle. Such instances were, however, rare and ever rarer. He was strongly attached to his home and home circle, and preferred having no addition to it. A very partial parent to all his children, his sons were his special pride and happiness.

During the first years of Craighouse, his wife was able to accompany him in those long rambles on the Pentlands which were his favourite amusement. Afterwards, when she was unable for the exertion, he found pleasant companions in his sons.

Several times during those years he spent some weeks on the Continent. He generally wrote daily during all absences, but his letters, as already said, were for the most part brief,—chiefly craving for news from home, which was also written for him daily. If any accident prevented his receiving [lxvii] his daily letter, he expressed agonies of apprehension about all possible or impossible ills. In regard to the health of his family he was painfully anxious and apprehensive.

The subjoined letters are offered as specimens of his correspondence.

"Athenæum Club,
29th June 1871.

"My dear Willie,[13]—As you and I have often gone geologising together, I'll tell you how I got on at St Albans, where, I suppose you know, I saw cousin William.[14] You know the conglomerates. They are generally hard little stones in a casing of sandstone, lime, or other soft matter. I have known for thirty years, in a lapidary's window in Perth, a large piece of conglomerate, where all is hard and flinty, taking a beautiful polish. After much inquiry I found that this was got in Hertfordshire, where St Albans is. I could get no account of any rock of it, however. But as there was a committee of agriculturists smoking in the inn every evening, I joined them, and got my information.

"It always occurs in cakes under the soil, and is very troublesome in ploughing. It is called the 'Mother stone,' or the 'Breeding stone,' from a supposition that it is the nursery of all the flints. When its nodules grow large enough, they set up as flints on their own account. There is therefore a great desire to extirpate it from [lxviii]

the fields, and it might be found by their sides, or, as one man said, 'You may foind it anywheres, and you maint never foind it nowheres.' So I prowled about and got plenty, chipping off as much as I could conveniently carry.

"Tell Tucky and Cos[15] all this. I'm sure it will amuse them.—Your affectionate papa."

"Strasburg, *8th August 1875*.

"My dear Cosmo,[16]—You have been very industrious, and have earned your holidays, so I hope you will have a good swing of them before we begin our Latin exercises. Meanwhile I am going to give you a little lesson in history and geography suggested by my travels.

"Look at some map containing Holland. You find me land at Rotterdam, and go round by Arnheim to Nymegen. This town used to be strongly fortified. I rambled in the remains of the fortifications, like small hills and valleys covered with bright grass. I saw a quantity of fine mushrooms growing in them, and the tall yellow flowers known as Samson's rod. The reason of the fortification is this. The Hollanders were an industrious, frugal people, who made a fruitful country out of swamps and sand. Nymegen is in the border. It is the gate, as it were, to Holland, and the fortifications kept the gate shut against enemies. [lxix]

"In the year 1704 there reigned in France Louis XIV., called Louis the Grand. He had greatly enlarged his dominions, taking one country after another. He possessed the whole between Holland and France, and now he was to besiege Nymegen and take Holland. The Hollanders said to the British: 'We have been good friends; you are strong. Surely you will not let this cruel king rob us of the fruits of our industry? Besides, if Louis takes one country after another he will be so strong that you will not be able to resist him—it is your interest as well as ours. Come and help us in our sore distress.'

"So Queen Anne sent over an army under Marlborough. Not only did he save Nymegen, but he took from King Louis the chief fortified town he had in the neighbourhood—Venlo,—and many others along the river Maas or Meuse. There was an alliance with the Germans, and when King Louis heard that a German army was going to join the British he said, 'Together they will be too strong for me, let us destroy the German army in the first place.' For this purpose he sent an army to the Danube.

"For reasons I may tell you afterwards, all great battles are fought on flat ground. Marlborough thought that if he could get his army over the hills and into the plains of the Danube, he could fight the French before they destroyed the Germans. Accordingly he crossed what is called the 'watershed' between the Rhine and the Danube. You will find it at Geislingen, between Heidelberg and here. There is [lxx] always high ground, and generally a valley in it at the sources of streams running in different directions. You may see this in the Pentlands, where the burns on one side run into the Water of Leith, and those on the other into the Esk."

The end of this letter has unfortunately been lost.

The fragment above quoted serves to illustrate Dr Burton's strong interest in military history. His accounts of battles and battle-fields are allowed to be the most striking parts of his Histories. His interest in such subjects arose partly from the faint infantile recollections already described. He purchased and studied works on fortification and military strategy.

"Athenæum Club, Pall Mall, S.W.,
25th April 1877.

"My dear Love,[17]—I got this morning your letter of Tuesday; very pleasant and refreshing, and more than once read over. But the exile can't hear too much from home, especially when the conditions are critical,[18] and I must not yet count that all critical conditions are at an end; so pray don't let a day pass without something being posted to me, though it should be but a card with the briefest inscription.

"I dined yesterday with the Vindicator,[19] when Horne, who you know is now Dean [lxxi] of Faculty, was in all his glory. On Monday I dined with Everest, dined also with Ellice and Colonel Mure, the member for Renfrewshire—rather too much gaiety, but I have no other engagement. I don't yet see when I shall get away, but will let you know whenever I myself know.

"I sent Will an engineering work yesterday, which I hope will profit and please him.—Love to all from your affectionate J.H. Burton."

Constitutionally irritable, energetic, and utterly persistent, Dr Burton did not know what dulness or depression of spirits was. With grief he was indeed acquainted, and while such a feeling lasted

it engrossed him; but his spirits were naturally elastic, and both by nature and on principle he discouraged in himself and others any dwelling on the sad or pathetic aspects of life. He has said that the nearest approach he had ever felt to low spirits was when he had finished some great work, and had not yet begun another.

Such blanks in his life were short, and ever shorter and fewer. He found necessary excitement in his work, and, when he joined his family, needed no particular encouragement or inducement to lead him to talk either about what he was doing or something else. As he advanced in years his [lxxii] family learned more and more to leave the choice of subjects of conversation entirely to him. Any subject not chosen by himself was apt to prove irritating. Sometimes even his own did. Often his irritations were amusing. If his wife, or some one else, chose to affect a ludicrous degree of ignorance on some of his special subjects, they might probably elicit a volley of information which would not have been vouchsafed to them in answer to a serious question. Old reminiscences sometimes led on to those laughable sayings in which Dr Burton's talk was rich. For instance,—He had once rented an old inn at Pettycur as summer quarters, and a favourite amusement, both at the time and afterwards, was to imagine and describe the visitors who might have called on him there in ignorance of the changed destination of the house. He would imagine and mimic the tones of a drouthy Highland drover demanding refreshment,—which, by the way, he would have been sure to get had he so applied to Dr Burton; of an entirely drunk Lowlander, persisting in representing himself as a *bonâ fide* traveller; of a highly Conservative old nobleman, posting up to town with his carriage-and-four in spite of railways: this story ended with, "A wicked and perverse generation shall come seeking a *Sign*, and no sign shall be given them."

He delighted in a sort of practical bull, or confusion of ideas, such as—"One may never have a *widow* all his *life*."

A favourite story was of a too hospitable elder in a country parish, who invited his minister to sup [lxxiii] and spend the night in his house without his wife's consent. The wife sees a male figure in the darkish entrance of the house, and in her anger deals him a violent blow on the head with the family Bible, ejaculating, "That's for asking him to stay a' nicht." The husband, from an inner room, exclaims, "Eh, woman, ye have felled the minister!" On which the virago says *to her victim*, "My dear, I thocht it was yersel'!"

Ministers and clergy of all denominations are often the text of jokes.

Another story referred to an Episcopal clergyman, who was frequently too late in reaching his church, and whose curate on such occasions began to read the morning service instead of him, and had reached in one of the lessons the well-known verse, St John xiv. 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," when his ecclesiastical superior, panting with exertion, reaches the reading-desk, pushes his curate from his place, and intones, "*I* am the way, and the truth, and the life," adding a strictly private aside to his curate, "*You* the way, and the truth, and the life, indeed!"

Another minister arriving at church drenched with rain, and claiming sympathy from his wife, is told by her to "Gang up into the pu'pit; ye'll be dry eneuch there."

A story in a different spirit, said to have been reported to him by Lord Cockburn, is ascribed to a Scotch shepherd. A set of gentlemen were imprecating the prevailing east wind, and asked the shepherd if he could in any way defend that prevalent evil of his country. "Ay, sirs," said he; "it [lxxiv] weets the sod, it slocks the yows [*i.e.*, quenches the thirst of the ewes], and it's God's wull."

Many Aberdeenshire stories are valueless without Dr Burton's Aberdeen accent, which he could intensify at pleasure.

A reminiscence of college days at Aberdeen was of one of the professors there trying to discipline his unruly class, who came tumbling in while the professor was opening proceedings by reciting the Lord's Prayer in Latin, according to custom, and wound up his "In secula seculorum, amen," with "Quis loupavit ower the factions [Aberdeen for forms or benches], ille solvit doon a saxpence."

Two neat little *mots* relate, the one to the familiar subject of London eggs, the other, to the name of his youngest son. London grocers—as all Londoners know—label their eggs *Fresh Eggs*, and *New-laid Eggs*, only the respective prices of the different sorts or hard-bought experience pointing to the signification of the two appellations. Dr Burton on hearing this, said, "Oh, of course the *New-laid Eggs* become *Fresh* in time."

The writer wished to bestow the name of David on her youngest son, in addition to that of Cosmo, in memory of her husband's young brother David, whom she had heard described as an interesting child at the time of his early death. Dr Burton opposed this wish, not desiring to diminish the compliment to the child's grandfather and name-father, Cosmo Innes. The child was ultimately christened Cosmo Innes—thus, as his father said, remaining *entirely Cosmetic*. [lxxv]

Two legal stories were told respectively of Lord ——and Lord Corehouse:—

Lord —— is pronouncing sentence on an assassin who had stabbed a soldier: "You did not only maliciously, wickedly, and feloniously stab or cut his person, thereby depriving him of his life, but did also sever the band of his military breeches, which are her Majesty's."

Lord Corehouse is listening to the pleading of an advocate who describes some performance which, as he says, "could be done as easily as your Lordship could leap out of your breeches." Lord Corehouse interrupts: "Mr ——, the saltatory feat which you are pleased to ascribe to me is

not one which I have ever attempted, and I do not feel sure that if I did I could perform it with any of that ease which you suppose."

Enough, perhaps, of such reminiscences, which, written, may fail altogether of their effect when spoken.

The writer recollects vaguely an immense number, of which confused images present themselves. Crocodiles with their hands in their breeches-pockets. Persons throwing off their coats and waistcoats like Newfoundland dogs. A master and man sleeping; master on the boards a-top, and the man in the bed; master remarking in the morning he would have preferred the lower station, but for the concetty o' the thing.

Coming down early one morning in great spirits at the prospect of a long day's outing with his son, he said to the boy— [lxxvi]

"I am not an early riser,
As you may surmise, sir;
But when I'm on a ploy, sir,
I feel just like a boy, sir."

No chance rhyme or pun, bad, good, or indifferent, was let slip, however much taking it up might interrupt the subject under discussion.

The following childish little poem seems worth preservation now. It was presented to his daughter Matilda on the death of her little dog. She happening to visit a relative, who was physician in a lunatic asylum, and showing the little poem, it was printed in the 'Asylum Magazine,' from which it was copied into the 'Animal World:'

LAMENT FOR FOXEY.

Poor little Foxey,
With your coaxy
Little way,
You're gone for aye.
I'll no longer hark
To your garrulous bark,
See the fleeching grimace
Of your comical face, [lxxvii]
Nor be touched by your yelping
When you get a skelping.
You had no orthodoxy
Poor Foxey,
Nor a commanding spirit,
Nor any great merit.
The reason for sorrow, then, what is it?
Just that you're missed,
And that's all
That shall befall
The rest of us,
Even the best of us.
An empty chair
Somewhere,
To be filled by another
Some day or other.
Sick cur or hero in his prime,
It's a matter of time.
The world is growing, growing,
The blank is going, going,
And will be gone anon.

[lxxviii]

CHAPTER VI.

LITERARY LIFE (*continued*).

Illness—Resignation of office—Sale of Craighouse—Morton—Domestic life—'Queen Anne'—Letters about ballad-lore—Singular incident connected with it—Letters from abroad.

In the end of the year 1877 Dr Burton had the first severe illness of his life. On the 18th day of December of that year, Mrs Cunningham, widow of Lord Cunningham, died at Morton House, which had been the summer home of her twenty years of widowhood, and at which illness had detained her during the winter of 1877. The editor of the 'Scotsman' applied to Dr Burton for an obituary notice of Mrs Cunningham—an old friend of his, and still older of his wife. He was then too ill to be applied to on any subject, or to be told of his old friend's death.

For several days at that time he was alarmingly ill from bronchitis, accompanied by unusually high fever. This passed off but slowly. The bodily health and strength appeared to be fully restored at the end of a few weeks, but there was an undefinable change. Shortly after this illness, though not in consequence of it, Dr Burton resigned his office of Prison Manager. He retired on an allowance of two-thirds of his former salary, remaining chairman of the Board of Prisons and Statistics, of which he was an honorary member. [lxxix]

He had not fully regained strength when, to the unspeakable sorrow of its inmates, they learned that Craighouse was sold to the Committee of the Lunatic Asylum, was to be immediately adapted to the purposes of an asylum, and that they must quit it at Whitsuntide.

They had held it first on a lease, then on a second short lease, but afterwards had merely rented it from year to year, not imagining that any other tenant would covet it with all its pretty heavy responsibilities. Dr Burton had, from his natural irritability, sometimes said he would prefer to be elsewhere; but when it came to finding some other place which would hold his books—some place not too far to move them to—to the abandonment of his own carpentery, &c.,—he lamented the departure as much as others. His one proviso as to the new abode was, that it was not to be in the town, or nearer the town than Craighouse.

The whole spring Dr Burton's family sought in all directions for a suitable abode, and at last pitched on that left vacant by Mrs Cunningham's death as most nearly combining all the various requisites. On the 20th of May 1878 the flitting from Craighouse to Morton was completed. Morton is fully two miles farther from Edinburgh than Craighouse, the approach to it from the town being a continuous ascent on to a shoulder of the Pentlands. Its situation is pretty and entirely rural, but with nothing of the unrivalled beauty of that of Craighouse, which commanded [lxxx] a view extending from North Berwick Law to Ben Lomond, yet lay well sheltered among its lovely hills and splendid trees. The great drawback of Morton House, for Dr Burton's family, lay in the greater distance from the town. The time spent in travelling the up-hill road was a serious loss, to say nothing of the fatigue. Dr Burton never would allow this to be a disadvantage, so far as he was concerned, but the writer is persuaded it was seriously prejudicial to his health.

During the summer of this year Dr Burton was invited to Oxford to receive the honour of a D.C.L. degree. He went, and was highly delighted with his visit. He had some years previously received a similar compliment from the University of Edinburgh.

Dr Burton, by way of setting a good example to his family, who continued to lament the loss of Craighouse, attached himself excessively to Morton. He was farther attached to it by the recollection of having been Mrs Cunningham's guest there. It was one of the very few houses at which he occasionally dined after he went to Craighouse. Soon after he had gone to Craighouse, he formed a resolution against dining out *in the town*. His neighbours in the country were so few that he had no reason to dread too frequent invitations from them; and he occasionally dined, as has been said, with Mrs Cunningham at Morton, and with his nearest neighbour, equally at Craighouse as at Morton, Mr John Skelton, at the beautiful Hermitage of Braid. Dr Burton was generally invited by the latter to meet his distinguished friend, the historian, Mr Anthony Froude. [lxxxi] He may during these years have been once or twice a guest at Colinton House, then inhabited by Lord Dunfermline, and as often at Bonally, the house of his old friend the late Professor Hodgson. During his residence at Morton, Dr Burton and his family dined with their neighbours, Mr and Mrs Stevenson, at Swanston Cottage, once. On one occasion he was persuaded to actually *drive* with his wife as far as Duddingston, where he dined and enjoyed a pleasant summer evening with Professor and Mrs Laurie and their family. Once he went still farther and dined with his old friend Mr Jenner, at Easter Duddingston. Mr Jenner and he had been associated with Lord Murray, Angus Fletcher, and others, in the foundation of the First Ragged School, as it was then called, in Edinburgh, and had remained friends ever since. On the Committee of the Ragged School splitting up on the question of religious instruction, all the gentlemen named had espoused the principle carried out in the United Industrial School—that of combined secular and separate religious instruction.

With these exceptions, and that of a very few visitors at home, the life at Morton was entirely domestic. During the whole of his three years' stay at Morton, Dr Burton always hoped to induce the remains of his circle of old friends to dine with him once more. They had become few indeed —were limited to Professor Blackie and Dr John Brown. He never succeeded in persuading these [lxxxii] gentlemen to come. Insuperable difficulties on one side or other always intervened. During these three years there never was any social gathering at Morton except entertainments which Dr Burton's family gave to the country people, and which sometimes included a few young friends as assistants. Dr Burton was no longer called on to visit his office daily. To attend the Board meetings once a-week was sufficient.

As soon as he had finished his 'History of Scotland' in 1870, he conceived the project of writing a 'History of the Reign of Queen Anne.' It was an ambitious attempt. Lord Macaulay's too early death had prevented his performing the task, and Mr Thackeray was understood to have contemplated it, but to have shrunk from its vastness. Dr Burton had been collecting material for this work in all his summer tours during the past ten years, and in all his visits to the British Museum while in London. He had written a great part of it before he was interrupted by his illness in the end of '77, and the removal from Craighouse early in '78. The most marked change in Dr Burton after that illness was in his impaired power of mental application. His general health was good, even strong; he still enjoyed long rambles with his sons, and walked to town and back at his former rapid rate; but now that he had no longer any office work, now that he might sit and

read or write all day if he would, he did not do so. Instead of, as formerly, resenting all interruption while engaged in his library, he seemed to seek every excuse for leaving it and his literary occupation. Though not rising earlier than formerly, he would go to bed comparatively early, and several times a-day would propose to his wife to go to visit her flowers, to do a little gardening, to go and feed the fowls—in short, to share in any little diversion going. [lxxxiii]

A visit of the writer's to her sister in Argyleshire gave occasion for the following notes on ballad-lore, in which Major Mackay of Carskey, Mrs Burton's brother-in-law, was also strong:—

"Morton, *2d May 1879*.

"My dear Love,—I recollect having come across the ballad incident you mention upwards of fifty years ago, when I was zealous in ballad-lore. If it had been in one of those accepted as genuine and poetical I would have remembered the ballad, but my impression is that it was condemned as a fabrication for this and other neologies. The *button* is not a conspicuous item of female attire as of the male, and Shakespeare has been attacked for the vulgarity of even making Lear say, 'Prithee, undo this button,' though I think it fine.

"If the Major is curious in ballad-lore, I can give him abundant information in it. For the musical item, the best collection I know is Motherwell's, both for good poetic taste in selection, and the tunes accompanying some of the contents....—Your affectionate

"J.H. Burton."

[lxxxiv]

"Morton, *Wednesday Evening, 8th May 1879*.

"My dear Love,—Looking for the ballad you want, and not finding it by recollection, I came by accident to the very line—

> 'When she cam' to her father's land
> The tenants a' cam' her to see;
> Never a word she could speak to them,
> But the buttons aff her claes would flee.'

The ballad is known by the title of The Marchioness of Douglas, but better known by the—

> 'O waly, waly, up yon bank,
> And waly, waly, doon yon brae.'

It was printed first in Jamieson's collection—1806; again in Chambers's, p. 150. The 'waly' has been by Cockney critics called Scotch for 'wail ye.' The word may come from the same etymological source as 'wail,' but it is a Scots adverb, indicative of the intensity of sorrow.

"It will be hard to find any one who is my master in ballad-lore (though other things have of late taken the preponderance). My services in the cause are certified by Robert Chambers in his collection, published in 1829—fifty years ago.

"I had then collected several versions from old people in Aberdeenshire. While writing this it dawns on my recollection that I lost the bulk of the collection, and that some years ago I got a letter from America, written by some one publishing Scots ballads, asking me to help him. Making a search for any remnant of the old collection, I found one ballad only, and sent it. Then came the odd conclusion—he had the rest of the collection, as he found by comparison of handwriting. [lxxxv]

"This little affair coming in upon others of so much more moment to me—I can't tell exactly how many years ago—was forgotten utterly until your inquiry about the 'buttons' brought it up. When I am through with 'Queen Anne' I may look back on it and other trifles....

"I do not think I have any news for you. Mary says the violet roots were sent on Monday.—Your affectionate

"J.H. Burton."

In the summer of 1879 Dr Burton went abroad for the last time, for the purpose of tracing the course of Marlborough's campaigns. From his daily letters home a few passages may be selected:—

"Mons, *18th June 1879*.

"My dear Will,—I think you may well write to Ratisbon after receiving this.

"I leave the Low Country when I have completed my inquiries.

"What little remains belongs to the Danube district, which I shall haunt for the remainder of my time. It got its name because the Romans found it a *ratis-bona*, or good pier for crossing. It is by the Germans called Regensberg, or the town of rain. [lxxxvi] —*N.B.* I went through the old Scots College there when its inmates had been driven out, and the only article I found left behind was a large umbrella. After three days' cessation the thunder and torrents have returned yesterday. I walked three hours in rain, which soused me, and then I had as long of sunshine to dry me, and arrived in very comfortable condition, but I had been starved and was afraid to make up by a heavy supper; I had consequently, after a long sleep, such an appetite, that though I had breakfast, I joined the *table d'hôte* dinner at one o'clock.

"Yesterday and the day before I went over the marching grounds of our army in 1709, especially the battle-field of Malplaquet. If you look into any of the histories of the period, or lives of Marlborough in the library, you will see all about it. They are concentrated in the room which I latterly used, and are concentrated opposite to the fireplace.

"I have had extreme interest in pursuing my inquiries, yet don't I long to go about in some country where one can get a drink of pure water by the roadside, such as you and I have enjoyed on occasion. The country people only get it in deep draw-wells. They have plenty of water for their agriculture—too much; it is like the Ancient Mariner's complaint—'Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink.' The peasantry are amply provided with brandy. I passed yesterday about thirty houses where they get it for two sous, not quite a penny a glass. I wonder all your [lxxxvii] friends at Brown Brothers' do not swarm to such a land....

"I have no doubt everything is beautiful, I hope also fruitful, about Morton. I feel sure of one thing, that mamma has abundance of her favourite flowers.—Love to all from your affectionate papa, J.H. Burton."

"Regensberg, *21st June 1879*.

"My dear Love,—I have but a scrap of paper available....

"Fine weather at last. Eating cherries. Last night I got a comfortable sleep for nothing. For reasons good no doubt, but unknown, the train stopped from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., at a country station. I lay on a bench, with my head on my small bag, and never had a sounder sleep.—Your affectionate

J.H. Burton."

"Donauwörth, *27th June 1879*.

"My dear Cos,—This afternoon I expect to be at Blenheim, and so at the farthest limits of my battle-fields. I spoke of not going to the Alps, in consideration of the depressing of our neighbours the Pentlands; but being so close to them, I can't resist a step farther, and then the Pentlands are not so very ill used, for they are put much on a level with the Grampians. At the beginning of next week I expect to be moving homewards, and I still think, as I wrote to mamma, the last place to catch me at, before taking to the water, is Antwerp. [lxxxviii]

"This is a very fishy place, not of the Danube rolling majestically not many yards from where I am writing, but of the sea. The inn I am in is called the Krebs or Crab, round the corner is the Crawfish, and somewhere else the Shrimps.

"I wonder what you are now all doing in the Belvidere,[20] and what projects you are all making for the summer, and whether you have ripe strawberries, and there is good promise of cherries and apples; and so, with kind love to all, adieu from your affectionate papa, J.H. Burton."

"Deggendorf, Bayerischer Wald,
1st July 1879.

"My dear Love,—I had a misgiving that I had given a false prospect of reaching me at Regensburg, so I came round that way again, and was rewarded by yours of the 24th, and Willy's of what he calls the *22d July*.

"I did not pursue the plan I spoke of to Cos, of getting a peep of the Alps, my investigations cutting off the time assigned to it. But I have gone into a siding here to see the much-boasted, and, it would seem, newly discovered touring ground of

the Wald.

"I have got through my work now, but I can still find some in the neighbourhood of Antwerp,—so that is my point, and there I shall hope for letters.

When I last went to Blenheim, some five years ago, the railway only reached a point some fifteen miles from it, and I could not get back to my inn until its opening at five o'clock. Now there is train all the way. It must be supported by agricultural produce. Such wealth of fertility I never saw. I think, standing at any point in the great haugh of the Danube, I could see as much grain as all Scotland could produce. This had a curious social influence, causing me some hardships. [lxxxix]

"The towns are all conglomerates of farm-steadings. The country was of old so cursed by war, that a steading in the fields was a lost affair. The old habit still rules, and in a town the size, say, of Linlithgow, there is not a shop or an inn except the store, whence the farmers draw their oceans of beer in great jugs, or sometimes meet to quaff it on the premises. I had to bribe the owner of such an establishment to give me brown bread and cheese; hard living of this kind, however, suits my constitution. Luckily, in consideration, I suppose, of there being no refuge for belated travellers, the station-master had a nice clean bedroom, which he was entitled to let.

"I propose remaining here till to-morrow, that I may have a glimpse of the much-lauded Wald.—Love to all from your affectionate goodman, J.H. Burton."

"Eger, *4th July 1879*.

"My dear Love,—The best account I can give you of where I am is, that I expect to reach Leipzic this evening. But it will still be some time ere I reach Antwerp, and you may as well write me somewhat. If any letters I get there prompt me to return with the least possible delay, I shall do so, but otherwise I shall wait, occupying myself in the Netherlands for the Antwerp steamer on Saturday, the 12th I think it is, to-morrow week. [xc]

"In going into the Bayerischer Wald I went where it was not easy to get speedily out, though I found a railway right through just opened. The night before last I slept, I suppose, some 4000 or 5000 feet above the sea, in a huge garret with some twenty beds in it. Somebody was sound asleep in one, but disappeared before I awoke. I supposed the house to have been temporary, for accommodating the workers making the railway, but I found it to be the *hospice* of the old road across the mountains. It has been a sort of pilgrimage, I think—*gasthaus zur Landes Grenze*.

"The scenery is naught in comparison with the Scots Highlands, or even our Pentlands. It is only in Scotland and the Lakes that hills of humble height look Alpine. The Wald is something like your Harz, but higher; so adieu.—Love to all from J.H. Burton."

"Thale, *Monday, 5th July 1879*.

"My dear Love,—I think you know this place. I found that if anything out of the direct line to Antwerp, it was only so to the extent of its short side line, some ten miles or so. When scenery is good, I enjoy a second visit to it more than the first, and this was specially so in the present instance; for in my visit from Grund, I took the most difficult and least profitable course, by climbing laterally to the level of the Ross Treppe, instead of going along the stream, and seeing the variety of cleft granite, unexampled, I think, elsewhere in that class of rock.... [xci]

"I am longing to see your beautiful gardens, and all—but have nothing to grumble at—health never better.—Affectionate remembrances to the rest, from your affectionate gudeman, J.H. Burton."

"Antwerp, *11th July 1879*.

"My dear Love,—To my great contentment I received here this morning your three letters, the latest dated on the 9th. I expect to-morrow, at 8 p.m., to sail by the steamer Windsor.

"I have had a grand time of it—everything going right with me, and yet I have a longing for home.

"From sultry, the weather has drifted into cold and rain. Yesterday the rain poured

powerfully all morning, and having some arrears of sleep to make up, I slumbered as long as it continued. Adieu, my dear.—Yours,

"J.H. Burton."

During this summer, Dr Burton and his eldest son walked from Morton to North Berwick and back in the same day, a walk of at least fifty miles. In former years sixty was an ordinary day's work. Once during Captain Speke's stay at Craighouse, Dr Burton traversed a distance within twenty-four hours, which Captain Speke computed at seventy miles. [xcii]

CHAPTER VII.

THE END.

Sale of library—Letters from Shetland and Aberdeen—Winter illness—Charities—Recovery—Magazine articles again—Literary executorship of late Mr Edward Ellice—Rev. James White of Methlick—Last illness and death—Concluding remarks—Burial at Dalmeny.

Would that in biography, as in romance, the story might end at its brightest point! But the true tale must follow its subject through the valley of the shadow of death, and on to his grave.

The remainder of '79 and beginning of '80 were spent at Morton in finishing the 'History of the Reign of Queen Anne;' but the work did not go on with the ease and pleasure of former works, and on its conclusion, Dr Burton formed the resolution to sell his library. This determination was combated by his family and friends, as well as by his friendly publisher, with all the arguments in their power, but in vain. Dr Burton never would allow that parting with his treasured volumes, the collection of which had been the pride of his life, cost him a pang. He had done with his books, he said. They were no book-hunter's library, but a collection made for use, and, that use over, had better be again turned into money. Dr Burton did not contemplate undertaking any [xciii] other great work; and the possession of so extensive a library forced him to live in a larger house than was convenient, and rendered leaving it very troublesome. In the proceeds of its sale Dr Burton was again disappointed. But before it could be brought to sale, while he was engaged in the laborious task of cataloguing his books for sale, he refreshed himself by a summer trip to Shetland, taking Aberdeen on his return journey, where he had the gratification of being present at the baptism of his little grandchild, the daughter of Dr and Mrs Rodger.

He wrote from Lerwick, 8th July 1880:—

"My dear Love,—I am not in what might be called an interesting country—low hills, rocky, stony, heathery, and peaty—but a new country has always something of interest to pass the time with. I saw a valuable archæological phenomenon to-day. The Roman roads were all paved, and went straight over hill and across valley—never troubled about levels. In the parts of Britain where the Romans are historically known to have been, such roads have been fully identified. But there, as well as in other places, where it has been questioned if the Romans ever were—any road strewn or surfaced with stones that have been laid down in the paving of the road, is adopted as a Roman road. I have often supposed that this conclusion was too readily adopted. And to-day I walked for some distance on a road that has all the requisites—yet no one is wild enough to say that the Romans were in [xciv] Shetland. The weather to-day was warmer than I have yet known it, the sun, such as he is, having nearly the whole twenty-four hours to do his work in. The next stage will be Kirkwall, then Wick.

"I shall intimate my motions as I find them coming up for consideration. I feel very elastic. There is nothing in my mind demanding either hard work or anxious adjustment. The 'Queen Anne' pressed very hard on me before I had done; and the press has rather too justly noticed a slovenliness about the conclusion. Then came immediately various cares and troubles, accompanied by the not very severe, but tedious, drudgery of the index; but I am not going to grumble more, since I am at present in comparative freedom and idleness.—Yours, my dear love, J.H. Burton."

The next is dated merely *Sunday*.

"My dear Love,— ... The weather here has been divine, with daylight, one may say, for twenty-four hours. The people are kind and cleanly, and all the necessaries of life are abundant. I do not know when I have enjoyed better health. There is nothing abnormal about me, except the extent of my appetite. Walking thirty miles here, is less fatiguing than from Morton to Edinburgh.

"Love to all the household, and remembrances to guests, from yours affectionately, J.H. Burton."

[xcv]

"Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen,
14th July 1880.

"My dear Love,— ... I had some fun yesterday with a class of people I detest—those who, because a man has been studious, and has written books, count that he is public property, who may be hailed by any one like a mountebank or street musician.

"There were some forty or fifty at dinner, and I found from the tenor of the conversation that I was taken for the American Judge Haliburton, the author of 'Sam Slick,' and other embodiments of smart Yankeyism. No direct question on the point was put to me, and I let the affair take its run, though a good deal to the bewilderment of some people, who I saw really knew me.[21] Good cold weather: seeing one by one the remnants of my generation of school and college friends.— Love to all, from your affectionate [xcvi]

"J.H. Burton.

"*P.S.*—On Monday I hired a boat, or small ship, and went a-hunting after antiquities. Passing Wire and Rousay, I recalled some association in the names, and I think it was with poor nurse Barbara. I was able to call on Mat.'s old friend, Mrs Burroughs; her husband, now General, was out. They live in great grandeur, on about the dreariest hillside Nature ever created." [xcvii]

"Banchory, *16th July 1880*.

"My dear Love,—I am here in the scene of many recollections going back to boyhood, and the interest of them takes a zest from knowing that you, too, must have stored up associations with the spot, though of a later period. I think the avenue trees at Blackhall were cut down before your day. They are not now much missed in the general landscape. The lapse of half a century has given such a growth to the surrounding plantations, that where I remember bare hills, or freshly planted and uglier than bare, there are now great stretches deserving to be called forest land."

Dr Burton returned from this pleasant little trip well, and in good spirits, but the winter was one of illness.

On the 8th of November it was found necessary to call in medical advice on account of a severe ex[oe]ma affecting chiefly one leg. The doctor ordered confinement to bed, besides other remedies. On the 8th of December these had proved successful, and Dr Burton was able to be up, and, at Christmas, to assist his wife in carrying gifts to all their poor neighbours—a plan substituted that year for the first time instead of a Christmas-tree for the same class of people. [xcviii]

Dr Burton was always much interested in the Christmas-tree, and used to contribute largely to it what he called *trash—i.e.*, cheap fancy articles, if he happened to be in London before Christmas-time, or money if he did not. His mode of visiting poor people was peculiar. He no sooner heard of any plan of benevolence towards them than he was determined it should be immediately carried out, and utterly impatient of all preparations. He chose to carry a basket, the heavier the better, but would on no account enter a cottage, still less speak to an inmate. He preferred such expeditions in the dark, that he might successfully hide himself outside while his wife went in to distribute his bounty.

On the 8th of January 1881 a recurrence of the former symptoms again obliged him to take to bed. On the 8th of February he was able to rise and go down to the library.

On the 8th of March he again became ill, and towards the end of that month had an alarming attack of bronchitis and congestion of the lungs. Slight hope was entertained of his recovery for some days, but this illness appeared a turning-point, and by the 8th of April he was able to come down-stairs. No more 8ths were marked by disaster or recovery till again the 8th of August. [xcix]

During the summer Dr Burton appeared to have recovered completely. He wrote several articles for 'Blackwood's Magazine,' and took regular walks, first with his wife, and, when his walking power improved so as to exceed hers, with his son. He also began to edit the literary remains of the late Mr Edward Ellice, to whom he was joint literary executor along with Mrs Ellice.

At the time of the General Assembly Dr Burton had the pleasure of seeing once more his valued friend, the Rev. James White, minister of Methlick. This gentleman had been his schoolfellow at the Grammar School in Aberdeen. The two old friends spent a pleasant summer evening together at Morton. On the Saturday before his own death Dr Burton learned that of Mr White. "Ah! so Jamie White's gone," he said, "and *without the catalogues*." The last part of his sentence referred to old class lists in which Joannes Burton and Jacobus White's names appear next each other. They believed themselves the last survivors of their Grammar School class.

On Tuesday, 2d August, he walked into Edinburgh and out again as usual, though his family drove in at the same time that he walked, and drove out again also at the same time, in the hope that he would avail himself of a seat in the pony-carriage, at least for part of the way. His

aversion to driving clung to him. He did not appear fatigued, declared himself the better for the walk, and even next day still boasted of the advantage which he thought he always gained from a long walk. On Thursday, 4th August, he became very hoarse, and complained of sore throat. On Friday these complaints were better. On Saturday, 6th, he slept almost the whole day, rousing himself to take food when required, and always intending to rise, but as the shades of evening fell announcing his intention of "making a day of it," and being very active and down in good time next day. [c]

On Sunday, 7th, he did come down as early as usual, and did not complain, but appeared languid, lying on the sofa the greater part of the day,—a thing he had never done before. He read and talked as usual. He sat at table with his family at dinner for the last time. It was observed that he looked ill, so ill that his wife resolved to send for the doctor as soon as possible next day, which was Monday, again the 8th, of August. The night had passed quietly, but on the doctor's arrival he pronounced the case very grave. The lungs were much congested, and the heart's action weak. The day brought no aggravation of the symptoms; again the night was quiet.

On Tuesday, 9th August, there was a slight improvement, which continued throughout the night.

On Wednesday, 10th, the improvement seemed more marked till about ten A.M. About that time a change in the countenance was observed. On the doctor's visit about twelve he pronounced the case all but hopeless, and five hours later life was extinct. Consciousness remained till almost the last moment. The illness was attended by no bodily pain, little even of uneasiness, and the mind was calm and placid throughout. [ci]

Since the beginning of illness, nine months before, the natural irritability, or impatience of temper, had been diminishing. Dr Burton was by no means, as all his friends seemed to suppose, a fretful or unreasonable invalid. With but few exceptions he was gentle and grateful to his attendants, especially to his wife. He was perfectly aware of his own condition, though never directly told it. His friend Mr Belcombe, the clergyman of the Episcopal Chapel at Morningside, called for him on Tuesday, 9th August, was received by him with pleasure, and spent some time with him. Dr Burton had been brought up an Episcopalian, and continued attached to the Moderate party in that Church through life.

It can hardly be expected that the writer should offer a critical estimate of one so lately dead, and so nearly related to her. In the preceding sketch she has endeavoured to inform the public on all particulars in which they might be supposed interested in the life of a man who served them during life with considerable acceptance. His voluminous works may speak for themselves, or find a more competent exponent than the present writer. She has endeavoured to give a picture of himself.

John Hill Burton can never have been handsome, and he so determinedly neglected his person as to increase its natural defects. His greatest mental defect was an almost entire want of imagination. From this cause the characters of those nearest and dearest to him remained to his life's end a sealed book. [cii]

He was fond of talking, and still fonder of writing, about character; but even his liveliest pictures, such as that of De Quincey the opium-eater, are but a collection of external habits or peculiarities, not necessarily bearing at all on the real nature—the inner man. His was the sort of mind which more naturally classifies than individualises, in this agreeing with the late Mr Buckle, who appreciated Dr Burton's historical labours, and was in his turn appreciated by him. To both, individual character seemed a small subject not worth study.

The characters of women, especially, were by Dr Burton all placed in the same category. He conceived of them all as baby-worshippers, flower-lovers, &c.—all alike.

Dr Burton was excessively kind-hearted within the limits placed by this great want. To any sorrow or suffering which he could understand he craved with characteristic impatience to carry immediate relief; and the greatest enjoyment of his life, especially of its later years, was to give pleasure to children, poor people, or the lower animals. Many humble folks will remember the bunches of flowers he thrust silently into their hands, and the refreshment he never failed to press on their acceptance in his own peculiar manner.

He was liberal of money to a fault. He never refused any application even from a street beggar. He quite allowed that these ought not to be encouraged, but he urged that the municipality ought to take charge of them, and prevent their appealing to the compassion of the public, who could not, as he said, be expected to perform the disagreeable task of disciplining vagrants at the wages of a penny a case. No printer's devil or other chance messenger failed to receive his sixpence or shilling, besides a comfortable meal. It was his constant custom to ask his sons if any of their wants were unsupplied, if they required money for furnishing their workshop or laboratory, or for any of their studies or amusements. It is but just to them to add that the question was almost always answered in the negative. [ciii]

Many of the "motley crew" along with whom Dr Burton received his education fell into difficulties in the course of their lives. An application from one of them always met with a prompt response. To send double the amount asked on such occasions was his rule, if money was the object desired. In his earlier life he would also spare no trouble in endeavouring to help these unfortunates to help themselves. As he grew old he was less zealous, probably from being less sanguine of success, in this service.

On Saturday the 13th of August the mortal remains of John Hill Burton were laid beside those of his infant child in the lovely little churchyard of Dalmeny. It had been at first intended that he should be buried in the Dean Cemetery, where his mother and his first wife were interred, and where his valued friend William Brodie[22] had erected a beautiful monument over their graves; but after orders had been given to this effect, his wife became strongly possessed by the wish to carry out his repeatedly expressed injunction to have him laid in Dalmeny. [civ]

KATHARINE BURTON.

MORTON, *20th September 1881*.

Dalmeny Church.

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[1]

A Nook in the Author's Library

THE BOOK-HUNTER.

PART I.—HIS NATURE.

Introductory.

Of the Title under which the contents of the following pages are ranged I have no better justification to offer than that it appeared to suit their discursive tenor. If they laid any claim to a scientific character, or professed to contain an exposition of any established department of knowledge, it might have been their privilege to appear under a title of Greek derivation, with all the dignities and immunities conceded by immemorial deference to this stamp of scientific rank. I not only, however, consider my own trifles unworthy of such a dignity, but am inclined to strip it from other productions which might appear to have a more appropriate claim to it. No doubt, the [2]
ductile inflections and wonderful facilities for decomposition and reconstruction make Greek an excellent vehicle of scientific precision, and the use of a dead language saves your nomenclature from being confounded with your common talk. The use of a Greek derivative gives notice that you are scientific. If you speak of an acanthopterygian, it is plain that you are not discussing perch in reference to its roasting or boiling merits; and if you make an allusion to monomyarian malacology, it will not naturally be supposed to have reference to the cooking of oyster sauce.

Like many other meritorious things, however, Greek nomenclature is much abused. The very reverence it is held in—the strong disinclination on the part of the public to question the accuracy of anything stated under the shadow of a Greek name, or to doubt the infallibility of the man who does it—makes this kind of nomenclature the frequent protector of fallacies and quackeries. It is an instrument for silencing inquiry and handing over the judgment to implicit belief. Get the passive student once into palæozoology, and he takes your other hard names—your ichthyodorulite, trogontherium, lepidodendron, and bothrodendron—for granted, contemplating them, indeed, with a kind of religious awe or devotional reverence. If it be a [3]
question whether a term is categorematic, or is of a quite opposite description, and ought to be described as *sun*categorematic, one may take up a very absolute positive position without finding many people prepared to assail it.

Antiquarianism, which used to be an easy-going slipshod sort of pursuit, has sought this all-powerful protection, and called itself Archæology. An obliterated manuscript written over again is called a palimpsest, and the man who can restore and read it a paleographist. The great erect stone on the moor, which has hitherto defied all learning to find the faintest trace of the age in which it was erected, its purpose, or the people who placed it there, seems as it were to be rescued from the heathen darkness in which it has dwelt, and to be admitted within the community of scientific truth, by being christened a monolith. If it be large and shapeless, it may take rank as an amorphous megalith; and it is on record that the owner of some muirland acres, finding them described in a learned work as "richly megalithic," became suddenly excited by hopes which were quickly extinguished when the import of the term was fully explained to him. Should there be any remains of sculpture on such a stone, it becomes a lithoglyph or a hieroglyph; and if the nature and end of this sculpture be quite incomprehensible to the adepts, they may term it a cryptoglyph, and thus dignify, by a sort of title of honour, the absoluteness of [4]
their ignorance. It were a pity if any more ingenious man should afterwards find a key to the mystery, and destroy the significance of the established nomenclature.

The vendors of quack medicines and cosmetics are aware of the power of Greek nomenclature, and apparently subsidise scholars of some kind or other to supply them with the article. A sort of shaving soap used frequently to be advertised under a title which was as complexly adjusted a piece of mosaic work as the geologists or the conchologists ever turned out. But perhaps the confidence in the protective power of Greek designations lately reached its climax, in an attempt to save thieves from punishment by calling them kleptomaniacs.

It is possible that, were I to attempt to dignify the class of men to whom the following sketches are devoted by an appropriate scientific title, a difficulty would start up at the very beginning. As the reader will perhaps see, from the tenor of my discourse, I would find it difficult to say whether I should give them a good name or a bad—to speak more scientifically, and of course more clearly, whether I should characterise them by a predicate eulogistic, or a predicate dyslogistic. On the whole, I am content with my first idea, and continue to stick to the title of "The Book-Hunter," with all the more assurance that it has been tolerated, and even liked, by [5]
readers of the kind I am most ambitious of pleasing.[23]

Few wiser things have ever been said than that remark of Byron's, that "man is an unfortunate fellow, and ever will be." Perhaps the originality of the fundamental idea it expresses may be questioned, on the ground that the same warning has been enounced in far more solemn language, and from a far more august authority. But there is originality in the vulgar everyday-world way of putting the idea, and this makes it suit the present purpose, in which, a human [6]
frailty having to be dealt with, there is no intention to be either devout or philosophical about it, but to treat it in a thoroughly worldly and practical tone, and in this temper to judge of its place among the defects and ills to which flesh is heir. It were better, perhaps, if we human creatures sometimes did this, and discussed our common frailties as each himself partaking of them, than that we should mount, as we are so apt to do, into the clouds of theology or of ethics, according [7]
as our temperament and training are of the serious or of the intellectual order. True, there are many of our brethren violently ready to proclaim themselves frail mortals, miserable sinners, and no better, in theological phraseology, than the greatest of criminals. But such has been my own unfortunate experience in life, that whenever I find a man coming forward with these self-denunciations on his lips, I am prepared for an exhibition of intolerance, spiritual pride, and envy,

hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, towards any poor fellow-creature who has floundered a little out of the straight path, and being all too conscious of his errors, is not prepared to proclaim them in those broad emphatic terms which come so readily to the lips of the censors, who at heart believe themselves spotless,—just as complaints about poverty, and inability to buy this and that, come from the fat lips of the millionaire, when he shows you his gallery of pictures, his stud, and his forcing-frames.

No; it is hard to choose between the two. The man who has no defect or crack in his character—no tinge of even the minor immoralities—no fantastic humour carrying him sometimes off his feet—no preposterous hobby—such a man, walking straight along the surface of this world in the arc of a circle, is a very dangerous character, no doubt; of such all children, dogs, simpletons, and other creatures that have the instinct of the odious in their nature, feel an innate loathing. And [8]
yet it is questionable if your perfectionised Sir Charles Grandison is quite so dangerous a character as your "miserable sinner," vociferously conscious that he is the frailest of the frail, and that he can do no good thing of himself. And indeed, in practice, the external symptoms of these two characteristics have been known so to alternate in one disposition as to render it evident that each is but the same moral nature under a different external aspect,—the mask, cowl, varnish, crust, or whatever you like to call it, having been adapted to the external conditions of the man—that is, to the society he mixes in, the set he belongs to, the habits of the age, and the way in which he proposes to get on in life. It is when the occasion arises for the mask being thrown aside, or when the internal passions burst like a volcano through the crust, that terrible events take place, and the world throbs with the excitement of some wonderful criminal trial.[24]

The present, however, is not an inquiry into the first principles either of ethics or of physiology. [9]
The object of this rambling preamble is to win from the reader a morsel of genial fellow-feeling towards the human frailty which I propose to examine and lay bare before him, trusting that he [10]
will treat it neither with the haughty disdain of the immaculate, nor the grim charity of the "miserable sinner:" that he may even, when sighing over it as a failing, yet kindly remember that, in comparison with many others, it is a failing that leans to virtue's side. It will not demand that breadth of charity which even rather rigid fathers are permitted to exercise by the licence of the existing school of French fiction.[25] Neither will it exact such extensive toleration as that of the old Aberdeen laird's wife, who, when her sister lairdesses were enriching the tea-table conversation with broad descriptions of the abominable vices of their several spouses, said her [11]
own "was just a gueed, weel-tempered, couthy, queat, innocent, daedlin, drucken body—wi' nae ill practices aboot him ava!" But all things in their own time and place. To understand the due weight and bearing of this feeling of optimism, it is necessary to remember that its happy owner had probably spent her youth in that golden age when it was deemed churlish to bottle the claret, and each guest filled his stoup at the fountain of the flowing hogshead; and if the darker days of dear claret came upon her times, there was still to fall back upon the silver age of smuggled usquebaugh, when the types of a really hospitable country-house were an anker of whisky always on the spigot, a caldron ever on the bubble with boiling water, and a cask of sugar with a spade in it,—all for the manufacture of toddy.

The habits of that age have passed away, and with them the drunken laird and the widely tolerant wife. The advancing civilisation which has nearly extinguished this class of frailties among those who have the amplest means of indulgence in them, is, no doubt, doing for other frailties, and will come at last to the one in hand, leaving it an object of admiring and compassionate retrospect to an enlightened posterity. There are people, however, too impatient to wait for such results from the mellowing influence of progressive civilisation. Such a consideration suggests to me that I [12]
may be treading on dangerous ground—dangerous, I mean, to the frail but amiable class to whom my exposition is devoted. Natural misgivings arise in one who professes to call attention to a special type of human frailty, since the world is full of people who will be prepared to deal with and cure it, provided only that they are to have their own way with the disease and the patient, and that they shall enjoy the simple privilege of locking him up, dieting him, and taking possession of his worldly goods and interests, as one who, by his irrational habits, or his outrages on the laws of physiology, or the fitness of things, or some other neology, has satisfactorily established his utter incapacity to take charge of his own affairs. No! This is not a cruel age; the rack, the wheel, the boot, the thumbikins, even the pillory and the stocks, have disappeared; death-punishment is dwindling away; and if convicts have not their full rations of cooked meat, or get damaged coffee or sour milk, or are inadequately supplied with flannels and clean linen, there will be an outcry and an inquiry, and a Secretary of State will lose a percentage of his influence, and learn to look better after the administration of patronage. But, at the same time, the area of punishment—or of "treatment," as it is mildly termed—becomes alarmingly widened, and people require to look sharply into themselves lest they should be tainted with any little frailty or peculiarity which may transfer them from the class of free self-regulators to that of [13]
persons under "treatment." In Owen's parallelograms there were to be no prisons: he admitted no power in one man to inflict punishment upon another for merely obeying the dictates of natural propensities which could not be resisted. But, at the same time, there were to be "hospitals" in which not only the physically diseased, but also the mentally and *morally* diseased, were to be detained until they were cured; and when we reflect that the laws of the parallelogram were very stringent and minute, and required to be absolutely enforced to the letter, otherwise the whole machinery of society would come to pieces, like a watch with a broken spring,—it is clear that these hospitals would have contained a very large proportion of the unrationalised population.

There is rather an alarming amount of this sort of communism now among us, and it is therefore with some little misgiving that one sets down anything that may betray a brother's weakness, and

lay bare the diagnosis of a human frailty. Indeed, the bad name that proverbially hangs the dog has already been given to the one under consideration, for bibliomania is older in the technology of this kind of nosology than dipsomania, which is now understood to be an almost established ground for seclusion, and deprivation of the management of one's own affairs. There is one ground of consolation, however,—the people who, being all right themselves, have undertaken [14] the duty of keeping in order the rest of the world, have far too serious a task in hand to afford time for idle reading. There is a good chance, therefore, that this little book may pass them unnoticed, and the harmless class, on whose peculiar frailties the present occasion is taken for devoting a gentle and kindly exposition, may yet be permitted to go at large.

So having spoken, I now propose to make the reader acquainted with some characteristic specimens of the class.

A Vision of Mighty Book-Hunters.

s the first case, let us summon from the shades my venerable friend Archdeacon Meadow, as he was in the body. You see him now—tall, straight, and meagre, but with a grim dignity in his air which warms into benignity as he inspects a pretty little clean Elzevir, or a tall portly Stephens, concluding his inward estimate of the prize with a peculiar grunting chuckle, known by the initiated to be an important announcement. This is no doubt one of the milder and more inoffensive types, but still a thoroughly confirmed and obstinate case. Its parallel to the classes who are to be taken charge of by their wiser neighbours is only too close and awful; for have not sometimes the [15] female members of his household been known on occasion of some domestic emergency—or, it may be, for mere sake of keeping the lost man out of mischief—to have been searching for him on from bookstall unto bookstall, just as the mothers, wives, and daughters of other lost men hunt them through their favourite taverns or gambling-houses? Then, again, can one forget that occasion of his going to London to be examined by a committee of the House of Commons, when he suddenly disappeared with all his money in his pocket, and returned penniless, followed by a waggon containing 372 copies of rare editions of the Bible? All were fish that came to his net. At one time you might find him securing a minnow for sixpence at a stall—and presently afterwards he outbids some princely collector, and secures with frantic impetuosity, "at any price," a great fish he has been patiently watching year after year. His hunting-grounds were wide and distant, and there were mysterious rumours about the numbers of copies, all identically the same in edition and minor individualities, which he possessed of certain books. I have known him, indeed, when beaten at an auction, turn round resignedly and say, "Well, so be it—but I daresay I have ten or twelve copies at home, if I could lay hands on them."

It is a matter of extreme anxiety to his friends, and, if he have a well-constituted mind, of sad [16] misgiving to himself, when the collector buys his first *duplicate*. It is like the first secret dram swallowed in the forenoon—the first pawning of the silver spoons—or any other terrible first step downwards you may please to liken it to. There is no hope for the patient after this. It rends at once the veil of decorum spun out of the flimsy sophisms by which he has been deceiving his friends, and partially deceiving himself, into the belief that his previous purchases were necessary, or, at all events, serviceable for professional and literary purposes. He now becomes shameless and hardened; and it is observable in the career of this class of unfortunates, that the first act of duplicity is immediately followed by an access of the disorder, and a reckless abandonment to its propensities. The Archdeacon had long passed this stage ere he crossed my path, and had become thoroughly hardened. He was not remarkable for local attachment; and in moving from place to place, his spoil, packed in innumerable great boxes, sometimes followed him, to remain unreleased during the whole period of his tarrying in his new abode, so that they were removed to the next stage of his journey through life with modified inconvenience.

Cruel as it may seem, I must yet notice another and a peculiar vagary of his malady. He had resolved, at least once in his life, to part with a considerable proportion of his collection—better [17] to suffer the anguish of such an act than endure the fretting of continued restraint. There was a wondrous sale by auction accordingly; it was something like what may have occurred on the dissolution of the monasteries at the Reformation, or when the contents of some time-honoured public library were realised at the period of the French Revolution. Before the affair was over, the Archdeacon himself made his appearance in the midst of the miscellaneous self-invited guests who were making free with his treasures,—he pretended, honest man, to be a mere casual spectator, who, having seen, in passing, the announcement of a sale by auction, stepped in like the rest of the public. By degrees he got excited, gasped once or twice as if mastering some desperate impulse, and at length fairly bade. He could not brazen out the effect of this escapade, however, and disappeared from the scene. It was remarked by the observant, that an unusual number of lots were afterwards knocked down to a military gentleman, who seemed to have left portentously large orders with the auctioneer. Some curious suspicions began to arise, which were settled by that presiding genius bending over his rostrum, and explaining in a confidential whisper that the military hero was in reality a pillar of the Church so disguised.

The Archdeacon lay under what, among a portion of the victims of his malady, was deemed a heavy scandal. He was suspected of reading his own books—that is to say, when he could get at [18] them; for there are those who may still remember his rather shamefaced apparition of an

evening, petitioning, somewhat in the tone with which an old schoolfellow down in the world requests your assistance to help him to go to York to get an appointment—petitioning for the loan of a volume of which he could not deny that he possessed numberless copies lurking in divers parts of his vast collection. This reputation of reading the books in his collection, which should be sacred to external inspection solely, is, with a certain school of book-collectors, a scandal, such as it would be among a hunting set to hint that a man had killed a fox. In the dialogues, not always the most entertaining, of Dibdin's Bibliomania, there is this short passage: "'I will frankly confess,' rejoined Lysander, 'that I am an arrant *bibliomaniac*—that I love books dearly—that the very sight, touch, and mere perusal—–' 'Hold, my friend,' again exclaimed Philemon; 'you have renounced your profession—you talk of *reading* books—do *bibliomaniacs* ever *read* books?'"

Yes, the Archdeacon read books—he devoured them; and he did so to full prolific purpose. His was a mind enriched with varied learning, which he gave forth with full, strong, easy flow, like an inexhaustible perennial spring coming from inner reservoirs, never dry, yet too capacious to exhibit the brawling, bubbling symptoms of repletion. It was from a majestic heedlessness of the [19]
busy world and its fame that he got the character of indolence, and was set down as one who would leave no lasting memorial of his great learning. But when he died, it was not altogether without leaving a sign; for from the casual droppings of his pen has been preserved enough to signify to many generations of students in the walk he chiefly affected how richly his mind was stored, and how much fresh matter there is in those fields of inquiry where compilers have left their dreary tracks, for ardent students to cultivate into a rich harvest. In him truly the bibliomania may be counted among the many illustrations of the truth so often moralised on, that the highest natures are not exempt from human frailty in some shape or other.

Let us now summon the shade of another departed victim—Fitzpatrick Smart, Esq. He, too, through a long life, had been a vigilant and enthusiastic collector, but after a totally different fashion. He was far from omnivorous. He had a principle of selection peculiar and separate from all other's, as was his own individuality from other men's. You could not classify his library according to any of the accepted nomenclatures peculiar to the initiated. He was not a black-letter man, or a tall copyist, or an uncut man, or a rough-edge man, or an early-English-dramatist, or an Elzevirian, or a broadsider, or a pasquinader, or an old-brown-calf man, or a [20]
Grangerite, or a tawny-moroccoite, or a gilt-topper, a marbled-insider, or an *editio princeps* man; neither did he come under any of the more vulgar classifications of collectors whose thoughts run more upon the usefulness for study than upon the external conditions of their library, such as those who affect science, or the classics, or English poetic and historical literature. There was no way of defining his peculiar walk save by his own name—it was the Fitzpatrick-Smart walk. In fact, it wound itself in infinite windings through isolated spots of literary scenery, if we may so speak, in which he took a personal interest. There were historical events, bits of family history, chiefly of a tragic or a scandalous kind,—efforts of art or of literary genius on which, through some hidden intellectual law, his mind and memory loved to dwell; and it was in reference to these that he collected. If the book were the one desired by him, no anxiety and toil, no payable price, was to be grudged for its acquisition. If the book were an inch out of his own line, it might be trampled in the mire for aught he cared, be it as rare or costly as it could be.

It was difficult, almost impossible, for others to predicate what would please this wayward sort of taste, and he was the torment of the book-caterers, who were sure of a princely price for the right article, but might have the wrong one thrown in their teeth with contumely. It was a [21]
perilous, but, if successful, a gratifying thing to present him with a book. If it happened to hit his fancy, he felt the full force of the compliment, and overwhelmed the giver with his courtly thanks. But great observation and tact were required for such an adventure. The chances against an ordinary thoughtless gift-maker were thousands to one; and those who were acquainted with his strange nervous temperament, knew that the existence within his dwelling-place of any book not of his own special kind, would impart to him the sort of feeling of uneasy horror which a bee is said to feel when an earwig comes into its cell. Presentation copies by authors were among the chronic torments of his existence. While the complacent author was perhaps pluming himself on his liberality in making the judicious gift, the recipient was pouring out all his sarcasm, which was not feeble or slight, on the odious object, and wondering why an author could have entertained against him so steady and enduring a malice as to take the trouble of writing and printing all that rubbish with no better object than disturbing the peace of mind of an inoffensive old man. Every tribute from such *dona ferentes* cost him much uneasiness and some want of sleep—for what could he do with it? It was impossible to make merchandise of it, for he was every inch a gentleman. He could not burn it, for under an acrid exterior he had a kindly nature. [22]
It was believed, indeed, that he had established some limbo of his own, in which such unwelcome commodities were subject to a kind of burial or entombment, where they remained in existence, yet were decidedly outside the circle of his household gods.

These gods were a pantheon of a lively and grotesque aspect, for he was a hunter after other things besides books. His acquisitions included pictures, and the various commodities which, for want of a distinctive name, auctioneers call "miscellaneous articles of vertu." He started on his accumulating career with some old family relics, and these, perhaps, gave the direction to his subsequent acquisitions, for they were all, like his books, brought together after some self-willed and peculiar law of association that pleased himself. A bad, even an inferior, picture he would not have—for his taste was exquisite—unless, indeed, it had some strange history about it, adapting it to his wayward fancies, and then he would adopt the badness as a peculiar recommendation, and point it out with some pungent and appropriate remark to his friends. But though, with these peculiar exceptions, his works of art were faultless, no dealer could ever calculate on his buying a

picture, however high in artistic merit or tempting as a bargain. With his ever-accumulating collection, in which tiny sculpture and brilliant colour predominated, he kept a sort of fairy world around him. But each one of the mob of curious things he preserved had some story linking it with others, or with his peculiar fancies, and each one had its precise place in a sort of *epos*, as certainly as each of the persons in the confusion of a pantomime or a farce has his own position and functions. [23]

After all, he was himself his own greatest curiosity. He had come to manhood just after the period of gold-laced waistcoats, small-clothes, and shoe-buckles, otherwise he would have been long a living memorial of these now antique habits. It happened to be his lot to preserve down to us the earliest phase of the pantaloon dynasty. So, while the rest of the world were booted or heavy shod, his silk-stockinged feet were thrust into pumps of early Oxford cut, and the predominant garment was the surtout, blue in colour, and of the original make before it came to be called a frock. Round his neck was wrapped an ante-Brummelite neckerchief (not a tie), which projected in many wreaths like a great poultice—and so he took his walks abroad, a figure which he could himself have turned into admirable ridicule.

