BIBLIOMANIA



IN THE MIDDLE AGES

BY F. SOMNER MERRYWEATHER

Being Sketches of Bookworms, Collectors, Bible Students, Scribes and Illuminators, from the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, to the Introduction of Printing into England; with Anecdotes illustrating the History of the Monastic Libraries of Great Britain in the Olden Time

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A New and Revised Edition prepared by H. B. Copinger from Materials compiled by the late Walter A. Copinger, M.A., LL.D., F.S.A., etc.; First President of the Bibliographical Society. Produced by Hugh J. Schonfield

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BENJAMIN BLOM, INC.
Publishers New York 1972

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Title: Bibliomania in the Middle Ages

Author: F. Somner Merryweather

Release date: May 28, 2007 [eBook #21630]
Most recently updated: January 2, 2021

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/21630

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BIBLIOMANIA

in

THE MIDDLE AGES

by

F. SOMNER MERRYWEATHER

With an Introduction by

CHARLES ORR

Librarian of Case Library



NEW YORK

MEYER BROTHERS & COMPANY

1900

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Louis Weiss & Co.

Printers....

118 Fulton Street

... New York

Bibliomania in the Middle Ages

or

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INTRODUCTION



IN every century for more than two thousand years, many men have owed their chief enjoyment of life to books. The bibliomaniac of today had his prototype in ancient Rome, where book collecting was fashionable as early as the first century of the Christian era. Four centuries earlier there was an active trade in books at Athens, then the center of the book production of the world. This center of literary activity shifted to Alexandria during the third century B. C. through the patronage of Ptolemy Soter, the founder of the Alexandrian Museum, and of his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus; and later to Rome, where it remained for many centuries, and where bibliophiles and bibliomaniacs were gradually evolved, and from whence in time other countries were invaded.

For the purposes of the present work the middle ages cover the period beginning with the seventh century and ending with the time of the invention of printing, or about seven hundred years, though they are more accurately bounded by the years 500 and 1500 A. D. It matters little, however, since there is no attempt at chronological arrangement.

About the middle of the present century there began to be a disposition to grant to mediæval times their proper place in the history of the preservation and dissemination of books, and Merryweather's

Bibliomania in the Middle Ages was one of the earliest works in English devoted to the subject. Previous to that time, those ten centuries lying between the fall of the Roman Empire and the revival of learning were generally referred to as the Dark Ages, and historians and other writers were wont to treat them as having been without learning or scholarship of any kind.

Even Mr. Hallam,[1] with all that judicial temperament and patient research to which we owe so much, could find no good to say of the Church or its institutions, characterizing the early university as the abode of "indigent vagabonds withdrawn from usual labor," and all monks as positive enemies of learning.

The gloomy survey of Mr. Hallam, clouded no doubt by his antipathy to all things ecclesiastical, served, however, to arouse the interest of the period, which led to other studies with different results, and later writers were able to discern below the surface of religious fanaticism and superstition so characteristic of those centuries, much of interest in the history of literature; to show that every age produced learned and inquisitive men by whom books were highly prized and industriously collected for their own sakes; in short, to rescue the period from the stigma of absolute illiteracy.

If the reader cares to pursue the subject further, after going through the fervid defense of the love of books in the middle ages, of which this is the introduction, he will find outside of its chapters abundant evidence that the production and care of books was a matter of great concern. In the pages of *Mores Catholici; or Ages of Faith*, by Mr. Kenelm Digby,[2] or of *The Dark*

Ages, by Dr. S. R. Maitland,[3] or of that great work of recent years, *Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages*, by Mr. George Haven Putnam,[4] he will see vivid and interesting portraits of a great multitude of mediæval worthies who were almost lifelong lovers of learning and books, and zealous laborers in preserving, increasing and transmitting them. And though little of the mass that has come down to us was worthy of preservation on its own account as literature, it is exceedingly interesting as a record of centuries of industry in the face of such difficulties that to workers of a later period might have seemed insurmountable.

A further fact worthy of mention is that book production was from the art point of view fully abreast of the other arts during the period, as must be apparent to any one who examines the collections in some of the libraries of Europe. Much of this beauty was wrought for the love of the art itself. In the earlier centuries religious institutions absorbed nearly all the social intellectual movements as well as the possession of material riches and land. Kings and princes were occupied with distant wars which impoverished them and deprived literature and art of that patronage accorded to it in later times. There is occasional mention, however, of wealthy laymen, whose religious zeal induced them to give large sums of money for the copying and ornamentation of books; and there were in the abbeys and convents lay brothers whose fervent spirits, burning with poetical imagination, sought in these monastic retreats and the labor of writing, redemption from their past sins. These men of faith were happy to consecrate their whole existence to the ornamentation of a single sacred book, dedicated to the community, which gave them in exchange the necessaries of life.

The labor of transcribing was held, in the monasteries, to be a full equivalent of manual labor in the field. The rule of St. Ferreol, written in the sixth century, says that, "He who does not turn up the earth with the plough ought to write the parchment with his fingers."

Mention has been made of the difficulties under which books were produced; and this is a matter which we who enjoy the conveniences of modern writing and printing can little understand. The hardships of the *scriptorium* were greatest, of course, in winter. There were no fires in the often damp and ill-lighted cells, and the cold in some of the parts of Europe where books were produced must have been very severe. Parchment, the material generally used for writing upon after the seventh century, was at some periods so scarce that copyists were compelled to resort to the expedient of effacing the writing on old and less esteemed manuscripts.[5] The form of writing was stiff and regular and therefore exceedingly slow and irksome.

In some of the monasteries the *scriptorium* was at least at a later period, conducted more as a matter of commerce, and making of books became in time very profitable. The Church continued to hold the keys of knowledge and to control the means of productions; but the cloistered cell, where the monk or the layman, who had a penance to work off for a grave sin, had worked in solitude, gave way to the apartment specially set aside, where many persons could work together, usually under the direction of a *librarius* or chief scribe. In the more carefully constructed monasteries this apartment was so

placed as to adjoin the calefactory, which allowed the introduction of hot air, when needed.

The seriousness with which the business of copying was considered is well illustrated by the consecration of the *scriptorium* which was often done in words which may be thus translated: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this work-room of thy servants, that all which they write therein may be comprehended by their intelligence and realized in their work."

While the work of the scribes was largely that of copying the scriptures, gospels, and books of devotion required for the service of the church, there was a considerable trade in books of a more secular kind. Particularly was this so in England. The large measure of attention given to the production of books of legends and romances was a distinguishing feature of the literature of England at least three centuries previous to the invention of printing. At about the twelfth century and after, there was a very large production and sale of books under such headings as chronicles, satires, sermons, works of science and medicine, treatises on style, prose romances and epics in verse. Of course a large proportion of these were written in or translated from the Latin, the former indicating a pretty general knowledge of that language among those who could buy or read books at all. That this familiarity with the Latin tongue was not confined to any particular country is abundantly shown by various authorities.

Mr. Merryweather, whose book, as has been intimated, is only a defense of bibliomania itself as it actually existed in the middle ages, gives the reader but scant information as to processes of book-making at that time. But thanks to the painstaking research

of others, these details are now a part of the general knowledge of the development of the book. The following, taken from Mr. Theodore De Vinne's *Invention of Printing*, will, we think, be found interesting:

"The size most in fashion was that now known as the demy folio, of which the leaf is about ten inches wide and fifteen inches long, but smaller sizes were often made. The space to be occupied by the written text was mapped out with faint lines, so that the writer could keep his letters on a line, at even distance from each other and within the prescribed margin. Each letter was carefully drawn, and filled in or painted with repeated touches of the pen. With good taste, black ink was most frequently selected for the text; red ink was used only for the more prominent words, and the catch-letters, then known as the rubricated letters. Sometimes texts were written in blue, green, purple, gold or silver inks, but it was soon discovered that texts in bright color were not so readable as texts in black.

"When the copyist had finished his sheet he passed it to the designer, who sketched the border, pictures and initials. The sheet was then given to the illuminator, who painted it. The ornamentation of a mediæval book of the first class is beyond description by words or by wood cuts. Every inch of space was used. Its broad margins were filled with quaint ornaments, sometimes of high merit, admirably painted in vivid colors. Grotesque initials, which, with their flourishes, often spanned the full height of the page, or broad bands of floriated tracery that occupied its entire width, were the only indications of changes of chapter or subject. In printer's phrase the composition was "close-up and solid" to the

extreme degree of compactness. The uncommonly free use of red ink for the smaller initials was not altogether a matter of taste; if the page had been written entirely in black ink it would have been unreadable through its blackness. This nicety in writing consumed much time, but the mediæval copyist was seldom governed by considerations of time or expense. It was of little consequence whether the book he transcribed would be finished in one or in ten years. It was required only that he should keep at his work steadily and do his best. His skill is more to be commended than his taste. Many of his initials and borders were outrageously inappropriate for the text for which they were designed. The gravest truths were hedged in the most childish conceits. Angels, butterflies, goblins, clowns, birds, snails and monkeys, sometimes in artistic, but much oftener in grotesque and sometimes in highly offensive positions are to be found in the illuminated borders of copies of the gospels and writings of the fathers.

"The book was bound by the forwarder, who sewed the leaves and put them in a cover of leather or velvet; by the finisher, who ornamented the cover with gilding and enamel. The illustration of book binding, published by Amman in his Book of Trades, puts before us many of the implements still in use. The forwarder, with his customary apron of leather, is in the foreground, making use of a plow-knife for trimming the edges of a book. The lying press, which rests obliquely against the block before him, contains a book that has received the operation of backing-up from a queer shaped hammer lying upon the floor. The workman at the end of the room is sewing together the sections of a book, for sewing was properly regarded as a man's work, and a scientific operation altogether beyond the capacity of the raw

seamstress. The work of the finisher is not represented, but the brushes, the burnishers, the sprinklers and the wheel-shaped gilding tools hanging against the wall leave us no doubt as to their use. There is an air of antiquity about everything connected with this bookbindery which suggests the thought that its tools and usages are much older than those of printing. Chevillier says that seventeen professional bookbinders found regular employment in making up books for the University of Paris, as early as 1292. Wherever books were produced in quantities, bookbinding was set apart as a business distinct from that of copying.

"The poor students who copied books for their own use were also obliged to bind them, which they did in a simple but efficient manner by sewing together the folded sheets, attaching them to narrow parchment bands, the ends of which were made to pass through a cover of stout parchment at the joint near the back. The ends of the bands were then pasted down under the stiffening sheet of the cover, and the book was pressed. Sometimes the cover was made flexible by the omission of the stiffening sheet; sometimes the edges of the leaves were protected by flexible and overhanging flaps which were made to project over the covers; or by the insertion in the covers of stout leather strings with which the two covers were tied together. Ornamentation was entirely neglected, for a book of this character was made for use and not for show. These methods of binding were mostly applied to small books intended for the pocket; the workmanship was rough, but the binding was strong and serviceable."

The book of Mr. Merryweather, here reprinted, is thought worthy of preservation in a series designed

for the library of the booklover. Its publication followed shortly after that of the works of Digby and Maitland, but shows much original research and familiarity with early authorities; and it is much more than either of these, or of any book with which we are acquainted, a plea in defense of bibliomania in the middle ages. Indeed the charm of the book may be said to rest largely upon the earnestness with which he takes up his self-imposed task. One may fancy that after all he found it not an easy one; in fact his "Conclusion" is a kind of apology for not having made out a better case. But this he believes he has proven, "that with all their superstition, with all their ignorance, their blindness to philosophic light—the monks of old were hearty lovers of books; that they encouraged learning, fostered it, and transcribed repeatedly the books which they had rescued from the destruction of war and time; and so kindly cherished and husbanded them as intellectual food for posterity. Such being the case, let our hearts look charitably upon them; and whilst we pity them for their superstition, or blame them for their pious frauds, love them as brother men and workers in the mines of literature."

Of the author himself little can be learned. A diligent search revealed little more than the entry in the London directory which, in various years from 1840 to 1850, gives his occupation as that of bookseller, at 14 King Street, Holborn. Indeed this is shown by the imprint of the title-page of *Bibliomania*, which was published in 1849. He published during the same year *Dies Dominicæ*, and in 1850 *Glimmerings in the Dark*, and *Lives and Anecdotes of Misers*. The latter has been immortalized by Charles Dickens as one of the books bought at the bookseller's shop by Boffin, the Golden Dustman, and which was read to him by the

redoubtable Silas Wegg during Sunday evenings at "Boffin's Bower."[6]



FOOTNOTES:

[1] Hallam, Henry. "Introduction to the Literature of Europe." 4 vols. London.

[2] Digby, Kenelm. "Mores Catholici; or Ages of Faith." 3 vols. London, 1848.

[3] Maitland, S. R. "The Dark Ages; a Series of Essays Intended to Illustrate the State of Religion and Literature in the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries." London, 1845.

[4] Putnam, George Haven. "Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages; a Study of the Conditions of the Production and Distribution of Literature from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Close of the Seventeenth Century."

[5] Lacroix, Paul. "Arts of the Middle Ages." Our author, however (*vide* page 58, *note*), quotes the accounts of the Church of Norwich to show that parchments sold late in the thirteenth century at about 1 d. per sheet; but Putnam and other writers state that up to that time it was a very costly commodity.

[6] Dickens's Mutual Friend.

CHAPTER I

Introductory Remarks—Monachism—Book Destroyers—Effects of the Reformation on Monkish Learning, etc.

IN recent times, in spite of all those outcries which have been so repeatedly raised against the illiterate state of the dark ages, many and valuable efforts have been made towards a just elucidation of those monkish days. These labors have produced evidence of what few anticipated, and some even now deny, viz., that here and there great glimmerings of learning are perceivable; and although debased, and often barbarous too, they were not quite so bad as historians have usually proclaimed them. It may surprise some, however, that an attempt should be made to prove that, in the olden time in "merrie Englande," a passion which Dibdin has christened Bibliomania, existed then, and that there were many

cloistered bibliophiles as warm and enthusiastic in book collecting as the Doctor himself. But I must here crave the patience of the reader, and ask him to refrain from denouncing what he may deem a rash and futile attempt, till he has perused the volume and thought well upon the many facts contained therein. I am aware that many of these facts are known to all, but some, I believe, are familiar only to the antiquary—the lover of musty parchments and the cobwebbed chronicles of a monastic age. I have endeavored to bring these facts together—to connect and string them into a continuous narrative, and to extract from them some light to guide us in forming an opinion on the state of literature in those ages of darkness and obscurity; and here let it be understood that I merely wish to give a fact as history records it. I will not commence by saying the Middle Ages were dark and miserably ignorant, and search for some poor isolated circumstance to prove it; I will not affirm that this was pre-eminently the age in which real piety flourished and literature was fondly cherished, and strive to find all those facts which show its learning, purposely neglecting those which display its unlettered ignorance: nor let it be deemed ostentation when I say that the literary anecdotes and bookish memoranda now submitted to the reader have been taken, where such a course was practicable, from the original sources, and the references to the authorities from whence they are derived have been personally consulted and compared.

That the learning of the Middle Ages has been carelessly represented there can be little doubt: our finest writers in the paths of history have employed

their pens in denouncing it; some have allowed difference of opinion as regards ecclesiastical policy to influence their conclusions; and because the poor scribes were monks, the most licentious principles, the most dismal ignorance and the most repulsive crimes have been attributed to them. If the monks deserved such reproaches from posterity, they have received no quarter; if they possessed virtues as christians, and honorable sentiments as men, they have met with no reward in the praise or respect of this liberal age: they were monks! superstitious priests and followers of Rome! What good could come of them? It cannot be denied that there were crimes perpetrated by men aspiring to a state of holy sanctity; there are instances to be met with of priests violating the rules of decorum and morality; of monks revelling in the dissipating pleasures of sensual enjoyments, and of nuns whose frail humanity could not maintain the purity of their virgin vows. But these instances are too rare to warrant the slanders and scurrility that historians have heaped upon them. And when we talk of the sensuality of the monks, of their gross indulgences and corporeal ease, we surely do so without discrimination; for when we speak of the middle ages thus, our thoughts are dwelling on the sixteenth century, its mocking piety and superstitious absurdity; but in the olden time of monastic rule, before monachism had burst its ancient boundaries, there was surely nothing physically attractive in the austere and dull monotony of a cloistered life. Look at the monk; mark his hard, dry studies, and his midnight prayers, his painful fasting and mortifying of the flesh; what can we find in this to tempt the epicure or the lover of indolence and sloth? They were fanatics, blind and credulous—I grant it. They

read gross legends, and put faith in traditionary lies —I grant it; but do not say, for history will not prove it, that in the middle ages the monks were wine bibbers and slothful gluttons. But let not the Protestant reader be too hastily shocked. I am not defending the monastic system, or the corruption of the cloister—far from it. I would see the usefulness of man made manifest to the world; but the measure of my faith teaches charity and forgiveness, and I can find in the functions of the monk much that must have been useful in those dark days of feudal tyranny and lordly despotism. We much mistake the influence of the monks by mistaking their position; we regard them as a class, but forget from whence they sprang; there was nothing aristocratic about them, as their constituent parts sufficiently testify; they were, perhaps, the best representatives of the people that could be named, being derived from all classes of society. Thus Offa, the Saxon king, and Cædman, the rustic herdsman, were both monks. These are examples by no means rare, and could easily be multiplied. Such being the case, could not the monks more readily feel and sympathize with all, and more clearly discern the frailties of their brother man, and by kind admonition or stern reproof, mellow down the ferocity of a Saxon nature, or the proud heart of a Norman tyrant? But our object is not to analyze the social influence of Monachism in the middle ages: much might be said against it, and many evils traced to the sad workings of its evil spirit, but still withal something may be said in favor of it, and those who regard its influence in *those days alone* may find more to admire and defend than they expected, or their Protestant prejudices like to own.

But, leaving these things, I have only to deal with such remains as relate to the love of books in those

times. I would show the means then in existence of acquiring knowledge, the scarcity or plentitude of books, the extent of their libraries, and the rules regulating them; and bring forward those facts which tend to display the general routine of a literary monk, or the prevalence of Bibliomania in those days.

It is well known that the great national and private libraries of Europe possess immense collections of manuscripts, which were produced and transcribed in the monasteries, during the middle ages, thousands there are in the rich alcoves of the Vatican at Rome, unknown save to a choice and favored few; thousands there are in the royal library of France, and thousands too reposing on the dusty shelves of the Bodleian and Cottonian libraries in England; and yet, these numbers are but a small portion—a mere relic—of the intellectual productions of a past and obscure age.[7] The barbarians, who so frequently convulsed the more civilized portions of Europe, found a morbid pleasure in destroying those works which bore evidence to the mental superiority of their enemies. In England, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans were each successively the destroyers of literary productions. The Saxon Chronicle, that invaluable repository of the events of so many years, bears ample testimony to numerous instances of the loss of libraries and works of art, from fire, or by the malice of designing foes. At some periods, so general was this destruction, so unquenchable the rapacity of those who caused it, that instead of feeling surprised at the manuscripts of those ages being so few and scanty, we have cause rather to wonder that so many have been preserved. For even the numbers which escaped the hands of the early and unlettered barbarians met with an

equally ignominious fate from those for whom it would be impossible to hold up the darkness of their age as a plausible excuse for the commission of this egregious folly. These men over whose sad deeds the bibliophile sighs with mournful regret, were those who carried out the Reformation, so glorious in its results; but the righteousness of the means by which those results were effected are very equivocal indeed. When men form themselves into a faction and strive for the accomplishment of one purpose, criminal deeds are perpetrated with impunity, which, individually they would blush and scorn to do; they feel no direct responsibility, no personal restraint; and, such as possess fierce passions, under the cloak of an organized body, give them vent and gratification; and those whose better feelings lead them to contemplate upon these things content themselves with the conclusion, that out of evil cometh good.

The noble art of printing was unable, with all its rapid movements, to rescue from destruction the treasures of the monkish age; the advocates of the Reformation eagerly sought for and as eagerly destroyed those old popish volumes, doubtless there was much folly, much exaggerated superstition pervading them; but there was also some truth, a few facts worth knowing, and perhaps a little true piety also, and it would have been no difficult matter to have discriminated between the good and the bad. But the careless grants of a licentious monarch conferred a monastery on a court favorite or political partizan without one thought for the preservation of its contents. It is true a few years after the dissolution of these houses, the industrious Leland was appointed to search and rummage over their libraries and to preserve any relic worthy of such an

honor; but it was too late, less learned hands had rifled those parchment collections long ago, mutilated their finest volumes by cutting out with childish pleasure the illuminations with which they were adorned; tearing off the bindings for the gold claps which protected the treasures within,[8] and chopping up huge folios as fuel for their blazing hearths, and immense collections were sold as waste paper. Bale, a strenuous opponent of the monks, thus deplores the loss of their books: "Never had we bene offended for the losse of our lybraryes beynge so many in nombre and in so desolate places for the moste parte, yf the chief monuments and moste notable workes of our excellent wryters had bene reserved, yf there had bene in every shyre of Englande but one solemyne library to the preservacyon of those noble workers, and preferrement of good learnynges in oure posteryte it had bene yet somewhat. But to destroye all without consyderacion, is and wyll be unto Englande for ever a most horryble infamy amonge the grave senyours of other nations. A grete nombre of them whych purchased those superstycyose mansyons reserved of those lybrarye bokes, some to serve theyr jakes, some to scoure theyr candelstyckes, and some to rubbe theyr bootes; some they solde to the grossers and sope sellers, and some they sent over see to the bokebynders,[9] not in small nombre, but at tymes *whole shippes ful*. I know a merchant man, whyche shall at thys tyme be nameless, that boughte the contents of two noble lybraryes for xl shyllyngs pryce, a shame is it to be spoken. Thys stuffe hathe he occupyed in the stide of graye paper for the space of more than these ten years, and yet hath store ynough for as many years to come. A prodyguose example is this, and to be abhorred of all men who

love theyr natyon as they shoulde do."[10]

However pernicious the Roman religion might have been in its practice, it argues little to the honor of the reformers to have used such means as this to effect its cure; had they merely destroyed those productions connected with the controversies of the day, we might perhaps have excused it, on the score of party feeling; but those who were commissioned to visit the public libraries of the kingdom were often men of prejudiced intellects and shortsighted wisdom, and it frequently happened that an ignorant and excited mob became the executioners of whole collections.[11] It would be impossible now to estimate the loss. Manuscripts of ancient and classic date would in their hands receive no more respect than some dry husky folio on ecclesiastical policy; indeed, they often destroyed the works of their own party through sheer ignorance. In a letter sent by Dr. Cox to William Paget, Secretary, he writes that the proclamation for burning books had been the occasion of much hurt. "For New Testaments and Bibles (not condemned by proclamation) have been burned, and that, out of parish churches and good men's houses. They have burned innumerable of the king's majesties books concerning our religion lately set forth."[12] The ignorant thus delighted to destroy that which they did not understand, and the factional spirit of the more enlightened would not allow them to make one effort for the preservation of those valuable relics of early English literature, which crowded the shelves of the monastic libraries; the sign of the cross, the use of red letters on the title page, the illuminations representing saints, or the diagrams and circles of a mathematical nature, were at all times deemed sufficient evidence of their popish origin and fitness for the flames.[13]

When we consider the immense number of MSS. thus destroyed, we cannot help suspecting that, if they had been carefully preserved and examined, many valuable and original records would have been discovered. The catalogues of old monastic establishments, although containing a great proportion of works on divine and ecclesiastical learning, testify that the monks did not confine their studies exclusively to legendary tales or superstitious missals, but that they also cultivated a taste for classical and general learning. Doubtless, in the ruin of the sixteenth century, many original works of monkish authors perished, and the splendor of the transcript rendered it still more liable to destruction; but I confess, as old Fuller quaintly says, that "there were many volumes full fraught with superstition which, notwithstanding, might be useful to learned men, except any will deny apothecaries the privilege of keeping poison in their shops, when they can make antidotes of them. But besides this, what beautiful bibles! Rare fathers! Subtle schoolmen! Useful historians! Ancient! Middle! Modern! What painful comments were here amongst them! What monuments of mathematics all massacred together!"[14]

More than a cart load of manuscripts were taken away from Merton College and destroyed, and a vast number from the Baliol and New Colleges, Oxford; [15] but these instances might be infinitely multiplied, so terrible were those intemperate outrages. All this tends to enforce upon us the necessity of using considerable caution in forming an opinion of the nature and extent of learning prevalent during those ages which preceded the discovery of the art of printing.

FOOTNOTES:

[7] The sad page in the Annals of Literary History recording the destruction of books and MSS. fully prove this assertion. In France, in the year 1790, 4,194,000 volumes were burnt belonging to the suppressed monasteries, about 25,000 of these were manuscripts.

[8] "About this time (Feb. 25, 1550) the Council book mentions the king's sending a letter for the purging his library at Westminster. The persons are not named, but the business was to cull out all superstitious books, as missals, legends, and such like, and to deliver the garniture of the books, being either gold or silver, to Sir Anthony Aucher. These books were many of them plated with gold and silver and curiously embossed. This, as far as we can collect, was the superstition that destroyed them. Here avarice had a very thin disguise, and the courtiers discovered of what spirit they were to a remarkable degree."—Collier's Eccle. History, vol. ii. p. 307.

[9] Any one who can inspect a library of ancient books will find proof of this. A collection of vellum scraps which I have derived from these sources are very exciting to a bibliomaniac, a choice line so abruptly broken, a monkish or classical verse so cruelly mutilated! render an inspection of this odd collection, a tantalizing amusement.

[10] Bale's Leland's Laboryouse Journey, Preface.

[11] The works of the Schoolmen, viz.: of P. Lombard, T. Aquinas, Scotus and his followers and critics also, and such that had popish

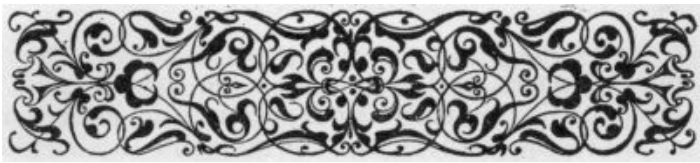
scholars in them they cast out of all college libraries and private studies.—*Wood's Hist. Oxon.*, vol. i. b. 1. p. 108. And "least their impiety and foolishness in this act should be further wanting, they brought it to pass that certain rude young men should carry this great spoil of books about the city on biers, which being so done, to set them down in the common market place, and then burn them, to the sorrow of many, as well as of the Protestants as of the other party. This was by them styled 'the funeral of Scotus the Scotists.' So that at this time and all this king's reign was seldom seen anything in the universities but books of poetry, grammar, idle songs, and frivolous stuff."—*Ibid., Wood is referring to the reign of Edward VI.*

[12] Wood's Hist. Oxon, b. i. p. 81.

[13] "Gutch has printed in his 'Collectiana' an order from the Queen's commissioners to destroy all capes, vestments, albes, missals, books, crosses, and such other idolatrous and superstitious monuments whatsoever.'—vol. ii. p. 280."

[14] Fuller's Church History, b. vi. p. 335.

[15] Wood's Oxon, vol. i. b. i. p. 107



CHAPTER II

Duties of the monkish librarian.—Rules of the library.—Lending books.—Books allowed the monks for private reading.—Ridiculous signs for books.—How the libraries were supported.—A monkish blessing on books, etc.



IN this chapter I shall proceed to inquire into the duties of the monkish amanuensis, and show by what laws and regulations the monastic libraries were governed. The monotonous habits of a cloistered bibliophile will, perhaps, appear dry and fastidious, but still it is curious and interesting to observe how carefully the monks regarded their vellum tomes, how indefatigably they worked to increase their stores, and how eagerly they sought for books. But besides being regarded as a literary curiosity, the subject derives importance by the light it throws on the state of learning in those dark and "bookless" days, and the illustrations gleaned in this way fully compensate for the tediousness of the research.

As a bibliophile it is somewhat pleasing to trace a deep book passion growing up in the barrenness of the cloister, and to find in some cowled monk a bibliomaniac as warm and enthusiastic in his way as the renowned "Atticus," or the noble Roxburghe, of more recent times. It is true we can draw no comparison between the result of their respective labors. The hundreds, which in the old time were

deemed a respectable if not an extensive collection, would look insignificant beside the ostentatious array of modern libraries.

But the very tenor of a monastic life compelled the monk to seek the sweet yet silent companionship of books; the rules of his order and the regulations of his fraternity enforced the strictest silence in the execution of his daily and never-ceasing duties. Attending mass, singing psalms, and midnight prayers, were succeeded by mass, psalms and prayers in one long undeviating round of yearly obligations; the hours intervening between these holy exercises were dull and tediously insupportable if unoccupied. Conversation forbidden, secular amusements denounced, yet idleness reproached, what could the poor monk seek as a relief in this distress but the friendly book; the willing and obedient companion of every one doomed to lonely hours and dismal solitude?

The pride and glory of a monastery was a well stored library, which was committed to the care of the armarian, and with him rested all the responsibility of its preservation. According to the Consuetudines Canonicorum Regularium, it was his duty to have all the books of the monastery in his keeping catalogued and separately marked with their proper names.[16] Some of these old catalogues have been preserved, and, viewed as bibliographical remains of the middle ages, are of considerable importance; indeed, we cannot form a correct idea of the literature of those remote times without them. Many productions of authors are recorded in these brief catalogues whose former existence is only known to us by these means.

There is one circumstance in connexion with them that must not be forgotten: instead of enumerating all the works which each volume contained, they merely specified the first, so that a catalogue of fifty or a hundred volumes might probably have contained nearly double that number of distinct works. I have seen MSS. formerly belonging to monasteries, which have been catalogued in this way, containing four or five others, besides the one mentioned. Designed rather to identify the book than to describe the contents of each volume, they wrote down the first word or two of the second leaf—this was the most prevalent usage; but they often adopted other means, sometimes giving a slight notice of the works which a volume contained; others took the precaution of noting down the last word of the last leaf but one,[17] a great advantage, as the monkish student could more easily detect at a glance whether the volume was perfect. The armarian was, moreover, particularly enjoined to inspect with scrupulous care the more ancient volumes, lest the moth-worms should have got at them, or they had become corrupt or mutilated, and, if such were the case, he was with great care to restore them. Probably the armarian was also the bookbinder to the monastery in ordinary cases, for he is here directed to cover the volumes with tablets of wood, that the inside may be preserved from moisture, and the parchment from the injurious effects of dampness. The different orders of books were to be kept separate from one another, and conveniently arranged; not squeezed too tight, lest it should injure or confuse them, but so placed that they might be easily distinguished, and those who sought them might find them without delay or impediment.[18] Bibliomaniacs have not been remarkable for their

memory or punctuality, and in the early times the borrower was often forgetful to return the volume within the specified time. To guard against this, many rules were framed, nor was the armarian allowed to lend the books, even to neighboring monasteries, unless he received a bond or promise to restore them within a certain time, and if the person was entirely unknown, a book of equal value was required as a security for its safe return. In all cases the armarian was instructed to make a short memorandum of the name of the book which he had lent or received. The "great and precious books" were subject to still more stringent rules, and although under the conservation of the librarian, he had not the privilege of lending them to any one without the distinct permission of the abbot.[19] This was, doubtless, practised by all the monastic libraries, for all generously lent one another their books. In a collection of chapter orders of the prior and convent of Durham, bearing date 1235, it is evident that a similar rule was observed there, which they were not to depart from except at the desire of the bishop.[20] According to the constitutions for the government of the Abingdon monastery, the library was under the care of the Cantor, and all the writings of the church were consigned to his keeping. He was not allowed to part with the books or lend them without a sufficient deposit as a pledge for their safe return, except to persons of consequence and repute.[21] This was the practice at a much later period. When that renowned bibliomaniac, Richard de Bury, wrote his delightful little book called *Philobiblon*, the same rules were strictly in force. With respect to the lending of books, his own directions are that, if any one apply for a particular volume, the librarian was to carefully consider whether the library contained

another copy of it; if so, he was at liberty to lend the book, taking care, however, that he obtained a security which was to exceed the value of the loan; they were at the same time to make a memorandum in writing of the name of the book, and the nature of the security deposited for it, with the name of the party to whom it was lent, with that of the officer or librarian who delivered it.[22]

We learn by the canons before referred to, that the superintendence of all the writing and transcribing, whether in or out of the monastery, belonged to the office of the armarian, and that it was his duty to provide the scribes with parchment and all things necessary for their work, and to agree upon the price with those whom he employed. The monks who were appointed to write in the cloisters he supplied with copies for transcription; and that no time might be wasted, he was to see that a good supply was kept up. No one was to give to another what he himself had been ordered to write, or presume to do anything by his own will or inclination. Nor was it seemly that the armarian even should give any orders for transcripts to be made without first receiving the permission of his superior.[23]

We here catch a glimpse of the quiet life of a monkish student, who labored with this monotonous regularity to amass his little library. If we dwell on these scraps of information, we shall discover some marks of a love of learning among them, and the liberality they displayed in lending their books to each other is a pleasing trait to dwell upon. They unhesitatingly imparted to others the knowledge they acquired by their own study with a brotherly frankness and generosity well becoming the spirit of a student. This they did by extensive correspondence

and the temporary exchange of their books. The system of loan, which they in this manner carried on to a considerable extent, is an important feature in connection with our subject; innumerable and interesting instances of this may be found in the monastic registers, and the private letters of the times. The cheapness of literary productions of the present age render it an absolute waste of time to transcribe a whole volume, and except with books of great scarcity we seldom think of borrowing or lending one; having finished its perusal we place it on the shelf and in future regard it as a book of reference; but in those days one volume did the work of twenty. It was lent to a neighboring monastery, and this constituted its publication; for each monastery thus favored, by the aid perhaps of some half dozen scribes, added a copy to their own library, and it was often stipulated that on the return of the original a correct duplicate should accompany it, as a remuneration to its author. Nor was the volume allowed to remain unread; it was recited aloud at meals, or when otherwise met together, to the whole community. We shall do well to bear this in mind, and not hastily judge of the number of students by a comparison with the number of their books. But it was not always a mere single volume that the monks lent from their library. Hunter has printed[24] a list of books lent by the Convent of Henton, A. D. 1343, to a neighboring monastery, containing twenty volumes. The engagement to restore these books was formally drawn up and sealed.

In the monasteries the first consideration was to see that the library was well stored with those books necessary for the performance of the various offices of the church, but besides these the library ought, according to established rules, to contain for the

"edification of the brothers" such as were fit and needful to be consulted in common study. The Bible and great expositors; *Bibliothecæ et majores expositores*, books of martyrs, lives of saints, homilies, etc.;[25] these and other large books the monks were allowed to take and study in private, but the smaller ones they could only study in the library, lest they should be lost or mislaid. This was also the case with respect to the rare and choice volumes. When the armarian gave out books to the monks he made a note of their nature, and took an exact account of their number, so that he might know in a moment which of the brothers had it for perusal.[26] Those who studied together were to receive what books they choose; but when they had satisfied themselves, they were particularly directed to restore them to their assigned places; and when they at any time received from the armarian a book for their private reading, they were not allowed to lend it to any one else, or to use it in common, but to reserve it especially for his own private reading. The same rule extended to the singers, who if they required books for their studies, were to apply to the abbot.[27] The sick brothers were also entitled to the privilege of receiving from the armarian books for their solace and comfort; but as soon as the lamps were lighted in the infirmary the books were put away till the morning, and if not finished, were again given out from the library.[28] In the more ancient monasteries a similar case was observed with respect to their books. The rule of St. Pacome directed that the utmost attention should be paid to their preservation, and that when the monks went to the refectory they were not to leave their books open, but to carefully close and put them in their assigned places. The monastery of St. Pacome contained a vast

number of monks; every house, says Mabillon, was composed of not less than forty monks, and the monastery embraced thirty or forty houses. Each monk, he adds, possessed his book, and few rested without forming a library; by which we may infer that the number of books was considerable.[29] Indeed, it was quite a common practice in those days, scarce as books were, to allow each of the monks one or more for his private study, besides granting them access to the library. The constitutions of Lanfranc, in the year 1072, directed the librarian, at the commencement of Lent, to deliver a book to each of the monks for their private reading, allowing them a whole year for its perusal.[30] There is one circumstance connected with the affairs of the library quite characteristic of monkish superstition, and bearing painful testimony to their mistaken ideas of what constituted "good works." In Martene's book there is a chapter, *De Scientia et Signis*—degrading and sad; there is something withal curious to be found in it. After enjoining the most scrupulous silence in the church, in the refectory, in the cloister, and in the dormitory, at all times, and in all seasons; transforming those men into perpetual mutes, and even when "actually necessary," permitting only a whisper to be articulated "in a low voice in the ear," *submissa voce in aure*, it then proceeds to describe a series of fantastic grimaces which the monks were to perform on applying to the armarian for books. The general sign for a book, *generali signi libri*, was to "extend the hand and make a movement as if turning over the leaves of a book." For a missal the monk was to make a similar movement with a sign of the cross; for the gospels the sign of the cross on the forehead; for an antiphon or book of responses he was to strike the thumb and little finger of the other

hand together; for a book of offices or gradale to make the sign of a cross and kiss the fingers; for a tract lay the hand on the abdomen and apply the other hand to the mouth; for a capitulary make the general sign and extend the clasped hands to heaven; for a psalter place the hands upon the head in the form of a crown, such as the king is wont to wear. [31] Religious intolerance was rampant when this rule was framed; hot and rancorous denunciation was lavished with amazing prodigality against works of loose morality or heathen origin; nor did the monks feel much compassion—although they loved to read them—for the old authors of antiquity. Pagans they were, and therefore fit only to be named as infidels and dogs, so the monk was directed for a secular book, "which some pagan wrote after making the general sign to scratch his ear with his hand, just as a dog itching would do with his feet, because infidels are not unjustly compared to such creatures —*quia nec immerito infideles tali animanti contparantur*."[32] Wretched bigotry and puny malice! Yet what a sad reflection it is, that with all the foul and heartburning examples which those dark ages of the monks afford, posterity have failed to profit by them—religious intolerance, with all its vain-glory and malice, flourishes still, the cankering worm of many a Christian blossom! Besides the duties which we have enumerated, there were others which it was the province of the armarian to fulfil. He was particularly to inspect and collate those books which, according to the decrees of the church, it was unlawful to possess different from the authorized copies; these were the bible, the gospels, missals, epistles, collects graduales, antiphons, hymns, psalters, lessions, and the monastic rules; these were always to be alike even in the most minute point.[33]

He was moreover directed to prepare for the use of the brothers short tables respecting the times mentioned in the capitulary for the various offices of the church, to make notes upon the matins, the mass, and upon the different orders.[34] In fact, the monkish amanuensis was expected to undertake all those matters which required care and learning combined. He wrote the letters of the monastery, and often filled the office of secretary to my Lord Abbot. In the monasteries of course the services of the librarian were unrequited by any pecuniary remuneration, but in the cathedral libraries a certain salary was sometimes allowed them. Thus we learn that the amanuensis of the conventual church of Ely received in the year 1372 forty-three shillings and fourpence for his annual duties;[35] and Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, in the tenth century, gave considerable landed possessions to a monk of that church as a recompense for his services as librarian. [36] In some monasteries, in the twelfth century, if not earlier, they levied a tax on all the members of the community, who paid a yearly sum to the librarian for binding, preserving, and purchasing copies for the library. One of these rules, bearing date 1145, was made by Udon, Abbot of St. Père en Vallée à Chantres, and that it might be more plausibly received, he taxed himself as well as all the members of his own house.[37] The librarian sometimes, in addition to his regular duties, combined the office of precentor to the monastery. [38] Some of their account-books have been preserved, and by an inspection of them, we may occasionally gather some interesting and curious hints, as to the cost of books and writing materials in those times. As may be supposed, the monkish librarians often became great bibliophiles, for being

in constant communication with choice manuscripts, they soon acquired a great mania for them. Posterity are also particularly indebted to the pens of these book conservators of the middle ages; for some of the best chroniclers and writers of those times were humble librarians to some religious house.

Not only did the bibliophiles of old exercise the utmost care in the preservation of their darling books, but the religious basis of their education and learning prompted them to supplicate the blessing of God upon their goodly tomes. Although I might easily produce other instances, one will suffice to give an idea of their nature: "O Lord, send the virtue of thy Holy Spirit upon these our books; that cleansing them from all earthly things, by thy holy blessing, they may mercifully enlighten our hearts and give us true understanding; and grant that by thy teaching, they may brightly preserve and make full an abundance of good works according to thy will."[39]

FOOTNOTES:

[16] Cap. xxi. Martene de Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus, tom. iii. p. 262.

[17] See Catalogue of Hulne Abbey, Library MS. Harleian. No. 3897.

[18] Martene de Antiq. Eccle. Rit., tom. iii. p. 263.

[19] *Ibid.* Ingulphus tells us that the same rule was observed in Croyland Abbey.—*Apud Gale*, p. 104.

[20] Marked b. iv. 26. Surtee Publications, vol. i. p. 121.

[21] Const. admiss. Abbat, et gubernatione Monast. Abendum Cottonian M.S. Claudius, b. vi. p. 194.

[22] Philobiblon, 4to. *Oxon*, 1599, chap. xix.

[23] Martene de Ant. Eccl. Ribibus, tom. iii. p. 263. For an inattention to this the Council of Soissons, in 1121, ordered some transcripts of Abelard's works to be burnt, and severely reproved the author for his unpardonable neglect.—*Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ix. p. 28.

[24] Catalogues of Monastic Libraries, pp. 16, 17.

[25] Const. Canon. Reg. ap. Martene, tom. iii. p. 263.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*, tom. iii. cap. xxxvi. pp. 269, 270.

[28] Martene, tom. iii. p. 331. For a list of some books applied to their use, see MS. Cot. Galba, c. iv. fo. 128.

[29] Mabillon, Traité des Etudes Monastiques, 4to. *Paris* 1691, cap. vi. p. 34.

[30] Wilkin's Concil. tom. i. p. 332.

[31] Stat. pro Reform. ordin. Grandimont. ap. Martene cap. x.

[32] *Ibid.*, tom. iv. pp. 289, 339.

[33] Const. Canon. Reg. ap. Martene, tom. iii. p. 263.

[34] *Ibid.*, cap. xxi. p. 263.

[35] Stevenson's Supple. to Bentham's Hist. of the Church of Ely, p. 51.

[36] Thomas' Survey of the Church of Worcester, p. 45.

[37] Mabillon. Annal. tom. vi. pp. 651 and 652. Hist. Litt. de la France, ix. p. 140.

[38] They managed the pecuniary matters of the fraternity. William of Malmsbury was precentor as well as librarian to his monastery.

[39] Martene de Antiq. Eccl. Ritibus ii. p. 302.

CHAPTER III

Scriptoria and the Scribes.—Care in copying.—Bible reading among the monks.—Booksellers in the middle ages.—Circulating libraries.—Calligraphic art, etc.

As the monasteries were the schools of learning, so their occupants were the preservers of literature, and, as Herault observes, had they not taken the trouble to transcribe books, the ancients had been

lost to us for ever; to them, therefore, we owe much. But there are many, however, who suppose that the monastic establishments were hotbeds of superstition and fanaticism, from whence nothing of a useful or elevated nature could possibly emanate. They are too apt to suppose that the human intellect must be altogether weak and impotent when confined within such narrow limits; but truth and knowledge can exist even in the dark cells of a gloomy cloister, and inspire the soul with a fire that can shed a light far beyond its narrow precincts. Indeed, I scarce know whether to regret, as some appear to do, that the literature and learning of those rude times was preserved and fostered by the Christian church; it is said, that their strict devotion and religious zeal prompted them to disregard all things but a knowledge of those divine, but such is not the case; at least, I have not found it so; it is true, as churchmen, they were principally devoted to the study of divine and ecclesiastical lore; but it is also certain that in that capacity they gradually infused the mild spirit of their Master among the darkened society over which they presided, and among whom they shone as beacons of light in a dreary desert. But the church did more than this. She preserved to posterity the profane learnings of Old Greece and Rome; copied it, multiplied it, and spread it. She recorded to after generations in plain, simple language, the ecclesiastical and civil events of the past, for it is from the terse chronicles of the monkish churchmen that we learn now the history of what happened then. Much as we may dislike the monastic system, the cold, heartless, gloomy ascetic atmosphere of the cloister, and much as we may deplore the mental dissipation of man's best attributes, which the system of those old monks

engendered, we must exercise a cool and impartial judgment, and remember that what now would be intolerable and monstrously inconsistent with our present state of intellectuality, might at some remote period, in the ages of darkness and comparative barbarism, have had its virtues and beneficial influences. As for myself, it would be difficult to convince me, with all those fine relics of their deeds before me, those beauteous fanes dedicated to piety and God, those libraries so crowded with their vellum tomes, so gorgeously adorned, and the abundant evidence which history bears to their known charity and hospitable love, that these monks and their system was a scheme of dismal barbarism; it may be so, but my reading has taught me different; but, on the other hand, although the monks possessed many excellent qualities, being the encouragers of literature, the preservers of books, and promulgators of civilization, we must not hide their numerous and palpable faults, or overlook the poison which their system of monachism *ultimately* infused into the very vitals of society. In the early centuries, before the absurdities of Romanism were introduced, the influence of the monastic orders was highly beneficial to our Saxon ancestors, but in after ages the Church of England was degraded by the influence of the fast growing abominations of Popedom. She drank copiously of the deadly potion, and became the blighted and ghostly shadow of her former self. Forgetting the humility of her divine Lord, she sought rather to imitate the worldly splendor and arrogance of her Sovereign Pontiff. The evils too obviously existed to be overlooked; but it is not my place to further expose them; a more pleasing duty guides my pen; others have done all this, lashing them painfully for their oft-told sins. Frail

humanity glories in chastizing the frailty of brother man. But we will not denounce them here, for did not the day of retribution come? And was not justice satisfied? Having made these few preliminary remarks, let us, in a brief manner, inquire into the system observed in the cloisters by the monks for the preservation and transcription of manuscripts. Let us peep into the quiet cells of those old monks, and see whether history warrants the unqualified contempt which their efforts in this department have met with.

In most monasteries there were two kinds of Scriptoria, or writing offices; for in addition to the large and general apartment used for the transcription of church books and manuscripts for the library, there were also several smaller ones occupied by the superiors and the more learned members of the community, as closets for private devotion and study. Thus we read, that in the Cistercian orders there were places set apart for the transcription of books called Scriptoria, or cells assigned to the scribes, "separate from each other," where the books might be transcribed in the strictest silence, according to the holy rules of their founders. [40] These little cells were usually situated in the most retired part of the monastery, and were probably incapable of accommodating more than one or two persons;[41] dull and comfortless places, no doubt, yet they were deemed great luxuries, and the use of them only granted to such as became distinguished for their piety, or erudition. We read that when David went to the Isle of Wight, to Paulinus, to receive his education, he used to sup in the Refectory, but had a Scriptorium, or study, in his cell, being a famous scribe.[42] The aged monks, who

often lived in these little offices, separate from the rest of the scribes, were not expected to work so arduously as the rest. Their employment was comparatively easy; nor were they compelled to work so long as those in the cloister.[43] There is a curious passage in Tangmar's Life of St. Bernward, which would lead us to suspect that private individuals possessed Scriptoria; for, says he, there are Scriptoria, not only in the monasteries, but in other places, in which are conceived books equal to the divine works of the philosophers.[44] The Scriptorium of the monastery in which the general business of a literary nature was transacted, was an apartment far more extensive and commodious, fitted up with forms and desks methodically arranged, so as to contain conveniently a great number of copyists. In some of the monasteries and cathedrals, they had long ranges of seats one after another, at which were seated the scribes, one well versed in the subject on which the book treated, recited from the copy whilst they wrote; so that, on a word being given out by him, it was copied by all. [45] The multiplication of manuscripts, under such a system as this, must have been immense; but they did not always make books, *fecit libros*, as they called it, in this wholesale manner, but each monk diligently labored at the transcription of a separate work.

The amount of labor carried on in the Scriptorium, of course, in many cases depended upon the revenues of the abbey, and the disposition of the abbot; but this was not always the case, as in some monasteries they undertook the transcription of books as a matter of commerce, and added broad lands to their house by the industry of their pens. But the Scriptorium was frequently supported by resources solely

applicable to its use. Laymen, who had a taste for literature, or who entertained an esteem for it in others, often at their death bequeathed estates for the support of the monastic Scriptoria. Robert, one of the Norman leaders, gave two parts of the tythes of Hatfield, and the tythes of Redburn, for the support of the Scriptorium of St. Alban's.[46] The one belonging to the monastery of St. Edmundsbury was endowed with two mills,[47] and in the church of Ely there is a charter of Bishof Nigellus, granting to the Scriptorium of the monastery the tythes of Wythessey and Impitor, two parts of the tythes of the Lordship of Pampesward, with 2s. 2d., and a messuage in Ely *ad faciendos et emandandos libros*.[48]

The abbot superintended the management of the Scriptorium, and decided upon the hours for their labor, during which time they were ordered to work with unremitting diligence, "not leaving to go and wander in idleness," but to attend solely to the business of transcribing. To prevent detraction or interruption, no one was allowed to enter except the abbot, the prior, the sub-prior, and the armarian,[49] as the latter took charge of all the materials and implements used by the transcribers, it was his duty to prepare and give them out when required; he made the ink and cut the parchment ready for use. He was strictly enjoined, however, to exercise the greatest economy in supplying these precious materials, and not to give more copies "nec artavos, nec cultellos, nec scarpellæ, nec membranes," than was actually necessary, or than he had computed as sufficient for the work; and what the armarian gave them the monks were to receive without contradiction or contention.[50]

The utmost silence prevailed in the Scriptorium;

rules were framed, and written admonitions hung on the walls, to enforce the greatest care and diligence in copying exactly from the originals. In Alcuin's works we find one of these preserved; it is a piece inscribed "*Ad Musæum libros scribentium*;" the lines are as follows:

"Hic sideant sacræ scribentes famina legis,
Nec non sanctorum dicta sacrata
Patrum,
Hæc interserere caveant sua frivola verbis,
Frivola nec propter erret et ipsa manus:

Correctosque sibi quærant studiose
libellos,
Tramite quo recto penna volantis eat.
Per cola distinquant proprios, et commata
sensus,
Et punctos ponant ordine quosque suo.

Ne vel falsa legat, taceat vel forte repente,
Ante pios fratres, lector in Ecclesia.
Est opus egregium sacros jam scribete
libros,
Nec mercede sua scriptor et ipse caret.

Fodere quam vites, melius est scribere
libros,
Ille suo ventri serviet, iste animæ.
Vel nova, vel vetera poterit proferre
magister
Plurima, quisque legit dicta sacrata
Patrum."[51]

Other means were resorted to besides these to preserve the text of their books immaculate, it was a common practice for the scribe at the end of his

copy, to adjure all who transcribed from it to use the greatest care, and to refrain from the least alteration of word or sense. Authors more especially followed this course, thus at the end of some we find such injunctions as this.

"I adjure you who shall transcribe this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious coming, who will come to judge the quick and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe and diligently correct it by the copy from which you transcribe it—this adjuration also—and insert it in your copy."[52]

The Consuetudines Canonicorum, before referred to, also particularly impressed this upon the monks, and directed that all the brothers who were engaged as scribes, were not to alter any writing, although in their own mind they might think it proper, without first receiving the sanction of the abbot, "*on no account were they to commit so great a presumption*."[53] But notwithstanding that the scribes were thus enjoined to use the utmost care in copying books, doubtless an occasional error crept in, which many causes might have produced, such as bad light, haste, a little drowsiness, imperfect sight, or even a flickering lamp was sufficient to produce some trivial error; but in works of importance the smallest error is of consequence, as some future scribe puzzled by the blunder, might, in an attempt to correct, still more augment the imperfection; to guard against this, with respect to the Scriptures, the most critical care was enforced. Monks advanced in age were alone allowed to transcribe them, and after their completion they were read—revised—and reread again, and it is by that means that so uniform a reading has been preserved, and although slight differences may here and there occur, there are no

books which have traversed through the shadows of the dark ages, that preserve their original text so pure and uncorrupt as the copies of the Scriptures, the fathers of the church, and the ancient writings of the classic authors; sometimes, it is true, a manuscript of the last order is discovered possessing a very different reading in some particular passage; but these appear rather as futile emendations or interpolations of the scribe than as the result of a downright blunder, and are easily perceivable, for when the monkish churchmen tampered with ancient copies, it generally originated in a desire to smooth over the indecencies of the heathen authors, and so render them less liable to corrupt the holy contemplations of the devotee; and while we blame the pious fraud, we cannot but respect the motive that dictated it.

But as regards the Scriptures, we talk of the carelessness of the monks and the interpolations of the scribes as if these were faults peculiar to the monastic ages alone; alas! the history of Biblical transmission tells us differently, the gross perversions, omissions, and errors wrought in the holy text, proclaim how prevalent these same faults have been in the ages of *printed literature*, and which appear more palpable by being produced amidst deep scholars, and surrounded with all the critical acumen of a learned age. Five or six thousand of these gross blunders, or these wilful mutilations, protest the unpleasant fact, and show how much of human grossness it has acquired, and how besmeared with corruption those sacred pages have become in passing through the hands of man, and the "revisings" of sectarian minds. I am tempted to illustrate this by an anecdote related by Sir Nicholas

L'Estrange of Hunstanton, and preserved in a MS. in the Harlein collection.—"Dr. Usher, Bish. of Armath, being to preach at Paules Crosse and passing hastily by one of the stationers, called for a Bible, and had a little one of the London edition given him out, but when he came to looke for his text, that very verse was omitted in the print: which gave the first occasion of complaint to the king of the insufferable negligence, and insufficience of the London printers and presse, and bredde that great contest that followed, betwixt the univers. of Cambridge and London stationers, about printing of the Bibles."[54] Gross and numerous indeed were the errors of the corrupt bible text of that age, and far exceeding even the blunders of monkish pens, and certainly much less excusable, for in those times they seldom had a large collection of codices to compare, so that by studying their various readings, they could arrive at a more certain and authentic version. The paucity of the sacred volume, if it rendered their pens more liable to err, served to enforce upon them the necessity of still greater scrutiny. On looking over a monastic catalogue, the first volume that I search for is the Bible; and, I feel far more disappointment if I find it not there, than I do at the absence of Horace or Ovid—there is something so desolate in the idea of a Christian priest without the Book of Life—of a minister of God without the fountain of truth—that however favorably we may be prone to regard them, a thought will arise that the absence of this sacred book may perhaps be referred to the indolence of the monkish pen, or to the laxity of priestly piety. But such I am glad to say was not often the case; the Bible it is true was an expensive book, but can scarcely be regarded as a rare one; the monastery was indeed poor that had it not, and when once

obtained the monks took care to speedily transcribe it. Sometimes they only possessed detached portions, but when this was the case they generally borrowed of some neighboring and more fortunate monastery, the missing parts to transcribe, and so complete their own copies. But all this did not make the Bible less loved among them, or less anxiously and ardently studied, they devoted their days, and the long hours of the night, to the perusal of those pages of inspired truth,[55] and it is a calumny without a shadow of foundation to declare that the monks were careless of scripture reading; it is true they did not apply that vigor of thought, and unrestrained reflection upon it which mark the labors of the more modern student, nor did they often venture to interpret the hidden meaning of the holy mysteries by the powers of their own mind, but were guided in this important matter by the works of the fathers. But hence arose a circumstance which gave full exercise to their mental powers and compelled the monk in spite of his timidity to think a little for himself. Unfortunately the fathers, venerable and venerated as they were, after all were but men, with many of the frailties and all the fallabilities of poor human nature; the pope might canonize them, and the priesthood bow submissively to their spiritual guidance, still they remained for all that but mortals of dust and clay, and their bulky tomes yet retain the swarthiness of the tomb about them, the withering impress of humanity. Such being the case we, who do not regard them quite so infallible, feel no surprise at a circumstance which sorely perplexed the monks of old, they unchained and unclasped their cumbrous "Works of the Fathers," and pored over those massy expositions with increasing wonder; surrounded by these holy guides, these fathers of infallibility, they

were like strangers in a foreign land, did they follow this holy saint they seemed about to forsake the spiritual direction of one having equal claims to their obedience and respect; alas! for poor old weak tradition, those fabrications of man's faulty reason were found, with all their orthodoxy, to clash woefully in scriptural interpretation. Here was a dilemma for the monkish student! whose vow of obedience to patristical guidance was thus sorely perplexed; he read and re-read, analyzed passage after passage, interpreted word after word; and yet, poor man, his laborious study was fruitless and unprofitable! What bible student can refrain from sympathizing with him amidst these torturing doubts and this crowd of contradiction, but after all we cannot regret this, for we owe to it more than my feeble pen can write, so immeasurable have been the fruits of this little unheeded circumstance. It gave birth to many a bright independent declaration, involving pure lines of scripture interpretation, which appear in the darkness of those times like fixed stars before us; to this, in Saxon days, we are indebted for the labors of Ælfric and his anti-Roman doctrines, whose soul also sympathized with a later age by translating portions of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, thus making it accessible to all classes of the people. To this we are indebted for all the good that resulted from those various heterodoxies and heresies, which sometimes disturbed the church during the dark ages; but which wrought much ultimate good by compelling the thoughts of men to dwell on these important matters. Indeed, to the instability of the fathers, as a sure guide, we may trace the origin of all those efforts of the human mind, which cleared the way for the Reformation, and relieved man from the shackles of these spiritual

guides of the monks.

But there were many cloistered Christians who studied the bible undisturbed by these shadows and doubts, and who, heedless of patristical lore and saintly wisdom, devoured the spiritual food in its pure and uncontaminating simplicity—such students, humble, patient, devoted, will be found crowding the monastic annals, and yielding good evidence of the same by the holy tenor of their sinless lives, their Christian charity and love.

But while so many obtained the good title of an "*Amator Scripturarum*," as the bible student was called in those monkish days, I do not pretend to say that the Bible was a common book among them, or that every monk possessed one—far different indeed was the case—a copy of the Old and New Testament often supplied the wants of an entire monastery, and in others, as I have said before, only some detached portions were to be found in their libraries. Sometimes they were more plentiful, and the monastery could boast of two or three copies, besides a few separate portions, and occasionally I have met with instances where besides several *Biblia Optima*, they enjoyed Hebrew codices and translations, with numerous copies of the gospels. We must not forget, however, that the transcription of a Bible was a work of time, and required the outlay of much industry and wealth. "Brother Tedynton," a monk of Ely, commenced a Bible in 1396, and was several years before he completed it. The magnitude of the undertaking can scarcely be imagined by those unpractised in the art of copying, but when the monk saw the long labor of his pen before him, and looked upon the well bound strong clasped volumes, with their clean vellum folios and fine illuminations, he

seemed well repaid for his years of toil and tedious labor, and felt a glow of pious pleasure as he contemplated his happy acquisition, and the comfort and solace which he should hereafter derive from its holy pages! We are not surprised then, that a Bible in those days should be esteemed so valuable, and capable of realizing a considerable sum. The monk, independent of its spiritual value, regarded it as a great possession, worthy of being bestowed at his death, with all the solemnity of a testamentary process, and of being gratefully acknowledged by the fervent prayers of the monkish brethren. Kings and nobles offered it as an appropriate and generous gift, and bishops were deemed benefactors to their church by adding it to the library. On its covers were written earnest exhortations to the Bible student, admonishing the greatest care in its use, and leveling anathemas and excommunications upon any one who should dare to purloin it. For its greater security it was frequently chained to a reading desk, and if a duplicate copy was lent to a neighboring monastery they required a large deposit, or a formal bond for its safe return.[56] These facts, while they show its value, also prove how highly it was esteemed among them, and how much the monks loved the Book of Life.

But how different is the picture now—how opposite all this appears to the aspect of bible propagation in our own time. Thanks to the printing-press, to bible societies, and to the benevolence of God, we cannot enter the humblest cottage of the poorest peasant without observing the Scriptures on his little shelf—not always read, it is true—nor always held in veneration as in the old days before us—its very plentitude and cheapness takes off its attraction to irreligious and indifferent readers, but to poor and

needy Christians what words can express the fulness of the blessing. Yet while we thank God for this great boon, let us refrain from casting uncharitable reflections upon the monks for its comparative paucity among them. If its possession was not so easily acquired, they were nevertheless true lovers of the Bible, and preserved and multiplied it in dark and troublous times.

Our remarks have hitherto applied to the monastic scribes alone; but it is necessary here to speak of the secular copyists, who were an important class during the middle ages, and supplied the functions of the bibliopole of the ancients. But the transcribing trade numbered three or four distinct branches. There were the Librarii Antiquarii, Notarii, and the Illuminators—occasionally these professions were all united in one—where perseverance or talent had acquired a knowledge of these various arts. There appears to have been considerable competition between these contending bodies. The notarii were jealous of the librarii, and the librarii in their turn were envious of the antiquarii, who devoted their ingenuity to the transcription and repairing of old books especially, rewriting such parts as were defective or erased, and restoring the dilapidations of the binding. Being learned in old writings they corrected and revised the copies of ancient codices; of this class we find mention as far back as the time of Cassiodorus and Isidore.[57] "They deprived," says Astle, "the poor librarii, or common scriptores, of great part of their business, so that they found it difficult to gain a subsistence for themselves and their families. This put them about finding out more expeditious methods of transcribing books. They formed the letters smaller, and made use of more conjugations and abbreviations than had been usual.

They proceeded in this manner till the letters became exceedingly small and extremely difficult to be read."[58] The fact of there existing a class of men, whose fixed employment or profession was solely confined to the transcription of ancient writings and to the repairing of tattered copies, in contradistinction to the common scribes, and depending entirely upon the exercise of their art as a means of obtaining a subsistence, leads us to the conclusion that ancient manuscripts were by no means so very scarce in those days; for how absurd and useless it would have been for men to qualify themselves for transcribing these antiquated and venerable codices, if there had been no probability of obtaining them to transcribe. The fact too of its becoming the subject of so much competition proves how great was the demand for their labor.[59]

We are unable, with any positive result, to discover the exact origin of the secular scribes, though their existence may probably be referred to a very remote period. The monks seem to have monopolized for some ages the "*Commercium Librorum*,"[60] and sold and bartered copies to a considerable extent among each other. We may with some reasonable grounds, however, conjecture that the profession was flourishing in Saxon times; for we find several eminent names in the seventh and eighth centuries who, in their epistolary correspondence, beg their friends to procure transcripts for them. Benedict, Bishop of Wearmouth, purchased most of his book treasures at Rome, which was even at that early period probably a famous mart for such luxuries, as he appears to have journeyed there for that express purpose. Some of the books which he collected were presents from his foreign friends; but most of them, as Bede tells us, were *bought* by himself, or in

accordance with his instructions, by his friends.[61] Boniface, the Saxon missionary, continually writes for books to his associates in all parts of Europe. At a subsequent period the extent and importance of the profession grew amazingly; and in Italy its followers were particularly numerous in the tenth century, as we learn from the letters of Gerbert, afterwards Silvester II., who constantly writes, with the cravings of a bibliomaniac, to his friends for books, and begs them to get the scribes, who, he adds, in one of his letters, may be found in all parts of Italy,[62] both in town and in the country, to make transcripts of certain books for him, and he promises to reimburse his correspondent all that he expends for the same.

These public scribes derived their principal employment from the monks and the lawyers; from the former in transcribing their manuscripts, and by the latter in drawing up their legal instruments. They carried on their avocation at their own homes like other artisans; but sometimes when employed by the monks executed their transcripts within the cloister, where they were boarded, lodged, and received their wages till their work was done. This was especially the case when some great book was to be copied, of rarity and price; thus we read of Paulinus, of St. Albans, sending into distant parts to obtain proficient workmen, who were paid so much per diem for their labor; their wages were generously supplied by the Lord of Redburn.[63]

The increase of knowledge and the foundation of the universities gave birth to the booksellers. Their occupation as a distinct trade originated at a period coeval with the foundation of these public seminaries, although the first mention that I am aware of is made by Peter of Blois, about the year

1170. I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter of this celebrated scholar, but I may be excused for giving the anecdote here, as it is so applicable to my subject. It appears, then, that whilst remaining in Paris to transact some important matter for the King of England, he entered the shop of "a public dealer in books"—for be it known that the archdeacon was always on the search, and seldom missed an opportunity of adding to his library—the bookseller, Peter tells us, offered him a tempting collection on Jurisprudence; but although his knowledge of such matters was so great that he did not require them for his own use, he thought they might be serviceable to his nephew, and after bargaining a little about the price he counted down the money agreed upon and left the stall; but no sooner was his back turned than the Provost of Sexeburgh came in to look over the literary stores of the stationer, and his eye meeting the recently sold volume, he became inspired with a wish to possess it; nor could he, on hearing it was bought and paid for by another, suppress his anxiety to obtain the treasure; but, offering more money, actually took the volume away by force. As may be supposed, Archdeacon Peter was sorely annoyed at this behavior; and "To his dearest companion and friend Master Arnold of Blois, Peter of Blois Archdeacon of Bath sent greeting," a long and learned letter, displaying his great knowledge of civil law, and maintaining the illegality of the provost's conduct.[64] The casual way in which this is mentioned make it evident that the "*publico mangone Librorum*" was no unusual personage in those days, but belonged to a common and recognized profession.

The vast number of students who, by the foundation of universities, were congregated together, generated

of course a proportionate demand for books, which necessity or luxury prompted them eagerly to purchase: but there were poor as well as rich students educated in these great seminaries of learning, whose pecuniary means debarred them from the acquisition of such costly luxuries; and for this and other cogent reasons the universities deemed it advantageous, and perhaps expedient, to frame a code of laws and regulations to provide alike for the literary wants of all classes and degrees. To effect this they obtained royal sanction to take the trade entirely under their protection, and eventually monopolized a sole legislative power over the *Librarii*.

In the college of Navarre a great quantity of ancient documents are preserved, many of which relate to this curious subject. They were deposited there by M. Jean Aubert in 1623, accompanied by an inventory of them, divided into four parts by the first four letters of the alphabet. In the fourth, under D. 18, there is a chapter entitled "Des Libraires Appretiateurs, Jurez et Enlumineurs," which contains much interesting matter relating to the early history of bookselling.[65] These ancient statutes, collected and printed by the University in the year 1652,[66] made at various times, and ranging between the years 1275 and 1403, give us a clear insight into the matter.

