

RARE GEMS IN BOOKS.

LITERARY TREASURES IN THE ASTOR LIBRARY IN NEW YORK.

Volumes That Are Storehouses of Scholarship and Are Worth Small Fortunes. Ancient Illustrations in Priceless Manuscripts.

Even many otherwise well informed people are not aware that the public libraries of this city contain some of the choicest literary gems extant—books for which wealthy bibliophiles have offered fabulous sums. If New York is not the literary center of America, then books immense in number, rare in antiquity and almost priceless in value are not factors in the competition.

There are thirty-four public libraries in New York, and the number and value of the volumes within their walls have grown so rapidly that Paris, Munich and even London will be surpassed in their library collections if the present growth continues.

The day when the citizen of New Amsterdam was content to sit outside his door, drink beer, smoke, grow fat and die in the firm belief that he had enjoyed life, has given way to an entirely different state of affairs.

Twenty-five years ago one public library collection was considered sufficient to meet the demands of every class, calling or profession. Today nine institutions can be picked out, each one of which is patronized by a single class.

The Astor is the richest of all our libraries. One million dollars' worth of books repose upon its shelves, but not without frequent disturbance. From fifty to 100 studious men and women are delving into the enchanting mysteries of some favorite theme every day that the reading rooms are open to the public.

The library contains nearly \$300,000 worth of rare books and manuscripts, which are seldom allowed to go into the hands of the public. Perhaps the largest and finest single volume in New York may be found there. If any one thinks that the contemporaries of Shakespeare and Milton would marvel at the superb product of modern illustrators he is very much mistaken. Nothing has been produced in the last century that can equal, much less rival, the illustrations in a Seventeenth century manuscript entitled "Antiphonale." It contains 228 pages of vellum, adorned by 272 small and 63 large miniatures in the highest style of the French art of that day. Some of its illustrations have been attributed to Le Brun, the great painter of the time of Louis XIV. The larger paintings for the most part are scenes from the Scriptures appropriate to the various church festivals, and many of the initial letters which accompany the stanzas are illuminated in a style wholly unknown at the present day. This volume, bound in purple morocco, with gilt mountings and ornamented with the flower-de-luce, was designed for the coronation of Charles V. At a public sale it would easily command several thousand dollars.

Another valuable work is Sylvester's "Universal Paleography," in two volumes, containing upward of 350 finely executed facsimiles of medieval works of art. This sumptuous work is said to have cost the sum of \$20,000 for its execution alone. Among other rarities is a copy of the first letter written by Christopher Columbus after he discovered America. There are only six copies of these in existence. The letter consists of only four leaves, but at a London auction sale in 1872 it brought \$700.

Another rare volume to be found only in this library is Lloyd's "History of Columbia, Now Called Wales," published in 1654. It contains the legendary narrative of the expedition of Prince Madoc and a Welsh company that voyaged to America prior to Columbus, but never returned. Many foreigners have sent to this country for abstracts from this rare volume.

The earliest known editions of Ptolemy's geography repose on the shelves of the Astor. The dates on their title pages range from 1478 to 1621. There is also a superb specimen of the "Biblia Sacra Latina" of 1492, the first edition of the Bible bound in old crimson morocco, with gilt edges, which is worth \$10,000. Inside the covers are the names of those "immortal printers," Johann Faust and Peter Schaeffer. The oldest polyglot edition of the Scriptures, executed at the order of Cardinal Ximenes, which cost 50,000 ducats in gold and fifteen years for its preparation, is also at the Astor. The oldest manuscript of all is the "Lectioes Evangelicæ," printed on vellum and containing whole pages of illustrations. This manuscript was executed by the monks in A. D. 1370, and is almost priceless in value. No other library in America possesses such a treasure. Next in point of antiquity is John Wright's English version of the New Testament, written in 1530, and containing the autobiography of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. There are also two Persian manuscripts of the Fifteenth century, besides manuscripts of more recent date.

Several competent Egyptologists, among them the late Miss Amelia B. Edwards, who inspected the collection of the late Mrs. G. W. Peck, who has presented it to this city, have pronounced the library especially rich in ancient books. The great work of James Addison on the "Bible of America," consisting of four volumes, would probably bring \$5,000. Addison's Indian Bible, dated 1801, the first Bible printed in America; the Geneva, or the Brecheux Bible of 1569; a copy of the papal bull against Luther, 1520; rare Slavonic manuscripts; and the valuable and interesting collection of autograph letters from emperors, poets, statesmen, presidents, soldiers and authors are included in this collection.—New York Herald.

A Sunday Suit.

Mr. Constant Squabbler—What kind of a suit do you think I had better get for Sundays?

Mrs. C. S.—Well, if you want one to match your usual Sunday disposition, you had better get a pepper and salt suit.—Exchange.