One of the mysteries about him was, that his clothes, though unlike any other person's, were always old. This characteristic could not even be accounted for by the supposition that he had laid in a sixty years' stock in his youth, for they always appeared to have been a good deal worn. The very umbrella was in keeping—it was of green silk, an obsolete colour ten years ago—and the handle was of a peculiar crosier-like formation in cast-horn, obviously not obtainable in the market. His face was ruddy, but not with the ruddiness of youth; and, bearing on his head a Brutus wig of the light-brown hair which had long ago legitimately shaded his brow, when he stood still—except for his linen, which was snowy white—one might suppose that he had been shot and stuffed on his return home from college, and had been sprinkled with the frowzy mouldiness which time imparts to stuffed animals and other things, in which a semblance to the freshness of living nature is vainly attempted to be preserved. So if he were motionless; but let him speak, and the internal freshness was still there, an ever-blooming garden of intellectual flowers. His antiquated costume was no longer grotesque—it harmonised with an antiquated courtesy and high-bred gentleness of manner, which he had acquired from the best sources, since he had seen the first company in his day, whether for rank or genius. And conversation and manner were far from exhausting his resources. He had a wonderful pencil—it was potent for the beautiful, the terrible, and the ridiculous; but it took a wayward wilful course, like everything else about him. He had a brilliant pen, too, when he chose to wield it; but the idea that he should exercise any of these his gifts in common display before the world, for any even of the higher motives that make people desire fame and praise, would have sickened him. His faculties were his own as much as his collection, and to be used according to his caprice and pleasure. So fluttered through existence one who, had it been his fate to have his own bread to make, might have been a great man. Alas for the end! Some curious annotations are all that remain of his literary powers—some drawings and etchings in private collections all of his artistic. His collection, with its long train of legends and associations, came to what he himself must have counted as dispersal. He left it to his housekeeper, who, like a wise woman, converted it into cash while its mysterious reputation was fresh. Huddled in a great auction-room, its several catalogued items lay in humiliating contrast with the decorous order in which they were wont to be arranged. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* [24] [25]

Let us now call up a different and a more commonplace type of the book-hunter—it shall be Inchrule Brewer. He is guiltless of all intermeddling with the contents of books, but in their external attributes his learning is marvellous. He derived his nickname, from the practice of keeping, as his inseparable pocket-companion, one of those graduated folding measures of length which may often be seen protruding from the moleskin pocket of the joiner. He used it at auctions and on other appropriate occasions, to measure the different elements of a book—the letterpress—the unprinted margin—the external expanse of the binding; for to the perfectly scientific collector all these things are very significant.[26] They are, in fact, on record among the craft, like the pedigrees and physical characteristics recorded in stud-books and short-horn books. One so accomplished in this kind of analysis could tell at once, by this criterion, whether the treasure under the hammer was the same that had been knocked down before at the Roxburghe sale—the Askew, the Gordonstoun, or the Heber, perhaps—or was veritably an impostor—or was in reality a new and previously unknown prize well worth contending for. The minuteness and precision of his knowledge excited wonder, and, being anomalous in the male sex even among collectors, gave occasion to a rumour that its possessor must veritably be an aged maiden in disguise. [26]

His experience, aided by a heaven-born genius tending in that direction, rendered him the most merciless detector of sophisticated books. Nothing, it might be supposed on first thought, can be a simpler or more easily recognised thing than a book genuine as printed. But in the old-book trade there are opportunities for the exercise of ingenuity inferior only to those which render the picture-dealer's and the horse-dealer's functions so mysteriously interesting. Sometimes entire facsimiles are made of eminent volumes. More commonly, however, the problem is to complete an imperfect copy. This will be most satisfactorily accomplished, of course, if another copy can be procured imperfect also, but not in the same parts. Great ingenuity is sometimes shown in completing a highly esteemed edition with fragments from one lightly esteemed. Sometimes a colophon or a decorated capital has to be imitated, and bold operators will reprint a page or two in facsimile; these operations, of course, involve the inlaying of paper, judiciously staining it, and other mysteries. Paris is the great centre of this kind of work, but it has been pretty extensively [27]

pursued in Britain; and the manufacture of first folio Shakespeares has been nearly as staple a trade as the getting up of genuine portraits of Mary Queen of Scots. It will establish a broad distinction to note the fact, that whereas our friend the Archdeacon would collect several imperfect copies of the same book, in the hope of finding materials for one perfect one among them, Inchrule would remorselessly spurn from him the most voluptuously got-up specimen (to use a favourite phrase of Dibdin's) were it tainted by the very faintest suspicion of "restoration." [28]

Among the elements which constitute the value of a book—rarity of course being essential—one might say he counted the binding highest. He was not alone in this view, for it would be difficult to give the uninitiated a conception of the importance attached to this mechanical department of book-making by the adepts. About a third of Dibdin's Bibliographical Decameron is, if I recollect rightly, devoted to bindings. There are binders who have immortalised themselves—as Staggemier, Walther, Payne, Padaloup, Hering, De Rome, Bozerian, Deseuille, Bradel, Faulkner, Lewis, Hayday, and Thomson. Their names may sometimes be found on their work, not with any particularities, as if they required to make themselves known, but with the simple brevity of illustrious men. Thus you take up a morocco-bound work of some eminence, on the title-page of which the author sets forth his full name and profession, with the distinctive initials of certain learned societies to which it is his pride to belong; but the simple and dignified enunciation, deeply stamped in his own golden letters, "Bound by Hayday," is all that that accomplished artist deigns to tell. [29]

And let us, after all, acknowledge that there are few men who are entirely above the influence of binding. No one likes sheep's clothing for his literature, even if he should not aspire to russia or morocco. Adam Smith, one of the least showy of men, confessed himself to be a beau in his books. Perhaps the majority of men of letters are so to some extent, though poets are apt to be ragamuffins. It was Thomson, I believe, who used to cut the leaves with his snuffers. Perhaps an event in his early career may have soured him of the proprieties. It is said that he had an uncle, a clever active mechanic, who could do many things with his hands, and contemplated James's indolent, dreamy, "feckless" character with impatient disgust. When the first of The Seasons—Winter it was, I believe—had been completed at press, Jamie thought, by a presentation copy, to triumph over his uncle's scepticism, and to propitiate his good opinion he had the book handsomely bound. The old man never looked inside, or asked what the book was about, but, turning it round and round with his fingers in gratified admiration, exclaimed—"Come, is that really our Jamie's doin' now?—weel, I never thought the cratur wad hae had the handicraft to do the like!"

The feeling by which this worthy man was influenced was a mere sensible practical respect for good workmanship. The aspirations of the collectors, however, in this matter, go out of the boundaries of the sphere of the utilitarian into that of the æsthetic. Their priests and prophets, by the way, do not seem to be aware how far back this veneration for the coverings of books may be traced, or to know how strongly their votaries have been influenced in the direction of their taste by the traditions of the middle ages. The binding of a book was, of old, a shrine on which the finest workmanship in bullion and the costliest gems were lavished. The psalter or the breviary of some early saint, a portion of the Scriptures, or some other volume held sacred, would be thus enshrined. It has happened sometimes that tattered fragments of them have been preserved as effective relics within outer shells or shrines; and in some instances, long after the books themselves have disappeared, specimens of these old bindings have remained to us beautiful in their decay;—but we are getting far beyond the Inchrule. [30]

Your affluent omnivorous collector, who has more of that kind of business on hand than he can perform for himself, naturally brings about him a train of satellites, who make it their business to minister to his importunate cravings. With them the phraseology of the initiated degenerates into a hard business sort of slang. Whatever slight remnant of respect towards literature as a vehicle of knowledge may linger in the conversation of their employers, has never belonged to theirs. They are dealers who have just two things to look to—the price of their merchandise, and the peculiar propensities of the unfortunates who employ them. Not that they are destitute of all sympathy with the malady which they feed. The caterer generally gets infected in a superficial cutaneous sort of way. He has often a collection himself, which he eyes complacently of an evening as he smokes his pipe over his brandy-and-water, but to which he is not so distractedly devoted but that a pecuniary consideration will tempt him to dismember it. It generally consists, indeed, of blunders or false speculations—books which have been obtained in a mistaken reliance on their suiting the craving of some wealthy collector. Caterers unable to comprehend the subtle influences at work in the mind of the book-hunter, often make miscalculations in this way. Fitzpatrick Smart punished them so terribly, that they at last abandoned him in despair to his own devices. [31]

Several men of this class were under the authority of the Inchrule, and their communings were instructive. "Thorpe's catalogue just arrived, sir—several highly important announcements," says a portly person with a fat volume under his arm, hustling forward with an air of assured consequence. There is now to be a deep and solemn consultation, as when two ambassadors are going over a heavy protocol from a third. It happened to me to see one of these myrmidons returning from a bootless errand of inspection to a reputed collection; he was hot and indignant "A *collection*," he sputtered forth—"that a *collection*!—mere rubbish, sir—irredeemable trash. What do you think, sir?—a set of the common quarto edition of the Delphini classics, copies of Newton's works and Bacon's works, Gibbon's Decline and Fall, and so forth—nothing better, I declare to you: and to call *that* a collection!" Whereas, had it contained The Pardoner and the [32]

Frere, Sir Clyomon and Clamydes, A Knacke to knowe a Knave, Banke's Bay Horse in a Trance, or the works of those eminent dramatists, Nabbes, May, Glapthorne, or Chettle, then would the collection have been worthy of distinguished notice. On another occasion, the conversation turning on a name of some repute, the remark is ventured, that he is "said to know something about books," which brings forth the fatal answer—"*He* know about books! Nothing—nothing at all, I assure you; unless, perhaps, about their insides."

The next slide of the lantern is to represent a quite peculiar and abnormal case. It introduces a strangely fragile, unsubstantial, and puerile figure, wherein, however, resided one of the most potent and original spirits that ever frequented a tenement of clay. He shall be called, on account of associations that may or may not be found out, Thomas Papaverius. But how to make palpable to the ordinary human being one so signally divested of all the material and common [33] characteristics of his race, yet so nobly endowed with its rarer and loftier attributes, almost paralyses the pen at the very beginning.

In what mood and shape shall he be brought forward? Shall it be as first we met at the table of Lucullus, whereto he was seduced by the false pretence that he would there meet with one who entertained novel and anarchical opinions regarding the Golden Ass of Apuleius? No one speaks of waiting dinner for him. He will come and depart at his own sweet will, neither burdened with punctualities nor burdening others by exacting them. The festivities of the afternoon are far on when a commotion is heard in the hall as if some dog or other stray animal had forced its way in. The instinct of a friendly guest tells him of the arrival—he opens the door, and fetches in the little stranger. What can it be? a street-boy of some sort? His costume, in fact, is a boy's duffle great-coat, very threadbare, with a hole in it, and buttoned tight to the chin, where it meets the fragments of a parti-coloured belcher handkerchief; on his feet are list-shoes, covered with snow, for it is a stormy winter night; and the trousers—some one suggests that they are inner linen garments blackened with writing-ink, but that Papaverius never would have been at the trouble so to disguise them. What can be the theory of such a costume? The simplest thing in the world— [34] it consisted of the fragments of apparel nearest at hand. Had chance thrown to him a court single-breasted coat, with a bishop's apron, a kilt, and top-boots, in these he would have made his entry.

The first impression that a boy has appeared vanishes instantly. Though in one of the sweetest and most genial of his essays he shows how every man retains so much in him of the child he originally was—and he himself retained a great deal of that primitive simplicity—it was buried within the depths of his heart—not visible externally. On the contrary, on one occasion when he corrected an erroneous reference to an event as being a century old, by saying that he recollected its occurrence, one felt almost a surprise at the necessary limitation in his age, so old did he appear, with his arched brow loaded with thought, and the countless little wrinkles which engrained his skin, gathering thickly round the curiously expressive and subtle lips. These lips are speedily opened by some casual remark, and presently the flood of talk passes forth from them, free, clear, and continuous—never rising into declamation—never losing a certain mellow earnestness, and all consisting of sentences as exquisitely jointed together as if they were destined to challenge the criticism of the remotest posterity. Still the hours stride over each other, and still flows on the stream of gentle rhetoric, as if it were *labitur et labetur in omne* [35] *volubilis ævum*. It is now far in to the night, and slight hints and suggestions are propagated about separation and home-going. The topic starts new ideas on the progress of civilisation, the effect of habit on men in all ages, and the power of the domestic affections. Descending from generals to the special, he could testify to the inconvenience of late hours; for, was it not the other night that, coming to what was, or what he believed to be, his own door, he knocked, and knocked, but the old woman within either couldn't or wouldn't hear him, so he scrambled over a wall, and, having taken his repose in a furrow, was able to testify to the extreme unpleasantness of such a couch. The predial groove might indeed nourish kindly the infant seeds and shoots of the peculiar vegetable to which it was appropriated, but was not a comfortable place of repose for adult man.

Shall I try another sketch of him, when, travel-stained and foot-sore, he glided in on us one night like a shadow, the child by the fire gazing on him with round eyes of astonishment, and suggesting that he should get a penny and go home—a proposal which he subjected to some philosophical criticism very far wide of its practical tenor. How far he had wandered since he had last refreshed himself, or even whether he had eaten food that day, were matters on which there was no getting articulate utterance from him. Though his costume was muddy, however, and his [36] communications about the material wants of life very hazy, the ideas which he had stored up during his wandering poured themselves forth as clear and sparkling, both in logic and language, as the purest fountain that springs from a Highland rock.

How that wearied, worn, little body was to be refreshed was a difficult problem: soft food disagreed with him—the hard he could not eat. Suggestions pointed at length to the solution of that vegetable unguent to which he had given a sort of lustre, and it might be supposed that there were some fifty cases of acute toothache to be treated in the house that night. How many drops? Drops! nonsense. If the wine-glasses of the establishment were not beyond the ordinary normal size, there was no risk—and so the weary is at rest for a time.

At early morn a triumphant cry of *Eureka*! calls me to his place of rest. With his unfailing instinct he has got at the books, and lugged a considerable heap of them around him. That one which specially claims his attention—my best bound quarto—is spread upon a piece of bedroom furniture readily at hand, and of sufficient height to let him pore over it as he lies recumbent on

the floor, with only one article of attire to separate him from the condition in which Archimedes, according to the popular story, shouted the same triumphant cry. He had discovered a very [37] remarkable anachronism in the commonly received histories of a very important period. As he expounded it, turning up his unearthly face from the book with an almost painful expression of grave eagerness, it occurred to me that I had seen something like the scene in Dutch paintings of the temptation of St Anthony.

Suppose the scene changed to a pleasant country-house, where the enlivening talk has make a guest forget

"The lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,"

that lie between him and his place of rest. He must be instructed in his course, but the instruction reveals more difficulties than it removes, and there is much doubt and discussion, which Papaverius at once clears up as effectually as he had ever dispersed a cloud of logical sophisms; and this time the feat is performed by a stroke of the thoroughly practical, which looks like inspiration—he will accompany the forlorn traveller, and lead him through the difficulties of the way—for have not midnight wanderings and musings made him familiar with all its intricacies? Roofed by a huge wideawake, which makes his tiny figure look like the stalk of some great fungus, with a lantern of more than common dimensions in his hand, away he goes down the wooded path, up the steep bank, along the brawling stream, and across the waterfall—and ever as he goes there comes from him a continued stream of talk concerning the philosophy of [38] Immanuel Kant, and other kindred matters. Surely if we two were seen by any human eyes, it must have been supposed that some gnome, or troll, or kelpie was luring the listener to his doom. The worst of such affairs as this was the consciousness that, when left, the old man would continue walking on until, weariness overcoming him, he would take his rest, wherever that happened, like some poor mendicant. He used to denounce, with his most fervent eloquence, that barbarous and brutal provision of the law of England which rendered sleeping in the open air an act of vagrancy, and so punishable, if the sleeper could not give a satisfactory account of himself —a thing which Papaverius never could give under any circumstances. After all, I fear this is an attempt to describe the indescribable. It was the commonest of sayings when any of his friends were mentioning to each other "his last," and creating mutual shrugs of astonishment, that, were one to attempt to tell all about him, no man would believe it, so separate would the whole be from all the normal conditions of human nature.

The difficulty becomes more inextricable in passing from specific little incidents to an estimation of the general nature of the man. The logicians lucidly describe definition as being *per genus et differentiam*. You have the characteristics in which all of the *genus* partake as common ground, [39] and then you individualise your object by showing in what it differs from the others of the genus. But we are denied this standard for Papaverius, so entirely did he stand apart, divested of the ordinary characteristics of social man—of those characteristics without which the human race as a body could not get on or exist. For instance, those who knew him a little might call him a loose man in money matters; those who knew him closer laughed at the idea of coupling any notion of pecuniary or other like responsibility with his nature. You might as well attack the character of the nightingale, which may have nipped up your five-pound note and torn it to shreds to serve as nest-building material. Only immediate craving necessities could ever extract from him an acknowledgment of the common vulgar agencies by which men subsist in civilised society; and only while the necessity lasted did the acknowledgment exist. Take just one example, which will render this clearer than any generalities. He arrives very late at a friend's door, and on gaining admission—a process in which he often endured impediments—he represents, with his usual silver voice and measured rhetoric, the absolute necessity of his being then and there invested with a sum of money in the current coin of the realm—the amount limited, from the nature of his necessities, which he very freely states, to seven shillings and sixpence. Discovering, or fancying [40] he discovers, signs that his eloquence is likely to be unproductive, he is fortunately reminded that, should there be any difficulty in connection with security for the repayment of the loan, he is at that moment in possession of a document, which he is prepared to deposit with the lender—a document calculated, he cannot doubt, to remove any feeling of anxiety which the most prudent person could experience in the circumstances. After a rummage in his pockets, which develops miscellaneous and varied, but as yet by no means valuable possessions, he at last comes to the object of his search, a crumpled bit of paper, and spreads it out—a fifty-pound bank-note! The friend, who knew him well, was of opinion that, had he, on delivering over the seven shillings and sixpence, received the bank-note, he never would have heard anything more of the transaction from the other party. It was also his opinion that, before coming to a personal friend, the owner of the note had made several efforts to raise money on it among persons who might take a purely business view of such transactions; but the lateness of the hour, and something in the appearance of the thing altogether, had induced these mercenaries to forget their cunning, and decline the transaction.

He stretched till it broke the proverb that to give quickly is as good as to give twice. His giving was quick enough on the rare occasions when he had wherewithal to give, but then the act was [41] final, and could not be repeated. If he suffered in his own person from this peculiarity, he suffered still more in his sympathies, for he was full of them to all breathing creatures, and, like poor Goldy, it was agony to him to hear the beggar's cry of distress, and to hear it without the means of assuaging it, though in a departed fifty pounds there were doubtless the elements for appeasing many a street wail. All sums of money were measured by him through the common

standard of immediate use; and with more solemn pomp of diction than he applied to the bank-note, might he inform you that, with the gentleman opposite, to whom he had hitherto been entirely a stranger, but who happened to be nearest to him at the time when the exigency occurred to him, he had just succeeded in negotiating a loan of "twopence." He was and is a great authority in political economy. I have known great anatomists and physiologists as careless of their health as he was of his purse, whence I have inferred that something more than a knowledge of the abstract truth of political economy is necessary to keep some men from pecuniary imprudence, and that something more than a knowledge of the received principles of physiology is necessary to bring others into a course of perfect sobriety and general obedience to the laws of health. Further, Papaverius had an extraordinary insight into practical human life; not [42] merely in the abstract, but in the concrete; not merely as a philosopher of human nature, but as one who saw into those who passed him in the walk of life with the kind of intuition attributed to expert detectives—a faculty that is known to have belonged to more than one dreamer, and is one of the mysteries in the nature of J.J. Rousseau; and, by the way, like Rousseau's, his handwriting was clear, angular, and unimpassioned, and not less uniform and legible than printing—as if the medium of conveying so noble a thing as thought ought to be carefully, symmetrically, and decorously constructed, let all other material things be as neglectfully and scornfully dealt with as may be.

This is a long proemium to the description of his characteristics as a book-hunter—but these can be briefly told. Not for him were the common enjoyments and excitements of the pursuit. He cared not to add volume unto volume, and heap up the relics of the printing-press. All the external niceties about pet editions, peculiarities of binding or of printing, rarity itself, were no more to him than to the Arab or the Hottentot. His pursuit, indeed, was like that of the savage who seeks but to appease the hunger of the moment. If he catch a prey just sufficient for his desires, it is well; yet he will not hesitate to bring down the elk or the buffalo, and, satiating himself with the choicer delicacies, abandon the bulk of the carcass to the wolves or the vultures. [43] So of Papaverius. If his intellectual appetite were craving after some passage in the [OE]dipus, or in the Medeia, or in Plato's Republic, he would be quite contented with the most tattered and valueless fragment of the volume, if it contained what he wanted; but, on the other hand, he would not hesitate to seize upon your tall copy in russia gilt and tooled. Nor would the exemption of an *editio princeps* from everyday sordid work restrain his sacrilegious hands. If it should contain the thing he desires to see, what is to hinder him from wrenching out the twentieth volume of your Encyclopédie Méthodique, or Ersch und Gruber, leaving a vacancy like an extracted front tooth, and carrying it off to his den of Cacus? If you should mention the matter to any vulgar-mannered acquaintance given to the unhallowed practice of jeering, he would probably touch his nose with his extended palm and say, "Don't you wish you may get it?" True, the world at large has gained a brilliant essay on Euripides or Plato—but what is that to the rightful owner of the lost sheep?

The learned world may very fairly be divided into those who return the books borrowed by them, and those who do not. Papaverius belonged decidedly to the latter order. A friend addicted to the marvellous boasts that, under the pressure of a call by a public library to replace a mutilated book with a new copy, which would have cost £30, he recovered a volume from Papaverius, [44] through the agency of a person specially bribed and authorised to take any necessary measures, insolence and violence excepted—but the power of extraction that must have been employed in such a process excites very painful reflections. Some legend, too, there is of a book creditor having forced his way into the Cacus den, and there seen a sort of rubble-work inner wall of volumes, with their edges outwards, while others, bound and unbound, the plebeian sheepskin and the aristocratic russian, were squeezed into certain tubs drawn from the washing establishment of a confiding landlady. In other instances the book has been recognised at large, greatly enhanced in value by a profuse edging of manuscript notes from a gifted pen—a phenomenon calculated to bring into practical use the speculations of the civilians about pictures painted on other people's panels.[27] What became of all his waifs and strays, it might be well not to inquire too curiously. If he ran short of legitimate *tabula rasa* to write on, do you think he would hesitate to tear out the most convenient leaves of any broad-margined book, whether belonging to himself or another? Nay, it is said he once gave in copy written on the edges of a tall [45] octavo Somnium Scipionis; and as he did not obliterate the original matter, the printer was rather puzzled, and made a funny jumble between the letterpress Latin and the manuscript English. All these things were the types of an intellectual vitality which despised and thrust aside all that was gross or material in that wherewith it came in contact. Surely never did the austerities of monk or anchorite so entirely cast all these away as his peculiar nature removed them from him. It may be questioned if he ever knew what it was "to eat a good dinner," or could even comprehend the nature of such a felicity. Yet in all the sensuous nerves which connect as it were the body with the ideal, he was painfully susceptible. Hence a false quantity or a wrong note in music was agony to him; and it is remembered with what ludicrous solemnity he apostrophised his unhappy fate as one over whom a cloud of the darkest despair had just been drawn—a peacock had come to live within hearing distance from him, and not only the terrific yells of the accursed biped pierced him to the soul, but the continued terror of their recurrence kept his nerves in agonising tension during the intervals of silence.

Peace be with his gentle and kindly spirit, now for some time separated from its grotesque and humble tenement of clay. It is both right and pleasant to say that the characteristics here spoken [46] of were not those of his latter days. In these he was tended by affectionate hands; and I have always thought it a wonderful instance of the power of domestic care and management that,

through the ministrations of a devoted offspring, this strange being was so cared for, that those who came in contact with him then, and then only, might have admired him as the patriarchal head of an agreeable and elegant household.

Let us now, for the sake of variety, summon up a spirit of another order—Magnus Lucullus, Esq. of Grand Priory. He is a man with a presence—tall, and a little portly, with a handsome pleasant countenance looking hospitality and kindliness towards friends, and a quiet but not easily solvable reserve towards the rest of the world. He has no literary pretensions, but you will not talk long with him without finding that he is a scholar, and a ripe and good one. He is complete and magnificent in all his belongings, only, as no man's qualities and characteristics are of perfectly uniform balance and parallel action, his library is the sphere in which his disposition for the complete and the magnificent has most profusely developed itself.

As you enter its Gothic door a sort of indistinct slightly musky perfume, like that said to frequent Oriental bazaars, hovers around. Everything is of perfect finish—the mahogany-railed gallery—
the tiny ladders—the broad-winged lecterns, with leathern cushions on the edges to keep the [47]
wood from grazing the rich bindings—the books themselves, each shelf uniform with its facings or rather backings, like well-dressed lines at a review. Their owner does not profess to indulge much in quaint monstrosities, though many a book of rarity is there. In the first place, he must have the best and most complete editions, whether common or rare; and, in the second place, they must be in perfect condition. All the classics are there—one complete set of Valpy's in good russia, and many separate copies of each, valuable for text or annotation. The copies of Bayle, Moreri, the Trevoux Dictionary, Stephens's Lexicon, Du Cange, Mabillon's Antiquities, the Benedictine historians, the Bollandists' Lives of the Saints, Grævius and Gronovius, and heavy books of that order, are in their old original morocco, without a scratch or abrasure, gilt-edged, vellum-jointed, with their backs blazing in tooled gold. Your own dingy well-thumbed Bayle or Moreri possibly cost you two or three pounds; his cost forty or fifty. Further, in these affluent shelves may be found those great costly works which cross the border of "three figures," and of which only one or two of the public libraries can boast, such as the Celebri Famiglie Italiane of Litta, Denon's Egypt, the great French work on the arts of the middle ages, and the like; and
many is the scholar who, unable to gratify his cravings elsewhere, has owed it to Lucullus that he [48]
has seen something he was in search after in one of these great books, and has been able to put it to public use.

Throughout the establishment there is an appearance of care and order, but not of restraint. Some inordinately richly-bound volumes have special grooves or niches for themselves lined with soft cloth, as if they had delicate lungs, and must be kept from catching cold. But even these are not guarded from the hand of the guest. Lucullus says his books are at the service of his friends; and, as a hint in the same direction, he recommends to your notice a few volumes from the collection of the celebrated Grollier, the most princely and liberal of collectors, on whose classic book-stamp you find the genial motto, "*Joannis Grollierii et amicorum*." Having conferred on you the freedom of his library, he will not concern himself by observing how you use it. He would as soon watch you after dinner to note whether you eschew common sherry and show an expensive partiality for that madeira at twelve pounds a-dozen, which other men would probably only place on the table when it could be well invested in company worthy of the sacrifice. Who shall penetrate the human heart, and say whether a hidden pang or gust of wrath has vibrated behind
that placid countenance, if you have been seen to drop an ink-spot on the creamy margin of the [49]
Mentelin Virgil, or to tumble that heavy Aquinas from the ladder and dislocate his joints? As all the world now knows, however, men assimilate to the conditions by which they are surrounded, and we civilise our city savages by substituting cleanness and purity for the putrescence which naturally accumulates in great cities. So, in a noble library, the visitor is enchained to reverence and courtesy by the genius of the place. You cannot toss about its treasures as you would your own rough calfs and obdurate hogskins; as soon would you be tempted to pull out your meerschaum and punk-box in a cathedral. It is hard to say, but I would fain believe that even Papaverius himself might have felt some sympathetic touch from the spotless perfection around him and the noble reliance of the owner; and that he might perhaps have restrained himself from tearing out the most petted rarities, as a wolf would tear a fat lamb from the fold.

Such, then, are some "cases" discussed in a sort of clinical lecture. It will be seen that they have differing symptoms—some mild and genial, others ferocious and dangerous. Before passing to another and the last case, I propose to say a word or two on some of the minor specialties which characterise the pursuit in its less amiable or dignified form. It is, for instance, liable to be
accompanied by an affection, known also to the agricultural world as affecting the wheat crop, [50]
and called "the smut." Fortunately this is less prevalent among us than the French, who have a name for the class of books affected by this school of collectors in the *Bibliothèque bleue*. There is a sad story connected with this peculiar frailty. A great and high-minded scholar of the seventeenth century had a savage trick played on him by some mad wags, who collected a quantity of the brutalities of which Latin literature affords an endless supply, and published them in his name. He is said not long to have survived this practical joke; and one does not wonder at his sinking before such a prospect, if he anticipated an age and a race of book-buyers among whom his great critical works are forgotten, and his name is known solely for the spurious volume, sacred to infamy, which may be found side by side with the works of the author of Trimalcion's Feast—"par nobile fratrum."

There is another failing, without a leaning to virtue's side, to which some collectors have been, by reputation at least, addicted—a propensity to obtain articles without value given for them—a

tendency to be larcenish. It is the culmination, indeed, of a sort of lax morality apt to grow out of the habits and traditions of the class. Your true collector—not the man who follows the occupation as a mere expensive taste, and does not cater for himself—considers himself a finder or discoverer rather than a purchaser. He is an industrious prowler in unlikely regions, and is [51] entitled to some reward for his diligence and his skill. Moreover, it is the essence of that very skill to find value in those things which, in the eye of the ordinary possessor, are really worthless. From estimating them at little value, and paying little for them, the steps are rather too short to estimating them at nothing, and paying nothing for them. What matters it, a few dirty black-letter leaves picked out of that volume of miscellaneous trash—leaves which the owner never knew he had, and cannot miss—which he would not know the value of, had you told him of them? What use of putting notions into the greedy barbarian's head, as if one were to find treasures for him? And the little pasquinade is *so* curious, and will fill a gap in that fine collection so nicely! The notions of the collector about such spoil are indeed the converse of those which Cassio professed to hold about his good name, for the scrap furtively removed is supposed in no way to impoverish the loser, while it makes the recipient rich indeed.

Those habits of the prowler which may gradually lead a mind not strengthened by strong principle into this downward career, are hit with his usual vivacity and wonderful truth by Scott. The speaker is our delightful friend Oldenbuck of Monkbarns, the Antiquary, and what he says has just enough of confession in it to show a consciousness that the narrator has gone over [52] dangerous ground, and, if we did not see that the narrative is tinged with some exaggeration, has trodden a little beyond the limits of what is gentlemanly and just.

"'See this bundle of ballads, not one of them later than 1700, and some of them a hundred years older. I wheedled an old woman out of these, who loved them better than her psalm-book. Tobacco, sir, snuff, and the Complete Syren, were the equivalent! For that mutilated copy of the Complaynt of Scotland I sat out the drinking of two dozen bottles of strong ale with the late learned proprietor, who in gratitude bequeathed it to me by his last will. These little Elzevirs are the memoranda and trophies of many a walk by night and morning through the Cowgate, the Canongate, the Bow, St Mary's Wynd—wherever, in fine, there were to be found brokers and trokers, those miscellaneous dealers in things rare and curious. How often have I stood haggling on a halfpenny, lest, by a too ready acquiescence in the dealer's first price, he should be led to suspect the value I set upon the article!—how have I trembled lest some passing stranger should chop in between me and the prize, and regarded each poor student of divinity that stopped to turn over the books at the stall as a rival amateur or prowling bookseller in disguise!—And then, Mr Lovel, the sly satisfaction with which one pays the consideration, and pockets the article, affecting a cold indifference, while the hand is trembling with pleasure!—Then to dazzle the eyes [53] of our wealthier and emulous rivals by showing them such a treasure as this' (displaying a little black smoked book about the size of a primer)—'to enjoy their surprise and envy, shrouding meanwhile, under a veil of mysterious consciousness, our own superior knowledge and dexterity; —these, my young friend, these are the white moments of life, that repay the toil and pains and sedulous attention which our profession, above all others, so peculiarly demands!'"

There is a nice subtle meaning in the worthy man calling his weakness his "profession," but it is in complete keeping with the mellow Teniers-like tone of the whole picture. Ere we have done I shall endeavour to show that the grubber among book-stalls has, with other grubs or grubbers, his useful place in the general dispensation of the world. But his is a pursuit exposing him to moral perils, which call for peculiar efforts of self-restraint to save him from them; and the moral Scott holds forth—for a sound moral he always has—is, If you go as far as Jonathan Oldenbuck did—and I don't advise you to go so far, but hint that you should stop earlier—say to yourself, Thus far, and no farther.

So much for one of the debased symptoms which in very bad cases sometimes characterise an otherwise genial failing. There is another peculiar, and, it may be said, vicious propensity, exhibited occasionally in conjunction with the pursuit. This propensity is, like the other, [54] antagonistic in spirit to the tenth commandment, and consists in a desperate coveting of the neighbour's goods, and a satisfaction, not so much in possessing for one's self, as in dispossessing him. This spirit is said to burn with still fiercer flame in the breasts of those whose pursuit would externally seem to be the most innocent in the world, and the least excitive of the bad passions—namely, among flower-fanciers. From some mysterious cause, it has been known to develop itself most flagrantly among tulip-collectors, insomuch that there are legends of Dutch devotees of this pursuit who have paid their thousands of dollars for a duplicate tuber, that they might have the satisfaction of crushing it under the heel.[28] This line of practice is not entirely alien to the book-hunter. Peignot tells us that it is of rare occurrence among his countrymen, and [55] yet, as we have seen, he thought it necessary to correct the technical term applied to this kind of practitioner, by calling him a Bibliothapte when he conceals books—a Bibliolyte when he destroys them. Dibdin warmed his convivial guests at a comfortable fire, fed by the woodcuts from which had been printed the impression of the Bibliographical Decameron. It was a quaint fancy, and deemed to be a pretty and appropriate form of hospitality, while it effectually assured the subscribers to his costly volumes that the vulgar world who buy cheap books was definitively cut off from participating in their privileges.

Let us, however, summon a more potent spirit of this order. He is a different being altogether from those gentle shadows who have flitted past us already. He was known in the body by many hard names, such as the Vampire, the Dragon, &c. He was an Irish absentee, or, more accurately, a refugee, since he had made himself so odious on his ample estate that he could not live there.

How on earth he should have set about collecting books is one of the inscrutable mysteries which ever surround the diagnosis of this peculiar malady. Setting aside his using his books by reading them as out of the question, he yet was never known to indulge in that fondling and complacent examination of their exterior and general condition, which, to Inchrule and others of his class, seemed to afford the highest gratification that, as sojourners through this vale of tears, it was [56] their lot to enjoy. Nor did he luxuriate in the collective pride—like that of David when he numbered his people—of beholding how his volumes increased in multitude, and ranged with one another, like well-sized and properly dressed troops, along an ample area of book-shelves. His collection—if it deserved the name—was piled in great heaps in garrets, cellars, and warerooms, like unsorted goods. They were accumulated, in fact, not so much that the owner might have them, as that other people might not. If there were a division of the order into positive, or those who desire to make collections—and negative, or those who desire to prevent them being made, his case would properly belong to the latter. Imagine the consternation created in a small circle of collectors by a sudden alighting among them of a *helluo librorum* with such propensities, armed with illimitable means, enabling him to desolate the land like some fiery dragon! What became of the chaotic mass of literature he had brought together no one knew. It was supposed to be congenial to his nature to have made a great bonfire of it before he left the world; but a little consideration showed such a feat to be impossible, for books may be burnt in detail by extraneous assistance, but it is a curious fact that, combustible as paper is supposed to be, books won't burn. If you doubt this, pitch that folio Swammerdam or Puffendorf into a good rousing fire, [57] and mark the result.

No—it is probable that, stored away in some forgotten repositories, these miscellaneous relics still remain; and should they be brought forth, some excitement might be created; for, ignorant as the monster was, he had an instinct for knowing what other people wanted, and was thus enabled to snatch rare and curious volumes from the grasp of systematic collectors. It was his great glory to get hold of a unique book and shut it up. There were known to be just two copies of a spare quarto called Rout upon Rout, or the Rabblers Rabbled, by Felix Nixon, Gent. He possessed one copy; the other, by indomitable perseverance, he also got hold of, and then his heart was glad within him; and he felt it glow with well-merited pride when an accomplished scholar, desiring to complete an epoch in literary history on which that book threw some light, besought the owner to allow him a sight of it, were it but for a few minutes, and the request was refused. "I might as well ask him," said the animal, who was rather proud of his firmness than ashamed of his churlishness, "to make me a present of his brains and reputation."

It was among his pleasant ways to attend book-sales, there to watch the biddings of persons on whose judgment he relied, and cut in as the contest was becoming critical. This practice soon betrayed to those he had so provoked the chinks in the monster's armour. He was assailable and [58] punishable at last, then, this potent tyrant—but the attack must be made warily and cautiously. Accordingly, impartial bystanders, ignorant of the plot, began to observe that he was degenerating by degrees in the rank of his purchases, and at last becoming utterly reckless, buying, at the prices of the sublimest rarities, common works of ordinary literature to be found in every book-shop. Such was the result of judiciously drawing him on, by biddings for valueless books, on the part of those whom he had outbid in the objects of their desire. Auctioneers were surprised at the gradual change coming over the book-market, and a few fortunate people obtained considerable prices for articles they were told to expect nothing for. But this farce, of course, did not last long; and whether or not he found out that he had been beaten at his own weapons, the devouring monster disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. [59]

Reminiscences.

uch incidents bring vividly before the eye the scenes in which they took place long long ago. If any one in his early youth has experienced some slight symptoms of the malady under discussion, which his constitution, through a tough struggle with the world, and a busy training in after life, has been enabled to throw off, he will yet look back with fond associations to the scenes of his dangerous indulgence. The auction-room is often the centre of fatal attraction towards it, just as the billiard-room and the *rouge-et-noir* table are to excesses of another kind. There is that august tribunal over which at one time reigned Scott's genial friend Ballantyne, succeeded by the sententious Tait, himself a man of taste and a collector, and since presided over by the great Nisbet, whose hand has dropped the ensign of office even before the present lot has an opportunity of obtaining from it the crowning honour. I bow with deferential awe to the august tribunal before which so vast a mass of literature has changed hands, and where the future destinies of so many thousands—or, shall it be rather said, millions—of volumes have been decided, each carrying with it its own little train of suspense and triumph.

More congenial, however, in my recollection, is that remote and dingy hall where rough Carfrae, [60] like Thor, flourished his thundering hammer. There it was that one first marked, with a sort of sympathetic awe, the strange and varied influence of their peculiar maladies on the book-hunters of the last generation. There it was that one first handled those pretty little pets, the Elzevir classics, a sort of literary bantams, which are still dear to memory, and awaken old associations by their dwarfish ribbed backs like those of ponderous folios, and their exquisite, but now, alas! too minute type. The eyesight that could formerly peruse them with ease has suffered decay, but

they remain unchanged; and in this they are unlike to many other objects of early interest. Children, flowers, animals, scenery even, all have undergone mutation, but no perceptible shade of change has passed over these little reminders of old times.

There it was that one first could comprehend how a tattered dirty fragment of a book once common might be worth a deal more than its weight in gold. There it was too, that, seduced by bad example, the present respected pastor of Ardsnischen purchased that beautiful Greek New Testament, by Jansen of Amsterdam, which he loved so, in the freshness of its acquisition, that he took it with him to church, and, turning up the text, handed it to a venerable woman beside him, after the fashion of an absorbed and absent student who was apt to forget whether he was [61] reading Greek or English. The presiding genius of the place, with his strange accent, odd sayings, and angular motions, accompanied by good-natured grunts of grotesque wrath, became a sort of household figure. The dorsal breadth of pronunciation with which he would expose Mr Ivory's Erskine, used to produce a titter which he was always at a loss to understand. Though not the fashionable mart where all the thorough libraries in perfect condition went to be hammered off—though it was rather a place where miscellaneous collections were sold, and therefore bargains might be expected by those who knew what they were about—yet sometimes extraordinary and valuable collections of rare books came under his hammer, and created an access of more than common excitement among the denizens of the place. On one of these occasions a succession of valuable fragments of early English poetry brought prices so high and far beyond those of ordinary expensive books in the finest condition, that it seemed as if their imperfections were their merit; and the auctioneer, momentarily carried off with this feeling, when the high prices began to sink a little, remonstrated thus, "Going so low as thirty shillings, gentlemen,—this curious book—so low as thirty shillings—and *quite imperfect*!"

Those who frequented this howf, being generally elderly men, have now nearly all departed. The [62] thunderer's hammer, too, has long been silenced by the great quieter. One living memorial still exists of that scene—the genial and then youthful assistant, whose partiality for letters and literary pursuits made him often the monitor and kindly guide of the raw student, and who now, in a higher field, exercises a more important influence on the destinies of literature. I passed the spot the other day—it was not desolate and forsaken, with the moss growing on the hearthstone; on the contrary, it flared with many lights—a thronged gin-palace. When one heard the sounds that issued from the old familiar spot, the reflection not unnaturally occurred that, after all, there are worse pursuits in the world than book-hunting.

Classification.

erhaps it would be a good practical distribution of the class of persons under examination, to divide them into private prowlers and auction-hunters. There are many other modes of classifying them, but none so general. They might be classified by the different sizes of books they affect—as folios, quartos, octavos, and duodecimos—but this would be neither an expressive nor a dignified classification. In enumerating the various orders to which Fitzpatrick Smart did *not* belong, I have [63] mentioned many of the species, but a great many more might be added. Some collectors lay themselves out for vellum-printed volumes almost solely. There are such not only among very old books, but among very new; for of a certain class of modern books it frequently happens that a copy or two may be printed on vellum, to catch the class whose weakness takes that direction.

It may be cited as a signal instance of the freaks of book-collecting, that of all men in the world Junot, the hard-fighting soldier, had a vellum library—but so it was. It was sold in London for about £1400. "The crown octavos," says Dibdin, "especially of ancient classics, and a few favourite English authors, brought from four to six guineas. The first virtually solid article of any importance, or rather of the greatest importance, in the whole collection, was the matchless Didot Horace, of 1799, folio, containing the original drawings from which the exquisite copperplate vignettes were executed. This was purchased by the gallant Mr George Hibbert for £140. Nor was it in any respect an extravagant or even dear purchase." It now worthily adorns the library of Norton Hall.

Some collectors may be styled Rubricists, being influenced by a sacred rage for books having the contents and marginal references printed in red ink. Some "go at" flowered capitals, others at broad margins. These have all a certain amount of magnificence in their tastes; but there are [64] others again whose priceless collections are like the stock-in-trade of a wholesale ballad-singer, consisting of chap-books, as they are termed—the articles dealt in by pedlars and semi-mendicants for the past century or two. Some affect collections relating to the drama, and lay great store by heaps of play-bills arranged in volumes, and bound, perhaps, in costly russia. Of a more dignified grade are perhaps those who have lent themselves to the collection of the theses on which aspirants after university honours held their disputations or impugnments. Sometimes out of a great mass of rubbish of this kind the youthful production of some man who has afterwards become great turns up. Of these theses and similar tracts a German, Count Dietrich, collected some hundred and forty thousand, which are now in this country.

Those collectors whose affections are invested in the devices or trade emblems of special favourites among the old printers must not be passed without a word of recognition.

Men who have had the opportunity of rummaging among old libraries in their boyhood are the most likely to cultivate pets of this kind. There is a rich variety of choice in the luxuriantly floral Gothic, the cold serene classic, and that prolific style combining both, which a popular writer on the Æsthetics of Art has stigmatised by the term "sensual," ordering all his votaries to abjure it [65] accordingly. To intellects not far enough advanced to acknowledge the influence of such terms, or to comprehend their application to what we should or should not like and admire, there is a fortunate element even in their deficiencies. They can admire the devices of the old printers from association with the boyish days when they were first noticed, from an absolute liking for their fantastic fancies, and possibly from an observation in some of them of the indications of the gradual development of artistic purity and beauty. In many of them in which the child has seen only an attractive little picture, the man has afterwards found a touch of poetic or religious thought.

There is the hand pouring oil into a lamp of pure Etruscan shape, symbolical of the nutriment supplied to the intellectual flame. In another, the gardener carefully plants the seedlings which are to bear the fruit of knowledge to the coming generations; in another, the sun rising bright over the eastern sea signifies the dawn of the restoration of classical learning to the European nations.

Other interpretations of the kind, called quaint conceits, can be read from these printers' devices. There is Gesner's Bibliotheca swarming with frogs and tadpoles like a quagmire in honour of its printer, a German Frog, latinised Christopherus Froshoverus. The *Quæ Extant* of Varro, printed [66] at Dort, are adorned with many lively cuts of bears and their good-humoured cubs, because the printer's name is Joannis Berewout. So the Aulus Gellius, printed by Gryphius of Lyons, more than a hundred years earlier, begins and ends with formidable effigies of griffins. The device of Michael and Phillip Lenoir is a jet-black shield, with an Ethiopian for crest, and Ethiopians for supporters; and Apiarius has a neat little cut representing a bear robbing a bee's nest in a hollow tree. Most instructive of them all, Ascensius has bequeathed to posterity the lively and accurate representation, down to every nail and screw, of the press in which the great works of the sixteenth century were printed, with the brawny pressman pulling his proof.

Collectors there have been, not unimportant for number and zeal, whose mission it is to purchase books marked by peculiar mistakes or errors of the press. The celebrated Elzevir Cæsar of 1635 is known by this, that the number of the 149th page is misprinted 153. All that want this peculiar distinction are counterfeits. The little volume being, as Brunet says, "une des plus jolies et plus rares de la collection des Elsevier," gave a temptation to fraudulent imitators, who, as if by a providential arrangement for their detection, lapsed into accuracy at the critical figure. How common errors are in editions of the classics, is attested by the one or two editions which claim a [67] sort of canonisation as immaculate—as, for instance, the Virgil of Didot, and the Horace of Foulis. A collector, with a taste for the inaccurate, might easily satiate it in the editions so attractive in their deceptive beauty of the great Birmingham printer Baskerville.

The mere printers' blunders that have been committed upon editions of the Bible are reverenced in literary history; and one edition—the Vulgate issued under the authority of Sixtus V.—achieved immense value from its multitude of errors. The well-known story of the German printer's wife, who surreptitiously altered the passage importing that her husband should be her lord (Herr) so as to make him be her fool (Narr), needs confirmation. If such a misprint were found, it might quite naturally be attributed to carelessness. Valarian Flavigny, who had many controversies on his hand, brought on the most terrible of them all with Abraham Ecchellensis by a mere dropped letter. In the rebuke about the mote in thy brother's eye and the beam in thine own, the first letter in the Latin for eye was carelessly dropped out, and left a word which may be found occasionally in Martial's Epigrams, but not in books of purer Latin and purer ideas.[29]

Questions as to typographical blunders in editions of the classics are mixed up with larger critical [68] inquiries into the purity of the ascertained text, and thus run in veins through the mighty strata of philological and critical controversy which, from the days of Poggio downwards, have continued to form that voluminous mass of learning which the outer world contemplates with silent awe.

To some extent the same spirit of critical inquiry has penetrated into our own language. What we have of it clusters almost exclusively around the mighty name of Shakespeare. Shakespearian criticism is a branch of knowledge by itself. To record its triumphs—from that greatest one by [69] which the senseless "Table of Greenfield," which interrupted the touching close of Falstaff's days, was replaced by "'a babbled of green fields"—would make a large book of itself. He who would undertake it, in a perfectly candid and impartial spirit, would give us, varied no doubt with much erudition and acuteness, a curious record of blundering ignorance and presumptuous conceit, the one so intermingling with the other that it would be often difficult to distinguish them.[30]

The quantity of typographical errors exposed in those pages, where they are least to be expected, [70] and are least excusable, opens up some curious considerations. It may surely be believed that, between the compositors who put the types together and the correctors of the press, the printing of the Bible has generally been executed with more than average care. Yet the editions of the sacred book have been the great mine of discovered printers' blunders. The inference from this, however, is not that blunders abound less in other literature, but that they are not worth finding there. The issuing of the true reading of the Scripture is of such momentous consequence, that a mistake is sure of exposure, like those minute incidents of evidence which come forth when a murder has been committed, but would never have left their privacy for the detection of a petty

fraud.

The value to literature of a pure Shakespearian text, has inspired the zeal of the detectives who [71]
work on this ground. Some casual detections have occurred in minor literature,—as, for instance, when Akenside's description of the Pantheon, which had been printed as "serenely great," was restored to "severely great." The reason, however, why such detections are not common in common books, is the rather humiliating one that they are not worth making. The specific weight of individual words is in them of so little influence, that one does as well as another. Instances could indeed be pointed out, where an incidental blunder has much improved a sentence, giving it the point which its author failed to achieve—as a scratch or an accidental splash of the brush sometimes supplies the painter with the ray or the cloud which the cunning of his hand cannot accomplish. Poetry in this way sometimes endures the most alarming oscillations without being in any way damaged, but, on the contrary, sometimes rather improved. I might refer to a signal instance of this, where, by some mysterious accident at press, the lines of a poem written in quatrains got their order inverted, so that the second and fourth of each quatrain changed places. This transposition was pronounced to operate a decided improvement on the spirit and originality of the piece,—an opinion in which, unfortunately, the author did not concur; nor could he appreciate the compliment of a critic, who remarked that the experiment tested the soundness [72]
of the lines, which could find their feet whatever way they were thrown about.[31]

There have been, no doubt, cruel instances of printers' blunders in our own days, like the fate of the youthful poetess in the Fudge family:—

> "When I talked of the dewdrops on freshly-blown roses,
> The nasty things printed it—freshly-blown noses."

Suchlike was the fatality which suddenly dried up the tears of those who read a certain pathetic ode, in which the desolate widow was printed as "dissolute;" and the accident which destroyed a poetic reputation by making the "pale martyr in his sheet of fire" come forward with "his shirt on fire." So also a certain printer, whose solemn duty it was to have announced to the world that "intoxication is folly," whether actuated by simplicity of soul or by malignity, was unable to resist the faint amendment which announced the more genial doctrine that "intoxication is jolly."[32] [73]

A solid scholar there was, who, had he been called to his account at a certain advanced period of his career, might have challenged all the world to say that he had ever used a false quantity, or committed an anomaly in syntax, or misspelt a foreign name, or blundered in a quotation from a Greek or Latin classic—to misquote an English author is a far lighter crime, but even to this he could have pleaded not guilty. He never made a mistake in a date, or left out a word in copying the title-page of a volume; nor did he ever, in affording an intelligent analysis of its contents, mistake the number of pages devoted to one head. As to the higher literary virtues, too, his sentences were all carefully balanced in a pair of logical and rhetorical scales of the most sensitive kind; and he never perpetrated the atrocity of ending a sentence with a monosyllable, or using the same word twice within the same five lines, choosing always some judicious method of circumlocution to obviate reiteration. Poor man! in the pride of his unspotted purity, he little knew what a humiliation fate had prepared for him. It happened to him to have to state how Theodore Beza, or some contemporary of his, went to sea in a Candian vessel. This statement, at [74]
the last moment, when the sheet was going through the press, caught the eye of an intelligent and judicious corrector, more conversant with shipping-lists than with the literature of the sixteenth century, who saw clearly what had been meant, and took upon himself, like a man who hated all pottering nonsense, to make the necessary correction without consulting the author. The consequence was, that people read with some surprise, under the authority of the paragon of accuracy, that Theodore Beza had gone to sea in a *Canadian* vessel. The victim of this calamity had undergone minor literary trials, which he had borne with philosophical equanimity; as, for instance, when inconsiderate people, destitute of the organ of veneration, thoughtlessly asked him about the last new popular work, as if it were something that he had read or even heard of, and actually went so far in their contumelious disrespect as to speak to him about the productions of a certain Charles Dickens. The "Canadian vessel," however, was a more serious disaster, and was treated accordingly. A charitable friend broke his calamity to the author at a judicious moment, to prevent him from discovering it himself at an unsuitable time, with results the full extent of which no one could foresee. It was an affair of much anxiety among his friends, who made frequent inquiries as to how he bore himself in his affliction, and what continued to be the condition of his health, and especially of his spirits. And although he was a confirmed book- [75]
hunter, and not unconscious of the merits of the peculiar class of books now under consideration, it may be feared that it was no consolation to him to reflect that, some century or so hence, his books and himself would be known only by the curious blunder which made one of them worth the notice of the book-fanciers. Consequences from printers' blunders of a still more tragic character even than this, have been preserved—as for instance, the fate of Guidi the Italian poet, whose end is said to have been hastened by the misprints in his poetical paraphrase of the Homilies of his patron, Clement XI.

An odd accident occurred to a well-known book lately published, called Men of the Time. It sometimes happens in a printing-office that some of the types, perhaps a printed line or two, fall out of "the forme." Those in whose hands the accident occurs generally try to put things to rights as well as they can, and may be very successful in restoring appearances with the most deplorable results to the sense. It happened thus in the instance referred to. A few lines dropping out of the Life of Robert Owen, the parallelogram Communist, were hustled, as the nearest place

of refuge, into the biography of his closest alphabetical neighbour—"Oxford, Bishop of." The consequence is that the article begins as follows:— [76]

"Oxford, the Right Reverend Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of, was born in 1805. A more kind-hearted and truly benevolent man does not exist. A sceptic, as regards religious revelation, he is nevertheless an out-and-out believer in spirit movements."

Whenever this blunder was discovered, the leaf was cancelled; but a few copies of the book had got into circulation, which some day or other may be very valuable.

From errors of the press there is a natural transition to the class who incur the guilt of perpetrating them, and whose peculiar mental qualities impart to them their special characteristics. That mysterious body called compositors, through whose hands all literature passes, are reputed to be a placid and unimpressionable race of practical stoics, who do their work dutifully, without yielding to the intellectual influences represented by it. A clause of an Act of Parliament, with all its whereases, and be it enacteds, and hereby repealeds, creates, it is said, quite as much emotion in them as the most brilliant burst of the fashionable poet of the day. They will set you up a psalm or a blasphemous ditty with the same equanimity, not retaining in their minds any clear distinction between them. Your writing must be something very wonderful indeed, before they distinguish it from other "copy," except by the goodness or badness of the hand. A State paper which all the world is mad to know about, is quite safe in a printing-office; [77] and, if report speak truly, they will set up what is here set down of them, without noting that it refers to themselves. It is said that this stoic indifference is a wonderful provision for the preservation of the purity of literature, and that, were compositors to think with the author under the "stick," they might make dire havoc.

We are not to suppose, however, that they take less interest in, or are less observant of, the work of their hands than other workmen. The point of view, however, from which their observation is taken, is not exactly the same as that of their co-operator, the author whose writing they set up, nor is their notification of specialties of a kind which would always be felt by him as complimentary. The tremendous philippic of Junius Brutus against the scandalous and growing corruptions of the age, is remembered in the "chapel" solely because its fiery periods exhausted the largest font of italics possessed by the establishment. The exhaustive inquiry by a great metaphysician into the Quantification of the predicate, is solely associated with the characteristic fact that the press was stopped during the casting of an additional hundredweight of parentheses for its special use. A youthful poet I could recall, who, with a kind of exulting indignation, thought he had discovered a celebrated brother of the lyre appropriating his ewe lamb in a flagrant [78] plagiarism. There was at least one man who had the opportunity of being acquainted with the productions of his unappreciated muse—the printer. To him, accordingly, he appealed for confirmation of his suspicions, demanding if he did not see in the two productions a similarity that in some places even approached identity. The referee turned over page after page with the scrupulous attention of one whose acuteness is on trial. After due deliberation he admitted that there was a very striking similarity, only it seemed to him that the other's brevier was a shade thinner in the hair-stroke than his own, and the small caps. would go a thought more to the pound; while as to the semicolons and marks of interrogation, they looked as if they came out of a different font altogether.

It is pleasant to be remembered for something, and the present author has the assurance that these pages will be imprinted on the memory of the "chapel" by the decorated capitals and Gothic devices with which a better taste than his own has strewed them. The position, indeed, conceded to him in the book-hunting field through the influence of these becoming decorations has communicated to him something of the uneasiness of Juvenal's

> "Miserum est aliorum incubere famæ,
> Ne collapsa ruant subductis tecta columnis."

[79]

And having so disburdened himself, he rejoices in the thought that whoever compliments him again on the taste and talent displayed in the printing and adorning of this volume, will only prove that he has not read it.

Returning to compositors, and what they note and do not note, if the fresh author has happened to feel it a rather damping forecast of his reception by the public that those who have had the first and closest contact with his efforts are not in any way aroused by their remarkable originality, yet one who may have had opportunities of taking a wide view of the functions of the compositor will not wonder that, like the deaf adder, he systematically closes his ear to the voice of the charmer.

That the uninitiated reader may form some practical conception of my meaning, I propose to set down a few items from the weekly contents of a compositor's "bill-book," slightly enlarging his brief entries with the view of rendering them the more intelligible.

"1. A time job—viz., inserting, as per author's proof, 50 'hear hears' and 20 'great cheerings' in report of speech to be delivered by Alderman Noddles at the great meeting on the social system.

"2. Picking out all the 'hear hears' and 'great cheerings' from said speech, in respect it was not permitted to be delivered, the meeting having dispersed when the alderman stood up; and breaking up the same into pages, with title, 'A plan for the immediate and total extirpation of [80] intemperance by prohibiting the manufacture of bottles.'

"3. A sheet of a volume of poems, titled 'Life thoughts by a Life thinker,' beginning—

> "'Far I dipt beneath the surface, through the texture of the earth,
> Till my heart's triumphant musings dreamt the dream of that new birth,
> When the engineer's deep science through the mighty sphere shall probe,
> And the railway trains to Melbourne sweep the centre of the globe,
> And the electro-motive engine renders it no more absurd
> That a human being should be in two places like a bird.'

"Item—Introduction, explaining the difficulties in the way of the poet's success, in an age devoted to forms and superficialities, by reason of his muscular originality, impulsive grasping at the infinite, and resolute disdain of popular and conventional models; but expressing opinion that, as he turns round on the pivot of his own individual idiosyncrasy, he will come out all right.

"4. Advertisement by a disinterested draper, beginning, 'awful sacrifices,' and ending, 'early application necessary to prevent disappointment.'

"5. Two sticks of prayer for a devotional work which has had an unexpected run, and is largely distributed over the office for an expeditious issue of a new edition.

"6. Part of an accountant's report, containing 45 schemes for the ranking of the creditors on ten bankrupt estates, each of which has drawn accommodation bills on all the others. [81]

"7. Signature YY of 'A treatise on the form and material of the sickle used by the Welsh Druids in cutting the mistletoe,' being a series of quotations in Arabic, Hindoo, Greek, German, and Gaelic, cemented together by thin lines of English. This is a stock job which keeps the office going like a balance-wheel when there is nothing else specially pressing, and is rather popular, as it contains a good many ethnological and etymological tables, implying scheme-work, which the compositors who are adepts in that department contemplate with great satisfaction as they put it together."

It is surely pleasant to suppose that the compositor has acquired the faculty of passing such dizzying whirls of heterogeneous elements without absorbing them all, and that, when his day's labour is over, he may find his own special intellectual food in his Milton or his Locke. In this view, his apathy to the literary matter passing through his hands may be contemplated as among the special beneficences in the providential order of things, like the faculty of healthy vitality to throw off morbid influences; and perhaps it has still closer analogy to that professional coolness which separates the surgeon from a nervous sympathy with the sufferings of those on whom he operates—a phenomenon which, though sometimes denounced as professional callousness, is one of the most beneficent specialties in the lot of mankind. [82]

In the several phases of the book-hunter, he whose peculiar glory it is to have his books illustrated—the Grangerite, as he is technically termed—must not be omitted. "Illustrating" a volume consists in inserting in or binding up with it portraits, landscapes, and other works of art bearing a reference to its contents. This is materially different from the other forms of the pursuit, in as far as the quarry hunted down is the raw material, the finished article being a result of domestic manufacture. The Illustrator is the very Ishmaelite of collectors—his hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against him. He destroys unknown quantities of books to supply portraits or other illustrations to a single volume of his own; and as it is not always known concerning any book that he has been at work on it, many a common book-buyer has cursed him on inspecting his own last bargain, and finding that it is deficient in an interesting portrait or two. Tales there are, fitted to make the blood run cold in the veins of the most sanguine book-hunter, about the devastations committed by those who are given over to this special pursuit. It is generally understood that they received the impulse which has rendered them an important sect, from the publication of Granger's Biographical History—hence their name of Grangerites. So it has happened that this industrious and respectable compiler is contemplated with mysterious awe as a sort of literary Attila or Gengis Khan, who has spread terror and ruin around him. In truth the illustrator, whether green-eyed or not, being a monster that doth make the meat he feeds on, is apt to become excited with his work, and to go on ever widening the circle of his purveyances, and opening new avenues toward the raw material on which he works. To show how widely such a person may levy contributions, I propose to take, not a whole volume, not even a whole page, but still a specific and distinguished piece of English literature, and describe the way in which a devotee of this peculiar practice would naturally proceed in illustrating it. The piece of literature to be illustrated is as follows:— [83]

> "How doth the little busy bee
> Improve each shining hour,
> And gather honey all the day
> From every opening flower!"

The first thing to be done is to collect every engraved portrait of the author, Isaac Watts. The next, to get hold of any engravings of the house in which he was born, or houses in which he lived. Then will come all kinds of views of Southampton—of its Gothic gate, and its older than Gothic wall. Any scrap connected with the inauguration of the Watts statue must of course be scrupulously gathered. To go but a step beyond such commonplaces—there is a traditional story about the boyhood of Isaac which has been told as follows. He took precociously to rhyming: like Pope, he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came. It happened that this practice was very offensive to his father, a practical man, who, finding his admonitions useless, resolved to stop it [84]

in an effectual manner. He accordingly, after the practice of his profession—being a schoolmaster —assailed with a leathern thong, duly prepared, the cuticle of that portion of the body which has from time immemorial been devoted to such inflictions. Under torture, the divine songster abjured his propensity in the following very hopeful shape—

> "Oh, father, do some pity take,
> And I will no more verses make."

It is not likely that this simple domestic scene has been engraved either for the Divine Hymns, or the Improvement of the Mind. The illustrator will therefore require to get a picture of it for his own special use, and will add immensely to the value of his treasure, while he gives scope to the genius of a Cruikshank or a Doyle.

We are yet, it will be observed, only on the threshold. We have next to illustrate the substance of the poetry. All kinds of engravings of bees Attic and other, and of bee-hives, will be appropriate, and will be followed by portraits of Huber and other great writers on bees, and views of Mount [85] Hybla and other honey districts. Some Scripture prints illustrative of the history of Samson, who had to do with honey and bees, will be appropriate, as well as any illustrations of the fable of the Bear and the Bees, or of the Roman story of the *Sic vos non vobis*. A still more appropriate form of illustration may, however, be drawn upon by remembering that a periodical called The Bee was edited by Dr Anderson; and it is important to observe that the name was adopted in the very spirit which inspired Watts. In both instances the most respected of all winged insects was brought forward as the type of industry. Portraits, then, of Dr Anderson, and any engravings that can be connected with himself and his pursuits, will have their place in the collection. It will occur, perhaps, to the intelligent illustrator, that Dr Anderson was the grandfather of Sir James Outram, and he will thus have the satisfaction of opening his collection for all illustrations of the career of that distinguished officer. Having been aptly called the Bayard of the Indian service, the collector who has exhausted him and his services will be justified by the principles of the craft in following up the chase, and picking up any woodcuts or engravings referring to the death of the false Bourbon, or any other scene in the career of the knight without fear or reproach. Here, by a fortunate and interesting coincidence, through the Bourbons the collector gets at the swarms of [86] bees which distinguish the insignia of royalty in France. When the illustrator comes to the last line, which invites him to add to what he has already collected a representation of "every opening flower," it is easy to see that he has indeed a rich garden of delights before him.

In a classification of book-hunters, the aspirants after large-paper copies deserve special notice, were it only for the purpose of guarding against a common fallacy which confounds them with the lovers of tall copies. The difference is fundamental, large-paper copies being created by system, while tall copies are merely the creatures of accident; and Dibdin bestows due castigation in a celebrated instance in which a mere tall copy had, whether from ignorance or design, been spoken of as a large-paper copy. This high development of the desirable book is the result of an arrangement to print so many copies of a volume on paper of larger size than that of the bulk of the impression. The tall copy is the result of careful cutting by the binder, or of no cutting at all. In this primitive shape a book has separate charms for a distinct class of collectors who esteem rough edges, and are willing, for the sake of this excellence, to endure the martyrdom of consulting books in that condition.[33]

The historian of the private libraries of New York makes us acquainted with a sect well known in [87] the actually sporting world, but not heretofore familiar in the bibliological. Here is a description of the Waltonian library of the Reverend Dr Bethune. In the sunshine he is a practical angler, and —

"During the darker seasons of the year, when forbidden the actual use of his rod, our friend has occupied himself with excursions through sale catalogues, fishing out from their dingy pages whatever tends to honour his favourite author or favourite art, so that his spoils now number nearly five hundred volumes, of all sizes and dates. Pains have been taken to have not only copies of the works included in the list, but also the several editions; and when it is of a work mentioned by Walton, an edition which the good old man himself may have seen. Thus the collection has all the editions of Walton, Cotton, and Venables in existence, and, with few exceptions, all the works referred to by Walton, or which tend to illustrate his favourite rambles by the Lea or the Dove. Every scrap of Walton's writing, and every compliment paid to him, have been carefully gathered [88] and garnered up, with prints and autographs and some precious manuscripts. Nor does the department end here, but embraces most of the older and many of the modern writers on ichthyology and angling."

The Prowler and the Auction-Haunter.

hese incidental divisions are too numerous and complex for a proper classification of book-hunters, and I am inclined to go back to the idea that their most effective and comprehensive division is into the private prowler and the auction-haunter. The difference between these is something like, in the sporting world, that between the stalker and the hunter proper. Each function has its merits, and calls for its special qualities and sacrifices. The one demands placidity, patience, caution, plausibility,

and unwearied industry—such attributes as those which have been already set forth in the words of the Antiquary. The auction-room, on the other hand, calls forth courage, promptness, and the spirit of adventure. There is wild work sometimes there, and men find themselves carried off by enthusiasm and competition towards pecuniary sacrifices which at the threshold of the temple they had solemnly vowed to themselves to eschew. But such sacrifices are the tribute paid to the [89] absorbing interest of the pursuit, and are looked upon in their own peculiar circle as tending to the immortal honour of those who make them. This field of prowess has, it is said, undergone a prejudicial change in these days, the biddings being nearly all by dealers, while gentlemen-collectors are gradually moving out of the field. In old days one might have reaped for himself, by bold and emphatic biddings at a few auctions, a niche in that temple of fame, of which the presiding deity is Dr Frognal Dibdin—a name familiarly abbreviated into that of Foggy Dibdin. His descriptions of auction contests are perhaps the best and most readable portions of his tremendously overdone books.