The nature of a bookseller's business in those days required no ordinary capacity, and no shallow store of critical acumen; the purchasing of manuscripts, the work of transcription, the careful revisal, the preparation of materials, the tasteful illuminations, and the process of binding, were each employments requiring some talent and discrimination, and we are

not surprised, therefore, that the avocation of a dealer and fabricator of these treasures should be highly regarded, and dignified into a profession, whose followers were invested with all the privileges, freedoms and exemptions, which the masters and students of the university enjoyed.[67] But it required these conciliations to render the restrictive and somewhat severe measures, which she imposed on the bookselling trade, to be received with any degree of favor or submission. For whilst the University of Paris, by whom these statutes were framed, encouraged and elevated the profession of the librarii, she required, on the other hand, a guarantee of their wealth and mental capacity, to maintain and to appreciate these important concessions; the bookseller was expected indeed to be well versed in all branches of science, and to be thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of those subjects and works of which he undertook to produce transcripts.[68] She moreover required of him testimonials to his good character, and efficient security, ratified by a solemn oath of allegiance,[69] and a promise to observe and submit to all the present and future laws and regulations of the university. In some cases, it appears that she restricted the number of librarii, though this fell into disuse as the wants of the students increased. Twenty-four seems to have been the original number, [70] which is sufficiently great to lead to the conclusion that bookselling was a flourishing trade in those old days. By the statutes of the university, the bookseller was not allowed to expose his transcripts for sale, without first submitting them to the inspection of certain officers appointed by the university, and if an error was discovered, the copies were ordered to be burnt or a fine levied on them,

proportionate to their inaccuracy. Harsh and stringent as this may appear at first sight, we shall modify our opinion, on recollecting that the student was in a great degree dependent upon the care of the transcribers for the fidelity of his copies, which rendered a rule of this nature almost indispensable; nor should we forget the great service it bestowed in maintaining the primitive accuracy of ancient writers, and in transmitting them to us through those ages in their original purity.[71]

In these times of free trade and unrestrained commercial policy, we shall regard less favorably a regulation which they enforced at Paris, depriving the bookseller of the power of fixing a price upon his own goods. Four booksellers were appointed and sworn in to superintend this department, and when a new transcript was finished, it was brought by the bookseller, and they discussed its merits and fixed its value, which formed the amount the bookseller was compelled to ask for it; if he demanded of his customer a larger sum, it was deemed a fraudulent imposition, and punishable as such. Moreover, as an advantage to the students, the bookseller was expected to make a considerable reduction in his profits in supplying them with books; by one of the laws of the university, his profit on each volume was confined to four deniers to student, and six deniers to a common purchaser. The librarii were still further restricted in the economy of their trade, by a rule which forbade any one of them to dispose of his entire stock of books without the consent of the university; but this, I suspect, implied the disposal of the stock and trade together, and was intended to intimate that the introduction of the purchaser would not be allowed, without the cognizance and sanction of the university.[72] Nor was the bookseller

able to purchase books without her consent, lest they should be of an immoral or heretical tendency; and they were absolutely forbidden to buy any of the students, without the permission of the rector.

But restricted as they thus were, the book merchants nevertheless grew opulent, and transacted an important and extensive trade; sometimes they purchased parts and sometimes they had whole libraries to sell.[73] Their dealings were conducted with unusual care, and when a volume of peculiar rarity or interest was to be sold, a deed of conveyance was drawn up with legal precision, in the presence of authorized witnesses.

In those days of high prices and book scarcity, the poor student was sorely impeded in his progress; to provide against these disadvantages, they framed a law in 1342, at Paris, compelling all public booksellers to keep books to lend out on hire. The reader will be surprised at the idea of a circulating library in the middle ages! but there can be no doubt of the fact, they were established at Paris, Toulouse, Vienna, and Bologne. These public librarians, too, were obliged to write out regular catalogues of their books and hang them up in their shops, with the prices affixed, so that the student might know beforehand what he had to pay for reading them. I am tempted to give a few extracts from these lists:

- St. Gregory's Commentaries upon Job, for reading 100 pages, 8 sous.
- St. Gregory's Book of Homilies, 28 pages for 12 deniers.
- Isidore's De Summa bona, 24 pages, 12 deniers.
- Anselm's De Veritate de Libertate Arbitrii, 40

pages, 2 sous.
- Peter Lombard's Book of Sentences, 3 sous.
- Scholastic History, 3 sous.
- Augustine's Confessions, 21 pages, 4 deniers.
- Gloss on Matthew, by brother Thomas Aquinas, 57 pages, 3 sous.
- Bible Concordance, 9 sous.
- Bible, 10 sous.[74]

This rate of charge was also fixed by the university, and the students borrowing these books were privileged to transcribe them if they chose; if any of them proved imperfect or faulty, they were denounced by the university, and a fine imposed upon the bookseller who had lent out the volume.

This potent influence exercised by the universities over booksellers became, in time, much abused, and in addition to these commercial restraints, they assumed a still less warrantable power over the original productions of authors; and became virtually the public censors of books, and had the power of burning or prohibiting any work of questionable orthodoxy. In the time of Henry the Second, a book was published by being read over for two or three successive days, before one of the universities, and if they approved of its doctrines and bestowed upon it their approbation, it was allowed to be copied extensively for sale.

Stringent as the university rules were, as regards the bookselling trade, they were, nevertheless, sometimes disregarded or infringed; some ventured to take more for a book than the sum allowed, and, by prevarication and secret contracts, eluded the vigilance of the laws.[75] Some were still bolder, and openly practised the art of a scribe and the

profession of a bookseller, without knowledge or sanction of the university. This gave rise to much jealousy, and in the University of Oxford, in the year 1373, they made a decree forbidding any person exposing books for sale without her licence.[76]

Now, considering all these usages of early bookselling, their numbers, their opulence, and above all, the circulating libraries which the librarii established, can we still retain the opinion that books were so inaccessible in those ante-printing days, when we know that for a few sous the booklover could obtain good and authenticated copies to peruse, or transcribe? It may be advanced that these facts solely relate to universities, and were intended merely to insure a supply of the necessary books in constant requisition by the students, but such was not the case; the librarii were essentially public *Librorum Venditores*, and were glad to dispose of their goods to any who could pay for them. Indeed, the early bibliomaniacs usually flocked to these book marts to rummage over the stalls, and to collect their choice volumes. Richard de Bury obtained many in this way, both at Paris and at Rome.

Of the exact pecuniary value of books during the middle ages, we have no means of judging. The few instances that have accidentally been recorded are totally inadequate to enable us to form an opinion. The extravagant estimate given by some as to the value of books in those days is merely conjectural, as it necessarily must be, when we remember that the price was guided by the accuracy of the transcription, the splendor of the binding, which was often gorgeous to excess, and by the beauty and richness of the illuminations.[77] Many of the manuscripts of the middle ages are magnificent in

the extreme. Sometimes they inscribed the gospels and the venerated writings of the fathers with liquid gold, on parchment of the richest purple,[78] and adorned its brilliant pages with illuminations of exquisite workmanship.

The first specimens we have of an attempt to embellish manuscripts are Egyptian. It was a common practice among them at first to color the initial letter of each chapter or division of their work, and afterwards to introduce objects of various kinds into the body of the manuscript.

The splendor of the ancient calligraphical productions of Greece,[79] and the still later ones of Rome, bear repeated testimony that the practice of this art had spread during the sixth century, if not earlier, to these powerful empires. England was not tardy in embracing this elegant art. We have many relics of remote antiquity and exquisite workmanship existing now, which prove the talent and assiduity of our early Saxon forefathers.

In Ireland the illuminating art was profusely practised at a period as early as the commencement of the seventh century, and in the eighth we find it holding forth eminent claims to our respect by the beauty of their workmanship, and the chastity of their designs. Those well versed in the study of these ancient manuscripts have been enabled, by extensive but minute observation, to point out their different characteristics in various ages, and even to decide upon the school in which a particular manuscript was produced.

These illuminations, which render the early manuscripts of the monkish ages so attractive,

generally exemplify the rude ideas and tastes of the time. In perspective they are wofully deficient, and manifest but little idea of the picturesque or sublime; but here and there we find quite a gem of art, and, it must be owned, we are seldom tired by monotony of coloring, or paucity of invention. A study of these parchment illustrations afford considerable instruction. Not only do they indicate the state of the pictorial art in the middle ages, but also give us a comprehensive insight into the scriptural ideas entertained in those times; and the bible student may learn much from pondering on these glittering pages; to the historical student, and to the lover of antiquities, they offer a verdant field of research, and he may obtain in this way many a glimpse of the manners and customs of those old times which the pages of the monkish chroniclers have failed to record.

But all this prodigal decoration greatly enhanced the price of books, and enabled them to produce a sum, which now to us sounds enormously extravagant. Moreover, it is supposed that the scarcity of parchment limited the number of books materially, and prevented their increase to any extent; but I am prone to doubt this assertion, for my own observations do not help to prove it. Mr. Hallam says, that in consequence of this, "an unfortunate practice gained ground of erasing a manuscript in order to substitute another on the same skin. This occasioned, probably, the loss of many ancient authors who have made way for the legends of saints, or other ecclesiastical rubbish."[80] But we may reasonably question this opinion, when we consider the value of books in the middle ages, and with what esteem the monks regarded, in spite of all their paganism, those "heathen dogs" of the ancient

world. A doubt has often forced itself upon my mind when turning over the "crackling leaves" of many ancient MSS., whether the peculiarity mentioned by Montfaucon, and described as parchment from which former writing had been erased, may not be owing, in many cases, to its mode of preparation. It is true, a great proportion of the membrane on which the writings of the middle ages are inscribed, appear rough and uneven, but I could not detect, through many manuscripts of a hundred folios—all of which evinced this roughness—the unobliterated remains of a single letter. And when I have met with instances, they appear to have been short writings—perhaps epistles; for the monks were great correspondents, and, I suspect, kept economy in view, and often carried on an epistolary intercourse, for a considerable time, with a very limited amount of parchment, by erasing the letter to make room for the answer. This, probably, was usual where the matter of their correspondence was of no especial importance; so that, what our modern critics, being emboldened by these faint traces of former writing, have declared to possess the classic appearance of hoary antiquity, may be nothing more than a complimentary note, or the worthless accounts of some monastic expenditure. But, careful as they were, what would these monks have thought of "paper-sparing Pope," who wrote his Iliad on small pieces of refuse paper? One of the finest passages in that translation, which describes the parting of Hector and Andromache, is written on part of a letter which Addison had franked, and is now preserved in the British Museum. Surely he could afford, these old monks would have said, to expend some few shillings for paper, on which to inscribe that for which he was to receive his thousand pounds.

But far from the monastic manuscripts displaying a scantiness of parchment, we almost invariably find an abundant margin, and a space between each line almost amounting to prodigality; and to say that the "vellum was considered more precious than the genius of the author,"[81] is absurd, when we know that, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a dozen skins of parchment could be bought for sixpence; whilst that quantity written upon, if the subject possessed any interest at all, would fetch considerably more, there always being a demand and ready sale for books.[82] The supposition, therefore, that the monastic scribes erased *classical* manuscripts for the sake of the material, seems altogether improbable, and certainly destitute of proof. It is true, many of the classics, as we have them now, are but mere fragments of the original work. For this, however, we have not to blame the monks, but barbarous invaders, ravaging flames, and the petty animosities of civil and religious warfare for the loss of many valuable works of the classics. By these means, one hundred and five books of Livy have been lost to us, probably forever. For the thirty which have been preserved, our thanks are certainly due to the monks. It was from their unpretending and long-forgotten libraries that many such treasures were brought forth at the revival of learning, in the fifteenth century, to receive the admiration of the curious, and the study of the erudite scholar. In this way Poggio Bracciolini discovered many inestimable manuscripts. Leonardo Aretino writes in rapturous terms on Poggio's discovery of a perfect copy of Quintillian. "What a precious acquisition!" he exclaims, "what unthought of pleasure to behold Quintillian perfect and entire!"[83] In the same letter we learn that Poggio had discovered Asconius and

Flaccus in the monastery of St. Gall, whose inhabitants regarded them without much esteem. In the monastery of Langres, his researches were rewarded by a copy of Cicero's Oration for Cæcina. With the assistance of Bartolomeo di Montepulciano, he discovered Silius Italicus, Lactantius, Vegetius, Nonius Marcellus, Ammianus Marcellus, Lucretius, and Columella, and he found in a monastery at Rome a complete copy of Turtullian.[84] In the fine old monastery of Casino, so renowned for its classical library in former days, he met with Julius Frontinus and Firmicus, and transcribed them with his own hand. At Cologne he obtained a copy of Petronius Arbiter. But to these we may add Calpurnius's Bucolic,[85] Manilius, Lucius Septimus, Coper, Eutychius, and Probus. He had anxious hopes of adding a perfect Livy to the list, which he had been told then existed in a Cistercian Monastery in Hungary, but, unfortunately, he did not prosecute his researches in this instance with his usual energy. The scholar has equally to regret the loss of a perfect Tacitus, which Poggio had expectations of from the hands of a German monk. We may still more deplore this, as there is every probability that the monks actually possessed the precious volume.[86] Nicolas of Treves, a contemporary and friend of Poggio's, and who was infected, though in a slight degree, with the same passionate ardor for collecting ancient manuscripts, discovered, whilst exploring the German monasteries, twelve comedies of Plautus, and a fragment of Aulus Gellius.[87] Had it not been for the timely aid of these great men, many would have been irretrievably lost in the many revolutions and contentions that followed; and, had such been the case, the monks, of course, would have received the odium, and on their heads the spleen of the

disappointed student would have been prodigally showered.

FOOTNOTES:

[40] Martene Thesaurus novus Anecdot. tom. iv. col. 1462.

[41] See Du Cange in Voc., vol. vi. p. 264.

[42] Anglia Sacra, ii. 635. Fosbrooke Brit. Monach., p. 15.

[43] Martene Thes. Nov. Anec. tom. iv. col. 1462. Stat. Ord. Cistere, anni 1278, they were allowed for "*Studendum vel recreandum*."

[44] Hildesh. episc apud Leibuit., tom. i. Script. Brunsvic, p. 444. I am indebted to Du Cange for this reference.

[45] King's Munimenta Antiqua. Stevenson's Suppl. to Bentham, p. 64.

[46] Matt Paris, p. 51.

[47] Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry, p. cxiv. Regest. Nig. St. Edmund. Abbat.

[48] Stevenson's Sup. to Bentham's Church of Norwich, 4to. 1817, p. 51.

[49] Martene de Ant. Eccl. Ritib., cap. xxi. tom. iii. p. 263.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] Alcuini Opera, tom. ii. vol. i. p. 211. Carmin xvii.

[52] Preface to Ælfric's Homilies MS. Lansdowne, No. 373, vol. iv. in the British Museum.

[53] Const. Can. Reg. ap. Martene, tom. iii. p. 263.

[54] MS. Harl. 6395, anecdote 348.—I am indebted to D'Israeli for the reference, but not for the extract.

[55] The monks were strictly enjoined by the monastic rules to study the Bible unceasingly. The Statutes of the Dominican order are particularly impressive on this point, and enforce a constant reading and critical study of the sacred volume, so as to fortify themselves for disputation; they were to peruse it continually, and apply to it before all other reading *semper ante aliam lectionem*. *Martene Thesan. Nov. Anecdot.*, tom. iv. col. 1932. See also cols. 1789, 1836, 1912, 1917, 1934.

[56] About the year 1225 Roger de Insula, Dean of York, gave several copies of the bible to the University of Oxford, and ordered that those who borrowed them for perusal should deposit property of equal value as a security for their safe return.—*Wood's Hist. Antiq. Oxon.* ii. 48.

[57] Muratori Dissert. Quadragesima tertia, vol. iii. column 849.

[58] Astle's Origin of Writing, p. 193.—See also Montfaucon Palæographia Græca, lib. iv. p. 263 et 319.

[59] In the year 1300 the pay of a common scribe was about one half-penny a day, see Stevenson's Supple. to Bentham's Hist. of the Church of Ely. p. 51.

[60] In some orders the monks were not allowed to sell their books without the express permission of their superiors. According to a statute of the year 1264 the Dominicans were strictly prohibited from selling their books or the rules of their order.—*Martene Thesaur. Nov. Anecdot.* tom. iv. col. 1741, et col. 1918.

[61] Vita Abbat. Wear. Ed. Ware, p. 26. His fine copy of the Cosmographers he bought at Rome.—*Roma Benedictus emerat.*

[62] Nosti quot Scriptores in Urbibus aut in Agris Italiæ passim habeantur.—Ep. cxxx. See also Ep. xliv. where he speaks of having purchased books in Italy, Germany and Belgium, at considerable cost. It is the most interesting Bibliomanical letter in the whole collection.

[63] Cottonian MS. in the Brit. Mus.—*Claudius*, E. iv. fo. 105, b.

[64] Epist. lxxi. p. 124, Edit. 4to. His words are—"Cum Dominus Rex Anglorum me nuper ad Dominum Regum Francorum nuntium distinasset, libri Legum venales Parisius oblati sunt mihi ab illo B. publico mangone librorum: qui cum ad opus cujusdam mei nepotis idoner viderentur conveni cum eo de pretio et eos apud venditorem dismittens, ei pretium numeravi; superveniente vero C. Sexburgensi Præposito sicut audini, plus oblulit et licitatione vincens libros de domo venditories per violentiam absportauit."

[65] Chevillier, Origines de l'Imprimerie de Paris, 4to. 1694, p. 301.

[66] "Actes concernant le pouvoir et la direction de l'Université de Paris sur les Ecrivains de Livres et les Imprimeurs qui leur ont succédé comme aussi sur les Libraires Relieurs et Enlumineurs," 4to. 1652, p. 44. It is very rare, a copy was in Biblioth. Teller, No. 132, p. 428. A statute of 1275 is given by Lambecii Comment. de Augus. Biblioth. Cæsarea Vendobon, vol. ii. pp. 252-267. The booksellers are called "Stationarii or Librarii;" *de Stationariis, sive Librariis ut Stationarus, qui*

vulgo appellantur, etc. See also *Du Cange*, vol. vi. col. 716.

[67] Chevillier, p. 301, to whom I am deeply indebted in this branch of my inquiry.

[68] Hist. Lit. de la France, tom. ix. p. 84. Chevillier, p. 302.

[69] The form of oath is given in full in the statute of 1323, and in that of 1342, Chevillier.

[70] Du Breuil, Le Théâtre des Antiq. de Paris, 4to. 1612, p. 608.

[71] *Ibid.*, Hist. Lit. de la France, tom. ix. p. 84.

[72] Chevillier, p. 303.

[73] Martene Anecd. tom. i. p. 502. Hist. Lit. de la France, ix. p. 142.

[74] Chevillier, 319, who gives a long list, printed from an old register of the University.

[75] Chevillier, 303.

[76] Vet. Stat. Universit. Oxoniæ, D. fol. 75. Archiv. Bodl.

[77] The Church of Norwich paid £22, 9s. for illuminating a Graduale and Consuetudinary in 1374.

[78] Isidore Orig., cap. ii.—Jerome, in his Preface to Job, writes, "*Habeant qui volunt veteres libros, vel in membranes purpurus auro argentique colore purpuros aurum liquiscit in literis.*" Eddius Stephanus in his Life of St. Wilfrid, cap xvi., speaks of "Quatuor Evangeliæ de auro purissimo in membranis de purpuratis coloratis pro animæ suæ remidis scribere jusset." Du Cange, vol. iv. p. 654. See also

Mabillon Act. Sanct., tom. v. p. 110, who is of opinion that these purple MSS. were only designed for princes; see Nouveau Traité de Diplomatique, and Montfaucon Palæog. Græc., pp. 45, 218, 226, for more on this subject.

[79] See a Fragment in the Brit. Mus. engraved in Shaw's Illuminated Ornaments, plate 1.

[80] Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 437. Mr. Maitland, in his "Dark Ages," enters into a consideration of this matter with much critical learning and ingenuity.

[81] D'Israeli Amenities of Lit., vol. i. p. 358.

[82] The Precentor's accounts of the Church of Norwich contain the following items:—1300, 5 *dozen parchment*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, 40 lbs. of ink, 4*s.* 4*d.*, 1 gallon of vini decrili, 3*s.*, 4 lbs. of corporase, 4 lbs. of galls, 2 lbs. of gum arab, 3*s.* 4*d.*, to make ink. I dismiss these facts with the simple question they naturally excite: that if parchment was so *very scarce*, what on earth did the monk want with all this ink?

[83] Leonardi Aretini Epist. 1. iv. ep. v.

[84] Mehi Præfatio ad vit Ambrosii Traversarii, p. xxxix.

[85] Mehi Præf., pp. xlviii.—xlix.

[86] A MS. containing five books of Tacitus which had been deemed lost was found in Germany during the pontificate of Leo X., and deposited in the Laurentian library at Florence. —*Mehi Præf.* p. xlvii. See Shepard's Life of Poggio, p. 104, to whom I am much indebted for these curious facts.

[87] Shepard's Life of Poggio, p. 101.

CHAPTER IV

Canterbury Monastery.—Theodore of Tarsus.—Tatwine.—Nothelm.—St. Dunstan.—Ælfric.—Lanfranc.—Anselm.—St. Augustine's books.—Henry de Estria and his Catalogue.—Chiclely.—Sellinge.—Rochester.—Gundulph, a Bible Student.—Radulphus.—Ascelin of Dover.—Glanvill, etc.

IN the foregoing chapters I have endeavored to give the reader an insight into the means by which the monks multiplied their books, the opportunities they had of obtaining them, the rules of their libraries and scriptoria, and the duties of a monkish librarian. I now proceed to notice some of the English monastic libraries of the middle ages, and by early records and old manuscripts inquire into their extent, and revel for a time among the bibliomaniacs of the cloisters. On the spot where Christianity—more than twelve hundred years ago—first obtained a permanent footing in Britain, stands the proud metropolitan cathedral of Canterbury—a venerable and lasting monument of ancient piety and monkish zeal. St. Augustine, who brought over the glad tidings of the

Christian faith in the year 596, founded that noble structure on the remains of a church which Roman Christians in remote times had built there. To write the literary history of its old monastery would spread over more pages than this volume contains, so many learned and bookish abbots are mentioned in its monkish annals. Such, however, is beyond the scope of my present design, and I have only to turn over those ancient chronicles to find how the love of books flourished in monkish days; so that, whilst I may here and there pass unnoticed some ingenious author, or only casually remark upon his talents, all that relate to libraries or book-collecting, to bibliophiles or scribes, I shall carefully record; and, I think, from the notes now lying before me, and which I am about to arrange in something like order, the reader will form a very different idea of monkish libraries than he previously entertained.

The name that first attracts our attention in the early history of Canterbury Church is that of Theodore of Tarsus, the father of Anglo-Saxon literature, and certainly the first who introduced bibliomania into this island; for when he came on his mission from Rome in the year 668 he brought with him an extensive library, containing many Greek and Latin authors, in a knowledge of which he was thoroughly initiated. Bede tells us that he was well skilled in metrical art, astronomy, arithmetic, church music, and the Greek and Latin languages.[88] At his death[89] the library of Christ Church Monastery was enriched by his valuable books, and in the time of old Lambarde some of them still remained. He says, in his quaint way, "The Reverend Father Mathew, nowe Archbishop of Canterburie, whose care for the

conservation of learned monuments can never be sufficiently commended, shewed me, not long since, the Psalter of David, and sundrie homilies in Greek; Homer also and some other Greeke authors beautifully wrytten on thicke paper, with the name of this Theodore prefixed in the fronte, to whose librarie he reasonably thought, being thereto led by shew of great antiquitie that they sometimes belonged."[90]

Tatwine was a great book lover, if not a bibliomaniac. "He was renowned for religious wisdom, and notably learned in Sacred Writ."[91] If he wrote the many pieces attributed to him, his pen must have been prolific and his reading curious and diversified. He is said to have composed on profane and sacred subjects, but his works were unfortunately destroyed by the Danish invaders, and a book of poems and one of enigmas are all that have escaped their ravages. The latter work, preserved in our National Library, contains many curious hints, illustrative of the manners of those remote days.[92]

Nothelm, or the Bold Helm, succeeded this interesting author; he was a learned and pious priest of London. The bibliomaniac will somewhat envy the avocation of this worthy monk whilst searching over the rich treasures of the Roman archives, from whence he gleaned much valuable information to aid Bede in compiling his history of the English Church.[93] Not only was he an industrious scribe but also a talented author, if we are to believe Pits, who ascribes to him several works, with a Life of St. Augustine.[94]

It is well known that St. Dunstan was an ingenious scribe, and so passionately fond of books, that we

may unhesitatingly proclaim him a bibliomaniac. He was a native of Wessex, and resided with his father near Glastonbury Abbey, which holy spot many a legendary tale rendered dear to his youthful heart. He entered the Abbey, and devoted his whole time to reading the wondrous lives and miracles of ascetic men till his mind became excited to a state of insanity by the many marvels and prodigies which they unfolded; so that he acquired among the simple monks the reputation of one holding constant and familiar intercourse with the beings of another world. On his presentation to the king, which was effected by the influence of his uncle Athelm, Archbishop of Canterbury, he soon became a great favorite, but excited so much jealousy there, that evil reports were industriously spread respecting him. He was accused of practising magical arts and intriguing with the devil. This induced him to retire again into the seclusion of a monastic cell, which he constructed so low that he could scarcely stand upright in it. It was large enough, however, to hold his forge and other apparatus, for he was a proficient worker in metals, and made ornaments, and bells for his church. He was very fond of music, and played with exquisite skill upon the harp.[95] But what is more to our purpose, his biographer tells us that he was remarkably skilful in writing and illuminating, and transcribed many books, adorning them with beautiful paintings, whilst in this little cell.[96] One of them is preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. On the front is a painting of St. Dunstan kneeling before our Saviour, and at the top is written "*Pictura et Scriptura hujus pagine subtas visi est de propria manu sei Dunstani*."[97] But in the midst of these ingenious pursuits he did not forget to devote many hours to the study of the Holy Scriptures, as

also to the diligent transcription and correction of copies of them,[98] and thus arming himself with the sacred word, he was enabled to withstand the numerous temptations which surrounded him. Sometimes the devil appeared as a man, and at other times he was still more severely tempted by the visitations of a beautiful woman, who strove by the most alluring blandishments to draw that holy man from the paths of Christian rectitude. In the tenth century such eminent virtues could not pass unrewarded, and he was advanced to the Archbishopric of Canterbury in the year 961, but his after life is that of a saintly politician, and displays nothing that need be mentioned here.

In the year 969,[99] Ælfric, abbot of St. Alban's, was elected archbishop of Canterbury. His identity is involved in considerable doubt by the many contemporaries who bore that name, some of whom, like him, were celebrated for their talent and erudition; but, leaving the solution of this difficulty to the antiquarian, we are justified in saying that he was of noble family, and received his education under Ethelwold, at Abingdon, about the year 960. He accompanied his master to Winchester, and Elphegus, bishop of that see, entertained so high an opinion of Ælfric's learning and capacity, that he sent him to superintend the recently founded monastery of Cerne, in Devonshire. He there spent all his hours, unoccupied by the duties of his abbatical office, in the transcription of books and the nobler avocations of an author. He composed a Latin Grammar, a work which has won for him the title of "*The Grammarian*," and he greatly helped to maintain the purity of the Christian church by composing a large collection of homilies, which became exceedingly popular during the succeeding century, and are yet in existence. The

preface to these homilies contain several very curious passages illustrative of the mode of publication resorted to by the monkish authors, and on that account I am tempted to make the following extracts:

"I, Ælfric, the scholar of Ethelwold, to the courteous and venerable Bishop Sigeric, in the Lord.

"Although it may appear to be an attempt of some rashness and presumption, yet have I ventured to translate this book out of the Latin writers, especially those of the 'Holy Scriptures,' into our common language; for the edification of the ignorant, who only understand this language when it is either read or heard. Wherefore I have not used obscure or unintelligible words, but given the plain English. By which means the hearts, both of the readers and of the hearers, may be reached more easily; because they are incapable of being otherwise instructed, than in their native tongue. Indeed, in our translation, we have not ever been so studious to render word for word, as to give the true sense and meaning of our authors. Nevertheless, we have used all diligent caution against deceitful errors, that we may not be found seduced by any heresy, nor blinded by any deceit. For we have followed these authors in this translation, namely, St. Austin of Hippo, St. Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus, and sometimes Haymo, whose authority is admitted to be of great weight with all the faithful. Nor have we only expounded the treatise of the gospels;... but have also described the passions and lives of the saints, for the use of the unlearned of this nation. We have placed forty discourses in this volume, believing this will be sufficient for one year, if they

be recited entirely to the faithful, by the ministers of the Lord. But the other book which we have now taken in hand to compose will contain those passions or treatises which are omitted in this volume." ... "Now, if any one find fault with our translation, that we have not always given word for word, or that this translation is not so full as the treatise of the authors themselves, or that in handling of the gospels we have run them over in a method not exactly conformable to the order appointed in the church, let him compose a book of his own; by an interpretation of deeper learning, as shall best agree with his understanding, this only I beseech him, that he may not pervert this version of mine, which I hope, by the grace of God, without any boasting, I have, according to the best of my skill, performed with all diligence. Now, I most earnestly entreat your goodness, my most gentle father Sigeric, that you will vouchsafe to correct, by your care, whatever blemishes of malignant heresy, or of dark deceit, you shall meet with in my translation, and then permit this little book to be ascribed to your authority, and not to the meanness of a person of my unworthy character. Farewell in the Almighty God continually. Amen."[100]

I have before alluded to the care observed by the scribes in copying their manuscripts, and the moderns may deem themselves fortunate that they did so; for although many interpolations, or emendations, as they called them, occur in monkish transcripts, on the whole, their integrity, in this respect, forms a redeeming quality in connexion with their learning. In another preface, affixed to the second collection of his homilies, Ælfric thus explains his design in translating them:

"Ælfric, a monk and priest, although a man of less abilities than are requisite for one in such orders, was sent, in the days of King Æthelred, from Alphege, the bishop and successor of Æthelwold, to a monastery which is called Cernel, at the desire of Æthelmer, the Thane, whose noble birth and goodness is everywhere known. Then ran it in my mind, I trust, through the grace of God, that I ought to translate this book out of the Latin tongue into the English language not upon presumption of great learning, but because I saw and heard much error in many English books, which ignorant men, through their simplicity, esteemed great wisdom, and because it grieved me that they neither knew, nor had the gospel learning in their writing, except from those men that understood Latin, and those books which are to be had of King Alfred's, which he skilfully translated from Latin into English."[101]

From these extracts we may gain some idea of the state of learning in those days, and they would seem, in some measure, to justify the opinion, that the laity paid but little attention to such matters, and I more anxiously present the reader with these scraps, because they depict the state of literature in those times far better than a volume of conjecture could do. It is not consistent with my design to enter into an analysis of these homilies. Let the reader, however, draw some idea of their nature from the one written for Easter Sunday, which has been deemed sufficient proof that the Saxon Church ever denied the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation; for he there expressly states, in terms so plain that all the sophistry of the Roman Catholic writers cannot pervert its obvious meaning, that the bread and wine is only typical of the body and blood of our Saviour.

To one who has spent much time in reading the lives and writings of the monkish theologians, how refreshing is such a character as that of Ælfric's. Often, indeed, will the student close the volumes of those old monastic writers with a sad, depressed, and almost broken heart; so often will he find men who seem capable of better things, who here and there breathe forth all the warm aspirations of a devout and Christian heart, bowed down and grovelling in the dust, as it were, to prove their blind submission to the Pope, thinking, poor fellows!—for from my very heart I pity them—that by so doing they were preaching that humility so acceptable to the Lord.

Cheering then, to the heart it is to find this monotony broken by such an instance, and although we find Ælfric occasionally diverging into the paths of papistical error, he spreads a ray of light over the gloom of those Saxon days, and offers pleasing evidence that Christ never forsook his church; that even amidst the peril and darkness of those monkish ages there were some who mourned, though it might have been in a monastery, submissive to a Roman Pontiff, the depravity and corruption with which the heart of man had marred it.

To still better maintain the discipline of the church, he wrote a set of canons, which he addressed to Wulfin, or Wulfsine, bishop of Sherbourne. With many of the doctrines advocated therein, the protestant will not agree; but the bibliophile will admit that he gave an indication of his love of books by the 21st Canon, which directs that, "Before a priest can be ordained, he must be armed with the sacred books, for the spiritual battle, namely, a Psalter, Book of Epistles, Book of Gospels, the Missal Book, Books of Hymns, the Manual, or Euchiridion,

the Gerim, the Passional, the Pænitential, and the Lectionary, or Reading Book; these the diligent priest requires, and let him be careful that they are all accurately written, and free from faults."[102]

About the same time, Ælfric wrote a treatise on the Old and New Testaments, and in it we find an account of his labors in Biblical Literature. He did more in laying open the holy mysteries of the gospel to the perusal of the laity, by translating them into the Saxon tongue, than any other before him. He gave them, in a vernacular version, the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Esther, Job, Judith, two Books of Maccabees, and a portion of the Book of Kings, and it is for these labors, above all others, that the bible student will venerate his name, but he will look, perhaps, anxiously, hopefully, to these early attempts at Bible propagation, and expect to observe the ecclesiastical orders, at least, shake off a little of their absurd dependence on secondary sources for biblical instruction. But, no; they still sadly clung to traditional interpretation; they read the Word of God mystified by the fathers, good men, many of them, devout and holy saints, but why approach God through man, when we have His own prescription, in sweet encouraging words, to come, however humble or lowly we may be, to His throne, and ask with our own lips for those blessings so needful for the soul. Ælfric, in a letter addressed to Sigwerd, prefixed to his Treatise on the Old and New Testament, thus speaks of his biblical labors:

"Abbot Elfricke greeteth friendly, Sigwerd at last Heolon. True it is I tell thee that very wise is he who speaketh by his doings; and well proceedeth he doth with God and the world who furnisheth himselfe with good works. And very plaine it is in holy

scripture, that holy men employed in well doing were in this world held in good reputation, and as saints now enjoy the kingdom of heaven, and the remembrance of them continueth for ever, because of their consent with God and relying on him, carelesse men who lead their life in all idleness and so end it, the memory of them is forgotten in holy writ, saving that the Old Testament records their ill deeds and how they were therefore comdemned. Thou hast oft entreated me for English Scripture .... and when I was with thee great mone thou madest that thou couldst get none of my writings. Now will I that thou have at least this little, since knowledge is so acceptable to thee, and thou wilt have it rather than be altogether without my books..... God bestoweth sevenfold grace on mankind, (whereof I have already written in another English Treatise,) as the prophet Isaiah hath recorded in the book of his prophesie." In speaking of the remaining books of the Pentateuch, he does so in a cursory manner, and excuses himself because he had "written thereof more at large." "The book which Moses wrote, called the book of Joshua, sheweth how he went with the people of Israel unto Abraham's country, and how he won it, and how the sun stood still while he got the victory, and how he divided the land; this book also I turned into English for prince Ethelverd, wherein a man may behold the great wonders of God really fulfilled." ..... "After him known it is that there were in the land certaine judges over Israel, who guided the people as it is written in the book of Judges ..... of this whoso hath desire to hear further, may read it in that English book which I translated concerning the same." ..... "Of the book of Kings, I have translated also some part into English," "the book of Esther, I briefly after my manner translated into English," and "The Widow

Judith who overcame Holophernes, the Syrian General, hath her book also, among these, concerning her own victory and *Englished according to my skill for your example*, that ye men may also defend your country by force of arms, against the invasion of a foreign host." "Two books of Machabeus, to the glory of God, I have turned also into English, and so read them, you may if you please, for your instruction." And at the end we find him again admonishing the scribes to use the pen with faithfulness. "Whosoever," says he, "shall write out this book, let him write it according to the copy, and for God's love correct it, that it be not faulty, less he thereby be discredited, and I shent."[103]

This learned prelate died on the 16th of November, 1006, after a life spent thus in the service of Christ and the cause of learning; by his will he bequeathed to the Abbey of St. Alban's, besides some landed possessions, his little library of books;[104] he was honorably buried at Abingdon, but during the reign of Canute, his bones were removed to Canterbury.

Passing on a few years, we come to that period when a new light shone upon the lethargy of the Saxons; the learning and erudition which had been fostering in the snug monasteries of Normandy, hitherto silent —buried as it were—but yet fast growing to maturity, accompanied the sword of the Norman duke, and added to the glory of the conquering hero, by their splendid intellectual endowments. All this emulated and roused the Saxons from their slumber; and, rubbing their laziness away, they again grasped the pen with the full nerve and energy of their nature; a reaction ensued, literature was respected, learning prospered, and copious work flowed in upon

the scribes; the crackling of parchment, and the din of controversy bespoke the presence of this revival in the cloisters of the English monasteries; books, the weapons spiritual of the monks, libraries, the magazines of the church militant were preserved, amassed, and at last deemed indispensable.[105] Such was the effect on our national literature of that gushing in of the Norman conquerors, so deeply imbued with learning, so polished, and withal so armed with classical and patristic lore were they.

Foremost in the rank we find the learned Lanfranc, that patron of literature, that indefatigable scribe and anxious book collector, who was endowed with an erudition far more deep and comprehensive than any other of his day. He was born at Pavia, in 1005, and received there the first elements of his education; [106] he afterwards went to Bologna, and from thence to Avranches, where he undertook the education of many celebrated scholars of that century, and instructed them in sacred and secular learning, *in sacris et secularibus erudivi literis*.[107] Whilst proceeding on a journey to Rome he was attacked by some robbers, who maltreated and left him almost dead; in this condition he was found by some peasants who conveyed him to the monastery of Bec; the monks with their usual hospitable charity tended and so assiduously nourished him in his sickness, that on his recovery he became one of their fraternity. A few years after, he was appointed prior and founded a school there, which did immense service to literature and science; he also collected a great library which was renowned and esteemed in his day,[108] and he increased their value by a critical revisal of their text. He was well aware that in works so voluminous as those of the fathers, the scribes through so many generations could not be

expected to observe an unanimous infallibility; but knowing too that even the most essential doctrines of the holy and catholic church were founded on patristical authority, he was deeply impressed with the necessity of keeping their writings in all their primitive integrity; an end so desirable, well repaid the tediousness of the undertaking, and he cheerfully spent much time in collecting and comparing codices, in studying their various readings or erasing the spurious interpolations, engendered by the carelessness or the pious frauds of monkish scribes. [109] He lavished his care in a similar manner on the Bible: considering the far distant period from which that holy volume has descended to us, it is astounding that the vicissitudes, the perils, the darkness of near eighteen hundred years, have failed to mar the divinity of that sacred book; not all the blunders of nodding scribes could do it, not all the monkish interpolations, or the cunning of sectarian pens could do it, for in all times the faithful church of Christ watched over it with a jealous care, supplied each erasure and expelled each false addition. Lanfranc was one of the most vigilant of these Scripture guards, and his own industry blest his church with the bible text, purified from the gross handmarks of human meddling. I learn, from the Benedictines of St. Maur, that there is still preserved in the Abbey of St. Martin de Sécz, the first ten conferences of Cassian corrected by the efficient hand of this great critical student, at the end of the manuscript these words are written, "*Hucusque ago Lanfrancus correxi*."[110] The works of St. Ambrose, on which he bestowed similar care, are preserved in the library of St. Vincent du Mans.[111]

When he was promoted to the See of Canterbury, he brought with him a copious supply of books, and

spread the influence of his learning over the English monasteries; but with all the cares inseparably connected with the dignity of Primate of England, he still found time to gratify his bookloving propensities, and to continue his critical labors; indeed he worked day and night in the service of the church, *servitio Ecclesiæ*, and in correcting the books which the scribes had written.[112] From the profusion of his library he was enabled to lend many volumes to the monks, so that by making transcripts, they might add to their own stores—thus we know that he lent to Paulen, Abbot of St. Albans, a great number, who kept his scribes hard at work transcribing them, and built a scriptorium for the transaction of these pleasing labors; but more of this hereafter.

Anselm, too, was a renowned and book-loving prelate, and if his pride and haughtiness wrought warm dissensions and ruptures in the church, he often stole away to forget them in the pages of his book. At an early age he acquired this fondness for reading, and whilst engaged as a monkish student, he applied his mind to the perusal of books with wonderful perseverance, and when some favorite volume absorbed his attention, he could scarce leave it night or day.[113] Industry so indefatigable ensured a certain success, and he became eminent for his deep and comprehensive learning; his epistles bear ample testimony to his extensive reading and intimate acquaintance with the authors of antiquity; [114] in one of his letters he praises a monk named Maurice, for his success in study, who was learning *Virgil* and some other old writers, under Arnulph the grammarian.

All day long Anselm was occupied in giving wise

counsel to those that needed it; and a great part of the night *pars maxima noctis* he spent in correcting his darling volumes, and freeing them from the inaccuracies of the scribes.[115] The oil in the lamp burnt low, still that bibliomaniac studiously pursued his favorite avocation. So great was the love of book-collecting engrafted into his mind, that he omitted no opportunity of obtaining them—numerous instances occur in his epistles of his begging the loan of some volume for transcription;[116] in more than one, I think, he asks for portions of the Holy Scriptures which he was always anxious to obtain to compare their various readings, and to enable him with greater confidence to correct his own copies.

In the early part of the twelfth century, the monks of Canterbury transcribed a vast number of valuable manuscripts, in which they were greatly assisted by monk Edwine, who had arrived at considerable proficiency in the calligraphical art, as a volume of his transcribing, in Trinity college, Cambridge, informs us;[117] it is a Latin Psalter, with a Saxon gloss, beautifully illuminated in gold and colors; at the end appears the figure of the monkish scribe, holding the pen in his hand to indicate his avocation, and an inscription extols his ingenuity in the art.[118]

Succeeding archbishops greatly enriched the library at Canterbury. Hubert Walter, who was appointed primate in 1191, gave the proceeds of the church of Halgast to furnish books for the library;[119] and Robert Kildwardly, archbishop in 1272, a man of great learning and wisdom, a remarkable orator and grammarian, wrote a great number of books, and was passionately fond of collecting them.[120]

I learn from Wanley, that there is a large folio

manuscript in the library of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, written about the time of Henry V. by a monk of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, containing the history of Christ Church; this volume proves its author to have been something of a bibliophile, and that is why I mention it, for he gives an account of some books then preserved, which were sent over by Pope Gregory to St. Augustine; these precious volumes consisted of a Bible in two volumes, called "Biblia Gregorian," beautifully written, with some of the leaves tinted with purple and rose-color, and the capital letters rubricated. This interesting and venerable MS. so immediately connected with the first ages of the Christian church of Britain, was in existence in the time of James I., as we learn by a passage in a scarce tract entitled "A Petition Apologetical," addressed by the Catholics to his majesty, where, as a proof that we derive our knowledge of Scripture originally from the church of Rome; they say, "The very original Bible, the self-same *Numero* which St. Gregory sent in with our apostle, St. Augustine, being as yet reserved by God's special providence, as testimony that what Scriptures we have, we had them from Rome."[121]

He next mentions two Psalters, one of which I have seen; it is among the manuscripts in the Cotton collection,[122] and bears full evidence of its great antiquity. This early gem of biblical literature numbers 160 folios; it contains the Roman Psalter, with a Saxon interlinear translation, written on stout vellum, in a clear, bold hand. On opening the volume, we find the first page enriched with a dazzling specimen of monkish skill—it is a painting of our Saviour pointing with his right hand to heaven, and in his left holding the sacred book; the corners are occupied with figures of animals, and the

whole wrought on a glittering ground work, is rendered still more gorgeous by the contrast which the purple robes of Jesus display; on the reverse of this fine illumination there is a beautiful tesselated ornament, interwoven with animals, flowers, and grotesque figures, around which are miniatures of our Saviour, David, and some of the apostles. In a line at the bottom the word CATVSVIR is inscribed. Very much inferior to this in point of art is the illumination, at folio 31, representing David playing his harp, surrounded by a musical coterie; it is probably the workmanship of a more modern, but less skilful scribe of the Saxon school. The smaller ornaments and initial letters throughout the manuscript display great intricacy of design.

The writer next describes two copies of the Gospels, both now in the Bodleian Collection at Oxford. A Passionarium Sanctorum, a book for the altar, on one side of which was the image of our Saviour wrought in gold, and lastly, an exposition of the Epistles and Gospels; the monkish bookworm tells us that these membraneous treasures were the most ancient books in all the churches of England.[123]

A good and liberal monk, named Henry De Estria, who was elected prior in the year 1285, devoted both his time and wealth to the interests of his monastery, and is said to have expended £900 in repairing the choir and chapter-house.[124] He wrote a book beginning, "*Memoriale Henerici Prioris Monasteri Xpi Cantuariæ*,"[125] now preserved in the Cotton collection; it contains the most extensive monastic catalogue I had ever seen, and sufficiently proves how Bibliomania flourished in that noble monastery. It occupies no less than thirty-eight treble-columned folio pages, and contains the titles

of more than three thousand works. To attempt to convey to the reader an idea of this curious and sumptuous library, without transcribing a large proportion of its catalogue, I am afraid will be a futile labor; but as that would occupy too much space, and to many of my readers be, after all, dry and uninteresting, I shall merely give the names of some of the most conspicuous. Years indeed it must have required to have amassed a collection so brilliant and superb in those days of book scarcity. Surprise and wonder almost surpass the admiration we feel at beholding this proud testimonial of monkish industry and early bibliomania. Many a choice scribe, and many an *Amator Librorum* must have devoted his pen and purse to effect so noble an acquisition. Like most of the monastic libraries, it possessed a great proportion of biblical literature—copies of the Bible whole and in parts, commentaries on the same, and numerous glossaries and concordances show how much care the monks bestowed on the sacred writings, and how deeply they were studied in those old days. In patristic learning the library was unusually rich, embracing the most eminent and valuable writings of the Fathers, as may be seen by the following names, of whose works the catalogue enumerates many volumes:

- Augustine.
- Ambroise.
- Anselm.
- Alcuin.
- Aldelm.
- Benedict.
- Bernard.
- Bede.

- Beranger.
- Chrysostom.
- Eusebius.
- Fulgentius.
- Gregory.
- Hillarius.
- Isidore.
- Jerome.
- Lanfranc.
- Origen.

Much as we may respect them for all this, our gratitude will materially increase when we learn how serviceable the monks of Canterbury were in preserving the old dead authors of Greece and Rome. We do not, from the very nature of their lives being so devoted to religion and piety, expect this; and knowing, too, what "heathen dogs" the monks thought these authors of idolatry, combined with our notion, that they, far from being the conservers, were the destroyers, of classic MSS., for the sake, as some tell us, of the parchment on which they were inscribed, we are somewhat staggered in our opinion to find in their library the following brilliant array of the wise men of the ancient world:

- Aristotle,
- Boethius,
- Cicero,
- Cassiodorus,
- Donatus,
- Euclid,
- Galen,
- Justin,
- Josephus,
- Lucan,
- Martial,

- Marcianus,
- Macrobius,
- Orosius,
- Plato,
- Priscian,
- Prosper,
- Prudentius,
- Suetonius,
- Sedulus,
- Seneca,
- Terence,
- Virgil,
- Etc., etc.

Nor were they mere fragments of these authors, but, in many cases, considerable collections; of Aristotle, for instance, they possessed numerous works, with many commentaries upon him. Of Seneca a still more extensive and valuable one; and in the works of the eloquent Tully, they were also equally rich. Of his *Paradoxa, de Senectute, de Amiticia*, etc., and *his Offices*, they had more copies than one, a proof of the respect and esteem with which he was regarded. In miscellaneous literature, and in the productions of the middle age writers, the catalogue teems with an abundant supply, and includes:

- Rabanus Maurus,
- Thomas Aquinas,
- Peter Lombard,
- Athelard,
- William of Malmsbury,
- John of Salisbury,
- Girald Barry,
- Thomas Baldwin,
- Brutus,
- Robert Grosetete,

- Gerlandus,
- Gregory Nazianzen,
- History of England,
- Gesti Alexandri Magni,
- Hystoria Longobardos,
- Hystoriæ Scholasticæ,
- Chronicles *Latine et Anglice*,
- Chronographia Necephori.

But I trust the reader will not rest satisfied with these few samples of the goodly store, but inspect the catalogue for himself. It would occupy, as I said before, too much space to enumerate even a small proportion of its many treasures, which treat of all branches of literature and science, natural history, medicine, ethics, philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, poetry, and music; each shared the studious attention of the monks, and a curious "*Liber de Astronomia*" taught them the rudiments of that sublime science, but which they were too apt to confound with its offspring, astrology, as we may infer, was the case with the monks of Canterbury, for their library contained a "*Liber de Astrolœbus*," and the "Prophesies of Merlin."

Many hints connected with the literary portion of a monastic life may sometimes be found in these catalogues. It was evidently usual at Christ Church Monastery to keep apart a number of books for the private study of the monks in the cloister, which I imagine they were at liberty to use at any time.[126]

A portion of the catalogue of monk Henry is headed "*Lib. de Armariole Claustre*,"[127] under which it is pleasing to observe a Bible, in two volumes, specified as for the use of the infirmary, with devotional books, lives of the fathers, a history of England, the

works of Bede, Isidore, Boethius, Rabanus Maurus, Cassiodorus, and many others of equal celebrity. In another portion of the manuscript, we find a list of their church books, written at the same time;[128] it affords a brilliant proof of the plentitude of the gospels among them; for no less than twenty-five copies are described. We may judge to what height the art of bookbinding had arrived by the account here given of these precious volumes. Some were in a splendid coopertoria of gold and silver, and others exquisitely ornamented with figures of our Saviour and the four Evangelists.[129] But this extravagant costliness rendered them attractive objects to pilfering hands, and somewhat accounts for the lament of the industrious Somner, who says that the library was "shamefully robbed and spoiled of them all."[130]

Our remarks on the monastic library at Canterbury are drawing to a close. Henry Chicley, archbishop in 1413, an excellent man, and a great promoter of learning, rebuilt the library of the church, and furnished it with many a choice tome.[131] His esteem for literature was so great, that he built two colleges at Oxford.[132] William Sellinge, who was a man of erudition, and deeply imbued with the book-loving mania, was elected prior in 1472. He is said to have studied at Bonania, in Italy; and, during his travels, he gathered together "all the ancient authors, both Greek and Latine, he could get," and returned laden with them to his own country. Many of them were of great rarity, and it is said that a Tully *de Republica* was among them. Unfortunately, they were all burnt by a fire in the monastery.[133]

I have said enough, I think, to show that books were eagerly sought after, and deeply appreciated, in

Canterbury cloisters during the middle ages, and when the reader considers that these facts have been preserved from sheer accident, and, therefore, only enable us to obtain a partial glimpse of the actual state of their library, he will be ready to admit that bibliomania existed then, and will feel thankful, too, that it did, for to its influence, surely, we are indebted for the preservation of much that is valuable and instructive in history and general literature.[134]

We can scarcely leave Kent without a word or two respecting the church of the Rochester monks. It was founded by King Ethelbert, who conferred upon it the dignities of an episcopal see, in the year 600; and, dedicating it to St. Andrew, completed the good work by many donations and emoluments. The revenues of the see were always limited, and it is said that its poverty caused it to be treated with kind forbearance by the ecclesiastical commissioners at the period of the Reformation.

I have not been able to meet with any catalogue of its monastic library, and the only hints I can obtain relative to their books are such as may be gathered from the recorded donations of its learned prelates and monks. In the year 1077, Gundulph, a Norman bishop, who is justly celebrated for his architectural talents, rebuilt the cathedral, and considerable remains of this structure are still to be seen in the nave and west front, and display that profuse decoration united with ponderous stability, for which the Norman buildings are so remarkable. This munificent prelate also enriched the church with numerous and costly ornaments; the encouragement he gave to learning calls for some notice here. Trained in one of the most flourishing of the Norman

schools, we are not surprised that in his early youth he was so studious and inquisitive after knowledge as to merit the especial commendation of his biographer.[135] William of Malmsbury, too, highly extols him "for his abundant piety," and tells us that he was not inexperienced in literary avocations; he was polished and courageous in the management of judicial affairs, and a close, devoted student of the divine writings;[136] as a scribe he was industrious and critical, and the great purpose to which he applied his patience and erudition was a careful revisal of the Holy Scriptures. He purged the sacred volume of the inadvertencies of the scribes, and restored the purity of the text; for transcribing after transcribing had caused some errors and diversity of readings to occur, between the English and foreign codices, in spite of all the pious care of the monastic copyists; this was perplexing, an uniformity was essential and he undertook the task;[137] labors so valuable deserve the highest praise, and we bestow it more liberally upon him for this good work than we should have done had he been the compiler of crude homilies or the marvellous legends of saints. The high veneration in which Gundulph held the patristic writings induced him to bestow his attention in a similar manner upon them, he compared copies, studied their various readings and set to work to correct them. The books necessary for these critical researches he obtained from the libraries of his former master, Bishop Lanfranc, St. Anselm, his schoolfellow, and many others who were studying at Bec, but besides this, he corrected many other authors, and by comparing them with ancient manuscripts, restored them to their primitive beauty. Fabricius[138] notices a fine volume, which bore ample testimony to his critical erudition and

dexterity as a scribe. It is described as a large Bible on parchment, written in most beautiful characters, it was proved to be his work by this inscription on its title page, "*Prima pars Bibliæ per bona memoriæ Gundulphum Rossensem Episcopum*." This interesting manuscript, formerly in the library of the monks of Rochester, was regarded as one of their most precious volumes. An idea of the great value of a Bible in those times may be derived from the curious fact that the bishop made a decree directing "excommunication to be pronounced against whosoever should take away or conceal this volume, or who should even dare to conceal the inscription on the front, which indicated the volume to be the property of the church of Rochester." But we must bear in mind that this was no ordinary copy, it was transcribed by Gundulph's own pen, and rendered pure in its text by his critical labors. But the time came when anathemas availed nought, and excommunication was divested of all terror. "Henry the Eighth," the "Defender of the Faith," frowned destruction upon the monks, and in the tumult that ensued, this treasure was carried away, anathema and all. Somehow or other it got to Amsterdam, perhaps sent over in one of those "shippes full," to the bookbinders, and having passed through many hands, at last found its way into the possession of Herman Van de Wal, Burgomaster of Amsterdam; since then it was sold by public auction, but has now I believe been lost sight of.[139] Among the numerous treasures which Gundulph gave to his church, he included a copy of the Gospels, two missals and a book of Epistles.[140] Similar books were given by succeeding prelates; Radolphus, a Norman bishop in 1108, gave the monks several copies of the gospels beautifully adorned.[141] Earnulphus, in the year

1115, was likewise a benefactor in this way; he bestowed upon them, besides many gold and silver utensils for the church, a copy of the gospels, lessons for the principal days, a benedictional, or book of blessings, a missal, handsomely bound, and a capitular.[142] Ascelin, formerly prior of Dover, and made bishop of Rochester, in the year 1142, gave them a Psalter and the Epistles of St. Paul, with a gloss.[143] He was a learned man, and excessively fond of books; a passion which he had acquired no doubt in his monastery of Dover which possessed a library of no mean extent.[144] He wrote a commentary on Isaiah, and gave it to the monastery; Walter, archdeacon of Canterbury, who succeeded Ascelin, gave a copy of the gospels bound in gold, to the church;[145] and Waleran, elected bishop in the year 1182, presented them with a glossed Psalter, the Epistles of Paul, and the Sermons of Peter.[146]

Glanvill, bishop in the year 1184, endeavored to deprive the monks of the land which Gundulph had bestowed upon them; this gave to rise to many quarrels[147] which the monks never forgave; it is said that he died without regret, and was buried without ceremony; yet the curious may still inspect his tomb on the north side of the altar, with his effigies and mitre lying at length upon it.[148] Glanvill probably repented of his conduct, and he strove to banish all animosity by many donations; and among other treasures, he gave the monks the five books of Moses and other volumes.[149]

Osbern of Shepey, who was prior in the year 1189, was a great scribe and wrote many volumes for the library; he finished the Commentary of Ascelin, transcribed a history of Peter, a Breviary for the chapel, a book called *De Claustra animæ*, and wrote

the great Psalter which is chained to the choir and window of St. Peter's altar.[150] Ralph de Ross, and Heymer de Tunebregge,[151] also bestowed gifts of a similar nature upon the monks; but the book anecdotes connected with this monastic fraternity are remarkably few, barren of interest, and present no very exalted idea of their learning.[152]

FOOTNOTES:

[88] Bede, iv. cap. ii.

[89] He died in 690, and was succeeded by Bertwold, Abbot of Reculver, *Saxon Chronicle, Ingram*, p. 57. Bede speaks of Bertwold as "well learned in Scripture and Ecclesiastical Literature."—*Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. viii.

[90] Preambulation of Kent, 4to. 1576, p. 233. Parker's Ant. Brit. p. 80.

[91] He was consecrated on the 10th of June, 731, Bede, v. c. xxiii.

[92] M.S. Reg. 12, c. xxiii. I know of no other copy. Leland says that he saw a copy at Glastonbury.

[93] Bede's Eccl. Hist. Prologue.

[94] Pitseus Angliæ Scrip. 1619, p. 141. Dart's Hist. Canterbury, p. 102.

[95] Cottonian MS. Cleopatra, B. xiii. fo. 70.

[96] W. Malm, de Vita, Dunst. ap. Leland, Script. tom. 1. p. 162. Cotton. MS. Fanstin, B. 13.

[97] Strutt's Saxon. Antiq. vol. 1, p. 105, plate xviii. See also Hicke's Saxon Grammar, p. 104.

[98] MS. Cotton., Cleop. b. xiii. fo. 69. Mabd.

Acta Sancto. vii. 663.

[99] Saxon Chron. by Ingram, 171.

[100] Landsdowne MS. in Brit. Mus. 373, vol. iv.

[101] Landsdowne MS. in Brit. Mus. 373, vol. iv.

[102] Can. 21, p. 577, vol. i.

[103] Lisle's Divers Ancient Monuments in the Saxon Tongue, 4to. Lond. 1638, p. 43.

[104] MS. Cottonian Claudius, b. vi. p. 103; Dart's Hist. of Cant. p. 112.; Dugdale's Monast., vol. i. p. 517.

[105] There was an old saying, and a true one, prevalent in those days, that a monastery without a library was like a castle without an armory, *Clastrum sine armario, quasi castrum sine armamentario*. See letter of Gaufredi of St. Barbary to Peter Mangot, *Martene Thes. Nov. Anecd.*, tom. i. col. 511.

[106] Mabillon, Act. S., tom. ix. p. 659.

[107] Ep. i. ad Papæ Alex.

[108] Vita Lanfr., c. vi. "*Effulsit eo majistro, obedientia coactu, philosophicarum ac divinarum litterarum bibliotheca, etc.*" Opera p. 8. Edit. folio, 1648.

[109] "Et quia scripturæ scriptorum vitio erant ninium corruptæ, omnes tam Veteris, quam Novi Testamenti libros; necnon etiam scriptæ sanctorum patrum secundum orthodoxam fidem studuit corrigere." Vita Lanfr. cap. 15, ap. Opera, p. 15.

[110] Hist. Litt. de la France, vol. vii. p. 117.

[111] *Ibid.* "Il rendit de même service à trois écrits de S. Ambrose l'Hexameron, l'apologie de David et le traité des Sacrements, tels qu'on les voit à la bibliothèque de St. Vincent du Mans."

[112] *Ibid.*

[113] Malmsb. de Gest. Pontif. b. i. p. 216.

[114] See Epist. 16. Lib. i.

[115] Edmer. Vit. Anselm, apud Anselm Opera.—*Edit. Benedict*, 1721, b. i. p. 4.

[116] Epp. 10-20, lib. i. and 24 b. ii.

[117] Codic. fol. first class, a dextr. Sc. Med. 5.

[118] Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry. Dissert, ii.

[119] Dart's Canterb. p. 132. Dugdale's Monast. vol. i. p. 85.

[120] There is, or was, in St. Peter's college, Cambridge, a MS. volume of 21 books, which formerly belonged to this worthy Bibliophile. —*Dart*, p. 137.

[121] Petition Apol. 4to. 1604, p. 17.

[122] Brit. Mus. Vesp. A. i.

[123] Wanley Librorum Vett Septentrionalium fol. Oxon, 1705, p. 172.

[124] Dugdale's Monast. Angl. vol. i. p. 112.

[125] MS. Cot. Galba. E. iv.

[126] See what has been said on this subject in the previous chapter.

[127] MS. Galla, E. iv. fol. 133.

[128] MS. fol. 122.

[129] *Textus Magnus auro coopertus et gemmis ornatus, cum majistate in media, et 4 Evangelistis in 4 Angulis. Ibid.*

[130] Somner Antiq. Cant. 4to. 1640, p. 174, he is speaking of books in general.

[131] Duck Vita Chich. p. 104.

[132] Dugdale, vol. i. p. 86. Dart, p. 158, and Somner Ant. Cant. 174.

[133] Somner, 294 and 295; see also Leland Scriptor. He was well versed in the Greek language, and his monument bears the following line:

"Doctor theologus Selling Græca
atque Latina,
Linqua perdoctus."—See Warton's
Hist. Poet., ii. p. 425.

[134] There is a catalogue written in the sixteenth century, preserved among the Cotton MS., containing the titles of seventy books belonging to Canterbury Library. It is printed in Leland Collect. vol. iv. p. 120, and in Dart's Hist. Cant. Cath.; but they differ slightly from the Cott. MS. Julius, c. vi. 4, fol. 99.

[135] Monachus Roffensis de Vita Gundulphi, 274.

[136] Will. Malms. de Gest. Pont. Ang. ap Rerum. Ang. Script, 133.

[137] Histoire Littéraire de Fr., tom. vii. p. 118.

[138] Biblioth. Latine, b. vii. p. 519.

[139] Hist. Litt. de Fr., tom. ix. p. 373.

[140] Thorpe Regist. Roffens, fol. 1769, p.

118.

[141] Wharton Angl. Sacr., tom. 1, p. 342.

[142] Thorpe Regist. Rof., p. 120. Dugdale's Monast., vol. 1, p. 157.

[143] Thorpe Reg. Rof., p. 121.

[144] A catalogue of this library is preserved among the Bodleian MSS. No. 920, containing many fine old volumes. I am not aware that it has been ever printed.

[145] "Textum Evangeliorum aureum." Reg. Rof., p. 121.

[146] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[147] Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. 1, p. 156.

[148] Wharton's Ang. Sac, tom. 1, p. 346.

[149] Thorpe Reg. Rof., p. 121.

[150] Thorpe Reg. Rof., 121. Dugdale's Monast., vol. i. p. 158.

[151] Reg. Rof., pp. 122, 123.

[152] In a long list of gifts by Robert de Hecham, I find "librum Ysidore ethimologiarum possuit in armarium claustri et alia plura fecit."—*Thorpe Reg. Rof.*, p. 123.

CHAPTER V

Lindesfarne.—St. Cuthbert's Gospels.—Destruction of the Monastery.—Alcuin's Letter on the occasion.—Removal to Durham.—Carelepho.—Catalogue of Durham Library.—Hugh de Pusar.—Anthony Bek.—Richard de Bury and his Philobiblon, etc.



THE Benedictine monastery of Lindesfarne, or the Holy Island, as it was called, was founded through the instrumentality of Oswald, the son of Ethelfrith, king of Northumberland, who was anxious for the promulgation of the Christian faith within his dominions. Aidan, the first bishop of whom we have any distinct account, was appointed about the year 635. Bede tells us that he used frequently to retire to the Isle of Farne, that he might pray in private and be undisturbed.[153] This small island, distant about nine miles from the church of Lindesfarne, obtained great celebrity from St. Cuthbert, who sought that quiet spot and led there a lonely existence in great continence of mind and body.[154] In 685 he was appointed to the see of Lindesfarne, where, by his pious example and regular life, he instructed many in their religious duties. The name of this illustrious saint is intimately connected with a most magnificent specimen of calligraphical art of the eighth century, preserved in the British Museum,[155] and well known by the name of the Durham Book, or Saint Cuthbert's Gospels; it was written some years after the death of that Saint, in honor of his memory, by Egfrith, a monk of Lindesfarne, who was made

bishop of that see in the year 698. At Egfrith's death in 721, his successor, Æthilwald, most beautifully bound it in gold and precious stones, and Bilfrid, a hermit, richly illuminated it by prefixing to each gospel a beautiful painting representing one of the Evangelists, and a tesselated cross, executed in a most elaborate manner. He also displayed great skill by illuminating the large capital letters at the commencement of each gospel.[156] Doubtless, the hermit Bilfrid was an eminent artist in his day. Aldred, the Glossator, a priest of Durham, about the year 950, still more enriched this precious volume by interlining it with a Saxon Gloss, or version of the Latin text of St. Jerome, of which the original manuscript is a copy.[157] It is therefore, one of the most venerable of those early attempts to render the holy scriptures into the vernacular tongue, and is on that account an interesting relic to the Christian reader, and, no doubt, formed the choicest volume in the library of Lindesfarne.[158]

But imperfectly, indeed, have I described the splendid manuscript which is now lying, in all its charms, before me. And as I mark its fine old illuminations, so bright in color, and so chaste in execution, the accuracy of its transcription, and the uniform beauty of its calligraphy, my imagination carries me back to the quiet cloister of the old Saxon scribe who wrote it, and I can see in Egfrith, a bibliomaniac, of no mean pretensions, and in Bilfrid, a monkish illuminator, well initiated in the mysteries of his art. The manuscript contains 258 double columned folio pages, and the paintings of the Evangelists each occupy an entire page. We learn the history of its production from a very long note at the

end of the manuscript, written by the hand of the glossator.[159]

But sad misfortunes were in store for the holy monks, for about 793, or a little earlier, when Highbald was abbot, the Danes burnt down the monastery and murdered the ecclesiastics; "most dreadful lightnings and other prodigies," says Simeon of Durham, "are said to have portended the impending ruin of this place; on the 7th of June they came to the church of Lindesfarne, miserably plundered all places, overthrew the altars, and carried away all the treasures of the church, some of the monks they slew, some they carried away captives, some they drowned in the sea, and others much afflicted and abused they turned away naked."[160] Fortunately some of the poor monks escaped, and after a short time returned to their old spot, and with religious zeal set about repairing the damage which the sacred edifice had sustained; after its restoration they continued comparatively quiet till the time of Eardulfus, when the Danes in the year 875, again invaded England and burned down the monastery of Lindesfarne. The monks obtained some knowledge of their coming and managed to effect their escape, taking with them the body of St. Cuthbert, which they highly venerated, with many other honored relics; they then set out with the bishop Eardulfus and the abbot Eadrid at their head on a sort of pilgrimage to discover some suitable resting place for the remains of their saint; but finding no safe locality, and becoming fatigued by the irksomeness of the journey, they as a last resource resolved to pass over to Ireland. For this purpose they proceeded to the sea, but no sooner were they on board the ship than a terrific storm arose, and had it not been for the fond care of their patron saint, a watery grave

would have been forever their resting place; but, as it was, their lives were spared, and the holy bones preserved to bless mankind, and work wondrous miracles in the old church of the Saxon monks. Nevertheless, considerable damage was sustained, and the fury of the angry waves forced them back again to the shore. The monks deeming this an indication of God's will that they should remain, decided upon doing so, and leaving the ship, they agreed to proceed on their way rejoicing, and place still greater trust in the mercy of God and the miraculous influence of St. Cuthbert's holy bones; but some whose reliance on Divine providence appears not so conspicuous, became dissatisfied, and separated from the rest till at last only seven monks were left besides their bishop and abbot. Their relics were too numerous and too cumbersome to be conveyed by so small a number, and they knew not how to proceed; but one of the seven whose name was Hanred had a vision, wherein he was told that they should repair to the sea, where they would find a book of Gospels adorned with gold and precious stones, which had been lost out of the ship when they were in the storm; and that after that he should see a bridle hanging on a tree, which he should take down and put upon a horse that would come to him, which horse he should put to a cart he would also find, to carry the holy body, which would be an ease to them. All these things happening accordingly, they travelled with more comfort, following the horse, which way soever he should lead. The book above mentioned was no ways damaged by the water, and is still preserved in the library at Durham,[161] where it remained till the Reformation, when it was stript of its jewelled covering, and after passing through many hands, ultimately came into the possession of

Sir Robert Cotton, in whose collection, as we have said before, it is now preserved in the British Museum.