A Momentary Delay.

At first blush it would seem to be an impossible feat for a pedestrian—a poor, defenceless woman, at that—to successfully bar three entrances to the Brooklyn bridge. It took place on the Brooklyn side one morning last week, when the wage workers were hurrying to the metropolis, and a large assembly was kept in a state of suspense for minutes that seemed ages.

To explain the feat accomplished, you remember how the entrances are arranged—a ticket office on either side, between them two iron parallel bars to guide you through. Between these railings is a space through which you pass on to the "chopping boxes," where tickets are deposited, but if you have to purchase them you pass between a rail and the box.

She was a gray haired old lady and she wished to buy a ticket. There would have been less difficulty had it not been for the umbrella. It was thrust under the old lady's arm as a man poses his umbrella when going up the "L" stairs—point to the rear and breast high.

The old lady stepped into the middle space, and while the umbrella swung round like a tollgate bar, closing the space behind her, she reached over to the ticket office and calmly proceeded to open her purse, fumble a roll of bills, finally select one, and with both arms stop the passing of pedestrians until a disgruntled lot of humanity was dammed.

With the umbrella posed like an infantryman's bayonet fixed to repel cavalry the old lady and her gray hairs held the fort. At last her pennies and tickets had been picked up one by one. She gave way and the crowd surged around her like the floodtide around a shad pole in the North river.—New York Herald.

The Great Rule of Life.

We have to be governed very largely by the analogies of nature whenever we venture into the realm of the possibilities and the unknown, and there is no analogy in nature of something being given for nothing. The seed has to push through the ground to find the sun; the tree has to draw its sap up from unseen sources to whirl forth its buds; the bud itself has to force its way through obstacles of bark and fiber; the bird has to build its nest with careful endeavor and many journeys ere it feels the little wings beneath its breast; the gold has to be mined, the precious stone dug from the matrix; the diamond has to undergo fierce processes of grinding and scouring before its facets shine like living light. Struggle is the rule of life. Were it otherwise it would seem as though we might all of us have been put upon the planet in conditions of luxury and ease and eminence that would require no effort on our part, and leave us free for all the enjoyment the world affords. But what soft, untempered, worthless metal we should be in such case! It is the fire that tempers the steel; it is the hammer that welds it; the grinding, whirling stone that brings it to an edge.—Harper's Bazar.

A Poor Folk's Garden.

So early were collectors in California, and so universal was the interest felt in Europe over the new plants of the Pacific coast, that many trees of sequoias and other superb conifers were planted in the parks of England, France and Italy long before the discovery of gold. Wealthy Californians, as early as 1855, visiting Europe, were surprised to find how popular were the brilliant annuals, flowering shrubs, vines and trees of their own state. Returning they often urged neighbors to cultivate more of the native plants, but with little effect.

In Alameda county, a plain, uneducated Englishwoman of Lancashire yeoman stock was one of the first persons in all California to make a home garden of wild flowers from field and hill. I remember in my boyhood the passionate devotion that she showed to this pursuit. "It do be the best land the sun ever shone on," she declared, "for poor folk to have a garden."—Charles H. Shinn in Century.

The Juice of the Papaw Tree.

In his "History of Barbados" Griffith Hughes mentions that the juice of the papaw tree is of so penetrating a nature that, if the unripe peeled fruit be boiled with the toughest old salted meat, it quickly makes it soft and tender. Kersten also tells us that boiling meat with the juice of the papaw is quite a common thing in Quiba.

Captain S. P. Oliver, writing in Nature, July 10, 1879, says, "In Mauritius, where we lived principally on a ration beef cut from the tough flesh of the Malagasy oxen, we were in the habit of hanging the ration under the leaves themselves, and if we were in a hurry for a very tender piece of fillet, our cook would wrap up the undercut of the sirloin in the leaves, when the newly killed meat would be as tender as if it had been hung for a considerable time."—Chambers's Journal.

A Baronet as a Constable.

Among the constables in the Royal Irish constabulary stationed at the depot in the Phoenix park, Dublin, is Constable Sir Thomas Eoblin, Bart. According to Dehrett's baronetage the Eoblin family is of ancient Scotch origin, and formerly possessed princely estates in Scotland, and also large domains in the counties of Kildare, Carlow, Dublin and Mayo. The third baronet dissipated a large portion of the family estates, and the fourth, fifth and sixth baronets managed to get through with the remainder. Then the present baronet found himself landless and entered the Royal Irish constabulary.—Yankee Blade.

The Giant's Organ.

One of the most interesting features of the Giant's causeway is "The Giant's Organ." This huge "instrument" consists of a group of pillars of various lengths set apart on the side of the main cliff. The larger columns being in the center and the smaller ones tapering off on either side, after the fashion of organ pipes, admirably sustain the idea which the name "Giant's organ" conveys.—St. Louis Republic.