Conspicuous beyond all others stands forth the sale of the Roxburghe library, perhaps the most eminent contest of that kind on record. There were of it some ten thousand separate "lots," as auctioneers call them, and almost every one of them was a book of rank and mark in the eyes of the collecting community, and had been, with special pains and care and anxious exertion, drawn into the vortex of that collection. Although it was created by a Duke, yet it has been rumoured that most of the books had been bargains, and that the noble collector drew largely on the spirit of patient perseverance and enlightened sagacity for which Monkbarns claims credit. The great [90] passion and pursuit of his life having been of so peculiar a character—he was almost as zealous a hunter of deer and wild swans, by the way, as of books, but this was not considered in the least peculiar—it was necessary to find some strange influencing motive for his conduct; so it has been said that it arose from his having been crossed in love in his early youth. Such crosses, in general, arise from the beloved one dying, or proving faithless and becoming the wife of another. It was, however, the peculiarity of the Duke's misfortune, that it arose out of the illustrious marriage of the sister of his elected. She was the eldest daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Though purchased by a sacrifice of regal rank, yet there would be many countervailing advantages in the position of an affluent British Duchess which might reconcile a young lady, even of so illustrious a descent, to the sacrifice, had it not happened that Lord Bute and the Princess of Wales selected her younger sister to be the wife of George III. and the Queen of Great Britain, long known as the good Queen Charlotte. Then there arose, it seems, the necessity, as a matter of state and political etiquette, that the elder sister should abandon the alliance with a British subject.

So, at all events, goes the story of the origin of the Duke's bibliomania; and it is supposed to have been in the thoughts of Sir Walter Scott, when he said of him that "youthful misfortunes, of a kind [91] against which neither wealth nor rank possess a talisman, cast an early shade of gloom over his prospects, and gave to one splendidly endowed with the means of enjoying society that degree of reserved melancholy which prefers retirement to the splendid scenes of gaiety." Dibdin, with more specific precision, after rambling over the house where the great auction sale occurred, as inquisitive people are apt to do, tells us of the solitary room occupied by the Duke, close to his library, in which he slept and died: "all his migrations," says the bibliographer, "were confined to these two rooms. When Mr Nichol showed me the very bed on which this bibliomaniacal Duke had expired, I felt—as I trust I ought to have felt on the occasion." Scott attributed to an incidental occurrence at his father's table the direction given to the great pursuit of his life. "Lord Oxford and Lord Sunderland, both famous collectors of the time, dined one day with the second Duke of Roxburghe, when their conversation happened to turn upon the *editio princeps* of Boccaccio, printed in Venice in 1474, and so rare that its very existence was doubted of." It so happened that the Duke remembered this volume having been offered to him for £100, and he believed he could still trace and secure it: he did so, and laid it before his admiring friends at a subsequent sitting. "His son, then Marquess of Bowmont, never forgot the little scene upon this [92] occasion, and used to ascribe to it the strong passion which he ever afterwards felt for rare books and editions, and which rendered him one of the most assiduous and judicious collectors that ever formed a sumptuous library."[34] And this same Boccaccio was the point of attack which formed the climax in the great contest of the Roxburghe roup, as the Duke's fellow-countrymen called it. I am not aware that any of the English bibliographers have alluded to any special cause for this volume's extreme rarity. Peignot attributes it to a sermon preached by the Italian pulpit orator Savonarola, on the 8th of February 1497, against indecorous books, in consequence of which the inhabitants of Florence made a bonfire of their Boccaccios,—an explanation which every one who pleases is at liberty to believe.[35]

The historian of the contest terms it "the Waterloo among book-battles," whereto "many a knight came far and wide from his retirement, and many an unfledged combatant left his father's castle to partake of the glory of such a contest." He also tells us that the honour of the first effective shot was due to a house in the trade—Messrs Payne and Foss—by whom "the Aldine Greek Bible was killed off the first in the contest. It produced the sum of £4, 14s. 6d. Thus measuredly, and [93] guardedly, and even fearfully, did this tremendous battle begin." The earliest brilliant affair seems to have come off when Lord Spencer bought two Caxtons for £245, a feat of which the closing scene is recorded, with a touching simplicity, in these terms:—"His Lordship put each volume under his coat, and walked home with them in all the flush of victory and consciousness of triumph." As every one does not possess a copy of the three costly volumes of which the Bibliographical Decameron consists—and, further, as many a one so fortunate as to possess them has not had patience and perseverance enough to penetrate to the middle of the third volume,

where the most readable part is to be found—a characteristic extract, describing the heat of the contest, may not be unwelcome:—

"For two-and-forty successive days—with the exception only of Sundays—were the voice and hammer of Mr Evans heard with equal efficacy in the dining-room of the late Duke, which had been appropriated to the vendition of the books; and within that same space (some thirty-five feet by twenty) were such deeds of valour performed, and such feats of book-heroism achieved, as had never been previously beheld, and of which the like will probably never be seen again. The shouts of the victors and the groans of the vanquished stunned and appalled you as you entered. The striving and press, both of idle spectators and determined bidders, was unprecedented. A [94] sprinkling of Caxtons and De Wordes marked the first day, and these were obtained at high, but, comparatively with the subsequent sums given, moderate prices. Theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, and philology chiefly marked the earlier days of this tremendous contest; and occasionally during these days, there was much stirring up of courage, and many hard and heavy blows were interchanged; and the combatants may be said to have completely wallowed themselves in the conflict. At length came poetry, Latin, Italian, and French: a steady fight yet continued to be fought; victory seemed to hang in doubtful scales—sometimes on the one, sometimes on the other side of Mr Evans, who preserved throughout (as it was his bounden duty to preserve) a uniform, impartial, and steady course; and who may be said on that occasion, if not 'to have rode the whirlwind,' at least to have 'directed the storm.'"

But the dignity and power of the historian's narrative cannot be fully appreciated until we find him in the midst of the climax of the contest—the battle, which gradually merged into a single combat, for the possession of the Venetian Boccaccio. According to the established historical practice, we have in the first place a statement of the position taken up by the respective "forces."

"At length the moment of sale arrived. Evans prefaced the putting-up of the article by an [95] appropriate oration, in which he expatiated on its extreme rarity, and concluding by informing the company of the regret, and even anguish of heart, expressed by Mr Van Praet that such a treasure was not to be found in the Imperial collection at Paris. Silence followed the address of Mr Evans. On his right hand, leaning against the wall, stood Earl Spencer; a little lower down, and standing at right angles with his Lordship, appeared the Marquess of Bland-ford. Lord Althorp stood a little backward, to the right of his father, Earl Spencer."

The first movement of the forces gives the historian an opportunity of dropping a withering sneer at an unfortunate man, so provincial in his notions as to suppose that a hundred pounds or two would be of any avail in such a contest.

"The honour of firing the first shot was due to a gentleman of Shropshire, unused to this species of warfare, and who seemed to recoil from the reverberation of the report himself had made. 'One hundred guineas,' he exclaimed. Again a pause ensued; but anon the biddings rose rapidly to five hundred guineas. Hitherto, however, it was evident that the firing was but masked and desultory. At length all random shots ceased, and the champions before named stood gallantly up to each other, resolving not to flinch from a trial of their respective strengths. *A thousand guineas* were bid by Earl Spencer—to which the Marquess added *ten*. You might have heard a pin [96] drop. All eyes were turned—all breathing wellnigh stopped—every sword was put home within its scabbard—and not a piece of steel was seen to move or to glitter except that which each of these champions brandished in his valorous hand."

But even this exciting sort of narrative will tire one when it goes on page after page, so that we must take a leap to the conclusion. "Two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds," said Lord Spencer. "The spectators were now absolutely electrified. The Marquess quietly adds his usual *ten*" and so there an end. "Mr Evans, ere his hammer fell, made a short pause—and indeed, as if by something preternatural, the ebony instrument itself seemed to be charmed or suspended in the mid air. However, at last down dropped the hammer."

Such a result naturally created excitement beyond the book-collectors' circle, for here was an actual stroke of trade in which a profit of more than two thousand per cent had been netted. It is easy to believe in Dibdin's statement of the crowds of people who imagined they were possessors of the identical Venetian Boccaccio, and the still larger number who wanted to do a stroke of business with some old volume, endowed with the same rarity and the same or greater intrinsic value. The general excitement created by the dispersal of the Roxburghe collection proved an [97] epoch in literary history, by the establishment of the Roxburghe Club, followed by a series of others, the history of which has to be told farther on.

Of the great book-sales that have been commemorated, it is curious to observe how seldom they embrace ancestral libraries accumulated in old houses from generation to generation, and how generally they mark the short-lived duration of the accumulations of some collector freshly deposited. One remarkable exception to this was in the Gordonstoun library, sold in 1816. It was begun by Sir Robert Gordon, a Morayshire laird of the time of the great civil wars of the seventeenth century. He was the author of the History of the Earldom of Sutherland, and a man of great political as well as literary account. He laid by heaps of the pamphlets, placards, and other documents of his stormy period, and thus many a valuable morsel, which had otherwise disappeared from the world, left a representative in the Gordonstoun collection. It was increased by a later Sir Robert, who had the reputation of being a wizard. He belonged to one of those terrible clubs from which Satan is entitled to take a victim annually; but when Gordon's turn came, he managed to get off with merely the loss of his shadow; and many a Morayshire peasant

has testified to having seen him riding forth on a sunny day, the shadow of his horse visible, with those of his spurs and his whip, but his body offering no impediment to the rays of the sun. He enriched the library with books on necromancy, demonology, and alchemy. [98]

The largest book-sale probably that ever was in the world, was that of Heber's collection in 1834. There are often rash estimates made of the size of libraries, but those who have stated the number of his books in six figures seem justified when one looks at the catalogue of the sale, bound up in five thick octavo volumes. For results so magnificent, Richard Heber's library had but a small beginning, according to the memoir of him in the Gentleman's Magazine, where it is said, that "having one day accidentally met with a little volume called The Vallie of Varietie, by Henry Peacham, he took it to the late Mr Bindley of the Stamp-office, the celebrated collector, and asked him if this was not a curious book. Mr Bindley, after looking at it, answered, 'Yes—not very—but rather a curious book.'" This faint morsel of encouragement was, it seems, sufficient to start him in his terrible career, and the trifle becomes important as a solemn illustration of the *obsta principiis*. His labours, and even his perils, were on a par with those of any veteran commander who has led armies and fought battles during the great part of a long life. He would set off on a journey of several hundred miles any day in search of a book not in his collection. [99] Sucking in from all around him whatever books were afloat, he of course soon exhausted the ordinary market; and to find a book obtainable which he did not already possess, was an event to be looked to with the keenest anxiety, and a chance to be seized with promptitude, courage, and decision. At last, however, he could not supply the cravings of his appetite without recourse to duplicates, and far more than duplicates. His friend Dibdin said of him, "He has now and then an ungovernable passion to possess more copies of a book than there were ever parties to a deed or stamina to a plant; and therefore I cannot call him a duplicate or a triplicate collector." He satisfied his own conscience by adopting a creed, which he enounced thus: "Why, you see, sir, no man can comfortably do without three copies of a book. One he must have for a show copy, and he will probably keep it at his country-house; another he will require for his own use and reference; and unless he is inclined to part with this, which is very inconvenient, or risk the injury of his best copy, he must needs have a third at the service of his friends."

This last necessity is the key-note to Heber's popularity: he was a liberal and kindly man, and though, like Wolsey, he was unsatisfied in getting, yet, like him, in bestowing he was most princely. Many scholars and authors obtained the raw material for their labours from his transcendent stores. These, indeed, might be said less to be personal to himself than to be a [100] feature in the literary geography of Europe. "Some years ago," says the writer in the Gentleman's Magazine, "he built a new library at his house at Hodnet, which is said to be full. His residence at Pimlico, where he died, is filled, like Magliabechi's at Florence, with books, from the top to the bottom—every chair, every table, every passage containing piles of erudition. He had another house in York Street, leading to Great James's Street, Westminster, laden from the ground-floor to the garret with curious books. He had a library in the High Street, Oxford, an immense library at Paris, another at Antwerp, another at Brussels, another at Ghent, and at other places in the Low Countries and in Germany." [101]

PART II.—HIS FUNCTIONS.

The Hobby.

Having devoted the preceding pages to the diagnosis of the book-hunter's condition, or, in other words, to the different shapes which the phenomena peculiar to it assume, I now propose to offer some account of his place in the dispensations of Providence, which will probably show that he is not altogether a mischievous or a merely useless member of the human family, but does in reality, however unconsciously to himself, minister in his own peculiar way to the service both of himself and others. This is to be a methodical discourse, and therefore to be divided and subdivided, insomuch that, taking in the first place his services to himself, this branch shall be subdivided into the advantages which are purely material and those which are properly intellectual. [102]

And, first, of material advantages. Holding it to be the inevitable doom of fallen man to inherit some frailty or failing, it would be difficult, had he a Pandora's box-ful to pick and choose among, to find one less dangerous or offensive. As the judicious physician informs the patient suffering under some cutaneous or other external torture, that the poison lay deep in his constitution—that it must have worked in some shape—and well it is that it has taken one so innocuous—so may even the book-hunter be congratulated on having taken the innate moral malady of all the race in a very gentle and rather a salubrious form. To pass over gambling, tippling, and other practices

which cannot be easily spoken of in good society, let us look to the other shapes in which man lets himself out—for instance to horse-racing, hunting, photography, shooting, fishing, cigars, dog-fancying, dog-fighting, the ring, the cockpit, phrenology, revivalism, socialism; which of these contains so small a balance of evil, counting of course that the amount of pleasure conferred is equal—for it is only on the datum that the book-hunter has as much satisfaction from his pursuit as the fox-hunter, the photographer, and so on, has in his, that a fair comparison can be struck? These pursuits, one and all, leave little or nothing that is valuable behind them, except, it may be, that some of them are conducive to health, by giving exercise to the body and a genial excitement to the mind; but every hobby gives the latter, and the former may be easily [103] obtained in some other shape. They leave little or nothing behind—even the photographer's portfolio will bring scarcely anything under the hammer after the death of him whose solace and pursuit it had been, should the positives remain visible, which may be doubted. And as to the other enumerated pursuits, some of them, as we all know, are immensely costly, all unproductive as they are.

But the book-hunter may possibly leave a little fortune behind him. His hobby, in fact, merges into an investment. This is the light in which a celebrated Quaker collector of paintings put his conduct, when it was questioned by the brethren, in virtue of that right to admonish one another concerning the errors of their ways, which makes them so chary in employing domestic servants of their own persuasion. "What had the brother paid for that bauble [a picture by Wouvermans], for instance?" "Well, £300." "Was not that then an awful wasting of his substance on vanities?" "No. He had been offered £900 for it. If any of the Friends was prepared to offer him a better investment of his money than one that could be realised at a profit of 200 per cent, he was ready to alter the existing disposal of his capital."

It is true that amateur purchasers do not, in the long-run, make a profit, though an occasional bargain may pass through their hands. It is not maintained that, in the general case, the libraries [104] of collectors would be sold for more than they cost, or even for nearly so much; but they are always worth something, which is more than can be said of the residue of other hobbies and pursuits. Nay, farther; the scholarly collector of books is not like the ordinary helpless amateur; for although, doubtless, nothing will rival the dealer's instinct for knowing the money-value of an article, though he may know nothing else about it, yet there is often a subtle depth in the collector's educated knowledge which the other cannot match, and bargains may be obtained off the counters of the most acute.

A small sprinkling of these—even the chance of them—excites him, like the angler's bites and rises, and gives its zest to his pursuit. It is the reward of his patience, his exertion, and his skill, after the manner in which Monkbarns has so well spoken; and it is certain that, in many instances, a collector's library has sold for more than it cost him.

No doubt, a man may ruin himself by purchasing costly books, as by indulgence in any other costly luxury, but the chances of calamity are comparatively small in this pursuit. A thousand pounds will go a great way in book-collecting, if the collector be true to the traditions of his pursuit, such as they are to be hereafter expounded. There has been one instance, doubtless, in the records of bibliomania, of two thousand pounds having been given for one book. But how [105] many instances far more flagrant could be found in picture-buying? Look around upon the world and see how many men are the victims of libraries, and compare them with those whom the stud, the kennel, and the preserve have brought to the Gazette. Find out, too, anywhere, if you can, the instance in which the money scattered in these forms comes back again, and brings with it a large profit, as the expenditure of the Duke of Roxburghe did when his library was sold.

But it is necessary to arrest this train of argument, lest its tenor might be misunderstood. The mercenary spirit must not be admitted to a share in the enjoyments of the book-hunter. If, after he has taken his last survey of his treasures, and spent his last hour in that quiet library, where he has ever found his chief solace against the wear and worry of the world, the book-hunter has been removed to his final place of rest, and it is then discovered that the circumstances of the family require his treasures to be dispersed,—if then the result should take the unexpected shape that his pursuit has not been so ruinously costly after all—nay, that his expenditure has actually fructified—it is well. But if the book-hunter allow money-making—even for those he is to leave behind—to be combined with his pursuit, it loses its fresh relish, its exhilarating influence, and [106] becomes the source of wretched cares and paltry anxieties. Where money is the object, let a man speculate or become a miser—a very enviable condition to him who has the saving grace to achieve it, if we hold with Byron that the accumulation of money is the only passion that never cloys.

Let not the collector, therefore, ever, unless in some urgent and necessary circumstances, part with any of his treasures. Let him not even have recourse to that practice called barter, which political philosophers tell us is the universal resource of mankind preparatory to the invention of money as a circulating medium and means of exchange. Let him confine all his transactions in the market to purchasing only. No good ever comes of gentlemen amateurs buying and selling. They will either be systematic losers, or they will acquire shabby, questionable habits, from which the professional dealers—on whom, perhaps, they look down—are exempt. There are two trades renowned for the quackery and the imposition with which they are habitually stained—the trade in horses and the trade in old pictures; and these have, I verily believe, earned their evil reputation chiefly from this, that they are trades in which gentlemen of independent fortune and considerable position are in the habit of embarking.

The result is not so unaccountable as it might seem. The professional dealer, however smart he may be, takes a sounder estimate of any individual transaction than the amateur. It is his object, not so much to do any single stroke of trade very successfully, as to deal acceptably with the public, and make his money in the long-run. Hence he does not place an undue estimate on the special article he is to dispose of, but will let it go at a loss, if that is likely to prove the most beneficial course for his trade at large. He has no special attachment to any of the articles in which he deals, and no blindly exaggerated appreciation of their merits and value. They come and go in an equable stream, and the cargo of yesterday is sent abroad to the world with the same methodical indifference with which that of to-day is unshipped. It is otherwise with the amateur. He feels towards the article he is to part with all the prejudiced attachment, and all the consequent over-estimate, of a possessor. Hence he and the market take incompatible views as to value, and he is apt to become unscrupulous in his efforts to do justice to himself. Let the single-minded and zealous collector then turn the natural propensity to over-estimate one's own into its proper and legitimate channel. Let him guard his treasures as things too sacred for commerce, and say, *Procul, o procul este, profani*, to all who may attempt by bribery and corruption to drag [107] them from their legitimate shelves. If, in any weak moment, he yield to mercenary temptation, he [108] will be for ever mourning after the departed unit of his treasure—the lost sheep of his flock. If it seems to be in the decrees of fate that all his gatherings are to be dispersed abroad after he is gone to his rest, let him, at all events, retain the reliance that on them, as on other things beloved, he may have his last look; there will be many changes after that, and this will be among them. Nor, in his final reflections on his conduct to himself and to those he is to leave, will he be disturbed by the thought that the hobby which was his enjoyment has been in any wise the more costly to him that he has not made it a means of mercenary money-getting.[36]

The Desultory Reader or Bohemian of Literature.

aving so put in a plea for this pursuit, as about the least costly foible to which those who can afford to indulge in foibles can devote themselves, one might descant on certain auxiliary advantages—as, that it is not apt to bring its votaries into low [109] company; that it offends no one, and is not likely to foster actions of damages for nuisance, trespass, or assault, and the like. But rather let us turn our attention to the intellectual advantages accompanying the pursuit, since the proper function of books is in the general case associated with intellectual culture and occupation. It would seem that, according to a received prejudice or opinion, there is one exception to this general connection, in the case of the possessors of libraries, who are under a vehement suspicion of not reading their books. Well, perhaps it is true in the sense in which those who utter the taunt understand the reading of a book. That one should possess no books beyond his power of perusal —that he should buy no faster than as he can read straight through what he has already bought— is a supposition alike preposterous and unreasonable. "Surely you have far more books than you can read," is sometimes the inane remark of the barbarian who gets his books, volume by volume, from some circulating library or reading club, and reads them all through, one after the other, with a dreary dutifulness, that he may be sure that he has got the value of his money.

It is true that there are some books—as Homer, Virgil, Horace, Milton, Shakespeare, and Scott— which every man should read who has the opportunity—should read, mark, learn, and inwardly [110] digest. To neglect the opportunity of becoming familiar with them is deliberately to sacrifice the position in the social scale which an ordinary education enables its possessor to reach. But is one next to read through the sixty and odd folio volumes of the Bollandist Lives of the Saints, and the new edition of the Byzantine historians, and the State Trials, and the Encyclopædia Britannica, and Moreri, and the Statutes at large, and the Gentleman's Magazine from the beginning, each separately, and in succession? Such a course of reading would certainly do a good deal towards weakening the mind, if it did not create absolute insanity.

But in all these just named, even in the Statutes at large, and in thousands upon thousands of other books, there is precious honey to be gathered by the literary busy bee, who passes on from flower to flower. In fact, "a course of reading," as it is sometimes called, is a course of regimen for dwarfing the mind, like the drugs which dog-breeders give to King Charles spaniels to keep them small. Within the span of life allotted to man there is but a certain number of books that it is practicable to read through, and it is not possible to make a selection that will not, in a manner, wall in the mind from a free expansion over the republic of letters. The being chained, as it were, to one intellect in the perusal straight on of any large book, is a sort of mental slavery superinducing imbecility. Even Gibbon's Decline and Fall, luminous and comprehensive as its [111] philosophy is, and rapid and brilliant the narrative, will become deleterious mental food if consumed straight through without variety. It will be well to relieve it occasionally with a little Boston's Fourfold State, or Hervey's Meditations, or Sturm's Reflections for Every Day in the Year, or Don Juan, or Ward's History of Stoke-upon-Trent.

Isaac D'Israeli says, "Mr Maurice, in his animated memoirs, has recently acquainted us with a fact which may be deemed important in the life of a literary man. He tells us, 'We have been just informed that Sir William Jones *invariably* read through every year the works of Cicero.'" What a task! one would be curious to know whether he felt it less heavy in the twelve duodecimos of Elzevir, or the nine quartos of the Geneva edition. Did he take to it doggedly, as Dr Johnson says,

and read straight through according to the editor's arrangement, or did he pick out the plums and take the dismal work afterwards? For the first year or two of his task, he is not to be pitied perhaps about the Offices, or the Dialogue on Friendship, or Scipio's Dream, or even the capital speeches against Verres and Catiline; but those tiresome Letters, and the Tusculan Questions, and the De Natura! It is a pity he did not live till Angelo Maï found the De Republica. What disappointed every one else might perhaps have commanded the admiration of the great Orientalist. [112]

But here follows, on the same authority, a more wonderful performance still. "The famous Bourdaloue reperused every year St Paul, St Chrysostom, and Cicero."[37] The sacred author makes but a slight addition to the bulk, but the works of St Chrysostom are entombed in eleven folios. Bourdaloue died at the age of seventy-two; and if he began his task at the age of twenty-two, he must have done it over fifty times. It requires nerves of more than ordinary strength to contemplate such a statement with equanimity. The tortures of the classic Hades, and the disgusting inflictions courted by the anchorites of old, and the Brahmins of later times, do not approach the horrors of such an act of self-torture.

Of course any one ambitious of enlightening the world on either the political or the literary history of Rome at the commencement of the empire, must be as thoroughly acquainted with every word of Cicero as the writer of the Times leader on a critical debate is with the newly-delivered speeches. The more fortunate vagabond reader, too, lounging about among the Letters, will open many little veins of curious contemporary history and biography, which he can follow up in Tacitus, Sallust, Cæsar, and the contemporary poets. Both are utterly different from the [113] stated-task reader, who has come under a vow to work so many hours or get through so many pages in a given time. *They* are drawn by their occupation, whether work or play; *he* drives himself to his. All such work is infliction, varying from the highest point of martyrdom down to tasteless drudgery; and it is as profitless as other supererogatory inflictions, since the task-reader comes to look at his words without following out what they suggest, or even absorbing their grammatical sense, much as the stupid ascetics of old went through their penitential readings, or as their representatives of the present day, chiefly of the female sex, read "screeds of good books," which they have not "the presumption" to understand. The literary Bohemian is sometimes to be pitied when his facility of character exposes him to have a modification of this infliction forced upon him. This will occur when he happens to be living in a house frequented by "a good reader," who solemnly devotes certain hours to the reading of passages from the English or French classics for the benefit of the company, and becomes the mortal enemy of every guest who absents himself from the torturing performance.

As to collectors, it is quite true that they do not in general read their books successively straight through, and the practice of desultory reading, as it is sometimes termed, must be treated as part [114] of their case, and if a failing, one cognate with their habit of collecting. They are notoriously addicted to the practice of standing arrested on some round of a ladder, where, having mounted up for some certain book, they have by wayward chance fallen upon another, in which, at the first opening, has come up a passage which fascinates the finder as the eye of the Ancient Mariner fascinated the wedding-guest, and compels him to stand there poised on his uneasy perch and read. Peradventure the matter so perused suggests another passage in some other volume which it will be satisfactory and interesting to find, and so another and another search is made, while the hours pass by unnoticed, and the day seems all too short for the pursuit which is a luxury and an enjoyment, at the same time that it fills the mind with varied knowledge and wisdom.

The fact is that the book-hunter, if he be genuine, and have his heart in his pursuit, is also a reader and a scholar. Though he may be more or less peculiar, and even eccentric, in his style of reading, there is a necessary intellectual thread of connection running through the objects of his search which predicates some acquaintance with the contents of the accumulating volumes. Even although he profess a devotion to mere external features—the style of binding, the cut or uncut leaves, the presence or the absence of the gilding—yet the department in literature holds more or [115] less connection with this outward sign. He who has a passion for old editions of the classics in vellum bindings—Stephenses or Aldines—will not be put off with a copy of Robinson Crusoe or the Ready Reckoner, bound to match and range with the contents of his shelves. Those who so vehemently affect some external peculiarity are the eccentric exceptions; yet even they have some consideration for the contents of a book as well as for its coat.

The Collector and the Scholar.

ither the possession, or, in some other shape, access to a far larger collection of books than can be read through in a lifetime, is in fact an absolute condition of intellectual culture and expansion. The library is the great intellectual stratification in which the literary investigator works—examining its external features, or perhaps driving a shaft through its various layers—passing over this stratum as not immediate to his purpose, examining that other with the minute attention of microscopic investigation. The geologist, the botanist, and the zoologist, are not content to receive one specimen after another into their homes, to be thoroughly and separately examined, each in succession, as novel-readers go through the volumes of a circulating library at twopence [116] a-night—they have all the world of nature before them, and examine as their scientific instincts

or their fancies suggest. For all inquirers, like pointers, have a sort of instinct, sharpened by training and practice, the power and acuteness of which astonish the unlearned. "Reading with the fingers," as Basnage said of Bayle—turning the pages rapidly over and alighting on the exact spot where the thing wanted is to be found—is far from a superficial faculty, as some deem it to be,—it is the thoroughest test of active scholarship. It was what enabled Bayle to collect so many flowers of literature, all so interesting, and yet all found in corners so distant and obscure.

In fact, there are subtle dexterities, acquired by sagacious experience in searching for valuable little trinkets in great libraries, just as in other pursuits. A great deal of that appearance of dry drudgery which excites the pitying amazement of the bystander is nimbly evaded. People acquire a sort of instinct, picking the valuables out of the useless verbiage, or the passages repeated from former authors. It is soon found what a great deal of literature has been the mere "pouring out of one bottle into another," as the Anatomist of melancholy terms it. There are those terrible folios of the scholastic divines, the civilians, and the canonists, their majestic stream of central print overflowing into rivulets of marginal notes sedgy with citations. Compared with these, all the [117]
intellectual efforts of our recent degenerate days seem the work of pigmies; and for any of us even to profess to read all that some of those indomitable giants wrote, would seem an audacious undertaking. But, in fact, they were to a great extent solemn shams, since the bulk of their work was merely that of the clerk who copies page after page from other people's writings.

Surely these laborious old writers exhibited in this matter the perfection of literary modesty. Far from secretly pilfering, like the modern plagiarist, it was their great boast that they themselves had not suggested the great thought or struck out the brilliant metaphor, but that it had been done by some one of old, and was found in its legitimate place—a book. I believe that if one of these laborious persons hatched a good idea of his own, he could experience no peace of mind until he found it legitimated by having passed through an earlier brain, and that the author who failed thus to establish a paternity for his thought would sometimes audaciously set down some great name in his crowded margin, in the hope that the imposition might pass undiscovered. Authorities, of course, enjoy priority according to their rank in literature. First come Aristotle and Plato, with the other great classical ancients; next the primitive fathers; then Abailard, Erigena, [118]
Peter Lombard, Ramus, Major, and the like. If the matter be jurisprudence, we shall have Marcianus, Papinianus, Ulpianus, Hermogenianus, and Tryphonius to begin with; and shall then pass through the straits of Bartolus and Baldus, on to Zuichemus, Sanchez, Brissonius, Ritterhusius, and Gothofridus. If all these say the same thing, each of the others copying it from the first who uttered it, so much the more valuable to the literary world is deemed the idea that has been so amply backed—it is like a vote by a great majority, or a strongly-signed petition. There is only one quarter in which this practice appears to be followed at the present day—the composition, or the compilation, as it may better be termed, of English law-books. Having selected a department to be expounded, the first point is to set down all that Coke said about it two centuries and a half ago, and all that Blackstone said about it a century ago, with passages in due subordination from inferior authorities. To these are added the rubrics of some later cases, and a title-page and index, and so a new "authority" is added to the array on the shelves of the practitioner.

Whoever is well up to such repetitions has many short cuts through literature to enable him to find the scattered originalities of which he may be in search. Whether he be the enthusiastic investigator resolved on exhausting any great question, or be a mere wayward potterer, picking up curiosities by the way for his own private intellectual museum, the larger the collection at his [119]
disposal the better—it cannot be too great.[38] No one, therefore, can be an ardent follower of such a pursuit without having his own library. And yet it is probably among those whose stock is the largest that we shall find the most frequent visitors to the British Museum and the State [120]
Paper Office; perhaps, for what cannot be found even there, to the Imperial Library at Paris, or the collections of some of the German universities.

To every man of our Saxon race endowed with full health and strength, there is committed, as if it were the price he pays for these blessings, the custody of a restless demon, for which he is doomed to find ceaseless excitement, either in honest work, or some less profitable or more mischievous occupation. Countless have been the projects devised by the wit of man to open up for this fiend fields of exertion great enough for the absorption of its tireless energies, and none of them is more hopeful than the great world of books, if the demon is docile enough to be coaxed into it. Then will its erratic restlessness be sobered by the immensity of the sphere of exertion, and the consciousness that, however vehemently and however long it may struggle, the resources set before it will not be exhausted when the life to which it is attached shall have faded away; and hence, instead of dreading the languor of inaction, it will have to summon all its resources of [121]
promptness and activity to get over any considerable portion of the ground within the short space allotted to the life of man.

That the night cometh when no man can work, haunts those who have gone so far in their investigations, and draws their entire energies into their pursuit with an exclusiveness which astonishes the rest of the world. But the energies might be more unfitly directed. Look back, for instance—no great distance back—on the great high-priest of our national school of logic and metaphysics,—he who gathered up its divers rays, and, helping them with light from all other sources of human knowledge, concentrated the whole into one powerful focus. No one could look at the massive brow, the large, full, lustrous eyes, the firm compressed lip, without seeing that the demon of energy was powerful within him, and had it not found work in the conquest of all human learning, must have sought it elsewhere. You see in him the nature that must follow up all

inquiries, not by languid solicitation but hot pursuit. His conquests as he goes are rapid but complete. Summing up the thousands upon thousands of volumes, upon all matters of human study and in many languages, which he has passed through his hands, you think he has merely dipped into them or skimmed them, or in some other shape put them to superficial use. You are wrong: he has found his way at once to the very heart of the living matter of each one; between it and him there are henceforth no secrets.[39] [122]

Descending, however, from so high a sphere, we shall find that the collector and the scholar are so closely connected with each other that it is difficult to draw the line of separation between them. As dynamic philosophers say, they act and react on each other. The possession of certain books has made men acquainted with certain pieces of knowledge which they would not otherwise have acquired. It is, in fact, one of the amiable weaknesses of the set, to take a luxurious glance at a new acquisition. It is an outcropping of what remains in the man, of the affection towards a new toy that flourished in the heart of the boy. Whether the right reverend or right honourable Thomas has ever taken his new-bought Baskerville to bed with him, as the Tommy that was has taken his humming-top, is a sort of case which has not actually come under observation in the course of my own clinical inquiries into the malady; but I am not prepared to state that it never occurred, and can attest many instances where the recent purchase has kept the owner from bed far on in the night. In this incidental manner is a general notion sometimes formed of the true object and tenor of a book, which is retained in the mind, stored for use, and capable of being refreshed and strengthened whenever it is wanted. In the skirmish for the Caxtons, which began the serious work in the great conflict of the Roxburghe sale, it was satisfactory to find, as I have already stated, on the authority of the great historian of the war, that Earl Spencer, the victor, "put each volume under his coat, and walked home with them in all the flush of victory and consciousness of triumph."[40] Ere next morning he would know a good deal more about the contents of the volumes than he did before. [123] [124]

The Gleaner and his Harvest.

here are sometimes agreeable and sometimes disappointing surprises in encountering the interiors of books. The title-page is not always a distinct intimation of what is to follow. Whoever dips into the Novellæ of Leo, or the Extravagantes, as edited by Gothofridus, will not find either of them to contain matter of a light, airy, and amusing kind. Dire have been the disappointments incurred by The Diversions of Purley—one of the toughest books in existence. It has even cast a shade over one of our best story-books, The Diversions of Hollycot, by the late Mrs Johnston. The great scholar, Leo Allatius, who broke his heart when he lost the special pen with which he wrote during forty years, published a work called Apes Urbanæ—Urban Bees. It is a biographical work, devoted to the great men who flourished during the Pontificate of Urban VIII., whose family carried bees on their coat-armorial. The History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker, has sorely perplexed certain strong-minded women, who read nothing but genuine history. The book which, in the English translation, goes by the name of Marmontel's Moral Tales, has been found to give disappointment to parents in search of the absolutely correct and improving; and Edgeworth's Essay on Irish Bulls has been counted money absolutely thrown away by eminent breeders. There is a sober-looking volume, generally bound in sheep, called MacEwen on the Types—a theological book, in fact, treating of the types of Christianity in the old law. Concerning it, a friend once told me that, at an auction, he had seen it vehemently competed for by an acute-looking citizen artisan and a burly farmer from the hills. The latter, the successful party, tossed the lot to the other, who might have it and be d——d to it, he "thought it was a buik upo' the tups," a word which, it may be necessary to inform the unlearned reader, means rams: but the other competitor also declined the lot; he was a compositor or journeyman printer, and expected to find the book honestly devoted to those tools of his trade of which it professed to treat. Mr Ruskin, having formed the pleasant little original design of abolishing the difference between Popery and Protestantism, through the persuasive influence of his own special eloquence, set forth his views upon the matter in a book which he termed a treatise "on the construction of sheepfolds." I have been informed that this work had a considerable run among the muirland farmers, whose reception of it was not flattering. I think I could also point to a public library in England, the keeper of which justified his high character for classification and arrangement by binding up this production between "suggestions as to eating off turnips with stock" and "an inquiry concerning the best materials for smeering." Peignot discusses, by the way, with his usual scientific precision, as a department in Bibliography, "Titres de livres qui ont induit en erreur des Bibliothecaires et des Libraires peu instruits." After mentioning a treatise De Missis Dominicis, which was not a religious book, as it might seem, but an inquiry into the functions of certain officers sent into the provinces by the emperors and the early kings of France, he comes nearer to our own door in telling how "un ignorant avait placé le *Traité des Fluxions de Maclaurin* avec les livres de pathologie, prenant pour une maladie les fluxions mathématiques."[41] [125] [126]

Logic has not succeeded as yet in discovering the means of framing a title-page which shall be exhaustive, as it is termed, and constitute an infallible finger-post to the nature of a book. From the beginning of all literature it may be said that man has been continually struggling after this achievement, and struggling in vain; and it is a humiliating fact, that the greatest adepts,

abandoning the effort in despair, have taken refuge in some fortuitous word, which has served their purpose better than the best results of their logical analysis. The book which has been the [127] supreme ruler of the intellect in this kind of work, stands forth as an illustrious example of failure. To those writings of Aristotle which dealt with mind, his editing pupils could give no name,—therefore they called them the things after the physics—the *metaphysics*; and that fortuitous title the great arena of thought to which they refer still bears, despite of efforts to supply an apter designation in such words as Psychology, Pneumatology, and Transcendentalism.

Writhing under this nightmare kind of difficulty, men in later times tried to achieve completeness by lengthening the title-page; but they found that the longer they made it, the more it wriggled itself into devious tracks, and the farther did it depart from a comprehensive name. Some title-pages in old folios make about half an hour's reading.[42] One advantage, however, was found in [128] these lengthy titles—they afforded to controversialists a means of condensing the pith of their malignity towards each other, and throwing it, as it were, right in the face of the adversary. It will thus often happen that the controversialist states his case first in the title-page; he then gives it at greater length in the introduction; again, perhaps, in a preface; a third time in an analytical form, through means of a table of contents; after all this skirmishing, he brings up his heavy columns in the body of the book; and if he be very skilful, he may let fly a few Parthian arrows from the index.

It is a remarkable thing that a man should have been imprisoned, and had his ears cut off, and [129] become one of the chief causes of our great civil wars, all along of an unfortunate word or two in the last page of a book containing more than a thousand. It was as far down in his very index as W that the great offence in Prynne's Histrio-Mastix was found, under the head "Women actors." The words which follow are rather unquotable in this nineteenth century; but it was a very odd compliment to Queen Henrietta Maria to presume that these words must refer to her—something like Hugo's sarcasm that, when the Parisian police overhear any one use the terms "ruffian" and "scoundrel," they say, "You must be speaking of the Emperor." The Histrio-Mastix was, in fact, so big and so complex a thicket of confusion, that it had been licensed without examination by the licenser, who perhaps trusted that the world would have as little inclination to peruse it as he had. The calamitous discovery of the sting in the tail must surely have been made by a Hebrew or an Oriental student, who mechanically looked for the commencement of the Histrio-Mastix where he would have looked for that of a Hebrew Bible. Successive licensers had given the work a sort of go-by, but, reversing the order of the sibylline books, it became always larger and larger, until it found a licenser who, with the notion that he "must put a stop to this," passed it without examination. It got a good deal of reading immediately afterwards, especially from Attorney- [130] General Noy, who asked the Star-Chamber what it had to do with the immorality of stage-plays to exclaim that church-music is not the noise of men, but rather "a bleating of brute beasts—choristers bellow the tenor as it were oxen, bark a counterpoint as a kennel of dogs, roar out a treble like a set of bulls, grunt out a bass as it were a number of hogs." But Mr Attorney took surely a more nice distinction when he made a charge against the author in these terms: "All stage-players he terms them rogues: in this he doth falsify the very Act of Parliament; for *unless they go abroad*, they are not rogues."

In the very difficulties in the way of framing a conclusive and exhaustive title, there is a principle of compensation. It clears literature of walls and hedgerows, and makes it a sort of free forest. To the desultory reader, not following up any special inquiry, there are delights in store in a devious rummage through miscellaneous volumes, as there are to the lovers of adventure and the picturesque in any district of country not desecrated by the tourist's guide-books. Many readers will remember the pleasant little narrative appended to Croker's edition of Boswell, of Johnson's talk at Cambridge with that extensive book-hunter, Dr Richard Farmer, who boasted of the possession of "plenty of all such reading as was never read," and scandalised his visitor by [131] quoting from Markham's Book of Armorie a passage applying the technicalities of heraldry and genealogy to the most sacred mystery of Christianity. One who has not tried it may form an estimate of this kind of pursuit from Charles Lamb's Specimens of the Writings of Fuller. No doubt, as thus transplanted, these have not the same fresh relish which they have for the wanderer who finds them in their own native wilderness, yet, like the specimens in a conservatory or a museum, they are examples of what may be found in the place they have come from.

But there are passages worth finding in books less promising. Those who potter in libraries, especially if they have courage to meddle with big volumes, sometimes find curious things—for all gems are not collected in caskets. In searching through the solid pages of Hatsell's Precedents in Parliament for something one doesn't find, it is some consolation to alight on such a precedent as the following, set forth as likely to throw light on the mysterious process called "naming a member." "A story used to be told of Mr Onslow, which those who ridiculed his strict observance of forms were fond of repeating, that as he often, upon a member's not attending to him, but persisting in any disorder, threatened to name him—'Sir, sir, I must name you'—on being asked what would be the consequence of putting that threat in execution and naming a member, he answered, 'The Lord in heaven knows.'" [132]

In the perusal of a very solid book on the progress of the ecclesiastical differences of Ireland, written by a native of that country, after a good deal of tedious and vexatious matter, the reader's complacency is restored by an artless statement how an eminent person "abandoned the errors of the Church of Rome, and adopted those of the Church of England."

So also a note I have preserved of a brief passage descriptive of the happy conclusion of a duel

runs thus:—

"The one party received a slight wound in the breast; the other fired in the air—and so the matter terminated."[43]

Professional law-books and reports are not generally esteemed as light reading, yet something may be made even of them at a pinch. Menage wrote a book upon the amenities of the civil law, [133] which does anything but fulfil its promise. There are many much better to be got in the most unlikely corners; as, where a great authority on copyright begins a narrative of a case in point by saying, "One Moore had written a book which he called Irish Melodies;" and again, in an action of trespass on the case, "The plaintiff stated in his declaration that he was the true and only proprietor of the copyright of a book of poems entitled The Seasons, by James Thomson." I cannot lay hands at this moment on the index which refers to Mr Justice Best—he was the man, as far as memory serves, but never mind. A searcher after something or other, running his eye down the index through letter B, arrived at the reference "Best—Mr Justice—his great mind." Desiring to be better acquainted with the particulars of this assertion, he turned up the page referred to, and [134] there found, to his entire satisfaction, "Mr Justice Best said he had a great mind to commit the witness for prevarication."

The following case is curiously suggestive of the state of the country round London in the days when much business was done on the road:—A bill in the Exchequer was brought by Everett against a certain Williams, setting forth that the complainant was skilled in dealing in certain commodities, "such as plate, rings, watches, &c.," and that the defendant desired to enter into partnership with him. They entered into partnership accordingly, and it was agreed that they should provide the necessary plant for the business of the firm—such as horses, saddles, bridles, &c. (pistols not mentioned)—and should participate in the expenses of the road. The declaration then proceeds, "And your orator and the said Joseph Williams proceeded jointly with good success in the said business on Hounslow Heath, where they dealt with a gentleman for a gold watch; and afterwards the said Joseph Williams told your orator that Finchley, in the county of Middlesex, was a good and convenient place to deal in, and that commodities were very plenty at Finchley aforesaid, and it would be almost all clear gain to them; that they went accordingly, and dealt with several gentlemen for divers watches, rings, swords, canes, hats, cloaks, horses, bridles, saddles, and other things; that about a month afterwards the said Joseph Williams [135] informed your orator that there was a gentleman at Blackheath who had a good horse, saddle, bridle, watch, sword, cane, and other things to dispose of, which, he believed, might be had for little or no money; that they accordingly went, and met with the said gentleman, and, after some small discourse, they dealt for the said horse, &c. That your orator and the said Joseph Williams continued their joint dealings together in several places—viz., at Bagshot, in Surrey; Salisbury, in Wiltshire; Hampstead, in Middlesex; and elsewhere, to the amount of £2000 and upwards."[44]

Here follows a brief extract from a law-paper, for the full understanding of which it has to be kept in view that the pleader, being an officer of the law who has been prevented from executing his warrant by threats, requires, as a matter of form, to swear that he was really afraid that the threats would be carried into execution.

"Farther depones, that the said A.B. said that if deponent did not immediately take himself off he would pitch him (the deponent) down stairs—which the deponent verily believes he would have done.

"Farther depones, that, time and place aforesaid, the said A.B. said to deponent, 'If you come [136] another step nearer I'll kick you to hell'—which the deponent verily believes he would have done."[45]

I know not whether "lay gents," as the English bar used to term that portion of mankind who had not been called to itself, can feel any pleasure in wandering over the case-books, and picking up the funny technicalities scattered over them; but I can attest from experience that, to a person trained in one set of technicalities, the pottering about among those of a different parish is exceedingly exhilarating. When one has been at work among interlocutors, suspensions, tacks, wadsets, multiplepoindings, adjudications in implement, assignations, infeftments, homologations, charges of horning, quadriennium utiles, vicious intromissions, decrees of putting to silence, conjoint actions of declarator and reduction-improbation,—the brain, being saturated with these and their kindred, becomes refreshed by crossing the border of legal nomenclature, and getting among common recoveries, demurrers, Quare impedits, tails-male, tails-female, docked tails, latitats, avowrys, nihil dicits, cestui que trusts, estopels, essoigns, darrein [137] presentments, emparlances, mandamuses, qui tams, capias ad faciendums or ad withernam, and so forth. After vexatious interlocutors in which the Lord Ordinary has refused interim interdict, but passed the bill to try the question, reserving expenses; or has repelled the dilatory defences, and ordered the case to the roll for debate on the peremptory defences; or has taken to avizandum; or has ordered re-revised condescendence and answers on the conjoint probation; or has sisted diligence till caution be found judicio sisti; or has done nearly all these things together in one breath,—it is like the consolation derived from meeting a companion in adversity, to find that at Westminster Hall, "In fermedon the tenant having demanded a view after a general imparlance, the demandant issued a writ of petit cape—held irregular."

Also, "If, after nulla bona returned, a testatum be entered upon the roll, quod devastavit, a writ of inquiry shall be directed to the sheriff, and if by inquisition the devastavit be found and returned, there shall be a scire facias quare executio non de propriis bonis, and if upon that the sheriff

returns scire feci, the executor or administrator may appear and traverse the inquisition."

Again, "If the record of Nisi prius be a die Sancti Trinitatis in tres Septimanas nisi a 27 June, prius venerit, which is the day after the day in Bank, which was mistaken for a die Sancti Michaelis, it shall not be amended." [138]

It is interesting to observe that at one end of the island a panel means twelve perplexed agriculturists, who, after having taken an oath to act according to their consciences, are starved till they are of one mind on some complicated question; while, at the other end, the same term applies to the criminal on whose conduct they are going to give their verdict. It would be difficult to decide which is the more happy application; but it must be admitted that we are a great way behind the South in our power of selecting a nomenclature immeasurably distant in meaning from the thing signified. We speak of a bond instead of a mortgage, and we adjudge where we ought to foreclose. We have no such thing as chattels, either personal or real.[46] If you want to know the English law of book-debts, you will have to look for it under the head of Assumpsit in a [139] treatise on Nisi Prius, while a lawyer of Scotland would unblushingly use the word itself, and put it in his index. So, too, our bailments are merely spoken of as bills, notes, or whatever a merchant might call them. Our garneshee is merely a common debtor. Baron and feme we call husband and wife, and coverture we term marriage.

Still, for the honour of our country, it is possible to find a few technicalities which would do no discredit to our neighbours. Where one of them would bring a habeas corpus—a name felicitously expressive, according to the English method, of civil liberty—an inhabitant of the North, in the same unfortunate position, would take to running his letters. We have no turbary, or any other easement; but, to compensate us, we have thirlage, outsucken multures, insucken multures, and dry multures; as also we have a soumin and roumin, as any one who has been so fortunate as to hear Mr Outram's pathetic lyric on that interesting right of pasturage will remember, in conjunction with pleasing associations. To do the duty of a duces tecum we have a diligence against havers. We have no capias ad faciendum (abbreviated cap ad fac), nor have we the fieri facias, familiarly termed fi fa, but we have perhaps as good in the in meditatione fugæ warrant, familiarly abbreviated into fugie, as poor Peter Peebles termed it, when he burst in upon the [140] party assembled at Justice Foxley's, exclaiming, "Is't here they sell the fugie warrants?"[47]

I am not sure but, in the very mighty heart of all legal formality and technicality—the Statutes at large—some amusing as well as instructive things might be found. Let me offer a guiding hint to the investigator ambitious of entering on this arduous field. The princely collector will, of course, put himself in possession of the magnificent edition of the Statutes issued by the Record Commission, but let not the unprofessional person who must look short of this imagine that he will find satisfaction in the prim pages of a professional lawyer's modern edition. These, indeed, are not truly the Statutes at large, but rather their pedantic and conventional descendants, who have taken out letters of administration to their wild ancestors. They omit all the repealed Statutes in which these ancestors might be found really at large sowing their wild oats, and [141] consequently all that would give them interest and zest for those in search of such qualities.

It is not, for instance, in the decorous quartos of Roughhead, but in the hoary blackletter folios, looking older than they are—for blackletter adhered to the Statutes after it had been cast off by other literature—that one will find such specimens of ancestral legislation as the following:—

Attorneys.—(33 Henry VI. c. 7.)

"Item: Whereas of time not long past, within the city of Norwich, and the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, there were no more but six or eight atturneys at the most coming to the King's Courts, in which time great tranquillity reigned in the said city and counties, little trouble or vexation was made by untrue or foreign suits, and now so it is, that in the said city and counties there be four score atturneys or more, the more part of them having no other thing to live upon, but only his gain by the practise of atturneyship: and also the more part of them not being of sufficient knowledge to be an atturney, which come to every fair, market, and other places, where is any assembly of people, exhorting, procuring, moving, and inciting the people to attempt untrue and foreign suits for small trespasses, little offences, and small sums of debt, whose actions be triable and determinable in Court Barons, whereby proceed many suits, more of evil will and malice than [142] of truth of the thing, to the manifold vexations and no little damage of the inhabitants of the said city and counties, and all to the perpetual diminution of all the Court Barons in the said counties, unless convenient remedy be provided in this behalf. The foresaid Lord the King, considering the premises, by the advice, assent, and authority aforesaid, hath ordained and stablished that at all times, from hencefort, there shall be but six common atturneys in the said county of Norfolk, and six common atturneys in the said county of Suffolk, and two common atturneys in the said city of Norwich, to be atturneys in the Courts of Record."

Fustian.—(11 Henry VII. c. 27.)

"Now so it is, that divers persons, by subtilty and undue sleights and means, have deceivably imagined and contrived instruments of iron, with the which irons, in the most highest and secret places of their houses, they strike and draw the said irons over the said fustians unshorn; by means whereof they pluck off both the nap and cotton of the same fustians, and break commonly both the ground and threeds in sunder, and after by crafty sleeking, they make the same fustians to appear to the common people fine, whole, and sound: and also they raise up the cotton of such [143]

fustians, and then take a light candle and set it in the fustian burning, which sindgeth and burneth away the cotton of the same fustian from the one end to the other down to the hard threeds, in stead of shering, and after that put them in colour, and so subtilly dress them that their false work cannot be espied without it be by workmen sherers of such fustians, or by the wearers of the same, and so by such subtilties, whereas fustians made in doublets or put to any other use, were wont and might endure the space of two years and more, will not endure now whole by the space of four months scarcely, to the great hurt of the poor commons and serving men of this realm, to the great damage, loss, and deceit of the King's true subjects, buyers and wearers of such fustians," &c.

The history of statute-making is not absolutely divested of pleasantry. The best tradition connected with it at present arising in the memory is not to be brought to book, and must be given as a tradition of the time when George III. was king. Its tenor is, that a bill which proposed, as the punishment of an offence, to levy a certain pecuniary penalty, one half thereof to go to his Majesty and the other half to the informer, was altered in committee, in so far that, when it appeared in the form of an act, *the punishment* was changed to whipping and imprisonment, *the destination* being left unaltered. [144]

It is wonderful that such mistakes are not of frequent occurrence when one remembers the hot hasty work often done by committees, and the complex entanglements of sentences on which they have to work.[48] Bentham was at the trouble of counting the words in one sentence of an Act of Parliament, and found that, beginning with "Whereas" and ending with the word "repealed," it was precisely the length of an ordinary three-volume novel. To offer the reader that sentence on the present occasion would be rather a heavy jest, and as little reasonable as the revenge offered to a village schoolmaster who, having complained that the whole of his little treatise on the Differential Calculus was printed bodily in one of the earlier editions of the Encyclopædia Britannica (not so profitable as the later), was told that he was welcome, in his turn, to incorporate the Encyclopædia Britannica in the next edition of his little treatise.

In the supposition, however, that there are few readers who, like Lord King, can boast of having read the Statutes at large through, I venture to give a title of an Act—a title only, remember, of one of the bundle of acts passed in one session—as an instance of the comprehensiveness of [145] English statute law, and the lively way in which it skips from one subject to another. It is called—

"An Act to continue several laws for the better regulating of pilots, for the conducting of ships and vessels from Dover, Deal, and the Isle of Thanet, up the River Thames and Medway; and for the permitting rum or spirits of the British sugar plantations to be landed before the duties of excise are paid thereon; and to continue and amend an Act for preventing fraud in the admeasurement of coals within the city and liberties of Westminster, and several parishes near thereunto; and to continue several laws for preventing exactions of occupiers of locks and wears upon the River Thames westward; and for ascertaining the rates of water-carriage upon the said river; and for the better regulation and government of seamen in the merchant service; and also to amend so much of an Act made during the reign of King George I. as relates to the better preservation of salmon in the River Ribble; and to regulate fees in trials and assizes at nisi prius," &c.

But this gets tiresome, and we are only half way through the title after all. If the reader wants the rest of it, as also the substantial Act itself, whereof it is the title, let him turn to the 23d of Geo. II., chap. 26.

No wonder, if he anticipated this sort of thing, that Bacon should have commended "the excellent [146] brevity of the old Scots acts." Here, for instance, is a specimen, an actual statute at large, such as they were in those pigmy days:—

"Item, it is statute that gif onie of the King's lieges passes in England, and resides and remains there against the King's will, he shall be halden as Traiter to the King."

Here is another, very comprehensive, and worth a little library of modern statute-books, if it was duly enforced:—

"Item, it is statute and ordained, that all our Sovereign lord's lieges being under his obeisance, and especially the Isles, be ruled by our Sovereign lord's own laws, and the common laws of the realm, and none other laws."

The Irish statute-book conveys more expressively than any narrative the motley contrasts of a history in the fabric of which the grotesque and the tragic are so closely interwoven. So early as the middle of the sixteenth century, English statesmen discover usquebaugh, and pass an act to extinguish it at once: "forasmuch as *aqua vitæ*, a drink nothing profitable to be daily drunken and used, is now universally throughout this realm of Ireland made, and especially in the borders of the Irishry, and for the furniture of Irishmen, and thereby much corn, grain, and other things are consumed, spent, and wasted," and so forth. [147]

To get men to shave and wash themselves, and generally to conform to the standard of civilisation in their day, seems innocent if not laudable; yet is there a world of heartburning, strife, oppression, and retaliatory hatred expressed in the title of "an act, that the Irishmen dwelling in the counties of Dublin, Meath, Uriell, and Kildare, shall go apparelled like Englishmen, and wear their beards after the English manner, swear allegiance, and take English surnames." Further on we have a whole series of acts, with a conjunction of epithets in their titles

which, at the present day, sounds rather startling, "for the better suppressing Tories, Robbers, and Rapparees, and for preventing robberies, burglaries, and other heinous crimes." The classes so associated having an unreasonable dislike of being killed, difficulties are thus put in the way of those beneficially employed in killing them, insomuch that they, "upon the killing of any one of their number, are thereby so alarmed and put upon their keeping, that it hath been found impracticable for such person or persons to discover and apprehend or kill any more of them, whereby they are discouraged from discovering and apprehending or killing," and so forth. There is a strange and melancholy historical interest in these grotesque enactments, since they almost verbatim repeat the legislation about the Highland clans passed a century earlier by the Lowland Parliament of Scotland. [148]

There is one shelf of the law library laden with a store of which few will deny the attractive interest—that devoted to the literature of Criminal Trials. It will go hard indeed, if, besides the reports of mere technicalities, there be not here some glimpses of the sad romances which lie at their heart; and, at all events, when the page passes a very slight degree beyond the strictly professional, the technicalities will be found mingled with abundant narrative. The State Trials, for instance—surely a lawyer's book—contains the materials of a thousand romances: nor are these all attached to political offences; as, fortunately, the book is better than its name, and makes a virtuous effort to embrace all the remarkable trials coming within the long period covered by the collection. Some assistance may be got, at the same time, from minor luminaries, such as the Newgate Calendar—not to be commended, certainly, for its literary merits, but full of matters strange and horrible, which, like the gloomy forest of the Castle of Indolence, "sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood."

There are many other books where records of remarkable crimes are mixed up with much rubbish, as, The Terrific Register, God's Revenge against Murder, a little French book called Histoire Générale des Larrons (1623), and if the inquirer's taste turn towards maritime crimes, The History of the Bucaniers, by Esquemeling. A little work in four volumes, called the Criminal [149] Recorder, by a student in the Inner Temple, can be commended as a sort of encyclopædia of this kind of literature. It professes—and is not far from accomplishing the profession—to give biographical sketches of notorious public characters, including "murderers, traitors, pirates, mutineers, incendiaries, defrauders, rioters, sharpers, highwaymen, footpads, pickpockets, swindlers, housebreakers, coiners, receivers, extortioners, and other noted persons who have suffered the sentence of the law for criminal offences." By far the most luxurious book of this kind, however, in the English language, is Captain Johnston's Lives of Highwaymen and Pirates. It is rare to find it now complete. The old folio editions have been often mutilated by over use; the many later editions in octavo are mutilated by design of their editors; and for conveying any idea of the rough truthful descriptiveness of a book compiled in the palmy days of highway robbery, they are worthless.

All our literature of that nature must, however, yield to the French Causes Célèbres, a term rendered so significant by the value and interest of the book it names, as to have been borrowed by writers in this country to render their works attractive. It must be noted as a reason for the success of this work, and also of the German collection by Feuerbach, that the despotic Continental method of procedure by secret inquiry affords much better material for narrative [150] than ours by open trial. We make, no doubt, a great drama of a criminal trial. Everything is brought on the stage at once, and cleared off before an audience excited so as no player ever could excite; but it loses in reading; while the Continental inquiry, with its slow secret development of the plot, makes the better novel for the fireside.

There is a method by which, among ourselves, the trial can be imbedded in a narrative which may carry down to later generations a condensed reflection of that protracted expectation and excitement which disturb society during the investigations and trials occasioned by any great crime. This is by "illustrating" the trial, through a process resembling that which has been already supposed to have been applied to one of Watts's hymns. In this instance there will be all the newspaper scraps—all the hawker's broadsides—the portraits of the criminal, of the chief witnesses, the judges, the counsel, and various other persons,—everything in literature or art that bears on the great question.

He who inherits or has been able to procure a collection of such illustrated trials, a century or so old, is deemed fortunate among collectors, for he can at any time raise up for himself the spectre as it were of the great mystery and exposure that for weeks was the absorbing topic of attraction for millions. The curtains are down—the fire burns bright—the cat purrs on the rug; Atticus, [151] soused in his easy-chair, cannot be at the trouble of going to see Macbeth or Othello—he will sup full of horrors from his own stores. Accordingly he takes down an unseemly volume, characterised by a flabby obesity by reason of the unequal size of the papers contained in it, all being bound to the back, while the largest only reach the margin. The first thing at opening is the dingy pea-green-looking paragraph from the provincial newspaper, describing how the reapers, going to their work at dawn, saw the clay beaten with the marks of struggle, and, following the dictates of curiosity, saw a bloody rag sticking on a tree, the leaves also streaked with red, and, lastly, the instrument of violence hidden in the moss; next comes from another source the lamentations for a young woman who had left her home—then the excitement of putting that and that together—the search, and the discovery of the body. The next paragraph turns suspense into exulting wrath: the perpetrator has been found with his bloody shirt on—a scowling murderous villain as ever was seen—an eminent poacher, and fit for anything. But the next paragraph turns the tables. The ruffian had his own secrets of what he had been about that night, and at last

makes a clean breast. It would have been a bad business for him at any other time, but now he is a revealing angel, for he noted this and that in the course of his own little game, and gives justice [152] the thread which leads to a wonderful romance, and brings home desperate crime to that quarter where, from rank, education, and profession, it was least likely to be found. Then comes the trial and the execution; and so, at a sitting, has been swallowed all that excitement which, at some time long ago, chained up the public in protracted suspense for weeks.

The reader will see, from what I have just been saying, that I am not prepared to back Charles Lamb's Index Expurgatorius.[49] It is difficult, almost impossible, to find the book from which [153] something either valuable or amusing may not be found, if the proper alembic be applied. I know books that are curious, and really amusing, from their excessive badness. If you want to find precisely how a thing ought not to be said, you take one of them down, and make it perform the service of the intoxicated Spartan slave. There are some volumes in which, at a chance opening, you are certain to find a mere platitude delivered in the most superb and amazing climax of big words, and others in which you have a like happy facility in finding every proposition stated with its stern forward, as sailors say, or in some other grotesque mismanagement of composition. There are no better farces on or off the stage than when two or three congenial spirits ransack books of this kind, and compete with each other in taking fun out of them.

There is a solid volume, written in an inquiring spirit, but in a manner which reminds one of deep calling unto deep, about the dark superstitions of a country which was once a separate European kingdom. I feel a peculiar interest in it, from the author having informed me, by way of communicating an important fact in literary history, and also as an example to be followed by literary aspirants, that, before committing the book to the press, he had written it over sixteen times. It would have been valuable to have his first manuscript, were it only that one might form [154] some idea of the steps by which he had brought it into the condition in which it was printed. But its perusal in that condition was not entirely thrown away, since I was able to recommend it to a teacher of composition, as containing, within a moderate compass—after the manner, in fact, of a handbook—good practical specimens of every description of depravity of style of which the English language is susceptible.