I cannot refrain, even at the risk of incurring some blame for my digression, presenting the reader with a part of a letter full of fraternal love, which Alcuin addressed to the monks of Lindesfarne on this sad occasion.

"Your dearest fraternity," says he, "was wont to afford me much joy. But now how different! though absent, I deeply lament the more your tribulations and calamities; the manner in which the Pagans contaminate the sanctuaries of God, and shed the blood of saints around the altar, devastating the joy of our house, and trampling on the bodies of holy men in the temple of God, as though they were treading on a dunghill in the street. But of what effect is our wailing unless we come before the altars of Christ and cry, 'Spare me, O Lord! spare thy people, and take not thine inheritance from them;' nor let the Pagans say, 'Where is the God of the Christians?' Besides who is to pacify the churches of Britain, if St. Cuthbert cannot defend them with so great a number of saints? Nevertheless do not trouble the mind about these things, for God chasteneth all the sons whom he receiveth, and therefore perhaps afflicts you the more, because he the more loveth you. Jerusalem, the delightful city of God, was lost by the Chaldean scourge; and Rome, the city of the holy Apostles and innumerable martyrs, was surrounded by the Pagans and devastated. Well nigh the whole of Europe is evacuated by the scourging sword of the Goths or the Huns. But in the same manner in which God preserved the stars to illuminate the heavens, so will He preserve the

churches to ornament, and in their office to strengthen and increase the Christian religion."[162]

Thus it came to pass that Eardulphus was the last bishop of Lindesfarne and the first of Cunecacestre, or Chester-upon-the-Street, to which place his see was removed previous to its final settlement at Durham.

After a succession of many bishops, some recorded as learned and bookish by monkish annalists, and nearly all benefactors in some way to their church, we arrive at the period when Aldwine was consecrated bishop of that see in the year 990. The commotions of his time made his presidency a troubled and harassing one. Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olauis, king of Norway, invaded England, and spreading themselves in bodies over the kingdom, committed many and cruel depredations; a strong body of these infested the northern coast, and approached the vicinity of Chester-on-the-Street. This so alarmed Aldwine, that he resolved to quit his church—for the great riches and numerous relics of that holy place were attractive objects to the plundering propensities of the invaders. Carrying, therefore, the bones of St. Cuthbert with them—for that box of mortal dust was ever precious in the sight of those old monks—and the costly treasures of the church, not forgetting their books, the monks fled to Ripon, and the see, which after similar adversities their predecessors one hundred and thirteen years ago had settled at Chester, was forever removed. It is true three or four months after, as Symeon of Durham tells us, they attempted to return, but when they reached a place called Werdelan, "on the east and near unto Durham," they could not move the bier on which the

body of St. Cuthbert was carried, although they applied their united strength to effect it. The superstition, or perhaps simplicity, of the monks instantly interpreted this into a manifestation of divine interference, and they resolved not to return again to their old spot. And we are further told that after three days' fasting and prayer, the Lord vouchsafed to reveal to them that they should bear the saintly burden to Durham, a command which they piously and cheerfully obeyed. Having arrived there, they fixed on a wild and uncultivated site, and making a simple oratory of wattles for the temporary reception of their relics, they set zealously to work—for these old monks well knew what labor was—to cut down wood, to clear the ground, and build an habitation for themselves. Shortly after, in the wilderness of that neglected spot, the worthy bishop Aldwine erected a goodly church of stone to the honor of God, and as a humble tribute of gratitude and love; and so it was that Aldwine, the last bishop of Chester-on-the-Street, was the first of Durham.

When William Carelepho, a Norman monk, was consecrated bishop, the church had so increased in wealth and usefulness, that fresh wants arose, more space was requisite, and a grander structure would be preferable; the bishop thereupon pulled the old church of Aldwine down and commenced the erection of a more magnificent one in its place, as the beauty of Durham cathedral sufficiently testifies even now; and will not the lover of artistic beauty award his praise to the Norman bishop—those massive columns and stupendous arches excite the admiring wonder of all; built on a rocky eminence and surrounded by all the charms of a romantic scenery, it is one of the finest specimens of architecture which the enthusiasm of monkish days

dedicated to piety and to God. Its liberal founder however did not live to see it finished, for he died in the year 1095, two years after laying its foundation stone. His bookloving propensities have been honorably recorded, and not only was he fond of reading, but kept the pens of the scribes in constant motion, and used himself to superintend the transcription of manuscripts, as the colophon of a folio volume in Durham library fully proves.[163] The monkish bibliophiles of his church received from him a precious gift of about 40 volumes, containing among other valuable books Prosper, Pompeii, Tertullian, and a great Bible in two volumes.[164]

It would have been difficult perhaps to have found in those days a body of monks so "bookish" as those of Durham; not only did they transcribe with astonishing rapidity, proving that there was no want of vellum there, but they must have bought or otherwise collected a great number of books; for the see of Durham, in the early part of the 12th century, could show a library embracing nearly 300 volumes.[165]

Nor let the reader imagine that the collection possessed no merit in a literary point of view, or that the monks cared for little else save legends of saints or the literature of the church; the catalogue proves them to have enjoyed a more liberal and a more refined taste, and again display the cloistered students of the middle ages as the preservers of classic learning. This is a point worth observing on looking over the old parchment catalogues of the monks; for as by their Epistles we obtain a knowledge of their intimacy with the old writers, and the use they made of them, so by their catalogues we catch a glimpse of the means they

possessed of becoming personally acquainted with their beauties; by the process much light may be thrown on the gloom of those long past times, and perhaps we shall gain too a better view of the state of learning existing then. But that the reader may judge for himself, I extract the names of some of the writers whom the monks of Durham preserved and read:

- Alcuin.
- Ambrose.
- Aratores.
- Anselm.
- Augustine.
- Aviany.
- Bede.
- Boethius.
- Bernard.
- Cassian.
- Cassiodorus.
- Claudius.
- Cyprian.
- Donatus.
- Esop.
- Eutropius.
- Galen.
- Gregory.
- Haimo.
- Horace.
- Homer.
- Hugo.
- Juvenal.
- Isidore.
- Josephus.
- Lucan.
- Marcianus.

- Maximian.
- Orosius.
- Ovid.
- Prudentius.
- Prosper.
- Persius.
- Priscian.
- Peter Lombard.
- Plato.
- Pompeius Trogus.
- Quintilian.
- Rabanus.
- Solinus.
- Servius.
- Statius.
- Terence.
- Tully.
- Theodulus.
- Virgil.
- Gesta Anglorum.
- Gesta Normanorum.

Hugh de Pussar,[166] consecrated bishop in 1153, is the next who attracts our attention by his bibliomanical renown. He possessed perhaps the finest copy of the Holy Scriptures of any private collector; and he doubtless regarded his "*unam Bibliam in* iv. *magnis voluminibus*," with the veneration of a divine and the fondness of a student. He collected what in those times was deemed a respectable library, and bequeathed no less than sixty or seventy volumes to the Durham monks, including his great Bible, which has ever since been preserved with religious care; from a catalogue of them we learn his partiality for classical literature; a Tully, Sedulus, Priscian, and Claudius, are mentioned

among them.[167]

Anthony Bek, who was appointed to the see in the year 1283, was a most ambitious and haughty prelate, and caused great dissensions in his church. History proves how little he was adapted for the responsible duties of a bishop, and points to the field of battle or civil pomp as most congenial to his disposition. He ostentatiously displayed the splendor of a Palatine Prince, when he contributed his powerful aid to the cause of his sovereign, in the Scottish war, by a retinue of 500 horse, 1000 foot, 140 knights, and 26 standard bearers,[168] rendered doubly imposing in those days of saintly worship and credulity, by the patronage of St. Cuthbert, under whole holy banner they marched against a brave and noble foe. His arbitrary temper caused sad quarrels in the cloister, which ultimately gave rise to a tedious law proceeding between him and the prior about the year 1300;[169] from a record of this affair we learn that the bishop had borrowed some books from the library which afterwards he refused to return; there was among them a Decretal, a history of England, a Missal, and a volume called "The book of St. Cuthbert, in which the secrets of the monastery are written," which was alone valued at £200,[170] probably in consideration of the important and delicate matters contained therein.

These proceedings were instituted by prior Hoton, who was fond of books, and had a great esteem for learning; he founded a college at Oxford for the monkish students of his church.[171] On more than one occasion he sent parcels of books to Oxford; in a list of an early date it appears that the monks of Durham sent at one time twenty volumes, and

shortly after fifteen more, consisting principally of church books and lives of saints.[172] The numbers thus taken from their library the monks, with that love of learning for which they were so remarkable, anxiously replaced, by purchasing about twenty volumes, many of which contained a great number of small but choice pieces.[173]

Robert de Graystane, a monk of Durham, was elected bishop by the prior and chapter, and confirmed on the 10th of November, 1333, but the king, Edward III., wishing to advance his treasurer to that see, refused his sanction to the proceeding; monk Robert was accordingly deposed, and Richard Angraville received the mitre in his stead. He was consecrated on the 19th of December in the same year, by John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, and installed by proxy on the 10th of January, 1334.

Angraville, Aungerville, or as he is more commonly called Richard de Bury, is a name which every bibliophile will honor and esteem; he was indeed a bibliomaniac of the first order, and a sketch of his life is not only indispensable here, but cannot fail to interest the book-loving reader. But before entering more at large into his bookish propensities and talents, it will be necessary to say something of his early days and the illustrious career which attended his political and ecclesiastical life. Richard de Bury, the son of Sir Richard Angraville, was born, as his name implies, at Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, in the year 1287.[174]

Great attention was paid to the instruction of his youthful mind by his maternal uncle, John de Willowby, a priest, previous to his removal to Oxford. At the university he obtained honorable

distinction, as much for his erudition and love of books as for the moral rectitude of his behavior. These pleasing traits were the stepping stones to his future greatness, and on the strength of them he was selected as one fully competent to undertake the education of Edward Prince of Wales, afterwards the third king of that name; and to Richard de Bury "may be traced the love for literature and the arts displayed by his pupil when on the throne. He was rewarded with the lucrative appointment of treasurer of Gascony."[175]

When Edward, the prince of Wales, was sent to Paris to assume the dominion of Guienne, which the king had resigned in his favor, he was accompanied by queen Isabella, his mother, whose criminal frailty, and afterwards conspiracy, with Mortimer, aroused the just indignation of her royal husband; and commenced those civil dissensions which rendered the reign of Edward II. so disastrous and turbulent. It was during these commotions that Richard de Bury became a zealous partizan of the queen, to whom he fled, and ventured to supply her pecuniary necessities from the royal revenues; for this, however, he was surrounded with imminent danger; for the king, instituting an inquiry into these proceedings, attempted his capture, which he narrowly escaped by secreting himself in the belfry of the convent of Brothers Minor at Paris.[176]

When the "most invincible and most magnificent king" Edward III. was firmly seated upon the throne, dignity and power was lavishly bestowed on this early bibliomaniac. In an almost incredible space of time he was appointed cofferer to the king, treasurer of the wardrobe, archdeacon of Northampton, prebendary of Lincoln, Sarum, Litchfield, and shortly

afterwards keeper of the privy seal, which office he held for five years. During this time he twice undertook a visit to Italy, on a mission to the supreme pontiff, John XXII., who not only entertained him with honor and distinction, but appointed him chaplain to his principal chapel, and gave him a bull, nominating him to the first vacant see in England.

He acquired whilst there an honor which reflected more credit than even the smiles of his holiness—the brightest of the Italian poets, Petrarch of never dying fame—bestowed upon him his acquaintance and lasting friendship. De Bury entered Avignon for the first time in the same year that Petrarch took up his residence there, in the house of Colonna, bishop of Lombes: two such enlightened scholars and indefatigable book collectors, sojourning in the same city, soon formed an intimacy.[177] How interesting must their friendly meetings have been, and how delightful the hours spent in Petrarch's library, which was one of great extent and rarity; and it is probable too that De Bury obtained from the poet a few treasures to enrich his own stores; for the generosity of Petrarch was so excessive, that he could scarcely withhold what he knew was so dearly coveted. His benevolence on one occasion deprived him and posterity of an inestimable volume; he lent some manuscripts of the classics to his old master, who, needing pecuniary aid, pawned them, and Cicero's books, *De Gloria*, were in this manner irrecoverably lost.[178] Petrarch acted like a true lover of learning; for when the shadows of old age approached, he presented his library, full of rare and ancient manuscripts, many of them enriched by his own notes, to the Venetian Senate, and thus laid the foundation of the library of Saint-Marc; he always

employed a number of transcribers, who invariably accompanied him on his journeys, and he kept horses to carry his books.[179] His love of reading was intense. "Whether," he writes in one of his epistles, "I am being shaved, or having my hair cut, whether I am riding on horseback or taking my meals, I either read myself or get some one to read to me; on the table where I dine, and by the side of my bed, I have all the materials for writing."[180] With the friendship of such a student, how charming must have been the visit of the English ambassador, and how much valuable and interesting information must he have gleaned by his intercourse with Petrarch and his books. At Rome Richard de Bury obtained many choice volumes and rare old manuscripts of the classics; for at Rome indeed, at that time, books had become an important article of commerce, and many foreign collectors besides the English bibliomaniac resorted there for these treasures: to such an extend was this carried on, that the jealousy of Petrarch was aroused, who, in addressing the Romans, exclaims: "Are you not ashamed that the wrecks of your ancient grandeur, spared by the inundation of the barbarians, are daily sold by your miscalculating avarice to foreigners? And that Rome is no where less known and less loved than at Rome?"[181]

The immense ecclesiastical and civil revenues which Aungraville enjoyed, enabled him whilst in Italy to maintain a most costly and sumptuous establishment: in his last visit alone he is said to have expended 5,000 marks, and he never appeared in public without a numerous retinue of twenty clerks and thirty-six esquires; an appearance which better became the dignity of his civil office, than the Christian humility of his ecclesiastical functions. On his return from this distinguished sojourn, he was

appointed, as we have said before, through the instrumentality of Edward III., to the bishopric of Durham. But not content with these high preferments, his royal master advanced him to still greater honor, and on the 28th of September, 1334, he was made Lord Chancellor of England, which office he filled till the 5th of June, 1335, when he exchanged it for that of high treasurer. He was twice appointed ambassador to the king of France, respecting the claims of Edward of England to the crown of that country. De Bury, whilst negociating this affair, visited Antwerp and Brabant for the furtherance of the object of his mission, and he fully embraced this rare opportunity of adding to his literary stores, and returned to his fatherland well laden with many choice and costly manuscripts; for in all his perilous missions he carried about with him, as he tells us, that love of books which many waters could not extinguish, but which greatly sweetened the bitterness of peregrination. Whilst at Paris he was especially assiduous in collecting, and he relates with intense rapture, how many choice libraries he found there full of all kinds of books, which tempted him to spend his money freely; and with a gladsome heart he gave his dirty lucre for treasures so inestimable to the bibliomaniac.

Before the commencement of the war which arose from the disputed claims of Edward, Richard de Bury returned to enjoy in sweet seclusion his bibliomanical propensities. The modern bibliophiles who know what it is to revel in the enjoyment of a goodly library, luxuriant in costly bindings and rich in bibliographical rarities, who are fully susceptible to the delights and exquisite sensibilities of that sweet madness called bibliomania, will readily comprehend the multiplied pleasures of that early

and illustrious bibliophile in the seclusion of Auckland Palace; he there ardently applied his energies and wealth to the accumulation of books; and whilst engaged in this pleasing avocation, let us endeavor to catch a glimpse of him. Chambre, to whom we are indebted for many of the above particulars, tells us that Richard de Bury was learned in the governing of his house, hospitable to strangers, of great charity, and fond of disputation with the learned, but he principally delighted in a multitude of books, *Iste summe delectabatur multitudine librorum*,[182] and possessed more books than all the bishops put together, an assertion which requires some modification, and must not be too strictly regarded, for book collecting at that time was becoming a favorite pursuit; still the language of Chambre is expressive, and clearly proves how extensive must have been his libraries, one of which he formed in each of his various palaces, *diversis maneriis*. So engrossed was that worthy bishop with the passion of book collecting, that his dormitory was strewed *jucebant* with them, in every nook and corner choice volumes were scattered, so that it was almost impossible for any person to enter without placing his feet upon some book.[183] He kept in regular employment no small assemblage of antiquaries, scribes, bookbinders, correctors, illuminators, and all such persons who were capable of being useful in the service of books, *librorum servitiis utiliter*.[184]

During his retirement he wrote a book, from the perusal of which the bibliomaniac will obtain a full measure of delight and instruction. It is a faithful record of the life and experience of this bibliophile of the olden time. He tells us how he collected his vellum treasures—his "crackling tomes" so rich in

illuminations and calligraphic art!—how he preserved them, and how he would have others read them. Costly indeed must have been the book gems he amassed together; for foreign countries, as well as the scribes at home, yielded ample means to augment his stores, and were incessantly employed in searching for rarities which his heart yearned to possess. He completed his Philobiblon at his palace at Auckland on the 24th of January, 1344.[185]

We learn from the prologue to this rare and charming little volume how true and genuine a bibliomaniac was Richard de Bury, for he tells us there, that a vehement love *amor excitet* of books had so powerfully seized all the faculties of his mind, that dismissing all other avocations, he had applied the ardor of his thoughts to the acquisition of books. Expense to him was quite an afterthought, and he begrudged no amount to possess a volume of rarity or antiquity. Wisdom, he says, is an infinite treasure *infinitus thesaurus*, the value of which, in his opinion, was beyond all things; for how, he asks, can the sum be too great which purchases such vast delight. We cannot admire the purity of his Latin so much as the enthusiasm which pervades it; but in the eyes of the bibliophile this will amply compensate for his minor imperfections. When expatiating on the value of his books he appears to unbosom, as it were, all the inward rapture of love. A very *helluo librorum*—a very Maliabechi of a collector, yet he encouraged no selfish feeling to alloy his pleasure or to mingle bitterness with the sweets of his avocation. His knowledge he freely imparted to others, and his books he gladly lent. This is apparent in the Philobiblon; and his generous spirit warms his diction—not always chaste—into a fluent eloquence.

His composition overflows with figurative expressions, yet the rude, ungainly form on which they are moulded deprive them of all claim to elegance or chastity; but while the homeliness of his diction fails to impress us with an idea of his versatility as a writer, his chatty anecdotal style rivets and keeps the mind amused, so that we rise from the little book with the consciousness of having obtained much profit and satisfaction from its perusal. Nor is it only the bibliomaniac who may hope to taste this pleasure in devouring the sweet contents of the Philobiblon; for there are many hints, many wise sayings, and many singular ideas scattered over its pages, which will amuse or instruct the general reader and the lover of olden literature. We observe too that Richard de Bury, as a writer, was far in advance of his age, and his work manifests an unusual freedom and independence of mind in its author; for although living in monkish days, when the ecclesiastics were almost supreme in power and wealth, he was fully sensible of the vile corruptions and abominations which were spreading about that time so fearfully among some of the cloistered devotees—the spotless purity of the primitive times was scarce known then—and the dark periods of the middle ages were bright and holy, when compared with the looseness and carnality of those turbulent days. Richard de Bury dipped his pen in gall when he spoke of these sad things, and doubtless many a revelling monk winced under the lashing words he applied to them; not only does he upbraid them for their carelessness in religion, but severely reprimands their inattention to literature and learning. "The monks," he says, "in the present day seem to be occupied in emptying cups, not in correcting codices, *Calicibus epotandis, non codicibus*

emendandis, which they mingle with the lascivious music of Timotheus, and emulate his immodest manners, so that the sportive song *cantus ludentis*, and not the plaintive hymn, proceeds from the cells of the monks. Flocks and fleeces, grain and granaries, gardens and olives, potions and goblets, are in this day lessons and studies of the monks, except some chosen few."[186] He speaks in equally harsh terms of the religious mendicants. He accuses them of forgetting the words and admonitions of their holy founder, who was a great lover of books. He wishes them to imitate the ancient members of that fraternity, who were poor in spirit, but most rich in faith. But it must be remembered, that about this time the mendicant friars were treated with undeserved contempt, and much ill feeling rose against them among the clergy, but the clergy were somewhat prejudiced in their judgment. The order of St. Dominic, which a century before gloried in the approbation of the pope, and in the enjoyment of his potential bulls, now winced under gloomy and foreboding frowns. The sovereign Pontiff Honorius III. gratefully embraced the service of these friars, and confirmed their order with important privileges. His successor, Gregory IX., ratified these favors to gain their useful aid in propping up the papal power, and commanded the ecclesiastics by a bull to receive these "well-beloved children and preaching friars" of his, with hospitality and respect. Thus established, they were able to bear the tossings to and fro which succeeding years produced; but in Richard de Bury's time darker clouds were gathering—great men had severely chastized them with their pens and denounced them in their preachings. Soon after a host of others sprang up—among the most remarkable of whom were Johannes Poliaco, and

Fitzralph, Archbishop of Armagh, who was a dear friend and chaplain of Richard de Bury's and many learned disputations were carried on between them. [187] The celebrated oration of Fitzralph's, cited in the presence of the pope, was a powerful blow to the mendicant friars—an examination of the matter has rather perplexed than cleared the subject, and I find it difficult which side to favor, the clergy seem to denounce the begging friars more from envy and interested motives, for they looked with extreme jealousy at the encroachments they had made upon their ecclesiastical functions of confession, absolution, etc., so profitable to the church in those days. In these matters the church had hitherto reserved a sole monopoly, and the clergy now determined to protect it with all the powers of oratorial denunciation; but, looking beyond this veil of prejudice, I am prone to regard them favorably, for their intense love of books, which they sought for and bought up with passionate eagerness. Fitzralph, quite unintentionally, bestows a bright compliment upon them, and as it bears upon our subject and illustrates the learning of the time, I am tempted to give a few extracts; he sorely laments the decrease of the number of students in the university of Oxford; "So," says he, "that yet in my tyme, in the universitie of Oxenford, were thirty thousand Scolers at ones; and now beth unnethe[188] sixe thousand."[189] All the blame of this he lays to the friars, and accuses them of doing "more grete damage to learning." "For these orders of beggers, for endeless wynnynges that thei geteth by beggyng of the forseide pryvyleges of schriftes and sepultures and othere, thei beth now so multiplyed in conventes and in persons. That many men tellith that in general studies unnethe, is it founde to sillynge a profitable book of ye faculte of

art, of dyvynyte, of lawe canon, of phisik, other of lawe civil, but alle bookes beth y-bougt of Freres, so that en ech convent of Freres is a noble librarye and a grete,[190] and so that ene rech Frere that hath state in scole, siche as thei beth nowe, hath an hughe librarye. And also y-sent of my Sugettes[191] to scole thre other foure persons, and hit is said me that some of them beth come home azen for thei myst nougt[192] finde to selle ovn goode Bible; nother othere couenable[193] books." This strange accusation proves how industriously the friars collected books, and we cannot help regarding them with much esteem for doing so. Richard de Bury fully admits his obligations to the mendicants, from whom he obtained many choice transcripts. "When indeed," says he, "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 satchells and baskets, 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 in itself all that is delectable;" and moreover, he says, that he found these friars "not selfish hoarders, but meet professors of enlightened knowledge."[194]

In the seventh chapter of his work, he deplores the sad destruction of books by war and fire, and laments the loss of the 700,000 volumes, which happened in the Alexandrian expedition; but the eighth chapter is the one which the bibliomaniac will regard with the greatest interest, for Richard de Bury tells us there how he collected together his rich and ample library. "For although," he writes, "from our youth we have ever been delighted to hold special

and social communion with literary men and lovers of books, yet prosperity attending us, having obtained the notice of his majesty the king, and being received into his own family, we acquired a most ample facility of visiting at pleasure and of hunting, as it were, some of the most delightful covers, the public and private libraries *privatas tum communes*, both of the regulars and seculars. Indeed, while we performed the duties of Chancellor and Treasurer of the most invincible and ever magnificently triumphant king of England, Edward III., of that name after the conquest, whose days may the Most High long and tranquilly deign to preserve. After first inquiring into the things that concerned his court, and then the public affairs of his kingdom, an easy opening was afforded us, under the countenance of royal favor, for freely searching the hiding places of books. For the flying fame of our love had already spread in all directions, and it was reported not only that we had a longing desire for books, and *especially for old ones*, but that any one could more easily obtain our favors by quartos than by money.[195] Wherefore, when supported by the bounty of the aforesaid prince of worthy memory, we were enabled to oppose or advance, to appoint or discharge; crazy quartos and tottering folios, precious however in our sight as well as in our affections, flowed in most rapidly from the great and the small, instead of new year's gift and remunerations, and instead of presents and jewels. Then the cabinets of the most noble monasteries *tunc nobilissimos monasterios* were opened, cases were unlocked, caskets were unclasped and sleeping volumes *soporata volumina* which had slumbered for long ages in their sepulchres were roused up, and those that lay hid in dark places *in locis tenebrosis*

were overwhelmed with the rays of a new light. Books heretofore most delicate now become corrupted and abominable, lay lifeless, covered indeed with the excrements of mice and pierced through with the gnawing of worms; and those that were formerly clothed with purple and fine linen were now seen reposing in dust and ashes, given over to oblivion and the abode of moths. Amongst these, nevertheless, as time served, we sat down more voluptuously than the delicate physician could do amidst his stores of aromatics, and where we found an object of love, we found also an assuagement. Thus the sacred vessel of science came into the power of our disposal, some being given, some sold, and not a few lent for a time. Without doubt many who perceived us to be contented with gifts of this kind, studied to contribute these things freely to our use, which they could most conveniently do without themselves. We took care, however, to conduct the business of such so favorably, that the profit might accrue to them; justice suffered therefore no detriment." Of this, however, a doubt will intrude itself upon our minds, in defiance of the affirmation of my Lord Chancellor; indeed, the paragraph altogether is unfavorable to the character of so great a man, and fully proves the laxity of opinion, in those days of monkish supremacy, on judicial matters; but we must be generous, and allow something for the corrupt usages of the age, but I cannot omit a circumstance clearly illustrative of this point, which occurred between the bibliomanical Chancellor and the abbot of St. Alban's, the affair is recorded in the chronicle of the abbey, and transpired during the time Richard de Bury held the privy seal; in that office he appears to have favored the monks of the abbey in their

disputes with the townspeople of St. Alban's respecting some possessions to which the monks tenaciously adhered and defended as their rightful property. Richard de Wallingford, who was then abbot, convoked the elder monks *convocatis senioribus*, and discussed with them, as to the most effectual way to obtain the goodwill and favor of de Bury; after due consideration it was decided that no gift was likely to prove so acceptable to that father of English bibliomania as a present of some of their choice books, and it was at last agreed to send four volumes, "that is to say Terence, a Virgil, a Quintilian, and Jerome against Ruffinus," and to sell him many others from their library; this they sent him intimation of, and a purchase was ultimately agreed upon between them. The monks sold to that rare collector, thirty-two choice tomes *triginta duos libros*, for the sum of fifty pounds of silver *quinginta libris argenti*.[196] But there were other bibliophiles and bookworms than Richard de Bury in old England then; for many of the brothers of St. Alban's who had nothing to do with this transaction, cried out loudly against it, and denounced rather openly the policy of sacrificing their mental treasures for the acquisition of pecuniary gain, but fortunately the loss was only a temporary one, for on the death of Richard de Bury many of these volumes were restored to the monks, who in return became the purchasers from his executors of many a rare old volume from the bishop's library.[197] To resume our extracts from the Philobiblon, De Bury proceeds to further particulars relative to his book-collecting career, and becomes quite eloquent in detailing these circumstances; but from the eighth chapter we shall content ourselves with one more paragraph. "Moreover," says he, "if we could have amassed cups of gold and silver, excellent

horses, or no mean sums of money, we could in those days have laid up abundance of wealth for ourselves. But we regarded books not pounds, and valued codices more than florens, and preferred paltry pamphlets to pampered palfreys.[198] In addition to this we were charged with frequent embassies of the said prince of everlasting memory, and owing to the multiplicity of state affairs, we were sent first to the Roman chair, then to the court of France, then to the various other kingdoms of the world, on tedious embassies and in perilous times, carrying about with us that fondness for books, which many waters could not extinguish."[199] The booksellers found Richard de Bury a generous and profitable customer, and those residing abroad received commissions constantly from him. "Besides the opportunities," he writes, "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."[200]

Such was bibliomania five hundred years ago! and does not the reader behold in it the very type and personification of its existence now? does he not see in Richard de Bury the prototype of a much honored and agreeable bibliophile of our own time? Nor has the renowned "Maister Dibdin" described his book-hunting tours with more enthusiasm or delight; with what a thrill of rapture would that worthy doctor have explored those monastic treasures which De Bury found hid in *locis tenebrosis*, antique Bibles, rare Fathers, rich Classics or gems of monkish lore, enough to fire the brain of the most lymphatic bibliophile, were within the grasp of the industrious and eager Richard de Bury—that old "Amator Librorum," like his imitators of the present day, cared

not whither he went to collect his books—dust and dirt were no barriers to him; at every nook and corner where a stationer's stall[201] appeared, he would doubtless tarry in defiance of the cold winds or scorching sun, exploring the ancient tomes reposing there. Nor did he neglect the houses of the country rectors; and even the humble habitations of the rustics were diligently ransacked to increase his collections, and from these sources he gleaned many rude but pleasing volumes, perhaps full of old popular poetry! or the wild Romances of Chivalry which enlivened the halls and cots of our forefathers in Gothic days.

We must not overlook the fact that this Treatise on the Love of Books was written as an accompaniment to a noble and generous gift. Many of the parchment volumes which De Bury had collected in his "*perilous embassies*," he gave, with the spirit of a true lover of learning, to the Durham College at Oxford, for the use of the Students of his Church. I cannot but regret that the names of these books, *of which he had made a catalogue*,[202] have not been preserved; perhaps the document may yet be discovered among the vast collections of manuscripts in the Oxonian libraries; but the book, being written for this purpose, the author thought it consistent that full directions should be given for the preservation and regulation of the library, and we find the last chapter devoted to this matter; but we must not close the Philobiblon without noticing his admonitions to the students, some of whom he upbraids for the carelessness and disrespect which they manifest in perusing books. "Let there," says he, with all the veneration of a passionate booklover, "be a modest 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."[203] Loving and venerating a book as De Bury did, it was agony to see a volume suffering under the indignities of the ignorant or thoughtless student whom he thus keenly satirizes: "You will perhaps see a stiffnecked 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;" nor is he "ashamed to eat fruit and cheese over an open book, or to transfer his empty cup from side to side; he reclines his elbow on the volume, turns down the leaves, and puts bits of straw to denote the place he is reading; he stuffs the book with leaves and flowers, and so pollutes it with filth and dust." With this our extracts from the Philobiblon must close; enough has been said and transcribed to place the Lord Chancellor of the puissant King Edward III. among the foremost of the bibliomaniacs of the past, and to show how valuable were his efforts to literature and learning; indeed, like Petrarch in Italy was Richard De Bury in England: both enthusiastic collectors and preservers of ancient manuscripts, and both pioneers of that revival of European literature which soon afterwards followed. In the fourteenth century we cannot imagine a more useful or more essential person than the bibliomaniac, for that surely was the harvest day for the gathering in of that food on which the mind of future generations were to subsist. And who reaped so laboriously or gleaned so carefully as those two illustrious scholars?

Richard de Bury was no unsocial bookworm; for whilst he loved to seek the intercourse of the learned dead, he was far from being regardless of the living.

Next to his clasped vellum tomes, nothing afforded him so much delight as an erudite disputation with his chaplains, who were mostly men of acknowledged learning and talent; among them were "Thomas Bradwardyn, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; and Richard Fitz-Raufe, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh; Walter Burley, John Maudyt, Robert Holcote, Richard of Kilwington, all Doctors in Theology, *omnes Doctores in Theologia*; Richard Benworth, afterwards Bishop of London, and Walter Segraffe, afterwards Bishop of Chester;"[204] with these congenial spirits Richard de Bury held long and pleasing conversations, doubtless full of old bookwisdom and quaint Gothic lore, derived from still quainter volumes; and after meals I dare say they discussed the choice volume which had been read during their repast, as was the pious custom of those old days, and which was not neglected by De Bury, for "his manner was at dinner and supper time to have some good booke read unto him."[205]

And now in bidding farewell to the illustrious Aungraville—for little more is known of his biography—let me not forget to pay a passing tribute of respect to his private character, which is right worthy of a cherished remembrance, and derives its principal lustre from the eminent degree in which he was endowed with the greatest of Christian virtues, and which, when practised with sincerity, covereth a multitude of sins; his charity, indeed, forms a delightful trait in the character of that great man; every week he distributed food to the poor; eight quarters of wheat *octo quarteria frumenti*, and the fragments from his own table comforted the indigent of his church; and always when he journeyed from Newcastle to Durham, he distributed twelve marks in relieving the distresses of the poor; from Durham to

Stockton eight marks; and from the same place to his palace at Aukeland five marks; and and when he rode from Durham to Middleham he gave away one hundred shillings.[206] Living in troublous times, we do not find his name coupled with any great achievement in the political sphere; his talents were not the most propitious for a statesman among the fierce barons of the fourteenth century; his spirit loved converse with the departed great, and shone more to advantage in the quite closet of the bibliomaniac, or in fulfilling the benevolent duties of a bishop. Yet he was successful in all that the ambition of a statesman could desire, the friend and confidant of his king; holding the highest offices in the state compatible with his ecclesiastical position, with wealth in abundance, and blessed with the friendship of the learned and the good, we find little in his earthly career to darken the current of his existence, or to disturb the last hours of a life of near three score years. He died lamented, honored, and esteemed, at Aukeland palace, on the fourteenth of April, in the year 1345, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and was buried with all due solemnity before the altar of the blessed Mary Magdalene, at the south angle of the church of Durham. His bones are now mingled with the dust and gone, but his memory is engraven on tablets of life; the hearts of all bibliomaniacs love and esteem his name for the many virtues with which it was adorned, and delight to chat with his choice old spirit in the Philobiblon, so congenial to their bookish souls. No doubt the illustrious example of Richard de Bury tended materially to spread far and wide the spirit of bibliomania. It certainly operated powerfully on the monks of Durham, who not only by transcribing, but at the cost of considerable sums of money, greatly

increased their library. A catalogue of the collection, taken some forty years after the death of De Bury, is preserved to this day at Durham, and shows how considerably they augmented it during a space of two hundred years, or from the time when the former list was written. If the bibliomaniac can obtain a sight of this ancient catalogue, he will dwell over it with astonishment and delight—immaculate volumes of Scripture—fathers and classics bespeak its richness and extent, and Robert of Langchester, the librarian who wrote it, with pious preference places first on the list the magnificent Bible which bishop Hugo gave them many years before. This rare biblical treasure, then the pride and glory of the collection, is now in the Durham Library; but to look upon that fair manuscript will make the blood run cold—barbarous desecration has been committed by some bibliopegistical hand; the splendid illuminations so rich and spirited, which adorned the beauteous tomes, dazzled an ignorant mind, who cut them out and robbed it of half its interest and value.

From near 600 volumes which the list enumerates, I cannot refrain from naming two or three. I have searched over its biblical department in vain to discover mention of the celebrated "Saint Cuthbert's Gospels." It is surprising they should have forgotten so rich a gem, for although four copies of the Gospels appear, not one of them answers to its description; two are specified as "*non glos*;" it could not have been either of those, another, the most interesting of the whole, is recorded as the venerable Bede's own copy! What bibliophile can look unmoved upon those time-honored pages, without indeed all the warmth of his booklove kindling forth into a very frenzy of rapture and veneration! So fairly written, and so accurately transcribed, it is one of the most precious of the

many gems which now crowd the shelves of the Durham Library, and is well worth a pilgrimage to view it.[207] But this cannot be St. Cuthbert's Gospels, and the remaining copy is mentioned as "*Quarteur Evangelum*," fol. ii. "*se levantem*;" now I have looked at the splendid volume in the British Museum, to see if the catchword answered to this description, but it does not; so it cannot be this, which I might have imagined without the trouble of a research, for if it was, they surely would not have forgotten to mention its celebrated coopertoria.

Passing a splendid array of Scriptures whole and in parts, for there was no paucity of sacred volumes in that old monkish library, and fathers, doctors of the Church, schoolmen, lives of saints, chronicles, profane writers, philosophical and logical treatises, medical works, grammars, and books of devotion, we are particularly struck with the appearance of so many fine classical authors. Works of Virgil (including the Æneid), Pompeius Trogus, Claudius, Juvenal, Terence, Ovid, Prudentius, Quintilian, Cicero, Bœthius, and a host of others are in abundance, and form a catalogue rendered doubly exciting to the bibliophile by the insertion of an occasional note, which tells of its antiquity,[208] rarity, or value. In some of the volumes a curious inscription was inserted, thundering a curse upon any who would dare to pilfer it from the library, and for so sacrilegious a crime, calling down upon them the maledictions of Saints Maria, Oswald, Cuthbert, and Benedict.[209] A volume containing the lives of St. Cuthbert, St. Oswald, and St. Aydani, is described as "*Liber speciales et preciosus cum signaculo deaurato*."

Thomas Langley, who was chancellor of England and bishop of Durham in the year 1406, collected many

choice books, and left some of them to the library of Durham church; among them a copy of Lyra's Commentaries stands conspicuous; he also bequeathed a number of volumes to many of his private friends.

There are few monastic libraries whose progress we can trace with so much satisfaction as the one now under consideration, for we have another catalogue compiled during the librarianship of John Tyshbourne, in the year 1416,[210] in which many errors appearing in the former ones are carefully corrected; books which subsequent to that time had been lost or stolen are here accounted for; many had been sent to the students at Oxford, and others have notes appended, implying to whom the volume had been lent; thus to a "*Flores Bernardi*," occurs "*Prior debit, I Kempe Episcopi Londoni*." It is, next to Monk Henry's of Canterbury, one of the best of all the monkish catalogues I have seen; not so much for its extent, as that here and there it fully partakes of the character of a catalogue *raisonné*; for terse sentences are affixed to some of the more remarkable volumes, briefly descriptive of their value; a circumstance seldom observable in these early attempts at bibliography.

In taking leave of Durham library, need I say that the bibliomaniacs who flourished there in the olden time, not only collected their books with so much industry, but knew well how to use them too. The reader is doubtless aware how many learned men dwelled in monkish time within those ancient walls; and if he is inquisitive about such things has often enjoyed a few hours of pleasant chat over the historic pages of Symeon of Durham,[211] Turgot and Wessington,[212] and has often heard of brothers

Lawrence,[213] Reginald,[214] and Bolton; but although unheeded now, many a monkish bookworm, glorying in the strict observance of Christian humility, and so unknown to fame, lies buried beneath that splendid edifice, as many monuments and funeral tablets testify and speak in high favor of the great men of Durham. If the reader should perchance to wander near that place, his eye will be attracted by many of these memorials of the dead; and a few hours spent in exploring them will serve to gain many additional facts to his antiquarian lore, and perhaps even something better too. For I know not a more suitable place, as far as outward circumstances are concerned, than an old sanctuary of God to prepare the mind and lead it to think of death and immortality. We read the names of great men long gone; of wealthy worldlings, whose fortunes have long been spent; of ambitious statesmen and doughty warriors, whose glory is fast fading as their costly mausoleums crumble in the hands of time, and whose stone tablets, green with the lichens' hue, manifest how futile it is to hope to gain immortality from stone, or purchase fame by the cold marble trophies of pompous grief; not that on their glassy surface the truth is always faithfully mirrored forth, even when the thoughts of holy men composed the eulogy; the tombs of old knew as well how to lie as now, and even ascetic monks could become too warm in their praises of departed worth; for whilst they blamed the great man living, with Christian charity they thought only of his virtues when they had nothing but his body left, and murmured long prayers, said tedious masses, and kept midnight vigils for his soul. For had he not shown his love to God by his munificence to His Church on earth? *Benedicite*, saith the monks.



FOOTNOTES:

[153] Bede's Eccles. Hist., B. iii. c. xvi.

[154] Bede, B. iv. c. xxvii.

[155] Marked Nero, D. iv. in the Cottonian collection.

[156] The illuminations are engraved in Strutt's *Horda*.

[157] There is prologue to the Canons and Prefaces of St. Jerome and Eusebius, and also a beautiful calendar written in compartments, elaborately finished in an architectural style.

[158] He also transcribed the Durham Ritual, recently printed by the Surtee Society; when Alfred wrote this volume he was with bishop Alfsige, p. 185, 8vo. *Lond.* 1840.

[159] For an account of this rare gem of Saxon art, see *Selden Præf. ad. Hist. Angl.* p. 25. *Marshall Observat. in Vers. Sax. Evang.*, 491. *Dibdin's Decameron, p.* lii. *Smith's Bibl. Cotton. Hist. et Synop.*, p. 33.

[160] Simeon of Durham translated by Stevens, p. 87.

[161] Simeon of Durham, by Stevens.

[162] Ep. viii.

[163] Tertia Quinquagina Augustini, marked B. ii. 14.

[164] Surtee publications, vol. i. p. 117.

[165] This catalogue is preserved at Durham, in the library of the Dean and Chapter, marked

B. iv. 24. It is printed in the Surtee publications, vol. i. p. 1.

[166] "King Stephen was vncle vnto him."—*Godwin's Cat. of Bishops*, 511.

[167] He died in 1195.—Godwin, p. 735. He gave them also another Bible in two volumes; a list of the whole is printed in the Surtee publications, vol. i. p. 118.

[168] Surtee's Hist, of Durham, vol. i. p. xxxii. "He was wonderfull rich, not onely in ready money but in lands also, and temporall revenues. For he might dispend yeerely 5000 marks."—*Godwin's Cat. Eng. Bish.* 4to. 1601, p. 520.

[169] Robert de Graystane's ap. Wharton's Angl. Sacr. p. 748, tom. i.—*Hutchinson's Durham*, vol. i. p. 244.

[170] Surtee publ. vol. i. p. 121.

[171] Raine's North Durham, p. 85.

[172] Surtee public. vol. 1. p. 39-40.

[173] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 41.

[174] Chambre Contin. Hist. Dunelm. apud Wharton Angliæ Sacra, tom. i. p. 765.

[175] Lord Campbell's Lives of the Lord Chancellors, vol. i. p. 219.

[176] Absconditus est in Campanili fratrum minorum.—*Chambre ap. Wharton*, tom. i. p. 765.

[177] In one of his letters Petrarch speaks of De Bury as *Virum ardentis ingenii*, Pet. ep. 1-3.

[178] Epist. Seniles, lib. xvi. ep. 1.

[179] Foscolo's Essays on Petrarch, p. 151.

[180] Foscolo's Essays on Petrarch, p. 156. Famil. ep. lxxii.

[181] Hortatio ad Nicol. Laurent Petrar., Op. vol. i. p. 596.

[182] *Apud Wharton Ang. Sac.* tom. i. p. 765.

[183] *Ibid.*

[184] MS. Harleian, No. 3224, fo. 89, b.

[185] There are two MSS. of the Philobiblon in the British Museum, which I quote in giving my Latin Extracts. The first is in the Cotton collection, marked Appendix iv. fol. 103. At the end are these lines, *Ric. de Aungervile cognominato de Bury, Dunelm. Episc. Philobiblon completum in Manerio de Auckland, d. 24 Jan. 1344*, fol. 119, b. The other is in the Harleian Collection, No. 3224, both are in fine preservation. The first printed edition appeared at Cologne, 1473, in 4to., without pagination, signatures, or catchwords, with 48 leaves, 26 lines on a full page; for some time, on account of its excessive rarity, which kept it from the eyes of book-lovers, bibliographers confused it with the second edition printed by John and Conrad Hüst, at Spires, in 1483, 4to. which, like the first, is without pagination, signatures, or catchwords, but it has only 39 pages, with 31 lines on a full page. Two editions were printed in 1500, 4to. at Paris, but I have only seen one of them. A fifth edition was printed at Oxford by T. J(ames), 4to. 1599. In 1614 it was published by Goldastus in 8vo. at Frankfort, with a *Philologicarium Epistolarum Centuria una*. Another edition of this same book was printed in 1674, 8vo. at Leipsic, and a still better edition appeared in 1703 by Schmidt, in 4to. The Philobiblon has recently been translated

by Inglis, 8vo. *Lond.* 1834, with much accuracy and spirit, and I have in many cases availed myself of this edition, though I do not always exactly follow it.

[186] "Greges et Vellera, Fruges et honea, Porri et Olera, Potus et Patera rectiones sunt hodie et studio monachorum."—MS. Harl. 2324, fol. 79, a; MS. Cot. ap. iv. fo. 108, a.

[187] Wharton Ang. Sac., tom. i. p. 766, he is called *Ricardus Fitz-Rause postomodum Archiepiscopus Armachanus*.

[188] Scarcely.

[189] Translated by Trevisa, MS. Harleian, No. 1900, fol. 11, b.

[190] The original is *grandis et nobilis libraria*.

[191] Chaplain.

[192] Could not.

[193] Profitable.

[194] Philobiblon, transl. by Inglis, p. 56.

[195] "Curiam deinde vero Rem. publicam Regni sui Cacellarii, viz.: est ac Thesaurii fugeremur officiis, patescebat nobis aditus faciles regal favoris intuitu, ad libros latebras libere perscruta tandas amoris quippe nostri fama volatitis jam ubiqs. percreluit tam qs. libros *et maxime veterum* ferabatur cupidite las vestere posse vero quemlibet nostrum per quaternos facilius quam per pecuniam adipisa favorem."—MS. Harl. fo. 85, a. MS. Cott. 110, b.

[196] MS. Cottonian Claudius, E. iv. fol. 203, b. *Warton's Hist. of Poetry, Dissert. ii.*; and *Hallam's* Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 611. Both

notice this circumstance as a proof of the scarcity of books in De Bury's time.

[197] *Ibid.* Among the MSS. in the Royal Library, there is a copy of John of Salisbury's *Ententicus* which contains the following note, "Hunc librum fecit dominus Symon abbas S. Albani, quem postea venditum domino *Ricardo* de Bury. Episcope Dunelmensi emit Michael abbas S. Albani ab executoribus prædicti episcopi, A. D. 1345." Marked 13 D. iv. 3. The same abbot expended a large sum in buying books for the library, but we shall speak more of Michael de Wentmore by and bye.

[198] "Sed revera libros non libras maluimus, Codicesque plus quam florenos, ac pampletos exiguos incrussatis prœtulimus palafridis."—MS. Harl. fo. 86, a. MS. Cott. fo. 111, a.

[199] Inglis's Translation, p. 53.

[200] Inglis's Translation, p. 58.

[201] The Stationers or Booksellers carried on their business on open Stalls.—*Hallam, Lit. Europe*, vol. i. p. 339. It is pleasing to think that the same temptations which allure the bookworm now, in his perambulations, can claim such great antiquity, and that through so many centuries, bibliophiles and bibliopoles remain unaltered in their habits and singularities; but alas! this worthy relic of the middle ages I fear is passing into oblivion. Plate-glass fronts and bulky expensive catalogues form the bookseller's pride in these days of speed and progress, and offer more splendid temptations to the collector, but sad obstacles to the hungry student and black-letter bargain hunters.

[202] *Philob.* xix.

[203] Inglis, p. 96. "In primis quidam circa claudenda et apienda volumina, sit matura modestia; ut nec præcipiti festinatione solvantur, nec inspectione finita, sina clausura debita dimittantur." *MS. Harl.* fol. 103.

[204] *Chambre ap. Wharton*, tom. i. p. 766.

[205] Godwin Cat. of Bish. 525.

[206] *Chambre ap. Wharton*, tom. i. p. 766.

[207] It is marked A, ii. 16, and described in the old MS. catalogue as *De manus Bedæ*, ii. fol. *Baptizatus*.

[208] The attractive words "*Est vetus Liber*" often occur.

[209] From a volume of Thomas Aquinas, the following is transcribed: "Lib. Sti. Cuthberti de Dunelm, ex procuratione fratis Roberti de Graystane quem qui aliena verit maledictionem Sanctorum Mariæ, Oswaldi, Cuthberti et Benedicti incurrat." See *Surtee publications*, vol. i. p. 35, where other instances are given.

[210] Surtee publ. vol. i. p. 85.

[211] He wrote The Chronicle of Durham Monastery in 1130.

[212] His book on the Rights and Privileges of Durham Church is in the Cottonian Library, marked *Vitellius*, A, 9.

[213] Lawrence was elected prior in 1149, "a man of singular prudence and learning, as the many books he writ manifest." *Dugdale's Monast.* vol. 1. p. 230.

[214] Wrote the Life and Miracles of St. Cuthbert, the original book is in the Durham

Library.

CHAPTER VI

Croyland Monastery.—Its Library increased by Egebric.—Destroyed by Fire.—Peterborough.—Destroyed by the Danes.—Benedict and his books.—Anecdotes of Collectors.—Catalogue of the Library of the Abbey of Peterborough.—Leicester Library, etc.

THE low marshy fens of Lincolnshire are particularly rich in monastic remains; but none prove so attractive to the antiquary as the ruins of the splendid abbey of Croyland. The pen of Ingulphus has made the affairs of that old monastery familiar to us; he has told us of its prospering and its misfortunes, and we may learn moreover from the pages of the monk how many wise and virtuous men, of Saxon and Norman days, were connected with this

ancient fabric, receiving education there, or devoting their lives to piety within its walls. It was here that Guthlac, a Saxon warrior, disgusted with the world, sought solitude and repose; and for ten long years he led a hermit's life in that damp and marshy fen; in prayer and fasting, working miracles, and leading hearts to God, he spent his lonely days, all which was rewarded by a happy and peaceful death, and a sanctifying of his corporeal remains—for many wondrous miracles were wrought by those holy relics.

Croyland abbey was founded on the site of Guthlac's hermitage, by Ethelred, king of Mercia. Many years before, when he was striving for the crown of that kingdom, his cousin, Crobrid, who then enjoyed it, pursued him with unremitting enmity; and worn out, spiritless and exhausted, the royal wanderer sought refuge in the hermit's cell. The holy man comforted him with every assurance of success; and prophesied that he would soon obtain his rights without battle or without bloodshed;[215] in return for these brighter prospects, and these kind wishes, Ethelred promised to found a monastery on that very spot in honor of God and St. Guthlac, which promise he faithfully fulfilled in the year 716, and "thus the wooden oratory was followed by a church of stone." Succeeding benefactors endowed, and succeeding abbots enriched it with their learning; and as years rolled by so it grew and flourished till it became great in wealth and powerful in its influence. But a gloomy day approached—the Danes destroyed that noble structure, devastating it by fire, and besmearing its holy altars with the blood of its hapless inmates. But zealous piety and monkish perseverance again restored it, with new and additional lustre; and besides adding to the splendor

of the edifice, augmented its internal comforts by forming a library of considerable importance and value. We may judge how dearly they valued a *Bibliotheca* in those old days by the contribution of one benevolent book-lover—Egebric, the second abbot of that name, a man whom Ingulphus says was "far more devoted to sacred learning and to the perusal of books than skilled in secular matters,"[216] gladdened the hearts of the monks with a handsome library, consisting of forty original volumes in various branches of learning, and more than one hundred volumes of different tracts and histories, [217] besides eighteen books for the use of the divine offices of the church. Honor to the monk who, in the land of dearth, could amass so bountiful a provision for the intellect to feed upon; and who encouraged our early literature—when feeble and trembling by the renewed attacks of rapacious invaders—by such fostering care.

In the eleventh century Croyland monastery was doomed to fresh misfortunes; a calamitous fire, accidental in its origin, laid the fine monastery in a heap of ruins, and scattered its library in blackened ashes to the winds.[218] A sad and irreparable loss was that to the Norman monks and to the students of Saxon history in modern times; for besides four hundred Saxon charters, deeds, etc., many of the highest historical interest and value beautifully illuminated in gold (*aureis pictures*) and written in Saxon characters,[219] the whole of the choice and ample library was burnt, containing seven hundred volumes, besides the books of divine offices—the Antiphons and Grailes. I will not agonize the bibliophile by expatiating further on the sad work of

destruction; but is he not somewhat surprised that in those bookless days seven hundred volumes should have been amassed together, besides a lot of church books and Saxon times?

Ingulphus, who has so graphically described the destruction of Croyland monastery by the Danes in 870, has also given the particulars of their proceedings at the monastery of Peterborough, anciently called Medeshamstede, to which they immediately afterwards bent their steps. The monks, on hearing of their approach, took the precaution to guard the monastery by all the means in their power; but the quiet habits of monastic life were ill suited to inspire them with a warlike spirit, and after a feeble resistance, their cruel enemies (whom the monks speak of in no gentle terms, as the reader may imagine), soon effected an entrance; in the contest however Tulla, the brother of Hulda, the Danish leader, was slain by a stone thrown by one of the monks from the walls; this tended to kindle the fury of the besiegers, and so exasperated Hulda that it is said he killed with his own hand the whole of the poor defenceless monks, including their venerable abbot. The sacred edifice, completely in their hands, was soon laid waste; they broke down the altars, destroyed the monuments, and—much will the bibliophile deplore it—set fire to their immense library "*ingens bibliotheca*," maliciously tearing into pieces all their valuable and numerous charters, evidences, and writings. The monastery, says the historian, continued burning for fifteen days.[220] This seat of Saxon learning was left buried in its ruins for near one hundred years, when Athelwold, bishop of Winchester, in the year 966, restored it; but in the course of time, after a century of peaceful repose, fresh troubles sprang up. When Turoldus, a

Norman, who had been appointed by William the Conqueror, was abbot, the Danes again paid them a visit of destruction. Hareward de Wake having joined a Danish force, proceeded to the town of Peterborough; fortunately the monks obtained some intelligence of their coming, which gave Turoldus time to repair to Stamford with his retinue. Taurus, the Sacrist, also managed to get away, carrying with him some of their treasures, and among them a text of the Gospels, which he conveyed to his superior at Stamford, and by that means preserved them. On the arrival of the Danes, the remaining monks were prepared to offer a somewhat stern resistance, but without effect; for setting fire to the buildings, the Danes entered through the flames and smoke, and pillaged the monastery of all its valuable contents; and that which they could not carry away, they destroyed: not even sparing the shrines of holy saints, or the miracle-working dust contained therein. The monks possessed a great cross of a most costly nature, which the invaders endeavored to take away, but could not on account of its weight and size; however, they broke off the gold crown from the head of the crucifix, and the footstool under its feet, which was made of pure gold and gems; they also carried away two golden biers, on which the monks carried the relics of their saints; with nine silver ones. There was certainly no monachal poverty here, for their wealth must have been profuse; besides the above treasures, they took twelve crosses, made of gold and silver; they also went up to the tower and took away a table of large size and value, which the monks had hid there, trusting it might escape their search; it was a splendid affair, made of gold and silver and precious stones, and was usually placed before the altar. But besides all this, they

robbed them of that which those poor monkish bibliophiles loved more than all. Their library, which they had collected with much care, and which contained many volumes, was carried away, "with many other precious things, the like of which were not to be found in all England."[221] The abbot and those monks who fortunately escaped, afterwards returned, sad and sorrowful no doubt; but trusting in their Divine Master and patron Saint, they ultimately succeeded in making their old house habitable again, and well fortified it with a strong wall, so that formerly it used to be remarked that this building looked more like a military establishment than a house of God.

Eminently productive was the monastery of Peterborough in Saxon bibliomaniacs. Its ancient annals prove how enthusiastically they collected and transcribed books. There were few indeed of its abbots who did not help in some way or other to increase their library. Kenulfus, who was abbot in the year 992, was a learned and eloquent student in divine and secular learning. He much improved his monastery, and greatly added to its literary treasures.[222] But the benefactors of this place are too numerous to be minutely specified here. Hugo Candidus tells us, that Kinfernus, Archbishop of York, in 1056, gave them many valuable ornaments; and among them a fine copy of the Gospels, beautifully adorned with gold. This puts us in mind of Leofricus, a monk of the abbey, who was made abbot in the year 1057. He is said to have been related to the royal family, a circumstance which may account for his great riches. He was a sad pluralist, and held at one time no less than five monasteries, viz. Burton, Coventy, Croyland, Thorney, and Peterborough.[223] He gave to the

church of Peterborough many and valuable utensils of gold, silver, and precious stones, and a copy of the Gospels bound in gold.[224]

But in all lights, whether regarded as an author or a bibliophile, great indeed was Benedict, formerly prior of Canterbury, and secretary to Thomas à Becket,[225] of whom it is supposed he wrote a life. He was made abbot of Peterborough in the year 1177; he compiled a history of Henry II. and king Richard I.;[226] he is spoken of in the highest terms of praise by Robert Swapham for his profound wisdom and great erudition in secular matters.[227] There can be no doubt of his book-loving passion; for during the time he was abbot he transcribed himself, and ordered others to transcribe, a great number of books. Swapham has preserved a catalogue of them, which is so interesting that I have transcribed it entire. The list is entitled:

de libris ejus.

- Plurimos quoque libros 3 scribere fecit, quorum nomina subnotantur.
- Vetus et Novum Testamentum in uno volumine.
- Vetus et Novum Testamentum in 4 volumina.
- Quinque libri Moysi glosati in uno volumine.
- Sexdecim Prophetæ glosati in uno volumine.
- Duodecim minores glosati Prophetæ in uno volumine.
- Liber Regum glosatus, paralipomenon glosatus. Job, Parabolæ Solomonis et Ecclesiastes, Cantica Canticorum glosati in uno volumine.
- Liber Ecclesiasticus et Liber Sapientiæ glosatus in uno volumine.

- Tobyas, Judith, Ester et Esdras, glosati in uno volumine.
- Liber Judicum glosatus.
- Scholastica hystoria.
- Psalterium glosatum.
- Item non glosatum.
- Item Psalterium.
- Quatuor Evangelia glosata in uno volumine.
- Item Mathæus et Marcus in uno volumine.
- Johannes et Lucas in uno volumine.
- Epistolæ Pauli glosatæ Apocalypsis et Epistolæ Canonicæ glosata in uno volumine.
- Sententiæ Petri Lombardi.
- Item Sententiæ ejusdem.
- Sermones Bernardi Abbatis Clarevallensis.
- Decreta Gratiani.
- Item Decreta Gratiani.
- Summa Ruffini de Decretis.
- Summa Johannes Fuguntini de Decretis.
- Decretales Epistolæ.
- Item Decretales Epistolæ.
- Item Decretales Epistolæ cum summa sic incipiente; Olim. Institutiones Justiniani cum autenticis et Infortiatio Digestum vetus.
- Tres partes cum digesto novo.
- Summa Placentini.
- Totum Corpus Juris in duobus voluminibus.
- Arismetica.
- Epistolæ Senecæ cum aliis Senecis in uno volumine.
- Martialis totus et Terentius in uno volumine.
- Morale dogma philosophorum.
- Gesta Alexandri et Liber Claudii et Claudiani.
- Summa Petri Heylæ de Grammatica, cum multis allis rebus in uno volumine.
- Gesta Regis Henrica secunda et Genealogiæ

ejus.
- Interpretatione Hebraicorum nominum.
- Libellus de incarnatione verbi. Liber Bernardi Abbatis ad Eugenium papam.
- Missale.
- Vitæ Sancti Thomæ Martyris.[228]
- Miracula ejusdem in quinque voluminibus.
- Liber Richardi Plutonis, qui dicitur, unde Malum Meditationes Anselmi.
- Practica Bartholomæi cum multis allis rebus in uno volumine.
- Ars Physicæ Pantegni, et practica ipsius in uno volumine.
- Almazor et Diascoridis de virtutibus herbarum.
- Liber Dinamidiorum et aliorum multorum in uno volumine.
- Libellus de Compoto.

Sixty volumes! perhaps containing near 100 separate works, and all added to the library in the time of one abbot; surely this is enough to controvert the opinion that the monks cared nothing for books or learning, and let not the Justin, Seneca, Martial, Terence, and Claudian escape the eye of the reader, those monkish bookworms did care a little, it would appear, for classical literature. But what will he say to the fine Bibles that crown and adorn the list? The two complete copies of the *Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, and the many glossed portions of the sacred writ, reflect honor upon the Christian monk, and placed him conspicuously among the bible students of the middle ages; proving too, that while he could esteem the wisdom of Seneca, and the vivacity of Terence, and feel a deep interest in the secular history of his own times, he did not lose sight of the fountain of all knowledge, but gave to the Bible his first care, and

the most prominent place on his library shelf. Besides the books which the abbots collected for the monastery, they often possessed a private selection for their own use; there are instances in which these collections were of great extent; some of which we shall notice, but generally speaking they seldom numbered many volumes. Thus Robert of Lyndeshye, who was abbot of Peterborough in 1214, only possessed six volumes, which were such as he constantly required for reference or devotion; they consisted of a Numerale Majestri W. de Montibus cum alliis rebus; Tropi Majestri Petri cum diversis summis; Sententiæ Petri Pretanensis; Psalterium Glossatum; Aurora; Psalterium;[229] Historiale. These were books continually in requisition, and which he possessed to save the trouble of constantly referring to the library. His successor, abbot Holdernesse, possessed also twelve volumes,[230] and Walter of St. Edmundsbury Abbot, in 1233, had eighteen books, and among them a fine copy of the Bible for his private study. Robert of Sutton in 1262, also abbot of Peterborough, possessed a similar number, containing a copy of the Liber Naturalium Anstotelis; and his successor, Richard of London, among ten books which formed his private library, had the Consolation of Philosophy, a great favorite in the monasteries. In the year 1295 William of Wodeforde, collected twenty volumes, but less than that number constituted the library of Adam de Botheby, who was abbot of Peterborough many years afterwards, but among them I notice a Seneca, with thirty-six others contained in the same volume.[231]

Abbot Godfrey, elected in the year 1299, was a great benefactor to the church, as we learn from Walter de Whytlesse, who gives a long list of donations made by him; among a vast quantity of valuables, "he gave

to the church *two Bibles*, one of which was written in France," with about twenty other volumes. In the war which occurred during his abbacy, between John Baliol of Scotland and Edward I. of England, the Scots applied to the pope for his aid and council; his holiness deemed it his province to interfere, and directed letters to the king of England, asserting that the kingdom of Scotland appertained to the Church of Rome; in these letters he attempt to prove that it was opposed to justice, and, what he deemed of still greater importance, to the interests of the holy see, that the king of England should not have dominion over the kingdom of Scotland. The pope's messengers on this occasion were received by abbot Godfrey; Walter says that "He honorably received two cardinals at Peterborough with their retinues, who were sent by the pope to make peace between the English and the Scotch, and besides cheerfully entertaining them with food and drink, gave them divers presents; to one of the cardinals, named Gaucelin, he gave a certain psalter, beautifully written in letters of gold and purple, and marvellously illuminated, *literis aureis et assuris scriptum et mirabiliter luminatum*.[232] I give this anecdote to show how splendidly the monks inscribed those volumes designed for the service of the holy church. I ought to have mentioned before that Wulstan, archbishop of York, gave many rare and precious ornaments to Peterborough, nor should I omit a curious little book anecdote related of him. He was born at Jceritune in Warwickshire, and was sent by his parents to Evesham, and afterwards to Peterborough, where he gave great indications of learning. His schoolmaster, who was an Anglo-Saxon named Erventus, was a clever calligraphist, and is said to have been highly proficient in the art of

illuminating; he instructed Wulstan in these accomplishments, who wrote under his direction a sacramentary and a psalter, and illuminated the capitals with many pictures painted in gold and colors; they were executed with so much taste that his master presented the sacramentary to Canute, and the psalter to his queen."[233]

From these few facts relative to Peterborough Monastery, the reader will readily perceive how earnestly books were collected by the monks there, and will be somewhat prepared to learn that a catalogue of 1,680 volumes is preserved, which formerly constituted the library of that fraternity of bibliophiles. This fine old catalogue, printed by Gunton in his history of the abbey, covers fifty folio pages; it presents a faithful mirror of the literature of its day, and speaks well for the bibliomanical spirit of the monks of Peterborough. Volumes of patristic eloquence and pious erudition crowd the list; chronicles, poetry, and philosophical treatises are mingled with the titles of an abundant collection of classic works, full of the lore of the ancient world. Although the names may be similar to those which I have extracted from other catalogues, I must not omit to give a few of them; I find works of—

- Augustine.
- Ambrose.
- Albinus.
- Cassiodorus.
- Gregory.
- Cyprian.
- Seneca.
- Prosper.
- Tully.
- Bede.