An exchange says that coal for the taking is the go now for people living along the banks of the North Branch of the Susquehanna and even along the banks of the big river for a good distance. It is a well known fact that for years coal that has been washed down from the mines at Hazleton and some from the Wyoming region has been accumulating along the river bed for a hundred miles and more and now many people enjoy the luxury of burning free coal. The getting is all that is required. The coal taken from the river is washed smooth and round by the action of the water. It is said that very little slate is found among it, and that when used in the stove it makes an excellent fire. Some of the gatherers of this coal get it for their individual use and some get it to sell. The proprietors of Savidge's sand digger have been taking twenty tons a day from the river at Johnson's run above Northumberland by using the digger. It is said that Jere Savidge disposes of the black diamonds at the rate of two tons for five dollars while a Shamokin Dam party is said to sell it for \$1.40 per ton.

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The greatest success of the Royal Baking Powder is due to the extreme care exercised by its manufacturers to make it entirely pure, uniform in quality, and of the highest leavening power. All the scientific knowledge, care and skill, attained by a twenty years' practical experience are contributed toward this end, and no pharmaceutical preparation can be dispensed with a greater accuracy, precision and exactness. Every article used is absolutely pure. A number of chemists are employed to test the strength of each ingredient, so that its exact power and effect in combination with its co-ingredients is definitely known. Nothing is trusted to chance, and no person is employed in the preparation of the materials used or the manufacture of the powder who is not an expert in his particular branches of the business. As a consequence, the Royal Baking Powder is of the highest grade of excellence, always pure, wholesome and uniform in quality. Each box is exactly like every other, and will retain its power and produce the same and the highest leavening effect in any climate, at any time. The Government Chemists after having analyzed all the principal brands in the market, in their reports placed the Royal Baking powder at the head of the list for strength, purity and wholesomeness, and thousands of tests all over the country have further demonstrated the fact that its qualities are, in every respect, unrivaled.

The first pipe organ was made by Archimedes B. C. 220.

Quick and sure! One-third of a bottle cures neuralgia and backache. Mr. W. H. Gill, Byesville, Guernsey Co., O., writes: "I had a severe attack of neuralgia and pains in my back and shoulders, and after using one-third of a bottle of Salvation Oil was able to go to work."

An Irresistible Appeal.

Men and women who understand the art of bending others to their will give due importance to the passion of vanity, and do not scruple to play upon it. A young French officer who was ordered to fire upon a French revolutionary mob, begged his general to let him try first to persuade them to withdraw. "It is useless to appeal to their reason," said the general. "Certainly," answered the officer; "and it is not to their reason, but to their vanity, I would appeal." The officer rode up to the front of the mob, doffed his cocked hat, pointed to the guns and said: "Gentlemen will have the kindness to retire; for I am ordered to shoot down the rabble." The street was cleared at once; for none could brook the idea of being classed with the scum of the city. During the agrarian riots which disturbed England in 1833, a mob of rick-burners and machine-breakers appeared at the old mansion of two elderly maiden ladies. The walls of the hall were decorated with suits of armor and antique weapons—pikes, halberds, swords and battle axes. The mob clamored for the weapons and for drink. The ladies courageously refused their demands, and when the mob seemed ready to resort to violence, Miss Betty, the elder of the ladies, went up to the leader, a hideous-looking man, and said: "You, too, of all the people in the world! I'm not surprised at these poor misguided creatures. But that such a good looking, intelligent man as you should attack two defenceless women does astonish me! You are the man I should have looked to for protection. But you are not the man I took you for! Never again will I trust to good looks!" There was no standing up against that compliment. The man took off his hat, and said: "Come, old lady, we ain't so bad as all that! only give us some beer. We would not harm a hair of your head!" "No; I know that," retorted Miss Betty. "You can't; I wear a wig!" The mob roared with laughter, and retired without another word. Womanly tact had won the day.

A gentleman is distinguished from a churl by the purity of sentiment he can reach in all these three passions—by his imaginative love as opposed to lust; his imaginative possession of wealth as opposed to avarice; his imaginative desire of honor as opposed to pride.—Ruskin.

A Woman's Back.

It is the mainspring of her life.

What can she do, where can she go, so long as that deadly backache saps every particle of her strength and ambition?

She cannot walk, she cannot stand; her housework is a burden; the hours behind the counter or in the factory are crushing; she is miserable.

The cause is some derangement of the uterus or womb. The backache is the sure symptom.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the one unfailing remedy. A woman discovered it and gave it to women. A woman reads your letter and gives you a woman's sympathy and help. Thousands send letters grateful for physical salvation. The same salvation is for you. Don't hesitate.



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