In the present day, when few scholars have opportunities of enriching the world with their prison hours, perhaps the best conditions for testing how far any volume or portion of printed matter, however hopeless-looking, may yet yield edifying or amusing matter to a sufficient pressure, will occur when a bookish person finds himself imprisoned in a country inn, say for twenty-four hours. Such things are not impossible in this age of rapid movement. It is not long since a train, freighted with musical artistes, sent express to perform at a provincial concert and be back immediately in town for other engagements, were caught by a great snow-storm which obliterated the railway, and had to live for a week or two in a wayside alehouse, in one of the dreariest districts of Scotland. The possessor and user of a large library undergoing such a calamity in a modified shape will be able to form a conception of the resources at his disposal, and to calculate how long it will take him to exhaust the intellectual treasures at his command, [155] just as a millionaire, haunted as such people sometimes are by the dread of coming on the parish, might test how long a life his invested capital would support by spending a winter in a Shetland cottage, and living on what he could procure. Having exhausted all other sources of excitement and interest, the belated traveller is supposed to call for the literature of the establishment. Perhaps the Directory of the county town is the only available volume. Who shall say what the belated traveller may make of this? He may do a turn in local statistics, or, if his ambition rises higher, he may pursue some valuable ethnological inquiries, trying whether Celtic or Saxon names prevail, and testing the justice of Mr Thierry's theory by counting the Norman patronymics, and observing whether any of them are owned by persons following plebeian and sordid occupations. If in after-life the sojourner should come in contact with people interested in the politics or business of that county town, he will surprise them by exhibiting his minute acquaintance with its affairs.

If, besides the Directory, an Almanac, old or new, is to be had, the analysis may be conducted on a greatly widened basis. The rotations of the changes of the seasons may at the same time suggest many appropriate reflections on the progress of man from the cradle to the grave, and all that he meets with between the alpha and omega; and if the prisoner is a man of genius, the [156] announcements of eclipses and other solar phenomena will suggest trains of thought which he can carry up to any height of sublimity. A person in the circumstances supposed, after he has exhausted the Directory and the Almanac, may perhaps be led to read (if he can get) Zimmerman On Solitude, Hervey's Meditations, Watts on the Improvement of the Mind, or Hannah More's Sacred Dramas. Who knows what he may be reduced to? I remember the great Irish liberator telling how, when once detained in an inn in Switzerland, he could find no book to beguile the time with but the Lettres Provinciales of Pascal. I have no doubt that the coerced perusal of them to which he had to submit did him a deal of good.

Let us imagine that nothing better is to be found than the advertising sheet of an old newspaper —never mind. Let the unfortunate man fall to and read the advertisements courageously, and make the best of them. An advertisement is itself a fact, though it may sometimes be the vehicle of a falsehood; and, as some one has remarked, he who has a fact in hand is like a turner with a piece of wood in his lathe, which he can manipulate to his liking, tooling it in any way, as a plain cylinder or a richly ornamented toy. There have been fortunate instances of people driven to read them finding good jokes and other enjoyable things in advertisements—such things as make one [157] almost regret that so little attention has been paid to this department of literature.[50] Besides

the spontaneous undesigned attractions to be found in it, there have been men of distinguished parts whose powers have found development in the advertisement line. George Robins, a hero in his day, is surely not yet quite forgotten; and though he were, doubtless his works will be restored to notice by future philosophers who will perhaps find in them the true spirit of the nineteenth century. Advertisements, more prosaic than his, however, bring us into the very heart of life and business, and contain a world of interest. Suppose that the dirty broadside you pick up in the dingy inn's soiled room contains the annual announcement of the reassembling of the school in which you spent your own years of schoolboy life—what a mingled and many-figured romance does it recall of all that has befallen to yourself and others since the day when the same advertisement made you sigh, because the hour was close at hand when you were to leave home [158] and all its homely ways to dwell among strangers! Going onward, you remember how each one after another ceased to be a stranger, and twined himself about your heart; and then comes the reflection, Where are they all now? You remember how

> "He, the young and strong, who cherished
> Noble longings for the strife,
> By the roadside fell and perished,
> Weary with the march of life."

You recall to your memory also those two inseparables—linked together, it would seem, because they were so unlike. The one, gentle, dreamy, and romantic, was to be the genius of the set; but alas, he "took to bad habits," and oozed into the slime of life, imperceptibly almost, hurting no creature but himself—unless it may be that to some parent or other near of kin his gentle facility may have caused keener pangs than others give by cruelty and tyranny. The other, bright-eyed, healthy, strong, and keen-tempered—the best fighter and runner and leaper in the school—the dare-devil who was the leader in every row—took to Greek much about the time when his companion took to drinking, got a presentation, wrote some wonderful things about the functions of the chorus, and is now on the fair road to a bishopric.

Next arises the vision of "the big boy," the lout—the butt of every one, even of the masters, who, [159] when any little imp did a thing well, always made the appropriate laudation tell to the detriment of the big boy, as if he were bound to be as superfluous in intellect as in flesh. He has sufficiently dinned into him to make him thoroughly modest, poor fellow, how all great men were little. Napoleon was little, so was Frederic the Great, William III., the illustrious Condé, Pope, Horace, Anacreon, Campbell, Tom Moore, and Jeffrey. His relations have so thoroughly given in to the prejudice against him, that they get him a cadetship because he is fit for nothing at home; and now, years afterwards, the newspapers resound with his fame—how, when at the quietest of all stations when the mutiny suddenly broke out in its most murderous shape, and even experienced veterans lost heart, he remained firm and collected, quietly developing, one after another, resources of which he was not himself aware, and in the end putting things right, partly by stern vigour, but more by a quiet tact and genial appreciation of the native character. But what has become of the Dux—him who, in the predictions of all, teachers and taught, was to render the institution some day illustrious by occupying the Woolsack, or the chief place at the Speaker's right hand? A curious destiny is his: at a certain point the curve of his ascent was as it were truncated, and he took to the commonest level of ordinary life. He may now be seen, staid and sedate in his walk, which brings him, with a regularity that has rendered him useful to [160] neighbours owning erratic watches, day by day to a lofty three-legged stool, mounted on which, all his proceedings confirm the high character retained by him through several years for the neatness of his handwriting, and especially for his precision in dotting his i's and stroking his t's.

This is all along of the use which the reflective man may make of an old advertisement. If it be old, the older the better—the more likely is it to contain matter of curious interest or instruction about the ways of men. To show this, I reprint two advertisements from British newspapers.

From the Public Advertiser of 28th March 1769.

> "TO BE SOLD, A BLACK GIRL, the property of J. B——, eleven years of age, who is extremely handy, works at her needle tolerably, and speaks English perfectly well: is of an excellent temper, and willing disposition.
>
> "Inquire of Mr Owen, at the Angel Inn, behind St Clement's Church in the Strand."

From the Edinburgh Evening Courant, 18th April 1768.

> "A BLACK BOY TO SELL.
>
> "TO BE SOLD, A BLACK BOY, with long hair, stout made, and well-limbed—is good tempered, can dress hair, and take care of a horse indifferently. He has been in Britain nearly three years.
>
> "Any person that inclines to purchase him may have him for £40. He belongs to Captain Abercrombie at Broughton.
>
> "This advertisement not to be repeated."

There was at that time probably more of this description of property in Britain than in Virginia. It [161] had become fashionable, as one may see in Hogarth. Such advertisements—they were abundant—might furnish an apt text on which a philosophical historian could speculate on the probable results to this country, had not Mansfield gone to the root of the matter by denying all property

in slaves.

So much for the chances which still remain to the devourer of books, if, after having consumed all the solid volumes within his reach, he should be reduced to shreds and patches of literature,—like a ship's crew having resort to shoe-leather and the sweepings of the locker.

Pretenders.

ut now to return to the point whence we started—the disposition, and almost the necessity, which the true enthusiast in the pursuit feels to look into the soul, as it were, of his book, after he has got possession of the body. When he is not of the omnivorous kind, but one who desires to possess a particular book, and, having got it, dips into the contents before committing it to permanent obscurity on his loaded shelves, there is, as we have already seen, a certain thread of intelligent association [162] linking the items of his library to each other. The collector knows what he wants, and why he wants it, and that *why* does not entirely depend on exteriors, though he may have his whim as to that also.

He is a totally different being from the animal who goes to all sales, and buys every book that is cheap. That is a painfully low and grovelling type of the malady; and, fortunately for the honour of literature, the bargain-hunter who suffers under it is not in general a special votary of books, but buys all bargains that come in his way—clocks, tables, forks, spoons, old uniforms, gas-meters, magic lanterns, galvanic batteries, violins (warranted real Cremonas, from their being smashed to pieces), classical busts (with the same testimony to their genuineness), patent coffee-pots, crucibles, amputating knives, wheel-barrows, retorts, cork-screws, boot-jacks, smoke-jacks, melon-frames, bath-chairs, and hurdy-gurdies. It has been said that once, a coffin, made too short for its tenant, being to be had an undoubted bargain, was bought by him, in the hope that, some day or other, it might prove of service in his family. His library, if such it may be termed, is very rich in old trade-directories, justices of peace and registers of voters, road-books, and other useful manuals; but there are very learned books in it too. That clean folio Herodotus was certainly extremely cheap at half-a-crown; and you need not inform him that the ninth book is [163] wanting, for he will never find that out. The day when he has discovered that any book has been bought by another person, a better bargain than his own copy, is a black one in his calendar; but he has a peculiar device for getting over the calamity by bringing down the average cost of his own copy through fresh investments. Having had the misfortune to buy a copy of Goldsmith's History of England for five shillings, while a neighbour flaunts daily in his face a copy obtained for three, he has been busily occupied in a search for copies still cheaper. He has now brought down the average price of his numerous copies of this more agreeable than accurate work to three shillings and twopence, and hopes in another year to get below the three shillings.

Neither is the rich man who purchases fine and dear books by deputy to be admitted within the category of the genuine book-hunter. He must hunt himself—must actually undergo the anxiety, the fatigue, and, so far as purse is concerned, the risks of the chase. Your rich man, known to the trade as a great orderer of books, is like the owner of the great game-preserve, where the sport is heavy butchery; there is none of the real zest of the hunter of the wilderness to be had within his gates. The old Duke of Roxburghe wisely sank his rank and his wealth, and wandered [164] industriously and zealously from shop to stall over the world, just as he wandered over the moor, stalking the deer. One element in the excitement of the poorer book-hunter he must have lacked—the feeling of committing something of extravagance—the consciousness of parting with that which will be missed. This is the sacrifice which assures the world, and satisfies the man's own heart, that he is zealous and earnest in the work he has set about. And it is decidedly this class who most read and use the books they possess. How genial a picture does Scott give of himself at the time of the Roxburghe sale—the creation of Abbotsford pulling him one way, on the other his desire to accumulate a library round him in his Tusculum. Writing to his familiar Terry, he says, "The worst of all is, that while my trees grow and my fountain fills, my purse, in an inverse ratio, sinks to zero. This last circumstance will, I fear, make me a very poor guest at the literary entertainment your researches hold out for me. I should, however, like much to have the treatise on Dreams by the author of the New Jerusalem, which, as John Cuthbertson, the smith, said of the minister's sermon, 'must be neat wark.' The loyal poems by N.T. are probably by poor Nahum Tate, who was associated with Brady in versifying the Psalms, and more honourably with Dryden in the second part of Absalom and Achitophel. I never saw them, however, but would give a [165] guinea or thirty shillings for the collection."

One of the reasons why Dibdin's expatiations among rare and valuable volumes are, after all, so devoid of interest, is, that he occupied himself in a great measure in catering for men with measureless purses. Hence there is throughout too exact an estimate of everything by what it is worth in sterling cash, with a contempt for small things, which has an unpleasant odour of plush and shoulder-knot about it. Compared with dear old Monkbarns and his prowlings among the stalls, the narratives of the Boccaccio of the book-trade are like the account of a journey that might be written from the rumble of the travelling chariot, when compared with the adventurous narrative of the pedestrian or of the wanderer in the far East. Everything is too comfortable, luxurious, and easy—russia, morocco, embossing, marbling, gilding—all crowding on one another, till one feels suffocated with riches. There is a feeling, at the same time, of the utter

useless pomp of the whole thing. Volumes, in the condition in which he generally describes them, are no more fitted for use and consultation than white kid gloves and silk stockings are for hard work. Books should be used decently and respectfully—reverently, if you will; but let there be no toleration for the doctrine that there are volumes too splendid for use, too fine almost to be [166] looked at, as Brummel said of some of his Dresden china. That there should be little interest in the record of rich men buying costly books which they know nothing about and never become acquainted with, is an illustration of a wholesome truth, pervading all human endeavours after happiness. It is this, that the active, racy enjoyments of life—those enjoyments in which there is also exertion and achievement, and which depend on these for their proper relish—are not to be bought for hard cash. To have been to him the true elements of enjoyment, the book-hunter's treasures must not be his mere property, they must be his achievements—each one of them recalling the excitement of the chase and the happiness of success. Like Monkbarns with his Elzevirs and his bundle of pedlar's ballads, he must have, in common with all hunters, a touch of the competitive in his nature, and be able to take the measure of a rival,—as Monkbarns magnanimously takes that of Davie Wilson, "'commonly called Snuffy Davie, from his inveterate addiction to black rappee, who was the very prince of scouts for searching blind alleys, cellars, and stalls, for rare volumes. He had the scent of a slow-hound, sir, and the snap of a bull-dog. He would detect you an old blackletter ballad among the leaves of a law-paper, and find an *editio princeps* under the mask of a school Corderius.'" [167]

In pursuing the chase in this spirit, the sportsman is by no means precluded from indulgence in the adventitious specialties that delight the commonest bibliomaniac. There is a good deal more in many of them than the first thought discloses. An *editio princeps* is not a mere toy—it has something in it that may purchase the attention even of a thinking man. In the first place, it is a very old commodity—about four hundred years of age. If you look around you in the world you will see very few movables coeval with it. No doubt there are wonderfully ancient things shown to travellers,—as in Glammis Castle you may see the identical four-posted bedstead—a very creditable piece of cabinet-makery—in which King Malcolm was murdered a thousand years ago. But genuine articles of furniture so old as the *editio princeps* are very rare. If we should highly esteem a poker, a stool, a drinking-can, of that age, is there not something worthy of observance, as indicating the social condition of the age, in those venerable pages, made to look as like the handwriting of their day as possible, with their decorated capitals, all squeezed between two solid planks of oak, covered with richly embossed hog-skin, which can be clasped together by means of massive decorated clasps? And shall we not admit it to a higher place in our reverence than some mere item of household furnishing, when we reflect that it is the very form in which some great ruling intellect, resuscitated from long interment, burst upon the dazzled eyes of [168] Europe and displayed the fulness of its face?

His Achievements in the Creation of Libraries.

So much, then, for the benefit which the class to whom these pages are devoted derive to themselves from their peculiar pursuit. Let us now turn to the far more remarkable phenomena, in which these separate and perhaps selfish pursuers of their own instincts and objects are found to concur in bringing out a great influence upon the intellectual destinies of mankind. It is said of Brindley, the great canal engineer, that,—when a member of a committee, where he was under examination, a little provoked or amused by his entire devotion to canals, asked him if he thought there was any use of rivers,—he promptly answered, "Yes, to feed navigable canals." So, if there be no other respectable function in life fulfilled by the book-hunter, I would stand up for the proposition that he is the feeder, provided by nature, for the preservation of literature from age to age, by the accumulation and preservation of libraries, public or private. It will require perhaps a little circumlocutory exposition to show this, but here it is. [169]

A great library cannot be constructed—it is the growth of ages. You may buy books at any time with money, but you cannot make a library like one that has been a century or two a-growing, though you had the whole national debt to do it with. I remember once how an extensive publisher, speaking of the rapid strides which literature had made of late years, and referring to a certain old public library, celebrated for its affluence in the fathers, the civilians, and the medieval chroniclers, stated how he had himself freighted for exportation, within the past month, as many books as that whole library consisted of. This was likely enough to be true, but the two collections were very different from each other. The cargoes of books were probably thousands of copies of some few popular selling works. They might be a powerful illustration of the diffusion of knowledge, but what they were compared with was its concentration. Had all the paper of which these cargoes consisted been bank-notes, they would not have enabled their owner to create a duplicate of the old library, rich in the fathers, the civilians, and the medieval chroniclers.

This impossibility of improvising libraries is really an important and curious thing; and since it is apt to be overlooked, owing to the facility of buying books, in quantities generally far beyond the available means of any ordinary buyer, it seems worthy of some special consideration. A man who sets to to form a library will go on swimmingly for a short way. He will easily get Tennyson's [170] Poems—Macaulay's and Alison's Histories—the Encyclopædia Britannica—Buckle on Civilisation —all the books "in print," as it is termed. Nay, he will find no difficulty in procuring copies of others which may not happen to be on the shelves of the publisher or of the retailer of new books.

Of Voltaire's works—a little library in itself—he will get a copy at his call in London, if he has not set his mind on some special edition. So of Scott's edition of Swift or Dryden, Croker's edition of Boswell's Johnson, and the like. One can scarcely suppose a juncture in which any of these cannot be found through the electric chain of communication established by the book-trade. Of Gibbon's and Hume's Histories—Jeremy Taylor's works—Bossuet's Universal History, and the like, copies abound everywhere. Go back a little, and ask for Kennet's Collection of the Historians—Echard's History, Bayle, Moreri, or Father Daniel's History of France, you cannot be so certain of immediately obtaining your object, but you will get the book in the end—no doubt about that.

Everything has its caprices, and there are some books which might be expected to be equally shy, but in reality, by some inexplicable fatality, are as plentiful as blackberries. Such, for instance, are Famianus Strada's History of the Dutch War of Independence—one of the most brilliant works ever written, and in the very best Latin after Buchanan's. There is Buchanan's own history, [171] very common even in the shape of the early Scotch edition of 1582, which is a highly favourable specimen of Arbuthnot's printing. Then there are Barclay's Argenis, and Raynal's Philosophical History of the East and West Indies, without which no book-stall is to be considered complete, and which seem to be possessed of a supernatural power of resistance to the elements, since, month after month, in fair weather or foul, they are to be seen at their posts dry or dripping.

So the collector goes on, till he perhaps collects some five thousand volumes or so of select works. If he is miscellaneous in his taste, he may get on pretty comfortably to ten or fifteen thousand, and then his troubles will arise. He has easily got Baker's and Froissart's and Monstrelet's Chronicles, because there are modern reprints of them in the market. But if he want Cooper's Chronicle, he may have to wait for it, since its latest form is still the black-letter. True, I did pick up a copy lately, at Braidwood's, for half-a-guinea, but that was a catch—it might have caused the search of a lifetime. Still more hopeless it is when the collector's ambition extends to The Ladder of Perfection of Wynkin de Worde, or to his King Rycharde Cure de Lion, whereof it is reported in the Repertorium Bibliographicum, that "an imperfect copy, wanting one leaf, was sold by auction at Mr Evans's, in June 1817, to Mr Watson Taylor for £40, 19s." "Woe betide," says [172] Dibdin, "the young bibliomaniac who sets his heart upon Breton's Flourish upon Fancie and Pleasant Toyes of an Idle Head, 1557, 4to; or Workes of a Young Wyt trussed up with a Fardell of Pretty Fancies!! Threescore guineas shall hardly fetch these black-letter rarities from the pigeon-holes of Mr Thorpe. I lack courage to add the prices for which these copies sold." But he has some comfort reserved for the hungry collector, in the intimation that The Ravisht Soul and the Blessed Weaper, by the same author, may be had for £15.[51] It creates a thrilling interest to know, through the same distinguished authority, that the Heber sale must have again let loose upon the world "A merry gest and a true, howe John Flynter made his Testament," concerning which we are told, with appropriate solemnity and pathos, that "Julian Notary is the printer of this inestimably precious volume, and Mr Heber is the thrice-blessed owner of the copy described in the Typographical Antiquities."

Such works as the Knightly Tale of Galogras, The Temple of Glas, Lodge's Nettle for Nice Noses, or the Book of Fayts of Armes, by Christene of Pisa, or Caxton's Pylgremage of the Sowle, or his Myrrour of the Worlde, will be long inquired after before they come to the market, thoroughly [173] contradicting that fundamental principle of political economy, that the supply is always equal to the demand.

He, indeed, who sets his mind on the possession of any one of these rarities, may go to his grave a disappointed man. It will be in general the consolation of the collector, however, that he is by no means the "homo unius libri." There is always something or other turning up for him, so long as he keeps within moderate bounds. If he be rich and ravenous, however, there is nothing for it but duplicating—the most virulent form of book-mania. We have seen that Heber, whose collection, made during his own lifetime, was on the scale of those public libraries which take generations to grow, had, with all his wealth, his liberality, and his persevering energy, to invest himself with duplicates, triplicates—often many copies of the same book.

It is rare that the private collector runs himself absolutely into this quagmire, and has so far exhausted the market that no already unpossessed volume turns up in any part of the world to court his eager embraces. The limitation constitutes, however, a serious difficulty in the way of rapidly creating great public libraries. We would obtain the best testimony to this difficulty in America, were our brethren there in a condition to speak or think of so peaceful a pursuit as library-making. In the normal condition of society there—something like that of Holland in the [174] seventeenth century—there are powerful elements for the promotion of art and letters, when wealth gives the means and civilisation the desire to promote them. The very absence of feudal institutions—the inability to found a baronial house—turns the thoughts of the rich and liberal to other foundations calculated to transmit their name and influence to posterity. And so we have such bequests as John Jacob Astor's, who left four hundred thousand dollars for a library, and the hundred and eighty thousand which were the nucleus of the Smithsonian Institution. Yes! Their efforts in this direction have fully earned for them their own peculiar form of laudation as "actually equal to cash." Hence, as the book-trade and book-buyers know very well, the "almighty dollar" has been hard at work, trying to rear up by its sheer force duplicates of the old European libraries, containing not only all the ordinary stock books in the market, but also the rarities, and those individualities—solitary remaining copies of impressions—which the initiated call uniques. It is clear, however, that when there is but one copy, it can only be in one place; and if it have been rooted for centuries in the Bodleian, or the University of Tubingen, it is not to be had for Harvard or the Astorian. Dr Cogswell, the first librarian of the Astorian, spent some time in [175]

Europe with his princely endowment in his pocket, and showed himself a judicious, active, and formidable sportsman in the book-hunting world. Whenever, from private collections, or the breaking-up of public institutions, rarities got abroad into the open market, the collectors of the old country found that they had a resolute competitor to deal with—almost, it might be said, a desperate one—since he was in a manner the representative of a nation using powerful efforts to get possession of a share of the literary treasures of the Old World.

In the case of a book, for instance, of which half-a-dozen copies might be known to exist, the combatants before the auctioneer would be, on the one side, many an ambitious collector desiring to belong to the fortunate circle already in possession of such a treasure; but on the other side was one on whose exertions depended the question, whether the book should henceforth be part of the intellectual wealth of a great empire, and should be accessible for consultation by American scholars and authors without their requiring to cross the Atlantic. Let us see how far, by a brief comparison, money has enabled them to triumph over the difficulties of their position.

It is difficult to know exactly the numerical contents of a library, as some people count by volumes, and others by the separate works, small or great; and even if all should consent to count [176] by volumes, the estimate would not be precise, for in some libraries bundles of tracts and other small works are massed in plethoric volumes for economy, while in affluent institutions every collection of leaves put under the command of a separate title-page is separately bound in cloth, calf, or morocco, according to its rank. The Imperial Library at Paris is computed to contain above eight hundred thousand volumes; the Astorian boasts of approaching a hundred thousand: the next libraries in size in America are the Harvard, with from eighty thousand to ninety thousand; the Library of Congress, which has from sixty thousand to seventy thousand; and the Boston Athenæum, which has about sixty thousand.

There are many of smaller size. In fact, there is probably no country so well stocked as the States with libraries of from ten thousand to twenty thousand volumes,—the evidence that they have bought what was to be bought, and have done all that a new people can to participate in the long-hoarded treasures of literature which it is the privilege of the Old World to possess. I know that, especially in the instance of the Astorian Library, the selections of books have been made with great judgment, and that, after the boundaries of the common crowded market were passed, and individual rarities had to be stalked in distant hunting-grounds, innate literary value was still held [177] an object more important than mere abstract rarity, and, as the more worthy quality of the two, that on which the buying power available to the emissary was brought to bear.

The zeal and wealth which the citizens of the States have thrown into the limited field from which a library can be rapidly reaped, are manifested in the size and value of their private collections. A volume, called The Private Libraries of New York, by James Wynne, M.D., affords interesting evidence of this phenomenon. It is printed on large thick paper, after the most luxurious fashion of our book clubs, apparently for private distribution. The author states, however, that "the greater part of the sketches of private libraries to be found in this volume, were prepared for and published in the Evening Post about two years since. Their origin is due to a request on the part of Mr Bigelow, one of the editors of the Post, to the writer, to examine and sketch the more prominent private collections of books in New York."

Such an undertaking reveals, to us of the old country, a very singular social condition. With us, the class who may be thus offered up to the martyrdom of publicity is limited. The owners of great houses and great collections are doomed to share them with the public, and if they would frequent their own establishments, must be content to do so in the capacity of librarians or [178] showmen, for the benefit of their numerous and uninvited visitors. They generally, with wise resignation, bow to the sacrifice, and, abandoning all connection with their treasures, dedicate them to the people—nor, as their affluence is generally sufficient to surround them with an abundance of other enjoyments, are they an object of much pity.

But that the privacy of our ordinary wealthy and middle classes should be invaded in a similar shape, is an idea that could not get abroad without creating sensations of the most lively horror. They manage these things differently across the Atlantic, and so here we have "over" fifty gentlemen's private collections ransacked and anatomised. If *they* like it, we have no reason to complain, but rather have occasion to rejoice in the valuable and interesting result.

It is quite natural that their ways of esteeming a collection should not be as our ways. There is a story of a Cockney auctioneer, who had a location in the back settlements to dispose of, advertising that it was "almost entirely covered with fine old timber." To many there would appear to be an equal degree of verdant simplicity in mentioning among the specialties and distinguishing features of a collection—the Biographia and Encyclopædia Britannica, Lowndes's Manual, the Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews, Boyle, Ducange, Moreri, Dodsley's Annual [179] Register, Watt's Bibliotheca, and Diodorus Siculus.

The statement that there is in Dr Francis's collection a "complete set of the Recueil des Causes Célèbres, collected by Maurice Mejan, in eighteen volumes—a scarce and valuable work"—would throw any of our black-letter knight-errants into convulsions of laughter. There are also some instances of perhaps not unnatural confusion between one merely local British celebrity and another, as where it is set forth that in Mr Noyes's collection "there is a fine copy of Sir Robert Walpole's works, in five large quarto volumes, embellished with plates." But under all this inexperience of the ways of the craft as it is cultivated among us, and unconsciousness of such small parochial distinctions as may hold between Sir Robert Walpole, our Prime Minister, and

Horace Walpole, the man of letters and trinkets, the book contains a quantity of valuable and substantial matter, both as a record of rich stores of learning heaped up for the use of the scholar, and marvellous varieties to dazzle the eyes of the mere Dibdinite. The prevailing feature throughout is the lavish costliness and luxury of these collections, several of which exceed ten thousand volumes. Where collections have grown so large that, on the principles already explained, their increase is impeded, the owner's zeal and wealth seem to have developed themselves in the lavish enshrining and decorating of such things as were attainable.[52] [180]

The descriptions of a remorseless investigator like this have a fresh individuality not to be found here, where our habitual reserve prevents us from offering or enjoying a full, true, and particular [181] account of the goods of our neighbours, unless they are brought to the hammer,—and then they have lost half the charm which they possessed as the household gods of some one conspicuous by position or character, and are little more estimable than other common merchandise. It would be [182] difficult to find, among the countless books about books produced by us in the old country, any in which the bent of individual tastes and propensities is so distinctly represented in tangible symbols; and the reality of the elucidation is increased by the sort of innocent surprise with which the historian approaches each "lot," evidently as a first acquaintance, about whom he inquires and obtains all available particulars, good-humouredly communicating them in bald detail to his reader. Here follows a sketch—and surely a tempting one—of a New York interior:—

"Mr Burton's library contains nearly sixteen thousand volumes. Its proprietor had constructed for its accommodation and preservation a three-storey fire-proof building, about thirty feet square, which is isolated from all other buildings, and is connected with his residence in Hudson Street by a conservatory gallery. The chief library-room occupies the upper floor of this building, and is about twenty-five feet in height. Its ceiling presents a series of groined rafters, after the old English style, in the centre of which rises a dome-skylight of stained glass. The sides of the library are fitted up with thirty-six oak book-cases of a Gothic pattern, which entirely surround it, and are nine feet in height. The space between the ceiling and the book-cases is filled with paintings, for the most part of large size, and said to be of value. Specimens of armour and busts [183] of distinguished authors decorate appropriate compartments, and in a prominent niche, at the head of the apartment, stands a full-length statue of Shakespeare, executed by Thom, in the same style as the Tam o' Shanter and Old Mortality groups of this Scotch sculptor.

"The great specialty of the library is its Shakespeare collection; but, although very extensive and valuable, it by no means engrosses the entire library, which contains a large number of valuable works in several departments of literature.

"The number of lexicons and dictionaries is large, and among the latter may be found all the rare old English works so valuable for reference. Three book-cases are devoted to serials, which contain many of the standard reviews and magazines. One case is appropriated to voyages and travels, in which are found many valuable ones. In another are upwards of one hundred volumes of table-talk, and numerous works on the fine arts and bibliography. One book-case is devoted to choice works on America, among which is Sebastian Munster's Cosmographia Totius Orbis Regionum, published in folio at Basle in 1537, which contains full notes of Columbus, Vespucci, and other early voyagers. Another department contains a curious catalogue of authorities relating to Crime and Punishment; a liberal space is devoted to Facetiæ, another to American [184] Poetry, and also one to Natural and Moral Philosophy. The standard works of Fiction, Biography, Theology, and the Drama, are all represented.

"There is a fair collection of classical authors, many of which are of Aldine and Elzevir editions. Among the rarities in this department is a folio copy of Plautus, printed at Venice in 1518, and illustrated with woodcuts."

The author thus coming upon a Roman writer of plays, named Plautus, favours us with an account of him, which it is unnecessary to pursue, since it by no means possesses the interest attached to his still-life sketches. Let us pass on and take a peep at the collection of Chancellor Kent, known in this country as the author of Kent's Commentary:—

"To a lawyer, the Chancellor's written remarks on his books are, perhaps, their most interesting feature. He studied pen in hand, and all of his books contain his annotations, and some are literary curiosities. His edition of Blackstone's Commentaries is the first American edition, printed in Philadelphia in 1771. It is creditable to the press of that time, and is overlaid with annotations, showing how diligently the future American commentator studied the elegant work of his English predecessor. The general reader will find still more interest in the earlier judicial reports of the State of New York, printed while he was on the bench. He will find not merely legal [185] notes, but biographical memoranda of many of the distinguished judges and lawyers who lived at the commencement of the century, and built up the present system of laws.

"In proceeding from the legal to the miscellaneous part of the library, the visitor's attention will, perhaps, be attracted by an extensive and curious collection of the records of criminal law. Not merely the English state trials and the French *causes célèbres* are there, but the criminal trials of Scotland and of America, and detached publications of remarkable cases, Newgate Calendars, Malefactors' Register, Chronicles of Crime, with ghastly prints of Newgate and Old Bailey, with their executions. The Chancellor is not responsible for this part of the library, which owes its completeness to the morbid taste of his successor, who defends the collection as best illustrating the popular morals and manners of every period, and contends that fiction yields in interest to the gloomy dramas of real life."

The practice attributed to the Chancellor of annotating his books is looked on by collectors as in the general case a crime which should be denied benefit of clergy. What is often said, however, of other crimes may be said of this, that if the perpetrator be sufficiently illustrious, it becomes a virtue. If Milton, for instance, had thought fit to leave his autograph annotations on the first folio Shakespeare, the offence would not only have been pardoned but applauded, greatly to the [186] pecuniary benefit of any one so fortunate as to discover the treasure. But it would be highly dangerous for ordinary people to found on such an immunity. I remember being once shown by an indignant collector a set of utterly and hopelessly destroyed copies of rare tracts connected with the religious disputes of Queen Elizabeth's day, each inlaid and separately bound in a thin volume in the finest morocco, with the title lengthways along the back. These had been lent to a gentleman who deemed himself a distinguished poet, and he thought proper to write on the margin the sensations caused within him by the perusal of some of the more striking passages, certifying the genuineness of his autograph by his signature at full length in a bold distinct hand. He, worthy man, deemed that he was adding greatly to the value of the rarities; but had he beheld the owner's face on occasion of the discovery, he would have been undeceived.

There are in Dr Wynne's book descriptions, not only of libraries according to their kind, but according to their stage of growth, from those which, as the work of a generation or two, have reached from ten to fifteen thousand, to the collections still in their youth, such as Mr Lorimer Graham's of five thousand volumes, rich in early editions of British poetry, and doubtless, by this time, still richer, since its owner was lately here collecting early works on the literature of [187] Scotland, and other memorials of the land of his fathers. Certainly, however, the most interesting of the whole is the library of the Rev. Dr Magoon, "an eminent and popular divine of the Baptist Church." He entered on active life as an operative bricklayer. There are, it appears, wall-plates extant, and not a few, built by his hands, and it was only by saving the earnings these brought to him that he could obtain an education. When an English mechanic finds out that he has a call to the ministry, we can easily figure the grim ignorant fanatical ranter that comes forth as the result. If haply he is able to read, his library will be a few lean sheepskin-clad volumes, such as Boston's Crook in the Lot, Fisher's Marrow of Modern Divinity, Brooks's Apples of Gold, Bolton's Saint's Enriching Examination, and Halyburton's Great Concern. The bricklayer, however, was endowed with the heavenly gift of the high æsthetic, which no birth or breeding can secure, and threw himself into that common ground where art and religion meet—the literature of Christian medieval art. Things must, however, have greatly changed among our brethren since the days of Cotton Mather, or even of Jonathan Edwards, when a person in Dr Magoon's position could embellish his private sanctuary in this fashion.

"The chief characteristic of the collection is its numerous works on the history, literature, and [188] theory of art in general, and of Christian architecture in particular. There is scarcely a church, abbey, monastery, college, or cathedral; or picture, statue, or illumination, prominent in Christian art, extant in Italy, Germany, France, or the British Islands, that is not represented either by original drawings or in some other graphic form.

"In addition to these works, having especial reference to Christian art, are many full sets of folios depicting the leading galleries of ancient, medieval, and modern art in general. Some of these, as the six elephant folios on the Louvre, are in superb bindings; while many others, among which are the Dresden Gallery and Retzsch's Outlines, derive an additional value from once having formed a part of the elegant collection of William Reginald Courtenay.

"But what renders this collection particularly valuable, is its large number of original drawings by eminent masters which accompany the written and engraved works. Amongst these are two large sepia drawings, by Amici, of the Pantheon and St Peter's at Rome. These drawings were engraved and published with several others by Ackermann. Both the originals, and the engravings executed from them, are in the collection. The original view near the Basilica of St Marco, by Samuel Prout, the engraving of which is in Finden's Byron, and the interior of St [189] Marco, by Luke Price, the engraving of which is in Price's Venice Illustrated, grace the collection. There is likewise a superb general view of Venice, by Wyld; a fine exterior view of Rheims Cathedral, by Buckley; an exterior view of St Peter's at Caën, by Charles Vacher; and the interior of St Germain des Prés at Paris, by Duval."

The early history of the American settlements is naturally the object around which many of these collections cluster; but the scraps of this kind of literature which have been secured have a sadly impoverished aspect in comparison with the luxurious stores which American money has attracted from the Old World.[53] Here one is forcibly reminded of those elements in the old- [190] established libraries of Europe which no wealth or zeal can achieve elsewhere, because the commodity is not in the market.

America had just one small old library, and the lamentation over the loss of this ewe-lamb is touching evidence of her poverty in such possessions. The Harvard Library dates from the year 1638. In 1764 the college buildings were burned, and though books are not easily consumed, yet the small collection of five thousand volumes was overwhelmed in the general ruin. So were destroyed many books from the early presses of the mother country, and many of the firstlings of the transatlantic printers; and though its bulk was but that of an ordinary country squire's collection, the loss has been always considered national and irreparable.

It is, after all, a rather serious consideration—which it never seems as yet to have occurred to any one to revolve—how entirely the new states of the West and the South seem to be cut off from the literary resources which the Old World possesses in her old libraries. Whatever light lies [191]

hidden beneath the bushel in these venerable institutions, seems for ever denied to the students and inquirers of the new empire rising in the antipodes, and consequently to the minds of the people at large who receive impressions from students and inquirers. Books can be reprinted, it is true; but where is the likelihood that seven hundred thousand old volumes will be reprinted to put the Astorian Library on a par with the Imperial? Well, perhaps some quick and cheap way will be found of righting it all when the Aerial Navigation Company issues its time-bills, and news come of battles "from the nation's airy navies grappling in the central blue."

In the meantime, what a lesson do these matters impress on us of the importance of preserving old books! Government and legislation have done little, if anything, in Britain, towards this object, beyond the separate help that may have been extended to individual public libraries, and the Copyright Act deposits. Of general measures, it is possible to point out some which have been injurious, by leading to the dispersal or destruction of books. The house and window duties have done this to a large extent. As this statement may not be quite self-evident, a word in explanation may be appropriate. The practice of the department having charge of the Assessed Taxes has [192] been, when any furniture was left in an unoccupied house, to levy the duty—to exempt only houses entirely empty. It was a consequence of this that when, by minority, family decay, or otherwise, a mansion-house had to be shut up, there was an inducement entirely to gut it of its contents, including the library. The same cause, by the way, has been more destructive still to furniture, and may be said to have lost to our posterity the fashions of a generation or two. Tables, chairs, and cabinets first grow unfashionable, and then old; in neither stage have they any friends who will comfort or support them—they are still worse off than books. But then comes an after-stage, in which they revive as antiquities, and become exceeding precious. As Pompeiis, however, are rare in the world, the chief repositories of antique furniture have been mansions shut up for a generation or two, which, after more fashions than generations have passed away, are reopened to the light of day, either in consequence of the revival of the fortunes of their old possessors, or of their total extinction and the entry of new owners. How the house and window duties disturbed this silent process by which antiques were created is easily perceived.

One service our Legislature has done for the preservation of books in the copies which require to be deposited under the Copyright Act at Stationers' Hall for the privileged libraries. True, this has been effected somewhat in the shape of a burden upon authors, for the benefit of that [193] posterity which has done no more for them specially than it has for other people of the present generation. But in its present modified shape the burden should not be grudged, in consideration of the magnitude of the benefit to the people of the future—a benefit the full significance of which it probably requires a little consideration to estimate. The right of receiving a copy of every book from Stationers' Hall has generally been looked on as a benefit to the library receiving it. The benefit, however, was but lightly esteemed by some of these institutions, the directors of which represented that they were thus pretty well supplied with the unsaleable rubbish, while the valuable publications slipped past them; and, on the whole, they would sell their privilege for a very small annual sum, to enable them to go into the market and buy such books, old and new, as they might prefer. The view adopted by the law, however, was, that the depositing of these books created an obligation if it conferred a privilege, the institution receiving them having no right to part with them, but being bound to preserve them as a record of the literature of the age.[54]

If the rule come ever to be thoroughly enforced, it will then come to pass that of every book that [194] is printed in Britain, good or bad, five copies shall be preserved in the shelves of so many public libraries, slumbering there in peace, or tossed about by impatient readers, as the case may be. For the latter there need not perhaps be much anxiety; it is for the sake of those addicted to slumbering in peaceful obscurity that this refuge is valuable. There is thus at least a remnant saved from the relentless trunk-maker. If the day of resuscitation from the long slumber should arrive, we know where to find the book—in a privileged library. The recollection just now occurs to me of a man of unquestionable character and scholarship, who wrote a suitable and intelligent [195] book on an important subject, and at his own expense had it brought into the world by a distinguished publisher, prudently intimating on the title-page that he reserved the right of translation. Giving the work all due time to find its way, he called at the Row, exactly a year after the day of publication, to ascertain the result. He was presented with a perfectly succinct account of charge and discharge, in which he was credited with three copies sold. Now, he knew that his family had bought two copies, but he never could find out who it was that had bought the third. [196] The one mind into which his thoughts had thus passed, remained ever mysteriously undiscoverable. Whether or not he consoled himself with the reflection that what might have been diffused over many was concentrated in one, it is consolatory to others to reflect that such a book stands on record in the privileged libraries, to come forth to the world if it be wanted.

Nor is the resuscitation of a book unsuited to its own age, but suited to another, entirely unexampled. That beautiful poem called Albania was reprinted by Leyden, from a copy preserved somewhere: so utterly friendless had it been in its obscurity, that the author's history, and even his name, were unknown; and though it at once excited the high admiration of Scott, no scrap of intelligence concerning it could be discovered in any quarter contemporary with its first publication. The Discourse on Trade by Roger North, the author of the amusing Lives of Lord-Keeper Guildford and his other two brothers, was lately reprinted from a copy in the British Museum, supposed to be the only one existing. Though neglected in its own day, it has been considered worthy of attention in this, as promulgating some of the principles of our existing philosophy of trade. On the same principle, some rare tracts on political economy and trade were lately reprinted by a munificent nobleman, who thought the doctrines contained in them worthy

of preservation and promulgation. The Spirit of Despotism, by Vicesimus Knox, was reprinted, at a time when its doctrines were popular, from a single remaining copy: the book, though instructive, is violent and declamatory, and it is supposed that its author discouraged or endeavoured to suppress its sale after it was printed. [197]

In the public duty of creating great libraries, and generally of preserving the literature of the world from being lost to it, the collector's or book-hunter's services are eminent and numerous. In the first place, many of the great public libraries have been absolute donations of the treasures to which some enthusiastic literary sportsman has devoted his life and fortune. Its gradual accumulation has been the great solace and enjoyment of his active days; he has beheld it, in his old age, a splendid monument of enlightened exertion, and he resolves that, when he can no longer call it his own, it shall preserve the relics of past literature for ages yet to come, and form a centre whence scholarship and intellectual refinement shall diffuse themselves around. We can see this influence in its most specific and material shape, perhaps, by looking round the reading-room of the British Museum—that great manufactory of intellectual produce, where so many heads are at work. The beginning of this great institution, as everybody knows, was in the fifty thousand volumes collected by Sir Hans Sloane—a wonderful achievement for a private [198] gentleman at the beginning of the last century. When George III. gave it the libraries of the kings of England, it gained, as it were, a better start still by absorbing collections which had begun before Sloane was born—those of Cranmer, Prince Henry, and Casaubon. The Ambrosian Library at Milan was the private collection of Cardinal Borromeo, bequeathed by him to the world. It reached forty thousand volumes ere he died, and these formed a library which had arisen in free, natural, and symmetrical growth, insomuch as, having fed it during his whole life, it began with the young and economic efforts of youth and poverty, and went on accumulating in bulk and in the costliness of its contents as succeeding years brought wealth and honours to the great prelate. What those merchant princes, the Medici, did for the Laurentian Library at Florence is part of history. Old Cosmo, who had his mercantile and political correspondents in all lands, made them also his literary agents, who thus sent him goods too precious to be resold even at a profit. "He corresponded," says Gibbon, "at once with Cairo and London, and a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books were often imported by the same vessel." The Bodleian started with a collection which had cost Sir Thomas Bodley £10,000, and it was augmented from time to time by the absorption of tributary influxes of the same kind. Some far-seeing promoters of national museums have reached the conclusion that it is not a sound ultimate policy to press too closely [199] on the private collector. He is therefore permitted, under a certain amount of watchful inspection, to accumulate his small treasury of antiquities, shells, or dried plants, in the prospect that in the course of time it will find its way, like the feeding rills of a lake, into the great public treasury.[55]

In many instances the collectors whose stores have thus gone to the public, have merely followed their hunting propensities, without having the merit of framing the ultimate destiny of their collections, but in others the intention of doing benefit to the world has added zest and energy to the chase. Of this class there is one memorable and beautiful instance in Richard of Bury, Bishop of Durham, who lived and laboured so early as the days of Edward III., and has left an autobiographical sketch infinitely valuable, as at once informing us of the social habits, and letting us into the very inner life, of the highly endowed student and the affluent collector of the fourteenth century. His little book, called Philobiblion, was brought to light from an older obscure edition by the scholar printer Badius Ascensius, and was the first fruit of his press when he set it [200] up in Paris in the year 1499. An English translation of it was published in 1832. It is throughout adorned with the gentle and elevated nature of the scholar, and derives a still nobler lustre from the beneficent purpose to which the author destined the literary relics which it was the enjoyment of his life to collect and study. Being endowed with power and wealth, and putting to himself the question, "What can I render to the Lord for all that he hath conferred on me?" he found an answer in the determination of smoothing the path of the poor and ardent student, by supplying him with the means of study. "Behold," he says, "a herd of outcasts rather than of elect scholars meets the view of our contemplations, in which God the artificer, and nature his handmaid, have planted the roots of the best morals and most celebrated sciences. But the penury of their private affairs so oppresses them, being opposed by adverse fortune, that the fruitful seeds of virtue, so productive in the unexhausted field of youth, unmoistened by their wonted dews, are compelled to wither. Whence it happens, as Boetius says, that bright virtue lies hid in obscurity, and the burning lamp is not put under a bushel, but is utterly extinguished for want of oil. Thus the flowery field in spring is ploughed up before harvest; thus wheat gives way to tares, the vine degenerates to woodbine, and the olive grows wild and unproductive." Keenly [201] alive to this want, he resolved to devote himself, not merely to supply to the hungry the necessary food, but to impart to the poor and ardent scholar the mental sustenance which might possibly enable him to burst the bonds of circumstance, and, triumphing over his sordid lot, freely communicate to mankind the blessings which it is the function of cultivated genius to distribute.

The Bishop was a great and powerful man, for he went over Europe commissioned as the spiritual adviser of the great conqueror, Edward III. Wherever he went on public business—to Rome, France, or the other states of Europe—"on tedious embassies and in perilous times," he carried about with him "that fondness for books which many waters could not extinguish," and gathered up all that his power, his wealth, and his vigilance brought within his reach. In Paris he becomes quite ecstatic: "Oh blessed God of gods in Zion! what a rush of the glow of pleasure rejoiced our heart as often as we visited Paris—the Paradise of the world! There we longed to remain, where, on account of the greatness of our love, the days ever appeared to us to be few. There are

delightful libraries in cells redolent of aromatics—there flourishing greenhouses of all sorts of volumes: there academic meads trembling with the earthquake of Athenian peripatetics pacing up and down: there the promontories of Parnassus and the porticos of the stoics." [202]

The most powerful instrument in his policy was encouraging and bringing round him, as dependents and followers, the members of the mendicant orders—the labourers called to the vineyard in the eleventh hour, as he calls them. These he set to cater for him, and he triumphantly asks, "Among so many of the keenest hunters, what leveret could lie hid? What fry could evade the hook, the net, or the trawl of these men? From the body of divine law down to the latest controversial tract of the day, nothing could escape the notice of these scrutinisers." In further revelations of his method he says, "When, indeed, we happened to turn aside to the towns and places where the aforesaid paupers had convents, we were not slack in visiting their chests and other repositories of books; for there, amidst the deepest poverty, we found the most exalted riches treasured up; there, in their satchels and caskets, we discovered not only the crumbs that fell from the master's table for the little dogs, but, indeed, the shew-bread without leaven—the bread of angels containing all that is delectable." He specially marks the zeal of the Dominicans or Preachers; and in exulting over his success in the field, he affords curious glimpses into the ways of the various humble assistants who were glad to lend themselves to the hobby of one of [203] the most powerful prelates of his day.[56]

The manner in which Richard of Bury dedicated his stores to the intellectual nurture of the poor scholar, was by converting them into a library for Durham College, which merged into Trinity of Oxford. It would have been a pleasant thing to look upon the actual collection of manuscripts which awakened so much recorded zeal and tenderness in the great ecclesiastic of five hundred years ago; but in later troubles they became dispersed, and all that seems to be known of their [204] whereabouts is, that some of them are in the library of Baliol.[57] Another eminent English prelate made a worthy, but equally ineffectual, attempt to found a great university library. This was the Rev. John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who gave what was called "the noblest library in England" to the newly founded college of St John's. It was not a bequest. To make his gift secure, it was made over directly to the college, but as he could not part with his favourites while he lived, he borrowed the whole back for life. This is probably the most extensive book loan ever negotiated; but the Reformation, and his own tragic destiny, were coming on apace, and the [205] books were lost both to himself and his favourite college.[58]

The Preservation of Literature.

he benefactors whose private collections have, by a generous act of endowment, been thus rendered at the same time permanent and public, could be counted by hundreds. It is now, however, my function to describe a more subtle, but no less powerful influence which the book-hunter exercises in the preservation and promulgation of literature, through the mere exercise of that instinct or passion which makes him what he is here called. What has been said above must have suggested—if it was not seen before—how great a pull it gives to any public library, that it has had an early start; and how hard it is, with any amount of wealth and energy, to make up for lost time, and raise a later institution to the level of its senior. The Imperial Library of Paris, which has so marvellously lived through all the storms that have swept round its walls, was founded in the fourteenth century. It began, of course, with manuscripts; possessing, before the beginning of [206] the fifteenth century, the then enormous number of a thousand volumes. The reason, however, of its present greatness, so far beyond the rivalry of later establishments, is, that it was in active operation at the birth of printing, and received the first-born of the press. There they have been sheltered and preserved, while their unprotected brethren, tossed about in the world outside, have long disappeared, and passed out of existence for ever.

Among the popular notions passing current as duly certified axioms, just because they have never been questioned and examined, one is, that, since the age of printing, no book once put to press has ever died. The notion is quite inconsistent with fact. When we count by hundreds of thousands the books that are in the Paris Library, and not to be had for the British Museum, we know the number of books which a chance refuge has protected from the general destruction, and can readily see, in shadowy bulk, though we cannot estimate in numbers, the great mass which, having found no refuge, have disappeared out of separate existence, and been mingled up with the other elements of the earth's crust.

We have many accounts of the marvellous preservation of books after they have become rare—the snatching of them as brands from the burning; their hairbreadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach. It would be interesting, also, to have some account of the progress of destruction [207] among books. A work dedicated apparently to this object, which I have been unable to find in the body, is mentioned under a very tantalising title. It is by a certain John Charles Conrad Oelrichs, author of several scraps of literary history, and is called a Dissertation concerning the Fates of Libraries and Books, and, in the first place, concerning the books that have been eaten—such I take to be the meaning of "Dissertatio de Bibliothecarum ac Librorum Fatis, imprimis libris comestis." This is nearly as tantalising as the wooden-legged Britisher's explanation to the inquisitive Yankee, who solemnly engaged to ask not another question were he told how that leg

was lost, and was accordingly told that "it was bitten off."

Nor is there anything to allay the curiosity thus excited in finding that the French, in the all-comprehensive spirit of their classification and nomenclature, include the book-eater with the decorous title Bibliophage, seeing that in so gossiping a work as Peignot's Dictionnaire de Bibliologie, all that is communicated under this department is, "Bibliophage signifie celui qui mange des livres." We are not favoured with any examples explanatory of the kind of books most in demand by those addicted to this species of food, nor of the effect of the different classes of books on the digestive organs. [208]

Religious and political intolerance has, as all the world knows, been a terrible enemy to literature, not only by absolute suppression, but by the restraints of the licenser. So little was literary freedom indeed understood anywhere until recent days, that it was only by an accident after the Revolution that the licensing of books was abolished in England. The new licenser, Edmond Bohun, happened in fact to be a Jacobite, and though he professed to conform to the Revolution Settlement, his sympathies with the exiled house disabled him from detecting disaffection skilfully smothered, and the House of Commons, in a rage, abolished his office by refusing to renew the Licensing Act. Of the extent to which literature has suffered by suppression, there are no data for a precise estimate. It might bring out some curious results, however, were any investigator to tell us of the books which had been effectually put down after being in existence. It would of course be found that the weak were crushed, while the strong flourished. Among the valuable bibliographical works of Peignot, is a dictionary of books which have been condemned to the flames, suppressed, or censured. We do not require to go far through his alphabet to see how futile the burnings and condemnations have been in their effect on the giants of literature. The first name of all is that of Abelard, and so going on we pick up the witty scamp Aretin, then pass on to D'Aubigné the great warrior and historian, Bayle, [209] Beaumarchais, Boulanger, Catullus, Charron, Condillac, Crébillon, and so on, down to Voltaire and Wicliffe.

Wars and revolutions have of course done their natural work on many libraries, yet the mischief effected by them has often been more visible than real, since they have tended rather to dispersion than destruction. The total loss to literature by the dispersion of the libraries of the monastic establishments in England, is probably not nearly so great as that which has accompanied the chronic mouldering away of the treasures preserved so obstinately by the lazy monks of the Levant, who were found by Mr Curzon at their public devotions laying down priceless volumes which they could not read, to protect their dirty feet from the cold floor. In the wildest times the book repository often partakes in the good fortune of the humble student whom the storm passes over. In the hour of danger, too, some friend who keeps a quiet eye upon its safety may interpose at the critical moment. The treasures of the French libraries were certainly in terrible danger when Robespierre had before him the draft of a decree, that "the books of the public libraries of Paris and the departments should no longer be permitted to offend the eyes of the republic by shameful marks of servitude." The word would have gone forth, and a good deal beyond the mere marks of servitude would have been doubtless destroyed, had not the [210] emergency called forth the courage and energies of Renouard and Didot.[59]

There are probably false impressions abroad as to the susceptibility of literature to destruction by fire. Books are not good fuel, as, fortunately, many a housemaid has found, when, among other frantic efforts and failures in fire-lighting, she has reasoned from the false data of the inflammability of a piece of paper. In the days when heretical books were burned, it was necessary to place them on large wooden stages, and after all the pains taken to demolish them, considerable readable masses were sometimes found in the embers; whence it was supposed that the devil, conversant in fire and its effects, gave them his special protection. In the end it was found easier and cheaper to burn the heretics themselves than their books.

Thus books can be burned, but they don't burn, and though in great fires libraries have been wholly or partially destroyed, we never hear of a library making a great conflagration like a cotton mill or a tallow warehouse. Nay, a story is told of a house seeming irretrievably on fire, until the flames, coming in contact with the folio Corpus Juris and the Statutes at Large, were quite unable to get over this joint barrier, and sank defeated. When anything is said about the burning of libraries, Alexandria at once flares up in the memory; but it is strange how little of a [211] satisfactory kind investigators have been able to make out, either about the formation or destruction of the many famous libraries collected from time to time in that city. There seems little doubt that Cæsar's auxiliaries unintentionally burnt one of them; its contents were probably written on papyrus, a material about as inflammable as dried reeds or wood-shavings. As to that other burning in detail, when the collection was used for fuel to the baths, and lasted some six weeks—surely never was there a greater victim of historical prejudice and calumny than the "ignorant and fanatical" Caliph Omar al Raschid. Over and over has this act been disproved, and yet it will continue to be reasserted with uniform pertinacity in successive rolling sentences, all as like each other as the successive billows in a swell at sea.[60]

Apart, however, from violence and accident, there is a constant decay of books from what might be called natural causes, keeping, like the decay of the human race, a proportion to their [212] reproduction, which varies according to place or circumstance; here showing a rapid increase where production outruns decay, and there a decrease where the morbid elements of annihilation are stronger than the active elements of reproduction. Indeed, volumes are in their varied external conditions very like human beings. There are some stout and others frail—some healthy

and others sickly; and it happens often that the least robust are the most precious. The full fresh health of some of the folio fathers and schoolmen, ranged side by side in solemn state on the oaken shelves of some venerable repository, is apt to surprise those who expect mouldy decay; the stiff hard binding is as angular as ever,—there is no abrasion of the leaves, not a single dog-ear or a spot, or even a dust-border on the mellowed white of the margin. So, too, of those quarto civilians and canonists of Leyden and Amsterdam, with their smooth white vellum coats, bearing so generic a resemblance to Dutch cheeses, that they might be supposed to represent the experiments of some Gouda dairyman on the quadrature of the circle. An easy life and an established position in society are the secret of their excellent preservation and condition. Their repose has been little disturbed by intrusive readers or unceremonious investigators, and their repute for solid learning has given them a claim to attention and careful preservation. It has [213] sometimes happened to me, as it probably has to many another inquisitive person, to penetrate to the heart of one of these solid volumes and find it closed in this wise:—As the binder of a book is himself bound to cut off as little as possible of its white margin, it may take place, if any of the leaves are inaccurately folded, that their edges are not cut, and that, as to such leaves, the book is in the uncut condition so often denounced by impatient readers. So have I sometimes had to open with a paper-cutter the pages which had shut up for two hundred years that knowledge which the ponderous volume, like any solemn holder-forth whom no one listens to, pretended to be distributing abroad from its place of dignity on the shelf. Sometimes, also, there will drop out of a heavy folio a little slip of orange-yellow paper covered with some cabalistic-looking characters, which a careful study discovers to be a hint, conveyed in high or low Dutch, that the dealer from whom the volume was purchased, about the time of some crisis in the Thirty Years' War, would be rather gratified than otherwise should the purchaser be pleased to remit to him the price of it.

Though quartos and folios are dwindling away, like many other conventional distinctions of rank, yet are authors of the present day not entirely divested of the opportunity of taking their place on the shelf like these old dignitaries. It would be as absurd, of course, to appear in folio as to step [214] abroad in the small-clothes and queue of our great-grandfathers' day, and even quarto is reserved for science and some departments of the law. But then, on the other hand, octavos are growing as large as some of the folios of the seventeenth century, and a solid roomy-looking book is still practicable. Whoever desires to achieve a sure, though it may be but a humble, niche in the temple of fame, let him write a few solid volumes with respectably sounding titles, and matter that will rather repel the reader than court him to such familiarity as may beget contempt. Such books are to the frequenter of a library like country gentlemen's seats to travellers, something to know the name and ownership of in passing. The stage-coachman of old used to proclaim each in succession—the guide-book tells them now. So do literary guide-books in the shape of library-catalogues and bibliographies, tell of these steady and respectable mansions of literature. No one speaks ill of them, or even proclaims his ignorance of their nature, and your "man who knows everything" will profess some familiarity with them, the more readily that the verity of his pretensions is not likely to be tested. A man's name may have resounded for a time through all the newspapers as the gainer of a great victory or the speaker of marvellous speeches—he may have been the most brilliant wit of some distinguished social circle—the head of a great [215] profession—even a leading statesman; yet his memory has utterly evaporated with the departure of his own generation. Had he but written one or two of these solid books, now, his name would have been perpetuated in catalogues and bibliographical dictionaries; nay, biographies and encyclopædias would contain their titles, and perhaps the day of the author's birth and death. Let those who desire posthumous fame, counting recollection as equivalent to fame, think of this.

It is with no desire to further the annihilation or decay of the stout and long-lived class of books of which I have been speaking, that I now draw attention to the book-hunter's services in the preservation of some that are of a more fragile nature, and are liable to droop and decay. We can see the process going on around us, just as we see other things travelling towards extinction. Look, for instance, at school-books, how rapidly and obviously they go to ruin. True, there are plenty of them, but save of those preserved in the privileged libraries, or of some that may be tossed aside among lumber in which they happen to remain until they become curiosities, what chance is there of any of them being in existence a century hence? Collectors know well the extreme rarity and value of ancient school-books. Nor is their value by any means fanciful. The dominie will tell us that they are old-fashioned, and the pedagogue who keeps a school, "and ca's [216] it a acaudemy," will sneer at them as "obsolete and incompatible with the enlightened adjuncts of modern tuition;" but if we are to consider that the condition of the human intellect at any particular juncture is worth studying, it is certainly of importance to know on what food its infancy is fed. And so of children's play-books as well as their work-books; these are as ephemeral as their other toys. Retaining dear recollections of some that were the favourites, and desiring to awaken from them old recollections of careless boyhood, or perhaps to try whether your own children inherit the paternal susceptibility to their beauties, you make application to the bookseller—but, behold, they have disappeared from existence as entirely as the rabbits you fed, and the terrier that followed you with his cheery clattering bark. Neither name nor description—not the announcement of the benevolent publishers, "Darton, Harvey, and Darton"—can recover the faintest traces of their vestiges.[61] Old cookery-books, almanacs, books of prognostication, [217] directories for agricultural operations, guides to handicrafts, and other works of a practical nature, are infinitely valuable when they refer to remote times, and also infinitely rare.

But of course the most interesting of all are the relics of pure literature, of poems and plays. Whence have arisen all the anxious searches and disappointments, and the bitter contests, and

the rare triumphs, about the early editions of Shakespeare, separately or collectively, save from this, that they passed from one impatient hand to another, and were subjected to an unceasing greedy perusal, until they were at last used up and put out of existence? True it was to be with him—

> "So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky."

[218]

But his tuneful companions who had less vital power have lain like some ancient cemetery or buried city, in which antiquaries have been for a long age digging and searching for some fragment of intellectual treasure.

One book, and that the most read of all, was hedged by a sort of divinity which protected it, so far as that was practicable, from the dilapidating effects of use. The Bible seems to have been ever touched with reverent gentleness, and, when the sordid effects of long handling had become inevitably conspicuous, to have been generally removed out of sight, and, as it were, decently interred. Hence it is that, of the old editions of the Bible, the copies are so comparatively numerous and in such fine preservation. Look at those two folios from the types of Guttenburg and Fust, running so far back into the earliest stage of the art of printing, that of them is told the legend of a combination with the devil, which enabled one man to write so many copies identically the same. See how clean and spotless is the paper, and how black, glossy, and distinct the type, telling us how little progress printing has made since the days of its inventors, in anything save the greater rapidity with which, in consequence of the progress of machinery, it can now be executed.

[219] The reason of the extreme rarity of the books printed by the early English printers is that, being very amusing, they were used up, thumbed out of existence. Such were Caxton's Book of the Ordre of Chyualry; his Knyght of the Toure; the Myrour of the World; and the Golden Legende; Cocke Lorell's Bote, by De Worde; his Kalender of Shepeherdes, and suchlike. If any one feels an interest in the process of exhaustion, by which such treasures were reduced to rarity, he may easily witness it in the *débris* of a circulating library; and perhaps he will find the phenomenon in still more distinct operation at any book-stall where lie heaps of school-books, odd volumes of novels, and a choice of Watts's Hymns and Pilgrim's Progresses. Here, too, it is possible that the enlightened onlooker may catch sight of the book-hunter plying his vocation, much after the manner in which, in some ill-regulated town, he may have beheld the *chiffonniers*, at early dawn, rummaging among the cinder heaps for ejected treasures. A ragged morsel is perhaps carefully severed from the heap, wrapped in paper to keep its leaves together, and deposited in the purchaser's pocket. You would probably find it difficult to recognise the fragment, if you should see it in the brilliancy of its resuscitation. A skilled and cautious workman has applied a bituminous solvent to its ragged edges, and literally incorporated, by a sort of paper-making process, each mouldering page into a broad leaf of fine strong paper, in which the print, according to a simile used for such occasions, seems like a small rivulet in a wide meadow of [220] margin. This is termed inlaying, and is a very lofty department in the art of binding. Then there is, besides, the grandeur of russia or morocco, with gilding, and tooling, and marbling, and perhaps a ribbon marker, dangling out with a decoration at its end—all tending, like stars, and garters, and official robes, to stamp the outer insignia of importance on the book, and to warn all the world to respect it, and save it from the risks to which the common herd of literature is liable. The French have, as usual, dignified the process which restores diseased books to health and condition by an appropriate technical name—it is Bibliuguiancie; and under that title it will be found fitly and appropriately discussed in the Dictionnaire de Bibliologie of Peignot, who specially mentions two practitioners of this kind as having conferred lustre on their profession by their skill and success—Vialard and Heudier.[62]

[221] I have recourse to our old friend Monkbarns again for a brilliant description of the prowler among the book-stalls, in the performance of the function assigned to him in the dispensation of things,—renewing my already recorded protest against the legitimacy of the commercial part of the transaction:—

"'Snuffy Davie bought the game of Chess, 1474, the first book ever printed in England, from a stall in Holland, for about two groschen, or twopence of our money. He sold it to Osborne for [222] twenty pounds, and as many books as came to twenty pounds more. Osborne resold this inimitable windfall to Dr Askew for sixty guineas. At Dr Askew's sale,' continued the old gentleman, kindling as he spoke, 'this inestimable treasure blazed forth in its full value, and was purchased by royalty itself for one hundred and seventy pounds! Could a copy now occur, Lord [223] only knows,' he ejaculated, with a deep sigh and lifted-up hands,—'Lord only knows what would be its ransom!—and yet it was originally secured, by skill and research, for the easy equivalent of twopence sterling. Happy, thrice happy, Snuffy Davie!—and blessed were the times when thy industry could be so rewarded!'"