- Basil.
- Lanfranc.
- Chrysostom.
- Jerome.
- Eusebius.
- Bœthius.
- Isidore.
- Origin.
- Dionysius.
- Cassian.
- Bernard.
- Anselm.
- Alcuinus.
- Honorius.
- Donatus.
- Macer.
- Persius.
- Virgil.
- Isagoge of Porphry.
- Aristotle.
- Entyci Grammatica.
- Socrates.
- Ovid.
- Priscian.
- Hippocrates.
- Horace.
- Sedulus.
- Theodulus.
- Sallust.
- Macrobius.
- Cato.
- Prudentius.

But although they possessed these fine authors and many others equally choice, I am not able to say much for the biblical department of their library, I

should have anticipated a goodly store of the Holy Scriptures, but in these necessary volumes they were unusually poor. But I suspect the catalogue to have been compiled during the fifteenth century, and I fear too, that in that age the monks were growing careless of Scripture reading, or at least relaxing somewhat in the diligence of their studies; perhaps they devoured the attractive pages of Ovid, and loved to read his amorous tales more than became the holiness of their priestly calling.[234] At any rate we may observe a marked change as regards the prevalence of the Bible in monastic libraries between the twelfth and the fifteenth century. It is true we often find them in those of the later age; but sometimes they are entirely without, and frequently only in detached portions.[235] I may illustrate this by a reference to the library of the Abbey of St. Mary de la Pré at Leicester, which gloried in a collection of 600 volumes, of the choicest and almost venerable writers. It was written in the year 1477, by William Chartye,[236] prior of the abbey, and an old defective and worn out Bible, *Biblie defect et usit*, with some detached portions, was all that fine library contained of the Sacred Writ. The bible *defect et usit* speaks volumes to the praise of the ancient monks of that house, for it was by their constant reading and study, that it had become so thumbed and worn; but it stamps with disgrace the affluent monks of the fifteenth century, who, while they could afford to buy, in the year 1470,[237] some thirty volumes with a Seneca, Ovid, Claudian, Macrobius, Æsop, etc., among them, and who found time to transcribe twice as many more, thought not of restoring their bible tomes, or adding one book of the Holy Scripture to their crowded shelves. But alas! monachal piety was waxing cool and indifferent then, and it is rare to

find the honorable title of an *Amator Scripturarum* affixed to a monkish name in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

FOOTNOTES:

[215] Gough's Hist. Croyland in Bibl. Top. Brit. xi. p. 3.

[216] Inguph. in Gale's Script. tom. i. p. 53.

[217] "Debit iste Abbas Egebricus communi bibliothecæ clanstralium monachorum magna volumina diversorum doctorum originalia numero quadraginta; minora vero volumina de diversæ tractatibus et historiis, quæ numerum centenarium excedibant." Ingul. p. 53.

[218] The fire occurred in 1091. Ingulphus relates with painful minuteness the progress of the work of destruction, and enumerates all the rich treasures which those angry flames consumed. I should have given a longer account of this event had not the Rev. Mr. Maitland already done so in his interesting work on the "*Dark Ages*."

[219] Gale's Remin. Ang. Scrip. i. p. 98.

[220] Ingulph. ap. Gale i. p. 25.

[221] See Gunter's Peterborough, suppl. 263.

[222] Hugo Candid, p. 31; Tamer Bib. Brit. et Hib. p. 175. Candidus says, "Flos literaris disciplina, torrens eloquentiæ, decus et norma rerum divinarum et secularium."

[223] Hugo Candid. ap. Sparke, Hist. Ang. Scrip. p. 41. Gunter's Peterboro, p. 15, ed. 1686.

[224] Hugo Candid. p. 42.

[225] Leland de Scrip. Brit. p. 217.

[226] Published by Hearne, 2 vol. 8vo. *Oxon.* 1735.

[227] Rt. Swap. ap. Sparke, p. 97. "Erat. enin literarum scientiæ satis imbutus; regulari disciplina optime instructus; sapientia seculari plenissime eruditus."

[228] Swapham calls this "Egregium volumen," p. 98.

[229] Now preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries.

[230] Gunter, Peterborough, p. 29.

[231] Ibid, p. 37.

[232] Walter de Whytlesse apud Sparke, p. 173.

[233] Gunter's Hist. of Peterborough, p. 259.

[234] At any rate, we find about thirty volumes of Ovid's works enumerated, and several copies of "de Arte Amandi," and "de Remedis Amoris."

[235] Let the reader examine Leland's Collect., and the Catalogues printed in Hunter's Tract on Monastic Libraries. See also Catalogue of Canterbury Library, MS. Cottonian Julius, c. iv. 4., in the British Museum.

[236] Printed by Nichols, in Appendix to Hist. of Leicester, from a MS. Register. It contains almost as fine a collection of the classics and fathers as that at Peterborough, just noticed, Aristotle, Virgil, Plato, Ovid, Cicero, Euclid, Socrates, Horace, Lucan, Seneca, etc., etc. are among them, pp. 101 to 108. It is curious that Leland mentions only six MSS. as forming the

library at the time he visited the Abbey of Leicester, all its fine old volumes were gone. He only arrived in time to pick up the crumbs.

[237] At least during the time of William Charteys priorship. See Nichols, p. 108.

CHAPTER VII

King Alfred an "amator librorum" and an author.

THE latter part of the tenth century was a most memorable period in the annals of monkish bibliomania, and gave birth to one of the brightest scholars that ever shone in the dark days of our Saxon forefathers. King Alfred, in honor of whose talents posterity have gratefully designated the Great, spread a fostering care over the feeble remnant of native literature which the Danes in their cruel depredations had left unmolested. The noble aspirations of this royal student and patron of

learning had been instilled into his mind by the tender care of a fond parent. It was from the pages of a richly illuminated little volume of Saxon poetry, given to him by the queen as a reward for the facility with which he had mastered its contents, that he first derived that intense love of books which never forsook him, though the sterner duties of his after position frequently required his thoughts and energies in another channel. Having made himself acquainted with this little volume, Alfred found a thirst for knowledge grow upon him, and applied his youthful mind to study with the most zealous ardor; but his progress was considerably retarded, because he could not, at that time, find a Grammaticus capable of instructing him,[238] although he searched the kingdom of the West Saxons. Yet he soon acquired the full knowledge of his own language, and the Latin it is said he knew as well, and was able to use with a fluency equal to his native tongue; he could comprehend the meaning of the Greek, although perhaps he was incapable of using it to advantage. He was so passionately fond of books, and so devoted to reading, that he constantly carried about him some favorite volume which, as a spare moment occurred, he perused with the avidity of an *helluo librorum*. This pleasing anecdote related by Asser[239] is characteristic of his natural perseverance.

When he ascended the throne, he lavished abundant favors upon all who were eminent for their literary acquirements; and displayed in their distribution the utmost liberality and discrimination. Asser, who afterwards became his biographer, was during his life the companion and associate of his studies, and it

is from his pen we learn that, when an interval occurred inoccupied by his princely duties, Alfred stole into the quietude of his study to seek comfort and instruction from the pages of those choice volumes, which comprised his library. But Alfred was not a mere bookworm, a devourer of knowledge without purpose or without meditation of his own, he thought with a student's soul well and deeply upon what he read, and drew from his books those principles of philanthropy, and those high resolves, which did such honor to the Saxon monarch. He viewed with sorrow the degradation of his country, and the intellectual barrenness of his time; the warmest aspiration of his soul was to diffuse among his people a love for literature and science, to raise them above their Saxon sloth, and lead them to think of loftier matters than war and carnage. To effect this noble aim, the highest to which the talents of a monarch can be applied, he for a length of time devoted his mind to the translation of Latin authors into the vernacular tongue. In his preface to the Pastoral of Gregory which he translated, he laments the destruction of the old monastic libraries by the Danes. "I saw," he writes, "before alle were spoiled and burnt, how the churches throughout Britain were filled with treasures and books,"[240] which must have presented a striking contrast to the illiterate darkness which he tells us afterwards spread over his dominions, for there were then very few *paucissimi* who could translate a Latin epistle into the Saxon language.

When Alfred had completed the translation of Gregory's Pastoral, he sent a copy to each of his bishops accompanied with a golden stylus or pen, [241] thus conveying to them the hint that it was their duty to use it in the service of piety and

learning. Encouraged by the favorable impression which this work immediately caused, he spared no pains to follow up the good design, but patiently applied himself to the translation of other valuable books which he rendered into as pleasing and expressive a version as the language of those rude times permitted. Besides these literary labors he also wrote many original volumes, and became a powerful orator, a learned grammarian, an acute philosopher, a profound mathematician, and the prince of Saxon poesy; with these exalted talents he united those of an historian, an architect, and an accomplished musician. A copious list of his productions, the length of which proves the fertility of his pen, will be found in the Biographica Britannica,[242] but names of others not there enumerated may be found in monkish chronicles; of his Manual, which was in existence in the time of William of Malmsbury, not a fragment has been found. The last of his labors was probably an attempt to render the psalms into the common language, and so unfold that portion of the Holy Scriptures to our Saxon ancestors.

Alfred, with the assistance of the many learned men whom he had called to his court, restored the monasteries and schools of learning which the Danes had desecrated, and it is said founded the university of Oxford, where he built three halls, in the name of the Holy Trinity; for the doctors of divinity, philosophy, and grammar. The controversy which this subject has given rise to among the learned is too long to enter into here, although the matter is one of great interest to the scholar and to the antiquary.

In the year 901, this royal bibliophile, "the victorious

prince, the studious provider for widows, orphanes, and poore people, most perfect in Saxon poetrie, most liberall endowed with wisdome, fortitude, justice, and temperance, departed this life;"[243] and right well did he deserve this eulogy, for as an old chronicle says, he was "a goode clerke and rote many bokes, and a boke he made in Englysshe, of adventures of kynges and bataylles that had bene wne in the lande; and other bokes of gestes he them wryte, that were of greate wisdome, and of good learnynge, thrugh whych bokes many a man may him amende, that well them rede, and upon them loke. And thys kynge Allured lyeth at Wynchestre."[244]



FOOTNOTES:

[238] Flor. Vigorn. sub. anno. 871. Brompton's Chron. in Alferi, p. 814.

[239] Asser de Alfredi Gestis., Edit. Camden i. p. 5. William Malmsbury, b. ii. c. iv.

[240] Preface to Pastoral.

[241] Much controversy has arisen as to the precise meaning of this word. *Hearne* renders this passage "with certain macussus or marks of gold the purest of his coin," which has led some to suppose gold coinage was known among the Saxons. *William of Malmsbury* calls it a golden style in which was a maucus of

gold. "In Alfred's Preface it is called an Æstel of fifty macuses."—*V. Asser a Wise*, 86 to 175; but the meaning of that word is uncertain. The stylus properly speaking was a small instrument formerly used for writing on waxen tablets, and made of iron or bone, see *Archæologia*, vol. ii. p. 75. But waxen tablets were out of use in Alfred's time. The Æstel or style was most probably an instrument used by the scribes of the monasteries, if it was not actually a pen. I am more strongly disposed to consider it so by the evidence of an ancient MS. illumination of Eadwine, a monk of Canterbury, in Trinity Coll. Camb.; at the end of this MS. the scribe is represented with a *metal pen in his hand*.

[242] Vol. i. pp. 54, 55.

[243] Stowe's Annals, 4to. 1615, p. 105.

[244] Cronycle of Englonde with the Fruyte of Tymes, 4to. 1515.

CHAPTER VIII

Benedict Biscop and his book tours.—Bede.—Ceolfrid.—Wilfrid.—Boniface the Saxon Missionary—His love of books.—Egbert of York.—Alcuin.—Whitby Abbey.—Cædmon.—Classics in the Library of Withby.—Rievall Library.—Coventry.—Worcester.—Evesham.—

Thomas of Marleberg, etc.



HE venerable Bede enables us to show that in the early Saxon days the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow possessed considerable collections of books. Benedict Biscop, the most enthusiastic bibliomaniac of the age, founded the monastery of Wearmouth in the year 674, in honor of the "Most Holy Prince of the Apostles." His whole soul was in the work, he spared neither pains or expense to obtain artists of well known and reputed talent to decorate the holy edifice; not finding them at home, he journeyed to Gaul in search of them, and returned accompanied by numerous expert and ingenious workmen. Within a year the building was sufficiently advanced to enable the monks to celebrate divine service there. He introduced glass windows and other ornaments into his church, and furnished it with numerous books of all descriptions, *innumerabilem librorum omnis generis*. Benedict was so passionately fond of books that he took five journeys to Rome for the purpose of collecting them. In his third voyage he gathered together a large quantity on divine erudition; some of these he bought, or received them as presents from his friends, *vel amicorum dono largitos retulit*. When he arrived at Vienne on his way home, he collected others which he had commissioned his friends to purchase for him.[245] After the completion of his monastery he undertook his fourth journey to Rome; he obtained from the Pope many privileges for the abbey, and returned in

the year 680, bringing with him many more valuable books; he was accompanied by John the Chantor, who introduced into the English churches the Roman method of singing. He was also a great *amator librorum*, and left many choice manuscripts to the monks, which Bede writes "were still preserved in their library." It was about this time that Ecgfrid[246] gave Benedict a portion of land on the other side of the river Wire, at a place called Jarrow; and that enterprising and industrious abbot, in the year 684, built a monastery thereon. No sooner was it completed, than he went a fifth time to Rome to search for volumes to gratify his darling passion. This was the last, but perhaps the most successful of his foreign tours, for he brought back with him a vast quantity of sacred volumes and curious pictures.[247] How deeply is it to be regretted that the relation of the travels which Ceolfrid his successor undertook, and which it is said his own pen inscribed, has been lost to us forever. He probably spoke much of Benedict in the volume and recorded his book pilgrimages. How dearly would the bibliomaniac revel over those early annals of his science, could his eye meet those venerable pages—perhaps describing the choice tomes Benedict met with in his Italian tours, and telling us how, and what, and where he gleaned those fine collections; sweet indeed would have been the perusal of that delectable little volume, full of the book experience of a bibliophile in Saxon days, near twelve hundred years ago! But the ravages of time or the fury of the Danes deprived us of this rare gem, and we are alone dependent on Bede for the incidents connected with the life of this great man; we learn from that venerable author that Benedict was seized with the palsy on his return, and that languishing a few short years, he died in the

year 690; but through pain and suffering he often dwelt on the sweet treasures of his library, and his solemn thoughts of death and immortality were intermixed with many a fond bookish recollection. *His most noble and abundant library which he brought from Rome* he constantly referred to, and gave strict injunctions that the monks should apply the utmost care to the preservation of that rich and costly treasure, in the collection of which so many perils and anxious years were spent.[248]

We all know the force of example, and are not surprised that the sweet mania which ruled so potently over the mind of Benedict, spread itself around the crowned head of royalty. Perhaps book collecting was beginning to make "a stir," and the rich and powerful among the Saxons were regarding strange volumes with a curious eye. Certain it is that Egfride, or Ælfride, the proud king of Northumbria, [249] fondly coveted a beautiful copy of the geographer's (*codice mirandi operis*), which Benedict numbered among his treasures; and so eagerly too did he desire its possession, that he gave in exchange a portion of eight hides of land, near the river Fresca, for the volume; and Ceolfrid, Benedict's successor, received it.

How useful must Benedict's library have been in ripening the mind that was to cast a halo of immortality around that old monastery, and to generate a renown which was long to survive the grey walls of that costly fane; for whilst we now fruitlessly search for any vestiges of its former being, we often peruse the living pages of Bede the venerable with pleasure and instruction, and we feel

refreshed by the breath of piety and devotion which they unfold; yet it must be owned the superstition of Rome will sometimes mar a devout prayer and the simplicity of a Christian thought. But all honor to his manes and to his memory! for how much that is admirable in the human character—how much sweet and virtuous humility was hid in him, in the strict retirement of the cloister. The writings of that humble monk outlive the fame of many a proud ecclesiastic or haughty baron of his day; and well they might, for how homely does his pen record the simple annals of that far distant age. Much have the old monks been blamed for their bad Latin and their humble style; but far from upbraiding, I would admire them for it; for is not the inelegance of diction which their unpretending chronicles display, sufficiently compensated by their charming simplicity. As for myself, I have sometimes read them by the blaze of my cheerful hearth, or among the ruins of some old monastic abbey,[250] till in imagination I beheld the events which they attempt to record, and could almost hear the voice of the "*goode olde monke*" as he relates the deeds of some holy man—in language so natural and idiomatic are they written.

But as we were saying, Bede made ample use of Benedict's library; and the many Latin and Greek books, which he refers to in the course of his writings, were doubtless derived from that source. [251] Ceolfrid, the successor of Benedict, "a man of great zeal, of acute wisdom, and bold in action," was a great lover of books, and under his care the libraries of Wearmouth and Jarrow became nearly doubled in extent; of the nature of these additions we are unable to judge, but probably they were not contemptible.[252]

Wilfrid, bishop of Northumbria, was a dear and intimate friend of Biscop's, and was the companion of one of his pilgrimages to Rome. In his early youth he gave visible signs of a heart full of religion and piety, and he sought by a steady perusal of the Holy Scriptures, in the little monastery of Lindesfarne, to garnish his mind with that divine lore with which he shone so brightly in the Saxon church. It was at the court of Ercenbyrht, king of Kent, that he met with Benedict Biscop; and the sympathy which their mutual learning engendered gave rise to a warm and devoted friendship between them. Both inspired with an ardent desire to visit the apostolic see, they set out together for Rome;[253] and it was probably by the illustrious example of his fellow student and companion, that Wilfrid imbibed that book-loving passion which he afterwards displayed on more than one occasion. On his return from Rome, Alfred of Northumbria bestowed upon him the monastery of Rhypum[254] in the year 661, and endowed it with certain lands. Peter of Blois records, in his life of Wilfrid, that this "man of God" gave the monastery a copy of the gospels, a library, and many books of the Old and New Testament, with certain tablets made with marvellous ingenuity, and ornamented with gold and precious stones.[255] Wilfrid did not long remain in the monastery of Ripon, but advanced to higher honors, and took a more active part in the ecclesiastical affairs of the time.[256] But I am not about to pursue his history, or to attempt to show how his hot and imperious temper, or the pride and avarice of his disposition, wrought many grievous animosities in the Saxon church; or how by his prelatical ambition he deservedly lost the friendship of his King and his ecclesiastical honors.[257]

About this time, and contemporary with Bede, we must not omit one who appears as a bright star in the early Christian church. Boniface,[258] the Saxon missionary, was remarked by his parents to manifest at an early age signs of that talent which in after years achieved so much, and advanced so materially the interests of piety and the cause of civilization. When scarcely four years old his infant mind seemed prone to study, which growing upon him as he increased in years, his parent placed him in the monastery of Exeter. His stay there was not of long duration, for he shortly after removed to a monastery in Hampshire under the care of Wybert. In seclusion and quietude he there studied with indefatigable ardor, and fortified his mind with that pious enthusiasm and profound erudition, which enabled him in a far distant country to render such service to the church. He was made a teacher, and when arrived at the necessary age he was ordained priest. In the year 710, a dispute having occurred among the western church of the Saxons, he was appointed to undertake a mission to the archbishop of Canterbury on the subject. Pleased perhaps with the variety and bustle of travel, and inspired with a holy ambition, he determined to attempt the conversion of the German people, who, although somewhat acquainted with the gospel truths, had nevertheless deviated materially from the true faith, and returned again to their idolatry and paganism. Heedless of the danger of the expedition, but looking forward only to the consummation of his fond design, he started on his missionary enterprise, accompanied by one or two of his monkish brethren.

He arrived at Friesland in the year 716, and proceeded onwards to Utrecht; but disappointments and failures awaited him. The revolt of the

Frieslanders and the persecution then raging there against the Christians, dissipated his hopes of usefulness; and with a heavy heart, no doubt, Boniface retraced his steps, and re-embarked for his English home. Yet hope had not deserted him—his philanthropic resolutions were only delayed for a time; for no sooner had the dark clouds of persecution passed away than his adventurous spirit burst forth afresh, and shone with additional lustre and higher aspirations. After an interval of two years we find him again starting on another Christian mission. On reaching France he proceeded immediately to Rome, and procured admission to the Pope, who, ever anxious for the promulgation of the faith and for the spiritual dominion of the Roman church, highly approved of the designs of Boniface, and gave him letters authorizing his mission among the Thuringians; invested with these powers and with the pontifical blessing, he took his departure from the holy city, well stored with the necessary ornaments and utensils for the performance of the ecclesiastical rites, besides a number of books to instruct the heathens and to solace his mind amidst the cares and anxieties of his travels. After some few years the fruits of his labor became manifest, and in 723 he had baptized vast multitudes in the true faith. His success was perhaps unparalleled in the early annals of the church, and remind us of the more recent wonders wrought by the Jesuit missionaries in India.[259] Elated with these happy results, far greater than even his sanguine mind had anticipated, he sent a messenger to the Pope to acquaint his holiness of these vast acquisitions to his flock, and soon after he went himself to Rome to receive the congratulations and thanks of the Pontiff; he was then made bishop, and entrusted with the

ecclesiastical direction of the new church. After his return, he spent many years in making fresh converts and maintaining the discipline of the faithful. But all these labors and these anxieties were terminated by a cruel and unnatural death; on one of his expeditions he was attacked by a body of pagans, who slew him and nearly the whole of his companions, but it is not here that a Christian must look for his reward—he must rest his hopes on the benevolence and mercy of his God in a distant and far better world. He who would wish to trace more fully these events, and so catch a glimpse of the various incidents which touch upon the current of his life, must not keep the monk constantly before his mind, he must sometimes forget him in that capacity and regard him as a *student*, and that too in the highest acceptation of the term. His youthful studies, which I have said before were pursued with unconquerable energy, embraced grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and the exposition of the Holy Scriptures; the Bible, indeed, he read unceasingly, and drew from it much of the vital truth with which it is inspired; but he perhaps too much tainted it with traditional interpretation and patristical logic. A student's life is always interesting; like a rippling stream, its unobtrusive gentle course is ever pleasing to watch, and the book-worms seems to find in it the counterpart of his own existence. Who can read the life and letters of the eloquent Cicero, or the benevolent Pliny, without the deepest interest; or mark their anxious solicitude after books, without sincere delight. Those elegant epistles reflect the image of their private studies, and so to behold Boniface in a student's garb, to behold his love of books and passion for learning, we must alike have recourse to his letters.

The epistolary correspondence of the middle ages is a

mirror of those times, far more faithful as regards their social condition than the old chronicles and histories designed for posterity; written in the reciprocity of friendly civilities, they contain the outpourings of the heart, and enable us to peep into the secret thoughts and motives of the writer; "for out of the fulness of the hearth the mouth speaketh." Turning over the letters of Boniface, we cannot but be forcibly struck with his great knowledge of Scripture; his mind seems to have been quite a concordance in itself, and we meet with epistles almost solely framed of quotations from the sacred books, in substantiation of some principle, or as grounds for some argument advanced. These are pleasurable instances, and convey a gentle hint that the greater plenitude of the Bible has not, in all cases, emulated us to study it with equal energy; there are few who would now surpass the Saxon bishop in biblical reading.

Most students have felt, at some period or other, a thirst after knowledge without the means of assuaging it—have felt a craving after books when their pecuniary circumstances would not admit of their acquisition, such will sympathize with Boniface, the student in the wilds of Germany, who, far from monastic libraries, sorely laments in some of his letters this great deprivation, and entreats his friends, sometimes in most piteous terms, to send him books. In writing to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, he asks for copies, and begs him to send the book of the six prophets, clearly and distinctly transcribed, and in large letters because his sight he says was growing weak; and because the book of the prophets was much wanted in Germany, and could not be obtained except written so obscurely, and the letters so confusedly joined together, as to be

scarcely readable *ac connexas litteras discere non possum*.[260] To "Majestro Lul" he writes for the productions of bishop Aldhelm, and other works of prose, poetry, and rhyme, to console him in his peregrinations *ad consolationem peregrinationis meæ*.[261] With Abbess Eadburge he frequently corresponded, and received from her many choice and valuable volumes, transcribed by her nuns and sometimes by her own hands; at one period he writes in glowing terms and with a grateful pen for the books thus sent him, and at another time he sends for a copy of the Gospels. "Execute," says he, "a glittering lamp for our hands, and so illuminate the hearts of the Gentiles to a study of the Gospels and to the glory of Christ; and intercede, I pray thee, with your pious prayers for these pagans who are committed by the apostles to our care, that by the mercy of the Saviour of the world they may be delivered from their idolatrous practices, and united to the congregation of mother church, to the honor of the Catholic faith, and to the praise and glory of His name, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."[262]

All this no doubt the good abbess faithfully fulfilled; and stimulated by his friendship and these encouraging epistles, she set all the pens in her monastery industriously to work, and so gratified the Saxon missionary with those book treasures, which his soul so ardently loved; certain it is, that we frequently find him thanking her for books, and with famishing eagerness craving for more; one of his letters,[263] full of gratitude, he accompanies with a present of a silver graphium, or writing instrument, and soon after we find him thus addressing her:

"To the most beloved sister, Abbess

> Eadburge, and all now joined to her house and under her spiritual care. Boniface, the meanest servant of God, wisheth eternal health in Christ."

"My dearest sister, may your assistance be abundantly rewarded hereafter in the mansions of the angels and saints above, for the kind presents of books which you have transmitted to me. Germany rejoices in their spiritual light and consolation, because they have spread lustre into, the dark hearts of the German people; for except we have a lamp to guide our feet, we may, in the words of the Lord, fall into the snares of death. Moreover, through thy gifts I earnestly hope to be more diligent, so that my country may be honored, my sins forgiven, and myself protected from the perils of the sea and the violence of the tempest; and that He who dwells on high may lightly regard my transgression, and give utterance to the words of my mouth, that the Gospel may have free course, and be glorified among men to the honor of Christ."[264]

Writing to Egbert, Archbishop of York, of whose bibliomaniacal character and fine library we have yet to speak, Boniface thanks that illustrious collector for the choice volumes he had kindly sent him, and further entreats Egbert to procure for him transcripts of the smaller works *opusculi* and other tracts of Bede, "who, I hear," he writes, "has, by the divine grace of the Holy Spirit, been permitted to spread such lustre over your country."[265] These, that kind and benevolent prelate sent to him with other books, and received a letter full of gratitude in return, but with all the boldness of a hungry student still asking for more! especially for Bede's Commentary on the Parables of Solomon.[266] He

sents to Archbishop Nothelm for a copy of the Questions of St. Augustine to Pope Gregory, with the answers of the pope, which he says he could not obtain from Rome; and in writing to Cuthbert, also Archbishop of Canterbury, imploring the aid of his earnest prayers, he does not forget to ask for books, but hopes that he may be speedily comforted with the works of Bede, of whose writings he was especially fond, and was constantly sending to his friends for transcripts of them. In a letter to Huetberth he writes for the "most sagacious dissertations of the monk Bede,"[267] and to the Abbot Dudde he sends a begging message for the Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Corinthians[268] by the same. In a letter to Lulla, Bishop of Coena, he deplores the want of books on the phenomena and works of nature, which, he says, were *omnio incognitum* there, and asks for a book on Cosmography;[269] and on another occasion Lulla supplied Boniface with many portions of the Holy Scriptures, and Commentaries upon them.[270] Many more of his epistles might be quoted to illustrate the Saxon missionary as an "*amator librorum*," and to display his profound erudition. In one of his letters we find him referring to nearly all the celebrated authors of the church, and so aptly, that we conclude he must have had their works on his desk, and was deeply read in patristical theology. Boniface has been fiercely denounced for his strong Roman principles, and for his firm adherence to the interests of the pope.[271] Of his theological errors, or his faults as a church disciplinarian, I have nothing here to do, but leave that delicate question to the ecclesiastical historian, having vindicated his character from the charge of ignorance, and displayed some pleasing traits which he evinced as a

student and book-collector. It only remains to be mentioned, that many of the membranous treasures, which Boniface had so eagerly searched for and collected from all parts, were nearly lost forever. The pagans, who murdered Boniface and his fellow-monks, on entering their tents, discovered little to gratify their avarice, save a few relics and a number of books, which, with a barbarism corresponding with their ignorance, they threw into the river as useless; but fortunately, some of the monks, who had escaped from their hands, observing the transaction, recovered them and carried them away in safety with the remains of the martyred missionary, who was afterwards canonized Saint Boniface.

The must remarkable book collector contemporary with Boniface, was Egbert of York, between whom, as we have seen, a bookish correspondence was maintained. This illustrious prelate was brother to King Egbert, of Northumbria, and received his education under Bishop Eata, at Hexham, about the year 686. He afterwards went on a visit to the Apostolic See, and on his return was made Archbishop of York.[272] He probably collected at Rome many of the fine volumes which comprised his library, and which was so celebrated in those old Saxon days; and which will be ever renowned in the annals of ancient bibliomania. The immortal Alcuin sang the praises of this library in a tedious lay; and what glorious tomes of antiquity he there enumerates! But stay, my pen should tarry whilst I introduce that worthy bibliomaniac to my reader, and relate some necessary anecdotes and facts connected with his early life and times.

Alcuin was born in England, and probably in the immediate vicinity of York; he was descended from

affluent and noble parents; but history is especially barren on this subject, and we have no information to instruct us respecting the antiquity of his Saxon ancestry. But if obscurity hangs around his birth, so soon as he steps into the paths of learning and ranks with the students of his day, we are no longer in doubt or perplexity; but are able from that period to his death to trace the occurrences of his life with all the ease that a searcher of monkish history can expect. He had the good fortune to receive his education from Egbert, and under his care he soon became initiated into the mysteries of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence; which were relieved by the more fascinating study of poetry, physics, and astronomy.[273] So much was he esteemed by his master the archbishop, that he entrusted him with a mission to Rome, to receive from the hands of the Pope his pall; on his return he called at Parma, where he had an interview with Charles the Great; who was so captivated with his eloquence and erudition that he eagerly entreated him to remain, and to aid in diffusing throughout his kingdom the spirit of that knowledge which he had so successfully acquired in the Saxon monasteries. But Alcuin was equally anxious for the advancement of literature in his own country; and being then on a mission connected with his church, he could do no more than hold out a promise of consulting his superiors, to whose decisions he considered himself bound to submit.

During the dominion of Charles, the ecclesiastical as well as the political institutions of France, were severely agitated by heresy and war: the two great questions of the age—the Worship of Images and the Nature of Christ—divided and perplexed the members of a church which had hitherto been

permitted to slumber in peace and quietude. The most prominent of the heretics was Felix, Bishop of Urgel, who maintained in a letter to Elipand, Bishop of Toledo, that Christ was only the Son of God by adoption. It was about the time of the convocation of the Council of Frankfort, assembled to consider this point, that Alcuin returned to France at the earnest solicitation of Charlemagne. When the business of the council was terminated, and peace was somewhat restored, Alcuin began to think of returning to his native country; but England at that time was a land of bloodshed and tribulation, in the midst of which it would be vain to hope for retirement or the blessings of study; after some deliberation, therefore, Alcuin resolved to remain in France, where there was at least a wide field for exertion and usefulness. He communicates his intention in a letter to Offa, King of Mercia. "I was prepared," says he, "to come to you with the presents of King Charles, and to return to my country; but it seemed more advisable to me for the peace of my nation to remain abroad; not knowing what I could have done among those persons with whom no man can be secure or able to proceed in any laudable pursuit. See every holy place laid desolate by pagans, the altars polluted by perjury, the monasteries dishonored by adultery, the earth itself stained with the blood of rulers and of princes."[274]

After the elapse of many years spent in the brilliant court of Charles, during which time it surpassed in literary greatness any epoch that preceded it, he was permitted to seek retirement within the walls of the abbey of St. Martin's at Tours. But in escaping from the bustle and intrigue of public life he did not allow his days to pass away in an inglorious obscurity; but sought to complete his earthly career by inspiring the

rising generation with an honorable and christian ambition. His cloistered solitude, far from weakening, seems to have augmented the fertility of his genius, for it was in the quiet seclusion of this monastery that Alcuin composed the principal portion of his works; nor are these writings an accumulation of monastic trash, but the fruits of many a solitary hour spent in studious meditation. His method is perhaps fantastic and unnatural; but his style is lively, and often elegant. His numerous quotations and references give weight and interest to his writings, and clearly proves what a fine old library was at his command, and how well he knew the use of it. But for the elucidation of his character as a student, or a bibliomaniac, we naturally turn to the huge mass of his epistles which have been preserved; and in them we find a constant reference to books which shew his intimacy with the classics as well as the patristical lore of the church. In biblical literature he doubtless possessed many a choice and venerable tome; for an indefatigable scripture reader was that great man. In a curious little work of his called "*Interrogationes et Responsiones sui Liber Questionorum in Genesim*," we find an illustration of his usefulness in spreading the knowledge he had gained in this department of learning. It was written expressly for his pupil and dearest brother (*carissime frater*), Sigulf, as we learn from a letter which accompanies it. He tells him that he had composed it "that he might always have near him the means of refreshing his memory when the more ponderous volumes of the sacred Scriptures were not at his immediate call."[275] Perhaps of all his works this is the least deserving of our praise; the good old monk was apt to be prolix, if not tedious, when he found the *stylus* in his hand and a clean skin of parchment

spread invitingly before him. But as this work was intended as a manual to be consulted at any time, he was compelled to curb this propensity, and to reduce his explications to a few concise sentences. Writing under this restraint, we find little bearing the stamp of originality, not because he had nothing original to say, but because he had not space to write it in; I think it necessary to give this explanation, as some critics upon the learning of that remote age select these small and ill-digested writings as fair specimens of the literary capacity of the time, without considering why they were written or compiled at all. But as a scribe how shall we sufficiently praise that great man when we take into consideration the fine Bible which he executed for Charlemagne, and which is now fortunately preserved in the British Museum. It is a superb copy of St. Jerome's Latin version, freed from the inaccuracies of the scribes; he commenced it about the year 778, and did not complete it till the year 800, a circumstance which indicates the great care he bestowed upon it. When finished he sent it to Rome by his friend and disciple, Nathaniel, who presented it to Charlemagne on the day of his coronation: it was preserved by that illustrious monarch to the last day of his life. Alcuin makes frequent mention of this work being in progress, and speaks of the labor he was bestowing upon it.[276] We, who blame the monks for the scarcity of the Bible among them, fail to take into consideration the immense labor attending the transcriptions of so great a volume; plodding and patience were necessary to complete it. The history of this biblical gem is fraught with interest, and well worth relating. It is supposed to have been given to the monastery of Prum in Lorraine by Lothaire, the grandson of

Charlemagne, who became a monk of that monastery. In the year 1576 this religious house was dissolved, but the monks preserved the manuscript, and carried it into Switzerland to the abbey of Grandis Vallis, near Basle, where it reposed till the year 1793, when, on the occupation of the episcopal territory of Basle by the French, all the property of the abbey was confiscated and sold, and the MS. under consideration came into the possession of M. Bennot, from whom, in 1822, it was purchased by M. Speyr Passavant, who brought it into general notice, and offered it for sale to the French Government at the price of 60,000 francs; this they declined, and its proprietor struck of nearly 20,000 francs from the amount; still the sum was deemed exorbitant, and with all their bibliomanical enthusiasm, the conservers of the Royal Library allowed the treasure to escape. M. Passavant subsequently brought it to England, where it was submitted to the Duke of Sussex, still without success. He also applied to the trustees of the British Museum, and Sir F. Madden informs us that "much correspondence took place; at first he asked 12,000*l.* for it; then 8,000*l.*, and at last 6,500*l.*, which he declared an *immense sacrifice!!* At length, finding he could not part with his MS. on terms so absurd, he resolved to sell it if possible by auction; and accordingly, on the 27th of April, 1836, the Bible was knocked down by Mr. Evans for the sum of 1,500*l.*, but for the proprietor himself, as there was not one real bidding for it. This result having brought M. Speyr Passavant in some measure to his senses, overtures were made to him on the part of the trustees to the British Museum, and the manuscript finally became the property of the nation, for the comparatively small sum of 750*l.*" There can be no doubt as to the authenticity of this

precious volume, the verses of Alcuin's, found in the manuscript, sufficiently prove it, for he alone could write—

"Is Carolus qui jam Scribe jussit eum."
. . . . . .
"Hæc Dator Æternus cunctorum Christe bonorum,
Munera de donis accipe sancta tuis,
Quæ Pater Albinus devoto pectore supplex
Nominus ad laudem obtulit ecce tui."

Other proofs are not wanting of Alcuin's industry as a scribe, or his enthusiasm as an *amator librorum*. Mark the rapture with which he describes the library of York Cathedral, collected by Egbert:

"Illic invenies veterum vestigia Patrum,
Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,
Græcia vel quidquid transmisit Clara Latinis.
Hebraicus vel quod populus bibet imbre superno
Africa lucifluo vel quidquid lumine sparsit.
Quod Pater Hieronymus quod sensit Hilarius, atque
Ambrosius Præsul simul Augustinus, et ipse
Sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius, edit avitus:
Quidquid Gregorius summus docet, et Leo Papa;
Basilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque coruscant

Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque
Johannes:
Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda
Magister,
Quæ Victorinus scripsêre, Boetius; atque
Historici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipse
Acer Aristoteles, Rhetor quoque Tullius
ingens;
Quidquoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse
Invencus,
Alcuinus, et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus,
Arator.
Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius
edunt;
Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus, et
auctor
Artis Grammaticæ, vel quid scripsêre
magistri;
Quid Probus atque Focas, Donatus,
Priscian usve,
Sevius, Euticius, Pompeius,
Commenianus,
Invenies alios perplures, lector, ibidem
Egregios studiis, arte et sermone
magistros
Plurima qui claro scripsêre volumina
sensu:
Nomina sed quorum præsenti in carmine
scribi
Longius est visum, quam plectri postulet
usus."[277]

Often did Alcuin think of these goodly times with a longing heart, and wish that he could revel among them whilst in France. How deeply would he have regretted, how many tears would he have shed over

the sad destruction of that fine library, had he have known it; but his bones had mingled with the dust when the Danes dispersed those rare gems of ancient lore. If the reader should doubt the ardor of Alcuin as a book-lover, let him read the following letter, addressed to Charlemagne, which none but a bibliomaniac could pen.

"I, your Flaccus, according to your admonitions and good-will, administer to some in the house of St. Martin, the sweets of the Holy Scriptures, *Sanctarum mella Scripturarum*: others I inebriate with the study of ancient wisdom; and others I fill with the fruits of grammatical lore. Many I seek to instruct in the order of the stars which illuminate the glorious vault of heaven; so that they may be made ornaments to the holy church of God and the court of your imperial majesty; that the goodness of God and your kindness may not be altogether unproductive of good. But in doing this I discover the want of much, especially those exquisite books of scholastic learning, which I possessed in my own country, through the industry of my good and most devout master (Egbert). I therefore intreat your Excellence to permit me to send into Britain some of our youths to procure those books which we so much desire, and thus transplant into France the flowers of Britain, that they may fructify and perfume, not only the garden at York, but also the Paradise of Tours; and that we may say, in the words of the song, '*Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit*;' and to the young, '*Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink, abundantly, O beloved*;' or exhort, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, '*every one that thirsteth to come to the waters, and ye that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price*.'

"Your Majesty is not ignorant how earnestly we are exhorted throughout the Holy Scriptures to search after wisdom; nothing so tends to the attainment of a happy life; nothing more delightful or more powerful in resisting vice; nothing more honorable to an exalted dignity; and, according to philosophy, nothing more needful to a just government of a people. Thus Solomon exclaims, '*Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.*' It exalteth the humble with sublime honors. '*By wisdom kings reign and princes decree justice: by me princes rule; and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. Blessed are they that keep my ways, and blessed is the man that heareth me.*' Continue, then, my Lord King, to exhort the young in the palaces of your highness to earnest pursuit in acquiring wisdom; that they may be honored in their old age, and ultimately enter into a blessed immortality. I shall truly, according to my ability, continue to sow in those parts the seeds of wisdom among your servants; remembering the command, '*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.*' In my youth I sowed the seeds of learning in the prosperous seminaries of Britain; and now, in my old age, I am doing so in France without ceasing, praying that the grace of God may bless them in both countries."[278]

Such was the enthusiasm, such the spirit of bibliomania, which actuated the monks of those *bookless* days; and which was fostered with such zealous care by Alcuin, in the cloisters of St. Martin of Tours. He appropriated one of the apartments of the monastery for the transcription of books, and called it the *museum*, in which constantly were employed a numerous body of industrious scribes: he presided over them himself, and continually exhorted

them to diligence and care; to guard against the inadvertencies of unskilful copyists, he wrote a small work on orthography. We cannot estimate the merits of this essay, for only a portion of it has been preserved; but in the fragment printed among his works, we can see much that might have been useful to the scribes, and can believe that it must have tended materially to preserve the purity of ancient texts. It consists of a catalogue of words closely resembling each other, and consequently requiring the utmost care in transcribing.[279]

In these pleasing labors Alcuin was assisted by many of the most learned men of the time, and especially by Arno, Archbishop of Salzburgh, in writing to whom Alcuin exclaims, "O that I could suddenly translate my *Abacus*, and with my own hands quickly embrace your fraternity with that warmth which cannot be compressed in books. Nevertheless, because I cannot conveniently come, I send more frequently my unpolished letters (*rusticitatis meæ litteras*) to thee, that they may speak for me instead of the words of my mouth." This Arno, to whom he thus affectionately writes, was no despicable scholar; he was a true lover of literature, and proved himself something of an *amator librorum*, by causing to be transcribed or bought for his use, 150 volumes,[280] but about this period the bookloving mania spread far and wide—the Emperor himself was touched with the enthusiasm; for, besides his choice private collections,[281] he collected together the ponderous writings of the holy fathers, amounting to upwards of 200 volumes, bound in a most sumptuous manner, and commanded them to be deposited in a public temple and arranged in proper order, so that those who could not purchase such treasures might be enabled to feast on the lore of the ancients. Thus did

bibliomania flourish in the days of old.

But I must not be tempted to remain longer in France, though the names of many choice old book collectors would entice me to do so. When I left England, to follow the steps of Alcuin, I was speaking of York, which puts me in mind of the monastery of Whitby,[282] in the same shire, on the banks of the river Eske. It was founded by Hilda, the virgin daughter of Hereric, nephew to King Edwin, about the year 680, who was its first abbess. Having put her monastery in regular order, Hilda set an illustrious example of piety and virtue, and particularly directed all under her care to a constant reading of the holy Scriptures. After a long life of usefulness and zeal she died deeply lamented by the Saxon Church,[283] an event which many powerful miracles commemorated.

In the old times of the Saxons the monastery of Whitby was renowned for its learning; and many of the celebrated ecclesiastics of the day received their instruction within its walls. The most interesting literary anecdote connected with the good lady Hilda's abbacy, is the kind reception she gave to the Saxon poet Cædmon, whose paraphrase of the Book of Genesis has rendered his name immortal. He was wont to make "pious and religious verses, so that whatever was interpreted to him out of Scripture, he soon after put the same into poetical expression of much sweetness and humility in English, which was his native language. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world and to aspire to heaven. Others after him attempted in the English nation to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him, *for he did not learn the art of poetry from man but from God*."[284] He was indeed,

as the venerable Bede says, a poet of nature's own teaching: originally a rustic herdsman, the sublime gift was bestowed upon him by inspiration, or as it is recorded, in a dream. As he slept an unknown being appeared, and commanded him to sing. Cædmon hesitated to make the attempt, but the apparition retorted, "Nevertheless, thou shalt sing—sing the origin of things." Astonished and perplexed, our poet found himself instantaneously in possession of the pleasing art; and, when he awoke, his vision and the words of his song were so impressed upon his memory, that he easily repeated them to his wondering companions.[285] He hastened at day-break to relate these marvels and to display his new found talents to the monks of Whitby, by whom he was joyfully received, and as they unfolded the divine mysteries, "The good man," says Bede, "listened like a clean animal ruminating; and his song and his verse were so winsome to hear, that his teachers wrote them down, and learned from his mouth."[286]

Some contend that an ancient manuscript in the British Museum is the original of this celebrated paraphrase.[287] It is just one of those choice relics which a bibliomaniac loves to handle, but scarcely perhaps bears evidence of antiquity so remote. It is described in the catalogue as, "The substance of the Book of Genesis, with the Acts of Moses and Joshua, with brief notes and annotations, part in Latin and part in Saxon by Bede and others." The notes, if by Bede, would tend to favor the opinion that it is the original manuscript, or, at any rate, coeval with the Saxon bard. The volume, as a specimen of calligraphic art, reflects honor upon the age, and is right worthy of Lady Hilda's monastery. There are 312[288] fine velum pages in this venerable and

precious volume, nearly every one of which dazzles with the talent of the skilful illuminator. The initial letters are formed, with singular taste and ingenuity, of birds, beasts, and flowers. To give an idea of the nature of these pictorial embellishments—which display more splendor of coloring than accuracy of design—I may describe the singular illumination adorning the sixth page, which represents the birth of Eve. Adam is asleep, reclining on the grass, which is depicted as so many inverted cones; and, if we may judge from the appearance of our venerable forefather, he could not have enjoyed a very comfortable repose on that memorable occasion, and the grass which grew in the Garden of Paradise must have been of a very stubborn nature when compared with the earth's verdure of the present day; for the weight of Adam alters not the position of the tender herb, which supports his huge body on their extreme summits. As he is lying on the left side Eve is ascending from a circular aperture in his right; nor would the original, if she bore any resemblance to her monkish portraiture, excite the envy or the admiration of the present age, or bear comparison with her fair posterity. Her physiognomy is anything but fascinating, and her figure is a repulsive monstrosity, *adorned* with a profusion of luxurious hair of a brilliant blue!

It is foreign to our subject to enter into any analysis of the literary beauties of this poem; let it suffice that Cædmon, the old Saxon herdsman, has been compared to our immortal Milton; and their names have been coupled together when speaking of a poet's genius.[289] But on other grounds Cædmon claims a full measure of our praise. Not only was he the "Father of Saxon poetry," but to him also belongs the inestimable honor of being the first who

attempted to render into the vulgar tongue the beauties and mysteries of the Holy Scriptures; he unsealed what had hitherto been a sealed book; his paraphrase is the first translation of the holy writ on record. So let it not be forgotten that to this Milton of old our Saxon ancestors were indebted for this invaluable treasure. We are unable to trace distinctly the formation of the monastic library of Whitby. But of the time of Richard, elected abbot in the year 1148, a good monk, and formerly prior of Peterborough, we have a catalogue of their books preserved. I would refer the reader to that curious list,[290] and ask him if it does not manifest by its contents the existence of a more refined taste in the cloisters than he gave the old monks credit for. It is true, the legends of saints abound in it; but then look at the choice tomes of a classic age, whose names grace that humble catalogue, and remember that the studies of the Whitby monks were divided between the miraculous lives of holy men, and the more pleasing pages of the "Pagan Homer," the eloquence of Tully, and the wit of Juvenal, of whose subject they seemed to have been fond; for they read also the satires of Persius. I extract the names of some of the authors contained in this monkish library:

- Ambrose.
- Hugo.
- Theodolus.
- Aratores.
- Bernard.
- Avianus.
- Gratian.
- Odo.
- Gilda.
- Maximianus.

- Eusebius.
- Plato.
- Homer.
- Cicero.
- Juvenal.
- Persius.
- Statius.
- Sedulus.
- Prosper.
- Prudentius.
- Boethius.
- Donatus.
- Rabanus Maurus.
- Origen.
- Priscian.
- Gregory Nazianzen.
- Josephus.
- Bede.
- Gildas.
- Isidore.
- Ruffinus.
- Guido on Music.
- Diadema Monachorum.

Come, the monks evidently read something besides their *Credo*, and transcribed something better than "monastic trash." A little taste for literature and learning we must allow they enjoyed, when they formed their library of such volumes as the above. I candidly admit, that when I commenced these researches I had no expectations of finding a collection of a hundred volumes, embracing so many choice works of old Greece and Rome. It is pleasant, however, to trace these workings of bibliomania in the monasteries; and it is a surprise quite agreeable and delicious in itself to meet with instances like the

present.

At a latter period the monastery of Rievall, in Yorkshire, possessed an excellent library of 200 volumes. This we know by a catalogue of them, compiled by one of the monks about the middle of the fourteenth century, and now preserved in the library of Jesus College, Cambridge.[291] A transcript of this manuscript was made by Mr. Halliwell, and published in his "Reliqua Antiqua,"[292] from which it may be seen that the Rievall monastery contained at that time many choice and valuable works. The numerous writings of Sts. Augustine, Bernard, Anselm, Cyprian, Origin, Haimo, Gregory, Ambrose, Isidore, Chrysostom, Bede, Aldhelm, Gregory Nazienzen, Ailred, Josephus, Rabanus Maurus, Peter Lombard, Orosius, Boethius, Justin, Seneca, with histories of the church of Britain, of Jerusalem, of King Henry, and many others equally interesting and costly, prove how industriously they used their pens, and how much they appreciated literature and learning. But in the fourteenth century the inhabitants of the monasteries were very industrious in transcribing books at a period coeval with the compilation of the Rievall catalogue, a monk of Coventry church was plying his pen with unceasing energy; John de Bruges wrote with his own hand thirty-two volumes for the library of the benedictine priory of St. Mary.

The reader will see that there is little among them worthy of much observation. The MS. begins, "These are the books which John of Bruges, monk of Coventry, wrote for the Coventry church. Any who shall take them away from the church without the consent of the convent, let him be anathema."[293]

- In primis, ymnarium in grossa littera.
- Halmo upon Isaiah.
- A Missal for the Infirmary.
- A Missal.
- Duo missalia domini Prioris Rogeris, scilicet collectas cum secretis et postcommunione.
- A Benedictional for the use of the same prior.
- Another Benedictional for the use of the convent.
- Librum cartarum.
- Martyrologium, Rule of St. Benedict and Pastoral, in one volume.
- Liber cartarum.
- A Graduale, with a Tropario, and a Processional.
- Psaltar for Prior Roger.
- Palladium de Agricultura.
- Librum experimentorum, in quo ligatur compotus Helprici.
- A book containing Compotus manualis et Merlin, etc.
- An Ordinal for the Choir.
- Tables for the Martyrology.
- Kalendarium mortuorum.
- Ditto.
- Table of Responses.
- Capitular.
- Capitular for Prior Roger.
- A Reading Book.
- A book of Decretals.
- Psalter for the monks in the infirmary.
- Generationes Veteris et Novi Testamenti; ante scholasticam hystoriam et ante Psalterium domini Anselmi.
- Pater noster.
- An Ordinal.

- Tables for Peter Lombard's Sentences.
- Tables for the Psalter.
- Book of the Statutes of the Church.
- Verses on the praise of the blessed Mary.

The priory of St. Mary's was founded by Leofricke, the celebrated Earl of Mercia and his good Lady Godiva, in the year 1042. "Hollingshead says that this Earl Leofricke was a man of great honor, wise, and discreet in all his doings. His high wisdome and policie stood the realme in great steed whilst he lived.... He had a noble ladie to his wife named Gudwina, at whose earnest sute he made the citie of Couentrie free of all manner of toll except horsses, and to haue that toll laid downe also, his foresaid wife rode naked through the middest of the towne without other couerture, saue onlie her haire. Moreouer partlie moued by his owne deuotion and partlie by the persuasion of his wife, he builded or beneficiallie augmented and repared manie abbeies and churches as the saide abbie or priorie at Couentrie—the abbeies of Wenlocke, Worcester, Stone, Evesham, and Leot, besides Hereford."

The church of Worcester, which the good Earl had thus "beneficiallie augmented," the Saxon King Offa had endowed with princely munificence before him. In the year 780, during the time of Abbot Tilhere, or Gilhere, Offa gave to the church Croppethorne, Netherton, Elmlege Cuddeshe, Cherton, and other lands, besides a "large Bible with two clasps, made of the purest gold."[294] In the tenth century the library of Exeter Church was sufficiently extensive to require the preserving care of an amanuensis; for according to Dr. Thomas, Bishop Oswald granted in the year 985 three hides of land at Bredicot, one yardland at Ginenofra, and seven acres of meadow at Tiberton,

to Godinge a monk, on condition of his fulfilling the duties of a librarian to the see, and transcribing the registers and writings of the church. It is said that the scribe Godinge wrote many choice books for the library.[295] I do not find any remarkable book donation, save now and then a volume or two, in the annals of Worcester Church; nor have I been able to discover any old parchment catalogue to tell of the number or rarity of their books; for although probably most monasteries had one compiled, being enjoined to do so by the regulations of their order, they have long ago been destroyed; for when we know that fine old manuscripts were used by the bookbinders after the Reformation, we can easily imagine how little value would be placed on a mere catalogue of names.

But to return again to Godiva, that illustrious lady gave the monks, after the death of her lord, many landed possessions, and bestowed upon them the blessings of a library.[296]

Thomas Cobham, who was consecrated Bishop of Worcester in the year 1317, was a great "*amator librorum*," and spent much time and money in collecting books. He was the first who projected the establishment of a public library at Oxford, which he designed to form over the old Congregation House in the churchyard of St. Mary's, but dying soon after in the year 1327, the project was forgotten till about forty years after, when I suppose the example of the great bibliomaniac Richard de Bury drew attention to the matter; for his book treasures were then "deposited there, and the scholars permitted to consult them on certain conditions."[297]

Bishop Carpenter built a library for the use of the

monastery of Exeter Church, in the year 1461, over the charnal house; and endowed it with £10 per annum as a salary for an amanuensis.[298] But the books deposited there were grievously destroyed during the civil wars; for on the twenty-fourth of September, 1642, when the army under the Earl of Essex came to Worcester, they set about "destroying the organ, breaking in pieces divers beautiful windows, wherein the foundation of the church was lively historified with painted glass;" they also "rifled the library, with the records and evidences of the church, tore in pieces the Bibles and service books pertaining to the quire."[299] Sad desecration of ancient literature! But the reader of history will sigh over many such examples.

The registers of Evesham Monastery, near Worcester, speak of several monkish bibliophiles, and the bookish anecdotes relating to them are sufficiently interesting to demand some attention here. Ailward, who was abbot in the year 1014, gave the convent many relics and ornaments, and what was still better a quantity of books.[300] He was afterwards promoted to the see of London, over which he presided many years; but age and infirmity growing upon him, he was anxious again to retire to Evesham, but the monks from some cause or other were unwilling to receive him back; at this he took offence, and seeking in the monastery of Ramsey the quietude denied him there, he demanded back all the books he had given them.[301] His successor Mannius was celebrated for his skill in the fine arts, and was an exquisite worker in metals, besides an ingenious scribe and illuminator. He wrote and illuminated with his own hand, for the use of his monastery, a missal and a large Psalter.[302]

Walter, who was abbot in the year 1077, gave also many books to the library,[303] and among the catalogue of sumptuous treasures with which Reginald, a succeeding abbot, enriched the convent, a great textus or gospels, with a multitude of other books, *multa alia libros*, are particularly specified. [304] Almost equally liberal were the choice gifts bestowed upon the monks by Adam (elected A. D. 1161); but we find but little in our way among them, except a fine copy of the "Old and New Testament with a gloss." No mean gift I ween in those old days; but one which amply compensated for the deficiency of the donation in point of numbers. But all these were greatly surpassed by a monk whom it will be my duty now to introduce; and to an account of whose life and bibliomanical propensities, I shall devote a page or two. Like many who spread a lustre around the little sphere of their own, and did honor, humbly and quietly to the sanctuary of the church in those Gothic days, he is unknown to many; and might, perhaps, have been entirely forgotten, had not time kindly spared a document which testifies to his piety and book-collecting industry. The reader will probably recollect many who, by their shining piety and spotless life, maintained the purity of the Christian faith in a church surrounded by danger and ignorance, and many a bright name, renowned for their virtue or their glory of arms, who flourished during the early part of the thirteenth century; but few have heard of a good and humble monk named Thomas of Marleberg. Had circumstances designed him for a higher sphere, had affairs of state, or weighty duties of an ecclesiastical import, been guided by his hand, his name would have been recorded with all the flourish of monkish adulation; but the learning and the prudence of that lowly

monk was confined to the little world of Evesham; and when his earthly manes were buried beneath the cloisters within the old convent walls, his name and good deeds were forgotten by the world, save in the hearts of his fraternity.

"But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd, is
forgot."

In a manuscript in the Cotton Library there is a document called "The good deeds of Prior Thomas," from which the following facts have been extracted. [305]

From this interesting memorial of his labors, we learn that Thomas had acquired some repute among the monks for his great knowledge of civil and canon law; so that when any difficulty arose respecting the claims or privileges of the monastery, or when any important matter was to be transacted, his advice was sought and received with deference and respect. Thus three years after his admission the bishop of Worcester intimated his intention of paying the monastery a visitation; a practice which the bishops of that see had not enforced since the days of abbot Alurie. The abbot and convent however considered themselves free from the jurisdiction of the bishop; and acting on the advice of Thomas of Marleberg, they successfully repulsed him. The affair was quite an event, and seems to have caused much sensation among them at the time; and is mentioned to show with what esteem Thomas was regarded by his monkish brethren. After a long enumeration of "good works" and important benefactions, such as rebuilding the tower and repairing the convent, we are told that "In the second year of Randulp's abbacy, Thomas, then dean, went with him to Rome to a general council, where, by his prudence and advice, a new arrangement in the business of the convent rents was confirmed, and many other useful matters settled." Here I am tempted to refer to the

arrangements, for they offer pleasing illustrations of the monk as an "*amator librorum*." Mark how his thoughts dwelt—even when surrounded by those high dignitaries of the church, and in the midst of that important council—on the library and the scriptorium of his monastery.

> "*To the Prior belongs the tythes of Beningar the both great and small, to defray the expenses of procuring parchment, and to procure manuscripts for transcription.*"

And in another clause it is settled that

> "*To the Office of the Precentor belongs the Manner of Hampton, from which he will receive five shillings annually, besides ten and eightpence from the tythes of Stokes and Alcester, with which he is to find all the ink and parchment for the Scribes of the Monastery, colours for illuminating, and all that is necessary for binding the books*."[306]

Pleasing traits are these of his bookloving passion; and doubtless under his guidance the convent library grew and flourished amazingly. But let us return to the account of his "good works."

"Returning from Rome after two years he was elected sacrist. He then made a reading-desk behind the choir,[307] which was much wanted in the church, and appointed stated readings to be held near the tomb of Saint Wilsius.... Leaving his office thus rich in good works, he was then elected prior. In this office he buried his predecessor, Prior John, in a new mausoleum; and also John, surnamed Dionysius; of the latter of whom Prior Thomas was accustomed to say, 'that he had never known any man who so

perfectly performed every kind of penance as he did for more than thirty years, in fasting and in prayer; in tears and in watchings; in cold and in corporeal inflictions; in coarseness and roughness of clothing, and in denying himself bodily comforts, far more than any other of the brethren; all of which he rather dedicated in good purposes and to the support of the poor."

Thus did many an old monk live, practising all this with punctilious care as the essence of a holy life, and resting upon the fallacy that these cruel mortifyings of the flesh would greatly facilitate the acquisition of everlasting ease and joy in a better world; as if God knew not, better than themselves, what chastisements and afflictions were needful for them. We may sigh with pain over such instances of mistaken piety and fanatical zeal in all ages of the church; yet with all their privations, and with all their macerations of the flesh, there was a vast amount of human pride mingled with their humiliation. But He who sees into the hearts of all—looking in his benevolence more at the intention than the outward form, may perhaps sometimes find in it the workings of a true christian piety, and so reward it with his love. Let us trust so in the charity of our faith, and proceed to notice that portion of the old record which is more intimately connected with our subject. We read that

"Thomas had brought with him to the convent, on his entering, many books, of both canon and civil law; as well as the books by which he had regulated the schools of Oxford and Exeter before he became a monk. He likewise had one book of Democritus; and the book of Antiparalenion, a gradual book, according to Constantine; Isidore's Divine Offices,

and the Quadrimum of Isidore; Tully's de Amicitia; Tully de Senectute et de Paradoxis; Lucan, Juvenal, and many other authors, *et multos alios auctores*, with a great number of sermons, with many writings on theological questions; on the art and rules of grammar and the book of accents. After he was prior he made a great breviary, better than any at that time in the monastery, with Haimo, on the Apocalypse, and a book containing the lives of the patrons of the church of Evesham; with an account of the deeds of all the good and bad monks belonging to the church, in one volume. He also wrote and bound up the same lives and acts in another volume separately. He made also a great Psalter, *magnum psalterium*, superior to any contained in the monastery, except the glossed ones. He collected and wrote all the necessary materials for four antiphoners, with their musical notes, himself; except what the brothers of the monastery transcribed for him. He also finished many books that William of Lith, of pious memory, commenced—the Marterologium, the Exceptio Missæ, and some excellent commentaries on the Psalter and Communion of the Saints in the old antiphoners. He also bought the four Gospels, with glosses, and Isaiah and Ezekiel, also glossed;[308] the Pistillæ upon Matthew; some Allegories on the Old Testament; the Lamentations of Jeremiah, with a gloss; the Exposition of the Mass, according to Pope Innocent; and the great book of Alexander Necham, which is called *Corrogationes Promethea de partibus veteris testamenti et novæ*.... He also caused to be transcribed in large letters the book concerning the offices of the abbey, from the Purification of St. Mary to the Feast of Easter; the prelections respecting Easter; Pentecost, and the blessings at the baptismal fonts.

He also caused a volume, containing the same works, to be transcribed, but in a smaller hand; all of which the convent had not before. He made also the tablet for the locutory in the chapel of St. Anne, towards the west. After the altar of St. Mary in the crypts had been despoiled by thieves of its books and ornaments, to the value of ten pounds, he contributed to their restoration."

Thomas was equally liberal in other matters. His whole time and wealth were spent in rebuilding and repairing the monastery and adding to its comforts and splendor. He had a great veneration for antiquity, and was especially anxious to restore those parts which were dilapidated by time; the old inscriptions on the monuments and altars he carefully re-inscribed. It is recorded that he renewed the inscription on the great altar himself, without the aid of a book, *sine libro*; which was deemed a mark of profound learning in my lord abbot by his monkish surbordinates.

With this I conclude my remarks on Thomas of Marleberg, leaving these extracts to speak for him. It is pleasing to find that virtue so great, and industry so useful met with its just reward; and that the monks of Evesham proved how much they appreciated such talents, by electing him their abbot, in 1229, which, for seven years he held with becoming piety and wisdom.

The annals of the monastery[309] testify that "In the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and ninety-two, and the fifteenth of the reign of King Richard the Second, on the tenth calends of May, died the venerable Prior Nicholas Hereford, of pious memory, who, as prior of the church of Evesham,

lived a devout and religious life for forty years." He held that office under three succeeding abbots, and filled it with great honor and industry. He was a dear lover of books, and spent vast sums in collecting together his private library, amounting to more than 100 volumes; some of these he wrote with his own hand, but most of them he bought *emit*. A list of these books is given in the Harleian Register, and many of the volumes are described as containing a number of tracts, bound up in one, *cum aliis tractatibus in eodem volumine*. Some of these display the industry of his pen, and silently tell us of his Christian piety. Among those remarkable for their bulk, it is pleasurable to observe a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which was doubtless a comfort to the venerable prior in the last days of his green old age; and which probably guided him in the even tenor of that *devout and religious life*, for which he was so esteemed by the monks of Evesham. He possessed also some works of Bernard Augustin, and Boethius, whose Consolation of Philosophy few book-collectors of the middle ages were without. To many of the books the prices he gave for them, or at which they were then valued, are affixed: a "*Summa Prædicantium*" is valued at eight marks, and a "*Burley super Politices*" at seven marks. We may suspect monk Nicholas of being rather a curious collector in his way, for we find in his library some interesting volumes of popular literature. He probably found much pleasure in perusing his copy of the marvelous tale of "Beufys of Hampton," and the romantic "Mort d'Arthur," both sufficiently interesting to relieve the monotonous vigils of the monastery. But I must not dwell longer on the monastic bibliophiles of Evesham, other libraries and bookworms call for some notice from my pen.



FOOTNOTES:

[245] "Rediens autem, ubi Viennam pervenit, eruptitios sibi quos apud amicos commendaverat, recepit." p. 26. *Vit. Abbat. Wear. 12mo. edit. Ware.*

[246] The youngest son of Oswy, or Oswis, king of Northumbria, who succeeded his father in the year 670, Alfred his elder brother being for a time set aside on the grounds of his illegitimacy; yet Alfred was a far more enlightened and talented prince than Ecgfrid, and much praised in Saxon annals for his love of learning.

[247] "Magnâ quidem copiâ voluminum sacrorum; sed non minori sicut et prius sanctorum imaginum numere detatus." *Vit. Abb.* p. 38.

[248] "Bibliothecam, quam de Roma nobillissimam copiosessimanque advenaret ad instructionem ecclesiæ necessariam sollicite servari integram, nec per incuriam fœdari aut passim dissipari præcepit."

[249] Bede says that he was "learned in Holy Scriptures." Dr. Henry mentions this anecdote in his *Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 287, 8vo. ed. which has led many secondary compilers into a curious blunder, by mistaking the king here alluded to for Alfred the Great: even Didbin, in his Bibliomania, falls into the same error although he suspected some mistake; he calls him *our immortal Alfrid*, p. 219, and seems puzzled to account for the anachronism, but

does not take the trouble to enquire into the matter; Heylin's little Help to History would have set him right, and shown that while Alfrede king of Northumberland reigned in 680, Alfred king of England lived more than two centuries afterwards, pp. 25 and 29.