[224] In such manner is it that books are saved from annihilation, and that their preservers become the feeders of the great collections in which, after their value is established, they find refuge; and herein it is that the class to whom our attention is at present devoted perform an inestimable service to literature. It is, as you will observe, the general ambition of the class to find value where there seems to be none, and this develops a certain skill and subtlety, enabling the operator, in the midst of a heap of rubbish, to put his finger on those things which have in them

the latent capacity to become valuable and curious. The adept will at once intuitively separate from its friends the book that either is or will become curious. There must be something more than mere rarity to give it this value, although high authorities speak of the paucity of copies as being everything. David Clement, the illustrious French bibliographer, who seems to have anticipated the positive philosophy by an attempt to make bibliography, as the Germans have named it, one of the exact sciences, lays it down with authority, that "a book which it is difficult to find in the country where it is sought ought to be called simply *rare*; a book which it is difficult to find in any country may be called *very rare*; a book of which there are only fifty or sixty copies existing, or which appears so seldom as if there never had been more at any time than that number of copies, ranks as *extremely rare*; and when the whole number of copies does not exceed ten, this constitutes *excessive rarity*, or rarity in the highest degree." This has been [225] received as a settled doctrine in bibliography; but it is utter pedantry. Books may be rare enough in the real or objective sense of the term, but if they are not so in the nominal or subjective sense, by being sought after, their rarity goes for nothing. A volume may be unique—may stand quite alone in the world—but whether it is so, or one of a numerous family, is never known, for no one has ever desired to possess it, and no one ever will.

But it is a curious phenomenon in the old-book trade, that rarities do not always remain rare; volumes seeming to multiply through some cryptogamic process, when we know perfectly that no additional copies are printed and thrown off. The fact is, that the rumour of scarcity, and value, and of a hunt after them, draws them from their hiding-places. If we may judge from the esteem in which they were once held, the Elzevirs must have been great rarities in this country; but they are now plentiful enough—the heavy prices in the British market having no doubt sucked them out of dingy repositories in Germany and Holland—so that, even in this department of commerce the law of supply and demand is not entirely abrogated. He who dashes at all the books called rare, or even very rare, by Clement and his brethren, will be apt to suffer the keen disappointment of finding that there are many who participate with him in the possession of the [226] same treasures. In fact, let a book but make its appearance in that author's Bibliothèque Curieuse, Historique, et Critique, ou Catalogue Raisonné des Livres difficiles à trouver; or in Graesses's Trésor des Livres Rares et Précieux; or in the Dictionnaire Bibliographique des Livres Rares, published by Caileau—or let it be mentioned as a rarity in Eibert's Allgemeines Bibliographisches Lexicon, or in Debure, Clement, Osmont, or the Repertorium Bibliographicum, —such proclamation is immediate notice to many fortunate possessors who were no more aware of the value of their dingy-looking volumes than Monsieur Jourdain knew himself to be in the habitual daily practice of talking prose.

So are we brought again back to the conclusion that the true book-hunter must not be a follower of any abstract external rules, but must have an inward sense and literary taste. It is not absolutely that a book is rare, or that it is run after, that must commend it to him, but something in the book itself. Hence the relics which he snatches from ruin will have some innate merits to recommend them. They will not be of that unhappy kind which nobody has desired to possess for their own sake, and nobody ever will. Something there will be of original genius, or if not that, yet of curious, odd, out-of-the-way information, or of quaintness of imagination, or of characteristics pervading some class of men, whether a literary or a polemical,—something, in [227] short, which people desirous of information will some day or other be anxious to read,—such are the volumes which it is desirable to save from annihilation, that they may find their place at last in some of the great magazines of the world's literary treasures.

Librarians.

t will often be fortunate for these great institutions if they obtain the services of the hunter himself, along with his spoils of the chase. The leaders in the German wars often found it an exceedingly sound policy to subsidise into their own service some captain of free lances, who might have been a curse to all around him. Your great game-preservers sometimes know the importance of taking the most notorious poacher in the district into pay as a keeper. So it is sometimes of the nature of the book-hunter, if he be of the genial sort, and free of some of the more vicious peculiarities of his kind, to make an invaluable librarian. Such an arrangement will sometimes be found to be like mercy twice blessed,—it blesseth him that gives and him that takes. The imprisoned spirit probably finds freedom at last, and those purchases and accumulations which, to the private [228] purse, were profuse and culpable recklessness, may become veritable duty; while the wary outlook and the vigilant observation, which before were only leading a poor victim into temptation, may come forth as commendable attention and zealous activity.

Sometimes mistakes have been made in selections on this principle, and a zeal has been embarked which has been found to tend neither to profit nor edification; for there have been known, at the head of public libraries, men of the Cerberus kind, who loved the books so dearly as to be unable to endure the handling of them by the vulgar herd of readers and searchers—even by those for whose special aid and service they are employed. They who have this morbid terror of the profanation of the treasures committed to their charge suffer in themselves the direst torments—something like those of a cat beholding her kittens tossed by a dog—whenever their favourites are handled; and the excruciating extent of their agonies, when any ardent and careless student dashes right into the heart of some *editio princeps* or tall copy, or perhaps lays

it open with its face on the table while he snatches another edition that he may collate a passage, is not to be conceived. It is then the dog *worrying* the kittens. Such men will only give satisfaction in great private libraries little disturbed by their proprietors, or in monastic or other corporate institutions, where it is the worthy object of the patrons to keep their collection in fine [229] condition, and, at the same time, to take order that it shall be of the least possible service to education or literature. Angelo Maï, the great librarian of the Vatican, who made so many valuable discoveries himself, had the character of taking good care that no one else should make any within his own strictly preserved hunting grounds.

In the general case, however, a bibliophile at the head of a public library is genial and communicative, and has a pleasure in helping the investigator through the labyrinth of its stores. Such men feel their strength; and the immense value of the service which they may sometimes perform by a brief hint in the right direction which the inquiry should take, or by handing down a volume, or recommending the best directory to all the learning on the matter in hand, has laid many men of letters under great obligations to them.

The most eminent type of this class of men was Magliabecchi, librarian to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, who could direct you to any book in any part of the world, with the precision with which the metropolitan policeman directs you to St Paul's or Piccadilly. It is of him that the stories are told of answers to inquiries after books, in these terms: "There is but one copy of that book in the world. It is in the Grand Seignior's library at Constantinople, and is the seventh book in the second shelf on the right hand as you go in." His faculties were, like those of all great men, self- [230] born and self-trained. So little was the impoverished soil in which he passed his infancy congenial to his pursuits in after life, that it was not within the parental intentions to teach him to read, and his earliest labours were in the shop of a greengrocer. Had his genius run on natural science, he might have fed it here, but it was his felicity and his fortune to be transferred to the shop of a patronising bookseller. Here he drank in an education such as no academic forcing machinery could ever infuse. He devoured books, and the printed leaves became as necessary to his existence as the cabbage-leaves to the caterpillars which at times made their not welcome appearance in the abjured greengrocery. Like these verdant reptiles, too, he became assimilated to the food he fed on, insomuch that he was in a manner hot-pressed, bound, marble-topped, lettered, and shelved. He could bear nothing but books around him, and would allow no space for aught else; his furniture, according to repute, being limited to two chairs, the second of which was admitted in order that the two together might serve as a bed.

Another enthusiast of the same kind was Adrien Baillet, the author, or, more properly speaking, the compiler, of the Jugemens des Savans. Some copies of this book, which has a quantity of valuable matter scattered through it, have Baillet's portrait, from which his calm scholarly [231] countenance looks genially forth, with this appropriate motto, "Dans une douce solitude, à l'abri du mensonge et de la vanité, j'adoptai la critique, et j'en fis mon étude, pour découvrir la vérité." Him, struggling with poverty, aggravated with a thirst for books, did Lamoignon the elder place at the head of his library, thus at once pasturing him in clover. When the patron told his friend, Hermant, of his desire to find a librarian possessed of certain fabulous qualifications for the duty, his correspondent said, "I will bring the very man to you;" and Baillet, a poor, frail, attenuated, diseased scholar, was produced. His kind patron fed him up, so far as a man who could not tear himself from his books, unless when nature became entirely exhausted, could be fed up. The statesman and his librarian were the closest of friends; and on the elder Lamoignon's death, the son, still more distinguished, looked up to Baillet as a father and instructor.

Men of this stamp are generally endowed with deep and solid learning. For any one, indeed, to take the command of a great public library, without large accomplishments, especially in the languages, is to put himself in precisely the position where ignorance, superficiality, and quackery are subjected to the most potent test, and are certain of detection. The number of librarians who have united great learning to a love of books, is the best practical answer to all [232] sneers about the two being incompatible. Nor, while we count among us such names as Panizzi, Birch, Halkett, Naudet, Laing, Cogswell, Jones, Pertz, and Todd, is the race of learned librarians likely to decay.

It will be worth while for the patrons of public libraries, even in appointments to small offices, to have an eye on bookish men for filling them. One librarian differs greatly from another, and on this difference will often depend the entire utility of an institution, and the question whether it is worth keeping it open or closing its door. Of this class of workman it may be said quite as aptly as of the poet, that he is born, not made. The usual testimonies to qualification—steadiness, sobriety, civility, intelligence, &c.—may all be up to the mark that will constitute a first-rate book-keeper in the mercantile sense of the term, while they are united in a very dreary and hopeless keeper of books. Such a person ought to go to his task with something totally different from the impulses which induce a man to sort dry goods or make up invoices with eminent success. In short, your librarian would need to be in some way touched with the malady which has been the object of these desultory remarks. [233]

Bibliographies.

A passing remark is due to the place and function in literature of those books which act the part of gentleman-usher towards other books, by introducing them to the notice of strangers. The talk about librarians, in fact, brings these naturally before us by the law of association, since the duties of the librarian are congenial to this special department of the literary world, the work of which has indeed been chiefly performed by eminent librarians.

The best general name for the class of books which I refer to, is that of Bibliographies, given to them by the French. Like most other products of human ingenuity, they are varied in their objects and their merits. At the one end of the scale is the Leipsic Bibliotheca Horatiana, ambitious only of commemorating the several editions of Horace, or Kuster's Bibliotheca Historica Brandenburgica, sacred to the histories of that duchy; while the other extremity aims at universality, an object which has not yet been accomplished, and seems every day fleeing farther off from those who are daring enough to pursue it. In 1545, when the world of literature was rather smaller than it now is, Conrade Gesner, in his Bibliotheca, made the first attempt at a [234] universal bibliography. The incompleteness of the result is confessed in the Epitome of the Bibliotheca, printed five years afterwards, which professes only to record *nearly* all the books written since the world began, and yet boasts of adding more than two thousand names of authors to the number mentioned in the original Bibliotheca.[63]

Of what any list of all the books that have appeared in the world might be, one may form some conception by the effort of Dr Watt, accomplished nearly fifty years ago. The work is said to have killed him; and no one who turns over the densely printed leaves of his four quartos, can feel surprised at such a result. It is by no means perfect or complete, even as a guide to books in the compiler's native tongue, yet stands in honourable contrast with the failure of several efforts to continue this portion of it down to later days. The voluminous France Littéraire of Quérard confesses its imperfections even to accomplish its limited object, by professing to devote its special attention to books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As to bibliographies of the present century aiming at universality, the Allgemeines Gelehrten [235] Lexicon of Jöcher—when accompanied by Adelung's supplement, which is its better-half—for scholarship and completeness casts into shade anything produced either in France or here. It is a guide which few people consult without passing a compliment either internally or aloud on the satisfactory result. That it contains an account of every, or nearly every, book is at once contradicted by its bulk, yet it is often remarked that no one appeals to it in vain—a specialty which seems to have arisen from the peculiar capacity of its editors to dive, as it were, into the hearts of those likely to seek their aid.

Naturally, the most satisfactory of bibliographies are those limited to books of a special class. These are frequent in law and divinity, but are most numerous in history. Hence have we such valued guides as Lelong, Dupin, Dufresnoy, and our own dynasty of historical bibliographers, which, including Leland, Bale, Pitts, and Tanner, reached its climax in Bishop Nicholson, whose introduction to the sources of British history, hitherto so valuable, will be superseded for most practical purposes on the completion of Mr Duffus Hardy's Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland. Science, though it can boast of the great compilations of Haller, and of other sources of reference to its literature, takes less aid from such [236] guides than other departments of intellectual labour, for the obvious reason that, except to the few who are pursuing its history through its dawn and progress, the latest books on any department generally supersede their predecessors. They are, in fact, themselves the guides which show the scientific inquirer his work, not lying like that of the historian and divine in old books, but in existing things and practical experiments. Of books intended to show what is to be found in others, an extremely curious history attaches to one, the Bibliotheca of Photius. It is known of course to all divines, but not necessarily, perhaps, to every other person, that this turbulent and ambitious patriarch, during what he calls his embassy to Syria, occupied himself in taking down notes of the contents of theological treatises by his predecessors and contemporaries, with his judgments on their merits. Being a man of controversial propensities, he selected for criticism the works of the authors with whom he was at war. Ranking himself among the orthodox, he thus collected notes of the works of heterodox writers, and, among these, of several eminent Arians; and the rather startling result of his labours is, that a considerable quantity of Arian literature has thus been preserved, which, but for the exertions of the man who intended to exterminate it by his censure, would have been entirely lost to the world. [237]

There are among bibliographers many highly meritorious leaders through the mysteries of occult literature—as, for instance, those who, like Placcius, Mylius, Barbière, and Melzi, have devoted themselves to the discovery and publication of the authorship of anonymous works. Their function is, on the whole, a rather cruel one, and suggests that those who betake themselves to it are men of austere character. Sometimes, to be sure, it falls to their lot to place the laurel wreath of fame on the deserving brow, but very seldom before the grave has closed over it. The resuscitation of books which have passed unnoticed because they were beyond their age, or failed to touch its sympathies, has been the class of instances in which honour has been thus conferred; and it has seldom fallen to the lot of the living, for the reason that it is the nature of the human being not very resolutely to conceal from an inquiring public those of his actions which receive the approval of his own conscience and taste. In dealing with the living, and often the recently departed, it is the function of this class of investigators to expose the weaknesses

and inconsistencies of the wise and great. It is they who have told the world about the youthful Jacobitism of the eminent pillar of the constitution; of the early Radicalism of the distinguished Conservative; of the more than questionable escapades of the popular, yet sedate divine, whose works are the supreme model of decorous piety. In this wise, indeed, the function of the [238] bibliographer of the anonymous much resembles the detective's. Like that functionary, he must not let feelings of delicacy or humanity interfere with the relentless execution of his duty, for of those who have achieved eminence as public teachers, all that they have ever told the world is the world's property. Whatever mercy may be shown to the history of their private life, cannot be claimed for the sayings which they have made or tried to make public. If they have at other times uttered opinions different from those which have achieved for them fame and eminence, those early utterances are an effective test of the value and sincerity of the later, and were it for this object only, the world is entitled to look at them. This is one of the penalties which can only be escaped by turning aside from the path to eminence.[64]

Passing from this class of interesting though rather unamiable elucidations, I come to another class of bibliographies, of which it is difficult to speak with patience—those which either profess to tell you how to find the best books to consult on every department of learning, or undertake to [239] point out to you the books which you should select for your library, or for your miscellaneous reading. As to those which profess to be universal mentors, at hand to help you with the best tools for your work, in whichever department of intellectual labour it may happen to be, *they* break down at once. Whoever has set himself to any special line of investigation, cannot open one of those books without discovering its utter worthlessness and incapacity to aid him in his own specialty. As to the other class of bibliographers, who profess to act the guide, philosopher, and friend to the collector and the reader, I cannot imagine anything more offensively audacious than the function they assume. It is an attempt of the pedagogue to assert a jurisdiction over grown intellects, and hence such books naturally develop in flagrant exaggeration the pragmatical priggism which is the pedagogue's characteristic defect. I would except from this condemnation a few bibliographers, who, instead of sitting in the schoolmaster's chair and dictating to you what it is proper that you should read, rather give you a sly hint that they are going a-vagabondising through the byways of literature, and will take you with them if you like. Among these I would chiefly be inclined to affect the company of Peignot, whose wild and wayward course of reading [240] provides for you something like to a ramble over the mountains with an Alpine hunter, the only kind of guide to whom the thorough pedestrian wanderer should give up his freedom. One of Peignot's books, called Predicatoriana, ou Révélations Singulières et Amusantes sur les Prédicateurs, brings one into scenes apt to shock a mind not tolerably hardened by eclectic reading. It is an anonymous publication, but has been traced home by the literary detectives. It may be characterised as a collection of the Buffooneries of Sermons. A little book enlivened by something like the same spirit, called The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence, is known among ourselves; and there is an answer to it assailing the Episcopal Church of Scotland, in a tone which decidedly improves on the lesson of sarcasm and malignity taught by the other side. Both writers are dishonest in the statements they make and the passages they quote from their adversaries, and both are grotesque and profane. Peignot, not being influenced by polemical rancour, is no doubt honest in his quotations, and tells you that the persons who preached the passages quoted by him uttered them in all religious sincerity. Yet wide as the Christian world stretches beyond our corner of it, by so far does the Frenchman's book in grotesqueness and profanity out-shadow the attempts of the Scottish polemical combatants. [241]

Of that highly patrician class of bibliographies which offer their services exclusively to the collectors of rare, curious, and costly books, there are so many notices dotted over this volume, that I shall only stop here to mark the recentness of their appearance in literature. To judge from the title-page, one might trace them as far back as 1676, in John Hallervord's Bibliotheca Curiosa, in which the editor professes to indicate many authors which are very rare and known to few; but this book would give no satisfaction to pure rarity seekers. Hallervord takes curious in its old sense, which corresponds in some measure with the present use of the word interesting; and the specialty of the books being known to few, seems to refer to their profundity and the rarity of learning sufficient to sound their depths. Nor does the list published a few years later by the London bookseller Hartley, though it professes to signalise very rare books, show that nice sense which discriminates game of a high order from the vulgar and useful.[65] I suspect that before we reach the dawn of this class of literature proper, we must descend at once to the year [242] 1750, distinguished by the simultaneous appearance of Clement's Bibliothèque Curieuse, and Freytag's Analecta de Libris Rarioribus.[66]

[243]

PART III.—HIS CLUB.

Clubs in General.

An author of the last generation, professing to deal with any branch of human affairs, if he were ambitious of being considered philosophical, required to go at once to the beginning of all things, where, finding man alone in the world, he would describe how the biped set about his own special business, for the supply of his own wants and desires; and then finding that the human being was, by his instincts, not a solitary but a social animal, the ambitious author would proceed in well-balanced sentences to describe how men aggregated themselves into hamlets, villages, towns, cities, counties, parishes, corporations, select vestries, and so on. I find that, without the merit of entertaining any philosophical views, I have followed, unconsciously, the same routine. Having discussed the book-hunter as he individually pursues his object, I now propose to look in upon [244] him at his club, and say something about its peculiarities, as the shape in which he takes up the pursuit collectively with others who happen to be like-minded to himself.

Those who are so very old as to remember the Episcopal Church of Scotland in that brief period of stagnant depression when the repeal of the penal laws had removed from her the lustre of martyrdom, and she had not yet attained the more secular lustre which the zeal of her wealthy votaries has since conferred on her, will be familiar with the name of Bishop Robert Jolly. To the ordinary reader, however, it may be necessary to introduce him more specifically. He was a man of singular purity, devotedness, and learning. If he had no opportunity of attesting the sincerity of his faith by undergoing stripes and bondage for the Church of his adoption, he developed in its fulness that unobtrusive self-devotion, not inferior to martyrdom, which dedicates to obscure duties the talent and energy that, in the hands of the selfish and ambitious, would be the sure apparatus of wealth and station. He had no doubt risen to an office of dignity in his own Church—he was a bishop. But to understand the position of a Scottish bishop in those days, one must figure Parson Adams, no richer than Fielding has described him, yet encumbered by a title ever associated with wealth and dignity, and only calculated, when allied with so much poverty and [245] social humility, to deepen the incongruity of his lot, and throw him more than ever on the mercy of the scorner. The office was indeed conspicuous, not by its dignities or emoluments, but by the extensive opportunities it afforded for self-devotion. One may have noticed his successor of later times giving lustre to newspaper paragraphs as "The Lord Bishop of Moray and Ross." It did not fall to the lot of him of whom I write to render his title so flagrantly incongruous. A lordship was not necessary, but it was the principle of his Church to require a bishop, and in him she got a bishop. In reality, however, he was the parish clergyman of the small and poor remnant of the Episcopal persuasion who inhabited the odoriferous fishing-town of Fraserburgh. There he lived a long life of such simplicity and abstinence as the poverty of the poorest of his flock scarcely drove them to. He had one failing to link his life with this nether world—he was a book-hunter. How with his poor income, much of which went to feed the necessities of those still poorer, he should have accomplished anything in a pursuit generally considered expensive, is among other unexplained mysteries. But somehow he managed to scrape together a curious and interesting collection, so that his name became associated with rare books, as well as with rare Christian virtues. [246]

When it was proposed to establish an institution for reprinting the works of the fathers of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, it was naturally deemed that no more worthy or characteristic name could be attached to it than that of the venerable prelate who, by his learning and virtues, had so long adorned the Episcopal chair of Moray and Ross, and who had shown a special interest in the department of literature to which the institution was to be devoted. Hence it came to pass that, through a perfectly natural process, the association for the purpose of reprinting the works of certain old divines was to be ushered into the world by the style and title of The Jolly Club.

There happened to be amongst those concerned, however, certain persons so corrupted with the wisdom of this world, as to apprehend that the miscellaneous public might fail to trace this designation to its true origin, and might indeed totally mistake the nature and object of the institution, attributing to it aims neither consistent with the ascetic life of the departed prelate, nor with the pious and intellectual objects of its founders. The counsels of these worldly-minded persons prevailed. The Jolly Club was never instituted,—at least, as an association for the reprinting of old books of divinity, though I am not prepared to say that institutions more than one so designed may not exist for other purposes. The object, however, was not entirely [247] abandoned. A body of gentlemen united themselves together under the name of another Scottish prelate, whose fate had been more distinguished, if not more fortunate; and the Spottiswoode Society was established. Here, it will be observed, there was a passing to the opposite extreme;

and so intense seems to have been the anxiety to escape from all excuse for indecorous jokes or taint of joviality, that the word Club, wisely adopted by other bodies of the same kind, was abandoned, and this one called itself a Society. To that abandonment of the *medio tutissimus* has been attributed its early death by those who contemn the taste of those other communities, essentially Book Clubs, which have taken to the devious course of calling themselves "Societies."

In fact, all our *societies*, from the broad-brimmed Society of Friends downwards, have something in them of a homespun, humdrum, plain, flat—not unprofitable, perhaps, but unattractive character. They may be good and useful, but they have no dignity or splendour, and are quite destitute of the strange meteoric power and grandeur which have accompanied the career of *Clubs*. Societies there are, indeed, which identify themselves through their very nomenclature with misfortune and misery, seeming proudly to proclaim themselves victims to all the saddest ills that flesh is heir to—as, for instance, Destitute Sick Societies, Indigent Blind Societies, Deaf [248]
and Dumb Societies, Burial Societies, and the like. The nomenclature of some of these benevolent institutions seems likely to test the etymological skill of the next generation of learned men. Perhaps some ethnological philosopher will devote himself to the special investigation and development of the phenomenon; and if such things are done then in the way in which they are now, the result will appear in something like the following shape:—

"Man, as we pursue his destiny from century to century, is still found inevitably to resolve himself into a connected and antithetic series of consecutive cycles. The eighteenth century having been an age of individuative, the nineteenth necessarily became an age of associative or coinonomic development. He, the man—to himself the *ego*, and to others the mere *homo*—ceased to revolve around the centre of gravity of his own personality, and, following the instincts of his adhesive nature, resolved himself into associative community. In this necessary development of their nature all partook, from the congresses of mighty monarchs down to those humbler but not less majestic types of the predominant influence, which, in the expressive language of that age, were recognised as twopenny goes. It is known only to those whose researches have led them through the intricacies of that phase of human progress, how multifarious and varied were the forms in which the inner spirit, objectively at work in mankind, had its external subjective development. [249]
Not only did associativeness shake the monarch on his throne, and prevail over the counsels of the assembled magnates of the realm, but it was the form in which each shape and quality of humanity, down even to penury and disease, endeavoured to express its instincts; and so the blind and the lame, the deaf and dumb, the sick and poor, made common stock of their privations, and endeavoured by the force of union to convert weakness into strength," &c.

When the history of clubs is fully written, let us hope that it will be in another fashion. If it sufficiently abound in details, such a history would be full of marvels, from the vast influences which it would describe as arising from time to time by silent obscure growth out of nothing, as it were. Just look at what clubs have been, and have done; a mere enumeration is enough to recall the impression. Not to dwell on the institutions which have made Pall Mall and its neighbourhood a conglomerate of palaces, or on such lighter affairs as "the Four-in-Hand," which the railways have left behind, or the "Alpine," whose members they carry to the field of their enjoyment: there was the Mermaid, counting among its members Shakespeare, Raleigh, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Jonson; then came the King's Head; the October; the Kit-Cat; the Beef-Steak; the Terrible Calves Head; Johnson's club, where he had Bozzy, Goldie, Burke, and Reynolds; the Poker, where Hume, [250]
Carlyle, Ferguson, and Adam Smith took their claret.

In these, with all their varied objects—literary, political, or convivial—the one leading peculiarity was the powerful influence they exercised on the condition of their times. A certain club there was with a simple unassuming name,—differing, by the way, only in three letters from that which would have commemorated the virtues of Bishop Jolly. The club in question, though nothing in the eye of the country but an easy knot of gentlemen who assembled for their amusement, cast defiance at a sovereign prince, and shook the throne and institutions of the greatest of modern states. But if we want to see the club culminating to its highest pitch of power, we must go across the water and saturate ourselves with the horrors of the Jacobin clubs, the Breton, and the Feuillans. The scenes we will there find stand forth in eternal protest against Johnson's genial definition in his Dictionary, where he calls a club "an assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions." [251]

The Structure of the Book Clubs.

here has been an addition, by no means contemptible, to the influence exercised by these institutions on the course of events, in the Book Clubs, or Printing Clubs as they are otherwise termed, of the present day. They have within a few years added a department to literature. The collector who has been a member of several may count their fruit by the thousand, all ranging in symmetrical and portly volumes. Without interfering either with the author who seeks in his copyrights the reward of his genius and labour, or with the publisher who calculates on a return for his capital, skill, and industry, the book clubs have ministered to literary wants, which these legitimate sources of supply have been unable to meet.

I hope no one is capable of reading so far through this book who is so grossly ignorant as not to

know that the Book Clubs are a set of associations for the purpose of printing and distributing among their members certain books, calculated to gratify the peculiar taste which has brought them together and united them into a club. An opportunity may perhaps be presently taken for indulging in some characteristic notices of the several clubs, their members, and their acts and [252] monuments: in the mean time let me say a word on the utilitarian efficiency of this arrangement —on the blank in the order of terrestrial things which the Book Club was required to fill, and the manner in which it has accomplished its function.

There is a class of books of which the production has in this country always been uphill work;—large solid books, more fitted for authors and students than for those termed the reading public at large—books which may hence, in some measure, be termed the raw materials of literature, rather than literature itself. They are eminently valuable; but, since it is to the intellectual manufacturer who is to produce an article of saleable literature that they are valuable, rather than to the general consumer, they do not secure an extensive sale. Of this kind of literature the staple materials are old state papers and letters—old chronicles—specimens of poetic, dramatic, and other literature, more valuable as vestiges of the style and customs of their age than for their absolute worth as works of genius—massive volumes of old divinity—disquisitions on obsolete science, and the like.

It is curious, by the way, that costly books of this sort seem to succeed better with the French than with us, though we do not generally give that people credit for excelling us in the outlay of money. Perhaps it is because they enjoy the British market as well as their own that they are [253] enabled to excel us; but they certainly do so in the publication, through private enterprise, of great costly works, having a sort of national character. The efforts to rival them in this country have been considerable and meritorious, but in many instances signally unfortunate. Take, for instance, the noble edition of Hollingshed and the other chroniclers, published in quarto volumes by the London trade; the Parliamentary History, in thirty-six volumes, each containing about as much reading as Gibbon's Decline and Fall; the State Trials; Sadler's and Thurlow's State Papers; the Harleian Miscellany, and several other ponderous publications of the same kind. All of them are to be had cheap, some at just a percentage above the price of waste paper. When an attempt was made to publish in the English language a really thorough Biographical Dictionary, an improvement on the French Biographie Universelle, it stuck in letter A, after the completion of seven dense octavo volumes—an abortive fragment bearing melancholy testimony to what such a work ought to be. Publications of this kind have, in several instances, caused great losses to some, while they have brought satisfaction to no one concerned in them. A publisher has just the same distaste as any other ordinary member of the human family to the loss of five or ten thousand pounds in hard cash. Then, as touching the purchasers,—no doubt the throwing of a [254] "remnant" on the market may sometimes bring the book into the possession of one who can put it to good use, and would have been unable to purchase it at the original price. But the rich deserve some consideration as well as the poor. It will be hard to find the man so liberal and benevolent that he will joyfully see his neighbour obtain for thirty shillings the precise article for which he has himself paid thirty pounds; nor does there exist the descendant of Adam who, whatever he may say or pretend, will take such an antithesis with perfect equanimity. Even the fortunate purchasers of portions of "the remnant," or "the broken book," as another pleasant technicality of the trade has it, are not always absolutely happy in their lot. They have been tempted by sheer cheapness to admit some bulky and unwieldy articles into their abodes, and they look askance at the commodity as being rather a sacrifice to mammon than a monument of good taste.

It has been the object of the machinery here referred to, to limit the impressions of such works to those who want and can pay for them—an extremely simple object, as all great ones are. There is, however, a minute nicety in the adjustment of the machinery, which was not obvious until it came forth in practice—a nicety without which the whole system falls to pieces. It was to accomplish this nicety that the principle of the club was found to be so well adapted. A club is essentially a [255] body to which more people want admission than can gain it; if it do not manage to preserve this characteristic, it falls to pieces for want of pressure from without, like a cask divested of its hoops. To make the books retain their value, and be an object of desire, it was necessary that the impressions should be slightly within the natural circulation—that there should be rather a larger number desirous of obtaining each volume than the number that could be supplied with it. The club effected this by its own natural action. So long as there were candidates for vacancies and the ballot-box went round, so long were the books printed in demand and valuable to their possessors. If there were 110 or 120 people willing to possess and pay for a certain class of books, the secret of keeping up the pressure from without and the value of the books, was to limit the number of members and participators to 100. There is nothing noble or disinterested in this. The arrangement has no pretension to either of these qualities; nor, when we come to the great forces which influence the supply and demand of human wants, whether in the higher or the humbler departments, will we find these qualities in force, or indeed any other motive than common selfishness. It is a sufficient vindication of the arrangement that it produced its effect. If [256] there were ten or twenty disappointed candidates, the hundred were possessed of the treasures which none could have obtained but for the restrictive arrangements. Scott used to say that the Bannatyne Club was the only successful joint-stock company he ever invested in—and the remark is the key-note of the motives which kept alive the system that has done so much good to literature.

To understand the nature and services of these valuable institutions, it is necessary to keep in view the limits within which alone they can be legitimately worked. They will not serve for the propagation of standard literature—of the books of established reputation, which are always

selling. These are merchandise, and must follow the law of trade like other commodities, whether they exist in the form of copyright monopolies, or are open to all speculators. No kind of co-operation will bring the volumes into existence so cheaply as the outlay of trade capital, which is expected to replace itself with a moderate profit after a quick sale. The perfection of this process is seen in the production and sale of that book which is ever the surest of a market—the Bible; and when a printer requires the certain and instantaneous return of his outlay, that is the shape in which he is most secure of obtaining it.

On the other hand, the clubs will not avail for ushering into the world the books of fresh ambitious authors. That paradise of the geniuses, in which their progeny are to be launched full [257] sail, where they are to encounter no risks, and draw all the profits without discount or percentage, as yet exists only in the imagination. It would not work very satisfactorily to have a committee decreeing the issues, and the remuneration to be paid to each aspirant—ten thousand copies of Poppleton's Epic, and a cheque for a thousand pounds handed over out of the common stock, to begin with—half the issue, and half the remuneration for the Lyrics of Astyagus, as a less robust and manful production, but still a pleasant, murmuring, meandering, earnest little dream-book, fresh with the solemn purpose of solitude and silence. No, it must be confessed our authors and men of letters would make sad work of it, if they had the bestowal of the honours and pecuniary rewards of literature in their hands, whether these were administered by an intellectual hierarchy or by a collective democracy. Hence the clubs have wisely confined their operations to books which are not the works of their members; and to keep clear of all risk of literary rivalries, they have been almost exclusively devoted to the promulgation of the works of authors long since dead, whether by printing from original manuscripts or from rare printed volumes.

It has been pleaded that this machinery might have been rendered influential for the encouragement of living authorship. It has been, for instance, observed, with some plausibility, [258] that he who has the divine fervour of the author in him, will sacrifice all he has to sacrifice—time, toil, and health—so that he can but secure a hearing by the world; and institutions of the nature of the book clubs might afford him this at all events, leaving him to find his way to wealth and honours, if the sources of these are in him. No doubt the history of book-publishing shows how small are the immediate inducements and the well-founded hopes that will set authors in motion, and, indeed, a very large percentage of valueless literature proves that the barriers between the author and the world are not very formidable, or become somehow easily removable. This, in fact, furnishes the answer to the pleading here alluded to; and it may further be safely said, where the book demanding an introduction professes to be a work of genius, addressing itself to all mankind, that if it really be what it professes, the market will get it. No production of the kind is liable to be lost to the world.

Here it is plaintively argued by Philemon, that the rewards of genius are very unequally distributed. Who can deny it? Nothing is distributed with perfect balance like chemical equivalents in this world, at least so far as mortal faculties are capable of estimating the elements of happiness and unhappiness in the lot of our fellow-men; nor can one imagine that a [259] world, all balanced and squared off to perfection, would be a very tolerable place to live in. Genius must take its chance, like all other qualities, and, on the whole, in a civilised country it gets on pretty well. Is it not something in itself to possess genius? and is it seemly, or a good example to the uninspired world, that its owner should deem it rather a misfortune than a blessing because he is not also surrounded by plush and shoulder-knots? If all geniuses had a prerogative right to rank and wealth, and all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, could we be sure that none but genuine geniuses would claim them, and that there would be no margin for disputation with "solemn shams"? Milton's fifteen pounds are often referred to by him who finds how hard it is to climb, &c.; but we have no "return," as the blue-books call it, of all the good opportunities afforded to intellects ambitious of arising as meteors but only showing themselves as farthing rush-lights. On the other hand, no doubt, the wide fame and the rich rewards of the popular author are not in every instance an exact measure of his superiority to the disappointed aspirant. His thousand pounds do not furnish incontrovertible evidence that he is a hundred times superior to the drudge who goes over as much work for ten pounds, and there may possibly be some one making nothing who is superior to both. [260]

Such aberrations are incident to all human affairs; but in those of literature, as in many others, they are exceptional. Here, as in other spheres of exertion, merit will in the general case get its own in some shape. Indeed, there is a very remarkable economic phenomenon, never, as it occurs to me, fully examined, which renders the superfluous success of the popular author a sort of insurance fund for enabling the obscure adventurer to enter the arena of authorship, and show what he is worth. Political economy has taught us that those old bugbears of the statute law called forestallers and regraters are eminent benefactors, in as far as their mercenary instincts enable them to see scarcity from afar, and induce them to "hold on" precisely so long as it lasts but no longer, since, if they have stock remaining on hand when abundance returns, they will be losers. Thus, through the regular course of trade, the surplus of the period of abundance is distributed over the period of scarcity with a precision which the genius of a Joseph or a Turgot could not achieve.

The phenomenon in the publishing world to which I have alluded has some resemblance to this, and comes to pass in manner following. The confirmed popular author whose books are sure to sell is an object of competition among publishers. If he is absolutely mercenary, he may stand forth in the public market and commit his works to that one who will take them on the best terms [261]

for the author and the worst for himself, like the contractor who gives in the lowest estimate in answer to an advertisement from a public department. Neither undertaking holds out such chances of gain as independent speculation may open, and thus there is an inducement to the enterprising publisher to risk his capital on the doubtful progeny of some author unknown to fame, in the hope that it may turn out "a hit." Of the number of books deserving a better fate, as also of the still greater number deserving none better than the fate they have got, which have thus been published at a dead loss to the publisher, the annals of bookselling could afford a moving history.

When an author has sold his copyright for a comparative trifle, and the book turns out a great success, it is of course matter of regret that he cannot have the cake he has eaten. This is one side of the balance-sheet, and on the other stands the debit account in the author who, through a work which proved a dead loss to its publisher, has made a reputation which has rendered his subsequent books successful, and made himself fashionable and rich. There have been instances where publishers who have bought for little the copyright of a successful book have allowed the author to participate in their gains; and I am inclined to believe that these instances are fully as numerous as those in which an author, owing his reputation and success to a book which did not [262] pay its expenses, has made up the losses of his first publisher.

If we go out of the hard market and look at the tendency of sympathies, they are all in the author's favour. Publishers, in fact, have, though it is not generally believed, a leaning towards good literature, and a tendency rather to over than to under estimate the reception it may meet with from the world. In considering whether they will take the risk of a new publication, they have no criterion to value it by except its literary merit, for they cannot obtain the votes of the public until they are committed; and, indeed, there have been a good many instances where a publisher, having a faith in some individual author and his star, has pushed and fought a way for him with dogged and determined perseverance, sometimes with a success of which, were all known, he has more of the real merit than the author, who seems to have naturally, without any external aid, taken his position among the eminent and fortunate.

There are, at the same time, special disquisitions on matters of science or learning intended for peculiar and limited audiences, which find their way to publicity without the aid of the publisher. For these there is an opening in certain institutions far older than the book clubs, and possessed of a far higher social and intellectual position, since they have the means of conferring titles of [263] dignity on those they adopt into their circle—titles which are worn not by trinkets dangling at the button-hole, but by certain cabalistic letters strung to the name in the directory of the town where the owner lives, or in the numberless biographical dictionaries which are to immortalise the present generation. So the author of an essay, especially in scholarship or science, will, if it be worth anything, find a place for it in the Transactions of one or other of the learned societies. It will probably keep company with, if indeed it be not itself one of, a series of papers which appear in the quarto volumes of the learned corporation's Transactions, merely because they cannot get into the octavo pages of the higher class of periodicals; but there they are, printed in the face of the world, whose inhabitants at large may worship them if they so please, and their authors cannot complain that they are suppressed. Whether the authors of these papers may have been ambitious of their appearance in a wider sphere, or are content with their appearance in "The Transactions," it suffices for the present purpose to explain how these volumes are a more suitable receptacle than those printed by the book clubs for essays or disquisitions by men following up their own specialties in literature or science; and if it be the case that some of the essays which appear in the Transactions of learned bodies would have gladly entered society [264] under the auspices of some eminent periodical, yet it is proper at the same time to admit that many of the most valuable of these papers, concerning discoveries or inventions which adepts alone can appreciate, could only be satisfactorily published as they have been. And so we find our way back to the proposition, that the book clubs have been judiciously restricted to the promulgation of the works of dead authors.

This has not necessarily excluded the literary contributions of living men, in the shape of editing and commenting; and it is really difficult to estimate the quantity of valuable matter which is thus deposited in obscure but still accessible places. A deal of useful work, too, has been done in the way of translation; and where the book to be dealt with is an Icelandic saga, a chronicle in Saxon, in Irish Celtic, or even in old Norman, one may confess to the weakness of letting the original remain, in some instances, unexamined, and drawing one's information with confiding gratitude from the translation furnished by the learned editor.

Let me offer one instance of the important service that may be done by affording a vehicle for translations. The late Dr Francis Adams, a village surgeon by profession, was at the same time, from taste and pursuit, a profound Greek scholar. He was accustomed to read the old authors on medicine and surgery—a custom too little respected by his profession, of whom it is the [265] characteristic defect to respect too absolutely the standard of the day. As a physician, who is an ornament to his profession and a great scholar, once observed to me, the writings of the old physicians, even if we reject them from science, may be perused with profit to the practitioner as a record of the diagnosis of cases stated by men of acuteness, experience, and accuracy of observation. Adams had translated from the Greek the works of Paul of Ægina, the father of obstetric surgery, and printed the first volume. It was totally unnoticed, for in fact there were no means by which the village surgeon could get it brought under the notice of the scattered members of his profession who desired to possess such a book. The remainder of his labours would have been lost to the world had it not been taken off his hands by the Sydenham Club,

established for the purpose of reprinting the works of the ancient physicians.

The Roxburghe Club.

reat institutions and small institutions have each individually had a beginning, though it cannot always be discovered, distance often obscuring it before it has been thought worth looking after. There is an ingenious theory abroad, to the effect [266] that every physical impulse, be it but a wave of a human hand, and that every intellectual impulse, whether it pass through the mind of a Newton or a brickmaker, goes, with whatever strength it may possess, into a common store of dynamic influences, and tells with some operative power, however imperceptible and infinitesimal, upon all subsequent events, great or small, so that everything tells on everything, and there is no one specific cause, primary or secondary, that can be assigned to any particular event. It may be so objectively, as the transcendentalists say, but to common apprehensions there are specific facts which are to them emphatic as beginnings, such as the day when any man destined for leadership in great political events was born, or that whereon the Cape of Good Hope was doubled, or America was discovered.

The beginning of the book clubs is marked by a like distinctness, both in date and circumstance. The institution did not spring in full maturity and equipment, like Pallas from the brain of Jove; it was started by a casual impulse, and remained long insignificant; but its origin and early progress are as distinctly and specifically its own, as the birth and infancy of any hero or statesman are his. It is to the garrulity of Dibdin writing before there was any prospect that this class of institutions would reach their subsequent importance and usefulness, that we owe many minute items of detail about the cradle of the new system. We first slip in upon a small dinner- [267] party, on the 4th of June in the year 1813, at the table of "Hortensius." The day was one naturally devoted to hospitality, being the birthday of the reigning monarch, George III.; but this the historian passes unnoticed, the object of all-absorbing interest being the great conflict of the Roxburghe book-sale, then raging through its forty-and-one days. Of Hortensius it is needless to know more than that he was a distinguished lawyer, and had a fine library, which having described, Dibdin passes on thus to matters of more immediate importance: "Nor is the hospitality of the owner of these treasures of a less quality and calibre than his taste; for Hortensius regaleth liberally—and as the 'night and day champagnes' (so he is pleased humorously to call them) sparkle upon his Gottingen-manufactured table-cloth, 'the master of the revels,' or (to borrow the phraseology of Pynson) of the 'feste royalle,' discourseth lustily and loudly upon the charms—not of a full-curled or full-bottomed 'King's Bench' periwig—but of a full-margined Bartholomæus or Barclay like his own."[67]

After some forty pages of this sort of matter, we get another little peep at this momentous dinner- [268] party. "On the clearance of the Gottingen-manufactured table-cloth, the Roxburghe battle formed the subject of discussion, when I proposed that we should not only be all present, if possible, on the day of the sale of the Boccaccio, but that we should meet at some 'fair tavern' to commemorate the sale thereof." They met accordingly on the 17th of June, some eighteen in number, "at the St Albans Tavern, St Albans Street, now Waterloo Place." Surely the place was symbolical, since on the 18th of June, two years afterwards, the battle of Waterloo was fought; and as the importance attributed to the contest at Roxburghe House on the 17th procured for it afterwards the name of the Waterloo of book-battles, it came to pass that there were two Waterloo commemorations treading closely one on the other's heels.

The pecuniary stake at issue, and the consequent excitement when the Valdarfer Boccaccio was knocked off, so far exceeded all anticipation, that at the festive board a motion was made and carried by acclamation, for meeting on the same day and in the same manner annually. And so the Roxburghe Club, the parent of all the book clubs, came into existence.

It must be admitted that its origin bears a curious generic resemblance to some scenes which produce less elevating results. On the day of some momentous race or cock-fight, a parcel of sporting devotees, "regular bricks," perhaps, agree to celebrate the occasion in a tavern, and when the hilarity of the evening is at its climax, some festive orator, whose enthusiasm has raised [269] him to the table, suggests, amidst loud hurrahs and tremendous table-rapping, that the casual meeting should be converted into an annual festival, to celebrate the event which has brought them together. At such an assemblage, the list of toasts will probably include Eclipse, Cotherstone, Mameluke, Plenipo, the Flying Dutchman, and other illustrious quadrupeds, along with certain bipeds, distinguished in the second degree as breeders, trainers, and riders, and may perhaps culminate in "the turf and the stud all over the world." With a like appropriate reference to the common bond of sympathy, the Roxburghe toasts included the uncouth names of certain primitive printers, as Valdarfer himself, Pannartz, Fust, and Schoeffher, terminating in "The cause of Bibliomania all over the world."[68]

The club thus abruptly formed, consisted of affluent collectors, some of them noble, with a [270] sprinkling of zealous practical men, who assisted them in their great purchases, while doing minor strokes of business for themselves. These, who in some measure fed on the crumbs that fell from the master's table, were in a position rather too closely resembling the professionals in a hunt or cricket club. The circle was a very exclusive one, however; the number limited to thirty-

one members, "one black ball excluding;" and it used to be remarked, that it was easier to get into the Peerage or the Privy Council than into "the Roxburghe."

Nothing has done so much to secure the potent influence of clubs as the profound secrecy in which their internal or domestic transactions have generally been buried. The great safeguard of [271] this secrecy will be found in that rigid rule of our social code which prohibits every gentleman from making public the affairs of the private circle; and if from lack of discretion, as it is sometimes gently termed, this law is supposed to have a lax hold on any one, he is picked off by the "one," "two," "three black balls." It is singular that a club so small and exclusive as the Roxburghe should have proved an exception to the rule of secrecy, and that the world has been favoured with revelations of its doings which have made it the object of more amusement than reverence. In fact, through failure of proper use of the black ball, it got possession of a black [272] sheep, in the person of a certain Joseph Hazlewood. He had achieved a sort of reputation in the book-hunting community by discovering the hidden author of Drunken Barnaby's Journal. In reality, however, he was a sort of literary Jack Brag. As that amusing creation of Theodore Hook's practical imagination mustered himself with sporting gentlemen through his command over the technicalities or slang of the kennel and the turf, so did Hazlewood sit at the board with scholars and aristocratic book-collectors through a free use of their technical phraseology. In either case, if the indulgence in these terms descended into a motley grotesqueness, it was excused as excessive fervour carrying the enthusiast off his feet. When Hazlewood's treasures—for he was a collector in his way—were brought to the hammer, the scraps and odds and ends it contained were found classified in groups under such headings as these—Garlands of Gravity, Poverty's Pot Pourri, Wallat of Wit, Beggar's Balderdash, Octagonal Olio, Zany's Zodiac, Noddy's Nuncheon, Mumper's Medley, Quaffing Quavers to Quip Queristers, Tramper's Twattle, or Treasure and Tinsel from the Tewksbury Tank, and the like. He edited reprints of some rare books—that is to say, he saw them accurately reprinted letter by letter. Of these one has a name which—risking due castigation if I betray gross ignorance by the supposition—I think he must certainly have [273] himself bestowed on it, as it excels the most outrageous pranks of the alliterative age. It is called, "Green-Room Gossip; or, Gravity Gallinipt; A Gallimaufry got up to guile Gymnastical and Gyneocratic Governments; Gathered and Garnished by Gridiron Gabble, Gent., Godson to Mother Goose."

The name of Joseph Hazlewood sounds well; it is gentleman-like, and its owner might have passed it into such friendly commemoration as that of Bliss, Cracherode, Heber, Sykes, Utterson, Townley, Markland, Hawtrey, and others generally understood to be gentlemen, and, in virtue of their bookish propensities, scholars. He might even, for the sake of his reprints, have been thought an "able editor," had it not been for his unfortunate efforts to chronicle the doings of the club he had got into.[69] His History, in manuscript, was sold with his other treasures after his [274] death, and was purchased by the proprietor of the Athenæum, where fragments of it were printed some fifteen years ago, along with editorial comments, greatly to the amusement, if not to the edification, of the public.

In these revelations we find how long a probation the system of book clubs had to pass through, before it shook off the convivial propensities which continued to cluster round the normal notion of a club, and reached the dry asceticism and attention to the duties of printing and editing, by which the greater number of book clubs are distinguished. It was at first a very large allowance of sack to the proportion of literary food, and it was sarcastically remarked that the club had spent a full thousand pounds in guzzling before it had produced a single valuable volume. We have some of the bills of fare at the "Roxburghe Revels," as they were called. In one, for instance, [275] there may be counted, in the first course, turtle cooked five different ways, along with turbot, john dory, tendrons of lamb, souchée of haddock, ham, chartreuse, and boiled chickens. The bill amounted to £5, 14s. a-head; or, as Hazlewood expresses it, "according to the long-established principles of 'Maysterre Cockerre,' each person had £5, 14s. to pay." Some illustrious strangers appear to have been occasionally invited to attend the symposium. If the luxurious table spread for them may have occasioned them some surprise, they must have experienced still more in the tenor of the invitation to be present, which, coming in the name of certain "Lions of Literature," as their historian and the author of the invitation calls them, was expressed in these terms—"The honour of your company is requested to dine with the Roxburghe dinner, on Wednesday the 17th instant." One might be tempted to offer the reader a fuller specimen of the historian's style; but unfortunately its characteristics, grotesque as they are, cannot be exemplified in their full breadth without being also given at full length. The accounts of the several dinners read like photographs of a mind wandering in the mazes of indigestion-begotten nightmare.[70]

When Dibdin protested against the publication of this record, he described it a great deal too [276] attractively when he called it "the concoction of one in his gayer and unsuspecting moments—the repository of private confidential communications—a mere memorandum-book of what had passed at convivial meetings, and in which 'winged words' and flying notes of merry gentlemen and friends were obviously incorporated." No! certainly wings and flying are not the ideas that naturally associate with the historian of the Roxburghe, although, in one instance, the dinner is sketched off in the following epigrammatic sentence, which startles the reader like a plover starting up in a dreary moor: "Twenty-one members met joyfully, dined comfortably, challenged eagerly, tippled prettily, divided regretfully, and paid the bill most cheerfully." On another [277] occasion the historian's enthusiasm was too expansive to be confined to plain prose, and he inflated it in lyric verse:—

"Brave was the banquet, the red red juice,

Hilarity's gift sublime,
Invoking the heart to kindred use,
And bright'ning halo of time."

This, and a quantity of additional matter of like kind, was good fun to the scorners, and, whether any of the unskilful laughed at it, scarcely made even the judicious grieve, for they thought that those who had embarked in such pompous follies deserved the lash unconsciously administered to them in his blunders by an unhappy member of their own order. [278]

In fact, however, this was the youthful giant sowing his wild oats. Along with them there lay also, unseen at first, the seed of good fruit. Of these, was a resolution adopted at the second meeting, and thus set forth by the historian in his own peculiar style: "It was proposed and concluded for each member of the club to reprint a scarce piece of ancient lore to be given to the members, one copy to be on vellum for the chairman, and only as many copies as members."

The earliest productions following on this resolution were on a very minute scale. One member, stimulated to distinguish himself by "a merry conceited jest," reprinted a French morsel called "La Contenance de la Table," and had it disposed of in such wise, that as each guest opened his napkin expecting to find a dinner-roll, he disclosed the typographical treasure. It stands No. 6 on the list of Roxburghe books, and is probably worth an enormous sum. The same enthusiast reprinted in a more formal manner a rarity called "News from Scotland, declaring the damnable life of Dr Fian, a notable sorcerer," &c. This same morsel was afterwards reprinted for another club, in a shape calculated almost to create a contemptuous contrast between the infantine efforts of the Roxburghe and the manly labours of its robust followers. It is inserted as what the French call a *pièce justificative* in Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, edited for the Bannatyne, and there occupies ten of the more than 2000 pages which make up that solid book. [279]

It was not until the year 1827 that a step was taken by the Roxburghe Club which might be called its first exhibition of sober manhood. Some of the members, ashamed of the paltry nature of the volumes circulated in the name of the club, bethought themselves of uniting to produce a book of national value. They took Sir Frederick Madden into their counsels, and authorised him to print eighty copies of the old metrical romance of Havelok the Dane. This gave great dissatisfaction to the historian, who muttered how "a MS. not discovered by a member of the club was selected, and an excerpt obtained, not furnished by the industry or under the inspection of any one member, nor edited by a member; but, in fact, after much *pro* and *con.*, it was made a complete hireling concern, truly at the expense of the club, from the copying to the publishing."

The value of this book has been attested by the extensive critical examination it has received, and by the serviceable aid it has given to all recent writers on the infancy of English literature. It was followed by another interesting old romance, William and the Wer Wolf, valuable not only as a specimen of early literature, but for the light it throws on the strange wild superstition dealing with the conversion of men into wolves, which has been found so widely prevalent that it has [280] received a sort of scientific title in the word Lycanthropy. These two books made the reputation of the Roxburghe, and proved an example and encouragement to the clubs which began to arise more or less on its model. It was a healthy protest against the Dibdinism which had ruled the destinies of the club, for Dibdin had been its master, and was the Gamaliel at whose feet Hazlewood and others patiently sat. Of the term now used, the best explanation I can give is this, that in the selection of books—other questions, such as rarity or condition, being set aside or equally balanced—a general preference is to be given to those which are the most witless, preposterous, and in every literary sense valueless—which are, in short, rubbish. What is here meant will be easily felt by any one who chooses to consult the book which Dibdin issued under the title of "The Library Companion, or the Young Man's Guide and the Old Man's Comfort in the choice of a Library." This, it will be observed, is not intended as a manual of rare or curious, or in any way peculiar books, but as the instruction of a Nestor on the best books for study and use in all departments of literature. Yet one will look in vain there for such names as Montaigne, Shaftesbury, Benjamin Franklin, D'Alembert, Turgot, Adam Smith, Malebranche, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Fénelon, Burke, Kant, Richter, Spinoza, Flechier, and many others. [281] Characteristically enough, if you turn up Rousseau in the index, you will find Jean Baptiste, but not Jean Jacques. You will search in vain for Dr Thomas Reid, the metaphysician, but will readily find Isaac Reed, the editor. If you look for Molinæus or Du Moulin, it is not there, but alphabetic vicinity gives you the good fortune to become acquainted with "Moule, Mr, his Bibliotheca Heraldica." The name Hooker will be found, not to guide the reader to the Ecclesiastical Polity, but to Dr Jackson Hooker's Tour in Iceland. Lastly, if any one shall search for Hartley on Man, he will find in the place it might occupy, or has reference to, the editorial services of "Hazlewood, Mr Joseph."

Though the Roxburghe, when it came under the fostering care of the scholarly Botfield, and secured the services of men like Madden, Wright, and Taylor, outgrew the pedantries in which it had been reared, and performed much valuable literary work, yet its chief merit is in the hints its practice afforded to others. The leading principle, indeed, which the other clubs so largely adopted after the example of the Roxburghe, was not an entire novelty. The idea of keeping up the value of a book by limiting the impression, so as to restrain it within the number who might desire to possess it, was known before the birth of this the oldest book club. The practice was [282] sedulously followed by Hearne the antiquary, and others, who provided old chronicles and books of the class chiefly esteemed by the book-hunter. The very fame of the restricted number, operating on the selfish jealousy of man's nature, brought out competitors for the possession of the book, who never would have thought of it but for the pleasant idea of keeping it out of the

hands of some one else.

There are several instances on record of an unknown book lying in the printer's warerooms, dead from birth and forgotten, having life and importance given to it by the report that all the copies, save a few, have been destroyed by a fire in the premises. This is an illustration in the sibylline direction of value being conferred by the decrease of the commodity; but by judiciously adjusting the number of copies printed, the remarkable phenomenon has been exhibited of the rarity of a book being increased by an increase in the number of copies. To understand how this may come to pass, it is necessary to recall the precept elsewhere set forth, and look on rarity as not an absolute quality, but as relative to the number who desire to possess the article. Ten copies which two hundred people want constitute a rarer book than two copies which twenty people want. Even to a sole remaining copy of some forgotten book, lying dead, as it were, and buried in some obscure library, may collective vital rarity be imparted. Let its owner print, say, twenty [283] copies for distribution—the book-hunting community have got the "hark-away," and are off after it. In this way, before the days of the clubs, many knowing people multiplied rarities; and at the present day there are reprints by the clubs themselves of much greater pecuniary value than the rare books from which they have been multiplied.

Some Book-Club Men.

No one probably did more to raise the condition of the book clubs than Sir Walter Scott. In 1823 the Roxburghe made proffers of membership to him, partly, it would seem, under the influence of a waggish desire to disturb his great secret, which had not yet been revealed. Dibdin, weighting himself with more than his usual burden of ponderous jocularity, set himself in motion to intimate to Scott the desire of the club that the Author of Waverley, with whom it was supposed that he had the means of communicating, would accept of the seat at the club vacated by the death of Sir Mark Sykes. Scott got through the affair ingeniously with a little coy fencing that deceived no one, and was finally accepted as the Author of Waverley's representative. The Roxburghe had, however, at that time, done nothing in serious book-club business, having let loose only the small flight of flimsy [284] sheets of letterpress already referred to. It was Scott's own favourite club, the Bannatyne, that first projected the plan of printing substantial and valuable volumes.

At the commencement of the same year, 1823, when he took his seat at the Roxburghe (he did not take his bottle there, which was the more important object, for some time after), he wrote to the late Robert Pitcairn, the editor of the Criminal Trials, in these terms: "I have long thought that a something of a bibliomaniacal society might be formed here, for the prosecution of the important task of publishing *dilettante* editions of our national literary curiosities. Several persons of rank, I believe, would willingly become members, and there are enough of good operatives. What would you think of such an association? David Laing was ever keen for it; but the death of Sir Alexander Boswell and of Alexander Oswald has damped his zeal. I think, if a good plan were formed, and a certain number of members chosen, the thing would still do well." [71]

Scott gave the Bannatyners a song for their festivities. It goes to the tune of "One Bottle More," and is a wonderful illustration of his versatile powers, in the admirable bibulous sort of joviality [285] which he distils, as it were, from the very dust of musty volumes, thus:—

"John Pinkerton next, and I'm truly concerned
I can't call that worthy so candid as learned;
He railed at the plaid, and blasphemed the claymore,
And set Scots by the ears in his one volume more.
One volume more, my friends, one volume more—
Celt and Goth shall be pleased with one volume more.

As bitter as gall, and as sharp as a razor,
And feeding on herbs as a Nebuchadnezzar,
His diet too acid, his temper too sour,
Little Ritson came out with his two volumes more.
But one volume, my friends, one volume more—
We'll dine on roast beef, and print one volume more."

I am tempted to add a word or two of prosaic gossip and comment to the characteristics thus so happily hit off in verse. John Pinkerton was, upon the whole, a man of simple character. The simplicity consisted in the thorough belief that never, in any country or at any period of the world's history, had there been created a human being destined to be endowed with even an approach to the genius, wisdom, and learning of which he was himself possessed. He never said a word in praise of any fellow-being, for none had ever risen so much above the wretched level of the stupid world he looked down upon as to deserve such a distinction. He condescended, however, to distribute censure, and that with considerable liberality. For instance, take his condensed notice of an unfortunate worker in his own field, Walter Goodal, whose works are [286] "fraught with furious railing, contemptible scurrility, low prejudice, small reading, and vulgar error." Thus having dealt with an unfortunate and rather obscure author, he shows his

impartiality by dealing with Macpherson, then in the zenith of his fame, in this wise: "His etymological nonsense he assists with gross falsehoods, and pretends to skill in the Celtic without quoting one single MS. In short, he deals wholly in assertion and opinion, and it is clear that he had not even an idea what learning and science are." Nor less emphatic is his railing at the plaid and blaspheming at the claymore. Donald and his brethren are thus described: "Being mere savages, but one degree above brutes, they remain still in much the same state of society as in the days of Julius Cæsar; and he who travels among the Scottish Highlanders, the old Welsh, or wild Irish, may see at once the ancient and modern state of women among the Celts, when he beholds these savages stretched in their huts, and their poor women toiling like beasts of burden for their unmanly husbands;" and finally, "being absolute savages, and, like Indians and negroes, will ever continue so, all we can do is to plant colonies among them, and by this, and encouraging their emigration, try to get rid of the breed."

This fervency is all along of the question whether the Picts, or Piks, as Pinkerton chooses to call them, were Celts or Goths. If we turn to the books of his opponent on this question, Joseph Ritson, we find him paid back in his own coin, and that so genuine, that, on reading about gross ignorance, falsehood, and folly, one would think he was still enjoying Pinkerton's own flowers of eloquence, were it not that the tenor of the argument has somehow turned to the opposite side. I drop into the note below a specimen from the last words of this controversy, as characteristic of the way in which it was conducted, and a sample of the kind of dry fuel which, when ignited by these incendiaries, blazed into so much rage.[72] [287]

Ritson was a man endowed with almost superhuman irritability of temper, and he had a genius fertile in devising means of giving scope to its restless energies. I have heard that it was one of his obstinate fancies, when addressing a letter to a friend of the male sex, instead of using the ordinary prefix of Mr or the affix Esq., to use the term "Master," as Master John Pinkerton, Master George Chalmers. The agreeable result of this was, that his communications on intricate and irritating antiquarian disputes were delivered to, and perused by, the young gentlemen of the family, so opening up new little intricate avenues, fertile in controversy and misunderstanding. But he had another and more inexhaustible resource for his superabundant irritability. In his numerous books he insisted on adopting a peculiar spelling. It was not phonetic, nor was it etymological; it was simply Ritsonian. To understand the efficacy of this arrangement, it must be remembered that the instinct of a printer is to spell according to rule, and that every deviation from the ordinary method can only be carried out by a special contest over each word. General instructions on such a matter are apt to produce unexpected results. One very sad instance I can now recall; it was that of a French author who, in a new edition of his works, desired to alter the old-fashioned spelling of the imperfect tense from o to a. To save himself trouble, on the first instance occurring in each proof, he put in the margin a general direction to change all such o's into a's. The instruction was so literally and comprehensively obeyed, that, happening to glance his eye over the volume on its completion, he found the letter o entirely excluded from it. Even the sacred name of Napoleon was irreverently printed Napalean, and the Revolution was the Revalutian. Ritson had far too sharp a scent for any little matter of controversy and irritating discussion to get into a difficulty like this. He would fight each step of the way, and such peculiarities as the following, profusely scattered over his books, may be looked upon as the names of so many battles or skirmishes with his printers—*compileër*, *writeër*, *wel*, *kil*, *onely*, *probablely*. Even when he condescended to use the spelling common to the rest of the nation, he could pick out little causes of quarrel with the way of putting it in type—as, for instance, in using the word Ass, which came naturally to him, he would not follow the practice of his day in the use of the long and short ([s]s), but inverted the arrangement thus, s[s]. This strange creature exemplified the opinion that every one must have some creed—something from without having an influence over thought and action stronger than the imperfect apparatus of human reason. Scornfully disdaining revelation from above, he groped below, and found for himself a little fetish made of turnips and cabbages. He was as fanatical a devotee of vegetarianism as others have been of a middle state or adult baptism; and, after having torn through a life of spiteful controversy with his fellow-men, and ribaldry of all sacred things, he thus expressed the one weight hanging on his conscience, that "on one occasion, when temptéed by wet, cold, and hunger in the south of Scotland, he ventured to eat a few potatoes dressed under the roast, nothing less repugnant to feelings being to be had."[73] [288] [289] [290]

To return to the services of him of mightier renown, whose genial drolleries led to these notices. Scott printed, as a contribution to his favourite club, the record of the trial of two Highlanders for murder, which brought forth some highly characteristic incidents. The victim was a certain Sergeant Davis, who had charge of one of the military parties or guards dispersed over the Highlands to keep them in order after the '45. Davis had gone from his own post at Braemar up Glen Clunie to meet the guard from Glenshee. He chose to send his men back and take a day's shooting among the wild mountains at the head of the glen, and was seen no more. How he was disposed of could easily be divined in a general way, but there were no particulars to be had. It happened, however, that there was one Highlander who, for reasons best known to himself—they were never got at—had come to the resolution of bringing his brother Highlanders, who had made away with the sergeant, to justice. It was necessary for his own safety, however, that he should be under the pressure of a motive or impulse sufficient to justify so heartless and unnatural a proceeding, otherwise he would himself have been likely to follow the sergeant's fate. Any reference to his conscience, the love of justice, respect for the laws of the land, or the like, would of course have been received with well-merited ridicule and scorn. He must have some motive which a sensible Highlander could admit as probable in itself, and sufficient for its [291]

purpose.

Accordingly the accuser said he had been visited by the sergeant's ghost, who had told him everything, and laid on him the heavy burden of bringing his slaughterers in the flesh to their account. If that were not done, the troubled spirit would not cease to walk the earth, and so long as he walked would the afflicted denouncer continue to be the victim of his ghostly visits. The case was tried at Edinburgh, and though the evidence was otherwise clear and complete, the Lowland jury were perplexed and put out by the supernatural episode. A Highland story, with a ghost acting witness at second-hand, roused all their Saxon prejudices, and they cut the knot of difficulties by declining to convict. A point was supposed to have been made, when the counsel for the defence asked the ghost-seer what language the ghost, who was English when in the flesh, spoke to the Highlander, who knew not that language; and the witness answered, through [292] his interpreter, that the spectre spoke as good Gaelic as ever was heard in Lochaber. Sir Walter Scott, however, remarks that there was no incongruity in this, if we once get over the first step of the ghost's existence. It is curious that Scott does not seem to have woven the particulars of this affair into any one of his novels.

Among those who contributed to place the stamp of a higher character on the labours of the book clubs, one of the most remarkable was Sir Alexander Boswell. A time there was, unfortunately, when his name could not easily be dissociated from exasperating political events; but now that the generation concerned in them has nearly passed away, it becomes practicable, even from the side of his political opponents, to glance at his literary abilities and accomplishments without recalling exciting recollections. He was a member of the Roxburghe, and though he did not live to see the improvement in the issues of that institution, or the others which kept pace with it, he, alone and single-handed, set the example of printing the kind of books which it was afterwards the merit of the book clubs to promulgate. He gave them, in fact, their tone. He had at his paternal home of Auchinleck a remarkable collection of rare books and manuscripts; one of these afforded the text from which the romance of Sir Tristrem was printed. He reprinted from the one [293] remaining copy in his own possession the disputation between John Knox and Quentin Kennedy, a priest who came forward against the great Reformer as the champion of the old religion. From the Auchinleck press came also reprints of Lodge's Fig for Momus, Churchyard's Mirrour of Man, the Book of the Chess, Sir James Dier's Remembrancer of the Life of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Dialogus inter Deum et Evam, and others.

The possession of a private printing-press is, no doubt, a very appalling type of bibliomania. Much as has been told us of the awful scale on which drunkards consume their favoured poison, one is not accustomed to hear of their setting up private stills for their own individual consumption. There is a Sardanapalitan excess in this bibliographical luxuriousness which refuses to partake with other vulgar mortals in the common harvest of the public press, but must itself minister to its own tastes and demands. The owner of such an establishment is subject to no extraneous caprices about breadth of margins, size of type, quarto or folio, leaded or unleaded lines; he dictates his own terms; he is master of the situation, as the French say; and is the true autocrat of literature. There have been several renowned private presses: Walpole's, at Strawberry Hill; Mr Johnes's, at Hafod; Allan's, at the Grange; and the Lee Priory Press. None of [294] these, however, went so distinctly into the groove afterwards followed by the book clubs as Sir Alexander Boswell's Auchinleck Press. In the Bibliographical Decameron is a brief history, by Sir Alexander himself, of the rise and progress of his press. He tells us how he had resolved to print Knox's Disputation: "For this purpose I was constrained to purchase two small fonts of black-letter, and to have punches cut for eighteen or twenty double letters and contractions. I was thus enlisted and articled into the service, and being infected with the *type* fever, the fits have periodically returned. In the year 1815, having viewed a portable press invented by Mr John Ruthven, an ingenious printer in Edinburgh, I purchased one, and commenced compositor. At this period, my brother having it in contemplation to present Bamfield to the Roxburghe Club, and not aware of the poverty and insignificance of my establishment, expressed a wish that his tract should issue from the Auchinleck Press. I determined to gratify him, and the portable press being too small for general purposes, I exchanged it for one of Mr Ruthven's full-sized ones; and having increased my stock to *eight* small fonts, roman and italic, with the necessary appurtenances, I placed the whole in a cottage, built originally for another purpose, very pleasantly situated on the bank of a rivulet, and, although concealed from view by the surrounding wood, not a quarter of a [295] mile from my house."[74]

To show the kind of man who co-operated with Scott in such frivolities, let me say a word or two more about Sir Alexander. He was the son, observe, of Johnson's Jamie Boswell, but he was about as like his father as an eagle might be to a peacock. To use a common colloquial phrase, he was a man of genius, if ever there was one. Had he been a poorer and socially humbler man than he was—had he had his bread and his position to make—he would probably have achieved immortality. Some of his songs are as familiar to the world as those of Burns, though their author is forgotten,—as, for instance, the song of parental farewell, beginning—

> "Good-night, and joy be wi' ye a';
> Your harmless mirth has cheered my heart,"

and ending with this fine and genial touch—

> "The auld will speak, the young maun hear;
> Be canty, but be good and leal;

Your ain ills aye hae heart to bear,
Another's aye hae heart to feel:
So, ere I set I'll see you shine,
I'll see you triumph ere I fa';
My parting breath shall boast you mine.
Good-night, and joy be wi' you a'."

His "Auld Gudeman, ye're a drucken carle," "Jenny's Bawbee," and "Jenny dang the Weaver," are [296]
of another kind, and perhaps fuller of the peculiar spirit of the man. This consisted in hitting off the deeper and typical characteristics of Scottish life with an easy touch that brings it all home at once. His lines do not seem as if they were composed by an effort of talent, but as if they were the spontaneous expressions of nature.

Take the following specimen of ludicrous pomposity, which must suffer a little by being quoted from memory: it describes a Highland procession:—

"Come the Grants o' Tullochgorum,
Wi' their pipers on afore 'em;
Proud the mithers are that bore 'em,
Fee fuddle, fau fum.

Come the Grants o' Rothiemurchus,
Ilka ane his sword an' durk has,
Ilka ane as proud's a Turk is,
Fee fuddle, fau fum."

To comprehend the spirit of this, one must endow himself with the feelings of a Lowland Scot before Waverley and Rob Roy imparted a glow of romantic interest to the Highlanders. The pompous and the ludicrous were surely never more happily interwoven. One would require to go further back still to appreciate the spirit of "Skeldon Haughs, or the Sow is Flitted." It is a picture of old Ayrshire feudal rivalry and hatred. The Laird of Bargainy resolved to humiliate his neighbour and enemy, the Laird of Kerse, by a forcible occupation of part of his territory. For the [297]
purpose of making this aggression flagrantly insulting, it was done by tethering or staking a female pig on the domain of Kerse. The animal was, of course, attended by a sufficient body of armed men for her protection. It was necessary for his honour that the Laird of Kerse should drive the animal and her attendants away, and hence came a bloody battle about "the flitting of the sow." In the contest, Kerse's eldest son and hope, Jock, is killed, and the point or moral of the narrative is, the contempt with which the old laird looks on that event, as compared with the grave affair of flitting the sow. A retainer who comes to tell him the result of the battle stammers in his narrative on account of his grief for Jock, and is thus pulled up by the laird—

"'Is the sow flitted?' cries the carle;
'Gie me an answer, short and plain—
Is the sow flitted, yammerin' wean?'"

To which the answer is—

"'The sow, deil tak her, 's ower the water,
And at her back the Crawfords clatter;
The Carrick couts are cowed and bitted.'"

Hereupon the laird's exultation breaks forth,—

"'My thumb for Jock—the sow's flitted!'"

Another man of genius and learning, whose name is a household one among the book clubs, is Robert Surtees, the historian of Durham. You may hunt for it in vain among the biographical [298]
dictionaries. Let us hope that this deficiency will be well supplied in the Biographia Britannica, projected by Mr Murray. Surtees was not certainly among those who flare their qualities before the world—he was to a peculiar degree addicted, as we shall shortly see, to hiding his light under a bushel; and so any little notice of him in actual flesh and blood, such as this left by his friend, the Rev. James Tate, master of Richmond School, interests one:—

"One evening I was sitting alone—it was about nine o'clock in the middle of summer—there came a gentle tap at the door. I opened the door myself, and a gentleman said with great modesty, 'Mr Tate, I am Mr Surtees of Mainsforth. James Raine begged I would call upon you.' 'The master of Richmond School is delighted to see you,' said I; 'pray walk in.' 'No, thank you, sir; I have ordered a bit of supper; perhaps you will walk up with me?' 'To be sure I will;' and away we went. As we went along, I quoted a line from the Odyssey. What was my astonishment to hear from Mr Surtees, not the next only, but line after line of the passage I had touched upon. Said I to myself, 'Good Master Tate, take heed; it is not often you catch such a fellow as this at Richmond.' I never spent such an evening in my life." What a pity, then, that he did not give us more of the evening, [299]
which seems to have left joyful memories to both: for Surtees himself thus commemorated it in macaronics, in which he was an adept:—

"Doctus Tatius hic residet,
Ad Coronam prandet ridet,

Spargit sales cum cachinno,
Lepido ore et concinno,
Ubique carus inter bonos
Rubei montis præsens honos."

In the same majestic folio in which this anecdote may be found—the Memoir prefixed to the History of Durham—we are likewise told how, when at college, he was waiting on a Don on business; and, feeling coldish, stirred the fire. "Pray, Mr Surtees," said the great man, "do you think that any other undergraduate in the college would have taken that liberty?" "Yes, Mr Dean," was the reply—"any one as cool as I am!" This would have been not unworthy of Brummell. The next is not in Brummell's line. Arguing with a neighbour about his not going to church, the man said, "Why, sir, the parson and I have quarrelled about the tithes." "You fool," was the reply, "is that any reason why you should go to hell?" Yet another. A poor man, with a numerous family, lost his only cow. Surtees was collecting a subscription to replace the loss, and called on the Bishop of Lichfield, who was Dean of Durham, and owner of the great tithes in the parish, to ascertain what he would give. "Give!" said the bishop; "why, a cow, to be sure. Go, Mr Surtees, to [300] my steward, and tell him to give you as much money as will buy the best cow you can find." Surtees, astonished at this unexpected generosity, said—"My Lord, I hope you will ride to heaven upon the back of that cow." A while afterwards he was saluted in the college by the late Lord Barrington, with—"Surtees, what is the absurd speech that I hear you have been making to the dean?" "I see nothing absurd in it," was the reply; "when the dean rides to heaven on the back of that cow, many of you prebendaries will be glad to lay hold of her tail!"

I have noted these innocent trifles concerning one who is chiefly known as a deep and dry investigator, for the purpose of propitiating the reader in his favour, since the sacred cause of truth renders it necessary to refer to another affair in which his conduct, however trifling it might be, was not innocent. He was addicted to literary practical jokes of an audacious kind, and carried his presumption so far as to impose on Sir Walter Scott a spurious ballad which has a place in the Border Minstrelsy. Nor is it by any means a servile imitation, which might pass unnoticed in a crowd of genuine and better ballads; but it is one of the most spirited and one of the most thoroughly endowed with individual character in the whole collection. This guilty composition is known as "The Death of Featherstonhaugh," and begins thus:— [301]

"Hoot awa', lads, hoot awa';
Ha' ye heard how the Ridleys, and Thirlwalls, and a',
Ha' set upon Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Dead Man's Haugh?
    There was Williemoteswick
    And Hardriding Dick,
And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will of the Wa',
    I canna tell a', I canna tell a',
And many a mair that the deil may knaw.

The auld man went down, but Nicol his son
Ran awa' afore the fight was begun;
    And he run, and he run,
    And afore they were done
There was many a Featherston gat sic a stun,
As never was seen since the world begun.
    I canna tell a', I canna tell a',
    Some got a skelp and some got a claw,
    But they gar't the Featherstons haud their jaw.
Some got a hurt, and some got nane,
Some had harness, and some got staen."

This imposture, professing to be taken down from the recitation of a woman eighty years old, was accompanied with some explanatory notes, characteristic of the dry antiquary, thus: "Hardriding Dick is not an epithet referring to horsemanship, but means Richard Ridley of Hardriding, the seat of another family of that name, which, in the time of Charles I., was sold on account of expenses incurred by the loyalty of the proprietor, the immediate ancestor of Sir Matthew Ridley. Will o' the Wa' seems to be William Ridley of Walltown, so called from its situation on the great Roman wall. Thirlwall Castle, whence the clan of Thirlwalls derived their name, is situated on the small river of Tippell, near the western boundary of Northumberland. It is near the wall, and [302] takes its name from the rampart having been *thirled*—that is, pierced or breached—in its vicinity."

In the Life of Surtees, the evidence of the crime is thus dryly set forth, in following up a statement of the transmission of the manuscript, and of its publication: "Yet all this was a mere figment of Surtees's imagination, originating probably in some whim of ascertaining how far he could identify himself with the stirring times, scenes, and poetical compositions which his fancy delighted to dwell on. This is proved by more than one copy among his papers of this ballad, corrected and interlined, in order to mould it to the language, the manners, and the feelings of the period and of the district to which it refers. Mr Surtees no doubt had wished to have the success of his attempt tested by the unbiassed opinion of the very first authority on the subject; and the result must have been gratifying to him."

In Scott's acknowledgment of the contribution, printed also in the Life of Surtees, there are some words that must have brought misgivings and fear of detection to the heart of the culprit, since Scott, without apparently allowing doubts to enter his mind, yet marked some peculiarities in the piece, in which it differed from others. "Your notes upon the parties concerned give it all the interest of authority, and it must rank, I suppose, among those half-serious, half-ludicrous songs, [303] in which the poets of the Border delighted to describe what they considered as the *sport of swords*. It is perhaps remarkable, though it may be difficult to guess a reason, that these Cumbrian ditties are of a different stanza and character, and obviously sung to a different kind of music, from those on the northern Border. The gentleman who collected the words may perhaps be able to describe the tune."

There is perhaps no system of ethics which lays down with perfect precision the moral code on literary forgeries, or enables us to judge of the exact enormity of such offences. The world looks leniently on them, and sometimes sympathises with them as good jokes. Allan Cunningham, who, like Ramsay, was called "honest Allan," did not lose that character by the tremendous "rises" which he took out of Cromek about those remains of Nithsdale and Galloway song—a case in point so far as principle goes, but differing somewhat in the intellectual rank of the victim to the hoax. The temptation to commit such offences is often extremely strong, and the injury seems slight, while the offender probably consoles himself with the reflection that he can immediately counteract it by confession. Vanity, indeed, often joins conscientiousness in hastening on a revelation. Surtees, however, remained in obdurate silence, and I am not aware that any edition [304] of the Minstrelsy draws attention to his handiwork. Lockhart seems not only to have been ignorant of it, but to have been totally unconscious of the risk of such a thing, since he always speaks of its author as a respectable local antiquary, useful to Scott as a harmless drudge. Perhaps Surtees was afraid of what he had done, like that teller in the House of Commons who is said by tradition to have attempted to make a bad joke in the division on the Habeas Corpus Act by counting a fat man as ten, and, seeing that the trick passed unnoticed, and also passed the measure, became afraid to confess it.

The literary history of "The Death of Featherstonhaugh" naturally excited uneasiness about the touching ballad of "Barthram's Dirge," also contributed to the Minstrelsy as the fruit of the industrious investigations of Surtees. Most readers will remember this:—

"They shot him dead at the Nine-Stone Rig,
Beside the headless cross,
And they left him lying in his blood,
Upon the moor and moss."

After this stanza, often admired for its clearness as a picture, there is a judicious break, and then come stanzas originally deficient of certain words, which, as hypothetically supplied by Surtees, were good-naturedly allowed to remain within brackets, as ingenious suggestions:— [305]

"They made a bier of the broken bough,
The sauch and the aspine grey,
And they bore him to the Lady Chapel,
And waked him there all day.

A lady came to that lonely bower,
And threw her robes aside;
She tore her ling [long] yellow hair,
And knelt at Barthram's side.

She bathed him in the Lady Well,
His wounds sae deep and sair,
And she plaited a garland for his breast,
And a garland for his hair."

A glance at the reprint of the Life of Surtees for the book club called after his name, confirms the suspicions raised by the exposure of the other ballad—this also is an imposition.[75]

Altogether, such affairs create an unpleasant uncertainty about the paternity of that delightful department of literature, our ballad poetry. Where next are we to be disenchanted? Of the way in which ancient ballads have come into existence, there is one sad example within my own knowledge. Some mad young wags, wishing to test the critical powers of an experienced collector, sent him a new-made ballad, which they had been enabled to secure only in a [306] fragmentary form. To the surprise of its fabricator, it was duly printed; but what naturally raised his surprise to astonishment, and revealed to him a secret, was, that it was no longer a fragment, but a complete ballad,—the collector, in the course of his industrious inquiries among the peasantry, having been so fortunate as to recover the missing fragments! It was a case where neither could say anything to the other, though Cato might wonder *quod non rideret haruspex, haruspicem cum vidisset*. This ballad has been printed in more than one collection, and admired as an instance of the inimitable simplicity of the genuine old versions!

It may perhaps do something to mitigate Surtees's offence in the eye of the world, that it was he who first suggested to Scott the idea of improving the Jacobite insurrections, and, in fact, writing Waverley. In the very same letter, quoted above, where Scott acknowledges the treacherous gift, he also acknowledges the hints he has received; and, mentioning the Highland stories he had

imbibed from old Stewart of Invernahyle, says: "I believe there never was a man who united the ardour of a soldier and tale-teller—or man of talk, as they call it in Gaelic—in such an excellent degree; and as he was as fond of telling as I was of hearing, I became a violent Jacobite at the age of ten years old; and even since reason and reading came to my assistance, I have never got [307] rid of the impression which the gallantry of Prince Charles made on my imagination. Certainly I will not renounce the idea of doing something to preserve these stories, and the memory of times and manners which, though existing as it were yesterday, have so strangely vanished from our eyes."

So much for certain men of mark whose pursuits or hobbies induced them to cluster round the cradle of this new literary organisation. When it was full grown it gathered about it a large body of systematic workers, who had their own special departments in the great republic of letters. To offer a just and discriminating account of these men's services would draw me through an extensive tract of literary biography.

There is a shallow prejudice very acceptable to all blockheads, that men who are both learned and laborious must necessarily be stupid. It is best to meet the approach of such a prejudice at once, by saying that the editors of club books are not mere dreary drudges, seeing the works of others accurately through the press, and attending only to dates and headings. Around and throughout the large library of volumes issued by these institutions, there run prolific veins of fresh literature pregnant with learning and ability. The style of work thus set agoing has indeed just the other day been incorporated into a sort of department of state literature since the great [308] collection called The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, of which the Master of the Rolls accepts the responsibility, is carried out in the very spirit of the book clubs, in which indeed most of the editors of the Chronicles have been trained.

Without prejudice to others, let me just name a few of those to whom the world is under obligation for services in this field of learned labour. For England, there are James Orchard Halliwell, Sir Frederic Madden, Beriah Botfield, Sir Henry Ellis, Alexander Dyce, Thomas Stapleton, William J. Thoms, Crofton Croker, Albert Way, Joseph Hunter, John Bruce, Thomas Wright, John Gough Nichols, Payne Collier, Joseph Stevenson, and George Watson Taylor, who edited that curious and melancholy book of poems, composed by the Duke of Orleans while he was a prisoner in England after the battle of Agincourt—poems composed, singularly enough, in the English language, and at a period extremely deficient in native vernacular literature.

In Scotland, it was in the earlier issues of the Bannatyne that Thomas Thomson, too indolent or fastidious to commit himself to the writing of a book, left the most accessible vestiges of that power of practically grasping historical facts and conditions, which Scott admired so greatly, and acknowledged so much benefit from. He was followed by Professor Innes, who found and taught [309] the secret of extracting from ecclesiastical chartularies, and other early records, the light they throw upon the social condition of their times, and thus collected matter for the two pleasant volumes which have become so popular. The Bannatyne Club, lately finding no more to do, wound up with a graceful compliment to David Laing—the man to whom, after Scott, it has been most indebted. And, lastly, it is in the Scotch book clubs that Joseph Robertson has had the opportunity of exercising those subtle powers of investigation and critical acumen, peculiarly his own, which have had a perceptible and substantial effect in raising archæology out of that quackish repute which it had long to endure under the name of antiquarianism. For Ireland, of which I have something farther to say at length, let it suffice in the mean time to name Dean Butler, Dr Reeves, Mr O'Donovan, Mr Eugene Curry, and Dr Henthorn Todd.

There is another and distinct class of services which have been performed through the medium of the club books. The Roxburghe having been founded on the principle that each member should print a volume, to be distributed among his colleagues, an example was thus set to men of easy fortune and scholarly tastes, which has been followed with a large liberality, of which the public have probably but a faint idea. Not only in those clubs founded on the reciprocity system of each [310] member distributing and receiving, but in those to be presently noticed, where the ordinary members pay an annual sum, to be expended in the printing of their books, have individual gentlemen come forward and borne the expense of printing and distributing costly volumes. In some instances valuable works have thus been presented to the members at the cost of those who have also undergone the literary labour of editing them.

There is something extremely refined and gentlemanlike in this form of liberality. The recipient of the bounty becomes the possessor of a handsome costly book without being subjected in any way to the obligation of receiving a direct gift at the hands of the munificent donor; for the recipient is a sort of corporation—a thing which the lawyers say has no personal responsibility and no conscience, and which all the world knows to have no gratitude.

PART IV.—BOOK-CLUB LITERATURE.

Generalities.

Nearly a quarter of a century after the birth of the first book club, a new era was ushered in by its brother, the Camden, established for the printing of books and documents connected with the early civil, ecclesiastical, and literary history of the British Empire. It discarded the rule which threw on each member the duty of printing and distributing a book, and tried the more equitable adjustment of an annual subscription to create a fund for defraying the expense of printing volumes to be distributed among the members. These, at first limited to 1000, expanded to 1200. Clubs with various objects now thickly followed. Any attempt to classify them as a whole, is apt to resemble Whately's illustration of illogical division—"*e.g.*, if you were to divide 'book' into [312] 'poetical, historical, folio, quarto, French, Latin,'" &c. One of the systems of arrangement is topographical, as the Chetham, "for the purpose of publishing biographical and historical books connected with the counties palatine of Lancaster and Chester."[76] The Surtees, again, named after our friend the ballad-monger, affects "those parts of England and Scotland included in the east between the Humber and the Firth of Forth, and in the west between the Mersey and the Clyde—a region which constituted the ancient kingdom of Northumberland." The Maitland, with its headquarters in Glasgow, gives a preference to the west of Scotland, but has not been exclusive. The Spalding Club, established in Aberdeen, the granite capital of the far north, is the luminary of its own district, and has produced fully as much valuable historical matter as any other club in Britain. Then there is the Irish Archæological—perhaps the most learned of all—with its casual assistants, the Ossianic, the Celtic, and the Iona. The Ælfric may be counted their ethnical rival, as dealing with the productions of the Anglo-Saxon enemies of the Celt. The Camden professes, as we have seen, to be general to the British Empire. The name of the club [313] called "The Oriental Translation Fund," tells its own story.

There are others, too, with no topographical connection, which express pretty well their purpose in their names—as the Shakespeare, for the old drama—the Percy, for old ballads and lyrical pieces. The Hakluyt has a delightful field—old voyages and travels. The Rae Society sticks to zoology and botany; and the Wernerian, the Cavendish, and the Sydenham, take the other departments in science, which the names given to them readily indicate.

In divinity and ecclesiastical history we have the Parker Society, named after the archbishop. Its tendencies are "Low," or, at all events, "Broad;" and as it counted some seven thousand members, it could not be allowed the run of the public mind without an antidote being accessible. Hence "The Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology," the tendency of which was not only shown in its name, but in its possessing among its earliest adherents the Rev. E.B. Pusey and the Rev. John Keble. The same party strengthened themselves by a series of volumes called the "Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church anterior to the Division of the East and West, translated by Members of the English Church." In Scotland, the two branches which deny the supremacy of Rome (it would give offence to call them both Protestant) are well represented by the [314] Spottiswoode, already referred to as the organ of Episcopacy; and the more prolific Wodrow, which, named after the zealous historian of the Troubles, was devoted to the history of Presbyterianism, and the works of the Presbyterian fathers.

Thus are the book clubs eminently the republic of letters, in which no party or class has an absolute predominance, but each enjoys a fair hearing. And whereas if we saw people for other purposes than literature combining together according to ecclesiastical divisions, as High Church or Low, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, we should probably find that each excluded from its circle all that do not spiritually belong to it, we are assured it is quite otherwise in the book clubs—that High Churchmen or Romanists have not been excluded from the Parker, or Evangelical divines prohibited from investing in the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology. Nay, the most zealous would incline to encourage the communication of their own peculiar literary treasures to their avowed theological opponents, as being likely to soften their hearts, and turn them towards the truth. Some adherents of these theological clubs there also are of slightly latitudinarian propensities, to whom the aspirations of honest religious zeal, and the records of endurance and martyrdom for conscience' sake, can never be void of interest, or fail in summoning up feelings of respectful [315] sympathy, whatever be the denominational banner under which they have been exhibited. Some of these clubs now rest from their labours, the literary strata in which they were employed having been in fact worked out. Whether dead or living, however, their books are now a considerable and varied intellectual garden, in which the literary busy bee may gather honey all the day and many a day.

It will be readily supposed from the different and utterly separate grooves in which they run, and

is very well known to the prowler among club books, that although these volumes profess to be printed from old manuscripts, or to be mere reprints of rare books, they take a considerable portion of their tone and tendency from the editor. In fact, the editor of a club book is, in the general case, a sort of literary sportsman, who professes to follow entirely his own humour or caprice, or, say, his own taste and enjoyment, in the matter which he selects, and the manner in which he lays it before his friends. Hence, many of these volumes, heavy and unimpressible as they look, yet are stamped strongly with the marks of the individuality, or of the peculiar intellectual cast, of living men. Take down, for instance, the volume of the Camden called "De Antiquis Legibus Liber," otherwise, "Cronica Majorum et Vicecomitum Londoniarum," printed from "a small folio, nine inches and a half in length and seven inches in breadth, the binding of [316] white leather covering wooden backs, and containing 159 leaves of parchment, paged continuously with Arabic cyphers." It is partly a record of the old municipal laws of the city of London, partly a chronicle of events. Had it fallen to be edited by a philosophical inquirer into the origin and principles of jurisprudence, or an investigator of the rise and progress of cities, or a social philosopher of any kind, it is hard to say what might have been made of it—easy to say that it would have been made something very different from what it is. The editor was an illustrious genealogist. Accordingly, early in his career as expositor of the character of the volume, he alights upon a proper name, not entirely isolated, but capable of being associated with other names. Thus, he is placed on a groove, and off he goes travelling in the fashion following over 220 pages of printed quarto: "Henry de Cornhill, husband of Alice de Courcy, the heiress of the Barony of Stoke Courcy Com. Somerset, and who, after his decease, re-married Warine Fitz-Gerald the king's chamberlain, leaving by each an only daughter, co-heirs of this Barony, of whom Joan de Cornhill was the wife of Hugh de Neville, Proto Forester of England, wife first of Baldwine de Riviers, eldest son and heir-apparent of William de Vernon, Earl of Devon, deceased in his father's lifetime; and, secondly, of the well-known favourite of King John, Fulk de Breauté, [317] who had name from a commune of the Canton of Goderville, arrondissement of Le Havre, department of La Seine Inférieure, rendered accompt of this his debt in the same roll;" and so on over the remainder of the 220 pages. If you turn over a few of them you will find the same sort of thing: "Agnes, the first daughter, was married to William de Vesey, of whom John de Vesey, issueless, and William de Vesey, who had issue, John de Vesey, who died before his father; and afterwards the said William de Vesey, the father, without heir of his body;" and so on.

The reader whose fortune it has been to pass a portion of his early days among venerable Scottish gentlewomen of the old school, will perhaps experience an uneasy consciousness of having encountered matter of this description before. It may recall to him misty recollections of communications which followed a course something like this: "And so ye see, auld Pittoddles, when his third wife deed, he got married upon the laird o' Blaithershin's aughteenth daughter, that was sister to Jemima, that was married intil Tam Flumexer, that was first and second cousin to the Pittoddleses, whase brither became laird afterwards, and married Blaithershin's Baubie—and that way Jemima became in a kind o' way her ain niece and her ain aunty, an' as we used to say, her gude-brither was married to his ain grannie." [318]

But there is the deep and the shallow in genealogy, as in other arts and sciences, and, incoherent as it may sound to the uninitiated, the introduction to the Liber de Antiquis Legibus is no old woman's work, but full of science and strange matter.[77] It all grows, however, in genealogical trees, these being the predominant intellectual growth in the editor's mind. In fact, your thorough genealogist is quite a peculiar intellectual phenomenon. He is led on by a special and irresistible internal influence or genius. If he should for some time endeavour to strive after a more cosmopolite intellectual vitality, the ruling spirit conquers all other pursuits. The organism of the tree resumes its predominance, and if he have healthy sturdy brains, whatever other matter they may have collected is betimes dragged into the growth, and absorbed in the vitality of the majestic bole and huge branches. There is perhaps no pursuit more thoroughly absorbing. The reason is this: No man having yet made out for himself an articulate pedigree from Adam—Sir Thomas Urquhart, the translator of Rabelais, to be sure, made one for himself, but he had his [319] tongue in his cheek all the while—no clear pedigree going back to the first of men, every one, whether short or long, Celtic or Saxon, comes into the clouds at last. It is when a pedigree approaches extinction that the occasion opens for the genealogist to exercise his subtlety and skill, and his exertions become all the more zealous and exciting that he knows he must be baffled somewhere. The pursuit is described as possessing something like the same absorbing influence which is exercised over certain minds by the higher mathematics. The devotees get to think that all human knowledge centres in their peculiar science and the cognate mysteries and exquisite scientific manipulations of heraldry, and they may be heard talking with compassionate contempt of some one so grossly ignorant as not to know a bar-dexter from a bend-sinister, or who asks what is meant by a cross potent quadrate party per pale.

These are generally great readers—reading is absolutely necessary for their pursuit; but they have a faculty of going over literary ground, picking up the proper names, and carrying them away, unconscious of anything else, as pointers go over stubble fields and raise the partridges, without taking any heed of the valuable examples of cryptogamic botany or palæozoic entomology they may have trodden over. A certain writer on logic and metaphysics was once as [320] much astonished as gratified by an eminent genealogical antiquary's expression of interest in a discovery which his last book contained. The philosopher thought his views on the subjectivity of the nominalists and the objectivity of the realists had at last been appreciated; but the discovery was merely this, that the name of a person who, according to the previously imperfect science of the genealogist, ought not to have existed then and there, was referred to in a letter from

Spinoza, cited in defence of certain views upon the absolute.

The votaries of this pursuit become powers in the world of rank and birth, from the influence they are able to bring upon questions of succession and inheritance. Hence they are, like all great influences, courted and feared. Their ministry is often desired and sometimes necessary; but it is received with misgiving and awe, since, like the demons of old summoned by incantation, they may destroy the audacious mortal who demands their services. The most sagacious and sceptical men are apt to be mildly susceptible to conviction in the matter of their own pedigrees, and, a little conscious of their weakness, they shrink from letting the sacred tree be handled by relentless and unsympathising adepts. One of these intellectual tyrants, a man of great ability, when he quarrelled with any one, used to threaten to "bastardise" him, or to find the bend-sinister somewhere in his ancestry; and his experience in long genealogies made him feel [321]
assured, in the general case, of finding what he sought if he went far enough back for it.

The next volume you lay hand on is manifestly edited by an Ecclesiologist, or a votary of that recent addition to the constituted "ologies," which has come into existence as the joint offspring of the revival of Gothic architecture and the study of primitive-church theology. Through this dim religious light he views all the things in heaven and earth that are dealt with in his philosophy. His notes are profusely decorated with a rich array of rood screens, finial crockets, lavatories, aumbries, lecterns, lych sheds, albs, stoups, sedilia, credence tables, pixes, hagioscopes, baudekyns, and squenches. It is evident that he keeps a Bestiary, or record of his experiences in bestiology, otherwise called bestial eikonography; and if he be requested to give a more explicit definition of the article, he will perhaps inform you that it is a record of the types of the ecclesiological symbolisation of beasts. If you prevail on him to exhibit to you this solemn record, which he will open with befitting reverence, the faintest suspicion of a smile curling on your lip will suffuse him with a lively sorrow for your lost condition, mixed with righteous indignation towards the irreverent folly whereof you have been guilty. He finds a great deal beyond sermons in stones, and can point out to you a certain piece of rather confused-looking architecture, which [322]
he terms a symbolical epitome of all knowledge, human and divine—an eikonographic encyclopædia.

If you desire an antidote to all this, you may find it in the editor in true blue who so largely refers to the Book of the Universal Kirk, The Hynd Let Loose, The Cloud of Witnesses, Naphtali, and Faithful Witness-Bearing Exemplified, and is great in his observations on the Auchinshauch Testimony, the Sanquhar Declaration, and that fine amalgamation of humility and dogmatism, the Informatory Vindication.[78]

There is no occasion for quarrelling with these specialties. They are typical of a zeal often prolific both in amusement and instruction; and when a man has gone through the labour of rendering many hundreds of pages from a crabbed old manuscript, or of translating as much from a nearly unknown tongue, it would be hard to deny him the recreation of a few capers on his own hobby. Keep in mind that everything of this kind is outside the substance of the book. The editor has his swing in the introduction and appendix, and the notes; perhaps also in the title and index, if he can make anything of them. But it is a principle of honour throughout the clubs that the purity of the text shall not be tampered with; and so, whether dark or light, faint or strong, it is a true [323]
impression of the times, as the reader will perhaps find in the few specimens I propose to show him. As touching the literary value of what is thus restored, there are some who will say, and get applause for doing so, that there are too many bad or second-rate books in existence already; that every work of great genius finds its way to the world at once; and that the very fact of its long obscurity proves a piece of literature to be of little value. For all this, and all that can be added to it, there are those who love these recovered relics of ancestral literature, and are prepared to give reasons for their attachment. In the first place, and apart from their purely literary merits, they are records of the intellect and manners of their age. Whoever desires to be really acquainted with the condition of a nation at any particular time—say with that of England during Elizabeth's reign, or the Commonwealth—will not attain his object by merely reading the most approved histories of the period. He must endeavour as far as he can to live back into the times, and to do this most effectually he had better saturate himself to the utmost with its fugitive literature, reading every scrap he may lay hand on until he can find no more.

Looking at these relics, on the other hand, as pure literature, no doubt what is recalled out of the past loses the freshness and the fitness to surrounding conditions which gave it pungency and [324]
emphasis in its own day, while it has not that hold on our sympathies and attachment possessed by the household literature which generation after generation has been educated to admire, and which, indeed, has made itself a part of our method of thought and our form of language. But precisely because it wants this qualification has resuscitated literature a peculiar value of its own. It breaks in with a new light upon the intellect of the day, and its conventional forms and colours. There is not in the intellectual history of mankind any so effective and brilliant an awakening as the resuscitation of classical literature. It was not one solitary star arising after another at long intervals and far apart in space, but a sudden blazing forth of a whole firmament of light. But that is a phenomenon to all appearance not to be repeated, or, more correctly speaking, not to be completed, since it broke up unfinished, leaving the world in partial darkness. Literature has been ever since wailing the loss of the seventy per cent of Livy's History, of the eighty per cent of Tacitus and of Euripides, of the still larger proportion of Æschylus and Sophocles, of the mysterious triumphs of Menander, and of the whole apparatus of the literary renown of Varro and of Atticus.[79] What would the learned world give for the restoration of these [325]
things? It may safely offer an indefinite reward, for so well has its surface been ransacked for

them that their existence is hardly possible, though some sanguine people enjoy the expectation of finding them in some obscure back-shelves in the Sultan's library. The literary results of the costly and skilful scientific process for restoring the baked books found in Herculaneum were so appallingly paltry, as to discourage the pursuit of the lost classics. The best thing brought to light [326] during the present century, indeed, is that Institute of Gaius which cost Angelo Maï such a world of trouble, and was the glory and boast of his life; but it is not a very popular or extensively read book after all. The manuscripts that have been extracted from the dirty greedy fingers of the Armenian and Abyssinian monks, are the most valuable pieces of literature that have been rescued from the far past. Important light on the early history of Eastern Christianity will no doubt be extracted from them; but they are written in those Oriental tongues which are available only to the privileged few.

Unlikely as the treasures opened by the revival of classic literature are to be to any extent increased, let us not despise the harvest of our own home gleaners. They do not find now and then a buried Hamlet, or Paradise Lost, or Hudibras—though, by the way, the Poetical Remains of Butler, which in wit and sarcasm are second only to his great work, were rescued from oblivion by the drudging antiquary Thyer, who was so conceited of the performance that he had the portrait of his own respectable and stupid face engraved beside that of Butler, in order perhaps that all men might see how incapable he was of fabricating the pieces to which it is prefixed. There is a good deal of the poetry of the club books of which it may at least be said, that worse is printed and praised as the produce of our contemporaries. [327]

It is not so much, however, in Poetry or the Drama as in Historical literature that the clubs develop their strength. It is difficult to estimate the greatness of the obligations of British history to these institutions. They have dug up, cleansed, and put in order for immediate inspection and use, a multitude of written monuments bearing on the greatest events and the most critical epochs in the progress of the empire. The time thus saved to investigators is great and priceless. In no other department of knowledge can the intellectual labourer more forcibly apply the Latin proverb which warns him that his work is indefinite, but his life brief. In the ordinary sciences the philosopher may and often does content himself with the well-rounded and professedly completed system of the day. But no one can grapple with history without feeling its inexhaustibleness. Its final boundaries seem only to retreat to a farther distance the more ground we master, as Mr Buckle found, when he betook himself, like another Atlas, to grapple with the history of the whole world.

The more an investigator finds his materials printed for him, the farther he can go. No doubt it is sometimes desirable, even necessary, to look to some manuscript authority for the clearing-up of a special point; but too often the profession of having perused a great mass of manuscript authorities is an affectation and a pedantry. He who searches for and finds the truth in any [328] considerable portion of history, performs too great an achievement to care for the praise of deciphering a few specimens of difficult handwriting, and revealing the sense hidden in certain words couched in obsolete spelling. If casual discoveries of this kind do really help him to great truths, it is well; but it too often happens that he exaggerates their value, because they are his own game, shot on his own manor. Until he has exhausted all that is in print, the student of history wastes his time in struggling with manuscripts. Hence the value of the services of the book clubs in immensely widening the arena of his immediate materials. To him their volumes are as new tools to the mechanic, or new machinery to the manufacturer. They economise, as it is termed, his labour: more correctly speaking, they increase its productiveness.

These books are fortunately rich in memorials of the great internal contest of the seventeenth century. The notes, for instance, of the proceedings of the Long Parliament, by Sir Ralph Verney, edited for the Camden by Mr Bruce, come upon us fresh from that scene of high debate, carrying with them the very marks of strife. The editor informs us that the manuscript is written almost entirely in pencil on slips of foolscap paper, which seem to have been so folded as to be conveniently placed on the knee, and transferred to the pocket as each was completed. "They [329] are," he says, "full of abrupt terminations, as if the writer occasionally gave up the task of following a rapid speaker who had got beyond him, and began his note afresh. When they relate to resolutions of the House, they often contain erasures, alterations, or other marks of the haste with which the notes were jotted down, and of the changes which took place in the subject-matter during the progress towards completion. On several important occasions, and especially in the instance of the debate on the Protestation [as to the impeachment of Strafford], the confusion and irregularity of the notes give evidence to the excitement of the House; and when the public discord rose higher, the notes become more brief and less personal, and speeches are less frequently assigned to their speakers, either from greater difficulty in reporting, or from an increased feeling of the danger of the time, and the possible use that might be made of notes of violent remarks. On several of the sheets there are marks evidently made by the writer's pencil having been forced upwards suddenly, as if by some one, in a full House, pressing hastily against his elbow while he was in the act of taking his note." [330]

John Spalding.

Looking from the opposite end of the island, and from a totally different social position, another watchful observer recorded the events of the great contest. This was John Spalding, commonly supposed to have been Commissary-Clerk of Aberdeen, but positively known in no other capacity than as author of the book aptly entitled The Troubles, or, more fully, "Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland and in England," from 1624 to 1645. Little, probably, did the Commissary-Clerk imagine, when he entered on his snug quiet office, where he recorded probates of wills and the proceedings in questions of marriage law, that he was to witness and record one of the most momentous conflicts that the world ever beheld—that contest which has been the prototype of all later European convulsions. Less still could he have imagined that fame would arise for him after two hundred years—that vehement though vain efforts should be made to endow the simple name of John Spalding with the antecedents and subsequents of a biographical existence, and that the far-off descendants of many of those lairds and barons, whose warlike deeds he noticed at humble distance, should raise a monument to his memory in an institution called by his name. He [331] was evidently a thoroughly retiring man, for he has left no vestige whatever of his individuality. Some specimens of his formal official work might have been found in the archives of his office—these would have been especially valuable for the identification of his handwriting and the settlement of disputed questions about the originality of manuscripts; but these documents, as it happens, were all burnt early in last century with the building containing them. So ardent and hot has been the chase after vestiges of this man, that the fact was once discovered that with his own hand he had written a certain deed concerning a feu-duty or rent-charge of £25, 7s. 4d., bearing date 31st January 1663; but in spite of the most resolute efforts, this interesting document has not been found.

It is probably to this same unobtrusive reserve, which has shrouded his very identity, that we owe the valuable peculiarities of the Commissary-Clerk's chronicle. He sought no public distinctions, took no ostensible side, and must have kept his own thoughts to himself, otherwise he would have had to bear record of his own share of troubles. In this calm serenity—folding the arms of resignation on the bosom of patience, as the Persians say—he took his notes of the wild contest that raged around him, setting down each event, great or small, with systematic deliberation, as if he were an experimental philosopher watching the phenomena of an eclipse or an eruption. [332] Hence nowhere, perhaps, has it been permitted to a mere reader to have so good a peep behind the scenes of the mighty drama of war. We have plenty of chroniclers of that epoch—marching us with swinging historic stride on from battle unto battle—great in describing in long sentences the musterings, the conflicts, and the retreats. In Spalding, however, we shall find the numbers and character of the combatants, their arms, their dresses, the persons who paid for these, and the prices paid—the amount they obtained in pay, and the amount they were cheated out of—their banners, distinguishing badges, watchwords, and all other like particulars, set down with the minuteness of a bailiff making an inventory of goods on which he has taken execution. He is very specific in what one may term the negative side of the characteristics of war—the misery and desolation it spreads around. The losses of this "gudeman" and that lone widow are stated as if he were their law agent, making up an account to go to a jury for damages for the "spulzie of outside and inside plenishing, nolt, horse, sheep, cocks and hens, hay, corn, peats, and fodder." He specifies all the items of mansions and farm-houses attacked and looted, or "harried," as he calls it—the doors staved in, the wainscoting pulled down—the windows smashed—the furniture made firewood of—the pleasant plantations cut down to build sleeping-huts—the linen, plate, and other [333] valuables carried off: he will even, perchance, tell how they were distributed—who it was that managed to feather his nest with the plunder, and who it was that was disappointed and cheated.

He had opportunities of bestowing his descriptive powers to good purpose. Besides its ordinary share in the vicissitudes and calamities of the war, his town of Aberdeen was twice pillaged by Montrose, with laudable impartiality—once for the Covenanters and once for the Royalists. Here is his first triumphant entry:—

"Upon the morne, being Saturday, they came in order of battle, being well armed both on horse and foot, ilk horseman having five shot at the least, whereof he had ane carbine in his hand, two pistols by his sides, and other two at his saddle-torr; the pikemen in their ranks with pike and sword; the musketeers in their ranks with musket, musket-staff, bandelier, sword, powder, ball, and match. Ilk company, both horse and foot, had their captains, lieutenants, ensigns, sergeants, and other officers and commanders, all for the most part in buff coats and goodly order. They had five colours or ensigns, whereof the Earl of Montrose had one having his motto drawn in letters, 'For Religion, the Covenant, and the Countrie.' The Earl Marechal had one, the Earl of Kinghorn had one, and the town of Dundee had two. They had trumpeters to ilk company of horsemen, and [334] drummers to ilk company of footmen. They had their meat, drink, and other provisions, bag and baggage, carried with them, done all by advice of his Excellency Field-Marshal Leslie, whose counsel General Montrose followed in this business. Then, in seemly order and good array, this army came forward and entered the burgh of Aberdeen about ten hours in the morning, at the Over Kirk gateport, syne came down through the Broadgate, through the Castlegate, over at the Justice Port to the Queen's Links directly. Here it is to be noted that few or none of this haill army wanted are blue ribbon hung about his craig [viz., neck] under his left arm, whilk they called 'the Covenanters' ribbon,' because the Lord Gordon and some other of the Marquis's bairns had ane ribbon, when he was dwelling in the toun, of ane red flesh colour, which they wore in their hats, and called it 'the royal ribbon,' as a sign of their love and loyalty to the King. In dispite or dirision

whereof this blue ribbon was worn and called 'the Covenanters' ribbon' by the haill soldiers of this army."

The well-ordered army passed through, levying a fine on the Malignants, and all seemed well; but because the citizens had not resisted Montrose, the loyal barons in the neighbourhood fell on them and plundered them; and because they had submitted to be so plundered, the Covenanting [335] army came back and plundered them also. "Many of this company went and brack up the Bishop's yetts, set on good fires of his peats standing within the close: they masterfully broke up the haill doors and windows of this stately house; they brake down beds, boards, aumries, glassen windows, took out the iron stauncheons, brake in the locks, and such as they could carry had with them, and sold for little or nothing; but they got none of the Bishop's plenishing to speak of, because it was all conveyed away before their coming." On Sunday, Montrose and the other leaders duly attended the devotional services of the eminent Covenanting divines they had brought with them. "But," says Spalding, "the renegate soldiers, in time of both preachings, is abusing and plundering New Aberdeen pitifully, without regard to God or man;" and he goes on in his specific way, describing the plundering until he reaches this climax: "No foul—cock or hen —left unkilled. The haill house-dogs, messens, and whelps within Aberdeen felled and slain upon the gate, so that neither hound nor messen or other dog was left that they could see." But there was a special reason for this. The ladies of Aberdeen, on the retiring of Montrose's army, had decorated all the vagabond street-dogs with the blue ribbon of the Covenant.

This was in 1639. Five years afterwards Montrose came back on them in more terrible guise still, [336] to punish the town for having yielded to the Covenant. In Aberdeen, Cavalier principles generally predominated; but after being overrun and plundered successively by either party, the Covenanters, having the acting government of the country at their back, succeeded in establishing a predominance in the councils of the exhausted community. Spalding had no respect for the civic and rural forces they attempted to embody, and speaks of a petty bailie "who brought in ane drill-master to learn our poor bodies to handle their arms, who had more need to handle the plough and win their livings." Montrose had now with him his celebrated army of Highlanders—or Irish, as Spalding calls them—who broke at a rush through the feeble force sent out of the town to meet them. Montrose "follows the chase to Aberdeen, his men hewing and cutting down all manner of men they could overtake within the town, upon the streets, or in their houses, and round about the town, as our men were fleeing, with broadswords, but mercy or remeid. These cruel Irish, seeing a man well clad, would first tyr [*i.e.*, strip] him and save the clothes unspoiled, then kill the man; ... nothing heard but pitiful howling, crying, weeping, mourning, through all the streets.... It is lamentable to hear how thir Irishes, who had gotten the spoil of the town, did abuse the samin. The men that they killed they would not suffer to be [337] buried, but tirled them of their clothes, syne left their naked bodies lying above the ground. The wife durst not cry nor weep at her husband's slaughter before her eyes, nor the mother for her son—which if they were heard, then they were presently slain also; ... and none durst bury the dead. Yea, and I saw two corpses carried to the burial through the old town with women only, and not are man amongst them, so that the naked corpses lay unburied so long as these limmers were ungone to the camp."

The Commissary-Clerk was on Montrose's side, but he had the hatred of a Lowlander of that day for the Highlanders. He has a great many amusing episodes describing the light-fingered lads from the hills coming down, and in the general confusion of the times plundering Cavalier and Covenanter alike; and on these occasions he drops his usual placidity and becomes rabid and abusive, as the best-tempered Americans are said to become when they speak of niggers, and deals out to them the terms limmers, thieves, robbers, cut-throats, masterful vagrants, and so forth, with great volubility. Of some of their chiefs, renowned in history, he speaks as mere robber-leaders, and when they are known by one name in their own country and another in the Lowlands, he puts an *alias* between the two. The very initial words of his chronicle are, "Efter the [338] death and burial of Angus Macintosh of Auldterlie, *alias* Angus Williamson."

Montrose having departed, Argyle's troops commenced to plunder the district for having submitted to his enemy, and these, being doubly offensive as Covenanters and Highlanders, are treated accordingly. But it is necessary to be impartial; and having bestowed so much on the Cavalier annalist, let us take a glimpse at the other side.

Robert Wodrow.

From the collections of the Reverend Robert Wodrow, the historian of The Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, a rich harvest has been reaped by the northern clubs, one of which appropriately adopted his name. He was a voluminous writer and an inexhaustible collector. It is generally classed among the failings of the book-hunter that he looks only to the far past, and disregards the contemporary and the recent. Wodrow was a valuable exception to this propensity. Reversing the spirit of the selfish bull which asks what posterity has done for us, he stored up contemporary literature for subsequent generations; and he thus left, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, such a library as a collector of the nineteenth, could he have sent a caterer before him, would have [339] prepared to await his arrival in the world. The inestimable value of the great collection of the civil-war pamphlets made by George Thomason, and fortunately preserved in the British

Museum, is very well known. Just such another of its kind is Wodrow's, made up of the pamphlets, broadsides, pasquinades, and other fugitive pieces of his own day, and of the generation immediately preceding. These are things easily obtained in their freshness, but the term fugitive is too expressive of their nature, and after a generation or two they have all flown away, save those which the book-hunter has exorcised into the vaults of some public collection. There is perhaps too little done in our own day in preserving for posterity these mute witnesses of our sayings and doings. They are too light and volatile to be caught by the Copyright Act, which so carefully deposits our quartos and octavos in the privileged libraries. It is pleasant, by the way, at this moment, to observe that the eminent scholar who has charge of the chief portion of Wodrow's gatherings, as keeper of the Advocates' Library, is following his example, by preserving a collection of the pamphlets of the present century which will keep our posterity in employment, if they desire to unwind the intricacies of all our civil and ecclesiastical sayings and doings. [340]

Wodrow carried on an active correspondence about matters of contemporary policy, and the special inquiries connected with his History: selections from this mass have furnished three sturdy volumes. Besides pamphlets, he scraped together quantities of other people's manuscripts —some of them rising high enough in importance to be counted State papers. How the minister of the quiet rural parish of Eastwood could have got his hands on them is a marvel, but it is fortunate that they were saved from destruction; and it is nearly equally fortunate that they have been well ransacked by zealous club-book makers, who have by this time probably exhausted the better part of their material. In the next place, Wodrow left behind several biographies of eminent members of his own Church, its saints and martyrs; and goodly masses out of this storehouse have also been printed.

But by far the most luxurious morsel in the worthy man's intellectual larder was not intended to reach the profane vulgar, but destined for his own special rumination. It consists in the veritable contents of his private note-books, containing his communings with his own heart and his imagination. They were written on small slips of paper, in a hand direly cramped and minute; and lest this should not be a sufficient protection to their privacy, a portion was committed to certain ciphers, which their ingenious inventor deemed, no doubt, to be utterly impregnable. In [341] stenography, however, the art of lock-picking always keeps ahead of the art of locking, as that of inventing destructive missiles seems to outstrip that of forging impenetrable plates. Wodrow's trick was the same as that of Samuel Pepys, and productive of the same consequences—the excitement of a rabid curiosity, which at last found its way into the recesses of his secret communings. They are now printed, in the fine type of the Maitland Club, in four portly quartos, under the title, Wodrow's Analecta. Few books would hold out so much temptation to a commentator, but their editor is dumb, faithfully reprinting the whole, page by page, and abstaining both from introduction and explanatory foot-note.

Perhaps in the circumstances this was a prudent measure. Those who enjoy the weaknesses of the enthusiastic historian have them at full length. As to others partially like-minded with him, but more worldly, who would rather that such a tissue of absurdities had not been revealed, they are bound over to silence, seeing that a word said against the book is a word of reproach against its idolised author—for as to the editor, he may repeat after Macbeth, "Thou canst not say I did it."

Mr Buckle's ravenous researches into the most distant recesses of literature revealed to him this pose. He has taken some curious specimens out of it, but he might have made his anthology still [342] richer had he been in search of the picturesque and ludicrous, instead of seeking solid support for his great theory of positivism. What he chiefly amuses one with in this part of the world, however, is the solemn manner in which he treats the responsibility of giving increased publicity to such things, and invokes the Deity to witness that his objects are sincere, and he is influenced by no irreverence. This feeling may arise from a very creditable source, but a native of Scotland has difficulty in understanding it. In this country, being, as many of us have been, within the very skirts of the great contests that have shaken the realm—Jacobitism on the one hand and Covenantism on the other—we are roughened and hardened, and what shocks our sensitive neighbours is very good fun to ourselves.

It appears that Wodrow had intended to publish a book on remarkable special providences—something of a scientific character it was to be, containing a classification of their phenomena, perhaps a theory of their connection with revealed religion. The natural laws by which they are ruled, he could not, of course, have sought to discover, since the principle on which he set out predicated the non-existence of such laws. The advantage of the peep enjoyed into his private note-book is, that we have his incompleted inquiries containing the stories as to which even he—a very poor adept at scepticism—required some confirmation. It is quite evident that we thus have [343] something more valuable to philosophy, and infinitely more amusing, than his completed labours would have been. Here, for instance, is one of his break-downs—an interesting phenomenon, but not irrefragably proved.

"This day I have an accompt from Marion Stevenson, who says she had it from one who was witness to it, that near Dunglass there was a child found upon the highway by some shearers, to their uptaking lately born; and they brought it to the next house, where the woman putting on the pan to make some meat for it, the pan filled full of corn; and when she turned it out and put it on the second time, it filled full of bear; and when put on the third time, it filled full of blood; and upon this the child began to alter its shapes some way, and to speak, and told them this year should have great plenty, and the next year also, but the third the land should be filled with blood

and fire and sword! and the child desired it might be taken to the place where it was found, and left there. I hear not yet what was done with it. This is so incredible, that I set it down only for after trial and inquiry about it—no confirmation."

His wife tells him a story which in her youth she had heard narrated by Mr Andrew Reid, minister of Kirkbean. It is a case of true love crossed by the interference of cruel relations. The swain leaves the country for several years—gets on—remembers the old love, and returns to fulfil his [344] vows. It happens that on the day of his return the loved one dies. He is on his way to her house in the dusk of eve when he meets an old man, who tells him that he is going on a bootless errand—he will find a dead corpse for the warm living heart he expected. The stranger, however, pitying his distress, tells him there is a remedy—hands to the lover certain pills, and says, "If you will give her these, she will recover." So it turned out, and they were happily married. A certain visitor at the house, however, "a very eminent Christian," refused to salute the lady with the usual courtesies. He takes the husband aside, "and tells him that he was very much persuaded his wife was a devil, and indeed he could not salute her; and after some discourse prevailed so far with him as to follow his advice, which was to go with her and take her to that room where he found her, and lay her down upon the bed where he found her, and quit her of a devil. Which he did, and immediately she became a dead corpse half consumed." "This had need," says cautious Wodrow, "to be weel attested, and I have writ to Mr Reid anent it." Curiosity urged me to look for and find among Wodrow's manuscripts Mr Reid's answer. He says he often heard the story from his father as a truth, but had been unaccountably negligent in noting the particulars of it; and then he favours his correspondent with some special providences anent himself, which appear [345] not to have been sufficiently pungent for Wodrow's taste.

A philosophical investigator of the established national superstitions would find excellent types of all of them in the Analecta. In the department of second-sight, for instance, restricted, with due observance to geographical propriety, within the Highland line, a guest disturbs a convivial meeting at Blair-Athol by exclaiming that he beholds a dirk sticking in the breast of their entertainer. That night he is stabbed to the heart; and even while the seer beheld the visionary dagger, a bare-legged gilly was watching outside to execute a long-cherished Highland vengeance. The Marquess of Argyle, who was afterwards beheaded, was playing with some of his clan at bowls, or bullets, as Wodrow calls them, for he was not learned in the nomenclature of vain recreations. "One of the players, when the Marquess stooped down to lift the bullet, fell pale, and said to them about him, 'Bless me! what is that I see?—my Lord with the head off, and all his shoulders full of blood.'"

In the department of fairy tricks, the infant of Thomas Paton, "a very eminent Christian," in its first use of speech, rattles out a volley of terrific oaths, then eats two cheeses, and attempts to cut its brother's throat. This was surely sufficient evidence to satisfy the most sceptical that it was a changeling, even had it not, as the result of certain well-applied prayers, "left the house [346] with an extraordinary howling and crying."

Ghost and witch stories abound. The following is selected on account of the eminence of its hero, Gilbert Rule, the founder and first Principal of the University of Edinburgh: He was travelling on the dreary road across the Grampians, called the Cairn o' Mont, on which stood a lone desolate inn. It has now disappeared, but I remember it in its dreary old age, standing alone on the moor, with its grim gables and its loupin'-on stane,—just the sort of place where, in the romances, the horrified traveller used to observe a trap-door in his bedroom floor, and at supper picked the finger of a murdered man out of a mutton-pie. There Rule arrived late at night seeking accommodation, but he could get none—the house was crammed. The only alternative was to make a bed for him in an empty house close by; it had been unoccupied for thirty years, and had a bad repute. He had to sleep there alone, for his servant would not go with him. Let Wodrow himself tell what came to pass.

"He walked some time in the room, and committed himself to God's protection, and went to bed. There were two candles left on the table, and these he put out. There was a large bright fire remaining. He had not been long in bed till the room door is opened, and an apparition, in shape [347] of a country tradesman, came in and opened the curtains without speaking a word. Mr Rule was resolved to do nothing till it should speak or attack him, but lay still with full composure, committing himself to the Divine protection and conduct. The apparition went to the table, lighted the two candles, brought them to the bedside, and made some steps toward the door, looking still to the bed, as if he would have Mr Rule rising and following. Mr Rule still lay still, till he should see his way further cleared. Then the apparition, who the whole time spoke none, took an effectual way to raise the doctor. He carried back the candles to the table, and went to the fire, and with the tongs took down the kindled coals, and laid them on the deal chamber floor. The doctor then thought it time to rise and put on his clothes, in the time of which the spectre laid up the coals again in the chimney, and, going to the table, lifted the candles and went to the door, opened it, still looking to the Principal as he would have him following the candles, which he now, thinking there was something extraordinary in the case, after looking to God for direction, inclined to do. The apparition went down some steps with the candles, and carried them into a long trance, at the end of which there was a stair which carried down to a low room. This the spectre went down, and stooped, and set down the lights on the lowest step of the stair, and straight disappears." [348]

The learned Principal, whose courage and coolness deserve the highest commendation, lighted himself back to bed with the candles, and took the remainder of his rest undisturbed. Being a man of great sagacity, on ruminating over his adventure, he informed the sheriff of the county

"that he was much of the mind there was murder in the case." The stone whereon the candles were placed was raised, and there "the plain remains of a human body were found, and bones, to the conviction of all." It was supposed to be an old affair, however, and no traces could be got of the murderer. Rule undertook the functions of the detective, and pressed into the service the influence of his own profession. He preached a great sermon on the occasion, to which all the neighbouring people were summoned; and behold, "in the time of his sermon, an old man near eighty years was awakened, and fell a-weeping, and before all the whole company acknowledged that, at the building of that house, he was the murderer."

In Wodrow's note-book the devil often cuts a humiliating figure, and is treated with a deal of rude and boisterous jeering. A certain "exercised Christian," probably during a fit of indigestion, was subjected to a heavy wrestling with doubts and irreconcilable difficulties, which raised in his mind horrible suggestions. The devil took occasion to put in a word or two for the purpose of increasing the confusion, but it had the directly opposite effect, and called forth the remark that, [349]
"on the whole the devil is a great fool, and outshoots himself oft when he thinks he has poor believers on the haunch." On another occasion the devil performed a function of a very unusual kind, one would think. He is known to quote Scripture for his purposes, but who ever before heard of his writing a sermon—and, as it seems, a sound and orthodox one? There was, it appears, a youth in the University of St Andrews, preparing to undergo his trials as a licentiate, who had good reason to fear that he would be plucked. He found he could make nothing whatever of the trial sermon, and was wandering about by lonely ways, seeking in vain for inspiration. At last "there came up to him a stranger, in habit like a minister, in black coat and band, and who addressed the youth very courteously." He was mighty inquisitive, and at length wormed out the secret grief. "I have got a text from the Presbytery. I cannot for my life compose a discourse on it, so I shall be affronted." The stranger replied—"Sir, I am a minister; let me hear the text?" He told him. "Oh, then, I have an excellent sermon on that text in my pocket, which you may peruse and commit to your memory. I engage, after you have delivered it before the Presbytery, you will be greatly approven and applauded." The youth received it thankfully; but [350]
one good turn deserves another. The stranger had an eccentric fancy that he should have a written promise from the youth to do him afterwards any favour in his power; and there being no other liquid conveniently at hand for the signature of the document, a drop of the young man's blood was drawn for the purpose. Note now what followed. "Upon the Presbytery day the youth delivered an excellent sermon upon the text appointed him, which pleased and amazed the Presbytery to a degree; only Mr Blair smelt out something in it which made him call the youth aside to the corner of the church, and thus he began with him: 'Sir, you have delivered a nate sermon, every way well pointed. The matter was profound, or rather sublime; your style was fine and your method clear; and, no doubt, young men at the beginning must make use of helps, which I doubt not you have done.' So beginning, Blair, who was a man of mighty gifts and repute, pressed on so close with repeated questions that the awful truth at last came out." There was nothing for it but that the Presbytery must engage in special exercise for the penitent youth. They prayed each in succession to no purpose, till it came to Blair's turn. "In time of his prayer there came a violent rushing of wind upon the church—so great that they thought the church should have fallen down about their ears—and with that the youth's paper and covenant drops [351]
down from the roof of the church among the ministers."