[250] The reader may perhaps smile at this, but it has long been my custom to carry some 8vo. edition of a monkish writer about me, when time or opportunity allowed me to spend a few hours among the ruins of the olden time. I recall with pleasure the recollection of many such rambles, and especially my last—a visit to Netley Abbey. What a sweet spot for contemplation; surrounded by all that is lovely in nature, it drives our old prejudices away, and touches the heart with piety and awe. Often have I explored its ruins and ascended its crumbling parapets, admiring the taste of those Cistercian monks in choosing so quiet, romantic, and choice a spot, and one so well suited to lead man's thoughts to sacred things above.

[251] Bede, *Vit. Abb. Wear.* p. 46.

[252] The fine libraries thus assiduously collected were destroyed by the Danes; that of Jarrow in the year 793, and that of Wearmouth in 867.

[253] Emer, Vita. ap. Mab. Act. SS. tom. iii. 199.

[254] Bede's Eccles. Hist. b. iii. c. xxv.

[255] "Idemque vir Dei quatuor Evangelica et Bibliothecam pluresque libros Novi et Veteris Testamenti cum tabulis tectis auro purissimo et pretiosis gemmis mirabili artificio fabricatis ad honorem Dei." Dugdale's Monast. vol. ii. p. 133.

[256] In 665 he was raised to the episcopacy of all Northumbria.

[257] He was deprived of his bishopric in the year 678, and the see was divided into those of York and Hexham. But for the particulars of his conduct see *Soame's Anglo. Sax. Church*, p. 63, with *Dr. Lingard's Ang. Sax. Church*, vol. i. p. 245; though without accusing either of misrepresentation, I would advise the reader to search (if he has the opportunity), the original authorities for himself, it is a delicate matter for a Roman or an English churchman to handle with impartiality.

[258] His Saxon name was Winfrid, or Wynfrith, but he is generally called Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz.

[259] The mere act of baptizing constitutes "*conversion*" in Jesuitical phraseology; and thousands were so converted in a few days by the followers of Ignatius. A similar process was used in working out the miracles of the Saxon missionary. He was rather too conciliating and too anxious for a "converting miracle," to be over particular; but it was all for the good of the church papal, to whom he was a devoted servant; the church papal therefore could not see the fault.

[260] Ep. iii. p. 7, Ed. 4to.—*Moguntiæ*, 1629.

[261] Ep. iv. p. 8.

[262] Ep. xiii.

[263] Ep. vii. p. 11.

[264] Ep. xiv. See also Ep. xxviii. p. 40.

[265] Ep. viii. p. 12.

[266] Ep. lxxxv. p. 119.

[267] Ep. ix. p. 13.

[268] Ep. xxii. p. 36.

[269] Ep. xcix. p. 135.

[270] Ep. cxi. p. 153.

[271] The accusation is not a groundless one. Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments*, warmly upbraids him; and Aikins in his *Biog. Dict.*, has acted in a similar manner. But the best guides are his letters—they display his faults and his virtues too.

[272] This was in the year 731. *Goodwin* says he "sate 36 years, and died an. 767." He says, "This man by his owne wisedome, and the authority of his brother, amended greatly the state of his church and see. He procured the archiepiscopall pall to be restored to his churche againe, and erected a famous library at York, which he stored plentifully with an infinite number of excellent bookes." p. 441.

[273] De Pontificibus et Sanctis Ecclesiæ Eboracensis.

[274] Alcuini Oper., tom. i. vol. 1, p. 57, translated in Sharpe's William of Malmsbury, p. 73.

[275] Opera, tom. i. p. 305.

[276] In a letter to Gisla, sister to the emperor, he writes "Totius forsitan evangelii Johannis expositionem direxissem vobis, si me non occupasset Domini Regis præceptum in emendatione Veteri Novique Testamenti."—*Opera*, tom. i. vol. 7, p. 591.

[277] Alcuini, ap. Gale, tom. iii. p. 730.

[278] Alcuini, Oper. tom. i. p. 52. Ep. xxxviii.

It was written about 796.

[279] He was also very careful in instructing the scribes to punctuate with accuracy, which he deemed of great importance. See Ep. lxxxv. p. 126.

[280] Necrolog. MS. Capituli, Metropolitani Salisburgensis, *apud* Froben, tom. i. p. lxxxi.

[281] Charlemagne founded several libraries; —see *Koeler, Dissert. de Biblio. Caroli Mog.* published in 1727. Eginhart mentions his private collection, and it is thus spoken of in the emperor's will; "Similiter et de libris, quorum magna in bibliotheca sua copiam congregavit: statuit ut ab iis qui eos habere uellet, justo pretio redimeretur, pretin in pauperes erogaretur." Echin. Vita Caroli, p. 366, edit. 24mo. 1562. Yet we cannot but regret the dispersion of this imperial library.

[282] Formerly called *Streaneshalch*.

[283] At the age of 66, *Bede*, b. iv. cxxiii.

[284] Bede, b. iv. c. xxiv.

[285] John de Trevisa says, "Cædmon of Whitaby was inspired of the Holy Gost, and made wonder poisyes an Englisch, meiz of al the Storyes of Holy Writ." *MS. Harleian*, 1900, fol. 43, a.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Cottonian Collection marked *Claudius*, B. iv. There is another MS. in the Bodleian (*Junius* XI.) It was printed by Junius in 1655, in 4to. Sturt has engraved some of the illuminations in his *Saxon Antiquities*, and they were also copied and published by J. Greene, F. A. S., in 1754, in fifteen plates.

[288] It is unfortunately imperfect at the end, and wants folio 32.

[289] Take the following as an instance of the similarity of thought between the two poets. Sharon Turner thus renders a portion of Satan's speech from the Saxon of Cædmon:

> "Yet why should I sue for his grace?
> Or bend to him with any obedience?
> I may be a God as he is.
> Stand by me strong companions."
>
> *Hist. Anglo Sax.* vol. ii. p. 314.

The idea is with Milton:

> . . . . . To bow to one for grace
> With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
> Who from the terror of this arm so late
> Doubted his empire; that were low indeed!
> That were an ignominy, and shame beneath
> This downfall!
>
> *Paradise Lost*, b. i.

[290] He will find it in Charlton's History of Whitby, 4to. 1779, p. 113.

[291] Marked MS. N. B. 17.

[292] Wright and Halliwell's Rel. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 180.

[293] It is printed in Hearne's History of Glastonbury, from a MS. in the Bodleian Library, Ed. *Oxon*, 1722, *Appendix* x. p. 291.

[294] Bibliothecam optimam cum duobus armillis ex auro purissimo fabricatis.—*Heming. Chart*, p. 95.

[295] Thomas's Survey, of Worcester Church, 4to. 1736, p. 46. The Scriptorium of the monastery was situated in the cloisters, and a Bible in Bennet College, Cambridge, was written therein by a scribe named Senatus, as we learn from a note printed in Nasmith's Catalogue, which proves it to have been written during the reign of Henry II. It is a folio MS. on vellum, and a fine specimen of the talent of the expert scribe.—See *Nasmith's Catalogus Libr. MSS.*, 4to. *Camb.* 1777, p. 31.

[296] Since writing the above, which I gave on the authority of Green (*Hist. of Worc.* vol. i. p. 79), backed with the older one of Thomas (*Survey Ch. Worc.* p. 70), I have had the opportunity of consulting the reference given by them (*Heming, Chart.* p. 262), and was somewhat surprised to find the words "*Et bibliothecam, in duobus partibus divisam*," the foundation of this pleasing anecdote. "*Bibliothecam*," however, was the Latin for a Bible in the middle ages: so that in fact the Lady Godiva gave them a Bible divided into two parts, or volumes.

[297] Chalmer's Hist. of the Colleges of Oxford, p. 458. Wood's Hist. Antiq. of Oxon, lib. ii. p. 48.

[298] Green's Hist. Worc. p. 79.

[299] Sir W. Dugdale's View of the Troubles in England, *Folio*, p. 557. We can easily credit the destruction of the organ and painted windows, so obnoxious to Puritan piety; but with regard to the *Bibles*, we may suspect the accuracy of the Royalist writer, col. 182.

[300] Symeon Dunelm. Tweyed. Script. x.

[301] Habingdon, MSS. Godwin de Præf, p. 231.

[302] Tindal's Hist. of Evesham, p. 248.

[303] *Ibid.* p. 250.

[304] MS. Harl., No. 3763, p. 180.

[305] MS. Cot. Vesp. b. xxiv. It is printed in Latin in *Nash's Worcestershire*, vol. i. p. 419, and translated in *Tindal's Hist. of Worcs.* p. 24, all of which I have used with *Dugdale's Monast.* vol. ii. p. 5.

[306] *MS. Cottonian Augustus II.* No. 11. "Ex his debet invenire præcentor incaustum omnibus scriptoribus monasterii; et Pergamenum ad brevia, et colores ad illuminandum, et necessaria ad legandum libros." See *Dugdale's Monast.* vol. ii. p. 24.

[307] After the elapse of so many years, the research of the antiquarian has brought this desk to light; an account of it will be found in the Archeologia, vol. xvii. p. 278.

[308] "Emit etiam quator evangelia glosata, et Yaiam et Ezechielem glossatos."

[309] Harleian MSS., No. 3763.

CHAPTER IX

Old Glastonbury Abbey.—Its Library.—John of Taunton.—Richard Whiting.—Malmsbury.—Bookish Monks of Gloucester Abbey.—Leofric of Exeter and his private library.—Peter of Blois. Extracts from his letters.—Proved to have been a great classical student, etc., etc.



THE fame of Glastonbury Abbey will attract the steps of the western traveller; and if he possess the spirit of an antiquary, his eye will long dwell on those mutilated fragments of monkish architecture. The bibliophile will regard it with still greater love; for, in its day, it was one of the most eminent repositories of those treasures which it is his province to collect. For more than ten hundred years that old fabric has stood there, exciting in days of remote antiquity the veneration of our pious forefathers, and in modern times the admiration of the curious. Pilgrim! tread lightly on that hallowed ground! sacred to the memory of the most learned and illustrious of our Saxon ancestry. The bones of princes and studious monks closely mingle with the

ruins which time has caused, and bigotry helped to desecrate. Monkish tradition claims, as the founder of Glastonbury Abbey, St. Joseph of Arimathea, who, sixty-three years after the incarnation of our Lord, came to spread the truths of the Gospel over the island of Britain. Let this be how it may, we leave it for more certain data.

After, says a learned antiquary, its having been built by St. Davis, Archbishop of Menevia, and then again restored by "twelve well affected men in the north;" it was entirely pulled down by Ina, king of the West Saxons, who "new builded the abbey of Glastonburie[310] in a fenny place out of the way, to the end the monks mought so much the more give their mindes to heavenly thinges, and chiefely use the contemplation meete for men of such profession. This was the fourth building of that monasterie."[311] The king completed his good work by erecting a beautiful chapel, garnished with numerous ornaments and utensils of gold and silver; and among other costly treasures, William of Malmsbury tells us that twenty pounds and sixty marks of gold was used in making a coopertoria for a book of the Gospels. [312]

Would that I had it in my power to write the literary history of Glastonbury Abbey; to know what the monks of old there transcribed would be to acquire the history of learning in those times; for there was little worth reading in the literature of the day that was not copied by those industrious scribes. But if our materials will not enable us to do this, we may catch a glimpse of their well stored shelves through the kindness and care of William Britone the

Librarian, who compiled a work of the highest interest to the biographer. It is no less than a catalogue of the books contained in the common library of the abbey in the year one thousand two hundred and forty-eight. Four hundred choice volumes comprise this fine collection;[313] and will not the reader be surprised to find among them a selection of the classics, with the chronicles, poetry, and romantic productions of the middle ages, besides an abundant store of the theological writings of the primitive Church. But I have not transcribed a large proportion of this list, as the extracts given from other monastic catalogues may serve to convey an idea of their nature; but I cannot allow one circumstance connected with this old document to pass without remark. I would draw the reader's attention to the fine bibles which commence the list, and which prove that the monks of Glastonbury Abbey were fond and devoted students of the Bible. It begins with—

- Bibliotheca una in duobus voluminibus.
- Alia Bibliotheca integra vetusta, set legibilis.
- Bibliotheca integræ minoris litteræ.
- Dimidia pars Bibliothecæ incipiens à Psalterio, vetusta.
- Bibliotheca magna versificata.
- Alia versificata in duobus voluminibus.
- Bibliotheca tres versificata.[314]

But besides these, the library contained numerous detached books and many copies of the Gospels, an ample collection of the fathers, and the controversal writings of the middle ages; and among many others, the following classics—

- Aristotle.

- Livy.
- Orosius.
- Sallust.
- Donatus.
- Sedulus.
- Virgil's Æneid.
- Virgil's Georgics.
- Virgil's Bucolics.
- Æsop.
- Tully.
- Boethius.
- Plato.
- Isagoge of Porphyry.
- Prudentius.
- Fortuanus.
- Persius.
- Pompeius.
- Isidore.
- Smaragdius.
- Marcianus.
- Horace.
- Priscian.
- Prosper.
- Aratores.
- Claudian.
- Juvenal.
- Cornutus.

I must not omit to mention that John de Taunton, a monk and an enthusiastic *amator librorum*, and who was elected abbot in the year 1271, collected forty choice volumes, and gave them to the library, *dedit librario*, of the abbey; no mean gift, I ween, in the thirteenth century. They included—

- Questions on the Old and New Law.
- St. Augustine upon Genesis.

- Ecclesiastical Dogmas.
- St. Bernard's Enchiridion.
- St. Bernard's Flowers.
- Books of Wisdom, with a Gloss.
- Postil's upon Jeremiah and the lesser Prophets.
- Concordances to the Bible.
- Postil's of Albertus upon Matthew, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah and others, in one volume.
- Postil's upon Mark.
- Postil's upon John, with a Discourse on the Epistles throughout the year.
- Brother Thomas Old and New Gloss.
- Morabilius on the Gospels and Epistles.
- St. Augustine on the Trinity.
- Epistles of Paul glossed.
- St. Augustine's City of God.
- Kylwardesby upon the Letter of the Sentences.
- Questions concerning Crimes.
- Perfection of the Spiritual Life.
- Brother Thomas' Sum of Divinity, in four volumes.
- Decrees and Decretals.
- A Book of Perspective.
- Distinctions of Maurice.
- Books of Natural History, in two volumes.
- Book on the Properties of Things.[315]

Subsequent to this, in the time of one book-loving abbot, an addition of forty-nine volumes was made to the collection by his munificence and the diligence of his scribes; and time has allowed the modern bibliophile to gaze on a catalogue of these treasures. I wish the monkish annalist had recorded the life of this early bibliomaniac, but unfortunately we know little of him. But they were no mean nor paltry

volumes that he transcribed. It is with pleasure I see the catalogue commenced by a copy of the Holy Scriptures; and the many commentaries upon them by the fathers of the church enumerated after it, prove my Lord Abbot to have been a diligent student of the Bible. Nor did he seek God alone in his written word; but wisely understood that his Creator spoke to him also by visible works; and probably loved to observe the great wisdom and design of his God in the animated world; for a Pliny's Natural History stands conspicuous on the list, as the reader will perceive.

- THE BIBLE.
- Pliny's Natural History.
- Cassiodorus upon the Psalms.
- Three great Missals.
- Two Reading Books.
- A Breviary for the Infirmary.
- Jerome upon Jeremiah and Isaiah.
- Origen upon the Old Testament.
- Origen's Homilies.
- Origen upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.
- Jerome upon the Epistles to the Galatians, to Ephesians, to Titus, and to Philemon.
- Lives of the Fathers.
- Collations of the Fathers.
- Breviary for the Hospital.
- An Antiphon.
- Pars una Moralium.
- Cyprian's Works.
- Register.
- Liber dictus Paradisus.
- Jerome against Jovinian.
- Ambrose against Novatian.

- Seven Volumes of the Passions of the Saints for the circle of the whole year.
- Lives of the Cæsars.
- Acts of the Britons.
- Acts of the English.
- Acts of the Franks.
- Pascasius.
- Radbert on the Body and Blood of the Lord.
- Book of the Abbot of Clarevalle *de Amando Deo*.
- Hugo de S. Victore de duodecim gradibus Humilitatis et de Oratione.
- Physiomania Lapedarum et Liber Petri Alsinii in uno volumine.
- Rhetoric, two volumes.
- Quintilian *de Causes*, in one volume.
- Augustine upon the Lord's Prayer and upon the Psalm *Miserero mei Deus*.
- A Benedictional.
- Decreta Cainotensis Episcopi.
- Jerome upon the Twelve Prophets, and upon the Lamentations of Jeremiah.
- Augustine upon the Trinity.
- Augustine upon Genesis.
- Isidore's Etymology.
- Paterius.
- Augustine on the Words of our Lord.
- Hugo on the Sacraments.
- Cassinus on the Incarnation of our Lord.
- Anselm's *Cui Deus Homo*.[316]

The reader, I think, will allow that the catalogue enumerates but little unsuitable for a christian's study; he may not admire the principles contained in some of them, or the superstition with which many of them are loaded; but after all there were but few

volumes among them from which a Bible reading monk might not have gleaned something good and profitable. These books were transcribed about the end of the thirteenth century, after the catalogue of the monastic library mentioned above was compiled.

Walter Taunton, elected in the year 1322, gave to the library several volumes; and his successor, Adam Sodbury,[317] elected in the same year, increased it with a copy of the whole Bible,[318] a Scholastic history, Lives of Saints, a work on the Properties of Things, two costly Psalters, and a most beautifully bound Benedictional.

But doubtless many a bookworm nameless in the page of history, dwelled within those walls apart from worldly solicitude and strife; relieving what would otherwise have been an insupportable monotony, with sweet converse, with books, or the avocations of a scribe.

Well, years rolled on, and this fair sanctuary remained in all its beauty, encouraging the trembling christian, and fostering with a mother's care the literature and learning of the time. Thus it stood till that period, so dark and unpropitious for monkish ascendency, when Protestant fury ran wild, and destruction thundered upon the heads of those poor old monks! A sad and cruel revenge for enlightened minds to wreck on mistaken piety and superstitious zeal. How widely was the fine library scattered then. Even a few years after its dissolution, when Leland spent some days exploring the book treasures reposing there, it had been broken up, and many of them lost; yet still it must have been a noble library, for he tells us that it was "scarcely equalled in all Britain;" and adds, in the spirit of a true

bibliomaniac, that he no sooner passed the threshold than the very sight of so many sacred remains of antiquity struck him with awe and astonishment. The reader will naturally wish that he had given us a list of what he found there; but he merely enumerates a selection of thirty-nine, among which we find a Grammatica Eriticis, formerly belonging to Saint Dunstan; a life of Saint Wilfrid; a Saxon version of Orosius, and the writings of William of Malmsbury. [319] The antiquary will now search in vain for any vestige of the abbey library; even the spot on which it stood is unknown to the curious.

No christian, let his creed be what it may, who has learnt from his master the principles of charity and love, will refuse a tear to the memory of Richard Whiting, the last of Glastonbury's abbots. Poor old man! Surely those white locks and tottering limbs ought to have melted a Christian heart; but what charity or love dwelt within the soul of that rapacious monarch? Too old to relinquish his long cherished superstitions; too firm to renounce his religious principles, Whiting offered a firm opposition to the reformation. The fury of the tyrant Henry was aroused, and that grey headed monk was condemned to a barbarous death. As a protestant I blush to write it, yet so it was; after a hasty trial, if trial it can be called, he was dragged on a hurdle to a common gallows erected on Torr Hill, and there, in the face of a brutal mob, with two of his companion monks, was he hung! Protestant zeal stopped not here, for when life had fled they cut his body down, and dividing it into quarters, sent one to each of the four principal towns; and as a last indignity to that mutilated clay, stuck his head on the gate of the old abbey, over which he had presided with judicious care in the last days of his troubled life. It was

Whiting's wish to bid adieu in person to his monastery, in which in more prosperous times he had spent many a quiet hour; it is said that even this, the dying prayer of that poor old man, they refused to grant.[320]

On viewing the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, so mournful to look upon, yet so splendid in its decay, we cannot help exclaiming with Michael Dayton,—

> "On whom for this sad waste, should justice
> lay the crime."

Whilst in the west we cannot pass unnoticed the monastery of Malmsbury, one of the largest in England, and which possessed at one time an extensive and valuable library; but it was sadly ransacked at the Reformation, and its vellum treasures sold to the bakers to heat their stoves, or applied to the vilest use; not even a catalogue was preserved to tell the curious of a more enlightened age, what books the old monks read there; but perhaps, and the blood runs cold as the thought arises in the mind, a perfect Livy was among them, for a rare *amator librorum* belonging to this monastery, quotes one of the lost Decades.[321] I allude to William of Malmsbury, one of the most enthusiastic bibliomaniacs of his age. From his youth he dwelt within the abbey walls, and received his education there. His constant study and indefatigable industry in collecting and perusing books, was only equalled by his prudence and by his talents; he soon rose in the estimation of his fellow monks, who appointed him their librarian, and ultimately offered him the abbacy, which he refused with Christian humility, fearing too, lest its contingent duties would debar him from a full enjoyment of his favorite

avocation; but of his book passion let William of Malmsbury speak for himself: "A long period has elapsed since, as well through the care of my parents as my own industry, I became familiar with books. This pleasure possessed me from my childhood; this source of delight has grown with my years; indeed, I was so instructed by my father, that had I turned aside to other pursuits, I should have considered it as jeopardy to my soul, and discredit to my character. Wherefore, mindful of the adage, 'covet what is necessary,' I constrained my early age to desire eagerly that which it was disgraceful not to possess. I gave indeed my attention to various branches of literature, but in different degrees. Logic, for instance, which gives arms to eloquence, I contented myself with barely learning: medicine, which ministers to the health of the body, I studied with somewhat more attention. But now, having scrupulously examined the various branches of ethics, I bow down to its majesty, because it spontaneously inverts itself to those who study it, and directs their minds to moral practice, history more especially; which by a certain agreeable recapitulation of past events, excites its readers by example, to frame their lives to the pursuit of good or to aversion from evil. When, therefore, at my own expense I had procured some historians of foreign nations, I proceeded during my domestic leisure, to inquire if anything concerning our own country could be found worthy of handing down to posterity. Hence it arose, that not content with the writings of ancient times, I began myself to compose, not indeed to display my learning, which is comparatively nothing, but to bring to light events lying concealed in the confused mass of antiquity. In consequence, rejecting vague opinions, I have studiously sought for

chronicles far and near, though I confess I have scarcely profited anything by this industry; for perusing them all I still remained poor in information, though I ceased not my researches as long as I could find anything to read."[322]

Having read this passage, I think my readers will admit that William of Malmsbury well deserves a place among the bibliomaniacs of the middle ages. As an historian his merit is too generally known and acknowledged to require an elucidation here. He combines in most cases a strict attention to fact, with the rare attributes of philosophic reflection, and sometimes the bloom of eloquence. But simplicity of narrative constitute the greatest and sometimes the only charm in the composition of the monkish chroniclers. William of Malmsbury aimed at a more ambitious style, and attempted to adorn, as he admits himself, his English history with Roman art; this he does sometimes with tolerable elegance, but too often at the cost of necessary detail. Yet still we must place him at the head of the middle age historians, for he was diligent and critical, though perhaps not always impartial; and in matters connected with Romish doctrine, his testimony is not always to be relied upon without additional authority; his account of those who held opinions somewhat adverse to the orthodoxy of Rome is often equivocal; we may even suspect him of interpolating their writings, at least of Alfric, whose homilies had excited the fears of the Norman ecclesiastics. His works were compiled from many sources now unknown; and from the works of Bede, the Saxon chronicles, and Florilegus, he occasionally transcribes with little alteration.

But is it not distressing to find that this talented

author, so superior in other respects to the crude compilers of monkish history, cannot rise above the superstition of the age? Is it not deplorable that a mind so gifted could rely with fanatical zeal upon the verity of all those foul lies of Rome called "Holy" miracles; or that he could conceive how God would vouchsafe to make his saints ridiculous in the eyes of man, by such gross absurdities as tradition records, but which Rome deemed worthy of canonization; but it was then, as now, so difficult to conquer the prejudices of early teaching. With all our philosophy and our science, great men cannot do it now; even so in the days of old; they were brought up in the midst of superstition; sucked it as it were from their mother's breast, and fondly cradled in its belief; and as soon as the infant mind could think, parental piety dedicated it to God; not, however, as a light to shine before men, but as a candle under a bushel; for to serve God and to serve monachism were synonymous expressions in those days.

The west of England was honored by many a monkish bibliophile in the middle ages. The annals of Gloucester abbey record the names of several. Prior Peter, who became abbot in the year 1104, is said to have enclosed the monastery with a stone wall, and greatly enriched it with many books "*copia librorum*."[323] A few years after (A. D. 1113), Godeman the Prior was made abbot, and the Saxon Chronicle records that during his time the tower was set on fire by lightning and the whole monastery was burnt; so that all the valuable things therein were destroyed except a "few books and three priest's mass-hackles."[324] Abbot Gamage gave many books to the library in the year 1306;[325] and Richard de Stowe, during the same century, gave the monks a small collection in nine or ten volumes; a list of them

is preserved in an old manuscript.[326]

But earlier than this in the eleventh century, a bishop of Exeter stands remarkable as an *amator librorum*. Leofric, the last bishop of Crediton, and "sometime lord chancellor of England,"[327] received permission from Edward the Confessor to translate the seat of his diocese to the city of Exeter in the year 1050. "He was brought up and studied in *Lotharingos*," says William of Malmsbury,[328] and he manifested his learning and fondness for study by collecting books. Of the nature of his collections we are enabled to judge by the volumes he gave to the church of Exeter. The glimpse thus obtained lead us to consider him a curious book-collector; and it is so interesting to look upon a catalogue of a bishop's private library in that early time, and to behold his tastes and his pursuits reflected and mirrored forth therein, that I am sure the reader will be gratified by its perusal. [329] After enumerating some broad lands and a glittering array of sumptuous ornaments, he is recorded to have given to the church "Two complete mass books; 1 Collectarium; 2 Books of Epistles (*Pistel Bec*[330]); 2 complete *Sang Bec*; 1 Book of *night sang*; 1 Book *unus liber*, a Breviary or Tropery; 2 Psalters; 3 Psalters according to the Roman copies; 2 Antiphoners; A precious book of blessings; 3 others; 1 Book of Christ *in English*; 2 Summer Reading bec; 1 Winter ditto; Rules and Canons; 1 Martyrology; 1 Canons in Latin; 1 Confessional *in English*; 1 Book of Homilies and Hymns for Winter and Summer; 1 Boethius on the Consolation of Philosophy, *in English* (King Alfred's translation); 1 Great Book of Poetry in English; 1 Capitular; 1 Book of very ancient nocturnal *sangs*; 1 Pistel bec; 2 Ancient ræding bec; 1 for the use of the priest; also the following books in Latin, viz., 1 Pastoral of Gregory; 1 Dialogues of

Gregory; 1 Book of the Four Prophets; 1 Boethius Consolation of Philosophy; 1 Book of the offices of Amalar; 1 Isagoge of Porphyry; 1 Passional; 1 book of Prosper; 1 book of Prudentius the Martyr; 1 Prudentius; 1 Prudentius (*de Mrib.*); 1 other book; 1 Ezechael the Prophet; 1 Isaiah the Prophet; 1 Song of Songs; 1 Isidore Etymology; 1 Isidore on the New and Old Testament; 1 Lives of the Apostles; 1 Works of Bede; 1 Bede on the Apocalypse; 1 Bede's Exposition on the Seven Canonical Epistles; 1 book of Isidore on the Miracles of Christ; 1 book of Orosius; 1 book of Machabees; 1 book of Persius; 1 Sedulus; 1 Avator; 1 book of Statius with a gloss."

Such were the books forming a part of the private library of a bishop of Exeter in the year of grace 1073. Few indeed when compared with the vast multitudes assembled and amassed together in the ages of printed literature. But these sixty or seventy volumes, collected in those times of dearth, and each produced by the tedious process of the pen, were of an excessive value, and mark their owner as distinctly an *amator librorum*, as the enormous piles heaped together in modern times would do a Magliabechi. Nor was Leofric an ordinary collector; he loved to preserve the idiomatic poetry of those old Saxon days; his ancient *sang bec*, or song books, would now be deemed a curious and precious relic of Saxon literature. One of these has fortunately escaped the ravages of time and the fate of war. "The great boc of English Poetry" is still preserved at Exeter—one of the finest relics of Anglo Saxon poetry extant. Mark too those early translations which we cannot but regard with infinite pleasure, and which satisfactorily prove that the Gospels and Church Service was at least partly read and sung in the Saxon church in the common language of the people;

let the Roman Catholics say what they will.[331] But without saying much of his church books, we cannot but be pleased to find the Christian Boethius in his library with Bede, Gregory, Isidore, Prosper, Orosius, Prudentius, Sedulus, Persius and Statius; these are authors which retrieve the studies of Leofric from the charge of mere monastic lore.

But good books about this time were beginning to be sought after with avidity. The Cluniac monks, who were introduced into England about the year 1077, more than one hundred and sixty years after their foundation, gave a powerful impetus to monastic learning; which received additional force by the enlightened efforts of the Cistercians, instituted in 1098, and spread into Britain about the year 1128. These two great branches of the Benedictine order, by their great love of learning, and by their zeal in collecting books, effected a great change in the monkish literature of England. "They were not only curious and attentive in forming numerous libraries, but with indefatigable assiduity transcribed the volumes of the ancients, *l'assiduité infatigable à transcrire les livres des anciens*, say the Benedictines of St. Maur,"[332] who perhaps however may be suspected of regarding their ancient brethren in rather too favorable a light. But certain it is, that the state of literature became much improved, and the many celebrated scholars who flourished in the twelfth century spread a taste for reading far and wide, and by their example caused the monks to look more eagerly after books. Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of London, is one of the most pleasing instances of this period, and his writings have even now a freshness and vivacity about them which surprise as they interest the reader. This illustrious student, and truly worthy man, was born at Blois in the early part

of the twelfth century. His parents, who were wealthy and noble, were desirous of bestowing upon their son an education befitting their own rank; for this purpose he was sent to Paris to receive instruction in the general branches of scholastic knowledge. He paid particular attention to poetry, and studied rhetoric with still greater ardor.[333] But being designed for the bar, he left Paris for Bologna, there to study civil law; and succeeded in mastering all the dry technicalities of legal science. He then returned to Paris to study scholastic divinity,[334] in which he became eminently proficient, and was ever excessively fond. He remained at Paris studying deeply himself, and instructing others for many years. About the year 1167 he went with Stephen, Count de Perche, into Sicily, and was appointed tutor to the young King William II., made keeper of his private seal, and for two years conducted his education.[335] Soon after leaving Sicily, he was invited by Henry II. into England,[336] and made Archdeacon of Bath. It was during the time he held that office that he wrote most of these letters, from which we obtain a knowledge of the above facts, and which he collected together at the particular desire of King Henry; who ever regarded him with the utmost kindness, and bestowed upon him his lasting friendship. I know not a more interesting or a more historically valuable volume than these epistolary collections of Archdeacon Peter. They seem to bring those old times before us, to seat us by the fire-sides of our Norman forefathers, and in a pleasant, quiet manner enter into a gossip on the passing events of the day; and being written by a student and an *amator librorum*, they moreover unfold to us the state of learning among the ecclesiastics at least of the twelfth century; and if we were to take our worthy

archdeacon as a specimen, they possessed a far better taste for these matters than we usually give them credit for. Peter of Blois was no ordinary man; a churchman, he was free from the prejudices of churchmen—a visitant of courts and the associate of royalty, he was yet free from the sycophancy of a courtier—and when he saw pride and ungodliness in the church, or in high places, he feared not to use his pen in stern reproof at these abominations. It is both curious and extraordinary, when we bear in mind the prejudices of the age, to find him writing to a bishop upon the looseness of his conduct, and reproving him for his inattention to the affairs of his diocese, and upbraiding another for displaying an unseemly fondness for hunting,[337] and other sports of the field; which he says is so disreputable to one of his holy calling, and quotes an instance of Pope Nicholas suspending and excluding from the church Bishop Lanfred for a similar offence; which he considers even more disgraceful in Walter, Lord Bishop of Winchester, to whom he is writing, on account of his advanced age; he being at that time eighty years old. We are constantly reminded in reading his letters that we have those of an indefatigable student before us; almost every page bears some allusion to his books or to his studies, and prove how well and deeply read he was in Latin literature; not merely the theological writings of the church, but the classics also. In one of his letters he speaks of his own studies, and tells us that when he learnt the art of versification and correct style, he did not spend his time on legends and fables, but took his models from Livy, Quintus Curtius, Trogus Pompeius, Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and other classics; in the same letter he gives some directions to the Archdeacon of Nantes, who had undertaken the education of his

nephews, as to the manner of their study. He had received from the archdeacon a flattering account of the progress made by one of them named William, to which he thus replies—"You speak," says he, "of William—his great penetration and ingenious disposition, who, without grammar or the authors of science, which are both so desirable, has mastered the subtilties of logic, so as to be esteemed a famous logician, as I learn by your letter. But this is not the foundation of a correct knowledge—these subtilties which you so highly extol, are manifoldly pernicious, as Seneca truly affirms,—*Odibilius nihil est subtilitate ubi est solæ subtilitas*. What indeed is the use of these things in which you say he spends his days—either at home, in the army, at the bar, in the cloister, in the church, in the court, or indeed in any position whatever, except, I suppose, the schools?" Seneca says, in writing to Lucalius, "*Quid est, inquit acutius arista et in quo est utiles!*"[338] In many letters we find him quoting the classics with the greatest ease, and the most appropriate application to his subject; in one he refers to Ovid, Persius, and Seneca,[339] and in others, when writing in a most interesting and amusing manner of poetic fame and literary study, he extracts from Terence, Ovid, Juvenal, Horace, Plato, Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, etc.[340] In another, besides a constant use of Scripture, which proves how deeply read too he was in Holy Writ, he quotes with amazing prodigality from Juvenal, Frontius, Vigetius, Dio, Virgil, Ovid, Justin, Horace, and Plutarch.[341] Indeed, Horace was a great favorite with the archdeacon, who often applied some of his finest sentences to illustrate his familiar chat and epistolary disquisitions.[342] It is worth noticing that in one he quotes the Roman history of Sallust, in six books, which is now lost, save a few

fragments; the passage relates to Pompey the Great.[343] We can scarcely refrain from a smile at the eagerness of Archdeacon Peter in persuading his friends to relinquish the too enticing study of frivolous plays, which he says can be of no service to the interest of the soul;[344] and then, forgetting this admonition, sending for tragedies and comedies himself, that he might get them transcribed.[345] This puts one in mind of a certain modern divine, whose conduct not agreeing with his doctrine, told his hearers not to do as he did, but as he told them. It appears also equally ludicrous to find him upbraiding a monk, named Peter of Blois, for studying the pagan authors: "the foolish old fables of Hercules and Jove," their lies and philosophy;[346] when, as we have seen, he read them so ravenously, and so greatly borrowed from them himself. But then we must bear in mind that the archdeacon had also well stored his mind with Scripture, and certainly always deemed *that* the first and most important of all his studies, which was perhaps not the case with the monk to whom he writes. In some of his letters we have pleasing pictures of the old times presented to us, and it is astonishing how homely and natural they read, after the elapse of 700 years. In more than one he launches out in strong invectives against the lawyers, who in all ages seems to have borne the indignation of mankind; Peter accuses them of selling their knowledge for hire, to the direct perversion of all justice; of favoring the rich and oppressing the poor.[347] He reproves Reginald, Archdeacon of Salisbury, for occupying his time with falconry, instead of attending to his clerical duties; and in another, a most interesting letter, he gives a description of King Henry II., whose character he extols in panegyric terms, and proves how much

superior he was in learning to William II. of Sicily. He says that "Henry, as often as he could breathe from his care and solicitudes, he was occupied in secret reading; or at other times joined by a body of clergy, would try to solve some elaborate question *quæstiones laborat evolvere*."[348] Frequently we find him writing about books, begging transcripts, eagerly purchasing them; and in one of his letters to Alexander, Abbot of Jenniege, *Gemiticensem*, he writes, apologizing, and begging his forgiveness for not having fulfilled his promise in returning a book which he had borrowed from his library, and begs that his friend will yet allow him to retain it some days longer.[349] The last days of a scholar's life are not always remarkable, and we know nothing of those of Archdeacon Peter; for after the death of Henry II., his intellectual worth found no royal mind to appreciate it. The lion-hearted Richard thought more of the battle axe and crusading than the encouragement of literature or science; and Peter, like many other students, grown old in their studies, was left in his age to wander among his books, unmolested and uncared for. With the friendship of a few clerical associates, and the archdeaconry of London, which by the bye was totally unproductive, [350] he died, and for many ages was forgotten. But a student's worth can never perish; a time is certain to arrive when his erudition will receive its due reward of human praise. We now, after a slumber of many hundred years, begin to appreciate his value, and to entertain a hearty friendship and esteem for the venerable Archdeacon Peter.

FOOTNOTES:

[310] See Speed's Chron. p. 228. Samme's

Antiq. p. 578.

[311] Stowe's Annales, 4to. 1605, p. 97. See also Hearne's Hist. Glastonbury.

[312] *Will. Malm. ap. Gale Script.* 311.—Coopertoria Librorum Evangelii. For many other instances of binding books in gold, and sometimes with costly gems, I refer the reader to *Du Cange* verb-Capsæ, and to *Mr. Maitland's Dark Ages*.

[313] Warton says, that this library was at the time the "*richest in England*." In this, however, he was mistaken.

[314] John of Glast. p. 423.

[315] John of Glastonbury Edt., Hearne, Oxon, 1726, p. 451. Steven's Additions to Dugdale, vol. i. p. 447.

[316] Printed in *Tanner's Notitia Monastica*, 8vo. Edit. 1695, p. 75, and in *Hearne's History of Glastonbury*, p. 141; but both these works are scarce, and I have thought it worth reprinting; the reader will perceive that I have given some of the items in English—the original of course is in Latin.

[317] John of Glas. p. 262.

[318] Librario dedit. bibliam preciosam.—*John of Glast.* p. 262.

[319] Among them was a "Dictionarum Latine et Saxonicum."—*Leland Collect.* iii. p. 153.

[320] Leland, in his MSS. preserved in the Bodleian Library, calls Whiting "*Homo sane candidissimus et amicus meus singularis*," but he afterwards scored the line with his pen. See *Arch Bodl.* A. Dugdale Monast. vol. i. p. 6.

[321] See Hume's Hist. Engl.; Moffat's Hist. of Malmsbury, p. 223, and Will. Malms. Novellæ Hist. lib. ii.; Sharpe's translation, p. 576.

[322] William of Malmsbury, translated by the Rev. J. Sharpe, 4to. *Lond.* 1815, p. 107.

[323] MS. *Cottonian Domit.* A. viii. fol. 128 b.

[324] Saxon Chron. by Ingram, p. 343.

[325] Dugdale's *Monastica*, vol. i. p. 534. Leland gives a list of the books he found there, but they only number about 20 volumes. See *Collect.* vol. iv. p. 159.

[326] MS. Harleian, No. 627, fol. 8 a. "Liber Geneseos versificatus" probably Cædmon's Paraphrase was among them, and Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy.

[327] Godwin Cat. of Bishops, p. 317.

[328] Will. of Malms. de Gestis Pont. Savile Script. fol. 1601, p. 256, *apud Lotharingos altus et doctus*.

[329] I use a transcript of the Exeter MS. collated by Sir F. Madden. *Additional MSS.* No. 9067. It is printed in Latin and Saxon from a old MS. In the Bodl. Auct. D. 2. 16. fol. 1 a; in Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. ii. p. 257, which varies a little from the Exeter transcript.

[330] Bec is the plural of boc, a book.

[331] See *Dr. Lingard's Hist. Anglo Sax. Church*, vol. i. p. 307, who cannot deny this entirely; see also *Lappenberg Hist. Eng.* vol. i. p. 202, who says that the mass was read partially in the Saxon tongue. *Hallam* in his *Supplemental Notes*, p. 408, has a good note on the subject.

[332] Hist. Litt. de la France, ix. p. 142.

[333] Pet. Blesensis Opera, 4to. Mogunt. 1600. Ep. lxxxix.

[334] Ep. xxvi.

[335] Ep. lxvi.

[336] Ep. cxxvii.

[337] Ep. lvi. Yet we find that Charlemagne, in the year 795, granted the monks of the monastery of St. Bertin, in the time of Abbot Odlando, the privilege of hunting in his forests for the purpose of procuring leather to bind their books. "Odlando Abbate hujus loci abbas nonus, in omni bonitate suo prædecessori Hardrado coæqualis anno primo sui regiminis impetravit à rege Carolo privilegium venandi in silvis nostris et aliis ubicumque constitutis, ad volumina librorum tegænda, et manicas et zonas habendas. Salvis forestis regiis, quod sic incipit. Carolus Dei gratia Rex Francorum et Longobardorum ac patricius Romanorum, etc., data Septimo Kal. Aprilis, anno xxvi. regni nostri." Martene Thasaurus Nov. Anecdotorum iii. 498. *Warton* mentions a similar instance of a grant to the monks of St. Sithin, *Dissert.* ii. *prefixed to Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, but he quotes it with some sad misrepresentations, and refers to *Mabillon De re Diplomatica*, 611. Mr. Maitland, in his *Dark Ages*, has shown the absurdity of Warton's inferences from the fact, and proved that it was to the servants, or *eorum homines*, that Charlemagne granted this uncanonical privilege, p. 216. But I find no such restriction in the case I have quoted above. Probably, however, it was thought needless to express what might be inferred, or to caution against a practice so uncongenial with the christian duties of a monk.

[338] Ep. ci. p. 184. He afterwards quotes

Livy, Tacitus, and many others.

[339] Ep. xiv. He was fond of Quintus Curtius, and often read his history with much pleasure. Ep. ci. p. 184.

[340] Ep. lxxvii. p. 81.

[341] Ep. xciv.

[342] Ep. xcii. and also lxxii. which is redundant with quotations from the poets.

[343] Ep. xciv. p. 170.

[344] Ep. lvii.

[345] Ep. xii.

[346] Ep. lxxvi. p. 132.

[347] Ep. cxl. p. 253.

[348] Ep. lxvi. p. 115.

[349] Ep. xxxvii. p. 68.

[350] Ep. cli.

CHAPTER X

Winchester famous for its Scribes.—Ethelwold and Godemann.—Anecdotes.—Library of the Monastery of Reading.—The Bible.—Library of Depying Priory.—Effects of Gospel Reading.—

Catalogue of Ramsey Library.—Hebrew MSS.—Fine Classics, etc.—St. Edmund's Bury.—Church of Ely.—Canute, etc.



N the olden time the monks of Winchester[351] were renowned for their calligraphic and pictorial art. The choice book collectors of the day sought anxiously for volumes produced by these ingenious scribes, and paid extravagant prices for them. A superb specimen of their skill was executed for Bishop Ethelwold; that enlightened and benevolent prelate was a great patron of art and literature, and himself a grammaticus and poet of no mean pretensions. He did more than any other of his time to restore the architectural beauties which were damaged or destroyed by the fire and sword of the Danish invaders. His love of these undertakings, his industry in carrying them out, and the great talent he displayed in their restoration, is truly wonderful to observe. He is called by Wolstan, his biographer, "a great builder of churches, and divers other works."[352] He was fond of learning, and very liberal in diffusing the knowledge which he acquired; and used to instruct the young by reading to them the Latin authors, translated into the Saxon tongue. "He wrote a Saxion version of the Rule of Saint Benedict, which was so much admired, and so pleased King Edgar, that he granted to him the manor of Sudborn, [353] as a token of his approbation."

Among a number of donations which he bequeathed

to this monastery, twenty volumes are enumerated, embracing some writings of Bede and Isidore.[354] As a proof of his bibliomanical propensities, I refer the reader to the celebrated Benedictional of the Duke of Devonshire; that rich gem, with its resplendent illuminations, place it beyond the shadow of a doubt, and prove Ethelwold to have been an *amator librorum* of consummate taste. This fine specimen of Saxon ingenuity is the production of a cloistered monk of Winchester, named Godemann, who transcribed it at the bishop's special desire, as we learn, from the following lines:—

> "*Presentem Biblum iusset prescribere Presul.*
> *Wintoniæ Dus que fecerat esse Patronum*
> *Magnus Æthelwoldus.*"[355]

Godemann, the scribe, entreats the prayers of his readers, and wishes "all who gaze on this book to ever pray that after the end of the flesh I may inherit health in heaven: this is the fervent prayer of the scribe, the humble Godemann." This talented illuminator was chaplain to Ethelwold, and afterwards abbot of Thorney.[356] The choice Benedictional in the public library of Rouen is also ascribed to his elegant pen, and adds additional lustre of his artistic fame.[357]

Most readers have heard of Walter, (who was prior of St. Swithin in 1174,) giving twelve measures of barley and a pall, on which was embroidered in silver the history of St. Berinus converting a Saxon king, for a fine copy of Bede's Homilies and St. Austin's Psalter;[358] and of Henry, a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Hyde, near there, who

transcribed, in the year 1178, Terence, Boethius, Seutonius and Claudian; and richly illuminated and bound them, which he exchanged with a neighboring bibliophile for a life of St. Christopher, St. Gregory's Pastoral Care, and four Missals.[359] Nicholas, Bishop of Winchester, left one hundred marks and a Bible, with a fine gloss, in two large volumes, to the convent of St. Swithin. John de Pontissara, who succeeded that bishop in the year 1282, borrowed this valuable manuscript to benefit and improve his biblical knowledge by a perusal of its numerous notes. So great was their regard for this precious gift, that the monks demanded a bond for its return; a circumstance which has caused some doubt as to the plenitude of the Holy Scriptures in the English Church during that period; at least among those who have only casually glanced at the subject. I may as well notice that the ancient Psalter in the Cottonian Library[360] was written about the year 1035, by the "most humble brother and monk Ælsinus," of Hyde Abbey. The table prefixed to the volume records the deaths of other eminent scribes and illuminators, whose names are mingled with the great men of the day;[361] showing how esteemed they were, and how honorable was their avocation. Thus under the 15th of May we find "*Obitus Ætherici mº picto*;" and again, under the 5th of July, "*Obit Wulfrici mº pictoris*." Many were the choice transcripts made and adorned by the Winchester monks.

The monastery of Reading, in Berkshire, possessed during the reign of Henry the Third a choice library of a hundred and fifty volumes. It is printed in the Supplement to the History of Reading, from the original prefixed to the Woollascot manuscripts. But it is copied very inaccurately, and with many grievous omissions; nevertheless it will suffice to

enable us to gain a knowledge of the class of books most admired by the monks of Reading; and the Christian reader will be glad to learn that the catalogue opens, as usual, with the Holy Scriptures. Indeed no less than four fine large and complete copies of the Bible are enumerated. The first in two volumes; the second in three volumes; the third in two, and the fourth in the same number which was transcribed by the *Cantor*, and kept in the cloisters for the use of the monks. But in addition to these, which are in themselves quite sufficient to exculpate the monks from any charge of negligence of Bible reading, we find a long list of separate portions of the Old and New Testament; besides many of the most important works of the Fathers, and productions of mediæval learning, as the following names will testify:—

- Ambrose.
- Augustine.
- Basil.
- Bede.
- Cassidorus.
- Eusebius.
- Gregory.
- Hilarius.
- Jerome.
- Josephus.
- Lombard.
- Macrobius.
- Origen.
- Plato.
- Prosper.
- Rabanus Maurus.

They possessed also the works of Geoffry of Monmouth; the *Vita Karoli et Alexandri et gesta*

Normannorum; a "Ystoria Rading," and many others equally interesting; and among the books given by Radbert of Witchir, we find a Juvenal, the Bucolics and Georgics of Virgil, and the "Ode et Poetria et Sermone et Epistole Oratii." But certainly the most striking characteristic is the fine biblical collection contained in their library, which is well worthy our attention, if not our admiration: not but that we find them in other libraries much less extensive. In those monasteries whose poverty would not allow the purchase of books in any quantity, and whose libraries could boast but of some twenty or thirty volumes, it is scarcely to be expected that they should be found rich in profane literature; but it is deeply gratifying to find, as we generally do, the Bible first on their little list; conveying a proof by this prominence, in a quiet but expressive way, how highly they esteemed that holy volume, and how essential they deemed its possession. Would that they had profited more by its holy precepts!

We find an instance of this, and a proof of their fondness for the Bible, in the catalogue of the books in Depying Priory,[362] in Lincolnshire; which, containing a collection of twenty-three volumes, enumerates a copy of the Bible first on the humble list. The catalogue is as follows:—

- These are the books in the library of the monks of Depying.[363]
- The Bible.
- The first part of the Morals of Pope St. Gregory.
- The second part of the Morals by the same.
- Book of Divine Offices.
- Gesta Britonorum.
- Tracts of Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, on

Confession, with other compilations.
- Martyrologium, with the Rules of St. Benedict; Passion of St. James, with other books.
- Constitutions of Pope Benedict.
- History of the Island of Ely.
- Hugucio de dono fratris Johannis Tiryngham.
- Homilies of the blessed Gregory.
- Constitutions of Pope Clement XII.
- Book of the Virtues and Vices.
- Majester Historiarum.
- Sacramentary given by Master John Swarby, Rector of the Church of St. Guthlac.
- One great Portoforium for the use of the Brothers.
- Two ditto.
- Two Psalters for the use of the Brothers.
- Three Missals for the use of the Brothers.

There is not much in this scanty collection, the loss of which we need lament; nor does it inspire us with a very high notion of the learning of the monks of Depying Priory. Yet how cheering it is to find that the Bible was studied in this little cell; and I trust the monk often drew from it many words of comfort and consolation. Where is the reader who will not regard these instances of Bible reading with pleasure? Where is the Christian who will not rejoice that the Gospel of Christ was read and loved in the turbulent days of the Norman monarchs? Where is the philosopher who will affirm that we owe nothing to this silent but effectual and fervent study? Where is he who will maintain that the influence of the blessed and abundant charity—the cheering promises, and the sweet admonitions of love and mercy with which the Gospels overflow—aided nothing in the progress of civilization? Where is the

Bible student who will believe that all this reading of the Scriptures was unprofitable because, forsooth, a monk preached and taught it to the multitude?

Let the historian open his volumes with a new interest, and ponder over their pages with a fresh spirit of inquiry; let him read of days of darkness and barbarity; and as he peruses on, trace the origin of the light whose brightness drove the darkness and barbarity away. How much will he trace to the Bible's influence; how often will he be compelled to enter a convent wall to find in the gospel student the one who shone as a redeeming light in those old days of iniquity and sin; and will he deny to the Christian priest his gratitude and love, because he wore the cowl and mantle of a monk, or because he loved to read of saints whose lives were mingled with lying legends, or because he chose a life which to us looks dreary, cold, and heartless. Will he deny him a grateful recollection when he reads of how much good he was permitted to achieve in the Church of Christ; of how many a doubting heart he reassured; of how many a soul he fired with a true spark of Christian love; when he reads of how the monk preached the faith of Christ, and how often he led some wandering pilgrim into the path of vital truth by the sweet words of the dear religion which he taught; when he reads that the hearts of many a Norman chief was softened by the sweetness of the gospel's voice, and his evil passions were lulled by the hymn of praise which the monk devoutly sang to his Master in heaven above. But speaking of the existence of the Bible among the monks puts me in mind of the Abbey of Ramsey and its fine old library of books, which was particularly rich in biblical treasures. Even superior to Reading, as regards its biblical collection, was the library of Ramsey. A

portion of an old catalogue of the library of this monastery has been preserved, apparently transcribed about the beginning of the fourteenth century, during the warlike reign of Richard the Second. It is one of the richest and most interesting relics of its kind extant, at least of those to be found in our own public libraries; and a perusal of it will not fail to leave an impression on the mind that the monks were far wealthier in their literary stores than we previously imagined. Originally on two or three skins, it is now torn into five separate pieces,[364] and in other respects much dilapidated. The writing also in some parts is nearly obliterated, so as to render the document scarcely readable. It is much to be regretted that this interesting catalogue is but a portion of the original; in its complete form it would probably have described twice as many volumes; but a fragment as it is, it nevertheless contains the titles of more than *eleven hundred books*, with the names of many of their donors attached. A creditable and right worthy testimonial this, of the learning and love of books prevalent among the monks of Ramsey Monastery. More than seven hundred of this goodly number were of a miscellaneous nature, and the rest were principally books used in the performance of divine service. Among these there were no less than seventy Breviaries; thirty-two Grails; twenty-nine Processionals; and one hundred Psalters! The reader will regard most of these as superstitious and useless; nor should I remark upon them did they not show that books were not so scarce in those times as we suppose; as this prodigality satisfactorily proves, and moreover testifies to the unceasing industry of the monkish scribes. We who are used to the speed of the printing press and its fertile abundance can form an opinion of the labor necessary to transcribe this

formidable array of papistical literature. Four hundred volumes transcribed with the plodding pen! each word collated and each page diligently revised, lest a blunder or a misspelt syllable should blemish those books so deeply venerated. What long years of dry tedious labor and monotonous industry was here!

But the other portion of the catalogue fully compensates for this vast proportion of ecclesiastical volumes. Besides several *Biblia optima in duobus voluminibus*, or complete copies of the Bible, many separate books of the inspired writers are noted down; indeed the catalogue lays before us a superb array of fine biblical treasures, rendered doubly valuable by copious and useful glossaries; and embracing many a rare Hebrew MS. Bible, *bibliotheca hebraice*, and precious commentary. I count no less than twenty volumes in this ancient language. But we often find Hebrew manuscripts in the monastic catalogues after the eleventh century. The Jews, who came over in great numbers about that time, were possessed of many valuable books, and spread a knowledge of their language and literature among the students of the monasteries. And when the cruel persecution commenced against them in the thirteenth century, they disposed of their books, which were generally bought up by the monks, who were ever hungry after such acquisitions. Gregory, prior of Ramsey, collected a great quantity of Hebrew MSS. in this way, and highly esteemed the language, in which he became deeply learned. At his death, in the year 1250, he left them to the library of his monastery.[365] Nor was my lord prior a solitary instance; many others of the same abbey, inspired by his example and aided by his books, studied the Hebrew with equal success. Brother Dodford, the Armarian, and Holbeach, a monk, displayed their

erudition in writing a Hebrew lexicon.[366]

The library of Ramsey was also remarkably rich in patristic lore. They gloried in the possession of the works of Ambrose, Augustine, Anselm, Basil, Boniface, Bernard, Gregory, and many others equally voluminous. But it was not exclusively to the study of such matters that these monks applied their minds, they possessed a taste for other branches of literature besides. They read histories of the church, histories of England, of Normandy, of the Jews; and histories of scholastic philosophy, and many old chronicles which reposed on their shelves. In science they appear to have been equally studious, for the catalogue enumerates works on medicine, natural history, philosophy, mathematics, logic, dialects, arithmetic and music! Who will say after this that the monks were ignorant of the sciences and careless of the arts? The classical student has perhaps ere this condemned them for their want of taste, and felt indignant at the absence of those authors of antiquity whose names and works he venerates. But the monks, far from neglecting those precious volumes, were ever careful of their preservation; they loved Virgil, Horace, and even Ovid, "heathen dogs" as they were, and enjoyed a keen relish for their beauties. I find in this catalogue the following choice names of antiquity occur repeatedly:—

- Aristotle.
- Arian.
- Boethius.
- Claudius.
- Dionysius.
- Donatus.
- Horace.
- Josephus.

- Justin.
- Lucan.
- Martial.
- Macrobius.
- Orosius.
- Ovid.
- Plato.
- Priscian.
- Prudentius.
- Seneca.
- Sallust.
- Solinus.
- Terence.
- Virgil.

Here were rich mines of ancient eloquence, and fragrant flowers of poesy to enliven and perfume the dull cloister studies of the monks. It is not every library or reading society even of our own time that possess so many gems of old. But other treasures might yet be named which still further testify to the varied tastes and literary pursuits of these monastic bibliophiles; but I shall content myself with naming Peter of Blois, the Sentences of Peter Lombard, of which they had several copies, some enriched with choice commentaries and notes, the works of Thomas Aquinas and others of his class, a "Liber Ricardi," Dictionaries, Grammars, and the writings of "Majestri Robi Grostete," the celebrated Bishop of Lincoln, renowned as a great *amator librorum* and collector of Grecian literature. I might easily swell this notice out to a considerable extent by enumerating many other book treasures in this curious collection: but enough has been said to enable the reader to judge of the sort of literature the monks of Ramsey collected and the books they read; and if he should feel inclined to

pursue the inquiry further, I must refer him to the original manuscript, promising him much gratification for his trouble.[367] It only remains for me to say that the Vandalism of the Reformation swept all traces of this fine library away, save the broken, tattered catalogue we have just examined. But this is more than has been spared from some. The abbey of St. Edmunds Bury[368] at one time must have enjoyed a copious library, but we have no catalogue that I am aware of to tell of its nature, not even a passing notice of its well-stored shelves, except a few lines in which Leland mentions some of the old manuscripts he found therein.[369] But a catalogue of their library in the flourishing days of their monastery would have disclosed, I imagine, many curious works, and probably some singular writings on the "*crafft off medycyne*," which Abbot Baldwin, "*phesean*" to Edward the Confessor,[370] had given the monks, and of whom Lydgate thus speaks —

> "Baldewynus, a monk off Seynt Denys,
> Gretly expert in crafft of medycyne;
> Full provydent off counsayl and right wys,
> Sad off his port, functuons off doctryne;
> After by grace and influence devyne,
> Choose off Bury Abbot, as I reede
> The thyrdde in order that did ther succeade."[371]

We may equally deplore the loss of the catalogue of the monastery of Ely, which, during the middle ages, we have every reason to suppose possessed a library of much value and extent. This old monastery can trace its foundation back to a remote period, and claim as its foundress, Etheldredæ,[372] the daughter

of Anna, King of the East Angles, she was the wife of King Ecgfrid,[373] with whom she lived for twelve long years, though during that time she preserved the glory of perfect virginity, much to the annoyance of her royal spouse, who offered money and lands to induce that illustrious virgin to waver in her resolution, but without success. Her inflexible determination at length induced her husband to grant her oft-repeated prayer; and in the year 673 she retired into the seclusion of monastic life,[374] and building the monastery of Ely, devoted her days to the praise and glory of her heavenly King. Her pure and pious life caused others speedily to follow her example, and she soon became the virgin-mother of a numerous progeny dedicated to God. A series of astounding miracles attended her monastic life; and sixteen years after her death, when her sister, the succeeding abbess, opened her wooden coffin to transfer her body to a more costly one of marble, that "holy virgin and spouse of Christ" was found entirely free from corruption or decay.[375]

A nunnery, glorying in so pure a foundress, grew and flourished, and for "two hundred years existed in the full observance of monastic discipline;" but on the coming of the Danes in the year 870, those sad destroyers of religious establishments laid it in a heap of ruins, in which desolate condition it remained till it attracted the attention of the celebrated Ethelwold, who under the patronage of King Edgar restored it; and endowing it with considerable privileges appointed Brithnoth, Prior of Winchester, its first abbot.[376]

Many years after, when Leoffin was abbot there, and Canute was king, that monarch honored the monastery of Ely with his presence on several

occasions. Monkish traditions say, that on one of these visits as the king approached, he heard the pious inmates of the monastery chanting their hymn of praise; and so melodious were the voices of the devotees, that his royal heart was touched, and he poured forth his feelings in a Saxon ballad, commencing thus:

"Merry sang the monks of Ely,
When Canute the king was sailing by;
Row ye knights near the land,
And let us hear these monks song."[377]

It reads smoother in Strutt's version; he renders it

"Cheerful sang the monk of Ely,
When Canute the king was passing by;
Row to the shore knights, said the king,
And let us hear these churchmen
sing."[378]

In addition to the title of a poet, Canute has also received the appellation of a bibliomaniac. Dibdin, in his bibliomania, mentions in a cursory manner a few monkish book collectors, and introduces Canute among them.[379] The illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels in the Danish tongue, now in the British Museum, he writes, "and once that monarch's own book leaves not the shadow of a doubt of his bibliomanical character!" I cannot however allow him that title upon such equivocal grounds; for upon examination, the MS. turns out to be in the Theotisc dialect, possessing no illuminations of its own, and never perhaps once in the hands of the royal poet.[380]

From the account books of Ely church we may infer

that the monks there enjoyed a tolerable library; for we find frequent entries of money having been expended for books and materials connected with the library; thus in the year 1300 we find that they bought at one time five dozen parchment, four pounds of ink, eight calf and four sheep-skins for binding books; and afterwards there is another entry of five dozen vellum and six pair of book clasps, a book of decretals for the library, 3s., a Speculum Gregor, 2s., and "*Pro tabula Paschalis fac denova et illuminand*," 4s.[381] They frequently perhaps sent one of the monks to distants parts to purchase or borrow books for their library; a curious instance of this occurs under the year 1329, when they paid "the precentor for going to Balsham to enquire for books, 6s. 7d." The bookbinder two weeks' wages, 4s.; twelve iron chains to fasten books, 4s.; five dozen vellum, 25s. 8d. In the year 1396, they paid their librarian 53s. 4d., and a tunic for his services during one year.[382]

Nigel, Bishop of Ely, by endowing the Scriptorium, enabled the monks to produce some excellent transcripts; they added several books of Cassiodorus, Bede, Aldelem, Radbert, Andres, etc., to the library; [383] and they possessed at one time no less than thirteen fine copies of the Gospels, which were beautifully bound in gold and silver.[384]

FOOTNOTES:

[351] Those learned in such matters refer the foundation of Winchester cathedral and monastery to a remote period. An old writer says that it was "built by King Lucius, who, abolishing Paganisme, embraced Christ the first yere of his reigne, being the yeere of our

Lord 180."—*Godwin's Cat.* p. 157. See also *Usher de Primordiis*. fo. 126.

[352] "Ecclesiarum ac diversorum operum magnus ædificator, et dum esset abbas et dum esset episcopus."—*Wolstan. Vita Æthelw. ap. Mabillon Actæ S. S. Benedict, Sæc.* v. p. 614.

[353] Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. i. p. 614.

[354] MS. belonging to the Society of Antiquaries, No. 60, fo. 34. See Dugdale Monast. vol. i. p. 382. He gave to the monks of Abingdon a copy of the Gospels cased in silver, ornamented with gold and precious stones.

[355] *Archæologia*, vol. xxiv. p. 22; and *Dibdin's* delightful "*Decameron*," vol. i. p. lix.

[356] Wuls. Act. S. S. Benedict. p. 616.

[357] Archæolog. vol. xxiv.

[358] Regist. Priorat. S. Swithin Winton.—*Warton* II, *Dissert.*

[359] *Ibid.*

[360] *Marked Titus*, D. 27.

[361] It is called "*Calendarium, in quo notantur dies obitus plurimorum monachorum, abbatum, etc.; temp. regum Anglo-Saxonum*."

[362] It was a little cell dependant on the Abbey of Thorney.

[363] MS. *Harleian*, No. 3658, fo. 74, b. It will be found printed in *Dugdale's Monasticon*, vol. iv. p. 167. The catalogue was evidently written about the year 1350.

[364] Cottonian Charta, 11-16. I am sorry to observe so little attention paid to this curious fragment, which, insignificant as it may appear

to some, is nevertheless quite a curiosity of literature in its way. Its tattered condition calls for the care of Sir Frederick Madden.

[365] Leland Script. Brit. p. 321, and MSS. Bibl. Lambeth, Wharton, L. p. 661. Libris Prioris Gregorii de Ramsey, *Prima pars Bibliothecæ Hebraice*, etc. Warton Dissert ii. Eng. Poetry.

[366] Bale, iv. 41, et ix. 9. Leland. Scrip. Brit. p. 452.

[367] Ailward, Bishop of London, gave many books to the library of Ramsey monastery, *Hoveden Scrip. post. Bedam.* 1596, fol. 252. Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. ii.

[368] In the year 1327, the inhabitants of Bury besieged the abbey, wounded the monks, and "bare out of the abbey all the gold, silver ornaments, *bookes, charters, and other writings*." Stowe Annals, p. 353.

[369] He particularly notices a Sallust, a very ancient copy, *vetustis simus*.

[370] And also to Lanfranc, he was elected in the year 1065.

[371] Harleian MS. No. 2278.

[372] Or Atheldryth.

[373] The youngest son of Osway, King of Northumbria; he succeeded to the throne on the death of his father in the year 670.

[374] She seems to have been principally encouraged in this fanatical determination by Wilfrid; probably this was one of the causes of Ecgfrid's displeasure towards him. So highly was the purity of the body regarded in the early Saxon church, that Aldhelm wrote a

piece in its praise, in imitation of the style of Sedulius, but in most extravagant terms. Bede wrote a poem, solely to commemorate the chastety of Etheldreda.

"Let Maro wars in loftier numbers sing
I sound the praises of our heavenly King;
Chaste is my verse, nor Helen's rape I write,
Light tales like these, but prove the mind as light."

Bede's Eccl. Hist. by Giles, b. iv. c. xx.

[375] Bede's Eccl. Hist. b. iv. c. xx.

[376] Saxon Chronicle translated by Ingram, p. 118. Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. i. p. 458.

[377] Sharon Turner's Hist. of the Anglo-Saxons, vol. ii. p. 288.

[378] Strutt's Saxon Antiquities, vol. i. p. 83.

[379] *Dibdin's Bibliomania*, p. 228.

[380] Dibdin alludes to the "Harmony of the Four Gospels," preserved among the Cotton MSS. *Caligula*, A. vii. and described as "*Harmonia Evangeliorum, lingua Francica capitulis, 71, Liber quondam (dicit Jamesius) Canuti regis*." See also Hicke's Gram. Franco-Theotisca, p. 6. But there is no ground for the supposition that it belonged to Canute; and the

several fine historical illuminations bound up with it are evidently of a much later age.

[381] An entry occurs of 6s. 8d. for writing two processionals.

[382] Stevenson's Suppl. to Bentham's church of Ely, p. 52. "It is worth notice," says Stevenson, "that in the course of a few years, about the middle of the 14th century, the precentor purchased upwards of seventy dozen parchment and thirty dozen vellum."

[383] Spelman Antiquarii Collectanea, vol. iii. p. 273. Nigel, who was made bishop in 1133, was plundered by some of King Stephen's soldiers, and robbed of his own copy of the Gospels which he had adorned with many sacred relics; see *Anglia Sacra*, i. p. 622.

[384] *Warton's Anglia Sacra*, it is related that William Longchamp, bishop in 1199, sold them to raise money towards the redemption of King Richard, *pro Regis Ricardi redemptione*, tom. i. 633. Dugd. Monast. i. p. 463.

CHAPTER XI

St. Alban's.—Willigod.—Bones of St. Alban.—Eadmer.—Norman Conquest.—Paul and the Scriptorium.—Geoffry de Gorham.—Brekspere the "Poor Clerk".—Abbot Simon and his "multis

voluminibus".—Raymond the Prior.—Wentmore.—Whethamstede.—Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.—Lydgate.—Guy, Earl of Warwick.



HE efficacy of "Good Works" was a principle ever inculcated by the monks of old. It is sad to reflect, that vile deeds and black intentions were too readily forgiven and absolved by the Church on the performance of some *good deed*; or that the monks should dare to shelter or to gloss over those sins which their priestly duty bound them to condemn, because forsooth some wealthy baron could spare a portion of his broad lands or coffered gold to extenuate them. But this forms one of the dark stains of the monastic system; and the monks, I am sorry to say, were more readily inclined to overlook the blemish, because it proved so profitable to their order. And thus it was, that the proud and noble monastery of St. Alban's was endowed by a murderer's hand, and built to allay the fierce tortures of an assassin's conscience. Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, fell by the regal hand of Offa, king of Mercia; and from the era of that black and guilty deed many a fine monastery dates its origin and owes its birth.

St. Alban's was founded, as its name implies, in honor of the English protomartyr, whose bones were said to have been discovered on that interesting site, and afterwards preserved with veneration in the abbey. In the ancient times, the building appears to

have covered a considerable space, and to have been of great magnitude and power; for ruins of its former structure mark how far and wide the foundation spreads.

"The glorious king Offa," as the monks in their adulation style him, richly endowed the monastery on its completion, as we learn from the old chronicles of the abbey; and a succession of potent sovereigns are emblazoned on the glittering parchment, whose liberalty augmented or confirmed these privileges.[385]

Willigod, the first abbot, greatly enriched the monastery, and bestowed especial care upon the relics of St. Alban. It is curious to mark how many perils those shrivelled bones escaped, and with what anxious care the monks preserved them. In the year 930, during the time of Abbot Eadfrid, the Danes attacked the abbey, and after many destroying acts broke open the repository, and carried away some of the bones of St. Alban into their own country.[386] The monks took greater care than ever of the remaining relics; and their anxiety for their safety, and the veneration with which they regarded them, is curiously illustrated by an anecdote of Abbot Leofric, elected in the year 1006. His abbacy was, therefore, held in troubled times; and in the midst of fresh invasions and Danish cruelties. Fearing lest they should a second time reach the abbey, he determined to protect by stratagem what he could not effect by force. After hiding the genuine bones of St. Alban in a place quite secure from discovery, he sent an open message to the Abbot of Ely, entreating permission to deposit the holy relics in his keeping;

and offering, as a plausible reason, that the monastery of Ely, being surrounded by marshy and impenetrable bogs, was secure from the approaches of the barbarians. He accompanied this message with some false relics—the remains of an old monk belonging to the abbey enclosed in a coffin—and sent with them a worn antiquated looking mantle, pretending that it formerly belonged to Amphibalus, the master of St. Alban.[387] The monks of Ely joyfully received these precious bones, and displayed perhaps too much eagerness in doing so. Certain it is, that when the danger was past and the quietude of the country was restored, Leofric, on applying for the restitution of these "holy relics," found some difficulty in obtaining them; for the Abbot of Ely attempted by equivocation and duplicity to retain them. After several ineffectual applications, Leofric was compelled, for the honor of his monastery, to declare the "pious fraud" he had practised; which he proved by the testimony of several monks of his fraternity, who were witnesses of the transaction. It is said, that Edward the Confessor was highly incensed at the conduct of the Abbot of Ely.

I have stated elsewhere, that the learned and pious Ælfric gave the monastery many choice volumes. His successor, Ealdred, abbot, about the year 955, was quite an antiquary in his way; and no spot in England afforded so many opportunities to gratify his taste as the site of the ancient city of Verulam. He commenced an extensive search among the ruins, and rescued from the earth a vast quantity of interesting and valuable remains. He stowed all the stone-work and other materials which were serviceable in building away, intending to erect a new edifice for the monks: but death prevented the consummation of these designs. Eadmer, his

successor, a man of great piety and learning, followed up the pursuit, and made some important accessions to these stores. He found also a great number of gold and silver ornaments, specimens of ancient art, some of them of a most costly nature, but being idols or figures connected with heathen mythology, he cared not to preserve them. Matthew Paris is prolix in his account of the operations and discoveries of this abbot; and one portion of it is so interesting, and seems so connected with our subject, that I cannot refrain from giving it to the reader. "The abbot," he writes, "whilst digging out the walls and searching for the ruins which were buried in the earth in the midst of the ancient city, discovered many vestiges of the foundation of a great palace. In a recess in one of the walls he found the remains of a library, consisting of a number of books and rolls; and among them a volume in an unknown tongue, and which, although very ancient, had especially escaped destruction. This nobody in the monastery could read, nor could they at that time find any one who understood the writing or the idiom; it was exceedingly ancient, and the letters evidently were most beautifully formed; the inscriptions or titles were written in gold, and encircled with ornaments; bound in oak with silken bands, which still retained their strength and beauty; so perfectly was the volume preserved. But they could not conceive what the book was about; at last, after much search and diligent inquiry, they found a very feeble and aged priest, named Unwon, who was very learned in writings *literis bene eruditum*, and imbued with the knowledge of divers languages. He knew directly what the volume was about, and clearly and fluently read the contents; he also explained the other *Codices* found in the same library *in eodem Almariolo* of the

palace with the greatest ease, and showed them to be written in the characters formerly in use among the inhabitants of Verulam, and in the language of the ancient Britons. Some, however, were in Latin; but the book before-mentioned was found to be the history of Saint Alban, the English proto-martyr, according to that mentioned by Bede, as having been daily used in the church. Among the other books were discovered many contrivances for the invocation and idolatrous rites of the people of Verulam, in which it was evident that Phœbus the god Sol was especially invoked and worshipped; and after him Mercury, called in English Woden, who was the god of the merchants. The books which contained these diabolical inventions they cast away and burnt; but that precious treasure, the history of Saint Alban, they preserved, and the priest before-mentioned was appointed to translate the ancient English or British into the vulgar tongue.[388] By the prudence of the Abbot Eadmer, the brothers of the convent made a faithful copy, and diligently explained it in their public teaching; they also translated it into Latin, in which it is now known and read; the historian adds that the ancient and original copy, which was so curiously written, instantaneously crumbled into dust and was destroyed for ever."[389]

Although the attention of the Saxon abbots was especially directed to literary matters, and to the affairs connected with the making of books, we find no definite mention of a Scriptorium, or of manuscripts having been transcribed as a regular and systematic duty, till after the Norman conquest. That event happened during the abbacy of Frederic, and was one which greatly influenced the learning of the monks. Indeed, I regard the Norman conquest as a

most propitious event for English literature, and one which wrought a vast change in the aspect of monastic learning; the student of those times cannot fail to perceive the revolution which then took place in the cloisters; visibly accomplished by the installation of Norman bishops and the importation of Norman monks, who in the well regulated monasteries of France and Normandy had been initiated into a more general course of study, and brought up in a better system of mental training than was known here at that time.

But poor Frederic, a conscientious and worthy monk, suffered severely by that event, and was ultimately obliged to seek refuge in the monastery of Ely to evade the displeasure of the new sovereign; but his earthly course was well nigh run, for three days after, death released him from his worldly troubles, and deprived the conqueror of a victim. Paul, the first of the Norman abbots, was appointed by the king in the year 1077. He was zealous and industrious in the interest of the abbey, and obtained the restitution of many lands and possessions of which it had been deprived; he rebuilt the old and almost ruined church, and employed for that purpose many of the materials which his predecessors had collected from the ruins of Verulam; and even now, I believe, some remnants of these Roman tiles, etc., may be discerned. He moreover obtained many important grants and valuable donations; among others a layman named Robert, one of the Norman leaders, gave him two parts of the tythes of his domain at Hatfield, which he had received from the king at the distribution.

"This he assigned," says Matthew Paris, "to the disposal of Abbot Paul, who was a lover of the

Scriptures, for the transcription of the necessary volumes for the monastery. He himself indeed was a learned soldier, and a diligent hearer and lover of Scripture; to this he also added the tythes of Redburn, appointing certain provisions to be given to the scribes; this he did out of "charity to the brothers that they may not thereby suffer, and that no impediment might be offered to the writers." The abbot thereupon sought and obtained from afar many renowned scribes, to write the necessary books for the monastery. And in return for these abundant favors, he presented, as a suitable gift to the warlike Robert, for the chapel in his palace at Hatfield, two pair of vestments, a silver cup, a missal, and the other needful books (*missale cum aliis libris necessariis*). Having thus presented to him the first volumes produced by his liberality, he proceeded to construct a scriptorium, which was set apart (*prælectos*) for the transcription of books; Lanfranc supplied the copies. They thus procured for the monastery twenty-eight notable volumes (*volumina notabilia*), also eight psalters, a book of collects, a book of epistles, a volume containing the gospels for the year, two copies of the gospels complete, bound in gold and silver, and ornamented with gems; besides ordinals, constitutions, missals, troapries, collects, and other books for the use of the library."[390]

Thus blessed, we find the monks of St. Albans for ages after constantly acquiring fresh treasures, and multiplying their book stores by fruitful transcripts. There is scarce an abbot, whose portrait garnishes the fair manuscript before me, that is not represented with some goodly tomes spread around him, or who is not mentioned as a choice "*amator librorum*," in these monkish pages. It is a singular circumstance,

when we consider how bookless those ages are supposed to have been, that the illuminated portraits of the monks are most frequently depicted with some ponderous volume before them, as if the idea of a monk and the study of a book were quite inseparable. During my search among the old manuscripts quoted in this work, this fact has been so repeatedly forced upon my attention that I am tempted to regard it as an important hint, and one which speaks favorably for the love of books and learning among the cowled devotees of the monasteries.

Passing Richard de Albani, who gave them a copy of the gospels, a missal written in letters of gold, an other precious volumes whose titles are unrecorded, [391] we come to Geoffry, a native of Gorham, who was elected abbot in the year 1119. He had been invited over to England (before he became a priest) by his predecessor, to superintend the school of St. Albans; but he delayed the voyage so long, that on his arrival he found the appointment already filled; on this he went to Dunstable, where he read lectures, and obtained some pupils. It was during his stay there that he wrote the piece which has obtained for him so much reputation. *Ubi quendam ludum de Sancta Katarinæ quem miracula vulgariter appellamus fecit*, says the Cotton manuscripts, on the vellum page of which he is portrayed in the act of writing it. [392] Geoffry, from this passage, is supposed to be the first author of dramatic literature in England; although the title seems somewhat equivocal, from the casual manner in which his famous play of St. Catherine is thus mentioned by Matthew Paris. Of its merits we are still less able to form an opinion; for nothing more than the name of that much talked of miracle play has been preserved. We may conclude,

however, that it was performed with all the paraphernalia of scenery and characteristic costume; for he borrowed of the sacrist of St. Albans some copes for this purpose. On the night following the representation the house in which he resided was burnt; and, says the historian, all his books, and the copes he had borrowed were destroyed. Rendered poor indeed by this calamity, and somewhat reflecting upon himself for the event, he assumed in sorrow and despair the religious habit, and entered the monastery of St. Albans; where by his deep study, his learning and his piety, he so gained the hearts of his fraternity, that he ultimately became their abbot. He is said to have been very industrious in the transcription of books; and he "made a missal bound in gold, *auro ridimitum*, and another in two volumes; both incomparably illuminated in gold, and written in a clear and legible hand; also a precious Psalter similarly illuminated; a book containing the Benedictions and the Sacraments; a book of Exorcisms, and a Collectaria."[393]

Geoffry was succeeded by Ralph de Gobium in the year 1143: he was a monk remarkable for his learning and his bibliomanical pursuits. He formerly remained some time in the services of Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, and gained the esteem of that prelate. His book-loving passion arose from hearing one "Master Wodon, of Italy, expound the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures." He from that time became a most enthusiastic *amator librorum*; and collected, with great diligence, an abundant multitude of books.[394]

The matters in which he was concerned, his donations to the monastery, and the anecdotes of his life, are all unconnected with my subject; so that I

am obliged to pass from this interesting monk, an undoubted bibliophile, from sheer want of information. I cannot but regret that the historian does not inform us more fully of his book collecting pursuits; but he is especially barren on that subject, although he highly esteems him for prosecuting that pleasing avocation. He died in the year 1151, in the fourteenth of King Stephen, and was followed by Robert de Gorham, who is also commemorated as a bibliophile in the pages of the Cotton manuscripts; and to judge from his portrait, and the intensity with which he pores over his volume, he was a hard and devoted student. He ordered the scribes to make a great many books; indeed, adds Paris the historian, who was himself somewhat of an *amator librorum*, "more by far than can be mentioned."[395] From another source we learn that these books were most sumptuously bound.[396]

During the days of this learned abbot a devout and humble clerk asked admission at the abbey gate. Aspiring to a holy life, he ardently hoped, by thus spending his days in monastic seclusion, to render his heart more acceptable to God. Hearing his prayer, the monks conducted him into the presence of my Lord Abbot, who received him with compassionate tenderness, and kindly questioned him as to his qualifications for the duties and sacred responsibilities of the monkish priesthood; for even in those dark ages they looked a little into the learning of the applicant before he was admitted into their fraternity. But alas! the poor clerk was found wofully deficient in this respect, and was incapable of replying to the questions of my Lord Abbot, who thereupon gently answered, "My son, tarry awhile, and still exercise thyself in study, and so become more perfect for the holy office."

Abashed and disappointed, he retired with a kindling blush of shame; and deeming this temporary repulse a positive refusal he left his fatherland, and started on a pilgrimage to France.[397] And who was this poor, humble, unlettered clerk? Who this simple layman, whose ignorance rendered him an unfit *socius* for the plodding monks of old St. Albans Abbey? No less than the English born Nicholas Brekespere, afterwards his Holiness Adrian IV., Pope of Rome, Vicar-apostolic and successor of St. Peter!

Yes; still bearing in mind the kind yet keen reproof of the English abbot, on his arrival in a foreign land he studied with all the depth and intensity of despair, and soon surpassed his companions in the pursuit of knowledge; and became so renowned for learning, and for his prudence, that he was made Canon of St. Rufus. His sagacity, moreover, caused him to be chosen, on three separate occasions, to undertake some important embassies to the apostolic see; and at length he was elected a cardinal. So step by step he finally became elevated to the high dignity of the popedom. The first and last of England's sons who held the keys of Peter.

These shadows of the past—these shreds of a forgotten age—these echoes of five hundred years, are full of interest and instruction. For where shall we find a finer example—a more cheering instance of what perseverance will accomplish—or a more satisfactory result of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties? Not only may these curious facts cheer the dull student now, and inspire him with that energy so essential to success, but these whisperings of old may serve as lessons for ages yet to come. For if *we* look back upon those dark days with such feelings of superiority, may not the wiser generations

of the future regard *us* with a still more contemptuous, yet curious eye? And when they look back at our Franklins, and our Johnsons, in astonishment at such fine instances of what perseverance could do, and what energy and plodding industry could accomplish, even when surrounded with the difficulties of *our* ignorance; how much more will they praise this bright example, in the dark background of the historical tableaux, who, without even our means of obtaining knowledge—our libraries or our talent—rose by patient, hard and devoted study, from Brekespere the humble clerk—the rejected of St. Albans—to the proud title of Vicar-apostolic of Christ and Pope of Rome!

Simon, an Englishman, a clerk and a "man of letters and good morals," was elected abbot in the year 1167. All my authorities concur in bestowing upon him the honor and praise appertaining to a bibliomaniac. He was, says one, an especial lover of books, *librorum amator speciales*: and another in panegyric terms still further dubs him an *amator scripturarum*. All this he proved, and well earned the distinction, by the great encouragement he gave to the collecting and transcribing of books. The monkish pens he found moving too slow, and yielding less fruit than formerly. He soon, however, set them hard at work again; and to facilitate their labors, he added materially to the comforts of the Scriptorium by repairing and enlarging it; "and always," says the monk from whom I learn this, "kept two or three most choice scribes in the Camera (Scriptorium,) who sustained its reputation, and from whence an abundant supply of the most excellent books were continually produced.[398] He framed some efficient laws for its management, and ordered

that, in subsequent times, every abbot should keep and support one able scribe at least. Among the 'many choice books and authentic volumes,' *volumina authentica*, which he by this care and industry added to the abbey library, was included a splendid copy of the Old and New Testament, transcribed with great accuracy and beautifully written—indeed, says the manuscript history of that monastery, so noble a copy was nowhere else to be seen.[399] But besides this, Abbot Simon gave them all those precious books which he had been for a 'long time' collecting himself at great cost and patient labor, and having bound them in a sumptuous and marvellous manner,[400] he made a library for their reception near the tomb of Roger the Hermit.[401] He also bestowed many rich ornaments and much costly plate on the monastery; and by a long catalogue of good deeds, too ample to be inserted here, he gained the affections and gratitude of his fraternity, who loudly praised his virtues and lamented his loss when they laid him in his costly tomb. There is a curious illumination of this monkish bibliophile in the Cotton manuscript. He is represented deeply engaged with his studies amidst a number of massy volumes, and a huge trunk is there before him crammed with rough old fashioned large clasped tomes, quite enticing to look upon."[402]

After Simon came Garinus, who was soon succeeded by one John. Our attention is arrested by the learned renown of this abbot, who had studied in his youth at Paris, and obtained the unanimous praise of his masters for his assiduous attention and studious industry. He returned with these high honors, and was esteemed in grammar a Priscian, in poetry an Ovid, and in physic equal to Galen.[403] With such literary qualifications, it was to be expected the

Scriptorium would flourish under his government, and the library increase under his fostering care. Our expectations are not disappointed; for many valuable additions were made during his abbacy, and the monks over whom he presided gave many manifestations of refinement and artistic talent, which incline us to regard the ingenuity of the cloisters in a more favorable light. Raymond, his prior, was a great help in all these undertakings. His industry seems to have been unceasing in beautifying the church, and looking after the transcription of books. With the assistance of Roger de Parco, the cellarer, he made a large table very handsome, and partly fabricated of metal. He wrote two copies of the Gospels, and bound them in silver and gold adorned with various figures. Brother Walter of Colchester, with Randulph, Gubium and others, produced some very handsome paintings comprising the evangelists and many holy saints, and hung them up in the church. "As we have before mentioned, by the care and industry of the lord Raymond, many noble and useful books were transcribed and given to the monastery. The most remarkable of these was a Historia Scholastica, with allegorics, a most elegant book—*liber elegantissimus* exclaims my monkish authority."[404] This leads me to say something more of my lord prior, for the troubles which the conscientious conduct of old Raymond brought upon himself—

"Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

Be it known then that William de Trompington succeeded to the abbacy on the death of John; but he was a very different man, without much esteem for learning; and thinking I am afraid far more of the world and heaven or the *Domus Dei*. Alas! memoirs of bad monks and worldly abbots are sometimes found blotting the holy pages of the monkish annals. *Domus Dei est porta cœli*, said the monks; and when they closed the convent gates they did not look back on the world again, but entered on that dull and gloomy path with a full conviction that they were leaving all and following Christ, and so acting in accordance with his admonitions; but those who sought the convent to forget in its solitude their worldly cares and worldly disappointments, too often found how futile and how ineffectual was that dismal life to eradicate the grief of an overburdened heart, or to subdue the violence of misguided temper. The austerity of the monastic rules might tend to conquer passion or moderate despair, but there was little within those walls to drive painful recollections of the outward world away; for at every interval between their holy meditations and their monkish duties, images of the earth would crowd back upon their minds, and wring from their ascetic hearts tributes of anguish and despair; and so we find the writings and letters of the old monks full of vain regrets and misanthropic thoughts, but sometimes overflowing with the most touching pathos of human misery. Yet the monk knew full well what his duty was, and knew how sinful it was to repine or rebel against the will of God. If he vowed obedience to his abbot, he did not forget that obedience was doubly due to Him; and strove with all the strength that

weak humanity could muster, to forget the darkness of the past by looking forward with a pious hope and a lively faith to the brightness and glory of the future. By constant prayer the monk thought more of his God, and gained help to strengthen the faith within him; and by assiduous and devoted study he disciplined his heart of flesh—tore from it what lingering affection for the world remained, and deserting all love of earth and all love of kin, purged and purified it for his holy calling, and closed its portals to render it inaccessible to all sympathy of blood. If a thought of those shut out from him by the monastic walls stole across his soul and mingled with his prayer, he started and trembled as if he had offered up an unholy desire in the supplication. To him it was a proof that his nature was not yet subdued; and a day of study and meditation, with a fast unbroken till the rays of the morrow's sun cast their light around his little cell, absolved the sin, and broke the tie that bound him to the world without.

If this violence was experienced in subduing the tenderest of human sympathy; how much more severe was the conflict of dark passions only half subdued, or malignant depravity only partially reformed. These dark lines of human nature were sometimes prominent, even when the monk was clothed in sackcloth and ashes; and are markedly visible in the life of William de Trompington. But let not the reader think that he was appointed with the hearty suffrages of the fraternity, he was elected at the recommendation of the "king," a very significant term in those days of despotic rule, at which choice became a mere farce. "Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and the monks soon began to perceive with regret and trembling the worldly ways of the new abbot, which he could not hide even

under his abbatical robes. In a place dedicated to holy deeds and heavenly thoughts, worldly conduct or unbridled passion strikes the mind as doubly criminal, and loads the heart with dismay and suffering; at least so my lord Prior regarded it, whose righteous indignation could no longer endure these manifestations of a worldly mind. So he gently remonstrated with his superior, and hinted at the impropriety of such conduct. This was received not in Christian fellowship, but with haughty and passionate displeasure; and from that day the fate of poor Raymond was irrevocably sealed. The abbot thinking to suppress the dissatisfaction which was now becoming general and particularly inconvenient, sent him a long distance off to the cell of Tynmouth in Northumberland, where all were strangers to him. Nor could the tears of the old man turn the heart of his cruel lord, nor the rebellious murmurings of the brothers avail. Thank God such cases are not very frequent; and the reader of monkish annals will not find many instances of such cold and unfeeling cruelty to distress his studies or to arouse his indignation. But obedience was a matter of course in the monastery; it was one of the most imperative duties of the monk, and if not cheerfully he was compelled to manifest alacrity in fulfilling even the most unpleasant mandate. But I would have forgiven this transaction on the score of *expediency* perhaps, had not the abbot heaped additional insults and cruelties upon the aged offender; but his books which he had transcribed with great diligence and care, he forcibly deprived him of, *violenter spoliatum*, and so robbed him, as his historian says, of all those things which would have been a comfort and solace to his old age.[405]

The books which the abbot thus became dishonestly

possessed of—for I cannot regard it in any other light —we are told he gave to the library of the monastery; and he also presented some books to more than one neighboring church.[406] But he was not bookworm himself, and dwelt I suspect with greater fondness over his wealthy rent roll than on the pages of the fine volumes in the monastic library. The monks, however, amidst all these troubles retained their love of books; indeed it was about this time that John de Basingstoke, who had studied at Athens, brought a valuable collection of Greek books into England, and greatly aided in diffusing a knowledge of that language into this country. He was deacon of Saint Albans, and taught many of the monks Greek; Nicholas, a chaplain there, became so proficient in it, that he was capable of greatly assisting bishop Grostete in translating his Testament of the twelve patriarchs into Latin.[407]

Roger de Northone, the twenty-fourth abbot of Saint Albans, gave "many valuable and choice books to the monastery," and among them the commentaries of Raymond, Godfrey, and Bernard, and a book containing the works and discourses of Seneca. His bibliomaniacal propensities, and his industry in transcribing books, is indicated by an illumination representing this worthy abbot deeply engrossed with his ponderous volumes.[408]

I have elsewhere related an anecdote of Wallingford, abbot of St. Albans, and the sale of books effected between him and Richard de Bury. It appears that rare and munificent collector gave many and various noble books, *multos et varios libros nobiles*, to the monastery of St. Albans whilst he was bishop of Durham.[409] Michael de Wentmore succeeded Wallingford, and proved a very valuable benefactor

to the monastery; and by wise regulations and economy greatly increased the comforts and good order of the abbey. He gave many books, *plures libros*, to the library, besides two excellent Bibles, [410] one for the convent and one for the abbot's study, and to be kept especially for his private reading; an ordinal, very beautiful to look upon, being sumptuously bound.[411] Indeed, so *multis voluminibus* did he bestow, that he expended more than 100*l.* in this way, an immense sum in those old days, when a halfpenny a day was deemed fair wages for a scribe.[412]

Wentmore was succeeded by Thomas de la Mare, a man of singular learning, and remarkable as a patron of it in others; it was probably by his direction that John of Tynmouth wrote his Sanctilogium Britannæ, for that work was dedicated to him. A copy, presented by Thomas de la Mare to the church of Redburn, is in the British Museum, much injured by fire, but retaining at the end the following lines:

> "Hunc librum dedet Dominus Thomas de la Mare, Albas monasterii S. Albani Anglorum Proto martyris Deo et Ecclesiæ B. Amphibali de Redburn, ut fratris indem in cursu existentus per ejus lecturam poterint cœlestibus instrui, et per Sanctorum exempla virtutibus insignixi."[413]

But there are few who have obtained so much reputation as John de Whethamstede, perhaps the most learned abbot of this monastery. He was formerly monk of the cell at Tynmouth, and afterwards prior of Gloucester College at Oxford, from whence he was appointed to the government of St. Albans. Whethamstede was a passionate

bibliomaniac, and when surrounded with his books he cared little, or perhaps from the absence of mind so often engendered by the delights of study, he too frequently forgot, the important affairs of his monastery, and the responsible duties of an abbot; but absorbed as he was with his studies, Whethamstede was not a mere

> ..... "Bookful blockhead ignorantly read
> With loads of learned lumber in his head."

It is true he was an inveterate reader, amorously inclined towards vellum tomes and illuminated parchments; but he did not covet them like some collectors for the mere pride of possessing them, but gloried in feasting on their intellectual charms and delectable wisdom, and sought in their attractive pages the means of becoming a better Christian and a wiser man. But he was so excessively fond of books, and became so deeply engrossed with his book-collecting pursuits, that it is said some of the monks showed a little dissatisfaction at his consequent neglect of the affairs of the monastery; but these are faults I cannot find the heart to blame him for, but am inclined to consider his conduct fully redeemed by the valuable encouragement he gave to literature and learning. Generous to a fault, abundant in good deeds and costly expenditure, he became involved in pecuniary difficulties, and found that the splendor and wealth which he had scattered so lavishly around his monastery, and the treasures with which he had adorned the library shelves, had not only drained his ample coffers, but left a large balance unsatisfied. Influenced by this circumstance, and the murmurings of the monks, and perhaps too, hoping to obtain more time for study and book-collecting, he determined to resign his abbacy, and

again become a simple brother. The proceedings relative to this affair are curiously related by a contemporary, John of Amersham.[414] In Whethamstede's address to the monks on this occasion, he thus explains his reasons for the step he was about to take. After a touching address, wherein he intimates his determination, he says,[415] "Ye have known moreover how, from the first day of my appointment even until this day, assiduously and continually without any intermission I have shown singular solicitude in four things, to wit, in the erection of conventual buildings, *in the writing of books*, in the renewal of vestments, and in the acquisition of property. And perhaps, by reason of this solicitude of mine, ye conceive that I have fallen into debt; yet that you may know, learn and understand what is in this matter the certain and plain truth, and when ye know it ye may report it unto others, know ye for certain, yea, for most certain, that for all these things about which, and in which I have expended money, I am not indebted to any one living more than 10,000 marks; but that I wish freely to acknowledge this debt, and so to make satisfaction to every creditor, that no survivor of any one in the world shall have to demand anything from my successor."

The monks on hearing this declaration were sorely affected, and used every persuasion to induce my lord abbot to alter his determination, but without success; so that they were compelled to seek another in whom to confide the government of their abbey. Their choice fell upon John Stokes, who presided over them for many years; but at his death the love and respect which the brothers entertained for Whethamstede, was manifested by unanimously electing him again, an honor which he in return

could not find the heart to decline. But during all this time, and after his restoration, he was constantly attending to the acquisition of books, and numerous were the transcripts made under his direction by the scribes and enriched by his munificence, for some of the most costly copies produced in that century were the fruits of their labor; during his time there were more volumes transcribed than in that of any other abbot since the foundation of the abbey, says the manuscript from whence I am gleaning these details, and adds that the number of them exceeded eighty-seven. He commenced the transcription of the great commentary of Nicholas de Lyra upon the whole Bible, which had then been published some few years. "Det Deus, ut in nostris felicem habere valeat consummacionem,"[416] exclaims the monk, nor will the reader be surprised at the expression, if he for one moment contemplates the magnitude of the undertaking.

But not only was Whethamstede remarkable as a bibliomaniac—he claims considerable respect as an author. Some of his productions were more esteemed in his own time than now; being compilations and commentaries more adapted as a substitute for other books, than valuable as original works. Under this class I am inclined to place his Granarium, a large work in five volumes; full of miscellaneous extracts, etc., and somewhat partaking of the encyclopediac form; his Propinarium, in two volumes, also treating of general matters; his Pabularium and Palearium Poetarium, and his Proverbiarium, or book of Proverbs; to which may be added the many pieces relating to the affairs of the monastery. But far different must we regard many of his other productions, which are more important in a literary point of view, as calling for the exercise of a refined

and cultivated mind, and no small share of critical acumen. Among these I must not forget to include his Chronicle,[417] which spreading over a space of twenty years, forms a valuable historical document. The rest are poetical narratives, embracing an account of Jack Cade's insurrection—the battles of Ferrybridge, Wakefield, and St. Albans.[418]

A Cottonian manuscript contained a catalogue of the books which this worthy abbot compiled, or which were transcribed under his direction: unfortunately it was burnt, with many others forming part of that inestimable collection.[419] From another source we learn the names of some of them, and the cost incurred in their transcription.[420] Twenty marks were paid for copying his Granarium, in four volumes; forty shillings for his Palearium; the same for a Polycraticon of John of Salisbury; five pounds for a Boethius, with a gloss; upwards of six pounds for "a book of Cato," enriched with a gloss and table; and four pounds for Gorham upon Luke. Whethamstede ordered a Grael to be written so beautifully illuminated, and so superbly bound, as to be valued at the enormous sum of twenty pounds: but let it be remembered that my Lord Abbot was a very epicure in books, and thought a great deal of choice bindings, tall copies, immaculate parchment, and brilliant illuminations, and the high prices which he freely gave for these book treasures evince how sensible he was to the joys of bibliomania; nor am I inclined to regard the works thus attained as "mere monastic trash."[421]

The finest illumination in the Cotton manuscript is a portrait of Abbot Whethamstede, which for artistic talent is far superior to any in the volume. Eight

folios are occupied with an enumeration of the "good works" of this liberal monk: among the items we find the sum of forty pounds having been expended on a reading desk, and four pounds for writing four Antiphoners.[422] He displayed also great liberality of spirit in his benefactions to Gloucester College, at Oxford, besides great pecuniary aid. He built a library there, and gave many valuable books for the use of the students, in which he wrote these verses:

> Fratribus Oxoniœ datur in minus liber iste,
> Per patrem pecorem prothomartyris
> Angligenorum:
> Quem si quis rapiat ad partem sive
> reponat,
> Vel Judæ loqueum, vel furcas sentiat;
> Amen.

In others he wrote—

> Discior ut docti fieret nova regia plebi
> Culta magisque deæ datur hic liber ara
> Minerva,
> Hic qui diis dictis libant holocausta
> ministrias.
> Et cirre bibulam sitiunt præ nectare
> lympham,
> Estque librique loci, idem datur, actor et
> unus.[423]

If we estimate worth by comparison, we must award a large proportion to this learned abbot. Living in the most corrupt age of the monastic system, when the evils attendant on luxurious ease began to be too obvious in the cloister, and when complaints were heard at first in a whispering murmur, but anon in a stern loud voice of wroth and indignant

remonstrance—when in fact the progressive, inquiring spirit of the reformation was taking root in what had hitherto been regarded as a hard, dry, stony soil. This coming tempest, only heard as yet like the lulling of a whisper, was nevertheless sufficiently loud to spread terror and dismay among the cowled habitants of the monasteries. That quietude and mental ease so indispensable to study—so requisite for the growth of thought and intellectuality, was disturbed by these distant sounds, or dissipated by their own indolence. And yet in the midst of all this, rendered still more anxious and perplexing by domestic troubles and signs of discontent and insubordination among the monks. Whethamstede found time, and what was better the spirit, for literary and bibliomanical pursuits. Honor to the man, monk though he be, who oppressed with these vicissitudes and cares could effect so much, and could appreciate both literature and art.

Contemporary with him we are not surprised that he gained the patronage and friendship of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, to whom he dedicated many of his own performances, and greatly aided in collecting those treasures which the duke regarded with such esteem. It is said that noble collector frequently paid a friendly visit to the abbey to inspect the work of the monkish scribes, and perhaps to negociate for some of those choice vellum tomes for which the monks of that monastery were so renowned.

But we must not pass the "good duke" without some slight notice of his "ryghte valiant deedes," his domestic troubles and his dark mysterious end. Old Foxe thus speaks of him in his Actes and Monuments: "Of manners he seemed meeke and gentle, louing the

commonwealth, a supporter of the poore commons, of wit and wisdom, discrete and studious, well affected to religion and a friend to verity, and no lesse enemy to pride and ambition, especially in haughtie prelates, which was his undoing in this present evil world. And, which is seldom and rare in such princes of that calling, he was both learned himselfe and no lesse given to studie, and also a singular favourer and patron to those who were studious and learned."[424] To which I cannot refrain from adding the testimony of Hollingshed, who tells us that "The ornaments of his mind were both rare and admirable; the feats of chiualrie by him commensed and atchiued valiant and fortunate; his grauitie in counsell and soundnesse of policie profound and singular; all which with a traine of other excellent properties linked together, require a man of manifold gifts to aduance them according to their dignitie. I refer the readers unto Maister Foxe's booke of Actes and Monuments. Onelie this I ad, that in respect of his noble indowments and his demeanor full of decencie, which he dailie used, it seemeth he might wel haue giuen this prettie poesie:"

"Virtute duce non sanguine nitor."[425]

But with all these high qualities, our notions of propriety are somewhat shocked at the open manner in which he kept his mistress Eleanor Cobham; but we can scarcely agree in the condemnation of the generality of historians for his marrying her afterwards, but regard it rather as the action of an honorable man, desirous of making every reparation in his power.[426] But the "pride of birth" was sorely wounded by the espousals; and the enmity of the aristocracy already roused, now became deeply

rooted. Eleanor's disposition is represented as passionate and unreasonable, and her mind sordid and oppressive. Be this how it may, we must remember that it is from her enemies we learn it; and if so, unrelenting persecution and inveterate malice were proceedings ill calculated to soothe a temper prone to violence, or to elevate a mind undoubtedly weak. But the vindictive and haughty cardinal Beaufort was the open and secret enemy of the good duke Humphrey; for not only did he thwart every public measure proposed by his rival, but employed spies to insinuate themselves into his domestic circle, and to note and inform him of every little circumstance which malice could distort into crime, or party rage into treason. This detestable espionage met with a too speedy success. The duke, who was especially fond of the society of learned men, retained in his family many priests and clerks, and among them one Roger Bolingbroke, "a famous necromancer and astronomer." This was a sufficient ground for the enmity of the cardinal to feed upon, and he determined to annihilate at one blow the domestic happiness of his rival. He arrested the Duchess, Bolingbroke, and a witch called Margery Gourdimain, or Jourdayn, on the charge of witchcraft and treason. He accused the priest and Margery of making, and the duchess for having in her possession, a waxen figure, which, as she melted it before a slow fire, so would the body of the king waste and decay, and his marrow wither in his bones. Her enemies tried her, and of course found her and her companions guilty, though without a shred of evidence to the purpose. The duchess was sentenced to do penance in St. Paul's and two other churches on three separate days, and to be afterwards imprisoned in the Isle of Man for life.

Bolingbroke, who protested his innocence to the last, was hung and quartered at Tyburn; and Margery, the witch of Eye, as she was called, was burnt at Smithfield. But the black enmity of the cardinal was sorely disappointed at the effect produced by this persecution. He reasonably judged that no accusation was so likely to arouse a popular prejudice against duke Humphrey as appealing to the superstition of the people who in that age were ever prone to receive the most incredulous fabrications; but far different was the impression made in the present case. The people with more than their usual sagacity saw through the flimsy designs of the cardinal and his faction; and while they pitied the victims of party malice, loved and esteemed the good duke Humphrey more than ever.

But the intriguing heart of Beaufort soon resolved upon the most desperate measures, and shrunk not from staining his priestly hands with innocent and honorable blood. A parliament was summoned to meet at St. Edmunds Bury, in Suffolk, on the 10th of February, 1447, at which all the nobility were ordered to assemble. On the arrival of Duke Humphrey, the cardinal arrested him on a groundless charge of high treason, and a few days after he was found dead in his bed, his enemies gave out that he had died of the palsy; but although his body was eagerly shown to the sorrowing multitude, the people believed that their friend and favorite had been foully murdered, and feared not to raise their voice in loud accusations at the Suffolk party; "sum sayed that he was smouldered betwixt two fetherbeddes,"[427] and others declared that he had suffered a still more barbarous death. Deep was the murmuring and the grief of the people, for the good duke had won the love and esteem of their hearts;

and we can fully believe a contemporary who writes —

"Compleyne al Yngland thys goode Lorde's deth."[428]

Perhaps none suffered more by his death than the author and the scholar; for Duke Humphrey was a munificent patron of letters, and loved to correspond with learned men, many of whom dedicated their works to him, and received ample encouragement in return.[429] Lydgate, who knew him well, composed some of his pieces at the duke's instigation. In his Tragedies of Ihon Bochas he thus speaks of him:

"Duke of Glocester men this prynce call,
And not withstandyng his estate and dignitie,
His courage neuer dothe appall
To study in bokes of antiquitie;
Therein he hath so great felicitie,
Virtuously him selfe to occupye,
Of vycious slouthe, he hath the maistry.

And for these causes as in his entent
To shewe the untrust of all worldly thinge,
He gave to me in commandment
As him seemed it was ryghte well fittynge
That I shoulde, after my small cunning,
This boke translate, him to do pleasaunce,
To shew the chaung of worldly variaunce.

And with support of his magnificence

Under the wynges of his correction,
Though that I lacke of eloquence
I shall proceede in this translation.
Fro me auoydyng all presumption,
Louyly submittying every houre and
space,
My rude language to my lorde's grace.

Anone after I of eutencion,
With penne in hande fast gan me spede,
As I coulde in my translation,
In this labour further to procede,
My Lorde came forth by and gan to take
hede;
This mighty prince right manly and right
wise
Gaue me charge in his prudent auyle.

That I should in euery tragedy,
After the processe made mencion,
At the ende set a remedy,
With a Lenuoy, conveyed by reason;
And after that, with humble affection,
To noble princes lowly it dyrect,
By others fallying them selues to correct.

And I obeyed his biddyng and pleasaunce
Under support of his magnificence,
As I coulde, I gan my penne aduaunce,
All be I was barrayne of eloquence,
Folowing mine auctor in substance and
sétence,
For it sufficeth playnly unto me,
So that my lorde my makyng take in
gre."[430]

Lydgate often received money whilst translating this

work, from the good duke Humphrey, and there is a manuscript letter in the British Museum in which he writes—

"Righte myghty prynce, and it be youre
wille,
Condescende leyser for to take,
To se the contents of thys litel bille,
Whiche whan I wrote my hand felt
qquake."[431]

Duke Humphrey gave a noble instance of his great love of learning in the year 1439, when he presented to the University of Oxford one hundred and twenty-nine treatises, and shortly after, one hundred and twenty-six *admirandi apparatus*; and in the same year, nine more. In 1443, he made another important donation of one hundred and thirty volumes, to which he added one hundred and thirty-five more, [432] making in all, a collection of five hundred and thirty-eight volumes. These treasures, too, had been collected with all the nice acumen of a bibliomaniac, and the utmost attention was paid to their outward condition and internal purity. Never, perhaps, were so many costly copies seen before, dazzling with the splendor of their illuminations, and rendered inestimable by the many faithful miniatures with which they were enriched. A superb copy of Valerius Maximus is the only relic of that costly and noble gift, a solitary but illustrious example of the membraneous treasures of that ducal library.[433] But alas! those very indications of art, those exquisite illuminations, were the fatal cause of their unfortunate end; the portraits of kings and eminent men, with which the historical works were adorned; the diagrams which pervaded the scientific treatises, were viewed by the zealous reformers of Henry's

reign, as damning evidence of their Popish origin and use; and released from the chains with which they were secured, they were hastily committed to the greedy flames. Thus perished the library of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester! and posterity have to mourn the loss of many an early gem of English literature.[434]

But in the fourteenth century many other honorable examples occur of lay collectors. The magnificent volumes, nine hundred in number, collected by Charles V. of France, a passionate bibliomaniac, were afterwards brought by the duke of Bedford into England. The library then contained eight hundred and fifty-three volumes, so sumptuously bound and gorgeously illuminated as to be valued at 2,223 livres![435] This choice importation diffused an eager spirit of inquiry among the more wealthy laymen. Humphrey, the "good duke," received some of these volumes as presents, and among others, a rich copy of Livy, in French.[436] Guy Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, also collected some choice tomes, and possessed an unusually interesting library of early romances. He left the whole of them to the monks of Bordesley Abbey in Worcestershire, about the year 1359.[437] As a specimen of a private library in the fourteenth century, I am tempted to extract it.

"A tus iceux, qe ceste lettre verront, ou orrount, Gwy de Beauchamp, Comte de Warr. Saluz en Deu. Saluz nous aveir baylé e en la garde le Abbé e le Covent de Bordesleye, lessé à demorer a touz jours touz les Romaunces de sonz nomes; ceo est assaveyr, un volum, qe est appelé Tresor. Un volum, en le quel est le premer livere de Lancelot, e un volum del Romaunce de Aygnes. Un Sauter de Romaunce. Un volum des Evangelies, e de Vie des Seins. Un volum,

qe p'le des quatre principals Gestes de Charles, e de dooun, e de Meyace e de Girard de Vienne e de Emery de Nerbonne. Un volum del Romaunce Emmond de Ageland, e deu Roy Charles dooun de Nauntoyle. E le Romaunce de Gwyoun de Nauntoyl. E un volum del Romaunce Titus et Vespasien. E un volum del Romaunce Josep ab Arimathie, e deu Seint Grael. E un volum, qe p'le coment Adam fust eniesté hors de paradys, e le Genesie. E un volum en le quel sount contenuz touns des Romaunces, ceo este assaveir, Vitas patrum au comencement; e pus un Comte de Auteypt; e la Vision Seint Pol; et pus les Vies des xii. Seins. E le Romaunce de Willame de Loungespe. E Autorites des Seins humes. E le Mirour de Alme. Un volum, en le quel sount contenuz la Vie Seint Pére e Seint Pol, e des autres liv. E un volum qe est appelé l'Apocalips. E un livere de Phisik, e de Surgie. Un volum del Romaunce de Gwy, e de la Reygne tut enterement. Un volum del Romaunce de Troies. Un volum del Romaunce de Willame de Orenges e de Teband de Arabie. Un volum del Romaunce de Amase e de Idoine. Un volum del Romaunce de Girard de Viene. Un volum del Romaunce deu Brut, e del Roy Costentine. Un volum de le enseignemt Aristotle enveiez au Roy Alisaundre. Un volum de la mort ly Roy Arthur, e de Mordret. Un volum en le quel sount contenuz les Enfaunces de Nostre Seygneur, coment il fust mené en Egipt. E la Vie Seint Edwd. E la Visioun Seint Pol. La Vengeaunce n're Seygneur par Vespasien a Titus, e la Vie Seint Nicolas, qe fust nez en Patras. E la Vie Seint Eustace. E la Vie Seint Cudlac. E la Passioun n're Seygneur. E la Meditacioun Seint Bernard de n're Dame Seint Marie, e del Passioun sour deuz fiz Jesu Creist n're Seignr. E la Vie Seint Eufrasie. E la Vie Seint Radegounde. E la Vie Seint Juliane. Un volum,

en le quel est aprise de Enfants et lumière à Lays. Un volum del Romaunce d'a Alisaundre, ove peintures. Un petit rouge livere, en le quel sount contenuz mons diverses choses. Un volum del Romaunce des Mareschans, e de Ferebras e de Alisaundre. Les queus livres nous grauntons par nos heyrs e par nos assignes qil demorront en la dit Abbeye, etc."



FOOTNOTES:

[385] See a fine manuscript in the Cotton collection marked Nero D. vii., and another marked Claudius E. iv., both of which I have consulted.

[386] Matthew Paris' Edit. Wats, tom. i. p. 39.

[387] "Asserens ad cantelam, ipsum fuisse beati Amphibali, beate Albini magistri, caracellam."—Mat. Paris, p. 44.

[388] Abjectis igitur et combustis libris, in quibus commenta diaboli continabantur.

[389] MS. Cottonian, E. iv. fo. 101; Mat. Paris, Edit. Wat. i. p. 41.

[390] MS. Cottanian Claudius, E. iv. fo. 105 b., and MS. Cott. Nero, D. vii. fo. 13, b.

[391] He was elected in 1093.—See MS. Cott. Claud. E. iv. fo. 107.

[392] Got. MS. Claud. E. iv. fo. 108.

[393] MS. Cot. Nero, D. vii. fo. 15, a; and MS. Cot. Claud. e. iv.

[394] Cot. MS. Claud. E. iv. fo. 113. "Ex tunc igitur amator librorum et adquisiter sedulus multio voluminibus habundavit."

[395] Fecit etiam scribi libros plurimos; quos longum esset enarrare.—*Mat. Paris Edit. Wat.* p. 89.

[396] Cot. MS. Nero D. vii. fo. 16, a.

[397] MS. Claud. E. iv. fo. 114, a.

[398] MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fo. 125 b.

[399] *Ibid.*

[400] MS. Cot. Nero D. vii. fo. 16 a.

[401] MS. Cot. Claud. iv. fo. 124.

[402] Claud. E. iv. fo. 124.

[403] "In grammatica Priscianus, in metrico Ovidius, in physica censori potuit Galenus." *MS. Cot. Claud.* E. iv. f. 129, b. *Matt. Paris' Edit. Wat.* p. 103.

[404] MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fo. 131. b.

[405] MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fol. 135 b.

[406] Ibid. fol. 141.

[407] MS. Reg. Brit. Mus. 4 D. viii. 4. Wood's Hist. Oxon. 1-82, and Matt. Paris. Turner's Hist. of Eng. vol. iv. p. 180.

[408] MS. Cot. Nero, D. vii. fol. 19 a.

[409] Ibid. fol. 86.

[410] Duos bonas biblias.

[411] MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fo. 229 b.

[412] MS. Cot. Nero D. vii. fo. 20 b.

[413] MS. Cot. Tiberius, E. i.

[414] MS. Cot. Claud. D. i. fo. 165, "Acta Johannis Abbatis per Johannem Agmundishamensem monachum S. Albani."

[415] Gibson's Hist. Monast. Tynmouth, vol. ii. p. 62, whose translation I use in giving the following extract. If the reader refers to Mr. Gibson's handsome volumes, he will find much interesting and curious matter from John of Amersham relative to this matter.

[416] Otterb. cxvi.; see also MS. Cot. Nero. vii. fo. 32 a.

[417] Otterbourne Hist. a Hearne, *edit.* Oxon, 1732, tom. i. 2.

[418] Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, vol. ii. pt. 11, p. 205. For a list of his works see Bale; also Pits. p. 630, who enumerates more than thirty.

[419] Marked Otho, b. iv.

[420] MS. Arundel. Brit. Mus. clxiii. c. A curious Register, "per magistrum Johannem Whethamstede et dominum Thoman Ramryge," fo. 74, 75. Upwards of fifty volumes are specified, with the cost of each.

[421] Julius Cæsar was among them.—Cot. MS. Claud. d. i. fo. 156.

[422] MS. Cod. Nero, D. vii. fo. 28 a. He "enlarged the abbot's study," fo. 29, which most monasteries possessed. Whethamstede had a study also at his manor at Tittinhanger, and had inscribed on it these lines:

"Ipse Johannis amor Whethamstede
ubique proclamor
Ejus et alter honor hic lucis in auge

reponer."

See also MS. Cot. Claud. D. i. fo. 157, for an account of his many donations.

[423] Weever's Funerall Monuments, p. 562 to 567. I have forgotten to mention before that Whethamstede built a new library for the abbey books, and expended considerably more than £120 upon the building.

[424] Foxe's Actes and Monuments, folio, Lond. 1576, p. 679.

[425] Holingshed Chronicle, fol. 1587, vol. ii. p. 627.

[426] See Stowe, p. 367.

[427] Leland Collect. vol. i. p. 494.

[428] MS. Harleian, No. 2251, fol. 7 b.

[429] Capgrave's Commentary on Genesis, in Oriel College, Cod. MSS. 32, is dedicated to him. Aretine's Trans. Aristotle's Politics, MS. Bodl. D. i. 8-10. Pet. de Monte de Virt. de Vit. MS. Norvic. More, 257. Bibl. publi Cantab. Many others are given in Warton's Hist. of Poetry, 4to. vol. ii. pp. 48-50.

[430] Tragedies of Ihon Bochas. Imp. at London, by John Wayland, fol. 38 b.

[431] MS. Harleian, No. 2251, fol. 6. Lydgate received one hundred shillings for translating the Life of St. Alban into English verse for Whethamstede.

[432] See Wood's Hist. and Antiq. of Oxford, vol. ii. p. 914.

[433] MSS. Bodl. N. E. vii. ii. Warton, vol. ii. p. 45. I find in the Arundel Register in the British Museum (MSS. Arund. clxiii. c.) that a

fine copy of Valerius, in two volumes, with a gloss, was transcribed in the time of Whethamstede at St. Albans, at the cost of £6 13 4, probably the identical copy.

[434] There are many volumes formerly belonging to duke Humphrey, in the public libraries, a fine volume intitled "Tabulas Humfridi ducis Glowcester in Judicus artis Geomantie," is in the Brit. Mus., MSS. Arund. 66, fo. 277, beautifully written and illuminated with excessive margins of the purest vellum. See also MSS. Harl. 1705. Leland says, "Humfredus multaties scripsit in frontispiecis librorum suorum, *Moun bien Mondain*," Script. vol. iii. 58.

[435] Bouvin, Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscrip., ii. 693.

[436] *Ibid.*

[437] Printed in Todd's Illustrations to Gower and Chaucer, 8vo. p. 161, from a copy by Arch Sancroft, from Ashmole's Register of the Earl of Ailesbury's Evidences, fol. 110. Lambeth, MSS., No. 577. fol. 18 b.

CHAPTER XII

The Dominicans.—The Franciscans and the

Carmelites.—Scholastic Studies.—Robert Grostest.—Libraries in London.—Miracle Plays.—Introduction of Printing into England.—Barkley's Description of a Bibliomaniac.



THE old monastic orders of St. Augustine and St. Benedict, of whose love of books we have principally spoken hitherto, were kept from falling into sloth and ignorance in the thirteenth century by the appearance of several new orders of devotees. The Dominicans,[438] the Franciscans,[439] and the Carmelites were each renowned for their profound learning, and their unquenchable passion for knowledge; assuming a garb of the most abject poverty, renouncing all love of the world, all participation in its temporal honors, and refraining to seek the aggrandizement of their order by fixed oblations or state endowments, but adhering to a voluntary system for support, they caused a visible sensation among all classes, and wrought a powerful change in the ecclesiastical and collegiate learning of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and by their devotion, their charity, their strict austerity, and by their brilliant and unconquerable powers of disputation, soon gained the respect and affections of the people.[440]

Much as the friars have been condemned, or darkly as they have been represented, I have no hesitation in saying that they did more for the revival of learning, and the progress of English literature, than

any other of the monastic orders. We cannot trace their course without admiration and astonishment at their splendid triumphs and success; they appear to act as intellectual crusaders against the prevailing ignorance and sloth. The finest names that adorn the literary annals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the most prolific authors who flourished during that long period were begging friars; and the very spirit that was raised against them by the churchmen, and the severe controversal battles which they had between them, were the means of doing a vast amount of good, of exposing ignorance in high places, and compelling those who enjoyed the honors of learning to strive to merit them, by a studious application to literature and science; need I do more than mention the shining names of Duns Scotus, of Thomas Aquinas, of Roger Bacon, the founder of experimental philosophy, and the justly celebrated Robert Grostest, the most enlightened ecclesiastic of his age.[441]

We may not admire the scholastic philosophy which the followers of Francis and Dominic held and expounded; we may deplore the intricate mazes and difficulties which a false philosophy led them to maintain, and we may equally deplore the waste of time and learning which they lavished in the vain hope of solving the mysteries of God, or in comprehending a loose and futile science. Yet the philosophy of the schoolmen is but little understood, and is too often condemned without reason or without proof; for those who trouble themselves to denounce, seldom care to read them; their ponderous volumes are too formidable to analyze; it is so much easier to declaim than to examine such sturdy antagonists; but we owe to the schoolmen far more than we are apt to suppose, and if it were possible to

scratch their names from the page of history, and to obliterate all traces of their bulky writings from our libraries and from our literature, we should find our knowledge dark and gloomy in comparison with what it is.

But the mendicant orders did not study and uphold the scholastic philosophy without improving it; the works of Aristotle, of which it is said the early schoolmen possessed only a vitiated translation from the Arabic,[442] was, at the period these friars sprung up, but imperfectly understood and taught. Michael Scot, with the assistance of a learned Jew,[443] translated and published the writings of the great philosopher in Latin, which greatly superseded the old versions derived from the Saracen copies.

The mendicant friars having qualified themselves with a respectable share of Greek learning, then taught and expounded the Aristotelian philosophy according to this new translation, and opened a new and proscribed field[444] for disputation and enquiry; their indomitable perseverance, their acute powers of reasoning, and the splendid popularity which many of the disciples of St. Dominic and St. Francis were fast acquiring, caused students to flock in crowds to their seats of learning, and all who were inspired to an acquaintance with scholastic philosophy placed themselves under their training and tuition.[445]

No religious order before them ever carried the spirit of inquiry to such an extent as they, or allowed it to wander over such an unbounded field. The most difficult and mysterious questions of theology were discussed and fearlessly analyzed; far from exercising that blind and easy credulity which mark the

religious conduct of the old monastic orders, they were disposed to probe and examine every article of their faith. To such an extent were their disputations carried, that sometimes it shook their faith in the orthodoxy of Rome, and often aroused the pious fears of the more timid of their own order. Angell de Pisa, who founded the school of the Franciscans or Grey Friars at Oxford, is said to have gone one day into his school, with a view to discover what progress the students were making in their studies; as he entered he found them warm in disputation, and was shocked to find that the question at issue was "*whether there was a God*;" the good man, greatly alarmed, cried out, "Alas, for me! alas, for me! simple brothers pierce the heavens and the learned dispute whether there be a God!" and with great indignation ran out of the house blaming himself for having established a school for such fearful disputes; but he afterwards returned and remained among his pupils, and purchased for ten marks a corrected copy of the decretals, to which he made his students apply their minds.[446] This school was the most flourishing of those belonging to the Franciscans; and it was here that the celebrated Robert Grostest[447], bishop of Lincoln, read lectures about the year 1230. He was a profound scholar, thoroughly conversant with the most abstruse matters of philosophy, and a great Bible reader.[448] He possessed an extensive knowledge of the Greek, and translated, into Latin, Dionysius the Areopagite, Damascenus, Suida's Greek Lexicon, a Greek Grammar, and, with the assistance of Nicholas, a monk of St. Alban's, the History of the Twelve Patriarchs. He collected a fine library of Greek books, many of which he obtained from Athens. Roger Bacon speaks of his knowledge of the Greek, and says, that he caused a vast number of

books to be gathered together in that tongue.[449] His extraordinary talent and varied knowledge caused him to be deemed a conjuror and astrologer by the ignorant and superstitious; and his enemies, who were numerous and powerful, did not refuse to encourage the slanderous report. We find him so represented by the poet Gower:—

"For of the grete clerk Grostest,
I rede how redy that he was
Upon clergye, and bede of bras,
To make and forge it, for to telle
Of suche thynges as befelle,
And seven yeres besinesse.
Ye ladye, but for the lackhesse
Of 'a halfe a mynute of an houre,
Fro fyrst that he began laboure,
Ye lost al that he had do."[450]

The Franciscan convent at Oxford contained two libraries, one for the use of the graduates and one for the secular students, who did not belong to their order, but who were receiving instruction from them. Grostest gave many volumes to these libraries, and at his death he bequeathed to the convent all his books, which formed no doubt a fine collection. "To these were added," says Wood, "the works of Roger Bacon, who, Bale tells us, writ an hundred Treatises. There were also volumes of other writers of the same order, which, I believe, amounted to no small number. In short, I guess that these libraries were filled with all sorts of erudition, because the friars of all orders, and chiefly the Franciscans, used so diligently to procure all monuments of literature from all parts, that wise men looked upon it as an injury to laymen, who, therefore, found a difficulty to get any books.

Several books of Grostest and Bacon treated of astronomy and mathematics, besides some relating to the Greek tongue. But these friars, as I have found by certain ancient manuscripts, bought many Hebrew books of the Jews who were disturbed in England. In a word, they, to their utmost power, purchased whatsoever was anywhere to be had of singular learning."[451]

Many of the smaller convents of the Franciscan order possessed considerable libraries, which they purchased or received as gifts from their patrons. [452] There was a house of Grey Friars at Exeter,[453] and Roger de Thoris, Archdeacon of Exeter, gave or lent them a library of books in the year 1266, soon after their establishment, reserving to himself the privilege of using them, and forbade the friars from selling or parting with them. The collection, however, contained less than twenty volumes, and was formed principally of the scriptures and writings of their own order. "Whosoever," concludes the document, "shall presume hereafter to separate or destroy this donation of mine, may he incur the malediction of the omnipotent God! dated on the day of the purification, in the year of our Lord MCCLXVI."[454]

The library of the Grey Friars in London was of more than usual magnificence and extent. It was founded by the celebrated Richard Whittington. Its origin is thus set forth in an old manuscript in the Cottonian library:[455]

"In the year of our Lord, 1421, the worshipful Richard Whyttyngton, knight and mayor of London, began the new library and laid the first foundation-stone on the 21st day of October; that is, on the feast

of St. Hilarion the abbot. And the following year before the feast of the nativity of Christ, the house was raised and covered; and in three years after, it was floored, whitewashed, glazed,[456] adorned with shelves, statues, and carving, and furnished with books: and the expenses about what is aforesaid amount to £556:16:9; of which sum, the aforesaid Richard Whyttyngton paid £400, and the residue was paid by the reverend father B. Thomas Winchelsey and his friends, to whose soul God be propitious.—Amen."

Among some items of money expended, we find, "for the works of Doctor de Lyra contained in two volumes, now in the chains,[457] 100 marks, of which B. John Frensile remitted 20s.; and for the Lectures of Hostiensis, now lying in the chains, 5 marks."[458] Leland speaks in the most enthusiastic terms of this library, and says, that it far surpassed all others for the number and antiquity of its volumes. John Wallden bequeathed as many manuscripts of celebrated authors as were worth two thousand pounds.[459]

The library of the Dominicans in London was also at one time well stored with valuable books. Leland mentions some of those he found there, and among them some writings of Wicliff;[460] indeed those of this order were renowned far and wide for their love of study; look at the old portraits of a Dominican friar, and you will generally see him with the pen in one hand and a book in the other; but they were more ambitious in literature than the monks, and aimed at the honors of an author rather than at those of a scribe; but we are surprised more at their fertility than at their style or originality in the mysteries of bookcraft. Henry Esseburn diligently

read at Oxford, and devoted his whole soul to study, and wrote a number of works, principally on the Bible; he was appointed to govern the Dominican monastery at Chester; "being remote from all schools, he made use of his spare hours to revise and polish what he had writ at Oxford; having performed the same to his own satisfaction, he caused his works to be fairly transcribed, and copies of them to be preserved in several libraries of his order."[461] But they did not usually pay so much attention to the duties of transcribing. The Dominicans were fond of the physical sciences, and have been accused of too much partiality for occult philosophy. Leland tells us that Robert Perserutatur, a Dominican, was over solicitous in prying into the secrets of philosophy, [462] and lays the same charge to many others.

The Carmelites were more careful in transcribing books than the Dominicans, and anxiously preserved them from dust and worms; but I can find but little notice of their libraries; the one at Oxford was a large room, where they arranged their books in cases made for that purpose; before the foundation of this library, the Carmelites kept their books in chests, and doubtless gloried in an ample store of manuscript treasures.[463]

But in the fifteenth century we find the Mendicant Friars, like the order religious sects, disregarding those strict principles of piety which had for two hundred years so distinguished their order. The holy rules of St. Francis and St. Dominic were seldom read with much attention, and never practised with severity; they became careless in the propagation of religious principles, relaxed in their austerity, and looked with too much fondness on the riches and honors of the world.[464] This diminution in religious

zeal was naturally accompanied by a proportionate decrease in learning and love of study. The sparkling orator, the acute controversialist, or the profound scholar, might have been searched for in vain among the Franciscans or the Dominicans of the fifteenth century. Careless in literary matters, they thought little of collecting books, or preserving even those which their libraries already contained; the Franciscans at Oxford "sold many of their books to Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, about the year 1433,[465] which he gave to the libraries of Lincoln, Durham, Baliol, and Oriel. They also declining in strictness of life and learning, sold many more to other persons, so that their libraries declined to little or nothing."[466]

We are not therefore surprised at the disappointment of Leland, on examining this famous repository; his expectations were raised by the care with which he found the library guarded, and the difficulty he had to obtain access to it: but when he entered, he did not find one-third the number of books which it originally contained; but dust and cobwebs, moths and beetles he found in abundance, which swarmed over the empty shelves.[467]

The mendicant friars have rendered themselves famous by introducing theatrical representations[468] for the amusement and instruction of the people. These shows were usually denominated miracles, moralities, or mysteries, and were performed by the friars in their convents or on portable stages, which were wheeled into the market places and streets for the convenience of the spectators.

The friars of the monastery of the Franciscans at Coventry are particularly celebrated for their

ingenuity in performing these pageants on Corpus Christi day; a copy of this play or miracle is preserved in the Cottonian Collection, written in old English rhyme. It embraces the transactions of the Old and New Testament, and is entitled *Ludus Corpus Christi*. It commences—

A PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI.[469]

Now gracyous God groundyd of all
goodnesse,
As thy grete glorie neuyr begynnyng
had;
So you succour and save all those that sytt
and sese,
And lystenyth to our talkyng with sylens
stylle and sad,
For we purpose no pertly stylle in his
prese
The pepyl to plese with pleys ful glad,
Now lystenyth us lowly both mar and
lesse
Gentyllys and ȝemaury off goodly lyff
lad,
þis tyde,
We call you shewe us that we kan,
How that þis werd fyrst began,
And howe God made bothe worlde and
man
If yt ye wyll abyde.

These miracles were intended to instruct the more ignorant, or those whose circumstances placed the usual means of acquiring knowledge beyond their reach; but as books became accessible, they were no longer needed; the printing press made the Bible,

from which the plots of the miracle plays were usually derived, common among the people, and these gaudy representations were swept away by the Reformation; but they were temporarily revived in Queen Mary's time, with the other abominations of the church papal, for we find that "in the year 1556 a goodly stage play of the Passion of Christ was presented at the Grey Friers in London on Corpus Christi day," before the Lord Mayor and citizens;[470] but we have nothing here to do with anecdotes illustrating a period so late as this.

We have now arrived at the dawn of a new era in learning, and the slow, plodding, laborious scribes of the monasteries were startled by the appearance of an invention with which their poor pens had no power to compete. The year 1472 was the last of the parchment literature of the monks, and the first in the English annals of printed learning; but we must not forget that the monks with all their sloth and ignorance, were the foremost among the encouragers of the early printing press in England; the monotony of the dull cloisters of Westminster Abbey was broken by the clanking of Caxton's press; and the prayers of the monks of old St. Albans mingled with the echoes of the pressman's labor. Little did those barefooted priests know what an opponent to their Romish rites they were fostering into life; their love of learning and passion for books, drove all fear away; and the splendor of the new power so dazzled their eyes that they could not clearly see the nature of the refulgent light just bursting through the gloom of ages.

After the invention of the printing art, bibliomania took some mighty strides; and many choice collectors, full of ardor in the pursuit, became

renowned for the vast book stores they amassed together. But some of their names have been preserved and good deeds chronicled by Dibdin, of bibliographical renown; so that a chapter is not necessary here to extol them. We may judge how fashionable the avocation became by the keen satire of Alexander Barkley, in his translation of Brandt's *Navis Stultifera* or Shyp of Folys,[471] who gives a curious illustration of a bibliomaniac; and thus speaks of those collectors who amassed their book treasures without possessing much esteem for their contents.

"That in this ship the chiefe place I
gouerne,
By this wide sea with fooles wandring,
The cause is plain & easy to discerne
Still am I busy, bookes assembling,
For to have plentie it is a pleasaunt thing
In my conceyt, to have them ay in hand,
But what they meane do I not
understande.

"But yet I have them in great reverence
And honoure, sauing them from filth &
ordure
By often brushing & much diligence
Full goodly bounde in pleasaunt
couerture
Of Damas, Sattin, or els of velvet pure
I keepe them sure, fearing least they
should be lost,
For in them is the cunning wherein I me
boast.

"But if it fortune that any learned man
Within my house fall to disputation,

I drawe the curtaynes to shewe my bokes them,
That they of my cunning should make probation
I love not to fall in altercation,
And while the commen, my bokes I turne and winde
For all is in them, and nothing in my minde.