A large proportion of Wodrow's special providences are performed for the benefit of the clergy, either to provide them with certain worldly necessaries of which they may happen to be in want, or to give effect to their pious indignation, or, as some might be tempted to call it, their vindictive spite, again those who revile them. Perhaps an interdicted pastor, wandering over the desolate moors where he and his hunted flock seek refuge, is sorely impeded by some small want of the flesh, and gives expression to his wishes concerning it; when forthwith he is miraculously supplied with a shoulder of mutton or a pair of trousers, according to the nature of his necessities. He encounters ridicule or personal insult, and instantly the blasphemer is struck dead, or idiotic, or dumb, after the example of those who mocked Elisha's bald head; and Wodrow generally winds up these judgments with an appropriate admonitory text, as, for instance, "Touch not His anointed, and do His prophets no harm." As the persons for whom these special miracles are performed generally happen to be sorely beset by worldly privations and dangers, which are at their climax at the very time when they are able to call in supernatural intervention, a logician might be inclined to ask why, if the operations, and, as it were, the very motives, of the Deity are [352]
examined in respect of those events which are propitious to His favourite, they should not also be examined with the same critical pertinacity as to the greatly predominating collection of events which are decidedly unpropitious to him, so as to bring out the reason why the simpler course of saving him from all hardships and persecution had not been followed, instead of the circuitous plan of launching heavy calamities against him, and then issuing special miraculous powers to save him from a small portion of these calamities. But such logic would probably be unprofitably bestowed, and it is wiser to take the narratives as they stand and make the best use of them. Whoever looks at them with a cold scientific eye, will at once be struck by the close analogy of Wodrow's vaticinations and miracles to those of other times and places, and especially to those credited to the saints of the early Catholic Church, to which many of them, indeed, bear a wonderfully exact resemblance.

The Early Northern Saints.

 arried on by the power of association, we are thus brought to the door of an exceedingly interesting department of book-club literature,—the restoration of the true text of the early lives of the saints—a species of literature now recognised and [353] separated from others by the title of Hagiology. Everybody knows, or ought to know, that the great library of this kind of literature, published by the Bollandists, begins with the beginning of the year, and gives the life of each saint successively according to his day in the calendar. Ignorance is more excusable on the question what constitutes saintship, and, supposing you to have found your saint, on the criterion by which the day of his festival should be adjusted in the calendar. Technically, to make a saint, there should be an act of pontifical jurisdiction, all the more solemn than any secular judicial act as the interests affected are more momentous; but only a small number of the saints stand on record in the proceedings of the Vatican. In fact, the great body of them were in the enjoyment of their honours hundreds of years before the certifying process was adopted, and to investigate all their credentials was far too weighty a task to be attempted. It is taken for granted that they have been canonised, and if it be difficult to prove that they have gone through this ceremony, they hold their ground through the still greater difficulty of proving that they have not. Some of those whose sanctity is established by this kind of acclamation are so illustrious, that it would be ludicrous to suppose even the Vatican capable of adding to their eminence—more so, to imagine any process by which they could be unsanctified; such are St Patrick, St George, and St [354] Kentigern. But there is a vast crowd of village or parochial saints firmly established within their own narrow circles, but as unknown at the court of Rome as any obscure curate working in some distant valley, or among the poor of some great city. In such a crowd there will naturally be questionable personages. St Valentine, St Fiacre, St Boniface, St Lupus, St Maccesso, St Bobbio, St Fursy, and St Jingo, have names not endowed with a very sanctimonious sound, but they are well-established respectable saints. Even Alban Butler, however, has hard work in giving credit to St Longinus, St Quirinus, St Mercurius, St Hermes, St Virgil, St Plutarch, and St Bacchus. It is the occurrence of such names that makes Moreri speak of the Bollandist selection as rather loose, since it contains "vies des saintes bonnes, médiocres, mauvaises, vrayes, douteuses, et fausses."

The saint's festival-day is generally the anniversary of his death, or "deposition," as it is technically termed; but this is by no means an absolute rule. Few compilers deserve more sympathy than those who try to adjust saints' days by rule and chronology, since not only does one saint differ from another in the way in which his feast is established, but for the same saint there are different days in different countries, and even in different ecclesiastical districts—the [355] diocese of Paris having, for instance, some special saints' days of its own, which differ from the practice throughout the rest of Catholic Christendom. Some saints, too, have been shifted about from day to day by authority. Queen Margaret of Scotland, the wife of Malcolm, whose real source of influence was that she represented the old Saxon line of England, had two great days,—that of her deposition on July the 8th, and that of her translation on July the 19th; but, by a papal ordinance immediately after the Revolution, her festival was established upon the 10th of June. This was rather a remarkable day in Britain, being that on which the poor infant son of the last of the Jameses, afterwards known in Parliamentary language as the Pretender, was born. The adjustment of Queen Margaret's day to that event was a stroke of policy for the purpose of rendering the poor child respectable, and removing all doubts about warming-pans and other disagreeables; but it is not known that the measure exercised the slightest influence on the British Parliament.

Bollandus, who was the first seriously to lay his hand to the great work called after him, was a Belgian Jesuit. He had got through January and February in five folio volumes, when he died in 1658. Under the auspices of his successor, Daniel Papebroch, March appeared in 1668 and April in 1675, each in three volumes. So the great work crept on day by day and year by year, [356] absorbing the whole lives of many devoted labourers, conspicuous among whom are the unmelodious names of Peter Bosch, John Stilting, Constantine Suyskhen, Urban Sticken, Cornelius Bye, James Bue, and Ignacius Hubens. In 1762, a hundred and four years after January, September was completed. It filled eight volumes, for the work accumulated like a snow-ball as it rolled, each month being larger than its predecessor. Here the ordinary copies stop in forty-seven volumes, for the evil days of the Jesuits were coming on, and the new literary oligarchy, where Voltaire, Montesquieu, and D'Alembert held sway, had not been propitious to hagiology. A part of October was accomplished under the auspices of Maria Theresa, the Empress Queen, but for some reason or other it came within the category of rare books, and was not to be easily obtained until it was lately reprinted.

Whatever effect such a phenomenon may have on some denominations of the religious world, it can afford nothing but pure satisfaction to all historical investigators to know that this great work has been resumed in this middle of the nineteenth century. I have before me the ninth volume for October, embracing the twentieth and twenty-first days of that month, and containing about as much matter as the five volumes of Macaulay's History. On the 21st of October there is, to be sure, a very heavy job to be got through in St Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins, whose [357] bones may be seen in musty presses in the Church of the Ursulines in Cologne; but still as it moves forward, it is evident that the mighty work continues to enlarge its proportions. The winter is coming on too, a period crowded with the memorials of departed saints, as being unpropitious to men of highly ascetic habits, so that those who have undertaken the completion of the Bollandist enterprise have their work before them.

There is a marvellous uniformity in all the arrangements of this array of volumes which have thus

appeared at intervals throughout two centuries. They dealt with matter too sublimely separated from the temporal doings of men to be affected by political events, yet could they not entirely escape some slight touches from the convulsions that had recast the whole order and conditions of society. When October was begun, Belgium, where the work is published, was attached to the Austrian Empire, and the French Revolution had not yet come. The Jesuits, though not favourites among monarchs, profess a decorous loyalty, and the earlier volumes of the month have portraits of the Empress Queen, and others of the Imperial family, in the most elaborate court costume of the days before the Revolution; while the later volumes, still loyal, are illustrated by the family circle of the Protestant King of constitutional Belgium, whose good-natured face and plain broad- [358]
cloth coat are those doubtless of the right man, though one cannot help imagining that he feels himself somehow in the wrong place.

The crowds of saints who come sometimes swarming in on a single day to these teeming volumes, give one an almost oppressive notion of the quantity of goodness that must have, after all, existed in this wicked world. The labours of the Bollandists, not only in searching through all available literature, but in a special correspondence established with their Jesuit brethren throughout the world, are absolutely astounding. Their conscientious minuteness is wonderful; and many a one who thinks he is master of the ecclesiastical lore of his own parish, which he has made his specialty, has been petrified to find what he thought his discoveries all laid down with careful precision as matters of ordinary knowledge in some corner of these mighty volumes. The Bollandists obtained their information from the spot, and it is on the spot that this kind of literature must be worked out. A thoroughly accomplished antiquary, working within a limited district, will thus bring forth more full and satisfactory results, so far as they go, than even the Bollandists have achieved, and hence the great value of the services of the book clubs to hagiology. [359]

The writer of the letters bearing the signature "Veritas," in all the newspapers, would, of course, specially object to the resuscitation of this class of literature, "because it is full of fabulous accounts of miracles and other supernatural events which can only minister to credulity and superstition." But even in the extent and character of this very element there is a great significance. The size of a current falsehood is the measure of the size of the human belief that has swallowed it, and is a component part of the history of man.

The best critical writers on ancient history have agreed not to throw away the cosmogony and the hierology of Greece. It is part of Grecian history that the creed of the people was filled with a love of embodied fancies, so graceful and luxuriant. No less are the revel rout of Valhalla part of the virtual history of the Scandinavian tribes. But the lives of our saints, independently altogether of the momentous change in human affairs and prospects which they ushered in, have a substantial hold on history, of which neither the classical nor the northern hierology can boast. Poseidon and Aphrodite, Odin and Freya, vanish into the indefinite and undiscoverable at the approach of historical criticism. But separately altogether from their miracles, Cuthbert and Ninian, Columba and Kentigern, had actual existences. We know when they lived and when they died. The closer that historical criticism dogs their steps, the clearer it sees them, and the more it [360]
knows about their actual lives and ways. Even if they were not the missionaries who introduced Christianity among us,—as men who, in the old days before Britain became populous and affluent in the fruits of advanced civilisation, trod the soil that we tread, it would be interesting to know about them—about the habitations they lodged in, the garments they wore, the food they ate, the language they spoke, their method of social intercourse among each other, and the sort of government under which they lived.

That by investigation and critical inquiry we can know more of these things than our ancestors of centuries past could know, is still a notion comparatively new which has not been popularly realised. The classic literature in which our early training lies has nothing in it to show us the power of historical inquiry, and much to make us slight it. The Romans, instead of improving on the Greeks, fell in this respect behind them. Father Herodotus, credulous as he was, was a better antiquary than any who wrote in Latin before the revival of letters. Occupied entirely with the glory of their conquests, and blind to the future which their selfish tyranny was preparing for them, the Romans were equally thoughtless of the past, unless it were exaggerated and falsified into a narrative to aggrandise their own glory. Their authors abdicated the duty of leaving to the [361]
world the true narrative of the early struggles and achievements out of which the Republic and the Empire arose. It is easy to be sceptical at any time. We can cut away Romulus and Remus from accepted history now, hundreds of years after the Empire has ceased to govern or exist. But the golden opportunity for sifting the genuine out of the fabulous has long passed away. It is seldom possible to construct the infant histories of departed nationalities. The difference between the facilities which a nation has for finding out its own early history, and those which strangers have for constructing it when the nationality has allowed its deathbed to pass over without the performance of that patriotic task, is nearly as great as a man's own facilities for writing the history of his youth, and those of the biographer who makes inquiries about him after he is buried.

We are becoming wiser than the Romans in this as in other matters, and are constructing the infant histories of the various European nations out of the materials which each possesses. The biographies of those saints or missionaries who first diffused the light of the Gospel among the various communities of the Christian north, form a very large element in these materials; and no wonder, when we remember that the Church possessed all the literature, such as it was, of the age. In applying, however, to the British Empire, this new source of historical information, there [362]

arose the difficulty that it was chiefly supplied from Ireland. If all hagiology were under a general suspicion of the fabulous, Irish history was known to be a luxuriant preserve of fables, and these causes of dubiety being multiplied by each other in the mind, it seemed almost impossible to obtain a hearing for the new voice. In fact, during a long period the three nations were engaged in a competition which should carry its history through the longest track of fictitious glory, and this was a kind of work in which Ireland beat her neighbours entirely. Hence, when all were pressing pretty close upon the Deluge, Ireland took the leap at once and cleared that gulf. As a fairish record of these successful efforts, I would recommend to the reader's notice a very well-conditioned and truly learned-looking folio volume, called "The General History of Ireland, collected by the learned Jeffrey Keating, D.D., faithfully translated from the original Irish Language, with many curious Amendments taken from the Psalters of Tara and Cashel, with other authentic Records, by Dermod O'Connor, Antiquary to the Kingdom of Ireland." Opposite to the title-page is a full-length portrait of Brian Boroomh, whose fame has been increased of late years by the achievements of his descendant in the cabbage-garden. The monarch is in full burnished plate armour, with scarf and surcoat—all three centuries at least later in fashion than [363] the era attributed to him. But that is a trifle. It would involve much hard and useless work to make war on the anachronisms of historical portraits, and we are not to judge of historical works by their engraved decorations. Here, however, the picture is sober truth itself to what the inquiring reader finds in the typography. After the descriptive geographical introduction common in old histories, the real commencement comes upon us in this form:—

"Of the first invasion of Ireland before the Flood!" "Various," the author tells us, "are the opinions concerning the first mortal that set a foot upon this island. We are told by some that three of the daughters of Cain arrived here, several hundred years before the Deluge. The white book, which in the Irish is called Leabhar Dhroma Sneachta, informs us that the oldest of these daughters was called Banba, and gave a name to the whole kingdom. After these, we are told that three men and fifty women arrived in the island; one of them was called Ladhra, from whom was derived the name of Ardladhan. These people lived forty years in the country, and at last they all died of a certain distemper in a week's time. From their death, it is said that the island was uninhabited for the space of an hundred years, till the world was drowned. We are told that the first who set foot [364] upon the island were three fishermen that were driven thither by a storm from the coast of Spain. They were pleased with the discovery they had made, and resolved to settle in the country; but they agreed first to go back for their wives, and in their return were unfortunately drowned by the waters of the Deluge at a place called Tuath Inbhir. The names of these three fishermen were Capa, Laighne, and Luasat. Others, again, are of opinion that Ceasar, the daughter of Bith, was the first that came into the island before the Deluge.... When Noah was building the ark to preserve himself and his family from the Deluge, Bith, the father of Ceasar, sent to desire an apartment for him and his daughter, to save them from the approaching danger. Noah, having no authority from Heaven to receive them into the ark, denied his request. Upon this repulse, Bith Fiontan, the husband of Ceasar, and Ladhra her brother, consulted among themselves what measures they should take in this extremity."

The result was, that, like the Laird of Macnab, they "built a boat o' their ain," but on a much larger scale, being a fair match with the ark itself. But justice should be done to every one. The learned Dr Keating does not give us all this as veritable history; on the contrary, being of a sceptical turn of mind, he has courage enough to stem the national prejudice, and throw doubt on the narrative. He even rises up into something like eloquent scorn when he discusses the manner [365] in which some antediluvian annals were said to be preserved. Thus:—

"As for such of them who say that Fiontan was drowned in the Flood, and afterwards came to life, and lived to publish the antediluvian history of the island—what can they propose by such chimerical relations, but to amuse the ignorant with strange and romantic tales, to corrupt and perplex the original annals, and to raise a jealousy that no manner of credit is to be given to the true and authentic chronicles of that kingdom?"

I shall quote no more until after the doctor, having exhausted his sceptical ingenuity about the antediluvian stories, finds himself again on firm ground, prepared to afford his readers, without any critical misgivings, "an account of the first inhabitants of Ireland after the Flood." He now tells us with simple and dignified brevity that "the kingdom of Ireland lay waste and uninhabited for the space of three hundred years after the Deluge, till Partholanus, son of Seara, son of Sru, son of Easru, son of Framant, son of Fathochda, son of Magog, son of Japhet, son of Noah, arrived there with his people." From such a patriarchal nomenclature the reader of Keating is suddenly introduced to a story of domestic scandal, in which a "footman" and a "favourite greyhound" make their frequent appearance. Then follow many great epochs—the arrival of the Firbolgs, the [366] dynasty of the Tuatha de Danans, with revolutions and battles countless, before we come to the commencement of a settled dynasty of kings, of whom more than ninety reigned before the Christian era. It is, after all, more sad than ridiculous to remember that within the present generation many historians believed not only what Keating thus tells as truth, but also what he ventured to doubt; and if the English antiquaries, according to their wont, called for records,—did these not exist abundantly, if they could be got at, in those authentic genealogies, which were from time to time adjusted and collated with so much skill and scrupulous accuracy by the official antiquaries who met in the Hall of Tara? The reader unacquainted with such an out-of-the-way and rather weedy corner of literature, may think this vague exaggeration; and I shall finish it by quoting the latest printed, so far as I know, of the numerous solemn and methodical statements about the manner in which the records of these very distant matters were authenticated.

"When the said princes got the kingdom into their hands, they assigned large territories to their antiquaries and their posterity to preserve their pedigree, exploits, actions, &c.; and so very strict they were on this point, that they established a triennial convention at Tara, where the chief kings of Ireland dwelt, where all the antiquaries of the nation met every third year to have [367] their chronicles and antiquities examined before the king of Ireland, the four provincial kings, the king's antiquary-royal, &c.; the least forgery in the antiquary was punished with death, and loss of estate to his posterity for ever—so very exact they were in preserving their venerable monuments, and leaving them to posterity truly and candidly; so that even at this day (though our nation lost estate and all almost) there is not an ancient name of Ireland, of the blood-royal thereof descended, but we can bring, from father to father, from the present man in being to Adam—and I, Thaddy O'Roddy, who wrote this, have written all the families of the Milesian race from this present age to Adam."[80]

To all this preposterous, and now scarcely credible extravagance of fiction, there attaches a melancholy political moral. Poor Ireland, trodden by a dominant party whose hand was strengthened by her potent neighbour, sought relief from the gloom of the present, by looking far back into the fabulous glories of the past—and it seemed the last drop in her cup of bitterness when this pleasant vista was also to be closed by the hard utilitarian hand of the unsympathising Saxon.

After "this sort of thing" it was naturally difficult to get sensible men to listen to proposals for [368] opening valuable new sources of early history in Ireland. In fact, down to the time when Moore wrote his History in 1835, no one could venture to look another in the face when speaking of the early Irish annals, and the consequence was that that accomplished author wilfully shut his eyes to the rich supply of historical materials in which he might have worked to brilliant effect.

Yet, upon the general face of history, it must on examination have been fairly seen that Ireland is the natural place where a great proportion of whatever is to be known about the primitive Church in the British Islands was to be found. Indeed, in the history of Christianity, not the least wonderful chapter contains the episode of the repose in the West, where a portion of the Church, having settled down, grew up in calm obscurity, protected by distance from the desolating contest which was breaking up the empire of the world, and raged more or less wherever the Roman sway had penetrated. Of the southern Britons it could no longer be said, as in the days of Augustus, that they were cut off from all the world. England was an integral part of the empire, where, if the proconsul or legionary commander had not the hot sun and blue sky of Italy, there were partial compensations in the bracing air which renewed his wasted strength, the new and peculiar luxuries in the shape of shellfish and wildfowl that enriched his table, and the facilities [369] which his insular authority afforded him for strengthening his political position, and plotting for a fragment of the disintegrating empire. An admiral of the Roman fleet had at one time established his power in Britain, where he set up as Cæsar, and sought to create a new imperial centre. Thus the southern part of Britain was a province of the true Roman empire awaiting the coming of the wild hordes who were gathering for the general overthrow, and was not the place where either the Christian Church or Italian civilisation could find permanent refuge. The destined destroyer was indeed close at hand. Though the Romans had their walls, their roads, their forts, and even a few villas in Scotland, yet one going northward at that time through the territories of the Gadeni and the Otadeni, would observe the Romanised character of the country gradually decreasing, until he found himself among those rough independent northern tribes, who, under the name of Picts and Scots, drove the Romanised Britons into the sea, and did for the insular portion of the empire what the hordes who were called Goths, Franks, and Alemanni, were doing in the Roman provinces of the Continent.

Behind the scene of this destructive contest, Christianity, having been planted, flourished in peaceful poverty. It grew here and there over Ireland, and in a small portion of the remote part of Scotland; and the distance from the scene of warfare necessary for its safety is shown by the fate [370] of St Ninian's little church in the Mull of Galloway. It was too near the field of strife to live. The isolation in which the western Christians thus arose, was productive of ecclesiastical conditions very remarkable in themselves, but perfectly natural as the effects of their peculiar causes. The admirable organisation for carrying out the civil government of the Roman empire, was a ready-made hierarchy for carrying out the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. It was far from the object of those who seized on the power of the Cæsars to abolish that power. On the contrary, they desired to work it on their own account, and thus the machinery of the empire lived, exercising more or less vitality and power, down to the first French Revolution.

No part of its civil organisation, however, retained the comprehensive vitality which the learning and subtlety of the priesthood enabled them to preserve, or rather restore, to its spiritual branch. Hence, wherever the conquerors of Rome held sway, there the priests of Rome obtained a sway also. But the one little fragment of the primitive Church, which had been so curiously cut off during the great contest, was beyond the sway of the conquerors of Rome, as it had been beyond the sway of the Emperors themselves. Hence, while the Church, as united to Rome, grew up in one great uniform hierarchy, the small, isolated Church in the West grew up with different [371] usages and characteristics; and when afterwards those who followed them were charged with schism, they asserted that they had their canons and usages directly from the apostles, from whom they had obtained the Gospel and the regulations of the Church pure and undefiled. Thus arose the renowned contest between the early Scottish Church and the rest of Christendom about the proper period of observing Easter, and about the form of the tonsure. Hence, too, arose the debates about the peculiar discipline of the communities called Culdees, who, having to

frame their own system of church government for themselves, humble, poor, and isolated as they were, constructed it after a different fashion from the potent hierarchy of Rome. The history of these corporations possesses extreme interest, even to those who follow it without a predetermined design to identify every feature of their arrangements with a modern English diocese, or with a modern Scottish presbytery; and not the least interesting portion of this history is its conclusion, in the final absorption, not without a struggle, of these isolated communities within the expanding hierarchy of the Popes.

In a few humble architectural remains, these primitive bodies have left vestiges of their peculiar character to the present day. Neither deriving the form of their buildings nor their other observances from Rome, they failed to enter with the rest of the Church on that course of [372] construction which led towards Gothic architecture. The earliest Christian churches on the Continent were constructed on the plan of the Roman basilica, or court of justice, and wherever the Church of Rome spread, this method of construction went with her. The oldest style of church-building—that which used to be called Saxon, and is now sometimes termed Norman, and sometimes Romanesque—degenerated directly from the architecture of Rome. There are ecclesiastical buildings in France and Italy, of which it might fairly be debated, from their style, whether they were built by the latest of the classical, or the earliest of the Gothic architects. The little Church in the West had not the benefit of such models. Places of worship, and cells, or oratories, were built of timber, turf, or osiers. The biographer of Columba describes his followers as collecting wattles for the construction of their first edifice. But they had also a few humble dwellings of stone, which, naturally enough, had no more resemblance to the proud fanes of the Romish hierarchy, than the primitive edifices of Mexico and New Zealand had to those of modern Europe. They were first found in Ireland; more lately, they have been traced in the Western Isles. They are small rude domes of rough stone; and if it may seem strange that the form adapted to the grandest of all architectural achievements should be accomplished by those rude masons who [373] could not make a Roman arch, it must be remembered, that while the arch cannot be constructed without artificial support or scaffolding, a dome on a small scale may, and is indeed the form to which rude artists, with rude stones, and no other materials, would naturally be driven. It is that in which boys build their snow-houses. I shall not easily forget how, once, accompanying a piscatorial friend on the Loch of Curran, near Ballyskelligs, in Kerry, I stepped on a small island to visit a Norman ruin there, and saw, besides the ruin and a stone cross, one of these small rough domes, testifying, by its venerable simplicity, that it had stood there centuries before the Norman church beside it. But the peculiar characteristics of the architecture of the West did not stop short with these simple types. It advanced, carrying in its advance its own significant character, until it became mingled with the architecture propagated from Rome, as the Christian community which worshipped within the buildings became absorbed in the hierarchy. The Oratory of Galerus, in Kerry, is a piece of solid, well-conditioned masonry, built after a plan of no mean symmetry and proportion, yet with scarcely a feature in common with the early Christian churches of the rest of Europe. Like the ruder specimens, it struggles for as much solidity and spaciousness as it can obtain in stonework without the help of the arch, and it makes a good deal [374] out of the old Egyptian plan of gradually narrowing the courses of stones inwards, until they come so near that large slabs of stone can be thrown across the opening. Some buildings of the same sort have been lately revealed in the island of Lewis: one is named Teampul Rona, and another, which is dedicated to St Flannan, Teampul Beannachadh.[81] The specialty of both these, as well as of the Irish buildings, is that they are edifices beyond all question raised for Christian worship, that they have been built with pains and skill, and yet that they have no vestige of that earlier type of Christian architecture which Europe in general obtained from Rome.

In offering a few stray remarks on the lives of the saints, or, more properly speaking, the missionaries, whose labours lay in the British Isles, it would be pedantic to cite the precise document, printed generally for one or other of the book clubs, which supplies the authority for each sentence. I must, however, mention one authority which stands supreme among its brethren —the edition of Adamnan's Life of St Columba, edited by Dr Reeves, under the joint patronage of the Irish Archæological and the Bannatyne Clubs. The original work has long been accepted as [375] throwing a light on the Christianising of the North, second only to that shed by the invaluable morsels in Bede. With wonderful industry and learning, the editor has incorporated the small book of Adamnan in a mass of new matter, every word of which is equally instructive and interesting to the student.

There is no doubt that the saints of Irish origin supply by far the more important portion of our hagiology. They are countless. Taking merely a topographical estimate of them—looking, that is, to the names of places which have been dedicated to them, or otherwise bear their names—we find them crowding Ireland, and swarming over the Highlands of Scotland and the north of England into London itself, where St Bride's Well has given a gloomy perpetuity to the name of the first and greatest of Irish female saints. Some people would be content to attribute the frequentness of saintship among the Irish and the Highlanders to the opportunities enjoyed by them in consequence of the early Church having found a refuge in Ireland. Others would attribute the phenomenon to the extreme susceptibility of the Celtic race to religious enthusiasm, and would illustrate their views by referring to the present Celtic population in Ireland under the dominion of the priests, and their brethren of the West of Scotland equally under the dominion of the doctrinal antipodes of the priests; while the parallel might be illustrated by a reference to [376] those Highland Franciscans called "The Men," whose belcher neckcloths represent the cord, and their Kilmarnock bonnets the cowl.

At the commencement of Christianity the difference between the religious Celt and the religious

Saxon was naturally far more conspicuous than it is now. Bede's description of the thoughtful calmness with which Ethelbert studied the preaching of Augustin, with all the consequences which the adoption of the new creed must bring upon his kingdom, is still eminently characteristic of the Saxon nature. In the life of St Wilbrord a scene is described which is not easily alluded to with due reverence. The saint had prevailed on a Frisian Prince to acknowledge Christianity, and be baptised. Standing by the font, with one foot in the water, a misgiving seized on him, and he inquired touching his ancestors, whether the greater number of them were in the regions of the blessed, or in those of the spirits doomed to everlasting perdition. On being abruptly told by the honest saint that they were all, without exception, in the latter region, he withdrew his foot—he would not desert his race—he would go to the place where he would find his dead ancestors.

The conversion of the Picts by Columba seems to have proceeded deliberately. We find him, in the narrative of his life, exercising much influence on Brud their king, and occasionally enjoying a [377] visit to the royal lodge on the pleasant banks of Lochness. There he is seen commending his friend and fellow-labourer St Cormac to the good offices of the Regulus of the Orkney Islands, who is also at the court of Brud, to whom he owes something akin to allegiance; for Columba looks to Brud as well as to the Orcadian guest for the proper attention being paid to Cormac. Still, honoured and respected as he is in the court of the Pictish monarch, Columba is not that omnipotent person which he finds himself to be in Dalriada and in Ireland. There still sits an unpleasant personage at the king's gate. A Magus, as he is called—a priest of the old heathen religion—is in fact well received at court, where, although doomed to be superseded by the Christian missionary, he yet seems to have been retained by the king, as a sort of protest that he had not put himself entirely under the control of the priests of the new doctrine.

It was indeed among their own people, the Celts of Ireland and of the Irish colony in the west of Scotland, that the reign of these saints was absolute. But if we count this ecclesiastical influence a feature of the Celtic nation, either the Welsh must not be counted as Celts, or they must be looked on as exceptions from this spiritual dominion. They were the people among whom, of all the tribes who inhabited Britain between the days of Julius Cæsar and those of William of [378] Normandy, it might have been primarily expected that we would find the most vital Christianity and the greatest missionary force. They professed to have carried with them into their mountains the traditions and the nationality of that very important portion of the Christianised Roman Empire which was called Britannia. When the heart of the Empire became paralysed, this branch, doubtless after a long harassing contest with the Picts and the Irish of the north, was broken, and partly subjected, partly driven away by the Saxons. That they should have failed, through all their revolutions and calamities, to preserve any remnants of Roman social habits, is not perhaps wonderful. But that they should have failed to preserve enough of Christian influence to second and support the missions sent to the Saxons, so soon after these had superseded the British power, looks like an exception to the usual rule of Christian progress. The Welsh antiquaries, through meritorious efforts, strive in vain to establish the existence of Welsh ecclesiarchs during the time when the countless saints of Ireland were swarming over Scotland and penetrating into England. They point to a stone said to commemorate a victory gained over the Picts and the Saxons by the Britons, not through their courage or their skill in fight, but by the Halleluiahs raised by two saints who were present in their host. These saints, however, Garmon and Lupus, [379] were, as Bede tells us, Frenchmen, missionaries from the Gallican Church to correct the errors of the Britons. The venerable Bede scolds these Britons roundly for not having kept up the faith planted among them, and for not having been prepared to help Augustin and his followers in the very hard task of converting the Saxons. It is a pity that we do not know something more of Roman Christianity, and indeed of Roman civilisation generally in Britain, before the Saxon days. There appears to have been among the Romanised British Christians little zeal and a good deal of controversy and dissent, and we hear a great deal more of the influence of the Pelagian heresy among them than of the influence of Christianity itself.

The scantiness of our acquaintance with Roman Christianity in Britain is the more to be regretted, because it would have been very interesting to compare its manifestations with those of the Church which found refuge in the West during the dark days of Rome—the days when the temporal empire was crushed, and the spiritual empire had not arisen. As we might expect from the ecclesiastical conditions already noticed, the persons who first exercise ecclesiastical authority in the two islands did not derive their strength from any foreign hierarchy, and had no connection with Rome. Any reference, indeed, to the influence of a Roman pontiff, either actual or prospective, in the life of any of our early saints, will prepare the critic for finding that the life [380] has been written centuries after the era of the saint, or has been tampered with. In Adamnan's Life of Columba, Rome is mentioned once or twice as a very great city, but there is no allusion throughout that remarkable biography to any spiritual central authority exercised by the bishop there over the presbyters in Scotland and Ireland. This is, of course, nothing more than the statement of what the reader of a book has not found in it. Any other reader may find allusions to the supremacy of the popedom over these early Christian communities, if he can. But I think he is likely to find none; and any one who desires to study the real history of the rise and progress of the spiritual dominion of Rome would, with more profit, take up the books and records referring to events three or four hundred years after the age of Columba.

Self-sustained as they were, these isolated communities had a very strong vitality. The picture exhibited in the hagiographies is truly the reign of the saints. Their power was of an immediate, abrupt, and purely despotic kind, which would have been neutralised or weakened by anything like a central control. Prompt and blind obedience to the commands of the saint-superior was the

rule of Hy or Iona, and of all the other religious communities of the West. Perhaps there were even here feuds, disputes, and mutinies of which no record has been preserved. The [381] hagiographer can only commemorate those which were suppressed by some terrible manifestation of Divine power, for the person whose life he commemorates is only conventionally and nominally to be spoken of as a mortal; he is in reality superhuman, wielding, whenever he pleases, the thunderbolts of the Deity, annihilating dissent and disobedience to himself, as if it were blasphemy in the Deity's own presence, and crushing by an immediate miracle any effort to oppose his will, were it even about the proper hour of setting off on a journey, or the dinner to be ordered for the day.

The rank which those primitive clergy of Ireland and the Highlands occupy is almost invariably that of the saint, a rank as far separated from that which can be conferred by any human hierarchy as heaven is from earth. They were, as we have seen, independent of Rome from the beginning, and this great host of saints had lived and left their biographies to the world long before the system of judicial canonisation. How a boundary is professed to be drawn between the genuine and the false among these saints of the North, cannot be easily understood. No one seems to object to any of them as spurious. Many of them are so very obscure that only faint and fragmentary traces of them can be found, yet it seems never to be questioned that they occupied the transcendent spiritual rank usually attributed to them. Of others nothing is known but the [382] bare name, yet it is never doubted that the owner was entitled to his attribute of saint.

The brethren at Iona seem sometimes to have lived well, for we hear of the killing of heifers and oxen. A pragmatical fellow declines to participate in the meal permitted on the occasion of a relaxation of discipline—the saint tells him that since he refuses good meat at a time when he is permitted to have it, it is to be his doom to be one of a band of robbers who will be glad to appease their hunger on putrid horse-flesh. The ruling spirit, however, of this first Christian mission, as we find it recorded, is undoubtedly asceticism. The mortification of the flesh is the temporal source of spiritual power. Some incidents occur which put this spirit in a shape bordering on the ludicrous. A saint is at a loss to know how his power is waning. There is some mysterious countervailing influence acting against him, which manifests itself in the continued success of an irreverent king or chief, whom he thought he had taken the proper spiritual methods to humble. He at last discovers the mystery; the king had been *fasting* against him—entering the field of asceticism with him, in short, and not without success.

The biography of an Asiatic despot, so far as other persons are concerned, is merely the history of his commands and their obedience. It is only incidentally, therefore, that one is likely to [383] acquire any information from it about the people over whom he rules. In like manner, the life of an Irish saint is the history of commanding and obeying; yet a few glimpses of social life may be caught through occasional chinks. The relation which the spiritual held towards the temporal powers is sufficiently developed to give ground for considerable inquiry and criticism. The more eminent of the saints had great influence in state affairs, ruling in some measure the monarchs themselves. Some monarch is occasionally mentioned as the friend of Columba, much as a bishop might allude to this or that lay lord as among his personal friends. We find him settling the succession of Aidan, the king of the Dalriadic Scots, through an influence to which any opposition was utterly hopeless. Send your sons to me, he says to Aidan, and God will show me who is to be your successor. The sign falls on Eochoid Buidh, and the saint tells the king that all his other sons will come to a premature end, and they drop off accordingly, chiefly in battle. This power of fixing the evil eye, of prophesying death, is found in perpetual use among the early saints. It is their ultimate appeal in strife and contest, and their instrument of vengeance when thwarted or affronted; and a terrible instrument it must have been. Who could gainsay those believed to hold in their hands the issues of life and death? [384]

In our conception of the kings with whom these saints were familiar, it may be well not to be misled by words. We shall realise them better at the present day by looking to Madagascar or the Marquesas Islands than among the states of Europe. The palace was a shanty of log or wattle, protected, perhaps, by a rampart of earth or uncemented stones, and the king had a stone chair with a few mystic decorations scratched on it, which served for his throne on state occasions. The prospect of acquiring a gold torque or a silver drinking-cup would have a material influence over his imperial policy. Were we to believe the fabulous historians, Ireland was for centuries a compact kingdom under one imperial sovereign, who presided over subsidiary rulers in the provinces. But although sometimes one provincial king was powerful enough to keep the others in subjection, old Celtic Ireland never was a kingdom, properly speaking, for it never had a nationality. Some people maintain, not without reason, that the facility with which a nationality resolves itself into existence depends much, not only on race, but on geological conditions. The Celtic Irish seem to have always been too busy with local feuds and rivalries to achieve any broad nationality. And the nature of their country—a vast plain intersected by morasses and rivers, and here and there edged with mountain ranges—is unfavourable to the growth of a nationality, since it presents no general centre of defence against a foreign enemy, like that great central range of [385] mountains in Scotland, which Columba's biographers call the Dorsum Britanniæ—the Backbone of Britain. Ireland, indeed, seems to have had no conception of a nationality until such a thing was suggested by the Normans and the Saxons, after they had been long enough there to feel patriotic. And so it has generally happened that any alarming outbreaks against the imperial government have been led by people of Norman or Saxon descent.

Still there is no doubt, difficult as it may be to realise the idea, that at the times with which we are dealing, Ireland enjoyed a kind of civilisation, which enabled its princes and its priests to look

down on Pictland, and even on Saxon England, as barbarian. The Roman dominion had not penetrated among them, but the very remoteness which kept the island beyond the boundaries of the Empire, also kept it beyond the range of the destroyers of the Empire, and made it in reality the repository of the vestiges of imperial civilisation in the north. Perhaps the difference between the two grades of civilisation might be about the same as we could have found ten years ago between Tahiti and New Zealand.

An extensive and minute genealogical ramification, when it is authentic, is a condition of a pretty far advanced state of civilisation. Abandoning the old fabulous genealogies which went back among the Biblical patriarchs, the rigid antiquaries of Ireland find their way through authentic [386] sources to genealogical connections of a truly marvellous extent. Such illustrious men as the saints can, of course, be easily traced, as all were proud to establish connection with them; while Columba himself and several others were men of royal descent. But of the casual persons mentioned in the Life of Columba, Dr Reeves hunts out the genealogy—fully as successfully, one would say, as that of any person of the country-gentleman class in Britain, living at the beginning of this century, could be established. There are, indeed, many characteristics in the hagiologic literature bearing an analogy to modern social habits so close as to be almost ludicrous; and it is not easy to deal with these conditions of a very distant age, brought to us as they are through the vehicle of a language which is neither classical nor vernacular, but conventional—the corrupt Latin in which the biographers of the saints found it convenient to write. It would appear that when he was in Ireland, St Columba kept his carriage, and the loss of the lynch-pin on one occasion is connected with a notable miracle. Dr Reeves, as appropriate to this, remarks that "the memoirs of St Patrick in the Book of Armagh make frequent mention of his chariot, and even name his driver." It is difficult to suppose such a vehicle ever becoming available in Iona; but there Columba seems to have been provided with abundance of vessels, and he could send for a [387] friend, in the way in which MacGillicallum's "carriage," in the form of a boat, was sent for Johnson and Boswell.

There are many other things in these books which have a sound more familiar to us than any sense which they really convey. Here the saint blesses the store of a "homo plebeius cum uxore et filiis"—a poor man with a wife and family—a term expressively known in this day among all who have to deal with the condition of their fellow-men, from the chancellor of the exchequer to the relieving-officer. In the same chapter we are told "de quodam viro divite tenacissimo"—of a very hard-fisted rich fellow—a term thoroughly significant in civilised times. He is doomed, by the way, to become bankrupt, and fall into such poverty that his offspring will be found dead in a ditch—a fate also intelligible in the nineteenth century. In another place we have among the saint's suitors "plebeius pauperrimus, qui in ea habitabat regione quæ Stagni litoribus Aporici est contermina." The "Stagnum Aporicum" is Lochaber; so here we have a pauper from the neighbourhood of Lochaber—a designation which I take to be familiarly known at "the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland." We are told, too, of the saint being at a plebeian feast, and of a plebeius in the island of Raghery quarrelling with his wife. [388]

The thoughtful student will find a more distinguished analogy with the habits of later civilisation in the literature of these early churchmen. The subject of the introduction of letters into Ireland, and the very early literature of that country, is too large to be handled here. It is certain that in Columba's era, the middle of the sixth century, books were written and used in Ireland. The respect paid to a book in that age was something beyond that of the most ardent book-hunter. Many of the most exciting of the saintly miracles have for their end the preservation of a book in fire or in water. The custody of the Book of Armagh, containing St Patrick's canons, was a great hereditary office; and the princely munificence which provided the book with a suitable case or shrine in the tenth century is recorded in Irish history. Besides their costly shrines already referred to, these books often had for an outer covering a bag or satchel, in which the sacred deposit was carried from place to place. The heart must be dead to all natural sensations that does not sympathise with Dr Reeves in the following triumphant announcement:—

"Of leather cases the cover of the Book of Armagh is the most interesting example now remaining. It came, together with its inestimable enclosure, into the writer's possession at the end of 1853, and is now lying before him. It is formed of a single piece of strong leather, 36 [389] inches long and 12 broad, folded in such a way as to form a six-sided case 12 inches long, 12-3/4 broad, and 2-3/4 thick, having a flap which doubles over in front, and is furnished with a rude lock and eight staples, admitted through perforations in the flap, for short iron rods to enter and meet at the lock. The whole outer surface, which has become perfectly black from age, is covered with figures and interlacings of the Irish pattern in relief, which appear to have been produced by subjecting the leather, in a damp state, before it was folded, to pressure upon a block of the whole size, having a depressed pattern, and allowing it to remain until the impression became indelible."

A pleasing peculiarity in the personal habits of these recluses is their frequent communion with birds and the gentler kind of beasts. Their legendary histories speak of these animals as apt mediums of vaticination and miraculous intervention; but we must be content, in the present age, to suppose that their frequent appearance, their familiar intercourse with the saints, and the quaint and amiable incidents in which they figure, are in reality characteristic memorials of the kindly feelings and the innocent pursuits natural to men of gentle disposition and retired life. Thus Columba one day gives directions to a brother to be on the watch at a certain point in the island of Iona, for there, by nine o'clock on that day, a certain stranger stork will alight and drop [390] down, utterly fatigued with her journey across the ocean. That stork the brother is enjoined to

take up gently, and convey to the nearest house, and feed and tend for three days, after which she will take wing and fly away to the sweet spot of her native Ireland, whence she had wandered. And this the brother is to do because the bird is a guest from their own beloved native land. The brother departs, and returns at the proper time. Columba asks no questions—he knows what has taken place, and commends the obedient piety of the brother who had sheltered and tended the wanderer.

Another saint, Ailbhe, had a different kind of intercourse with certain cranes. They went about in a large body, destroying the corn in the neighbourhood, and would not be dispersed. The saint went and delivered on oration to them on the unreasonableness of their conduct, and forthwith, penitent and somewhat ashamed, they soared into the air and went their way. "St Cuthbert's ducks" acquired a long celebrity. When that reverenced ascetic went to take up his residence in the wave-bounded solitude of the Farne Islands, he found the solan-geese there imbued with the wild habits common to their storm-nurtured race, and totally unconscious of the civilisation and refinement of their kinsmen who graze on commons, and hiss at children and dogs. St Cuthbert [391] tamed them through his miraculous powers, and made them as obedient and docile a flock as abbot ever ruled. The geese went before him in regular platoons, following the word of command, and doing what he ordered—whether it might be the most ordinary act of the feathered biped, or some mighty miracle. Under his successors their conduct seems to have been less regular, though certainly not less peculiar; for we are told that they built their nests on the altar, and around the altar, and in all the houses of the island; farther, that, during the celebration of mass, they familiarly pecked the officiating priest and his assistants with their bills. It is curious enough that the miraculous education of these birds makes its appearance in a Scottish legal or official document at the close of the fifteenth century. It is an instrument recording an attestation to the enormous value of the down of these renowned birds; and seems, indeed, to be an advertisement or puff by merchants dealing in the ware, though its ponderous Latinity is in curious contrast with the neat examples of that kind of literature to which we are accustomed in these days.[82]

One of the prettiest of the stories about birds is divided between St Serf, the founder of a monastery in Loch Leven, and St Kentigern, the patron of Glasgow, where he is better known as [392] St Mungo. Kentigern was one among a parcel of neophyte boys whom the worthy old Serf, or Servanus, was perfecting in the knowledge of the truth. Their teacher had a feathered pet —"quædam avicula quæ vulgo ob ruborem corpusculi rubisca nuncupatur"—a robin-redbreast, in fact, an animal whose good fortune it is never to be mentioned without some kindly reference to his universal popularity, and the decoration which renders him so easily recognised wherever he appears. St Serf's robin was a wonderful bird; he not only took food from his master's hand and pecked about him according to the fashion of tame and familiar birds, but took a lively interest in his devotions and studies by flapping his wings and crowing in his own little way, so as to be a sort of chorus to the acts of the saint. The old man enjoyed this extremely; and his biographer, with more geniality than hagiographers usually show, sympathises with this innocent recreation, applying the example of the bow that was not always bent, in a manner suggestive of suspicions that he was not entirely unacquainted with profane letters. One day, when the saint had retired to his devotions, the boys amused themselves with his little pet; and a struggle arising among them for its possession, the head was torn from the body—altogether a natural incident. Thereupon, says the narrator, fear was turned to grief, and the avenging birch—"plagas virgarum [393] quæ puerorum gravissima tormenta esse solent"—arose terribly in their sight. It was at this moment that an unpopular pupil, named Kentigern—a new boy, apparently—a stranger who had not taken in good-fellowship to the rest of the school, but was addicted to solitary meditation, entered the guilty conclave. Their course was taken—they threw the fragments of the bird into his hands, and bolted. St Serf enters, and the crew are awaiting in guilty exultation the bursting of his wrath. The consecrated youth, however, fitting the severed parts to each other, signs the cross, raises his pure hands to heaven, and breathes an appropriate prayer—when lo! robin lifts his little head, expands his wings, and hops away to meet his master. In the eucharistic office of St Kentigern's day, this event, along with the restoration to life of a meritorious cook, and other miracles, inspired a canticle which, for long subsequent ages, was exultingly sung by the choristers in the saint's own cathedral of Glasgow, thus:—

"Garrit ales pernecatus.
Cocus est resuscitatus.
Salit vervex trucidatus
Amputato capite."

A bird proper, on the shield argent of the city of Glasgow, has been identified with the resuscitated pet of the patron saint. The tree on which it is there perched is a commemoration of [394] another of the saint's miracles. In a time of frost and snow his enemies had extinguished his fire; but immediately drawing on the miraculous resources ever at the command of his class on such emergencies, he breathed fire into a frozen branch from the forest; and it was centuries afterwards attested that the green branches of that forest made excellent firewood.

Another element in the blazon of the Venice of the west is a fish, laid across the stem of the tree, "in base," as the heralds say, but not, as generally depicted, conformable either to their science or that of the ichthyologist. This fish holds in its mouth something like a dish—in reality a ring—and thus commemorates a miraculous feat of the same saint, which has found its way into the romances of the juvenile portion of the reading public, where it is a standard nuisance. Queen Cadyow, whose conduct was of such a character that it is wonderful how any respectable saint could have prevailed on himself to serve her, gives her bridal ring to a paramour. Her husband

lures the rival away to the bank of the Clyde, to sleep after the fatigues of the chase, and there, furtively removing the ring, pitches it into the river. The reader knows the result by instinct. St Kentigern, appealed to, directs the first salmon that can be caught in the Clyde to be opened, and there, of course, is the ring in the stomach. This miracle is as common in the "Acta Sanctorum" as [395] in the juvenile romances. It served St Nathalan in such a manner as to preclude the supposition that the saint had invoked it on the occasion. He locked himself into iron chains, and threw their key into the river Dee, in order that he might be unable to open the fetterlock before he had made a pilgrimage to the tombs of St Peter and St Paul; but the water did its duty, and restored the key in the stomach of a fish.

We have naturally many fishing anecdotes connected with the northern saints. Columba is described as out a-fishing one day with a parcel of his disciples, who are characterised as "strenui piscatores," a term which would be highly applicable to many a Waltonian of the present day. The saint, desirous of affording them a pleasant surprise, directs them to cast their net where a wonderful fish was prepared for them; and they drag out an "esox" (whatever that may mean) of wonderful size.

Some of the inhabitants of the deep familiar to these saints were animals of a formidable kind. Columba and a band of his disciples are going to cross the river Ness, when they meet those who bear on their shoulders the body of one who, endeavouring to swim across the same river, had been bitten to death by a monster of the deep. The saint, in the face of this gloomy procession, requires that one of his disciples shall swim across the Ness, and bring over a boat which is on [396] the other side. A disciple named Mocumin, whom the saint had miraculously cured of a bleeding of the nose, confident in the protecting power of his master, pulls off all his clothes save his tunica (whatever that may be—coat, kilt, or leathern shirt), and takes to the water. The monster, who is reposing deep down in the stillness of the profoundest pool, hears the stir of the water above, and is seen to rise with a splash on the surface, and make with distended jaws for the swimmer. The saint, of course, orders the beast back just at the moment when all seemed over, and is instantly obeyed. The characteristics of the monster could not be more closely identical with those of the crocodile or alligator, had the incident been narrated in Egypt or America.

Adventures with such monsters in our northern waters supply many of the triumphs attributed to the saints. St Colman of Drumore actually extracted a young girl alive from the stomach of an "aquetalis bestia." She had been swallowed while standing on the edge of a lake, "camisiam suam lavantem"—washing her chemise, poor simple soul. St Molua saw a monster, of the size of a large boat, in pursuit of two boys swimming unconscious of danger in a lake in the county of Monaghan. He showed good worldly sense and presence of mind on the occasion; for, instead of alarming them with an announcement of their perilous condition, he called out to them to try a [397] race and see which would reach the bank first. The beast, balked of his prey, took in good part an admonition by the saint, and returned no more to frighten boys.

From fishes and aquatic monsters the law of association naturally leads us to the waters themselves. There are throughout the United Kingdom multitudes of wells, still bearing the names of the saints to whom they were dedicated. The legends of miracles performed by their waters, through the intercession of their special saints, are countless. It is, perhaps, because cures effected by the use of waters may be accounted for otherwise than by supernatural intervention, that modern writers of the old faith speak with less reserve of the miracles at fountains than of the others they have to record, and even bring them down to modern times. Many of them may be found recorded in his usual slipshod manner in the amiable pages of Butler —as, for instance, in the life of St Winfrid (November 3), where we are told how "Roger Whetstone, a Quaker, near Bromsgrove, by bathing at Holywell, was cured of an inveterate lameness and palsy by which he was converted to the Catholic faith." Some of the old saints' wells, remote from cities and advanced opinions, are still haunted by people who believe them to be endowed with supernatural healing virtues. It is in Romish Ireland, of course, that this belief [398] has its most legitimate seat; but even in the most orthodoxly-Presbyterian districts of Scotland, a lingering dubious trust in the healing virtues of sanctified fountains has given much perplexity to the clergy.

Some of these fountains are in caverns, and if in any one of these the well falls into a rude-hewn basin like a font, we may be sure that a hermit frequented the cave, and that it was the place of worship of early converts. Such a cave was the hiding-place, after the '45, of the worthy single-minded Lord Pitsligo, no bad prototype of the Baron of Bradwardine. It is entered by a small orifice like a fox's hole, in the face of the rugged cliffs which front the German Ocean near Trouphead. Gradually it rises to a noble arched cavern, at the end of which is the font cut into the stone, where it would catch the outpourings of a small spring. When I saw it long years ago, it was filled with clear living water, which, save when it had been the frugal drink of the poor Jacobite refugee, had probably been scarcely disturbed since the early day when heathen men and women went thither to throw off their idolatry and enter the pale of Christendom. The unnoticeable smallness of many of these consecrated wells makes their very reminiscence and still semi-sacred character all the more remarkable. The stranger in Ireland or the Highlands of Scotland hears rumours of a distinguished well miles on miles off. He thinks he will find an [399] ancient edifice over it, or some other conspicuous adjunct. Nothing of the kind—he has been lured all that distance over rock and bog to see a tiny spring bubbling out of the rock, such as he may see hundreds of in a tolerable walk any day. Yet, if he search in old topographical authorities, he will find that the little well has ever been an important feature of the district—that, century after century, it has been unforgotten; and, with diligence, he may perhaps trace it

to some incident in the life of the saint, dead more than 1200 years ago, whose name it bears. Highlanders still make pilgrimages to drink the waters of such fountains, which they judiciously mix with the other aqua to which they are attached. They sometimes mimic the spirit of the old pilgrimage, by leaving behind them an offering at the fountain. I have seen such offerings by the brink of remote Highland springs, as well as in Ireland. The market value of them would not afford an alarming estimate of the intensity of the superstition still lingering in this form in the land. The logic of the depositors probably suggests, that the spiritual guardians of the fountain, though amenable to flattery and propitiation by gift, are not really well informed about the market value of worldly chattels, and are easily put off with rubbish.

A historical inquiry into the worship or consecration of wells and other waters would be [400] interesting. In countries near the tropics, where sandy deserts prevail, a well must ever have been a thing of momentous importance; and we find among the tribes of Israel the digging down a well spoken of as the climax of reckless, heartless, and awful destructiveness. To find, however, how in watery Ireland and Scotland a mere dribblet of the element so generally abounding should have been an object of veneration for centuries, we must look to something beyond physical wants and their supply.

The principal cause of the sanctification of springs must, of course, be explained by the first of Christian ordinances. The spring close by the dwelling or cell of the saint—the spring on account of which he probably selected the centre of his mission—had not only washed the forefathers of the district from the stain of primeval heathenism, but had applied the visible sign by which all, from generation to generation, had been admitted into the bosom of the Church. This might seem to afford a cause sufficient in itself for the effect, yet it appears to have been aided by other causes more recondite and mysterious. Notwithstanding all the trash talked about Druids and other persons of this kind, we know extremely little of the heathenism of the British Isles. The little that we do know is learned from the meagre notices which the biographers of the saints have furnished of that which the saints superseded. It is not their function to commemorate the [401] abominations of heathenism; they would rather bury it in eternal oblivion—*premat nox alta*—but they cannot entirely tell the triumphs of their spiritual heroes without some reference, however faint, to the conquered enemies.

The earliest recorded conflicts between the new and the old creed are connected with fountains. In one page of the Life of Columba we find the saint, on a child being brought to him for baptism, in a desert place where no water was, striking the rock like Moses, and drawing forth a rill, which remained in perennial existence—a fountain surrounded by a special sanctity. In the next page he deals with a well in the hands of the Magi. They had put a demon of theirs into it to such effect, that any unfortunate person washing himself in the well or drinking of its water, was forthwith stricken with paralysis, or leprosy, or blindness of an eye, or some other corporeal calamity. The malignant powers with which they had inspired this formidable well spread far around the fear of the Magi, and consequently their influence. But the Christian missionaries were to show a power of a different kind—a power of beneficence, excelling and destroying the power of malignity. The process adopted is fully described. The saint, after a suitable invocation, washed his hands and feet in the water, and then drank of it with his disciples. The Magi looked [402] on with a malignant smile to see the accursed well produce its usual effect; but the saint and his followers came away uninjured: the demon was driven out of the well, and it became ever afterwards a holy fountain, curing many of their infirmities. Another miracle, bearing against the Magi, introduces us to one of their number by name, and gives a little of his domestic history. His name is Broichan, and he is tutor to Brud, king of the Picts, with whom he dwells on the banks of the Ness. It might have relieved the mind of the historical inquirer to be told that Brud built for himself the remarkable vitrified fort of Craig-Phadric, which rises high above the Ness, and to be informed of the manner in which its calcined rampart was constructed; but nothing is said on the subject, and Craig-Phadric stands on its own isolated merits, still to be guessed at, without one tangible word out of record or history to help any theory about its object or construction home to a conclusion. One is free, however, to imagine Brud, the heathen king of the Picts, living on the scarped top of the hill, in a lodging of wattled or wooden houses, surrounded by a rampart of stones fused by fire, as the only cement then known. Such we may suppose to have been the "domus regia," whence the saint walked out in a very bad humour to the river Ness, from the pebbles of which he selected one white stone, to be turned to an important use. Broichan, the [403] Magus, had in his possession a female slave from Ireland. Columba, who seems to have held with him such intercourse as a missionary to the Chocktaws might have with a great medicine-man, desired that the Magus should manumit the woman, for what reason we are not distinctly told; but it is easy to suppose strong grounds for intervention when a Christian missionary finds a woman, of his own country and creed, the slave of a heathen priest. Columba's request was refused. Losing patience, he had resort to threats; and at length, driven to his ultimatum, he denounced death to Broichan if the slave were not released before his own return to Ireland. Columba told his disciples to expect two messengers to come from the king to tell of the sudden and critical illness of Broichan. The messengers rushed in immediately after to claim the saint's intervention. Broichan had been suddenly stricken by an angel sent for the purpose; and as if he had been taking his dram in a modern gin-palace, we are told that the drinking-glass, or glass drinking-vessel, "vitrea bibera," which he was conveying to his lips, was smashed in pieces, and he himself seized with deadly sickness. Columba sends the consecrated pebble, with a prescription that the water in which it is dipped is to be drunk. If, before he drinks, Broichan releases his slave, he is to recover; if not, he dies. The Magus complies, and is saved. The [404] consecrated stone, which had the quality of floating in water like a nut, was afterwards, as we are told, preserved in the treasury of the king of the Picts. It has been lost to the world, along

with the saint's white robe and his consecrated banner, both of which performed miracles after his death. But the sanitary influence attributed to the water in which consecrated stones have been dipped, is a superstition scarcely yet uprooted in Scotland.

Sermons in Stones.

ne of the clubs has lately deviated from the printing of letterpress, which is the established function of clubs, into pictorial art. As it threatens to repeat the act on a larger scale, it is proposed to take a glance at the result already afforded, in order that it may be seen whether it is a failure, or a success opening up a new vein for club enterprise. In distributing a set of pictorial prints among its members, the club in question may be supposed to have invaded the art-unions: but its course is in another direction, since its pictures are entirely subservient to archæology. The innovator in question is the Spalding Club, which has already distributed among its adherents a collection of portraits of the sculptured stones in Scotland, and now proposes to do the same by the early [405] architectural remains of the north. In giving effect to such a design, it will produce something like Dugdale's Monasticon and the great English county histories.

If that which is to be done shall rival that which the club has achieved, it will be worthy of all honour. No one can open the book of The Sculptured Stones without being almost overwhelmed with astonishment at the reflection that they are not monuments excavated in Egypt, or Syria, or Mexico, but have stood before the light of day in village churchyards, or in marketplaces, or by waysides throughout our own country. As you pass on, the eye becomes almost tired with the endless succession of grim and ghastly human figures—of distorted limbs—of preternatural beasts, birds, and fishes—of dragons, centaurs, and intertwined snakes—of uncouth vehicles, and warlike instruments, and mystic-looking symbols—of chains of interlaced knots and complex zigzags, all so crowding on each other that the tired eye feels as if it had run through a procession of Temptations of St Anthony or Faust Sabbaths. When this field of investigation and speculation is surveyed in all its affluence, one is not surprised to find that it has been taken in hand by a race of bold guessers, who, by the skilful appliance of a jingling jargon of Asiatic, Celtic, and classical phraseology, make nonsense sound like learning too deep to be fathomed. [406] So, while Rusticus will point out to you "the auld-fashioned standin' stane"—on which he tells you that there are plain to be seen a cocked hat, a pair of spectacles, a comb, a looking-glass, a sow with a long snout, and a man driving a gig,—Mr Urban will describe to you "a hieroglyphed monolith" in the terms following:—

"The Buddhist triad is conspicuously symbolised by what the peasantry call a pair of spectacles. It consists of two circles, of which the one, having its radius 1-3/4 inch wider than the other, is evidently Buddha, the spiritual or divine intellectual essence of the world, or the efficient underived source of all; the other is Dharma, the material essence of the world—the plastic derivative cause. The ligamen connecting them together, completes the sacred triad with the Sangha derived from and composed of the two others. Here, therefore, is symbolised the collective energy of spirit and matter in the state of action, or the embryotic creation, the type and sum of all specific forms, spontaneously evolved from the union of Buddha and Dharma. The crescent, likened by the vulgar-minded peasantry to a cocked hat, is the embodiment of the all-pervading celestial influence; and the decorated sceptres or sacred wands of office, laid across it at the mystic angle of forty-five degrees, represent the comprehensive discipline and cosmopolite authority of the conquering Sarsaswete. The figure of the elephant—undoubted evidence of the [407] oriental origin of this monoglyph—represents the embryo of organised matter; while in the chariot of the sun the never-dying Inis na Bhfiodhlhadth threads the sacred labyrinth, waving a branch of the Mimosa serisha, which has been dipped in a sacred river, and dried beneath the influence of Osiris. The figures called a comb and a looking-glass are the lingal emblems of the sacred Phallic worship. The whole hierograph thus combines, in an extremely simple and instructive unity, the symbolisation of Apis, Osiris, Uphon, and Isis, Phallos, Pater Æther, and Mater Terra, Lingam and Yoni, Vishnu, Brama, and Sarsaswete, with their Saktes, Yang and Yiri, Padwadevi, Viltzli-pultzli, Baal, Dhanandarah, Sulivahna and Mumbo Jumbo."

The honest transcripts in the club book clear away a great deal of that unknown which is so convertible into the magnificent. It was extremely perplexing to understand that the elephant was profusely represented upon memorials familiar to the eyes of the inhabitants of Scotland, at a period, if we might credit some theories, anterior to the time when Roman soldiers were appalled in the Punic war by the sudden apparition of unknown animals of monstrous size and preternatural strength. The whole flood of oriental theory was let loose by this evidence of familiarity with the usages of Hindostan. But it is pretty evident, when we inspect him closely, [408] that the animal, though a strange beast of some peculiar conventional type, is no elephant. That spiral winding-up of his snout, which passed for a trunk, is a characteristic refuge of embryo art, repeated upon other parts of the animal. It is necessitated by the difficulty which a primitive artist feels in bringing out the form of an extremity, whatever it may be—snout, horn, or hoof. He finds that the easiest termination he can make is a whirl, and he makes it accordingly. Thus the noses, the tails, the feet of the characteristic monster of the sculptured stones, all end in a whirl, as the final letter of an accomplished and dashing penman ends in a flourish. The same difficulty is met in repeated instances on these stones by another ingenious resource. Animals are united or twined together by noses or tails, to enable the artist to escape the difficulty of executing the

extremities of each separately.

There is a propensity to believe that whatever is old must have something holy and mysterious about it. It is difficult to suppose that, in making an ornament, men who would be so venerable, were they alive now, as our ancestors of many centuries ago, can have been in the slightest degree affected by the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. Hence there is never a quaint Gothic decoration, floral or animal, but it must be symbolic of some great mystery. So the [409] reticulated and geometrical tracery on the sculptured stones has been invested with mythic attributes, under such names as "the Runic Knot." It has been counted symbolical of a mysterious worship or creed, and has been associated with Druids and other respectable, but not very palpable, personages.[83]

Good theories are such a rarity in the antiquarian world, that it is a luxury to find one which, in reference to this sort of decoration, merits that character. The buildings, both ecclesiastical and civil, of the early Christians of the North were, as we have seen, made of wattles or wicker-ware. The skill, therefore, of the architectural decorator took the direction of the variations in basket-work. We know that in the Gothic age those forms which were found the most endurable and graceful in which stone could be placed upon stone, became also the ruling forms which guided the carver and the painter; so that all wood-work, metal-work, seal-cutting, illumination of books, and the like, repeated the ornaments of Gothic architecture. It would only, then, be a prototype of [410] an established phenomenon were it to be found that the sculptor of an earlier age adopted the decorations developed by the skillful platting of withes or wattles; and accordingly, this is just the character of the platted ornaments so prevalent on the sculptured stones.[84] But, however these may have been suggested, they show the work of the undoubted artist, and furnish, as the advertisements say, "a varied assortment of the most elegant and attractive patterns."