"Ptolomeus the riche caused, longe agone,
Over all the worlde good bookes to be sought,
Done was his commandement—anone
These bokes he had, and in his studie brought,
Which passed all earthly treasure as he thought,
But neverthelesse he did him not apply
Unto their doctrine, but lived unhappily.

"Lo, in likewise of bookes I have store,
But fewe I reade and fewer understande,
I folowe not their doctrine nor their lore,
It is ynough to beare a booke in hande.
It were too muche to be in such a bande,
For to be bounde to loke within the booke
I am content on the fayre coveryng to looke.

"Why should I studie to hurt my wit therby,
Or trouble my minde with studie excessiue.
Sithe many are which studie right busely,
And yet therby thall they never thrive

The fruite of wisdome can they not
contriue,
And many to studie so muche are
inclinde,
That utterly they fall out of their minde.

"Eche is not lettred that nowe is made a
lorde,
Nor eche a clerke that hath a benefice;
They are not all lawyers that pleas do
recorde,
All that are promoted are not fully wise;
On suche chaunce nowe fortune throwes
her dice
That though we knowe but the yrishe
game,
Yet would he have a gentleman's name.

"So in like wise I am in suche case,
Though I nought can, I would be called
wise,
Also I may set another in my place,
Whiche may for me my bokes exercise,
Or els I shall ensue the common guise,
And say concedo to euery argument,
Least by much speache my latin should
be spent.

"I am like other Clerkes, which so
frowardly them gyde,
That after they are once come unto
promotion,
They give them to pleasure, their study
set aside,
Their auarice couering with fained
deuotion;
Yet dayly they preache and have great

derision
Against the rude laymen, and all for couetise,
Through their owne conscience be blended with that vice.

"But if I durst truth plainely utter and expresse,
This is the speciall cause of this inconvenience,
That greatest of fooles & fullest of lewdness,
Having least wit and simplest science,
Are first promoted, & have greatest reverence;
For if one can flatter & bear a hauke on his fist,
He shall be made Parson of Honington or of Elist.

"But he that is in study ay firme and diligent,
And without all favour preacheth Christe's love,
Of all the Cominalite nowe adayes is sore shent,
And by estates threatned oft therfore.
Thus what anayle is it to us to study more,
To knowe ether Scripture, truth, wisdome, or virtue,
Since fewe or none without fauour dare them shewe.

"But O noble Doctours, that worthy are of name,
Consider oure olde fathers, note well

their diligence,
Ensue ye to their steppes, obtayne ye
suche fame
As they did living; and that, by true
prudence
Within their heartes, thy planted their
science,
And not in pleasaunt bookes, but noue to
fewe suche be,
Therefore to this ship come you & rowe
with me.

"The Lennoy of Alexander Barclay,
Translatour, exhorting the fooles
accloyed
with this vice, to amende their foly.

"Say worthie Doctours & Clerkes curious,
What moneth you of bookes to have such
number,
Since diuers doctrines through way
contrarious,
Doth man's minde distract and sore
encomber.
Alas blinde men awake, out of your
slumber;
And if ye will needes your bookes
multiplye,
With diligence endeuor you some to
occupye."[472]

FOOTNOTES:

[438] Thirteen Dominicans were sent into England in the year 1221; they held their first provincial council in England in 1230 at Oxford, three years before St. Dominic was canonized by pope Gregory.

[439] Four clercs and five laymen of the Franciscan order were sent into England in 1224; ten years afterwards we find their disciples spreading over the whole of England.

[440] Edward the Second regarded them with great favor, and wrote several letters to the pope in their praise; he says in one, "Desiderantes itaque, pater sancte ordinis fratrum prædicatorum Oxonii, ubi religionis devotio, et honestatis laudabilis decer viget, per quem etiam honor universitatis Oxoniensis, et utilitas ibidem studentium, etc." Dugdale's Monast. vol. vi. p. 1492.

[441] A list of celebrated authors who flourished in England, and who were members of the Dominican Order, will be found in *Steven's Monasticon*, vol. ii. p. 193, more than 80 names are mentioned. A similar list of authors of the Franciscan order will be found at p. 97 of vol. i. containing 122 names; and of the Carmelite authors, vol. ii. p. 160, specifying 137 writers; a great proportion of their works are upon the Scriptures.

[442] Dr. Cave says, "In scholis Christianis pene unice regnavit scholastica theologia, advocata in subsidium Aristotelis philosophia, eaque non ex Græcis fontibus *sed ex turbidis Arabum lacunis, ex versionibus male factis, male intellectis, hansta*." *Hist. Liter.*, p. 615. But I am not satisfied that this has been proved, though often affirmed.

[443] It was probably the work of Andrew the

Jew. *Meiners*, ii. p. 664.

[444] At a council held at Paris in the year 1209, the works of Aristotle were proscribed and ordered to be burnt. *Launvius de Varia Aristotelis fortuna*. But in spite of the papal mandate the friars revived its use. Richard Fizacre, an intimate friend of Roger Bacon, was so passionately fond of reading Aristotle, that he always carried one of his works in his bosom. *Stevens Monast.*, vol. ii. p. 194.

[445] See what has been said of the Mendicants at p. 79.

[446] Steven's additions to Dugdale's Monasticon from the MSS. of Anthony a Wood in the library at Oxford, vol. i. p. 129. Agnell himself was "*a man of scarce any erudition*."—*Ibid.*

[447] He is spoken of under a multitude of names, sometimes Grosthead, Grouthead, etc. A list of them will be found in Wood's Oxford by Gutch, vol. i. p. 198.

[448] He gives strict injunctions as to the study of the Scriptures in his *Constitutiones*.—See Pegge's Life of Grostest, p. 315.

[449] Utilitate Scientiarum, cap. xxxix.

[450] De Confess. Amantis, lib. iv. fo. 70, *Imprint*. Caxton *at Westminster*, 1483. The bishop is said to have taken a journey from England to Rome one night on an infernal horse.—Pegge's Life of Grostest, p. 306.

[451] Stephen's additions to Dugdale's Monasticon from Anthony a Wood's MSS. vol. i. p. 133.

[452] The Mendicant orders, unlike the monks, were not remarkable for their industry

in transcribing books: their roving life was unsuitable to the tedious profession of a scribe.

[453] Leland's Itin. vol. iii. p. 59.

[454] Oliver's Collections relating to the Monasteries in Devon, 8vo. 1820, appendix lxii.

[455] Cottonian MSS. Vittel, F. xii. 13. fol. 325, headed "*De Fundacione Librarie*."

[456] The library was 129 feet long and 31 feet broad, and most beautifully fitted up.—*Lelandi Antiquarii Collectanea*, vol. i. p. 109.

[457] This refers to the custom then prevalent of chaining their books, especially their choice ones, to the library shelf, or to a reading desk.

[458] MS. *ibid.* fo. o. 325 b.

[459] Script. Brit. p. 241, and Collectanea, iii. 52.

[460] Leland's Collect. vol. iii. p. 51. He found in the priory of the Dominicans at Cambridge, among other books, a *Biblia in lingua vernacula*.

[461] Steven's Monast. vol. ii. p. 194.

[462] His works were of the impressions of the Air—of the Wonder of the Elements—of Ceremonial Magic—of the Mysteries of Secrets —and the Correction of Chemistry.

[463] Sieben's Monast. vol. i. p. 183, from the MSS. of Anthony a Wood, who says, "What became of them (their books) at the dissolution unless they were carried into the library of some college, I know not."

[464] They obtained much wealth by the sale of pardons and indulgences. Margaret Est, of the convent of Franciscans, ordered her letters

of pardon and absolution, to partake of the indulgences of the convent, to be returned as soon she was buried. *Bloomfield's Hist. of Norfolk*, vol. ii. p. 565.

[465] And among others of St. Augustine's books, *De Civitate Dei*, with many notes in the margins, by Grostest. *Wood's Hist. Oxon*, p. 78.

[466] Anthony a Wood in Steven's Monast. vol. i. p. 133.

[467] Script. Brit. p. 286.

[468] Le Bœuf gives an instance of one being represented as early as the eleventh century, in which Virgil was introduced. *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. p. 295. The case of Geoffry of St. Albans is well known, and I have already mentioned it.

[469] MS. Cottonian Vespasian, D. viii. fo. 1. Codex Chart. 225 folios, written in the fifteenth century. Sir W. Dugdale, in his Hist. of Warwick, p. 116, mentions this volume; and Stevens, in his Monast. has printed a portion of it. Mr. Halliwell has printed them with much care and accuracy.

[470] MS. Cottonian Vitel. E. 5. *Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 326.

[471] The original was written in 1494.

[472] Ship of Fooles, folio 1570, Imprynted by Cawood, fol. 1.

CHAPTER XIII

Conclusion.



E have traversed through the darkness of many long and dreary centuries, and with the aid of a few old manuscripts written by the monks in the *scriptoria* of their monasteries, caught an occasional glimpse of their literary labors and love of books; these parchment volumes being mere monastic registers, or terse historic compilations, do not record with particular care the anecdotes applicable to my subject, but appear to be mentioned almost accidentally, and certainly without any ostentatious design; but such as they are we learn from them at least one thing, which some of us might not have known before—that the monks of old, besides telling their beads, singing psalms, and muttering their breviary, had yet one other duty to perform—the transcription of books. And I think there is sufficient evidence that they fulfilled this obligation with as much zeal as those of a more strictly monastic or religious nature. It is true, in casting our eye over the history of their labors, many regrets will arise that they did not manifest a little more taste and refinement in their choice of books for transcribing. The classical scholar will wish the holy monks had thought more about his darling authors of Greece and Rome; but the pious puritan historian blames them for patronizing the romantic allurements of Ovid, or the loose satires of Juvenal, and throws out

some slanderous hint that they must have found a sympathy in those pages of licentiousness, or why so anxious to preserve them? The protestant is still more scandalized, and denounces the monks, their books, scriptorium and all together as part and parcel of popish craft and Romish superstition. But surely the crimes of popedom and the evils of monachism, that thing of dry bones and fabricated relics, are bad enough; and the protestant cause is sufficiently holy, that we may afford to be honest if we cannot to be generous. What good purpose then will it serve to cavil at the monks forever? All readers of history know how corrupt they became in the fifteenth century; how many evils were wrought by the craft of some of them, and how pernicious the system ultimately waxed. We can all, I say, reflect upon these things, and guard against them in future; but it is not just to apply the same indiscriminate censure to all ages. Many of the purest Christians of the church, the brightest ornaments of Christ's simple flock, were barefooted cowled monks of the cloister; devout perhaps to a fault, with simplicity verging on superstition; yet nevertheless faithful, pious men, and holy. Look at all this with an eye of charity; avoid their errors and manifold faults: but to forget the loathsome thing our minds have conjured up as the type of an ancient monk. Remember they had a few books to read, and venerated something more than the dry bones of long withered saints. Their God was our God, and their Saviour, let us trust, will be our Saviour.

I am well aware that many other names might have been added to those mentioned in the foregoing pages, equally deserving remembrance, and offering

pleasing anecdotes of a student's life, or illustrating the early history of English learning; many facts and much miscellaneous matter I have collected in reference to them; but I am fearful whether my readers will regard this subject with sufficient relish to enjoy more illustrations of the same kind. Students are apt to get too fond of their particular pursuit, which magnifies in importance with the difficulties of their research, or the duration of their studies. I am uncertain whether this may not be my own position, and wait the decision of my readers before proceeding further in the annals of early bibliomania.

Moreover as to the simple question—Were the monks booklovers? enough I think as been said to prove it, but the enquiry is far from exhausted; and if the reader should deem the matter still equivocal and undecided, he must refer the blame to the feebleness of my pen, rather than to the barrenness of my subject. But let him not fail to mark well the instances I have given; let him look at Benedict Biscop and his foreign travels after books; at Theodore and the early Saxons of the seventh century; at Boniface, Alcuin, Ælfric, and the numerous votaries of bibliomania who flourished then. Look at the well stored libraries of St. Albans, Canterbury, Ramsey, Durham, Croyland, Peterborough, Glastonbury, and their thousand tomes of parchment literature. Look at Richard de Bury and his sweet little work on biographical experience; at Whethamstede and his industrious pen; read the rules of monastic orders; the book of Cassian; the regulations of St. Augustine; Benedict Fulgentius; and the ancient admonitions of many other holy and ascetic men. Search over the remnants and shreds of information which have

escaped the ravages of time, and the havoc of cruel invasions relative to these things. Attend to the import of these small still whisperings of a forgotten age; and then, letting the eye traverse down the stream of time, mark the great advent of the Reformation; that wide gulf of monkish erudition in which was swallowed "whole shyppes full" of olden literature; think well and deeply over the huge bonfires of Henry's reign, the flames of which were kindled by the libraries which monkish industry had transcribed. A merry sound no doubt, was the crackling of those "popish books" for protestant ears to feed upon!

Now all these facts thought of collectively—brought to bear one upon another—seem to favor the opinion my own study has deduced from them; that with all their superstition, with all their ignorance, their blindness to philosophic light—the monks of old were hearty lovers of books; that they encouraged learning, fostered and transcribed repeatedly the books which they had rescued from the destruction of war and time; and so kindly cherished and husbanded them as intellectual food for posterity. Such being the case, let our hearts look charitably upon them; and whilst we pity them for their superstition, or blame them for their "pious frauds," love them as brother men and workers in the mines of literature; such a course is far more honorable to the tenor of a christian's heart, than bespattering their memory with foul denunciations.

Some may accuse me of having shown too much fondness—of having dwelt with a too loving tenderness in my retrospection of the middle ages. But in the course of my studies I have found much to admire. In parchment annals coeval with the times of

which they speak, my eyes have traversed over many consecutive pages with increasing interest and with enraptured pleasure. I have read of old deeds worthy of an honored remembrance, where I least expected to find them. I have met with instances of faith as strong as death bringing forth fruit in abundance in those sterile times, and glorying God with its lasting incense. I have met with instances of piety exalted to the heavens—glowing like burning lava, and warming the cold dull cloisters of the monks. I have read of many a student who spent the long night in exploring mysteries of the Bible truths; and have seen him sketched by a monkish pencil with his ponderous volumes spread around him, and the oil burning brightly by his side. I have watched him in his little cell thus depicted on the ancient parchment, and have sympathized with his painful difficulties in acquiring true knowledge, or enlightened wisdom, within the convent walls; and then I have read the pages of his fellow monk—perhaps, his book-companion; and heard what *he* had to say of that poor lonely Bible student, and have learnt with sadness how often truth had been extinguished from his mind by superstition, or learning cramped by his monkish prejudices; but it has not always been so, and I have enjoyed a more gladdening view on finding in the monk a Bible teacher; and in another, a profound historian, or pleasing annalist.

As a Christian, the recollection of these cheering facts, with which my researches have been blessed, are pleasurable, and lead me to look back upon those old times with a student's fondness. But besides piety and virtue, I have met with wisdom and philanthropy; the former, too profound, and the latter, too generous for the age; but these things are precious, and worth remembering; and how can I

speak of them but in words of kindness? It is these traits of worth and goodness that have gained my sympathies, and twined round my heart, and not the dark stains on the monkish page of history; these I have always striven to forget, or to remember them only when I thought experience might profit by them; for they offer a terrible lesson of blood, tyranny and anguish. But this dark and gloomy side is the one which from our infancy has ever been before us; we learnt it when a child from our tutor; or at college, or at school; we learnt it in the pages of our best and purest writers; learnt that in those old days nought existed, but bloodshed, tyranny, and anguish; but we never thought once to gaze at the scene behind, and behold the workings of human charity and love; if we had, we should have found that the same passions, the same affections, and the same hopes and fears existed then as now, and our sympathies would have been won by learning that we were reading of brother men, fellow Christians, and fellow-companions in the Church of Christ. We have hitherto looked, when casting a backward glance at those long gone ages of inanimation, with the severity of a judge upon a criminal; but to understand him properly we must regard them with the tender compassion of a parent; for if our art, our science, and our philosophy exalts us far above them, is that a proof that there was nothing admirable, nothing that can call forth our love on that infant state, or in the annals of our civilization at its early growth?

But let it not be thought that if I have striven to retrieve from the dust and gloom of antiquity, the remembrance of old things that are worthy; that I feel any love for the superstition with which we find them blended. There is much that is good connected

with those times; talent even that is worth imitating, and art that we may be proud to learn, which is beginning after the elapse of centuries to arrest the attention of the ingenious, and the love of these, naturally revive with the discovery; but we need not fear in this resurrection of old things of other days, that the superstition and weakness of the middle ages; that the veneration for dry bones and saintly dust, can live again. I do not wish to make the past assume a superiority over the present; but I think a contemplation of mediæval art would often open a new avenue of thought and lead to many a pleasing and profitable discovery; I would too add the efforts of my feeble pen to elevate and ennoble the fond pursuit of my leisure hours. I would say one word to vindicate the lover of old musty writings, and the explorer of rude antiquities, from the charge of unprofitableness, and to protect him from the sneer of ridicule. For whilst some see in the dry studies of the antiquary a mere inquisitiveness after forgotten facts and worthless relics; I can see, nay, have felt, something morally elevating in the exercise of these inquiries. It is not the mere fact which may sometimes be gained by rubbing off the parochial whitewash from ancient tablets, or the encrusted oxide from monumental brasses, that render the study of ancient relics so attractive; but it is the deductions which may sometimes be drawn from them. The light which they sometimes cast on obscure parts of history, and the fine touches of human sensibility, which their eulogies and monodies bespeak, that instruct or elevate the mind, and make the student's heart beat with holier and loftier feelings. But it is not my duty here to enter into the motives, the benefits, or the most profitable manner of studying antiquity; if it were, I would

strive to show how much superior it is to become an original investigator, a practical antiquary, than a mere borrower from others. For the most delightful moments of the student's course is when he rambles personally among the ruins and remnants of long gone ages; sometimes painful are such sights, even deeply so; but never to a righteous mind are they unprofitable, much less exerting a narrowing tendency on the mind, or cramping the gushing of human feeling; for cold, indeed, must be the heart that can behold strong walls tottering to decay, and fretted vaults, mutilated and dismantled of their pristine beauty; that can behold the proud strongholds of baronial power and feudal tyranny, the victims of the lichen or creeping parasites of the ivy tribe; cold, I say, must be the heart that can see such things, and draw no lesson from them.





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Transcriber's Notes

1. Footnotes 293, 386 are not anchored in the page image. A best guess has been made as to their anchor point.

2. Refer to the image for the black letter poems as the yogh/ezh & thorn/h characters are difficult to distinguish. Other internet sources show vastly different interpretations for the text of 'A Plaie called Corpus Christi'.

3. Hyphenation has been left as printed, inconsistencies are:

- bookloving, book-loving
- booklover, book-lover
- bookworms, book-worms
- goodwill, good-will
- halfpenny, half-penny
- protomartyr, proto-martyr
- reread, re-read

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BIBLIOMANIA

IN

THE MIDDLE AGES

BY

F. SOMNER MERRYWEATHER

With an Introduction by

CHARLES ORR

Librarian of Case Library



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Bibliomania in the Middle Ages

OR

SKETCHES OF BOOKWORMS, COLLECTORS, BIBLE STUDENTS, SCRIBES AND ILLUMINATORS

From the Anglo-Saxon and Norman Periods to the Introduction of Printing into England, with Anecdotes Illustrating the History of the Monastic Libraries of Great Britain in the Olden Time

by F. SOMNER MERRYWEATHER, *with an Introduction by* CHARLES ORR, *Librarian of Case Library.*

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INTRODUCTION.

IN every century for more than two thousand years, many men have owed their chief enjoyment of life to books. The bibliomaniac of today had his prototype in ancient Rome, where book collecting was fashionable as early as the first century of the Christian era. Four centuries earlier there was an active trade in books at Athens, then the center of the book production of the world. This center of literary activity shifted to Alexandria during the third century B. C. through the patronage of Ptolemy Soter, the founder of the Alexandrian Museum, and of his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus; and later to Rome, where it remained for many

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centuries, and where bibliophiles and bibliomaniacs were gradually evolved, and from whence in time other countries were invaded.

For the purposes of the present work the middle ages cover the period beginning with the seventh century and ending with the time of the invention of printing, or about seven hundred years, though they are more accurately bounded by the years 500 and 1500 A. D. It matters little, however, since there is no attempt at chronological arrangement.

About the middle of the present century there began to be a disposition to grant to mediæval times their proper place in the history of the preservation and dissemination of books, and Merryweather's *Bibliomania in the Middle Ages* was one of the earliest works in English devoted to the subject. Previous to that time, those ten centuries lying between the fall of the Roman Empire and the revival of learning were generally referred to as the Dark Ages, and historians and other writers were wont to treat them as having been without learning or scholarship of any kind.

Even Mr. Hallam,* with all that judicial temperament and patient research to which we owe so much, could find no good to say of the Church or its institutions, characterizing the early university

* Hallam, Henry. "Introduction to the Literature of Europe." 4 vols. London.

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as the abode of "indigent vagabonds withdrawn from usual labor," and all monks as positive enemies of learning.

The gloomy survey of Mr. Hallam, clouded no doubt by his antipathy to all things ecclesiastical, served, however, to arouse the interest of the period, which led to other studies with different results, and later writers were able to discern below the surface of religious fanaticism and superstition so characteristic of those centuries, much of interest in the history of literature; to show that every age produced learned and inquisitive men by whom books were highly prized and industriously collected for their own sakes; in short, to rescue the period from the stigma of absolute illiteracy.

If the reader cares to pursue the subject further, after going through the fervid defense of the love of books in the middle ages, of which this is the introduction, he will find outside of its chapters abundant evidence that the production and care of books was a matter of great concern. In the pages of *Mores Catholici; or Ages of Faith*, by Mr. Kenelm Digby,* or of *The Dark Ages*, by Dr. S. R. Maitland,† or of that great work of recent

* Digby, Kenelm. "Mores Catholici; or Ages of Faith." 3 vols. London, 1848.

† Maitland, S. R. "The Dark Ages; a Series of Essays Intended to Illustrate the State of Religion and Literature in the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries." London, 1845.

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years, *Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages*, by Mr. George Haven Putnam,* he will see vivid and interesting portraits of a great multitude of mediæval worthies who were almost lifelong lovers of learning and books, and zealous laborers in preserving, increasing and transmitting them. And though little of the mass that has come down to us was worthy of preservation on its own account as literature, it is exceedingly interesting as a record of centuries of industry in the face of such difficulties that to workers of a later period might have seemed insurmountable.

A further fact worthy of mention is that book production was from the art point of view fully abreast of the other arts during the period, as must be apparent to any one who examines the collections in some of the libraries of Europe. Much of this beauty was wrought for the love of the art itself. In the earlier centuries religious institutions absorbed nearly all the social intellectual movements as well as the possession of material riches and land. Kings and princes were occupied with distant wars which impoverished them and deprived literature and art of that patronage accorded to it

* Putnam, George Haven. "Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages; a Study of the Conditions of the Production and Distribution of Literature from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Close of the Seventeenth Century."

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in later times. There is occasional mention, however, of wealthy laymen, whose religious zeal induced them to give large sums of money for the copying and ornamentation of books; and there were in the abbeys and convents lay brothers whose fervent spirits, burning with poetical imagination, sought in these monastic retreats and the labor of writing, redemption from their past sins. These men of faith were happy to consecrate their whole existence to the ornamentation of a single sacred book, dedicated to the community, which gave them in exchange the necessaries of life.

The labor of transcribing was held, in the monasteries, to be a full equivalent of manual labor in the field. The rule of St. Ferreol, written in the sixth century, says that, "He who does not turn up the earth with the plough ought to write the parchment with his fingers."

Mention has been made of the difficulties under which books were produced; and this is a matter which we who enjoy the conveniences of modern writing and printing can little understand. The hardships of the *scriptorium* were greatest, of course, in winter. There were no fires in the often damp and ill-lighted cells, and the cold in some of the parts of Europe where books were produced must have been very severe. Parchment, the material generally used for writing upon after the

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seventh century, was at some periods so scarce that copyists were compelled to resort to the expedient of effacing the writing on old and less esteemed manuscripts.* The form of writing was stiff and regular and therefore exceedingly slow and irksome.

In some of the monasteries the *scriptorium* was at least at a later period, conducted more as a matter of commerce, and making of books became in time very profitable. The Church continued to hold the keys of knowledge and to control the means of productions; but the cloistered cell, where the monk or the layman, who had a penance to work off for a grave sin, had worked in solitude, gave way to the apartment specially set aside, where many persons could work together, usually under the direction of a *librarius* or chief scribe. In the more carefully constructed monasteries this apartment was so placed as to adjoin the calefactory, which allowed the introduction of hot air, when needed.

The seriousness with which the business of copying was considered is well illustrated by the consecration of the *scriptorium* which was often

* Lacroix, Paul. "Arts of the Middle Ages." Our author, however *(vide* page 58, *note)*, quotes the accounts of the Church of Norwich to show that parchments sold late in the thirteenth century at about 1 d. per sheet; but Putnam and other writers state that up to that time it was a very costly commodity.

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done in words which may be thus translated: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this work-room of thy servants, that all which they write therein may be comprehended by their intelligence and realized in their work."

While the work of the scribes was largely that of copying the scriptures, gospels, and books of devotion required for the service of the church, there was a considerable trade in books of a more secular kind. Particularly was this so in England. The large measure of attention given to the production of books of legends and romances was a distinguishing feature of the literature of England at least three centuries previous to the invention of printing. At about the twelfth century and after, there was a very large production and sale of books under such headings as chronicles, satires, sermons, works of science and medicine, treatises on style, prose romances and epics in verse. Of course a large proportion of these were written in or translated from the Latin, the former indicating a pretty general knowledge of that language among those who could buy or read books at all. That this familiarity with the Latin tongue was not confined to any particular country is abundantly shown by various authorities.

Mr. Merryweather, whose book, as has been

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intimated, is only a defense of bibliomania itself as it actually existed in the middle ages, gives the reader but scant information as to processes of book-making at that time. But thanks to the pains-taking research of others, these details are now a part of the general knowledge of the development of the book. The following, taken from Mr. Theodore De Vinne's *Invention of Printing*, will, we think, be found interesting:

"The size most in fashion was that now known as the demy folio, of which the leaf is about ten inches wide and fifteen inches long, but smaller sizes were often made. The space to be occupied by the written text was mapped out with faint lines, so that the writer could keep his letters on a line, at even distance from each other and within the prescribed margin. Each letter was carefully drawn, and filled in or painted with repeated touches of the pen. With good taste, black ink was most frequently selected for the text; red ink was used only for the more prominent words, and the catch-letters, then known as the rubricated letters. Sometimes texts were written in blue, green, purple, gold or silver inks, but it was soon discovered that texts in bright color were not so readable as texts in black.

"When the copyist had finished his sheet he passed it to the designer, who sketched the border,

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pictures and initials. The sheet was then given to the illuminator, who painted it. The ornamentation of a mediæval book of the first class is beyond description by words or by wood cuts. Every inch of space was used. Its broad margins were filled with quaint ornaments, sometimes of high merit, admirably painted in vivid colors. Grotesque initials, which, with their flourishes, often spanned the full height of the page, or broad bands of floriated tracery that occupied its entire width, were the only indications of changes of chapter or subject. In printer's phrase the composition was "close-up and solid" to the extreme degree of compactness. The uncommonly free use of red ink for the smaller initials was not altogether a matter of taste; if the page had been written entirely in black ink it would have been unreadable through its blackness. This nicety in writing consumed much time, but the mediæval copyist was seldom governed by considerations of time or expense. It was of little consequence whether the book he transcribed would be finished in one or in ten years. It was required only that he should keep at his work steadily and do his best. His skill is more to be commended than his taste. Many of his initials and borders were outrageously inappropriate for the text for which they were designed. The gravest truths were hedged in the most childish conceits.

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Angels, butterflies, goblins, clowns, birds, snails and monkeys, sometimes in artistic, but much oftener in grotesque and sometimes in highly offensive positions are to be found in the illuminated borders of copies of the gospels and writings of the fathers.

"The book was bound by the forwarder, who sewed the leaves and put them in a cover of leather or velvet; by the finisher, who ornamented the cover with gilding and enamel. The illustration of book binding, published by Amman in his Book of Trades, puts before us many of the implements still in use. The forwarder, with his customary apron of leather, is in the foreground, making use of a plow-knife for trimming the edges of a book. The lying press, which rests obliquely against the block before him, contains a book that has received the operation of backing-up from a queer shaped hammer lying upon the floor. The workman at the end of the room is sewing together the sections of a book, for sewing was properly regarded as a man's work, and a scientific operation altogether beyond the capacity of the raw seamstress. The work of the finisher is not represented, but the brushes, the burnishers, the sprinklers and the wheel-shaped gilding tools hanging against the wall leave us no doubt as to their use. There is an air of antiquity about everything connected with this bookbindery which suggests the thought that its

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tools and usages are much older than those of printing. Chevillier says that seventeen professional bookbinders found regular employment in making up books for the University of Paris, as early as 1292. Wherever books were produced in quantities, bookbinding was set apart as a business distinct from that of copying.

"The poor students who copied books for their own use were also obliged to bind them, which they did in a simple but efficient manner by sewing together the folded sheets, attaching them to narrow parchment bands, the ends of which were made to pass through a cover of stout parchment at the joint near the back. The ends of the bands were then pasted down under the stiffening sheet of the cover, and the book was pressed. Sometimes the cover was made flexible by the omission of the stiffening sheet; sometimes the edges of the leaves were protected by flexible and overhanging flaps which were made to project over the covers; or by the insertion in the covers of stout leather strings with which the two covers were tied together. Ornamentation was entirely neglected, for a book of this character was made for use and not for show. These methods of binding were mostly applied to small books intended for the pocket; the workmanship was rough, but the binding was strong and serviceable."

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The book of Mr. Merryweather, here reprinted, is thought worthy of preservation in a series designed for the library of the booklover. Its publication followed shortly after that of the works of Digby and Maitland, but shows much original research and familiarity with early authorities; and it is much more than either of these, or of any book with which we are acquainted, a plea in defense of bibliomania in the middle ages. Indeed the charm of the book may be said to rest largely upon the earnestness with which he takes up his self-imposed task. One may fancy that after all he found it not an easy one; in fact his "Conclusion" is a kind of apology for not having made out a better case. But this he believes he has proven, "that with all their superstition, with all their ignorance, their blindness to philosophic light—the monks of old were hearty lovers of books; that they encouraged learning, fostered it, and transcribed repeatedly the books which they had rescued from the destruction of war and time; and so kindly cherished and husbanded them as intellectual food for posterity. Such being the case, let our hearts look charitably upon them; and whilst we pity them for their superstition, or blame them for their pious frauds, love them as brother men and workers in the mines of literature."

Of the author himself little can be learned. A

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diligent search revealed little more than the entry in the London directory which, in various years from 1840 to 1850, gives his occupation as that of bookseller, at 14 King Street, Holborn. Indeed this is shown by the imprint of the title-page of *Bibliomania*, which was published in 1849. He published during the same year *Dies Dominicæ*, and in 1850 *Glimmerings in the Dark*, and *Lives and Anecdotes of Misers*. The latter has been immortalized by Charles Dickens as one of the books bought at the bookseller's shop by Boffin, the Golden Dustman, and which was read to him by the redoubtable Silas Wegg during Sunday evenings at "Boffin's Bower." *

* Dickens's Mutual Friend.



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BIBLIOMANIA

IN

THE MIDDLE AGES.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Remarks—Monachism—Book Destroyers—Effects of the Reformation on Monkish Learning, etc.

IN recent times, in spite of all those outcries which have been so repeatedly raised against the illiterate state of the dark ages, many and valuable efforts have been made towards a just elucidation of those monkish days. These labors have produced evidence of what few anticipated, and some even now deny, viz., that here and there great glimmerings of learning are perceivable ; and although debased,

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and often barbarous too, they were not quite so bad as historians have usually proclaimed them. It may surprise some, however, that an attempt should be made to prove that, in the olden time in "merrie Englande," a passion which Dibdin has christened Bibliomania, existed then, and that there were many cloistered bibliophiles as warm and enthusiastic in book collecting as the Doctor himself. But I must here crave the patience of the reader, and ask him to refrain from denouncing what he may deem a rash and futile attempt, till he has perused the volume and thought well upon the many facts contained therein. I am aware that many of these facts are known to all, but some, I believe, are familiar only to the antiquary—the lover of musty parchments and the cobwebbed chronicles of a monastic age. I have endeavored to bring these facts together—to connect and string them into a continuous narrative, and to extract from them some light to guide us in forming an opinion on the state of literature in those ages of darkness and obscurity; and here let it be understood that I merely wish to give a fact as history records it. I will not commence by saying the Middle Ages were dark and miserably ignorant, and search for some poor isolated circumstance to prove it; I will not affirm that this was pre-eminently the age in which real piety flourished and literature was fondly cherished, and strive to find all those facts which show its learning, purposely neglecting those which display its unlettered ignorance: nor let it be deemed ostentation when I say that the literary anecdotes and bookish memoranda now submitted to the

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reader have been taken, where such a course was practicable, from the original sources, and the references to the authorities from whence they are derived have been personally consulted and compared.

That the learning of the Middle Ages has been carelessly represented there can be little doubt: our finest writers in the paths of history have employed their pens in denouncing it; some have allowed difference of opinion as regards ecclesiastical policy to influence their conclusions; and because the poor scribes were monks, the most licentious principles, the most dismal ignorance and the most repulsive crimes have been attributed to them. If the monks deserved such reproaches from posterity, they have received no quarter; if they possessed virtues as christians, and honorable sentiments as men, they have met with no reward in the praise or respect of this liberal age: they were monks! superstitious priests and followers of Rome! What good could come of them? It cannot be denied that there were crimes perpetrated by men aspiring to a state of holy sanctity; there are instances to be met with of priests violating the rules of decorum and morality; of monks revelling in the dissipating pleasures of sensual enjoyments, and of nuns whose frail humanity could not maintain the purity of their virgin vows. But these instances are too rare to warrant the slanders and scurrility that historians have heaped upon them. And when we talk of the sensuality of the monks, of their gross indulgences and corporeal ease, we surely do so without discrimination; for when we speak of the middle ages thus, our thoughts are

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dwelling on the sixteenth century, its mocking piety and superstitious absurdity; but in the olden time of monastic rule, before monachism had burst its ancient boundaries, there was surely nothing physically attractive in the austere and dull monotony of a cloistered life. Look at the monk; mark his hard, dry studies, and his midnight prayers, his painful fasting and mortifying of the flesh; what can we find in this to tempt the epicure or the lover of indolence and sloth? They were fanatics, blind and credulous—I grant it. They read gross legends, and put faith in traditionary lies—I grant it; but do not say, for history will not prove it, that in the middle ages the monks were wine bibbers and slothful gluttons. But let not the Protestant reader be too hastily shocked. I am not defending the monastic system, or the corruption of the cloister—far from it. I would see the usefulness of man made manifest to the world; but the measure of my faith teaches charity and forgiveness, and I can find in the functions of the monk much that must have been useful in those dark days of feudal tyranny and lordly despotism. We much mistake the influence of the monks by mistaking their position; we regard them as a class, but forget from whence they sprang; there was nothing aristocratic about them, as their constituent parts sufficiently testify; they were, perhaps, the best representatives of the people that could be named, being derived from all classes of society. Thus Offa, the Saxon king, and Cædman, the rustic herdsman, were both monks. These are examples by no means rare, and could easily be multiplied. Such being the case, could not the

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monks more readily feel and sympathize with all, and more clearly discern the frailties of their brother man, and by kind admonition or stern reproof, mellow down the ferocity of a Saxon nature, or the proud heart of a Norman tyrant? But our object is not to analyze the social influence of Monachism in the middle ages: much might be said against it, and many evils traced to the sad workings of its evil spirit, but still withal something may be said in favor of it, and those who regard its influence in *those days alone* may find more to admire and defend than they expected, or their Protestant prejudices like to own.

But, leaving these things, I have only to deal with such remains as relate to the love of books in those times. I would show the means then in existence of acquiring knowledge, the scarcity or plentitude of books, the extent of their libraries, and the rules regulating them; and bring forward those facts which tend to display the general routine of a literary monk, or the prevalence of Bibliomania in those days.

It is well known that the great national and private libraries of Europe possess immense collections of manuscripts, which were produced and transcribed in the monasteries, during the middle ages, thousands there are in the rich alcoves of the Vatican at Rome, unknown save to a choice and favored few; thousands there are in the royal library of France, and thousands too reposing on the dusty shelves of the Bodleian and Cottonian libraries in England; and yet, these numbers are but a small portion—a mere relic—of the intel-

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lectual productions of a past and obscure age.* The barbarians, who so frequently convulsed the more civilized portions of Europe, found a morbid pleasure in destroying those works which bore evidence to the mental superiority of their enemies. In England, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans were each successively the destroyers of literary productions. The Saxon Chronicle, that invaluable repository of the events of so many years, bears ample testimony to numerous instances of the loss of libraries and works of art, from fire, or by the malice of designing foes. At some periods, so general was this destruction, so unquenchable the rapacity of those who caused it, that instead of feeling surprised at the manuscripts of those ages being so few and scanty, we have cause rather to wonder that so many have been preserved. For even the numbers which escaped the hands of the early and unlettered barbarians met with an equally ignominious fate from those for whom it would be impossible to hold up the darkness of their age as a plausible excuse for the commission of this egregious folly. These men over whose sad deeds the bibliophile sighs with mournful regret, were those who carried out the Reformation, so glorious in its results; but the righteousness of the means by which those results were effected are very equivocal indeed. When men form themselves into a faction and strive for the accomplishment of one purpose, criminal deeds are perpetrated with im-

* The sad page in the Annals of Literary History recording the destruction of books and MSS. fully prove this assertion. In France, in the year 1790, 4,194,000 volumes were burnt belonging to the suppressed monasteries, about 25,000 of these were manuscripts.

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punity, which, individually they would blush and scorn to do; they feel no direct responsibility, no personal restraint; and, such as possess fierce passions, under the cloak of an organized body, give them vent and gratification; and those whose better feelings lead them to contemplate upon these things content themselves with the conclusion, that out of evil cometh good.

The noble art of printing was unable, with all its rapid movements, to rescue from destruction the treasures of the monkish age; the advocates of the Reformation eagerly sought for and as eagerly destroyed those old popish volumes, doubtless there was much folly, much exaggerated superstition pervading them; but there was also some truth, a few facts worth knowing, and perhaps a little true piety also, and it would have been no difficult matter to have discriminated between the good and the bad. But the careless grants of a licentious monarch conferred a monastery on a court favorite or political partizan without one thought for the preservation of its contents. It is true a few years after the dissolution of these houses, the industrious Leland was appointed to search and rummage over their libraries and to preserve any relic worthy of such an honor; but it was too late, less learned hands had rifled those parchment collections long ago, mutilated their finest volumes by cutting out with childish pleasure the illuminations with which they were adorned; tearing off the bindings for the gold claps which protected the treasures within,*

* "About this time (Feb. 25, 1550) the Council book mentions the king's sending a letter for the purging his library at Westminster.

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and chopping up huge folios as fuel for their blazing hearths, and immense collections were sold as waste paper. Bale, a strenuous opponent of the monks, thus deplores the loss of their books: "Never had we bene offended for the losse of our lybraryes beynge so many in nombre and in so desolate places for the moste parte, yf the chief monuments and moste notable workes of our excellent wryters had bene reserved, yf there had bene in every shyre of Englande but one solemyne library to the preservacyon of those noble workers, and preferrement of good learnynges in oure posteryte it had bene yet somewhat. But to destroye all without consyderacion, is and wyll be unto Englande for ever a most horryble infamy amonge the grave senyours of other nations. A grete nombre of them whych purchased those superstycyose mansyons reserved of those lybrarye bokes, some to serve theyr jakes, some to scoure theyr candelstyckes, and some to rubbe theyr bootes; some they solde to the grossers and sope sellers, and some they sent over see to the bokebynders,* not in small nombre, but at tymes *whole shippes ful.* I know a merchant man, whyche

The persons are not named, but the business was to cull out all superstitious books, as missals, legends, and such like, and to deliver the garniture of the books, being either gold or silver, to Sir Anthony Aucher. These books were many of them plated with gold and silver and curiously embossed. This, as far as we can collect, was the superstition that destroyed them. Here avarice had a very thin disguise, and the courtiers discovered of what spirit they were to a remarkable degree."—Collier's Eccle. History, vol. ii. p. 307.

* Any one who can inspect a library of ancient books will find proof of this. A collection of vellum scraps which I have derived from these sources are very exciting to a bibliomaniac, a choice line so abruptly broken, a monkish or classical verse so cruelly mutilated! render an inspection of this odd collection, a tantalizing amusement.

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shall at thys tyme be nameless, that boughte the contents of two noble lybraryes for xl shyllyngs pryce, a shame is it to be spoken. Thys stuffe hathe he occupyed in the stide of graye paper for the space of more than these ten years, and yet hath store ynough for as many years to come. A prodyguose example is this, and to be abhorred of all men who love theyr natyon as they shoulde do."*

However pernicious the Roman religion might have been in its practice, it argues little to the honor of the reformers to have used such means as this to effect its cure; had they merely destroyed those productions connected with the controversies of the day, we might perhaps have excused it, on the score of party feeling; but those who were commissioned to visit the public libraries of the kingdom were often men of prejudiced intellects and short-sighted wisdom, and it frequently happened that an ignorant and excited mob became the executioners of whole collections.† It would be impossible now to estimate the loss. Manuscripts of ancient and classic date would in their hands receive no more

* Bale's Leland's Laboryouse Journey, Preface.

† The works of the Schoolmen, viz.: of P. Lombard, T. Aquinas, Scotus and his followers and critics also, and such that had popish scholars in them they cast out of all college libraries and private studies.—*Wood's Hist. Oxon.*, vol. i. b. 1. p. 108. And "least their impiety and foolishness in this act should be further wanting, they brought it to pass that certain rude young men should carry this great spoil of books about the city on biers, which being so done, to set them down in the common market place, and then burn them, to the sorrow of many, as well as of the Protestants as of the other party. This was by them styled 'the funeral of Scotus the Scotists.' So that at this time and all this king's reign was seldom seen anything in the universities but books of poetry, grammar, idle songs, and frivolous stuff."—*Ibid.*, *Wood is referring to the reign of Edward VI.*

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respect than some dry husky folio on ecclesiastical policy; indeed, they often destroyed the works of their own party through sheer ignorance. In a letter sent by Dr. Cox to William Paget, Secretary, he writes that the proclamation for burning books had been the occasion of much hurt. "For New Testaments and Bibles (not condemned by proclamation) have been burned, and that, out of parish churches and good men's houses. They have burned innumerable of the king's majesties books concerning our religion lately set forth."* The ignorant thus delighted to destroy that which they did not understand, and the factional spirit of the more enlightened would not allow them to make one effort for the preservation of those valuable relics of early English literature, which crowded the shelves of the monastic libraries; the sign of the cross, the use of red letters on the title page, the illuminations representing saints, or the diagrams and circles of a mathematical nature, were at all times deemed sufficient evidence of their popish origin and fitness for the flames.†

When we consider the immense number of MSS. thus destroyed, we cannot help suspecting that, if they had been carefully preserved and examined, many valuable and original records would have been discovered. The catalogues of old monastic establishments, although containing a great proportion of works on divine and ecclesiastical learning, testify

* Wood's Hist. Oxon, b. i. p. 81.

† "Gutch has printed in his 'Collectiana' an order from the Queen's commissioners to destroy all capes, vestments, albes, missals, books, crosses, and such other idolatrous and superstitious monuments whatsoever.'—vol. ii. p. 280."

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that the monks did not confine their studies exclusively to legendary tales or superstitious missals, but that they also cultivated a taste for classical and general learning. Doubtless, in the ruin of the sixteenth century, many original works of monkish authors perished, and the splendor of the transcript rendered it still more liable to destruction; but I confess, as old Fuller quaintly says, that "there were many volumes full fraught with superstition which, notwithstanding, might be useful to learned men, except any will deny apothecaries the privilege of keeping poison in their shops, when they can make antidotes of them. But besides this, what beautiful bibles! Rare fathers! Subtle schoolmen! Useful historians! Ancient! Middle! Modern! What painful comments were here amongst them! What monuments of mathematics all massacred together!"*

More than a cart load of manuscripts were taken away from Merton College and destroyed, and a vast number from the Baliol and New Colleges, Oxford†; but these instances might be infinitely multiplied, so terrible were those intemperate outrages. All this tends to enforce upon us the necessity of using considerable caution in forming an opinion of the nature and extent of learning prevalent during those ages which preceded the discovery of the art of printing.

* Fuller's Church History, b. vi. p. 335.
† Wood's Oxon, vol. i. b. i. p. 107

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CHAPTER II.

Duties of the monkish librarian.—Rules of the library.—Lending books.—Books allowed the monks for private reading.—Ridiculous signs for books.—How the libraries were supported.—A monkish blessing on books, etc.

IN this chapter I shall proceed to inquire into the duties of the monkish amanuensis, and show by what laws and regulations the monastic libraries were governed. The monotonous habits of a cloistered bibliophile will, perhaps, appear dry and fastidious, but still it is curious and interesting to observe how carefully the monks regarded their vellum tomes, how indefatigably they worked to increase their stores, and how eagerly they sought for books. But besides being regarded as a literary curiosity, the subject derives importance by the light it throws on the state of learning in those dark and "bookless" days, and the illustrations gleaned in this way fully compensate for the tediousness of the research.

As a bibliophile it is somewhat pleasing to trace

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a deep book passion growing up in the barrenness of the cloister, and to find in some cowled monk a bibliomaniac as warm and enthusiastic in his way as the renowned "Atticus," or the noble Roxburghe, of more recent times. It is true we can draw no comparison between the result of their respective labors. The hundreds, which in the old time were deemed a respectable if not an extensive collection, would look insignificant beside the ostentatious array of modern libraries.

But the very tenor of a monastic life compelled the monk to seek the sweet yet silent companionship of books; the rules of his order and the regulations of his fraternity enforced the strictest silence in the execution of his daily and never-ceasing duties. Attending mass, singing psalms, and midnight prayers, were succeeded by mass, psalms and prayers in one long undeviating round of yearly obligations; the hours intervening between these holy exercises were dull and tediously insupportable if unoccupied. Conversation forbidden, secular amusements denounced, yet idleness reproached, what could the poor monk seek as a relief in this distress but the friendly book; the willing and obedient companion of every one doomed to lonely hours and dismal solitude?

The pride and glory of a monastery was a well stored library, which was committed to the care of the armarian, and with him rested all the responsibility of its preservation. According to the Consuetudines Canonicorum Regularium, it was his duty to have all the books of the monastery in his keeping catalogued and separately marked with their proper

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names.* Some of these old catalogues have been preserved, and, viewed as bibliographical remains of the middle ages, are of considerable importance; indeed, we cannot form a correct idea of the literature of those remote times without them. Many productions of authors are recorded in these brief catalogues whose former existence is only known to us by these means. There is one circumstance in connexion with them that must not be forgotten: instead of enumerating all the works which each volume contained, they merely specified the first, so that a catalogue of fifty or a hundred volumes might probably have contained nearly double that number of distinct works. I have seen MSS. formerly belonging to monasteries, which have been catalogued in this way, containing four or five others, besides the one mentioned. Designed rather to identify the book than to describe the contents of each volume, they wrote down the first word or two of the second leaf—this was the most prevalent usage; but they often adopted other means, sometimes giving a slight notice of the works which a volume contained; others took the precaution of noting down the last word of the last leaf but one,† a great advantage, as the monkish student could more easily detect at a glance whether the volume was perfect. The armarian was, moreover, particularly enjoined to inspect with scrupulous care the more ancient volumes, lest the moth-worms should have got at them, or they had become cor-

* Cap. xxi. Martene de Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus, tom. iii. p. 262.

† See Catalogue of Hulne Abbey, Library MS. Harleian. No. 3897.

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rupt or mutilated, and, if such were the case, he was with great care to restore them. Probably the armarian was also the bookbinder to the monastery in ordinary cases, for he is here directed to cover the volumes with tablets of wood, that the inside may be preserved from moisture, and the parchment from the injurious effects of dampness. The different orders of books were to be kept separate from one another, and conveniently arranged; not squeezed too tight, lest it should injure or confuse them, but so placed that they might be easily distinguished, and those who sought them might find them without delay or impediment.* Bibliomaniacs have not been remarkable for their memory or punctuality, and in the early times the borrower was often forgetful to return the volume within the specified time. To guard against this, many rules were framed, nor was the armarian allowed to lend the books, even to neighboring monasteries, unless he received a bond or promise to restore them within a certain time, and if the person was entirely unknown, a book of equal value was required as a security for its safe return. In all cases the armarian was instructed to make a short memorandum of the name of the book which he had lent or received. The "great and precious books" were subject to still more stringent rules, and although under the conservation of the librarian, he had not the privilege of lending them to any one without the distinct permission of the abbot.* This was, doubtless,

* Martene de Antiq. Eccle. Rit., tom iii. p. 263.

* *Ibid.* Ingulphus tells us that the same rule was observed in Croyland Abbey.—*Apud Gale*, p. 104.

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practised by all the monastic libraries, for all generously lent one another their books. In a collection of chapter orders of the prior and convent of Durham, bearing date 1235, it is evident that a similar rule was observed there, which they were not to depart from except at the desire of the bishop.* According to the constitutions for the government of the Abingdon monastery, the library was under the care of the Cantor, and all the writings of the church were consigned to his keeping. He was not allowed to part with the books or lend them without a sufficient deposit as a pledge for their safe return, except to persons of consequence and repute.† This was the practice at a much later period. When that renowned bibliomaniac, Richard de Bury, wrote his delightful little book called *Philobiblon*, the same rules were strictly in force. With respect to the lending of books, his own directions are that, if any one apply for a particular volume, the librarian was to carefully consider whether the library contained another copy of it; if so, he was at liberty to lend the book, taking care, however, that he obtained a security which was to exceed the value of the loan; they were at the same time to make a memorandum in writing of the name of the book, and the nature of the security deposited for it, with the name of the party to whom it was lent, with that of the officer or librarian who delivered it.‡

We learn by the canons before referred to, that

* Marked b. iv. 26. Surtee Publications, vol. i. p. 121.

† Const. admiss. Abbat, et gubernnatione Monast. Abendum Cottonian M.S. Claudius, b. vi. p. 194.

‡ Philobiblon, 4to, *Oxon*, 1599, chap. xix.

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the superintendence of all the writing and transcribing, whether in or out of the monastery, belonged to the office of the armarian, and that it was his duty to provide the scribes with parchment and all things necessary for their work, and to agree upon the price with those whom he employed. The monks who were appointed to write in the cloisters he supplied with copies for transcription; and that no time might be wasted, he was to see that a good supply was kept up. No one was to give to another what he himself had been ordered to write, or presume to do anything by his own will or inclination. Nor was it seemly that the armarian even should give any orders for transcripts to be made without first receiving the permission of his superior.*

We here catch a glimpse of the quiet life of a monkish student, who labored with this monotonous regularity to amass his little library. If we dwell on these scraps of information, we shall discover some marks of a love of learning among them, and the liberality they displayed in lending their books to each other is a pleasing trait to dwell upon. They unhesitatingly imparted to others the knowledge they acquired by their own study with a brotherly frankness and generosity well becoming the spirit of a student. This they did by extensive correspondence and the temporary exchange of their books. The system of loan,

* Martene de Ant. Eccl. Ribibus, tom. iii. p. 263. For an inattention to this the Council of Soissons, in 1121, ordered some transcripts of Abelard's works to be burnt, and severely reproved the author for his unpardonable neglect. —*Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ix. p. 28.

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which they in this manner carried on to a considerable extent, is an important feature in connection with our subject; innumerable and interesting instances of this may be found in the monastic registers, and the private letters of the times. The cheapness of literary productions of the present age render it an absolute waste of time to transcribe a whole volume, and except with books of great scarcity we seldom think of borrowing or lending one; having finished its perusal we place it on the shelf and in future regard it as a book of reference; but in those days one volume did the work of twenty. It was lent to a neighboring monastery, and this constituted its publication; for each monastery thus favored, by the aid perhaps of some half dozen scribes, added a copy to their own library, and it was often stipulated that on the return of the original a correct duplicate should accompany it, as a remuneration to its author. Nor was the volume allowed to remain unread; it was recited aloud at meals, or when otherwise met together, to the whole community. We shall do well to bear this in mind, and not hastily judge of the number of students by a comparison with the number of their books. But it was not always a mere single volume that the monks lent from their library. Hunter has printed* a list of books lent by the Convent of Henton, A. D. 1343, to a neighboring monastery, containing twenty volumes. The engagement to restore these books was formally drawn up and sealed.

In the monasteries the first consideration was

* Catalogues of Monastic Libraries, pp. 16, 17.

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to see that the library was well stored with those books necessary for the performance of the various offices of the church, but besides these the library ought, according to established rules, to contain for the "edification of the brothers" such as were fit and needful to be consulted in common study. The Bible and great expositors; *Bibliothecæ et majores expositores*, books of martyrs, lives of saints, homilies, etc.;* these and other large books the monks were allowed to take and study in private, but the smaller ones they could only study in the library, lest they should be lost or mislaid. This was also the case with respect to the rare and choice volumes. When the armarian gave out books to the monks he made a note of their nature, and took an exact account of their number, so that he might know in a moment which of the brothers had it for perusal.† Those who studied together were to receive what books they choose; but when they had satisfied themselves, they were particularly directed to restore them to their assigned places; and when they at any time received from the armarian a book for their private reading, they were not allowed to lend it to any one else, or to use it in common, but to reserve it especially for his own private reading. The same rule extended to the singers, who if they required books for their studies, were to apply to the abbot.‡ The sick brothers were also entitled to the privilege of receiving from the armarian books for their solace

* Const. Canon. Reg. ap. Martene, tom. iii. p. 263.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid.*, tom. iii. cap. xxxvi. pp. 269, 270.

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and comfort; but as soon as the lamps were lighted in the infirmary the books were put away till the morning, and if not finished, were again given out from the library.* In the more ancient monasteries a similar case was observed with respect to their books. The rule of St. Pacome directed that the utmost attention should be paid to their preservation, and that when the monks went to the refectory they were not to leave their books open, but to carefully close and put them in their assigned places. The monastery of St. Pacome contained a vast number of monks; every house, says Mabillon, was composed of not less than forty monks, and the monastery embraced thirty or forty houses. Each monk, he adds, possessed his book, and few rested without forming a library; by which we may infer that the number of books was considerable.† Indeed, it was quite a common practice in those days, scarce as books were, to allow each of the monks one or more for his private study, besides granting them access to the library. The constitutions of Lanfranc, in the year 1072, directed the librarian, at the commencement of Lent, to deliver a book to each of the monks for their private reading, allowing them a whole year for its perusal.‡ There is one circumstance connected with the affairs of the library quite characteristic of monkish superstition, and bearing painful testimony to their mistaken ideas of what consti-

* Martene, tom. iii. p. 331. For a list of some books applied to their use, see MS. Cot. Galba, c. iv. fo. 128.

† Mabillon, Traité des Etudes Monastiques, 4to. *Paris* 1691, cap. vi. p. 34.

‡ Wilkin's Concil. tom. i. p. 332.

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tuted "good works." In Martene's book there is a chapter, *De Scientia et Signis*—degrading and sad; there is something withal curious to be found in it. After enjoining the most scrupulous silence in the church, in the refectory, in the cloister, and in the dormitory, at all times, and in all seasons; transforming those men into perpetual mutes, and even when "actually necessary," permitting only a whisper to be articulated "in a low voice in the ear," *submissa voce in aure*, it then proceeds to describe a series of fantastic grimaces which the monks were to perform on applying to the armarian for books. The general sign for a book, *generali signi libri*, was to "extend the hand and make a movement as if turning over the leaves of a book." For a missal the monk was to make a similar movement with a sign of the cross; for the gospels the sign of the cross on the forehead; for an antiphon or book of responses he was to strike the thumb and little finger of the other hand together; for a book of offices or gradale to make the sign of a cross and kiss the fingers; for a tract lay the hand on the abdomen and apply the other hand to the mouth; for a capitulary make the general sign and extend the clasped hands to heaven; for a psalter place the hands upon the head in the form of a crown, such as the king is wont to wear.* Religious intolerance was rampant when this rule was framed; hot and rancorous denunciation was lavished with amazing prodigality against works of loose morality or heathen origin; nor did the monks feel much compassion—although they loved

* Stat. pro Reform. ordin. Grandimont. ap. Martene cap. x.

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to read them—for the old authors of antiquity. Pagans they were, and therefore fit only to be named as infidels and dogs, so the monk was directed for a secular book, "which some pagan wrote after making the general sign to scratch his ear with his hand, just as a dog itching would do with his feet, because infidels are not unjustly compared to such creatures—*quia nec immerito infideles tali animanti comparantur.** Wretched bigotry and puny malice! Yet what a sad reflection it is, that with all the foul and heartburning examples which those dark ages of the monks afford, posterity have failed to profit by them—religious intolerance, with all its vain-glory and malice, flourishes still, the cankering worm of many a Christian blossom! Besides the duties which we have enumerated, there were others which it was the province of the armarian to fulfil. He was particularly to inspect and collate those books which, according to the decrees of the church, it was unlawful to possess different from the authorized copies; these were the bible, the gospels, missals, epistles, collects graduales, antiphons, hymns, psalters, lessions, and the monastic rules; these were always to be alike even in the most minute point.† He was moreover directed to prepare for the use of the brothers short tables respecting the times mentioned in the capitulary for the various offices of the church, to make notes upon the matins, the mass, and upon the different orders.‡ In fact, the

* *Ibid.*, tom. iv. pp. 289, 339.
† Const. Canon. Reg. ap. Martene, tom. iii. p. 263.
‡ *Ibid.*, cap. xxi. p. 263.

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monkish amanuensis was expected to undertake all those matters which required care and learning combined. He wrote the letters of the monastery, and often filled the office of secretary to my Lord Abbot. In the monasteries of course the services of the librarian were unrequited by any pecuniary remuneration, but in the cathedral libraries a certain salary was sometimes allowed them. Thus we learn that the amanuensis of the conventual church of Ely received in the year 1372 forty-three shillings and fourpence for his annual duties;* and Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, in the tenth century, gave considerable landed possessions to a monk of that church as a recompense for his services as librarian.† In some monasteries, in the twelfth century, if not earlier, they levied a tax on all the members of the community, who paid a yearly sum to the librarian for binding, preserving, and purchasing copies for the library. One of these rules, bearing date 1145, was made by Udon, Abbot of St. Père en Vallée à Chantres, and that it might be more plausibly received, he taxed himself as well as all the members of his own house.‡ The librarian sometimes, in addition to his regular duties, combined the office of precentor to the monastery.§ Some of their account-books have been preserved, and by an inspection of them, we may occasionally gather

* Stevenson's Supple. to Bentham's Hist. of the Church of Ely, p. 51.

† Thomas' Survey of the Church of Worcester, p. 45.

‡ Mabillon. Annal. tom. vi. pp. 651 and 652. Hist. Litt. de la France, ix. p. 140.

§ They managed the pecuniary matters of the fraternity. William of Malmsbury was precentor as well as librarian to his monastery.

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some interesting and curious hints, as to the cost of books and writing materials in those times. As may be supposed, the monkish librarians often became great bibliophiles, for being in constant communication with choice manuscripts, they soon acquired a great mania for them. Posterity are also particularly indebted to the pens of these book conservators of the middle ages; for some of the best chroniclers and writers of those times were humble librarians to some religious house.

Not only did the bibliophiles of old exercise the utmost care in the preservation of their darling books, but the religious basis of their education and learning prompted them to supplicate the blessing of God upon their goodly tomes. Although I might easily produce other instances, one will suffice to give an idea of their nature: "O Lord, send the virtue of thy Holy Spirit upon these our books; that cleansing them from all earthly things, by thy holy blessing, they may mercifully enlighten our hearts and give us true understanding; and grant that by thy teaching, they may brightly preserve and make full an abundance of good works according to thy will." *

* Martene de Antiq. Eccl. Ritibus ii. p. 302.

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CHAPTER III.

Scriptoria and the Scribes.—Care in copying.—Bible reading among the monks.—Booksellers in the middle ages.—Circulating libraries.—Calligraphic art, etc.

AS the monasteries were the schools of learning, so their occupants were the preservers of literature, and, as Herault observes, had they not taken the trouble to transcribe books, the ancients had been lost to us for ever; to them, therefore, we owe much. But there are many, however, who suppose that the monastic establishments were hotbeds of superstition and fanaticism, from whence nothing of a useful or elevated nature could possibly emanate. They are too apt to suppose that the human intellect must be altogether weak and impotent when confined within such narrow limits; but truth and knowledge can exist even in the dark cells of a gloomy cloister, and inspire the soul with a fire that can shed a light far beyond its narrow pre-

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cincts. Indeed, I scarce know whether to regret, as some appear to do, that the literature and learning of those rude times was preserved and fostered by the Christian church; it is said, that their strict devotion and religious zeal prompted them to disregard all things but a knowledge of those divine, but such is not the case; at least, I have not found it so; it is true, as churchmen, they were principally devoted to the study of divine and ecclesiastical lore; but it is also certain that in that capacity they gradually infused the mild spirit of their Master among the darkened society over which they presided, and among whom they shone as beacons of light in a dreary desert. But the church did more than this. She preserved to posterity the profane learnings of Old Greece and Rome; copied it, multiplied it, and spread it. She recorded to after generations in plain, simple language, the ecclesiastical and civil events of the past, for it is from the terse chronicles of the monkish churchmen that we learn now the history of what happened then. Much as we may dislike the monastic system, the cold, heartless, gloomy ascetic atmosphere of the cloister, and much as we may deplore the mental dissipation of man's best attributes, which the system of those old monks engendered, we must exercise a cool and impartial judgment, and remember that what now would be intolerable and monstrously inconsistent with our present state of intellectuality, might at some remote period, in the ages of darkness and comparative barbarism, have had its virtues and beneficial influences. As for myself, it

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would be difficult to convince me, with all those fine relics of their deeds before me, those beauteous fanes dedicated to piety and God, those libraries so crowded with their vellum tomes, so gorgeously adorned, and the abundant evidence which history bears to their known charity and hospitable love, that these monks and their system was a scheme of dismal barbarism; it may be so, but my reading has taught me different; but, on the other hand, although the monks possessed many excellent qualities, being the encouragers of literature, the preservers of books, and promulgators of civilization, we must not hide their numerous and palpable faults, or overlook the poison which their system of monachism *ultimately* infused into the very vitals of society. In the early centuries, before the absurdities of Romanism were introduced, the influence of the monastic orders was highly beneficial to our Saxon ancestors, but in after ages the Church of England was degraded by the influence of the fast growing abominations of Popedom. She drank copiously of the deadly potion, and became the blighted and ghostly shadow of her former self. Forgetting the humility of her divine Lord, she sought rather to imitate the worldly splendor and arrogance of her Sovereign Pontiff. The evils too obviously existed to be overlooked; but it is not my place to further expose them; a more pleasing duty guides my pen; others have done all this, lashing them painfully for their oft-told sins. Frail humanity glories in chastizing the frailty of brother man. But we will not denounce them here, for did not the day of

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retribution come? And was not justice satisfied? Having made these few preliminary remarks, let us, in a brief manner, inquire into the system observed in the cloisters by the monks for the preservation and transcription of manuscripts. Let us peep into the quiet cells of those old monks, and see whether history warrants the unqualified contempt which their efforts in this department have met with.

In most monasteries there were two kinds of Scriptoria, or writing offices; for in addition to the large and general apartment used for the transcription of church books and manuscripts for the library, there were also several smaller ones occupied by the superiors and the more learned members of the community, as closets for private devotion and study. Thus we read, that in the Cistercian orders there were places set apart for the transcription of books called Scriptoria, or cells assigned to the scribes, "separate from each other," where the books might be transcribed in the strictest silence, according to the holy rules of their founders.* These little cells were usually situated in the most retired part of the monastery, and were probably incapable of accommodating more than one or two persons;† dull and comfortless places, no doubt, yet they were deemed great luxuries, and the use of them only granted to such as became distinguished for their piety, or erudition. We read that when David went to the Isle of Wight, to Paulinus, to receive his education, he

* Martene Thesaurus novus Anecdot. tom. iv. col. 1462.
† See Du Cange in Voc., vol. vi. p. 264.

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used to sup in the Refectory, but had a Scriptorium, or study, in his cell, being a famous scribe.* The aged monks, who often lived in these little offices, separate from the rest of the scribes, were not expected to work so arduously as the rest. Their employment was comparatively easy; nor were they compelled to work so long as those in the cloister.† There is a curious passage in Tangmar's Life of St. Bernward, which would lead us to suspect that private individuals possessed Scriptoria; for, says he, there are Scriptoria, not only in the monasteries, but in other places, in which are conceived books equal to the divine works of the philosophers.‡ The Scriptorium of the monastery in which the general business of a literary nature was transacted, was an apartment far more extensive and commodious, fitted up with forms and desks methodically arranged, so as to contain conveniently a great number of copyists. In some of the monasteries and cathedrals, they had long ranges of seats one after another, at which were seated the scribes, one well versed in the subject on which the book treated, recited from the copy whilst they wrote; so that, on a word being given out by him, it was copied by all.§ The multiplication of manuscripts, under such a system as this, must have been immense; but they did not always

* Anglia Sacra, ii. 635. Fosbrooke Brit. Monach., p. 15.

† Martene Thes. Nov. Anec. tom. iv. col. 1462. Stat. Ord. Cistere, anni 1278, they were allowed for "*Studendum vel recreandum.*"

‡ Hildesh. episc apud Leibuit., tom. i. Script. Brunsvic, p. 444. I am indebted to Du Cange for this reference.

§ King's Munimenta Antiqua. Stevenson's Suppl. to Bentham, p. 64.

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make books, *fecit libros*, as they called it, in this wholesale manner, but each monk diligently labored at the transcription of a separate work.