Every one who in future attempts to unravel the mystery of these primitive sculptures must not only in gratitude but in common justice pay homage to the services of Mr John Stuart, the secretary of the Antiquaries' Society of Scotland, to whose learning and zeal he owes the collective means of examining them. It will interest many to know that Mr Stuart has been at work again, and has a second collection of transcripts, in some respects even more instructive than the first. These will show, for instance, the point of junction between the sculptures of the East and of the West, which, in their extreme special features, are widely unlike each other. [411]

In the mean time, as the reader is perhaps tired of all this talk about books, and I would fain part with him in good humour, I venture to take him on an imaginary ramble in the wilds of Argyllshire, in search of specimens of ancient native sculpture, that he may have an opportunity of noticing how much has yet to be gleaned off this stony field. So we are off together, on a fresh summer morning, along the banks of the Crinan Canal, until we reach the road which turns southward to Loch Swin and Taivalich. After ascending so far, we strike off by a scarcely discernible track, and climb upwards among the curiously broken mountains of South Knapdale. When we are high enough up we look on the other side of the first ridge, and see the brown heather dappled with tiny lakes, looking like molten silver dropped into their hollows; while far below, one of the countless branches of Loch Swin winds through a narrow inlet, among rocks cushioned to the water's edge with deep green foliage. We are not to descend to the region of lake and woodland, betrayed by this glimpse, but to keep the wilder upland; and at last, in a secluded hollow near the small tarn called Lochcolissor, we reach a deserted village—a collection of roofless stone houses, looking, if one judged from mere externals, as if they might in their early days have given shelter to Columba or Oran. In the centre of this group of domestic ruins is [412] an affluent fountain of the clearest water. Standing over it is the object of our search—a tall, grey, profusely-lichened stone. At first it seems amorphous, as geologists say; but a closer view discloses on the one side a cross incised, on the other a network of floral decorations in relief. To trace these in their completeness, it would be necessary to accomplish the not easy task of removing the coating of lichen; and, by the way, if adepts in the cryptogamic department of botany shall succeed in finding a test of the precise age of those lichens, which they believe they have proved to be the growth of centuries, a key of the most valuable kind will be obtained for discovering the age of stone monuments.[85]

Turn now in another direction. At the head of Loch Fyne, near Dunderar, the grim tower of the Macnaughtons—which, from some decorations on it, looks hugely like as if it had been built in the seventeenth century with the stones of an old church—we find a tuft of trees with a dyke round it, called Kilmorich. It is a graveyard evidently, though it may not have been recently opened; the surface is uneven, and several rough stones, which may have been placed there at [413] any time, stick through the earth. These, after a deliberate inspection, are found to have nothing of a sculptural character. But a small piece of rounded stone appears above the grass, and a little grubbing discloses a font, faintly decorated with some primitive fluting, on which a stone-mason would look with much scorn, and a scratching of a galley, the symbol of the Argyll family, or some other of the races descended from ancient sea-kings. This gives encouragement, and a sharper glance around betrays a singular-looking rounded headstone, in which are two crescent-shaped holes. There are corresponding holes on the portion under the sod, which thus completes the rounded head of an ancient Scoto-Irish cross. The next point is to find the shaft—it lies not far off, deep in the turf. And when we take the grass and moss from its face, it discloses some extremely curious quadrilateral decorations, quite peculiar, and not in conformity with any type of form which would enable its date to be guessed at within a century or two of the reality.

Passing through the rich woods of Ardkinglas, in a few miles we reach the burying-ground, called

of old Kilmaglas, but now the well-kept churchyard, in which stands the modern church of Strachur. There are many who will remember the white house glimmering through the trees, and lament that memory is now all that it contains for them. Here are several curious specimens of [414] sculpture. Some stones, not of the oldest type, have the crossed sword, symbolical alike of the warrior character of the dead and the religion of peace in which he rests. There is one with a figure in full chain-armour; and others, again, of an older date, ornamented with the geometric reticulations already discussed. Descending a few miles farther, in the small fertile delta of the Lachlan, and overshadowed almost by the old square castle of the M'Lachlans, there is a bushy enclosure which may be identified as the old burial-place of Kilmory. A large block of hewn stone, with a square hole in it, sets one in search of the cross of which it was the socket. This is found in the grass, sadly mutilated, but can be recognised by the stumps of the branches which once exfoliated into its circular head. Beside it lies a flat stone, on which a sword is surrounded by graceful floral sculpture.

Let us cross over again to the valley perforated by Loch Crinan. Northward of the canal there is a remarkable alluvial district, through which, although it seems crowded with steep mountain summits, one can travel over many a mile of level turf. From this soil the hills and rocks rise with extreme abruptness, in ridges at the border of the plain, and in isolated peaks here and there throughout its flat alluvial surface. Conspicuous, in a minor degree, is a great barrow like a pyramid, with a chamber roofed with long stones in its centre. Near it is one of those circles of [415] rough stones called Druidical, and farther on there is another, and then another; some of them tall pillars, others merely peeping above ground. They literally people the plain. This must have been a busy neighbourhood, whatever sort of work it may have been that went on around these untooled fragments of the living rock, which have so distracted our antiquaries in later centuries. If they were the means or the object of any kind of heathen worship, then the existence close beside them of the vestiges of early Christianity may be set down as an illustration of the well-known historical opinion, that the first Christian missionaries, instead of breaking the idols and reviling the superstitions of those whom they went to convert, professed to bring a new sanctity to their sacred places, and endeavoured to turn their impure faith, with the least possible violence, into the path of purity.

Our next trial is at Kilmichael, about three miles from Loch Gilp. The churchyard is extremely fruitful in sculptured stones of various kinds—some floral, others geometrical, with wild beasts, monsters, and human figures. One of them was pointed out as the tomb of a member of the house of Campbell, who bore the name of Thomas, and was a great bard, and lived in London and other great cities—Thomas Campbell, in short. It seems to be true that his ancestors were buried in [416] Kilmichael churchyard, but my informant seemed to struggle with an idea that the stone covered with the sculpture of a far-past century had been really raised to his honour. The next generation will probably assert this as a fact. The genesis of such traditions is curious. The stone called Rob Roy's tomb, which lies beside an ancient font in the churchyard of Balquhidder, is a sculptured stone raised for some one who had probably died in wealth and honour hundreds of years before Rob stole cattle.

By a slight ascent westward of the alluvial plain we reach Kilmartin, a village with a large modern church. Its graveyard is graced with many sculptured stones—twenty-five may be counted, conspicuous for their rich carving and excellent preservation. On one or two of the latest in date, there are knightly figures clad in chain-mail. A local antiquary could probably trace these home to some worshipful families in the neighbourhood, but there are others beyond the infancy of the oldest authentic pedigrees. While the stones in the eastern counties are all of extremely remote antiquity, offering no link of connection with later times, these Highland specimens seem to carry their peculiarities with modified variations through several centuries into times comparatively late. There are among them stones bearing some types of extreme [417] antiquity, and others which undoubtedly proclaim themselves as no older than the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. It is sometimes a difficult task, in judging of antiquities, to make a sufficient allowance for the spirit of imitation. There is nothing certainly more natural than that a new tombstone should be made after the fashion of time-honoured monuments, the pride of the graveyard in which it is to be placed. In Kilmartin there are two decided imitations of the more ancient class of the western sculptured stones. Though the symbols and decorations which they bear are of ancient outline, the heavy, and at the same time accurate and workmanlike, way in which they are cut, would mark them indubitably as modern, even if the one did not bear the date of 1707, and the other of 1711.

But the sun is dropping behind Ben Cruachan and the Jura hills. The time of holiday reading and holiday rambling has come to its end; and a voice calls the wanderer back to more sedate and methodical pursuits. [418]

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Marischal College. Mr M'Lean's descriptions refer to King's; but the two colleges, close together, must have been pretty similar in their manners and customs even before they were, as they now are, formally united.

[2] Life in a Northern University. By Neil M'Lean, author of 'Memoirs of Marshal Keith,' 'Romance of the Seal and Whale Fishing,' &c., &c. Glasgow; John S. Marr & Sons:

London; Simpkin, Marshall, & Co. 1874.

[3] Life in a Northern University.

[4] It may not be counted indelicate, as it refers to a period 120 years gone by, to mention that Peggy Paton once had a lover, and that this, her first lover, was no other than the son of that Moir of Stoneywood, whose correspondence is so frequently quoted in Dr Burton's 'History of Scotland.' The young man was Peggy's first cousin, the lairds of Grandholm and Stoneywood having married sisters—Mackenzie by name. The laird of Stoneywood is known to posterity by his ingenious achievement of ferrying the rebel army across the Dornoch Firth in small fishing-boats collected by Stoneywood all along the coast. On the defeat of the Pretender, and the suppression of the insurrection in 1746, Stoneywood's estate was confiscated, and he fled to the Continent. Family tradition adds that his escape was achieved by his disguising himself as a miller and swimming across the Don from Stoneywood to Grandholm, where the laird of Grandholm, who was of opposite politics, had removed the ferry-boat, and saw but did not denounce his kinsman. The houses of Grandholm and Stoneywood are exactly opposite each other on the two sides of the Don. Mrs Moir of Stoneywood did not immediately follow her husband, but remained with her friends to bring up her children, among them Miss Peggy's lover, who, soon after his engagement to her, joined his father on the Continent and there died.

[5] Mrs Burton wrote verses well. She occasionally published in the 'Gentleman's Magazine.'

[6] Probably a mistake. He was the brother of the proprietor.

[7] Dr Burton's youngest brother and sister.

[8] William Spalding, author of a History of English Literature and other works; a close friend till his too early death.

[9] Dr Burton's eight years younger brother.

[10] The Cyclopædia of Universal Biography.

[11] See Pitcairn's Criminal Trials.

[12] The late Professor Simpson.

[13] Dr Burton's eldest son, then a boy of fifteen.

[14] William Burton, artist, son of Dr Burton's eldest brother.

[15] His two younger children.

[16] Dr Burton's youngest son, eleven or twelve years old.

[17] This letter is addressed to the writer.

[18] His youngest daughter had had a mild attack of scarlet fever, from which she was completely recovered before he left home.

[19] Mr Hosack, author of an ingenious and exhaustive work, 'Mary Queen of Scots and her Accusers,' in which he vindicates the character of Queen Mary. Notwithstanding their difference of opinion on that fruitful subject of dispute, the two authors were fast friends.

[20] A tower within the grounds of Morton, used by his sons as a workshop.

[21] A rather amusing comment on this letter is conveyed in the following extract from one addressed to Dr Burton's publishers, by Mr George M'Crie, a grandson of the eminent Scotch divine of the same name:—

"In the month of July last year, I happened to be travelling southward, in the steamer St Magnus, from Orkney. Before calling at Wick, and while the tourists on board were gazing at John o' Groat's House, I was spoken to by an elderly gentleman, on the 'bridge,' regarding some of the steamer's arrangements. I satisfied his curiosity as well as I was able, and thought no more of the matter. We had a large number of passengers, and I did not notice him again until we were coming out together in a boat, after a ramble on shore at Pulteneytown. A fellow-passenger, who had previously noticed the elderly gentleman and myself in conversation, then whispered to me, 'A celebrated literary man that, sir, with whom you were speaking before we went ashore; no other than the famous Judge Haliburton of America, the author of "Sam Slick."' Some doubt, I must confess, crossed my mind at this stage. I surely had heard of the Judge's death some years before, but thinking, very pardonably, that I must be mistaken, I replied, 'Oh, indeed!' and viewed my late acquaintance with some curiosity. I am imaginative, but it was difficult, in truth, to connect this staid and sober personage with the idea of the American satirist, however proverbially dissimilar authors may be to their own creations. However, I am no hunter after celebrities, literary or otherwise, and I would not, in all likelihood, have taken any steps to further conversation with the one in question, had he not, by chance, been seated close beside me on the quarterdeck when we resumed our journey south. The steamer was rolling heavily, and his seat was not a comfortable one. I gave him a camp-stool which I had secured, and in return he kindly again entered into conversation with me. We talked about many things, but I could not help thinking that the American author seemed well informed, for a transatlantic stranger, regarding the coast, the route generally, and, singularly enough, regarding Scottish antiquities. At last an observation, which I timidly hazarded regarding the United States, showed me, in the reply it received, that I was hopelessly at sea regarding my fellow-passenger's identity. Before we came to Aberdeen he had told me that his name was John Hill Burton. The similarity of the sound of the names had misled my too easily persuaded informant and my own credulous self. I had taken the author of the 'Book-hunter' for the author of the 'Clockmaker'!

"Dr Hill Burton most kindly continued to converse with me for several hours after we had exchanged cards. My own is a name not unconnected with Scottish ecclesiastical history, and this, to him, was a sufficient topic. Being an Edinburgh man by birth, I ought to have known him by sight, but I have been absent from my native city for many years, and may be excused for not recognising one of Edinburgh's most distinguished dwellers, now unhappily lost to us.

"G.M. M'C."

[22] Since deceased—October 30, 1881—and also buried there.

[23] To afford the reader, however, an opportunity of noting at a glance the appropriate learned terms applicable to the different sets of persons who meddle with books, I subjoin the following definitions, as rendered in D'Israeli's Curiosities, from the Chasse aux Bibliographes et aux Antiquaires mal avisés of Jean Joseph Rive:—

"A bibliognoste, from the Greek, is one knowing in title-pages and colophons, and in editions; the place and year when printed; the presses whence issued; and all the minutiæ of a book."—"A bibliographe is a describer of books and other literary arrangements."—"A bibliomane is an indiscriminate accumulator, who blunders faster than he buys, cock-brained and purse-heavy."—"A bibliophile, the lover of books, is the only one in the class who appears to read them for his own pleasure."—"A bibliotaphe buries his books, by keeping them under lock, or framing them in glass-cases."

The accurate Peignot, after accepting of this classification with high admiration of its simplicity and exhaustiveness, is seized in his supplementary volume with a misgiving in the matter of the bibliotaphe, explaining that it ought to be translated as a grave of books, and that the proper technical expression for the performer referred to by Rive, is bibliothapt. He adds to the nomenclature bibliolyte, as a destroyer of books; bibliologue, one who discourses about books; bibliotacte, a classifier of books; and bibliopée, "*l'art d'écrire ou de composer des livres*," or, as the unlearned would say, the function of an author. Of the dignity with which this writer can invest the objects of his nomenclature, take the following specimen from his description of the bibliographe:—

"Nothing is rarer than to deserve the title of bibliographe, and nothing more difficult and laborious than to attain a just title to it.

"Bibliography being the most universal and extensive of all sciences, it would appear that all subjects should come under the consideration of the bibliographe; languages, logic, criticism, philosophy, eloquence, mathematics, geography, chronology, history, are no strangers to him; the history of printing and of celebrated printers is familiar to him, as well as all the operations of the typographic art. He is continually occupied with the works of the ancients and the moderns; he makes it his business to know books useful, rare, and curious, not only by their titles and form, but by their contents; he spends his life in analysing, classifying, and describing them. He seeks out those which are recommended by talented authors; he runs through libraries and cabinets to increase the sum of his knowledge; he studies authors who have treated of the science of books, he points out their errors; he chooses from among new productions those which bear the stamp of genius, and which will live in men's memories; he ransacks periodicals to keep himself well up to the discoveries of his age, and compare them with those of ages past; he is greedy of all works which treat of libraries, particularly catalogues, when they are well constructed and well arranged, and their price adds to their value. Such is the genuine *Bibliographe*." This reminds one of the old Roman jurists, who briefly defined their own science as the knowledge of things human and divine.

[24] It has often been observed that it is among the Society of Friends, who keep so tight a rein on the passions and propensities, that these make the most terrible work when they break loose. De Quincey, in one of his essays on his contemporaries, giving a sketch of a man of great genius and high scholarship, whose life was early clouded by insanity, gives some curious statements about the effects of the system of rigid restraint exercised by the Society of Friends, which I am not prepared either to support or contradict. After describing the system of restraint itself, he says: "This is known, but it is not equally known that this unnatural restraint, falling into collision with two forces at once—the force of passion and of youth—not unfrequently records its own injurious tendencies, and publishes the rebellious movements of nature by distinct and anomalous diseases. And, further, I have been assured, upon most excellent authority, that these diseases—strange and elaborate affections of the nervous system—are found *exclusively* among the young men and women of the Quaker Society; that they are known and understood exclusively amongst physicians who have practised in great towns having a large Quaker population, such as Birmingham; that they assume a new type and a more inveterate character in the second or third generation, to whom this fatal inheritance is often transmitted; and, finally, that if this class of nervous derangements does not increase so much as to attract public attention, it is simply because the community itself—the Quaker body—does not increase, but, on the contrary, is rather on the wane."

There exist many good stories which have for their point the passions of the natural man breaking forth, in members of this persuasion, in a shape more droll than distressing. One of the best of these is a north-country anecdote preserved by Francis Douglas in his Description of the East Coast of Scotland. The hero was the first Quaker of that Barclay family which produced the apologist and the pugilist. He was a colonel in the great civil wars, and had seen wild work in his day; but in his old age a change came over him, and, becoming a follower of George Fox, he retired to spend his latter days on his ancestral estate in Kincardineshire. Here it came to pass that a brother laird thought the old Quaker could be easily done, and began to encroach upon his marches. Barclay, a strong man, with the iron sinews of his race, and their fierce spirit still burning in his eyes, strode up to the encroacher, and, with a grim smile, spoke thus: "Friend, thou knowest that I have become a man of peace and have relinquished strife, and therefore thou art

endeavouring to take what is not thine own, but mine, because thou believest that, having abjured the arm of the flesh, I cannot hinder thee. And yet, as thy friend, I advise thee to desist; for shouldst thou succeed in rousing the old Adam within me, perchance he may prove too strong, not only for me, but for *thee*." There was no use of attempting to answer such an argument.

[25] In the renowned Dame aux Camélias, the respectable, rigid, and rather indignant father, addresses his erring son thus: "Que vous ayez une maîtresse, c'est fort bien; que vous la payiez comme un galant homme doit payer l'amour d'une fille entretenue, c'est on ne peut mieux; mais que vous oubliez les choses les plus saintes pour elle, que vous permettiez que la bruit de votre vie scandaleuse arrive jusqu'au fond de ma province, et jette l'ombre d'une tache sur le nom honorable que je vous ai donné—voilà ce qui ne peut être, voilà ce qui ne sera pas."

So even the French novelists draw the line "somewhere," and in other departments of morals they may be found drawing it closer than many good uncharitable Christians among us would wish. In one very popular novel the victim spends his wife's fortune at the gaming-table, leaves her to starve, lives with another woman, and, having committed forgery, plots with the Mephistopheles of the story to buy his own safety at the price of his wife's honour. This might seem bad enough, but worse remains. It is told in a smothered whisper, by the faithful domestic, to the horrified family, that he has reason to suspect his master of having indulged, once at least, if not oftener, in brandy-and-water!

[26] Of the copy of the celebrated 1635 Elzevir Cæsar, in the Imperial Library at Paris, Brunet triumphantly informs us that it is four inches and ten-twelfths in height, and occupies the high position of being the tallest copy of that volume in the world, since other illustrious copies put in competition with it have been found not to exceed four inches and eight, or, at the utmost, nine, twelfths.

"Ces détails," he subjoins, "paroitront sans doute puérils à bien des gens: mais puisque c'est la grandeur des marges de ces sorts de livres qu'en détermine la valeur, il faut bien fixer le *maximum* de cette grandeur, afin que les amateurs puissent apprécier les exemplaires qui approchent plus ou moins de la mésure donnée."

[27] "Si quis in aliena tabula pinxerit, quidam putant, tabulam picturæ cedere: aliis videtur picturam (qualiscunque sit) tabulæ cedere: sed nobis videtur melius esse tabulam picturæ cedere. Ridiculum est enim picturam Apellis vel Parrhasii in accessionem vilissimæ tabulæ cedere."—*Inst.* ii. 1. 34.

[28] "The great point of view in a collector is to possess that not possessed by any other. It is said of a collector lately deceased, that he used to purchase scarce prints at enormous prices in order to destroy them, and thereby render the remaining impressions more scarce and valuable."—Grose's Olio, p. 57. I do not know to whom Grose alludes; but it strikes me, in realising a man given to such propensities—taking them as a reality and not a joke—that it would be interesting to know how, in his moments of serious thought, he could contemplate his favourite pursuit—as, for instance, when the conscientious physician may have thought it necessary to warn him in time of the approaching end—how he could reckon up his good use of the talents bestowed on him, counting among them his opportunities for the encouragement of art as an elevator and improver of the human race.

[29] A traditional anecdote represents the Rev. William Thomson, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, as having got into a scrape by a very indecorous alteration of a word in Scripture. A young divine, on his first public appearance, had to read the solemn passage in 1st Corinthians, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Thomson scratched the letter *c* out of the word changed. The effect of the passage so mutilated can easily be tested. The person who could play such tricks was ill suited for his profession, and being relieved of its restraints, he found a more congenial sphere of life among the unsettled crew of men of letters in London, over whom Smollett had just ceased to reign. He did a deal of hard work, and the world owes him at least one good turn in his translation of Cunningham's Latin History of Britain from the Revolution to the Hanover Succession. The value of this work, in the minute light thrown by it on one of the most memorable periods of British history, is too little known. The following extract may give some notion of the curious and instructive nature of this neglected book. It describes the influences which were in favour of the French alliance, and against the Whigs, during Marlborough's campaign. "And now I shall take this opportunity to speak of the French wine-drinkers as truly and briefly as I can. On the first breaking out of the Confederate war, the merchants in England were prohibited from all commerce with France, and a heavy duty was laid upon French wine. This caused a grievous complaint among the topers, who have great interest in the Parliament, as if they had been poisoned by port wines. Mr Portman Seymour, who was a jovial companion, and indulged his appetites, but otherwise a good man; General Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough's brother, a man of courage, but a lover of wine; Mr Pereira, a Jew and smell-feast, and other hard drinkers, declared, that the want of French wine was not to be endured, and that they could hardly bear up under so great a calamity. These were joined by Dr Aldridge, who, though nicknamed the priest of Bacchus, was otherwise an excellent man, and adorned with all kinds of learning. Dr Ratcliffe, a physician of great reputation, who ascribed the cause of all diseases to the want of French wines, though he was very rich, and much addicted to wine, yet, being extremely covetous, bought the cheaper wines; but at the same time he imputed the badness of his wine to the war, and the difficulty of getting better. Therefore the Duke of Beaufort and the Earl of Scarsdale, two young noblemen of great interest among their acquaintance, who had it in their power to live at their ease in magnificence or luxury, merrily attributed all the doctor's complaints to his avarice. All those were also for peace rather than war. And all the bottle-companions, many physicians, and great numbers of the lawyers and inferior

clergy, and, in fine, the loose women too, were united together in the faction against the Duke of Marlborough."—ii. 200.

[30] Without venturing too near to this very turbulent arena, where hard words have lately been cast about with much reckless ferocity, I shall just offer one amended reading, because there is something in it quite peculiar, and characteristic of its literary birthplace beyond the Atlantic. The passage operated upon is the wild soliloquy, where Hamlet resolves to try the test of the play, and says—

> "The devil hath power
> T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps,
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
> As he is very potent with such spirits,
> Abuses me to damn me."

The amended reading stands—

> "As he is very potent with such spirits,
> Abuses me too—damme."

[31] One curious service of printers' blunders, of a character quite distinct from their bibliological influence, is their use in detecting plagiarisms. It may seem strange that there should be any difficulty in critically determining the question, when the plagiarism is so close as to admit of this test; but there are pieces of very hard work in science, tables of reference, and the like, where, if two people go through the same work, they will come to the same conclusion. In such cases, the prior worker has sometimes identified his own by a blunder, as he would a stolen china vase by a crack. Peignot complains that some thirty or forty pages of his Dictionnaire Bibliographique were incorporated in the Siècles Littéraires de la France, "avec une exactitude si admirable, qu'on y a precieusement conservé toutes les fautes typographiques."

[32] See this and other cases in point set forth in an amusing article on "Literary Mishaps," in Hedderwick's Miscellany, part ii.

[33]
> "But devious oft, from ev'ry classic muse,
> The keen collector meaner paths will choose:
> And first the margin's breadth his soul employs,
> Pure, snowy, broad, the type of nobler joys.
> In vain might Homer roll the tide of song,
> Or Horace smile, or Tully charm the throng;
> If, crost by Pallas' ire, the trenchant blade,
> Or too oblique, or near the edge, invade,
> The Bibliomane exclaims, with haggard eye,
> 'No margin!'—turns in haste, and scorns to buy."

—Ferriar's Bibliomania, v. 34-43.

[34] Article on Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, in the 21st vol. of Miscellaneous Prose Works.

[35] Predicatoriana, p. 23

[36] Atticus was under the scandal of having disposed of his books, and Cicero sometimes hints to him that he might let more of them go his way. In truth, Atticus carried this so far, however, that he seems to have been a sort of dealer, and the earliest instance of a capitalist publisher. He had slaves whom he occupied in copying, and was in fact much in the position of a rich Virginian or Carolinian, who should find that the most profitable investment for his stock of slaves is a printing and publishing establishment.

[37] Curiosities of Literature, iii. 339.

[38] I am quite aware that the authorities to the contrary are so high as to make these sentiments partake of heresy, if not a sort of classical profanity.

"Studiorum quoque, quæ liberalissima impensa est, tamdiu rationem habet, quamdiu modum. Quo innumerabiles libros et bibliothecas, quarum dominus vix tota vita indices perlegit? Onerat discentem turba, non instruit: multoque satius est paucis te auctoribus tradere, quam errare per multos. Quadraginta millia librorum Alexandræ arserunt: pulcherrimum regiæ opulentiæ monumentum alius laudaverit, sicut et Livius, qui elegantiæ regum curæque egregium id opus ait fuisse. Non fuit elegantia illud aut cura, sed studiosa luxuria. Immo ne studiosa quidem: quoniam non in studium, sed in spectaculum comparaverant: sicut plerisque, ignaris etiam servilium literarum libri non studiorum instrumenta, sed c[oe]nationum ornamenta sunt. Paretur itaque librorum quantum satis sit, nihil in apparatum. Honestius, inquis, hoc te impensæ, quam in Corinthia pictasque tabulas effuderint. Vitiosum est ubique, quod nimium est. Quid habes, cur ignoscas homini armaria citro atque ebore captanti, corpora conquirenti aut ignotorum auctorum aut improbatorum, et inter tot millia librorum oscitanti, cui voluminum suorum frontes maxime placent titulique? Apud desidiosissimos ergo videbis quicquid orationum historiarumque est, tecto tenus exstructa loculamenta; jam enim inter balnearia et thermas bibliotheca quoque ut necessarium domus ornamentum expolitur. Ignoscerem plane, si studiorum nimia cupidine oriretur: nunc ista conquisita, cum imaginibus suis descripta et sacrorum opera ingeniorum in speciem et cultum parietum comparantur."—*Seneca*, De Tranquillitate, c. ix.

There are some good hits here, which would tell at the present day. Seneca is reported to have had a large library; it is certain that he possessed and fully enjoyed enormous wealth; and it is amusing to find this commendation of literary moderation following on a well-known passage in praise of parsimonious living, and of the good example set by Diogenes. Modern scepticism about the practical stoicism of the ancients is surely

brought to a climax by a living writer, M. Fournier, who maintains that the so-called tub of Diogenes was in reality a commodious little dwelling—neat but not gorgeous. It must be supposed, then, that he spoke of his tub much as an English country gentleman does of his "box."

[39] How a nature endowed with powerful impulses like these might be led along with them into a totally different groove, I am reminded by a traditionary anecdote of student life. A couple of college chums are under the impression that their motions are watched by an inquisitive tutor, who for the occasion may be called Dr Fusby. They become both exceeding wroth, and the more daring of the two engages on the first opportunity to "settle the fellow." They are occupied in ardent colloquy, whether on the predicates or other matters it imports not, when a sudden pause in the conversation enables them to be aware that there is a human being breathing close on the other side of the "oak." The light is extinguished, the door opened, and a terrific blow from a strong and scientifically levelled fist hurls the listener down-stairs to the next landing-place, from which resting-place he hears thundered after him for his information, "If you come back again, you scoundrel, I'll put you into the hands of Dr Fusby." From that source, however, no one had much to dread for some considerable period, during which the Doctor was confined to his bedroom by serious indisposition. It refreshed the recollection of this anecdote, years after I had heard it, and many years after the date attributed to it, to have seen a dignified scholar make what appeared to me an infinitesimally narrow escape from sharing the fate of Dr Fusby, having indeed just escaped it by satisfactorily proving to a hasty philosopher that he was not the party guilty of keeping a certain copy of Occam on the sentences of Peter Lombard out of his reach.

[40] The author, from a vitiated reminiscence, at first made the unpardonable blunder of attributing this touching trait of nature to the noble purchaser of the Valderfaer Boccaccio. For this, as not only a mistake, but in some measure an imputation on the tailor who could have made for his lordship pockets of dimensions so abnormal, I received due castigation from an eminent practical man in the book-hunting field.

[41] Dict. de Bibliologie, i. 391.

[42] A good modern specimen of a lengthy title-page may be found in one of the books appropriate to the matter in hand, by the diligent French bibliographer Peignot:—

"Dictionnaire Raisonné de Bibliologie: contenant—1mo, L'explication des principaux termes relatifs à la bibliographie, à l'art typographique, à la diplomatique, aux langues, aux archives, aux manuscrits, aux médailles, aux antiquités, &c.; 2do, Des notices historiques détaillées sur les principales bibliothèques anciennes et modernes; sur les différentes sectes philosophiques; sur les plus célèbres imprimeurs, avec une indication des meilleures éditions sorties de leurs presses, et sur les bibliographes, avec la liste de leurs ouvrages; 3tio, enfin, L'exposition des différentes systèmes bibliographiques, &c.,—ouvrage utile aux bibliothécaires, archivistes, imprimeurs, libraires, &c. Par G. Peignot, Bibliothécaire de la Haute-Saône, membre-correspondant de la Société libre d'emulation du Haut-Rhin. *Indocti discant, et ament meminisse periti.* Paris, An x. 1802."

Here follows a rival specimen selected from the same department of literature:—

"Bibliographie Instructive; ou, Traité de la Connaissance des Livres Rares et Singuliers; contenant un catalogue raisonné de la plus grande partie de ces livres précieux, qui ont paru successivement dans la république des lettres, depuis l'invention de l'imprimerie jusqu'à nos jours; avec des notes sur la différence et la rareté de leurs éditions, et des remarques sur l'origine de cette rareté actuelle, et son dégré plus ou moins considerable; la manière de distinguer les éditions originales, d'avec les contrefaites; avec une description typographique particulière, du composé de ces rares volumes, au moyen de laquelle il sera aisé de reconnoître facilement les exemplaires, ou mutilés en partie, ou absolument imparfaits, qui s'en rencontrent journellement dans le commerce, et de les distinguer sûrement de ceux qui seront exactement complets dans toutes leurs parties. Disposé par ordre de matières et de facultés, suivant le système bibliographique généralement adopté; avec une table générale des auteurs, et un système complet de bibliographie choisie. Par Guillaume-François de Bûre le jeune, Libraire de Paris."

[43] This passage has been quoted and read by many people quite unconscious of the arrant bull it contains. Indeed, an eminent London newspaper, to which the word Bull cannot be unfamiliar, tells me, in reviewing my first edition, that it is no bull at all, but a plain statement of fact, and boldly quotes it in confirmation of this opinion. There could be no better testimony to its being endowed with the subtle spirit of the genuine article. Irish bulls, as it has been said of constitutions, "are not made—they grow," and that only in their own native soil. Those manufactured for the stage and the anecdote-books betray their artificial origin in their breadth and obviousness. The real bull carries one with it at first by an imperceptible confusion and misplacement of ideas in the mind where it has arisen, and it is not until you reason back that you see it. Horace Walpole used to say that the best of all bulls, from its thorough and grotesque confusion of identity, was that of the man who complained of having been "changed at nurse;" and perhaps he is right. An Irishman, and he only, can handle this confusion of ideas so as to make it a more powerful instrument of repartee than the logic of another man: take, for instance, the beggar who, when imploring a dignified clergyman for charity, was charged not to take the sacred name in vain, and answered, "Is it in vain, then? and whose fault is that?" I have doubts whether the saying attributed to Sir Boyle Roche about being in two places at once "like a bird," is the genuine article. I happened to discover that it is of earlier date than Sir Boyle's day, having found, when rummaging in an old house among some Jacobite manuscripts, one from Robertson of Strowan, the warrior poet, in which he says about two contradictory military instructions, "It seems a difficult point for me to put both orders in execution, unless, as the man said, I can be in two places at once, like a bird." A few copies of these letters were printed for the use of the Abbotsford Club. This

letter of Strowan's occurs in p. 92.

[44] This case has been often referred to in law-books, but I have never met with so full a statement of the contents of the declaration as in the Retrospective Review (vol. v. p. 81).

[45] It is curious to observe how bitter a prejudice Themis has against her own humbler ministers. Most of the bitterest legal jokes are at the expense of the class who have to carry the law into effect. Take, for instance, the case of the bailiff who had been compelled to swallow a writ, and, rushing into Lord Norbury's court to proclaim the indignity done to justice in his person, was met by the expression of a hope that the writ was "*not returnable* in this court."

[46] A late venerable practitioner in a humble department of the law, who wanted to write a book, and was recommended to try his hand at a translation of Latin law-maxims as a thing much wanted, was considerably puzzled by the maxim, "Catella realis non potest legari;" nor was he quite relieved when he turned up his Ainsworth and found that catella means a "little puppy." There was nothing for it, however, but obedience, so that he had to give currency to the remarkable principle of law, that "a genuine little whelp cannot be left in legacy." He also translated "messis sequitur sementem," with a fine simplicity, into "the harvest follows the seed-time;" and "actor sequitur forum rei," he made "the agent must be in court when the case is going on." Copies of the book containing these gems are exceedingly rare, some malicious person having put the author up to their absurdity.

[47] There are two old methods of paying rent in Scotland—Kane and Carriages; the one being rent in kind from the farmyard, the other being an obligation to furnish the landlord with a certain amount of carriage, or rather cartage. In one of the vexed cases of domicile, which had found its way into the House of Lords, a Scotch lawyer argued that a landed gentleman had shown his determination to abandon his residence in Scotland by having given up his "kane and carriages." It is said that the argument went further than he expected—the English lawyers admitting that it was indeed very strong evidence of an intended change of domicile when the laird not only ceased to keep a carriage, but actually divested himself of his walking-cane.

[48] A polite correspondent reminds me of the Registration Act, 52 G. III. c. 156, in which the fruit of penalties is divided between the informer, who gets one half, and certain charitable purposes, to which the other is devoted, while the only penalty set forth in the Act is transportation for fourteen years.

[49] "In this catalogue of *books which are no books—biblia a biblia*—I reckon court calendars, directories, pocket-books, draught-boards bound and lettered on the back, scientific treatises, almanacs, statutes at large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and generally all those volumes which 'no gentleman's library should be without;' the histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew) and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding. I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what 'seem its leaves,' to come bolt upon a withering population essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of block-headed encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of russia or morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably reclothe my shivering folios, would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils."—Essays of Elia.

[50] Take, for instance, the announcement of the wants of an affluent and pious elderly lady, desirous of having the services of a domestic like-minded with herself, who appeals to the public for a "groom to take charge of two carriage-horses of a serious turn of mind." So also the simple-hearted innkeeper, who founds on his "limited charges and civility;" or the description given by a distracted family of a runaway member, who consider that they are affording valuable means for his identification by saying, "age not precisely known—but looks older than he is."

[51] Library Companion, p. 699.

[52] Take as a practical commentary on what has been said (p. 82) on "illustrating" books, the following passage describing some of the specialties of a collection, the general features of which are described further on:—

"But the crowning glory is a folio copy of Shakespeare, illustrated by the collector himself, with a prodigality of labour and expense, that places it far above any similar work ever attempted. The letterpress of this great work is a choice specimen of Nichol's types, and each play occupies a separate portfolio. These are accompanied by costly engravings of landscapes, rare portraits, maps, elegantly coloured plates of costumes, and water-colour drawings, executed by some of the best artists of the day. Some of the plays have over 200 folio illustrations, each of which is beautifully inlaid or mounted, and many of the engravings are very valuable. Some of the landscapes, selected from the oldest cosmographies known, illustrating the various places mentioned in the pages of Shakespeare, are exceedingly curious as well as valuable.

"In the historical plays, when possible, every character is portrayed from authoritative sources, as old tapestries, monumental brasses, or illuminated works of the age, in well-executed drawings or recognised engravings. There are in this work a vast number of illustrations, in addition to a very numerous collection of water-colour drawings. In addition to the thirty-seven plays, are two volumes devoted to Shakespeare's life and

times, one volume of portraits, one volume devoted to distinguished Shakespearians, one to poems, and two to disputed plays, the whole embracing a series of forty-two folio volumes, and forming, perhaps, the most remarkable and costly monument, in this shape, ever attempted by a devout worshipper of the Bard of Avon. The volume devoted to Shakespeare's portraits was purchased by Mr Burton, at the sale of a gentleman's library, who had spent many years in making the collection, and includes various 'effigies' unknown to many laborious collectors. It contains upwards of 100 plates, for the most part proofs. The value of this collection may be estimated by the fact, that a celebrated English collector recently offered its possessor £60 for this single volume.

"In the reading-room directly beneath the main library, are a number of portfolios of prints illustrative of the plays of Shakespeare, of a size too large to be included in the illustrated collection just noticed. There is likewise another copy of Shakespeare, based upon Knight's pictorial royal octavo, copiously illustrated by the owner; but although the prints are numerous, they are neither as costly nor as rare as those contained in the large folio copy.

"Among the curiosities of the Shakespeare collection are a number of copies of the disputed plays, printed during his lifetime, with the name of Shakespeare as their author. It is remarkable, if these plays were not at least revised by Shakespeare, that no record of a contradiction of their authorship should be found. It is not improbable that many plays written by others were given to Shakespeare to perform in his capacity as a theatrical manager, requiring certain alterations in order to adapt them to the use of the stage, which were arranged by his cunning and skilful hand, and these plays afterward found their way into print, with just sufficient of his emendations to allow his authorship of them, in the carelessness in which he held his literary fame, to pass uncontradicted by him.

"There is a copy of an old play of the period, with manuscript annotations, and the name of Shakespeare written on the title-page. It is either the veritable signature of the poet, or an admirably imitated forgery. Mr Burton inclined to the opinion that the work once belonged to Shakespeare, and that the signature is genuine. If so, it is probably the only scrap of his handwriting on this continent. This work is not included in the list given of Ireland's library, the contents of which were brought into disrepute by the remarkable literary forgeries of the son, but stands forth peculiar and unique, and furnishes much room for curious speculation."—(148-51.)

[53] "This collection [Mr Menzies's] contains four thousand volumes, and is for the most part in the English language. Its chief specialty consists in works on American history and early American printed books. Among the latter may be mentioned a series of the earliest works issued from the press in New York. Of these, is A Letter of Advice to a Young Gentleman, by R.L., printed and sold by William Bradford, in New York, 1696. Richard Lyon, the author, came early to this country, and officiated as a private tutor to a young English student at Cambridge, to whom the letter of advice was written. It is undoubtedly the earliest work which issued from the press in New York, and is so extremely rare, that it is questionable whether another copy is to be found in the State. There is a collection of tracts comprised in seven volumes, written by the Rev. George Keith, and published by Bradford, at New York, 1702-4. Keith was born in Scotland, and settled in East Jersey, in the capacity of surveyor-general, in 1682. The several tracts in the collection are on religious subjects, and are controversial in their character. As early specimens of printing, and as models of the manner in which the religious controversies of the day were conducted, they are both instructive and curious. In addition to these is a work entitled The Rebuker Rebuked, by Daniel Leeds, 1703; A Sermon preached at Kingston in Jamaica, by William Corbin, 1703; The Great Mystery of Foxcraft, by Daniel Leeds, 1705; A Sermon preached at Trinity Church, in New York, by John Sharp, 1706; An Alarm Sounded to the Inhabitants of the World, by Bath Bowers, 1709; and Lex Parliamentaria, 1716. All the above works were printed by Bradford, the earliest New York publisher, and one of the earliest printers in America. They constitute, perhaps, the most complete collection in existence of the publications of this early typographer. The whole are in an excellent state of preservation, and are nearly, if not quite, unique."

[54] I am not aware that in the blue-books, or any other source of public information, there is any authenticated statement of the quantity of literature which the privileged libraries receive through the Copyright Act. The information would afford a measure of the fertility of the British press. It is rather curious, that for a morsel of this kind of ordinary modern statistics, one must have recourse to so scholarly a work as the quarto volume of the *Præfationes et Epistolæ Editionibus Principibus Auctorum Veterum præpositæ, curante Beriah Botfield, A.M.* The editor of that noble quarto obtained a return from Mr Winter Jones, of the number of deposits in the British Museum from 1814 to 1860. Counting the "pieces," as they are called—that is, every volume, pamphlet, page of music, and other publication—the total number received in 1814 was 378. It increased by steady gradation until 1851, when it reached 9871. It then got an impulse, from a determination more strictly to enforce the Act, and next year the number rose to 13,934, and in 1859 it reached 28,807. In this great mass, the number of books coming forth complete in one volume or more is roundly estimated at 5000, but a quantity of the separate numbers and parts which go to make up the total are elementary portions of books, giving forth a certain number of completed volumes annually. From the same authority, it appears that the total number of publications which issued from the French press in 1858 was estimated at 13,000; but this includes "sermons, pamphlets, plays, pieces of music, and engravings." In the same year the issues from the German press, Austria not included, are estimated at 10,000, all apparently actual volumes, or considerable pamphlets. Austria in 1855 published 4673 volumes and parts. What a contrast to all this it must be to live in sleepy Norway, where the annual literary prowess produces 146 volumes! In Holland the annual publications approach 2000. "During the year 1854, 861 works in the Russian language, and 451 in foreign languages were

printed in Russia; besides 2940 scientific and literary treatises in the different periodicals." The number of works anywhere published is, however, no indication of the number of books put in circulation, since some will have to be multiplied by tens, others by hundreds, and others by thousands. We know that there is an immense currency of literature in the American States, yet, of the quantity of literature issued there, the Publishers' Circular for February 1859 gives the following meagre estimate:—"There were 912 works published in America during 1858. Of these 177 were reprints from England, 35 were new editions, and 10 were translations from the French or German. The new American works thus number only 690, and among them are included sermons, pamphlets, and letters, whereas the reprints are in most cases *bonâ fide* books."

[55] The most complete mass of information which we probably possess in the English language about the history of libraries, both home and foreign, is in the two octavos called Memoirs of Libraries, including a Handbook of Library Concerns, by Edward Edwards.

[56] "Indeed, although we had obtained abundance both of old and new works, through an extensive communication with all the religious orders, yet we must in justice extol the Preachers with a special commendation in this respect; for we found them, above all other religious devotees, ungrudging of their most acceptable communications, and overflowing with a certain divine liberality; we experienced them not to be selfish hoarders, but meet professors of enlightened knowledge. Besides all the opportunities already touched upon, we easily acquired the notice of the stationers and librarians, not only within the provinces of our native soil, but of those dispersed over the kingdoms of France, Germany, and Italy, by the prevailing power of money; no distance whatever impeded, no fury of the sea deterred them; nor was cash wanting for their expenses, when they sent or brought us the wished-for books; for they knew to a certainty that their hopes reposed in our bosoms could not be disappointed, but ample redemption, with interest, was secure with us. Lastly, our common captivatrix of the love of all men (money), did not neglect the rectors of country schools, nor the pedagogues of clownish boys, but rather, when we had leisure to enter their little gardens and paddocks, we culled redolent flowers upon the surface, and dug up neglected roots (not, however, useless to the studious), and such coarse digests of barbarism, as with the gift of eloquence might be made sanative to the pectoral arteries. Amongst productions of this kind, we found many most worthy of renovation, which, when the foul rust was skilfully polished off, and the mask of old age removed, deserved to be once more remodelled into comely countenances, and which we, having applied a sufficiency of the needful means, resuscitated for an exemplar of future resurrection, having in some measure restored them to renewed soundness. Moreover, there was always about us in our halls no small assemblage of antiquaries, scribes, bookbinders, correctors, illuminators, and, generally, of all such persons as were qualified to labour advantageously in the service of books.

"To conclude. All of either sex, of every degree, estate, or dignity, whose pursuits were in any way connected with books, could, with a knock, most easily open the door of our heart, and find a convenient reposing place in our bosom. We so admitted all who brought books, that neither the multitude of first-comers could produce a fastidiousness of the last, nor the benefit conferred yesterday be prejudicial to that of to-day. Wherefore, as we were continually resorted to by all the aforesaid persons, as to a sort of adamant attractive of books, the desired accession of the vessels of science, and a multifarious flight of the best volumes were made to us. And this is what we undertook to relate at large in the present chapter."

[57] Edwards on Libraries, vol. i. p. 586.

[58] Edwards on Libraries, vol. i. p. 609.

[59] Edwards on Libraries, vol. ii. p. 272.

[60] One of the latest inquirers who has gone over the ground concludes his evidence thus: "Omar ne vint pas à Alexandrie; et s'il y fut venu, il n'eut pas trouvé des livres à brûler. La bibliothèque n'existait plus depuis deux siècles et demi."—Fournier, L'Esprit dans l'Histoire. What shall we say to the story told by Zonaras and repeated by Pancirole, of the burning, in the reign of the Emperor Basilisc, of the library of Constantinople, containing one hundred and twenty thousand volumes, and among them a copy of the Iliad and the Odyssey, written in golden letters on parchment made from the intestines of the dragon?

[61] I question if Toy Literature, as it may be called, has received the consideration it deserves, when one remembers how great an influence it must have on the formation of the infant mind. I am not prepared to argue that it should be put under regulation—perhaps it is best that it should be left to the wild luxuriance of nature—but its characteristics and influence are surely worthy of studious observation. It happened to me once to observe in the library of an eminent divine a large heap of that class of works which used to be known as "penny bookies." My reverend friend explained, in relation to them, that they were intended to counteract some pernicious influences at work—that he had made the important and painful discovery that the influence of this class of literature had been noticed and employed by the enemies of the Church. In confirmation of this view, he showed me some passages, of which I remember the following:—

> "B was a Bishop who loved his repose,
> C was a Curate who had a red nose,"

D was a Dean, but how characterised I forget. I did not think, however, that the proposed antidote, in which the mysteries of religion and the specialties of a zealous class in the English Church were mixed up with childish prattle, was much more decorous or appropriate than what it was intended to counteract.

[62] There is something exceedingly curious, not only in its bearing on the matter of the text, but as a record of some peculiar manners and habits of the fourteenth century, in Richard of Bury's injunctions as to the proper treatment of the manuscripts which were read in his day, and the signal contrast offered by the practice both of the clergy and laity to his decorous precepts:—

"We not only set before ourselves a service to God in preparing volumes of new books, but we exercise the duties of a holy piety, if we first handle so as not to injure them, then return them to their proper places and commend them to undefiling custody, that they may rejoice in their purity while held in the hand, and repose in security when laid up in their repositories. Truly, next to the vestments and vessels dedicated to the body of the Lord, holy books deserve to be most decorously handled by the clergy, upon which injury is inflicted as often as they presume to touch them with a dirty hand. Wherefore, we hold it expedient to exhort students upon various negligencies which can always be avoided, but which are wonderfully injurious to books.

"In the first place, then, let there be a mature decorum in opening and closing of volumes, that they may neither be unclasped with precipitous haste, nor thrown aside after inspection without being duly closed; for it is necessary that a book should be much more carefully preserved than a shoe. But school folks are in general perversely educated, and, if not restrained by the rule of their superiors, are puffed up with infinite absurdities; they act with petulance, swell with presumption, judge of everything with certainty, and are unexperienced in anything.

"You will perhaps see a stiff-necked youth, lounging sluggishly in his study, while the frost pinches him in winter time, oppressed with cold, his watery nose drops, nor does he take the trouble to wipe it with his handkerchief till it has moistened the book beneath it with its vile dew. For such a one I would substitute a cobbler's apron in the place of his book. He has a nail like a giant's, perfumed with stinking filth, with which he points out the place of any pleasant subject. He distributes innumerable straws in various places, with the ends in sight, that he may recall by the mark what his memory cannot retain. These straws, which the stomach of the book never digests, and which nobody takes out, at first distend the book from its accustomed closure, and, being carelessly left to oblivion, at last become putrid. He is not ashamed to eat fruit and cheese over an open book, and to transfer his empty cup from side to side upon it; and because he has not his alms-bag at hand, he leaves the rest of the fragments in his books. He never ceases to chatter with eternal garrulity to his companions; and while he adduces a multitude of reasons void of physical meaning, he waters the book, spread out upon his lap, with the sputtering of his saliva. What is worse, he next reclines with his elbows on the book, and by a short study invites a long nap; and by way of repairing the wrinkles, he twists back the margins of the leaves, to the no small detriment of the volume. He goes out in the rain, and now flowers make their appearance upon our soil. Then the scholar we are describing, the neglecter rather than the inspector of books, stuffs his volume with firstling violets, roses, and quadrifoils. He will next apply his wet hands, oozing with sweat, to turning over the volumes, then beat the white parchment all over with his dusty gloves, or hunt over the page, line by line, with his forefinger covered with dirty leather. Then, as the flea bites, the holy book is thrown aside, which, however, is scarcely closed in a month, and is so swelled with the dust that has fallen into it, that it will not yield to the efforts of the closer.

"But impudent boys are to be specially restrained from meddling with books, who, when they are learning to draw the forms of letters, if copies of the most beautiful books are allowed them, begin to become incongruous annotators, and wherever they perceive the broadest margin about the text, they furnish it with a monstrous alphabet, or their unchastened pen immediately presumes to draw any other frivolous thing whatever that occurs to their imagination. There the Latinist, there the sophist, there every sort of unlearned scribe tries the goodness of his pen, which we have frequently seen to have been most injurious to the fairest volumes, both as to utility and price. There are also certain thieves who enormously dismember books by cutting off the side margins for letter-paper (leaving only the letters or text), or the fly-leaves put in for the preservation of the book, which they take away for various uses and abuses, which sort of sacrilege ought to be prohibited under a threat of anathema.

"But it is altogether befitting the decency of a scholar that washing should without fail precede reading, as often as he returns from his meals to study, before his fingers, besmeared with grease, loosen a clasp or turn over the leaf of a book. Let not a crying child admire the drawings in the capital letters, lest he pollute the parchment with his wet fingers, for he instantly touches whatever he sees.

"Furthermore, laymen, to whom it matters not whether they look at a book turned wrong side upwards or spread before them in its natural order, are altogether unworthy of any communion with books. Let the clerk also take order that the dirty scullion, stinking from the pots, do not touch the leaves of books unwashed; but he who enters without spot shall give his services to the precious volumes.

"The cleanliness of delicate hands, as if scabs and postules could not be clerical characteristics, might also be most important, as well to books as to scholars, who, as often as they perceive defects in books, should attend to them instantly, for nothing enlarges more quickly than a rent, as a fracture neglected at the time will afterwards be repaired with increased trouble."—Philobiblion, p. 101.

[63] Gesner's is a work in which many curious things may be found, as, for instance the following, which would have gladdened the heart of Scott, had it been his fortune to alight on it: "Thomas Leirmant, vel Ersiletonus, natione Scotus, edidit Rhythmica quædam, et ob id Rhythmicus apud Anglos cognominatus est. Vixit anno 1286."

[64] It will be agreeable news to the severely disposed, to know that a wholesale exposure of

those British authors who attempt to hide their deeds in darkness is now in progress, the work having been undertaken, as police reports say, by "a thoroughly efficient officer of indomitable activity."

[65] Catalogus Universalis Librorum in omni facultate linguaque insignium et rarissimorum, &c. Londini, apud Joannem Hartley, Bibliopolam, exadversum Hospitio Grayensi, in vico vulgo Holborn dicto. MDCXCIX.

[66] Of course the Bibliographers prey relentlessly on each other, and bibliographical notices of Bibliographies abound. Le Brun sets aside a department for them, but the most handy reference to them that has come my way is a chronological list in the Dictionnaire Bibliographique, ou Nouveau Manuel du Libraire, by M. P*****—identified by his brother detectives as M. Psaume.

[67] Bibliographical Decameron, vol. iii. p. 28.

[68] As of other influential documents, there have been various versions of the Roxburghe list of toasts, and a corresponding amount of critical discussion, which leaves the impression common to such disputes, that this important manifesto was altered and enlarged from time to time. The version which bears the strongest marks of completeness and authenticity, was found among the papers of Mr Hazlewood, of whom hereafter. It is here set down as nearly in its original shape as the printer can give it:—

The Order of y^e Tostes.

The Immortal Memory of
John Duke of Roxburghe.
Christopher Valdarfer, Printer of the Decameron of 1471.
Gutemberg, Fust, and Schoeffher, the Inventors of the Art of Printing.
William Caxton, the Father of the British Press.
Dame Juliana Berners, and the St Albans Press.
Wynkyn de Worde, and Richard Pynson, the Illustrious Successors of William Caxton.
The Aldine Family, at Venice.
The Giunta Family, at Florence.
The Society of the Bibliophiles at Paris.
The Prosperity of the Roxburghe Club.
The Cause of Bibliomania all over the World.

It will be seen that this accomplished black-letterer must have been under a common delusion, that our ancestors not only wrote but pronounced the definite article "the" as "ye." Every blunderer ambitious of success in fabricating old writings is sure to have recourse to this trick, which serves for his immediate detection. The Gothic alphabet, in fact, as used in this country, had a Theta for expressing in one letter our present t and h conjoined. When it was abandoned, some printers substituted for it the letter y as most nearly resembling it in shape, hence the "ye" which occurs sometimes in old books, but much more frequently in modern imitations of them.

The primitive Roxburgheians used to sport these toasts as a symbol of knowingness and high caste in book-hunting freemasonry. Their representative man happening, in a tour in the Highlands, to open his refreshment wallet on the top of Ben Lomond, pledged his guide in the potent *vin du pays* to Christopher Valdarfer, John Gutemberg, and the others. The Celt had no objection in the world to pledge successive glasses to these names, which he had no doubt belonged "to fery respectaple persons," probably to the chief landed gentry of his entertainer's neighbourhood. But the best Glenlivet would not induce him to pledge "the cause of Bibliomania all over the world," being unable to foresee what influence the utterance of words so unusual and so suspiciously savouring of demonology might exercise over his future destiny.

[69] A voice from the other side of the Atlantic reveals the portentous nature of the machinery with which Mr Hazlewood conducted his editorial labours. The following is taken from the book on the Private Libraries of New York, already so freely quoted:—

"A unique book of unusual interest to the bibliophile in this department is the copy of Ancient and Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy, edited by Joseph Hazlewood, 2 vols. 4to, London, 1815. This is Hazlewood's own copy, and it is enriched and decorated by him in the most extravagant style of the bibliomaniac school in which he held so eminent a position. It is illustrated throughout with portraits, some of which are very rare; it contains all the letters which the editor received in relation to it from the eminent literary antiquarians of his day; and not only these, but all the collations and memoranda of any consequence which were made for him during its progress, frequently by men of literary distinction. To these are added all the announcements of the work, together with the impressions of twelve cancelled pages, printed four in one form and eight in another, apparently by way of experiment, with other cancelled matter; tracings of the facsimile woodcuts of the title to Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie, with a proof of it on India paper, and three impressions of this title, one all in black, one with the letter in black and the device in red, and the third *vice versâ*; tracings for, and proofs of, other woodcuts; an impression of a leaf printed to be put into a single copy of the work, &c. &c.; for we must stop, although we have but indicated the nature rather than the quantity of the matter, all of it unique, which gives this book its peculiar value. But it should be remarked besides, that the editorial part of the work is interleaved for the purpose of receiving Mr Hazlewood's explanations and corrections, and those that he received from literary friends, which alone would give this copy a singular interest. It is bound by Clarke in maroon morocco."

[70] It is but fair, however, to a reputation which was considerable within its own special circle, to let the reader judge for himself; so, if he think the opportunity worth the trouble of wading through small print, he may read the following specimen of Mr Hazlewood's style. He would certainly himself not have objected to its being taken as a criterion of the whole, since he was evidently proud of it.

"Consider, in the bird's-eye view of the banquet, the trencher cuts, foh! nankeen displays: as intersticed with many a brilliant drop to friendly beck and clubbish hail, to moisten the viands or cool the incipient cayenne. No unfamished livery-man would desire better dishes, or high-tasted courtier better wines. With men that meet to commune, that can converse, and each willing to give and receive information, more could not be wanting to promote well-tempered conviviality—a social compound of mirth, wit, and wisdom; combining all that Anacreon was famed for, tempered with the reason of Demosthenes, and intersected with the archness of Scaliger. It is true we had not any Greek verses in praise of the grape; but we had, as a tolerable substitute, the ballad of the 'Bishop of Hereford and Robin Hood,' sung by Mr Dodd, and it was of his own composing. It is true, we had not any long oration denouncing the absentees, the cabinet council, or any other set of men; but there was not a man present that at one hour and seventeen minutes after the cloth was removed but could have made a Demosthenic speech far superior to any record of antiquity. It is true, no trace of wit is going to be here preserved, for the flashes were too general, and what is the critical sagacity of a Scaliger compared to our chairman? Ancients believe it! We were not dead drunk, and therefore lie quiet under the table for once, and let a few moderns be uppermost."

The following chronicle of the third dinner and second anniversary records an interesting little personal incident:—

"After Lord Spencer left the chair, it was taken, I believe, by Mr Heber, who kept it up to a late hour,—Mr Dodd very volatile and somewhat singular, at the same time quite novel, in amusing the company with Robin Hood ditties and similar productions. I give this on after report, having left the room very early from severe attack of sickness, which appeared to originate in some vile compound partook of at dinner."

[71] Notices of the Bannatyne Club, privately printed.

[72] "See Pinkerton's Enquiry, i. 173, &c., 369. He explains the *Vecturiones* of Marcellinus, '*Vectveriar*, or *Pikish* men, as,' he untruly says, 'the Icelandic writers call them in their Norwegian seats *Vik-veriar*,' and, either ignorantly or dishonestly to countenance this most false and absurd hypothesis, corrupts the Pihtas of the Saxons into Pihtar, a termination impossible to their language. It is true, indeed, that he has stumbled upon a passage in Rudbeck's Atlantica, i. 672, in which that very fanciful and extravagant writer speaks of the *Packar*, *Baggar*, *Paikstar*, *Baggeboar*, *Pitar*, and *Medel Pakcar*, whom he pretends '*Britanni* vero *Peiktar* appellant, et *Peictonum* tam eorum qui in Galliis quam in Britannia resident genitores faciunt.' He finds these Pacti also in the Argonauticks, v. 1067; and his whole work seems the composition of a man whom 'much learning hath made mad.'"—Ritson's Annals of the Caledonians, &c., i. 81.

[73] See an Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty. By Joseph Ritson.

[74] Bibliographical Decameron, vol. ii. p. 454.

[75] The editor of the Life prints the following note by Mr Raine, the coadjutor of Surtees in his investigations into the history of the North of England: "I one evening in looking through Scott's Minstrelsy wrote opposite to this dirge, *Aut Robertus aut Diabolus*. Surtees called shortly after, and, pouncing upon the remark, justified me by his conversation on the subject, in adding to my note, *Ita, teste seipso*."—P. 87.

[76] Among other volumes of interest, the Chetham has issued a very valuable and amusing collection of documents about the siege of Preston, and other incidents of the insurrection of 1715 in Lancashire.

[77] I remember hearing of an instance at a jury trial in Scotland, where counsel had an extremely subtle point of genealogy to make out, and no one but a ploughman witness, totally destitute of the genealogical faculty, to assist him to it. His plan—and probably a very judicious one in the general case—was to get the witness on a table-land of broad unmistakable principle, and then by degrees lure him farther on. Thus he got the witness readily to admit that his own mother was older than himself, but no exertion of ingenuity could get his intellect a step beyond that broad admission.

[78] "An Informatory Vindication of a poor, wasted, misrepresented remnant of the suffering anti-popish, anti-prelatic, anti-erastian, anti-sectarian, *only true* church of Christ in Scotland."

[79] The applicability of this to Varro has been questioned. It is a matter in which every one is entitled to hold his own opinion. To say nothing of the other extant shreds of his writings —and I never found any one who had anything to say for them—I cannot account even the De Re Rustica as much higher in literary rank than a Farmers' and Gardeners' Calendar. No doubt it is valuable, as any such means of insight into the practical life of the Egyptians or the Ph[oe]nicians would be, even were it less methodical than what we have from Varro. But this, or other writing like it, will hardly account for his great fame among contemporaries. Look, for instance, to Cicero at the outset of the Academics: "Tu ætatem patriæ, tu descriptiones temporum, tu sacrorum jura, tu sacerdotum munera, tu domesticam, tu bellicam disciplinam, tu sedem regionum et locorum, tu omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum nomina, genera officia, causas aperuiste: plurimumque poetis nostris omninoque latinis, et literis luminis attulisti, et verbis: atque ipse varium et elegans omni fere numero poema fecisti: philosophiamque multis locis inchoasti—ad impellendum satis, ad edocendum parum." Laudation could scarcely be pitched in higher tone towards the works of the great Youatt, or Mr Huxtable's contributions to the

department of literature devoted to manure and pigs. The De Re Rustica, written when its author was eighty years old, seems to have been about the last of what he calls his seven times seventy works, and it is natural to suppose that somewhere in the remaining four hundred and eighty-nine lay the merits which excited such encomiums. The story about Gregory the Great suppressing the best of Varro's works to hide St Augustine's pilferings from them, would be a valuable curiosity of literature if it could be established.

[80] Miscel. of Irish Arch. Soc., i. 120.

[81] See Mr Muir's very curious volume on "Characteristics of Old Church Architecture in the Mainland and Western Islands of Scotland."

[82] "Instrumentum super Aucis Sancti Cuthberti."—Spalding Club.

[83] It would not be difficult to trace a resemblance between some of the exceedingly elaborate sculpture of the New Zealanders and that of the sculptured stones, especially in the instance of the very handsome country-house of the chief Rangihaetita, represented in Mr Angas's New Zealanders Illustrated. Its name, by the way, in the native Maori, is Kai Tangata, or Eat-man House—so called, doubtless, in commemoration of the many jolly feasts held in it, on missionaries and others coming within Wordsworth's description of

> "A being not too wise and good
> For human nature's daily food."

[84] See "An Attempt to Explain the Origin and Meaning of the Early Interlaced Ornamentation found on the Ancient Sculptured Stones of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man, by Gilbert J. French of Bolton." Privately printed.

[85] Any one who desires to see the extent to which science can find employment in this arid-looking corner of organic life, may look at a "Memoir on the Spermogones and Pycnides of Filamentous, Fruticulose, and Foliaceous Lichens," by Dr William Lauder Lindsay, in the 22d volume of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

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THE END.

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