The amount of labor carried on in the Scriptorium, of course, in many cases depended upon the revenues of the abbey, and the disposition of the abbot; but this was not always the case, as in some monasteries they undertook the transcription of books as a matter of commerce, and added broad lands to their house by the industry of their pens. But the Scriptorium was frequently supported by resources solely applicable to its use. Laymen, who had a taste for literature, or who entertained an esteem for it in others, often at their death bequeathed estates for the support of the monastic Scriptoria. Robert, one of the Norman leaders, gave two parts of the tythes of Hatfield, and the tythes of Redburn, for the support of the Scriptorium of St. Alban's.* The one belonging to the monastery of St. Edmundsbury was endowed with two mills,† and in the church of Ely there is a charter of Bishof Nigellus, granting to the Scriptorium of the monastery the tythes of Wythessey and Impitor, two parts of the tythes of the Lordship of Pampesward, with 2s. 2d., and a messuage in Ely *ad faciendos et emandandos libros.*‡

The abbot superintended the management of the Scriptorium, and decided upon the hours for their labor, during which time they were ordered

* Matt Paris, p. 51.

† Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry, p. cxiv. Regest. Nig. St. Edmund. Abbat.

‡ Stevenson's Sup. to Bentham's Church of Norwich, 4to. 1817, p. 51.

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to work with unremitting diligence, "not leaving to go and wander in idleness," but to attend solely to the business of transcribing. To prevent detraction or interruption, no one was allowed to enter except the abbot, the prior, the sub-prior, and the armarian,* as the latter took charge of all the materials and implements used by the transcribers, it was his duty to prepare and give them out when required; he made the ink and cut the parchment ready for use. He was strictly enjoined, however, to exercise the greatest economy in supplying these precious materials, and not to give more copies "nec artavos, nec cultellos, nec scarpellæ, nec membranes," than was actually necessary, or than he had computed as sufficient for the work; and what the armarian gave them the monks were to receive without contradiction or contention.†

The utmost silence prevailed in the Scriptorium; rules were framed, and written admonitions hung on the walls, to enforce the greatest care and diligence in copying exactly from the originals. In Alcuin's works we find one of these preserved; it is a piece inscribed "*Ad Musæum libros scribentium;*" the lines are as follows:

"Hic sideant sacræ scribentes famina legis,
Nec non sanctorum dicta sacrata Patrum,
Hæc interserere caveant sua frivola verbis,
Frivola nec propter erret et ipsa manus:

Correctosque sibi quærant studiose libellos,
Tramite quo recto penna volantis eat.
Per cola distinquant proprios, et commata sensus,
Et punctos ponant ordine quosque suo.

* Martene de Ant. Eccl. Ritib., cap. xxi. tom. iii. p. 263.
† *Ibid.*

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Ne vel falsa legat, taceat vel forte repente,
Ante pios fratres, lector in Ecclesia.
Est opus egregium sacros jam scribete libros,
Nec mercede sua scriptor et ipse caret.
Fodere quam vites, melius est scribere libros,
Ille suo ventri serviet, iste animæ.
Vel nova, vel vetera poterit proferre magister
Plurima, quisque legit dicta sacrata Patrum."*

Other means were resorted to besides these to preserve the text of their books immaculate, it was a common practice for the scribe at the end of his copy, to adjure all who transcribed from it to use the greatest care, and to refrain from the least alteration of word or sense. Authors more especially followed this course, thus at the end of some we find such injunctions as this.

"I adjure you who shall transcribe this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious coming, who will come to judge the quick and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe and diligently correct it by the copy from which you transcribe it—this adjuration also—and insert it in your copy."†

The Consuetudines Canonicorum, before referred to, also particularly impressed this upon the monks, and directed that all the brothers who were engaged as scribes, were not to alter any writing, although in their own mind they might think it proper, without first receiving the sanction of the abbot, "*on no account were they to commit so great a presumption.*"‡ But notwithstanding that the

* Alcuini Opera, tom. ii. vol. i. p. 211. Carmin xvii.

† Preface to Ælfric's Homilies MS. Lansdowne, No. 373, vol. iv. in the British Museum.

‡ Const. Can. Reg. ap. Martene, tom. iii. p. 263.

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scribes were thus enjoined to use the utmost care in copying books, doubtless an occasional error crept in, which many causes might have produced, such as bad light, haste, a little drowsiness, imperfect sight, or even a flickering lamp was sufficient to produce some trivial error; but in works of importance the smallest error is of consequence, as some future scribe puzzled by the blunder, might, in an attempt to correct, still more augment the imperfection; to guard against this, with respect to the Scriptures, the most critical care was enforced. Monks advanced in age were alone allowed to transcribe them, and after their completion they were read—revised—and reread again, and it is by that means that so uniform a reading has been preserved, and although slight differences may here and there occur, there are no books which have traversed through the shadows of the dark ages, that preserve their original text so pure and uncorrupt as the copies of the Scriptures, the fathers of the church, and the ancient writings of the classic authors; sometimes, it is true, a manuscript of the last order is discovered possessing a very different reading in some particular passage; but these appear rather as futile emendations or interpolations of the scribe than as the result of a downright blunder, and are easily perceivable, for when the monkish churchmen tampered with ancient copies, it generally originated in a desire to smooth over the indecencies of the heathen authors, and so render them less liable to corrupt the holy contemplations of the devotee; and while we blame the pious fraud, we cannot but respect the motive that dictated it.

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But as regards the Scriptures, we talk of the carelessness of the monks and the interpolations of the scribes as if these were faults peculiar to the monastic ages alone; alas! the history of Biblical transmission tells us differently, the gross perversions, omissions, and errors wrought in the holy text, proclaim how prevalent these same faults have been in the ages of *printed literature*, and which appear more palpable by being produced amidst deep scholars, and surrounded with all the critical acumen of a learned age. Five or six thousand of these gross blunders, or these wilful mutilations, protest the unpleasant fact, and show how much of human grossness it has acquired, and how besmeared with corruption those sacred pages have become in passing through the hands of man, and the "revisings" of sectarian minds. I am tempted to illustrate this by an anecdote related by Sir Nicholas L'Estrange of Hunstanton, and preserved in a MS. in the Harlein collection. —"Dr. Usher, Bish. of Armath, being to preach at Paules Crosse and passing hastily by one of the stationers, called for a Bible, and had a little one of the London edition given him out, but when he came to looke for his text, that very verse was omitted in the print: which gave the first occasion of complaint to the king of the insufferable negligence, and insufficience of the London printers and presse, and bredde that great contest that followed, betwixt the univers. of Cambridge and London stationers, about printing of the Bibles."*

* MS. Harl. 6395, anecdote 348.—I am indebted to D'Israeli for the reference, but not for the extract.

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Gross and numerous indeed were the errors of the corrupt bible text of that age, and far exceeding even the blunders of monkish pens, and certainly much less excusable, for in those times they seldom had a large collection of codices to compare, so that by studying their various readings, they could arrive at a more certain and authentic version. The paucity of the sacred volume, if it rendered their pens more liable to err, served to enforce upon them the necessity of still greater scrutiny. On looking over a monastic catalogue, the first volume that I search for is the Bible; and, I feel far more disappointment if I find it not there, than I do at the absence of Horace or Ovid—there is something so desolate in the idea of a Christian priest without the Book of Life—of a minister of God without the fountain of truth—that however favorably we may be prone to regard them, a thought will arise that the absence of this sacred book may perhaps be referred to the indolence of the monkish pen, or to the laxity of priestly piety. But such I am glad to say was not often the case; the Bible it is true was an expensive book, but can scarcely be regarded as a rare one; the monastery was indeed poor that had it not, and when once obtained the monks took care to speedily transcribe it. Sometimes they only possessed detached portions, but when this was the case they generally borrowed of some neighboring and more fortunate monastery, the missing parts to transcribe, and so complete their own copies. But all this did not make the Bible less loved among them, or less anxiously and ardently studied, they devoted their

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days, and the long hours of the night, to the perusal of those pages of inspired truth,* and it is a calumny without a shadow of foundation to declare that the monks were careless of scripture reading; it is true they did not apply that vigor of thought, and unrestrained reflection upon it which mark the labors of the more modern student, nor did they often venture to interpret the hidden meaning of the holy mysteries by the powers of their own mind, but were guided in this important matter by the works of the fathers. But hence arose a circumstance which gave full exercise to their mental powers and compelled the monk in spite of his timidity to think a little for himself. Unfortunately the fathers, venerable and venerated as they were, after all were but men, with many of the frailties and all the fallabilities of poor human nature; the pope might canonize them, and the priesthood bow submissively to their spiritual guidance, still they remained for all that but mortals of dust and clay, and their bulky tomes yet retain the swarthiness of the tomb about them, the withering impress of humanity. Such being the case we, who do not regard them quite so infallible, feel no surprise at a circumstance which sorely perplexed the monks of old, they unchained and unclasped their cumbrous "Works of

* The monks were strictly enjoined by the monastic rules to study the Bible unceasingly. The Statutes of the Dominican order are particularly impressive on this point, and enforce a constant reading and critical study of the sacred volume, so as to fortify themselves for disputation; they were to peruse it continually, and apply to it before all other reading *semper ante aliam lectionem. Martene Thesan. Nov. Anecdot.*, tom. iv. col. 1932. See also cols. 1789, 1836, 1912, 1917, 1934.

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the Fathers," and pored over those massy expositions with increasing wonder; surrounded by these holy guides, these fathers of infallibility, they were like strangers in a foreign land, did they follow this holy saint they seemed about to forsake the spiritual direction of one having equal claims to their obedience and respect; alas! for poor old weak tradition, those fabrications of man's faulty reason were found, with all their orthodoxy, to clash woefully in scriptural interpretation. Here was a dilemma for the monkish student! whose vow of obedience to patristical guidance was thus sorely perplexed; he read and re-read, analyzed passage after passage, interpreted word after word; and yet, poor man, his laborious study was fruitless and unprofitable! What bible student can refrain from sympathizing with him amidst these torturing doubts and this crowd of contradiction, but after all we cannot regret this, for we owe to it more than my feeble pen can write, so immeasurable have been the fruits of this little unheeded circumstance. It gave birth to many a bright independent declaration, involving pure lines of scripture interpretation, which appear in the darkness of those times like fixed stars before us; to this, in Saxon days, we are indebted for the labors of Ælfric and his anti-Roman doctrines, whose soul also sympathized with a later age by translating portions of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, thus making it accessible to all classes of the people. To this we are indebted for all the good that resulted from those various heterodoxies and heresies, which sometimes disturbed the church during the

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dark ages; but which wrought much ultimate good by compelling the thoughts of men to dwell on these important matters. Indeed, to the instability of the fathers, as a sure guide, we may trace the origin of all those efforts of the human mind, which cleared the way for the Reformation, and relieved man from the shackles of these spiritual guides of the monks.

But there were many cloistered Christians who studied the bible undisturbed by these shadows and doubts, and who, heedless of patristical lore and saintly wisdom, devoured the spiritual food in its pure and uncontaminating simplicity — such students, humble, patient, devoted, will be found crowding the monastic annals, and yielding good evidence of the same by the holy tenor of their sinless lives, their Christian charity and love.

But while so many obtained the good title of an "*Amator Scripturarum*," as the bible student was called in those monkish days, I do not pretend to say that the Bible was a common book among them, or that every monk possessed one—far different indeed was the case—a copy of the Old and New Testament often supplied the wants of an entire monastery, and in others, as I have said before, only some detached portions were to be found in their libraries. Sometimes they were more plentiful, and the monastery could boast of two or three copies, besides a few separate portions, and occasionally I have met with instances where besides several *Biblia Optima*, they enjoyed Hebrew codices and translations, with numerous

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copies of the gospels. We must not forget, however, that the transcription of a Bible was a work of time, and required the outlay of much industry and wealth. "Brother Tedynton," a monk of Ely, commenced a Bible in 1396, and was several years before he completed it. The magnitude of the undertaking can scarcely be imagined by those unpractised in the art of copying, but when the monk saw the long labor of his pen before him, and looked upon the well bound strong clasped volumes, with their clean vellum folios and fine illuminations, he seemed well repaid for his years of toil and tedious labor, and felt a glow of pious pleasure as he contemplated his happy acquisition, and the comfort and solace which he should hereafter derive from its holy pages! We are not surprised then, that a Bible in those days should be esteemed so valuable, and capable of realizing a considerable sum. The monk, independent of its spiritual value, regarded it as a great possession, worthy of being bestowed at his death, with all the solemnity of a testamentary process, and of being gratefully acknowledged by the fervent prayers of the monkish brethren. Kings and nobles offered it as an appropriate and generous gift, and bishops were deemed benefactors to their church by adding it to the library. On its covers were written earnest exhortations to the Bible student, admonishing the greatest care in its use, and leveling anathemas and excommunications upon any one who should dare to purloin it. For its greater security it was frequently chained to a reading desk, and if a duplicate copy was lent to a neigh-

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boring monastery they required a large deposit, or a formal bond for its safe return.* These facts, while they show its value, also prove how highly it was esteemed among them, and how much the monks loved the Book of Life.

But how different is the picture now—how opposite all this appears to the aspect of bible propagation in our own time. Thanks to the printing-press, to bible societies, and to the benevolence of God, we cannot enter the humblest cottage of the poorest peasant without observing the Scriptures on his little shelf—not always read, it is true—nor always held in veneration as in the old days before us—its very plentitude and cheapness takes off its attraction to irreligious and indifferent readers, but to poor and needy Christians what words can express the fulness of the blessing. Yet while we thank God for this great boon, let us refrain from casting uncharitable reflections upon the monks for its comparative paucity among them. If its possession was not so easily acquired, they were nevertheless true lovers of the Bible, and preserved and multiplied it in dark and troublous times.

Our remarks have hitherto applied to the monastic scribes alone; but it is necessary here to speak of the secular copyists, who were an important class during the middle ages, and supplied the functions of the bibliopole of the ancients. But the transcribing trade numbered three or four distinct bran-

* About the year 1225 Roger de Insula, Dean of York, gave several copies of the bible to the University of Oxford, and ordered that those who borrowed them for perusal should deposit property of equal value as a security for their safe return.—*Wood's Hist. Antiq. Oxon.* ii. 48.

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ches. There were the Librarii Antiquarii, Notarii, and the Illuminators—occasionally these professions were all united in one—where perseverance or talent had acquired a knowledge of these various arts. There appears to have been considerable competition between these contending bodies. The notarii were jealous of the librarii, and the librarii in their turn were envious of the antiquarii, who devoted their ingenuity to the transcription and repairing of old books especially, rewriting such parts as were defective or erased, and restoring the dilapidations of the binding. Being learned in old writings they corrected and revised the copies of ancient codices; of this class we find mention as far back as the time of Cassiodorus and Isidore.* "They deprived," says Astle, "the poor librarii, or common scriptores, of great part of their business, so that they found it difficult to gain a subsistence for themselves and their families. This put them about finding out more expeditious methods of transcribing books. They formed the letters smaller, and made use of more conjugations and abbreviations than had been usual. They proceeded in this manner till the letters became exceedingly small and extremely difficult to be read."† The fact of there existing a class of men, whose fixed employment or profession was solely confined to the transcription of ancient writings and to the repairing of tattered copies, in contradistinction to the common scribes, and depending entirely upon the exercise of their art as a

* Muratori Dissert. Quadragesima tertia, vol. iii. column 849.

† Astle's Origin of Writing, p. 193.—See also Montfaucon Palæographia Græca, lib. iv. p. 263 et 319.

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means of obtaining a subsistence, leads us to the conclusion that ancient manuscripts were by no means so very scarce in those days; for how absurd and useless it would have been for men to qualify themselves for transcribing these antiquated and venerable codices, if there had been no probability of obtaining them to transcribe. The fact too of its becoming the subject of so much competition proves how great was the demand for their labor.*

We are unable, with any positive result, to discover the exact origin of the secular scribes, though their existence may probably be referred to a very remote period. The monks seem to have monopolized for some ages the "*Commercium Librorum*,"† and sold and bartered copies to a considerable extent among each other. We may with some reasonable grounds, however, conjecture that the profession was flourishing in Saxon times; for we find several eminent names in the seventh and eighth centuries who, in their epistolary correspondence, beg their friends to procure transcripts for them. Benedict, Bishop of Wearmouth, purchased most of his book treasures at Rome, which was even at that early period probably a famous mart for such luxuries, as he appears to have journeyed there for that express purpose. Some of the books which he collected were presents from

* In the year 1300 the pay of a common scribe was about one half-penny a day, see Stevenson's Supple. to Bentham's Hist. of the Church of Ely. p. 51.

† In some orders the monks were not allowed to sell their books without the express permission of their superiors. According to a statute of the year 1264 the Dominicans were strictly prohibited from selling their books or the rules of their order.—*Martene Thesaur. Nov. Anecdot.* tom. iv. col. 1741, et col. 1918.

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his foreign friends; but most of them, as Bede tells us, were *bought* by himself, or in accordance with his instructions, by his friends.* Boniface, the Saxon missionary, continually writes for books to his associates in all parts of Europe. At a subsequent period the extent and importance of the profession grew amazingly; and in Italy its followers were particularly numerous in the tenth century, as we learn from the letters of Gerbert, afterwards Silvester II., who constantly writes, with the cravings of a bibliomaniac, to his friends for books, and begs them to get the scribes, who, he adds, in one of his letters, may be found in all parts of Italy,† both in town and in the country, to make transcripts of certain books for him, and he promises to reimburse his correspondent all that he expends for the same.

These public scribes derived their principal employment from the monks and the lawyers; from the former in transcribing their manuscripts, and by the latter in drawing up their legal instruments. They carried on their avocation at their own homes, like other artisans; but sometimes when employed by the monks executed their transcripts within the cloister, where they were boarded, lodged, and received their wages till their work was done. This was especially the case when some great book was to be copied, of rarity and price; thus we read of

* Vita Abbat. Wear. Ed. Ware, p. 26. His fine copy of the Cosmographers he bought at Rome.—*Roma Benedictus emerat.*

† Nosti quot Scriptores in Urbibus aut in Agris Italiæ passim habeantur.—Ep. cxxx. See also Ep. xliv. where he speaks of having purchased books in Italy, Germany and Belgium, at considerable cost. It is the most interesting Bibliomanical letter in the whole collection.

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Paulinus, of St. Albans, sending into distant parts to obtain proficient workmen, who were paid so much per diem for their labor; their wages were generously supplied by the Lord of Redburn.*

The increase of knowledge and the foundation of the universities gave birth to the booksellers. Their occupation as a distinct trade originated at a period coeval with the foundation of these public seminaries, although the first mention that I am aware of is made by Peter of Blois, about the year 1170. I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter of this celebrated scholar, but I may be excused for giving the anecdote here, as it is so applicable to my subject. It appears, then, that whilst remaining in Paris to transact some important matter for the King of England, he entered the shop of "a public dealer in books"—for be it known that the archdeacon was always on the search, and seldom missed an opportunity of adding to his library—the bookseller, Peter tells us, offered him a tempting collection on Jurisprudence; but although his knowledge of such matters was so great that he did not require them for his own use, he thought they might be serviceable to his nephew, and after bargaining a little about the price he counted down the money agreed upon and left the stall; but no sooner was his back turned than the Provost of Sexeburgh came in to look over the literary stores of the stationer, and his eye meeting the recently sold volume, he became inspired with a wish to possess it; nor could he, on hearing it was bought and paid for by another, suppress his anxiety to obtain

* Cottonian MS. in the Brit. Mus.—*Claudius*, E. iv. fo. 105, b.

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the treasure; but, offering more money, actually took the volume away by force. As may be supposed, Archdeacon Peter was sorely annoyed at this behavior; and "To his dearest companion and friend Master Arnold of Blois, Peter of Blois Archdeacon of Bath sent greeting," a long and learned letter, displaying his great knowledge of civil law, and maintaining the illegality of the provost's conduct.* The casual way in which this is mentioned make it evident that the "*publico mangone Librorum*" was no unusual personage in those days, but belonged to a common and recognized profession.

The vast number of students who, by the foundation of universities, were congregated together, generated of course a proportionate demand for books, which necessity or luxury prompted them eagerly to purchase: but there were poor as well as rich students educated in these great seminaries of learning, whose pecuniary means debarred them from the acquisition of such costly luxuries; and for this and other cogent reasons the universities deemed it advantageous, and perhaps expedient, to frame a code of laws and regulations to provide alike for the literary wants of all classes and degrees. To effect this they obtained royal sanction to take the trade entirely under their protection,

* Epist. lxxi. p. 124, Edit. 4to. His words are—"Cum Dominus Rex Anglorum me nuper ad Dominum Regum Francorum nuntium distinasset, libri Legum venales Parisius oblati sunt mihi ab illo B. publico mangone librorum: qui cum ad opus cujusdam mei nepotis idoner viderentur conveni cum eo de pretio et eos apud venditorem dismittens, ei pretium numeravi; superveniente vero C. Sexburgensi Præposito sicut audini, plus oblulit et licitatione vincens libros de domo venditories per violentiam absportauit."

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and eventually monopolized a sole legislative power over the *Librarii.*

In the college of Navarre a great quantity of ancient documents are preserved, many of which relate to this curious subject. They were deposited there by M. Jean Aubert in 1623, accompanied by an inventory of them, divided into four parts by the first four letters of the alphabet. In the fourth, under D. 18, there is a chapter entitled "Des Libraires Appretiateurs, Jurez et Enlumineurs," which contains much interesting matter relating to the early history of bookselling.* These ancient statutes, collected and printed by the University in the year 1652,† made at various times, and ranging between the years 1275 and 1403, give us a clear insight into the matter.

The nature of a bookseller's business in those days required no ordinary capacity, and no shallow store of critical acumen; the purchasing of manuscripts, the work of transcription, the careful revisal, the preparation of materials, the tasteful illuminations, and the process of binding, were each employments requiring some talent and discrimination, and we are not surprised, therefore, that the avocation of a dealer and fabricator of these treasures

* Chevillier, Origines de l'Imprimerie de Paris, 4to. 1694, p. 301.

† "Actes concernant le pouvoir et la direction de l'Université de Paris sur les Ecrivains de Livres et les Imprimeurs qui leur ont succédé comme aussi sur les Libraires Relieurs et Enlumineurs," 4to. 1652, p. 44. It is very rare, a copy was in Biblioth. Teller, No. 132, p. 428. A statute of 1275 is given by Lambecii Comment. de Augus. Biblioth. Cæsarea Vendobon, vol. ii. pp. 252—267. The booksellers are called "Stationarii or Librarii;" *de Stationariis, sive Librariis ut Stationarus, qui vulgo appellantur,* etc. See also *Du Cange,* vol. vi. col. 716.

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should be highly regarded, and dignified into a profession, whose followers were invested with all the privileges, freedoms and exemptions, which the masters and students of the university enjoyed.* But it required these conciliations to render the restrictive and somewhat severe measures, which she imposed on the bookselling trade, to be received with any degree of favor or submission. For whilst the University of Paris, by whom these statutes were framed, encouraged and elevated the profession of the librarii, she required, on the other hand, a guarantee of their wealth and mental capacity, to maintain and to appreciate these important concessions; the bookseller was expected indeed to be well versed in all branches of science, and to be thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of those subjects and works of which he undertook to produce transcripts.† She moreover required of him testimonials to his good character, and efficient security, ratified by a solemn oath of allegiance,‡ and a promise to observe and submit to all the present and future laws and regulations of the university. In some cases, it appears that she restricted the number of librarii, though this fell into disuse as the wants of the students increased. Twenty-four seems to have been the original number,§ which is sufficiently great to lead to the conclusion that bookselling was a flourishing trade in those old days.

* Chevillier, p. 301, to whom I am deeply indebted in this branch of my inquiry.

† Hist. Lit. de la France, tom. ix. p. 84. Chevillier, p. 302.

‡ The form of oath is given in full in the statute of 1323, and in that of 1342, Chevillier.

§ Du Breuil, Le Théâtre des Antiq. de Paris, 4to. 1612, p. 608.

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By the statutes of the university, the bookseller was not allowed to expose his transcripts for sale, without first submitting them to the inspection of certain officers appointed by the university, and if an error was discovered, the copies were ordered to be burnt or a fine levied on them, proportionate to their inaccuracy. Harsh and stringent as this may appear at first sight, we shall modify our opinion, on recollecting that the student was in a great degree dependent upon the care of the transcribers for the fidelity of his copies, which rendered a rule of this nature almost indispensable; nor should we forget the great service it bestowed in maintaining the primitive accuracy of ancient writers, and in transmitting them to us through those ages in their original purity.*

In these times of free trade and unrestrained commercial policy, we shall regard less favorably a regulation which they enforced at Paris, depriving the bookseller of the power of fixing a price upon his own goods. Four booksellers were appointed and sworn in to superintend this department, and when a new transcript was finished, it was brought by the bookseller, and they discussed its merits and fixed its value, which formed the amount the bookseller was compelled to ask for it; if he demanded of his customer a larger sum, it was deemed a fraudulent imposition, and punishable as such. Moreover, as an advantage to the students, the bookseller was expected to make a considerable reduction in his profits in supplying them with books; by one of the laws of the university, his

* *Ibid.*, Hist. Lit. de la France, tom. ix. p. 84.

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profit on each volume was confined to four deniers to student, and six deniers to a common purchaser. The librarii were still further restricted in the economy of their trade, by a rule which forbade any one of them to dispose of his entire stock of books without the consent of the university; but this, I suspect, implied the disposal of the stock and trade together, and was intended to intimate that the introduction of the purchaser would not be allowed, without the cognizance and sanction of the university.* Nor was the bookseller able to purchase books without her consent, lest they should be of an immoral or heretical tendency; and they were absolutely forbidden to buy any of the students, without the permission of the rector.

But restricted as they thus were, the book merchants nevertheless grew opulent, and transacted an important and extensive trade; sometimes they purchased parts and sometimes they had whole libraries to sell.† Their dealings were conducted with unusual care, and when a volume of peculiar rarity or interest was to be sold, a deed of conveyance was drawn up with legal precision, in the presence of authorized witnesses.

In those days of high prices and book scarcity, the poor student was sorely impeded in his progress; to provide against these disadvantages, they framed a law in 1342, at Paris, compelling all public booksellers to keep books to lend out on hire. The reader will be surprised at the idea of

* Chevillier, p. 303.

† Martene Anecd. tom. i. p. 502. Hist. Lit. de la France, ix. p. 142.

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a circulating library in the middle ages! but there can be no doubt of the fact, they were established at Paris, Toulouse, Vienna, and Bologne. These public librarians, too, were obliged to write out regular catalogues of their books and hang them up in their shops, with the prices affixed, so that the student might know beforehand what he had to pay for reading them. I am tempted to give a few extracts from these lists:

St. Gregory's Commentaries upon Job, for reading 100 pages, 8 sous.
St. Gregory's Book of Homilies, 28 pages for 12 deniers.
Isidore's De Summa bona, 24 pages, 12 deniers.
Anselm's De Veritate de Libertate Arbitrii, 40 pages, 2 sous.
Peter Lombard's Book of Sentences, 3 sous.
Scholastic History, 3 sous.
Augustine's Confessions, 21 pages, 4 deniers.
Gloss on Matthew, by brother Thomas Aquinas, 57 pages, 3 sous.
Bible Concordance, 9 sous.
Bible, 10 sous.*

This rate of charge was also fixed by the university, and the students borrowing these books were privileged to transcribe them if they chose; if any of them proved imperfect or faulty, they were denounced by the university, and a fine imposed upon the bookseller who had lent out the volume.

This potent influence exercised by the universities over booksellers became, in time, much abused, and in addition to these commercial restraints, they assumed a still less warrantable

* Chevillier, 319, who gives a long list, printed from an old register of the University.

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power over the original productions of authors; and became virtually the public censors of books, and had the power of burning or prohibiting any work of questionable orthodoxy. In the time of Henry the Second, a book was published by being read over for two or three successive days, before one of the universities, and if they approved of its doctrines and bestowed upon it their approbation, it was allowed to be copied extensively for sale.

Stringent as the university rules were, as regards the bookselling trade, they were, nevertheless, sometimes disregarded or infringed; some ventured to take more for a book than the sum allowed, and, by prevarication and secret contracts, eluded the vigilance of the laws.* Some were still bolder, and openly practised the art of a scribe and the profession of a bookseller, without knowledge or sanction of the university. This gave rise to much jealousy, and in the University of Oxford, in the year 1373, they made a decree forbidding any person exposing books for sale without her licence.†

Now, considering all these usages of early bookselling, their numbers, their opulence, and above all, the circulating libraries which the librarii established, can we still retain the opinion that books were so inaccessible in those ante-printing days, when we know that for a few sous the book-lover could obtain good and authenticated copies to peruse, or transcribe? It may be advanced that these facts solely relate to universities, and were

* Chevillier, 303.

† Vet. Stat. Universit. Oxoniæ, D. fol. 75. Archiv. Bodl.

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intended merely to insure a supply of the necessary books in constant requisition by the students, but such was not the case; the librarii were essentially public *Librorum Venditores*, and were glad to dispose of their goods to any who could pay for them. Indeed, the early bibliomaniacs usually flocked to these book marts to rummage over the stalls, and to collect their choice volumes. Richard de Bury obtained many in this way, both at Paris and at Rome.

Of the exact pecuniary value of books during the middle ages, we have no means of judging. The few instances that have accidentally been recorded are totally inadequate to enable us to form an opinion. The extravagant estimate given by some as to the value of books in those days is merely conjectural, as it necessarily must be, when we remember that the price was guided by the accuracy of the transcription, the splendor of the binding, which was often gorgeous to excess, and by the beauty and richness of the illuminations.* Many of the manuscripts of the middle ages are magnificent in the extreme. Sometimes they inscribed the gospels and the venerated writings of the fathers with liquid gold, on parchment of the richest purple,† and adorned its brilliant pages with illuminations of exquisite workmanship.

* The Church of Norwich paid £22, 9s. for illuminating a Graduale and Consuetudinary in 1374.

† Isidore Orig., cap. ii.—Jerome, in his Preface to Job, writes, "*Habeant qui volunt veteres libros, vel in membranes purpurus auro argentique colore purpuros aurum liquiscit in literis.*" Eddius Stephanus in his Life of St. Wilfrid, cap xvi., speaks of "Quatuor Evangeliæ de auro purissimo in membranis de purpuratis coloratis pro animæ suæ remidis scribere jusset." Du Cange, vol. iv. p.654.

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The first specimens we have of an attempt to embellish manuscripts are Egyptian. It was a common practice among them at first to color the initial letter of each chapter or division of their work, and afterwards to introduce objects of various kinds into the body of the manuscript.

The splendor of the ancient calligraphical productions of Greece,* and the still later ones of Rome, bear repeated testimony that the practice of this art had spread during the sixth century, if not earlier, to these powerful empires. England was not tardy in embracing this elegant art. We have many relics of remote antiquity and exquisite workmanship existing now, which prove the talent and assiduity of our early Saxon forefathers.

In Ireland the illuminating art was profusely practised at a period as early as the commencement of the seventh century, and in the eighth we find it holding forth eminent claims to our respect by the beauty of their workmanship, and the chastity of their designs. Those well versed in the study of these ancient manuscripts have been enabled, by extensive but minute observation, to point out their different characteristics in various ages, and even to decide upon the school in which a particular manuscript was produced.

These illuminations, which render the early manuscripts of the monkish ages so attractive,

See also Mabillon Act. Sanct., tom. v. p. 110, who is of opinion that these purple MSS. were only designed for princes; see Nouveau Traité de Diplomatique, and Montfaucon Palæog. Græc., pp. 45, 218, 226, for more on this subject.

* See a Fragment in the Brit. Mus. engraved in Shaw's Illuminated Ornaments, plate 1.

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generally exemplify the rude ideas and tastes of the time. In perspective they are wofully deficient, and manifest but little idea of the picturesque or sublime; but here and there we find quite a gem of art, and, it must be owned, we are seldom tired by monotony of coloring, or paucity of invention. A study of these parchment illustrations afford considerable instruction. Not only do they indicate the state of the pictorial art in the middle ages, but also give us a comprehensive insight into the scriptural ideas entertained in those times; and the bible student may learn much from pondering on these glittering pages; to the historical student, and to the lover of antiquities, they offer a verdant field of research, and he may obtain in this way many a glimpse of the manners and customs of those old times which the pages of the monkish chroniclers have failed to record.

But all this prodigal decoration greatly enhanced the price of books, and enabled them to produce a sum, which now to us sounds enormously extravagant. Moreover, it is supposed that the scarcity of parchment limited the number of books materially, and prevented their increase to any extent; but I am prone to doubt this assertion, for my own observations do not help to prove it. Mr. Hallam says, that in consequence of this, "an unfortunate practice gained ground of erasing a manuscript in order to substitute another on the same skin. This occasioned, probably, the loss of many ancient authors who have made way for the legends of saints, or other ecclesiastical rubbish."* But we

* Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 437. Mr. Maitland, in his "Dark

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may reasonably question this opinion, when we consider the value of books in the middle ages, and with what esteem the monks regarded, in spite of all their paganism, those "heathen dogs" of the ancient world. A doubt has often forced itself upon my mind when turning over the "crackling leaves" of many ancient MSS., whether the peculiarity mentioned by Montfaucon, and described as parchment from which former writing had been erased, may not be owing, in many cases, to its mode of preparation. It is true, a great proportion of the membrane on which the writings of the middle ages are inscribed, appear rough and uneven, but I could not detect, through many manuscripts of a hundred folios—all of which evinced this roughness—the unobliterated remains of a single letter. And when I have met with instances, they appear to have been short writings—perhaps epistles; for the monks were great correspondents, and, I suspect, kept economy in view, and often carried on an epistolary intercourse, for a considerable time, with a very limited amount of parchment, by erasing the letter to make room for the answer. This, probably, was usual where the matter of their correspondence was of no especial importance; so that, what our modern critics, being emboldened by these faint traces of former writing, have declared to possess the classic appearance of hoary antiquity, may be nothing more than a complimentary note, or the worthless accounts of some monastic expenditure. But, careful as they were, what would these monks

Ages," enters into a consideration of this matter with much critical learning and ingenuity.

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have thought of "paper-sparing Pope," who wrote his Iliad on small pieces of refuse paper? One of the finest passages in that translation, which describes the parting of Hector and Andromache, is written on part of a letter which Addison had franked, and is now preserved in the British Museum. Surely he could afford, these old monks would have said, to expend some few shillings for paper, on which to inscribe that for which he was to receive his thousand pounds.

But far from the monastic manuscripts displaying a scantiness of parchment, we almost invariably find an abundant margin, and a space between each line almost amounting to prodigality; and to say that the "vellum was considered more precious than the genius of the author,"* is absurd, when we know that, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a dozen skins of parchment could be bought for sixpence; whilst that quantity written upon, if the subject possessed any interest at all, would fetch considerably more, there always being a demand and ready sale for books.† The supposition, therefore, that the monastic scribes erased *classical* manuscripts for the sake of the material, seems altogether improbable, and certainly destitute of proof. It is true, many of the classics, as we have them now, are but mere fragments of the original

* D'Israeli Amenities of Lit., vol. i. p. 358.

† The Precentor's accounts of the Church of Norwich contain the following items:—1300, 5 *dozen parchment*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, 40 lbs. of ink, 4*s.* 4d., 1 gallon of vini decrili, 3*s.*, 4 lbs. of corporase, 4 lbs. of galls, 2 lbs. of gum arab, 3*s.* 4*d.*, to make ink. I dismiss these facts with the simple question they naturally excite: that if parchment was so *very scarce*, what on earth did the monk want with all this ink?

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work. For this, however, we have not to blame the monks, but barbarous invaders, ravaging flames, and the petty animosities of civil and religious warfare for the loss of many valuable works of the classics. By these means, one hundred and five books of Livy have been lost to us, probably forever. For the thirty which have been preserved, our thanks are certainly due to the monks. It was from their unpretending and long-forgotten libraries that many such treasures were brought forth at the revival of learning, in the fifteenth century, to receive the admiration of the curious, and the study of the erudite scholar. In this way Poggio Bracciolini discovered many inestimable manuscripts. Leonardo Aretino writes in rapturous terms on Poggio's discovery of a perfect copy of Quintillian. "What a precious acquisition!" he exclaims, "what unthought of pleasure to behold Quintillian perfect and entire!"* In the same letter we learn that Poggio had discovered Asconius and Flaccus in the monastery of St. Gall, whose inhabitants regarded them without much esteem. In the monastery of Langres, his researches were rewarded by a copy of Cicero's Oration for Cæcina. With the assistance of Bartolomeo di Montepulciano, he discovered Silius Italicus, Lactantius, Vegetius, Nonius Marcellus, Ammianus Marcellus, Lucretius, and Columella, and he found in a monastery at Rome a complete copy of Turtullian.† In the fine old monastery of Casino, so renowned for its classical library in former days, he met with Julius Frontinus

* Leonardi Aretini Epist. l. iv. ep. v.
† Mehi Præfatio ad vit Ambrosii Traversarii, p. xxxix.

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and Firmicus, and transcribed them with his own hand. At Cologne he obtained a copy of Petronius Arbiter. But to these we may add Calpurnius's Bucolic,* Manilius, Lucius Septimus, Coper, Eutychius, and Probus. He had anxious hopes of adding a perfect Livy to the list, which he had been told then existed in a Cistercian Monastery in Hungary, but, unfortunately, he did not prosecute his researches in this instance with his usual energy. The scholar has equally to regret the loss of a perfect Tacitus, which Poggio had expectations of from the hands of a German monk. We may still more deplore this, as there is every probability that the monks actually possessed the precious volume.† Nicolas of Treves, a contemporary and friend of Poggio's, and who was infected, though in a slight degree, with the same passionate ardor for collecting ancient manuscripts, discovered, whilst exploring the German monasteries, twelve comedies of Plautus, and a fragment of Aulus Gellius.‡ Had it not been for the timely aid of these great men, many would have been irretrievably lost in the many revolutions and contentions that followed; and, had such been the case, the monks, of course, would have received the odium, and on their heads the spleen of the disappointed student would have been prodigally showered.

* Mehi Præf., pp. xlviii.—xlix.

† A MS. containing five books of Tacitus which had been deemed lost was found in Germany during the pontificate of Leo X., and deposited in the Laurentian library at Florence.—*Mehi Præf.* p. xlvii. See Shepard's Life of Poggio, p. 104, to whom I am much indebted for these curious facts.

‡ Shepard's Life of Poggio, p. 101.

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CHAPTER IV.

Canterbury Monastery.—Theodore of Tarsus.—Tatwine.—Nothelm.—St. Dunstan.—Ælfric.—Lanfranc.—Anselm.—St. Augustine's books.—Henry de Estria and his Catalogue.—Chiclely.—Sellinge.—Rochester.—Gundulph, a Bible Student.—Radulphus.—Ascelin of Dover.—Glanvill, etc.

In the foregoing chapters I have endeavored to give the reader an insight into the means by which the monks multiplied their books, the opportunities they had of obtaining them, the rules of their libraries and scriptoria, and the duties of a monkish librarian. I now proceed to notice some of the English monastic libraries of the middle ages, and by early records and old manuscripts inquire into their extent, and revel for a time among the bibliomaniacs of the cloisters. On the spot where Christianity—more than twelve hundred years ago—first obtained a permanent footing in Britain, stands the proud metropolitan cathedral of Canterbury—a venerable and lasting monument of ancient piety and monkish zeal. St. Augustine, who brought over the glad tidings of the Christian faith in the year 596, founded that noble structure

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on the remains of a church which Roman Christians in remote times had built there. To write the literary history of its old monastery would spread over more pages than this volume contains, so many learned and bookish abbots are mentioned in its monkish annals. Such, however, is beyond the scope of my present design, and I have only to turn over those ancient chronicles to find how the love of books flourished in monkish days; so that, whilst I may here and there pass unnoticed some ingenious author, or only casually remark upon his talents, all that relate to libraries or book-collecting, to bibliophiles or scribes, I shall carefully record; and, I think, from the notes now lying before me, and which I am about to arrange in something like order, the reader will form a very different idea of monkish libraries than he previously entertained.

The name that first attracts our attention in the early history of Canterbury Church is that of Theodore of Tarsus, the father of Anglo-Saxon literature, and certainly the first who introduced bibliomania into this island; for when he came on his mission from Rome in the year 668 he brought with him an extensive library, containing many Greek and Latin authors, in a knowledge of which he was thoroughly initiated. Bede tells us that he was well skilled in metrical art, astronomy, arithmetic, church music, and the Greek and Latin languages.* At his death† the library of Christ

* Bede, iv. cap. ii.

† He died in 690, and was succeeded by Bertwold, Abbot of Reculver, *Saxon Chronicle*, *Ingram*. p. 57. Bede speaks of Bertwold as "well learned in Scripture and Ecclesiastical Literature."—*Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. viii.

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Church Monastery was enriched by his valuable books, and in the time of old Lambarde some of them still remained. He says, in his quaint way, "The Reverend Father Mathew, nowe Archbishop of Canterburie, whose care for the conservation of learned monuments can never be sufficiently commended, shewed me, not long since, the Psalter of David, and sundrie homilies in Greek; Homer also and some other Greeke authors beautifully wrytten on thicke paper, with the name of this Theodore prefixed in the fronte, to whose librarie he reasonably thought, being thereto led by shew of great antiquitie that they sometimes belonged."*

Tatwine was a great book lover, if not a bibliomaniac. "He was renowned for religious wisdom, and notably learned in Sacred Writ."† If he wrote the many pieces attributed to him, his pen must have been prolific and his reading curious and diversified. He is said to have composed on profane and sacred subjects, but his works were unfortunately destroyed by the Danish invaders, and a book of poems and one of enigmas are all that have escaped their ravages. The latter work, preserved in our National Library, contains many curious hints, illustrative of the manners of those remote days.‡

Nothelm, or the Bold Helm, succeeded this interesting author; he was a learned and pious priest of London. The bibliomaniac will somewhat

* Preambulation of Kent, 4to. 1576, p. 233. Parker's Ant. Brit. p. 80.

† He was consecrated on the 10th of June, 731, Bede, v. c. xxiii.

‡ M.S. Reg. 12, c. xxiii. I know of no other copy. Leland says that he saw a copy at Glastonbury.

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envy the avocation of this worthy monk whilst searching over the rich treasures of the Roman archives, from whence he gleaned much valuable information to aid Bede in compiling his history of the English Church.* Not only was he an industrious scribe but also a talented author, if we are to believe Pits, who ascribes to him several works, with a Life of St. Augustine.†

It is well known that St. Dunstan was an ingenious scribe, and so passionately fond of books, that we may unhesitatingly proclaim him a bibliomaniac. He was a native of Wessex, and resided with his father near Glastonbury Abbey, which holy spot many a legendary tale rendered dear to his youthful heart. He entered the Abbey, and devoted his whole time to reading the wondrous lives and miracles of ascetic men till his mind became excited to a state of insanity by the many marvels and prodigies which they unfolded; so that he acquired among the simple monks the reputation of one holding constant and familiar intercourse with the beings of another world. On his presentation to the king, which was effected by the influence of his uncle Athelm, Archbishop of Canterbury, he soon became a great favorite, but excited so much jealousy there, that evil reports were industriously spread respecting him. He was accused of practising magical arts and intriguing with the devil. This induced him to retire again into the seclusion of a monastic cell, which he constructed

* Bede's Eccl. Hist. Prologue.

† Pitseus Angliæ Scrip. 1619, p. 141. Dart's Hist. Canterbury, p. 102.

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so low that he could scarcely stand upright in it. It was large enough, however, to hold his forge and other apparatus, for he was a proficient worker in metals, and made ornaments, and bells for his church. He was very fond of music, and played with exquisite skill upon the harp.* But what is more to our purpose, his biographer tells us that he was remarkably skilful in writing and illuminating, and transcribed many books, adorning them with beautiful paintings, whilst in this little cell.† One of them is preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. On the front is a painting of St. Dunstan kneeling before our Saviour, and at the top is written "*Pictura et Scriptura hujus pagine subtas visi est de propria manu sei Dunstani.*"‡ But in the midst of these ingenious pursuits he did not forget to devote many hours to the study of the Holy Scriptures, as also to the diligent transcription and correction of copies of them,§ and thus arming himself with the sacred word, he was enabled to withstand the numerous temptations which surrounded him. Sometimes the devil appeared as a man, and at other times he was still more severely tempted by the visitations of a beautiful woman, who strove by the most alluring blandishments to draw that holy man from the paths of Christian rectitude. In the tenth century such eminent virtues could not pass un-

* Cottonian MS. Cleopatra, B. xiii. fo. 70.

† W. Malm. de Vita, Dunst. ap. Leland, Script. tom. 1. p. 162. Cotton. MS. Fanstin, B. 13.

‡ Strutt's Saxon. Antiq. vol. 1, p. 105, plate xviii. See also Hicke's Saxon Grammar, p. 104.

§ MS. Cotton., Cleop. b. xiii. fo. 69. Mabd. Acta Sancto. vii. 663.

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rewarded, and he was advanced to the Archbishopric of Canterbury in the year 961, but his after life is that of a saintly politician, and displays nothing that need be mentioned here.

In the year 969,* Ælfric, abbot of St. Alban's, was elected archbishop of Canterbury. His identity is involved in considerable doubt by the many contemporaries who bore that name, some of whom, like him, were celebrated for their talent and erudition; but, leaving the solution of this difficulty to the antiquarian, we are justified in saying that he was of noble family, and received his education under Ethelwold, at Abingdon, about the year 960. He accompanied his master to Winchester, and Elphegus, bishop of that see, entertained so high an opinion of Ælfric's learning and capacity, that he sent him to superintend the recently founded monastery of Cerne, in Devonshire. He there spent all his hours, unoccupied by the duties of his abbatical office, in the transcription of books and the nobler avocations of an author. He composed a Latin Grammar, a work which has won for him the title of "*The Grammarian*," and he greatly helped to maintain the purity of the Christian church by composing a large collection of homilies, which became exceedingly popular during the succeeding century, and are yet in existence. The preface to these homilies contain several very curious passages illustrative of the mode of publication resorted to by the monkish authors, and on that account I am tempted to make the following extracts:

* Saxon Chron. by Ingram, 171.

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"I, Ælfric, the scholar of Ethelwold, to the courteous and venerable Bishop Sigeric, in the Lord.

"Although it may appear to be an attempt of some rashness and presumption, yet have I ventured to translate this book out of the Latin writers, especially those of the 'Holy Scriptures,' into our common language; for the edification of the ignorant, who only understand this language when it is either read or heard. Wherefore I have not used obscure or unintelligible words, but given the plain English. By which means the hearts, both of the readers and of the hearers, may be reached more easily; because they are incapable of being otherwise instructed, than in their native tongue. Indeed, in our translation, we have not ever been so studious to render word for word, as to give the true sense and meaning of our authors. Nevertheless, we have used all diligent caution against deceitful errors, that we may not be found seduced by any heresy, nor blinded by any deceit. For we have followed these authors in this translation, namely, St. Austin of Hippo, St. Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus, and sometimes Haymo, whose authority is admitted to be of great weight with all the faithful. Nor have we only expounded the treatise of the gospels;... but have also described the passions and lives of the saints, for the use of the unlearned of this nation. We have placed forty discourses in this volume, believing this will be sufficient for one year, if they be recited entirely to the faithful, by the ministers of the Lord. But the other book which we have now taken in hand to compose will contain those passions or treatises which are

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omitted in this volume."... "Now, if any one find fault with our translation, that we have not always given word for word, or that this translation is not so full as the treatise of the authors themselves, or that in handling of the gospels we have run them over in a method not exactly conformable to the order appointed in the church, let him compose a book of his own; by an interpretation of deeper learning, as shall best agree with his understanding, this only I beseech him, that he may not pervert this version of mine, which I hope, by the grace of God, without any boasting, I have, according to the best of my skill, performed with all diligence. Now, I most earnestly entreat your goodness, my most gentle father Sigeric, that you will vouchsafe to correct, by your care, whatever blemishes of malignant heresy, or of dark deceit, you shall meet with in my translation, and then permit this little book to be ascribed to your authority, and not to the meanness of a person of my unworthy character. Farewell in the Almighty God continually. Amen."*

I have before alluded to the care observed by the scribes in copying their manuscripts, and the moderns may deem themselves fortunate that they did so; for although many interpolations, or emendations, as they called them, occur in monkish transcripts, on the whole, their integrity, in this respect, forms a redeeming quality in connexion with their learning. In another preface, affixed to the second collection of his homilies, Ælfric thus explains his design in translating them:

* Landsdowne MS. in Brit. Mus. 373, vol. iv.

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"Ælfric, a monk and priest, although a man of less abilities than are requisite for one in such orders, was sent, in the days of King Æthelred, from Alphege, the bishop and successor of Æthelwold, to a monastery which is called Cernel, at the desire of Æthelmer, the Thane, whose noble birth and goodness is everywhere known. Then ran it in my mind, I trust, through the grace of God, that I ought to translate this book out of the Latin tongue into the English language not upon presumption of great learning, but because I saw and heard much error in many English books, which ignorant men, through their simplicity, esteemed great wisdom, and because it grieved me that they neither knew, nor had the gospel learning in their writing, except from those men that understood Latin, and those books which are to be had of King Alfred's, which he skilfully translated from Latin into English."*

From these extracts we may gain some idea of the state of learning in those days, and they would seem, in some measure, to justify the opinion, that the laity paid but little attention to such matters, and I more anxiously present the reader with these scraps, because they depict the state of literature in those times far better than a volume of conjecture could do. It is not consistent with my design to enter into an analysis of these homilies. Let the reader, however, draw some idea of their nature from the one written for Easter Sunday, which has been deemed sufficient proof that the Saxon Church ever denied the Romish doctrine of transubstanti-

* Landsdowne MS. in Brit. Mus. 373, vol. iv.

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ation; for he there expressly states, in terms so plain that all the sophistry of the Roman Catholic writers cannot pervert its obvious meaning, that the bread and wine is only typical of the body and blood of our Saviour.

To one who has spent much time in reading the lives and writings of the monkish theologians, how refreshing is such a character as that of Ælfric's. Often, indeed, will the student close the volumes of those old monastic writers with a sad, depressed, and almost broken heart; so often will he find men who seem capable of better things, who here and there breathe forth all the warm aspirations of a devout and Christian heart, bowed down and grovelling in the dust, as it were, to prove their blind submission to the Pope, thinking, poor fellows!—for from my very heart I pity them—that by so doing they were preaching that humility so acceptable to the Lord.

Cheering then, to the heart it is to find this monotony broken by such an instance, and although we find Ælfric occasionally diverging into the paths of papistical error, he spreads a ray of light over the gloom of those Saxon days, and offers pleasing evidence that Christ never forsook his church; that even amidst the peril and darkness of those monkish ages there were some who mourned, though it might have been in a monastery, submissive to a Roman Pontiff, the depravity and corruption with which the heart of man had marred it.

To still better maintain the discipline of the church, he wrote a set of canons, which he addressed to Wulfin, or Wulfsine, bishop of Sher-

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bourne. With many of the doctrines advocated therein, the protestant will not agree; but the bibliophile will admit that he gave an indication of his love of books by the 21st Canon, which directs that, "Before a priest can be ordained, he must be armed with the sacred books, for the spiritual battle, namely, a Psalter, Book of Epistles, Book of Gospels, the Missal Book, Books of Hymns, the Manual, or Euchiridion, the Gerim, the Passional, the Pænitential, and the Lectionary, or Reading Book; these the diligent priest requires, and let him be careful that they are all accurately written, and free from faults." *

About the same time, Ælfric wrote a treatise on the Old and New Testaments, and in it we find an account of his labors in Biblical Literature. He did more in laying open the holy mysteries of the gospel to the perusal of the laity, by translating them into the Saxon tongue, than any other before him. He gave them, in a vernacular version, the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Esther, Job, Judith, two Books of Maccabees, and a portion of the Book of Kings, and it is for these labors, above all others, that the bible student will venerate his name, but he will look, perhaps, anxiously, hopefully, to these early attempts at Bible propagation, and expect to observe the ecclesiastical orders, at least, shake off a little of their absurd dependence on secondary sources for biblical instruction. But, no; they still sadly clung to traditional interpretation; they read the Word of God mystified by the fathers, good men, many of them, devout

* Can. 21, p. 577, vol. i.

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and holy saints, but why approach God through man, when we have His own prescription, in sweet encouraging words, to come, however humble or lowly we may be, to His throne, and ask with our own lips for those blessings so needful for the soul. Ælfric, in a letter addressed to Sigwerd, prefixed to his Treatise on the Old and New Testament, thus speaks of his biblical labors :

"Abbot Elfricke greeteth friendly, Sigwerd at last Heolon. True it is I tell thee that very wise is he who speaketh by his doings ; and well proceedeth he doth with God and the world who furnisheth himselfe with good works. And very plaine it is in holy scripture, that holy men employed in well doing were in this world held in good reputation, and as saints now enjoy the kingdom of heaven, and the remembrance of them continueth for ever, because of their consent with God and relying on him, carelesse men who lead their life in all idleness and so end it, the memory of them is forgotten in holy writ, saving that the Old Testament records their ill deeds and how they were therefore commdemned. Thou hast oft entreated me for English Scripture....and when I was with thee great mone thou madest that thou couldst get none of my writings. Now will I that thou have at least this little, since knowledge is so acceptable to thee, and thou wilt have it rather than be altogether without my books.....God bestoweth sevenfold grace on mankind, (whereof I have already written in another English Treatise,) as the prophet Isaiah hath recorded in the book of his prophesie." In speaking of the remaining books of the Pentateuch, he does

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so in a cursory manner, and excuses himself because he had "written thereof more at large." "The book which Moses wrote, called the book of Joshua, sheweth how he went with the people of Israel unto Abraham's country, and how he won it, and how the sun stood still while he got the victory, and how he divided the land; this book also I turned into English for prince Ethelverd, wherein a man may behold the great wonders of God really fulfilled."....."After him known it is that there were in the land certaine judges over Israel, who guided the people as it is written in the book of Judges..... of this whoso hath desire to hear further, may read it in that English book which I translated concerning the same."..... "Of the book of Kings, I have translated also some part into English," "the book of Esther, I briefly after my manner translated into English," and "The Widow Judith who overcame Holophernes, the Syrian General, hath her book also, among these, concerning her own victory and *Englished according to my skill for your example,* that ye men may also defend your country by force of arms, against the invasion of a foreign host." "Two books of Machabeus, to the glory of God, I have turned also into English, and so read them, you may if you please, for your instruction." And at the end we find him again admonishing the scribes to use the pen with faithfulness. "Whosoever," says he, "shall write out this book, let him write it according to the copy, and for God's love correct it, that it be not faulty, less he thereby be discredited, and I shent." *

* Lisle's Divers Ancient Monuments in the Saxon Tongue, 4to. Lond. 1638, p. 43.

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This learned prelate died on the 16th of November, 1006, after a life spent thus in the service of Christ and the cause of learning; by his will he bequeathed to the Abbey of St. Alban's, besides some landed possessions, his little library of books;* he was honorably buried at Abingdon, but during the reign of Canute, his bones were removed to Canterbury.

Passing on a few years, we come to that period when a new light shone upon the lethargy of the Saxons; the learning and erudition which had been fostering in the snug monasteries of Normandy, hitherto silent—buried as it were—but yet fast growing to maturity, accompanied the sword of the Norman duke, and added to the glory of the conquering hero, by their splendid intellectual endowments. All this emulated and roused the Saxons from their slumber; and, rubbing their laziness away, they again grasped the pen with the full nerve and energy of their nature; a reaction ensued, literature was respected, learning prospered, and copious work flowed in upon the scribes; the crackling of parchment, and the din of controversy bespoke the presence of this revival in the cloisters of the English monasteries; books, the weapons spiritual of the monks, libraries, the magazines of the church militant were preserved, amassed, and at last deemed indispensable.† Such was the effect on

* MS. Cottonian Claudius, b. vi. p. 103; Dart's Hist. of Cant. p. 112.; Dugdale's Monast., vol. i. p. 517.

† There was an old saying, and a true one, prevalent in those days, that a monastery without a library was like a castle without an armory, *Clastrum sine armario, quasi castrum sine armamentario.* See letter of Gaufredi of St. Barbary to Peter Mangot, *Martene Thes. Nov. Anecd.*, tom. i. col. 511.

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our national literature of that gushing in of the Norman conquerors, so deeply imbued with learning, so polished, and withal so armed with classical and patristic lore were they.

Foremost in the rank we find the learned Lanfranc, that patron of literature, that indefatigable scribe and anxious book collector, who was endowed with an erudition far more deep and comprehensive than any other of his day. He was born at Pavia, in 1005, and received there the first elements of his education;* he afterwards went to Bologna, and from thence to Avranches, where he undertook the education of many celebrated scholars of that century, and instructed them in sacred and secular learning, *in sacris et secularibus erudivi literis.*† Whilst proceeding on a journey to Rome he was attacked by some robbers, who maltreated and left him almost dead; in this condition he was found by some peasants who conveyed him to the monastery of Bec; the monks with their usual hospitable charity tended and so assiduously nourished him in his sickness, that on his recovery he became one of their fraternity. A few years after, he was appointed prior and founded a school there, which did immense service to literature and science; he also collected a great library which was renowned and esteemed in his day,‡ and he increased their value by a critical revisal of their text. He was well aware that in works so voluminous as those of

* Mabillon, Act. S., tom. ix. p. 659.

† Ep. i. ad Papæ Alex.

‡ Vita Lanfr., c. vi. "*Effulsit eo majistro, obedientia coactu, philosophicarum ac divinarum litterarum bibliotheca, etc.*" Opera p. 8. Edit. folio, 1648.

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the fathers, the scribes through so many generations could not be expected to observe an unanimous infallibility; but knowing too that even the most essential doctrines of the holy and catholic church were founded on patristical authority, he was deeply impressed with the necessity of keeping their writings in all their primitive integrity; an end so desirable, well repaid the tediousness of the undertaking, and he cheerfully spent much time in collecting and comparing codices, in studying their various readings or erasing the spurious interpolations, engendered by the carelessness or the pious frauds of monkish scribes.* He lavished his care in a similar manner on the Bible: considering the far distant period from which that holy volume has descended to us, it is astounding that the vicissitudes, the perils, the darkness of near eighteen hundred years, have failed to mar the divinity of that sacred book; not all the blunders of nodding scribes could do it, not all the monkish interpolations, or the cunning of sectarian pens could do it, for in all times the faithful church of Christ watched over it with a jealous care, supplied each erasure and expelled each false addition. Lanfranc was one of the most vigilant of these Scripture guards, and his own industry blest his church with the bible text, purified from the gross handmarks of human meddling. I learn, from the Benedictines of St. Maur, that there is still preserved in the Abbey of St. Martin de Sécz, the first ten conferences of

* "Et quia scripturæ scriptorum vitio erant ninium corruptæ, omnes tam Veteris, quam Novi Testamenti libros; necnon etiam scriptæ sanctorum patrum secundum orthodoxam fidem studuit corrigere." Vita Lanfr. cap. 15, ap. Opera,' p. 15.

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Cassian corrected by the efficient hand of this great critical student, at the end of the manuscript these words are written, "*Hucusque ago Lanfrancus correxi.*"* The works of St. Ambrose, on which he bestowed similar care, are preserved in the library of St. Vincent du Mans.†

When he was promoted to the See of Canterbury, he brought with him a copious supply of books, and spread the influence of his learning over the English monasteries; but with all the cares inseparably connected with the dignity of Primate of England, he still found time to gratify his book-loving propensities, and to continue his critical labors; indeed he worked day and night in the service of the church, *servitio Ecclesiæ*, and in correcting the books which the scribes had written.‡ From the profusion of his library he was enabled to lend many volumes to the monks, so that by making transcripts, they might add to their own stores—thus we know that he lent to Paulen, Abbot of St. Albans, a great number, who kept his scribes hard at work transcribing them, and built a scriptorium for the transaction of these pleasing labors; but more of this hereafter.

Anselm, too, was a renowned and book-loving prelate, and if his pride and haughtiness wrought warm dissensions and ruptures in the church, he often stole away to forget them in the pages of his book. At an early age he acquired this fondness

* Hist. Litt. de la France, vol. vii. p. 117.

† *Ibid.* "Il rendit de même service à trois écrits de S. Ambrose l'Hexameron, l'apologie de David et le traité des Sacrements, tels qu'on les voit à la bibliothèque de St. Vincent du Mans.

‡ *Ibid.*

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for reading, and whilst engaged as a monkish student, he applied his mind to the perusal of books with wonderful perseverance, and when some favorite volume absorbed his attention, he could scarce leave it night or day.* Industry so indefatigable ensured a certain success, and he became eminent for his deep and comprehensive learning; his epistles bear ample testimony to his extensive reading and intimate acquaintance with the authors of antiquity;† in one of his letters he praises a monk named Maurice, for his success in study, who was learning *Virgil* and some other old writers, under Arnulph the grammarian.

All day long Anselm was occupied in giving wise counsel to those that needed it; and a great part of the night *pars maxima noctis* he spent in correcting his darling volumes, and freeing them from the inaccuracies of the scribes.‡ The oil in the lamp burnt low, still that bibliomaniac studiously pursued his favorite avocation. So great was the love of book-collecting engrafted into his mind, that he omitted no opportunity of obtaining them—numerous instances occur in his epistles of his begging the loan of some volume for transcription;§ in more than one, I think, he asks for portions of the Holy Scriptures which he was always anxious to obtain to compare their various readings, and to enable him with greater confidence to correct his own copies.

* Malmsb. de Gest. Pontif. b. i. p. 216.

† See Epist. 16. Lib. i.

‡ Edmer. Vit. Anselm, apud Anselm Opera.—*Edit. Benedict*, 1721, b. i. p. 4.

§ Epp. 10-20, lib. i. and 24 b. ii.

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In the early part of the twelfth century, the monks of Canterbury transcribed a vast number of valuable manuscripts, in which they were greatly assisted by monk Edwine, who had arrived at considerable proficiency in the calligraphical art, as a volume of his transcribing, in Trinity college, Cambridge, informs us;* it is a Latin Psalter, with a Saxon gloss, beautifully illuminated in gold and colors; at the end appears the figure of the monkish scribe, holding the pen in his hand to indicate his avocation, and an inscription extols his ingenuity in the art.†

Succeeding archbishops greatly enriched the library at Canterbury. Hubert Walter, who was appointed primate in 1191, gave the proceeds of the church of Halgast to furnish books for the library;‡ and Robert Kildwardly, archbishop in 1272, a man of great learning and wisdom, a remarkable orator and grammarian, wrote a great number of books, and was passionately fond of collecting them.§

I learn from Wanley, that there is a large folio manuscript in the library of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, written about the time of Henry V. by a monk of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, containing the history of Christ Church; this volume proves its author to have been something of a bibliophile, and that is why I mention it, for he gives an

* Codic. fol. first class. a dextr. Sc. Med. 5.
† Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry. Dissert. ii.
‡ Dart's Canterb. p. 132. Dugdale's Monast. vol. i. p. 85.
§ There is, or was, in St. Peter's college, Cambridge, a MS. volume of 21 books, which formerly belonged to this worthy Bibliophile.—*Dart*, p. 137.

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account of some books then preserved, which were sent over by Pope Gregory to St. Augustine; these precious volumes consisted of a Bible in two volumes, called "Biblia Gregorian," beautifully written, with some of the leaves tinted with purple and rose-color, and the capital letters rubricated. This interesting and venerable MS. so immediately connected with the first ages of the Christian church of Britain, was in existence in the time of James I., as we learn by a passage in a scarce tract entitled "A Petition Apologetical," addressed by the Catholics to his majesty, where, as a proof that we derive our knowledge of Scripture originally from the church of Rome; they say, "The very original Bible, the self-same *Numero* which St. Gregory sent in with our apostle, St. Augustine, being as yet reserved by God's special providence, as testimony that what Scriptures we have, we had them from Rome.*

He next mentions two Psalters, one of which I have seen; it is among the manuscripts in the Cotton collection, † and bears full evidence of its great antiquity. This early gem of biblical literature numbers 160 folios; it contains the Roman Psalter, with a Saxon interlinear translation, written on stout vellum, in a clear, bold hand. On opening the volume, we find the first page enriched with a dazzling specimen of monkish skill—it is a painting of our Saviour pointing with his right hand to heaven, and in his left holding the sacred book; the corners are occupied with figures of animals,

* Petition Apol. 4to, 1604, p. 17.
† Brit. Mus. Vesp. A. i.

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and the whole wrought on a glittering ground work, is rendered still more gorgeous by the contrast which the purple robes of Jesus display; on the reverse of this fine illumination there is a beautiful tesselated ornament, interwoven with animals, flowers, and grotesque figures, around which are miniatures of our Saviour, David, and some of the apostles. In a line at the bottom the word CATVSVIR is inscribed. Very much inferior to this in point of art is the illumination, at folio 31, representing David playing his harp, surrounded by a musical coterie; it is probably the workmanship of a more modern, but less skilful scribe of the Saxon school. The smaller ornaments and initial letters throughout the manuscript display great intricacy of design.

The writer next describes two copies of the Gospels, both now in the Bodleian Collection at Oxford. A Passionarium Sanctorum, a book for the altar, on one side of which was the image of our Saviour wrought in gold, and lastly, an exposition of the Epistles and Gospels; the monkish bookworm tells us that these membraneous treasures were the most ancient books in all the churches of England.*

A good and liberal monk, named Henry De Estria, who was elected prior in the year 1285, devoted both his time and wealth to the interests of his monastery, and is said to have expended £900 in repairing the choir and chapter-house. † He

* Wanley Librorum Vett Septentrionalium fol. Oxon, 1705, p. 172.

† Dugdale's Monast. Angl. vol. i. p. 112.

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wrote a book beginning, "*Memoriale Henerici Prioris Monasteri Xpi Cantuariæ*,"* now preserved in the Cotton collection; it contains the most extensive monastic catalogue I had ever seen, and sufficiently proves how Bibliomania flourished in that noble monastery. It occupies no less than thirty-eight treble-columned folio pages, and contains the titles of more than three thousand works. To attempt to convey to the reader an idea of this curious and sumptuous library, without transcribing a large proportion of its catalogue, I am afraid will be a futile labor; but as that would occupy too much space, and to many of my readers be, after all, dry and uninteresting, I shall merely give the names of some of the most conspicuous. Years indeed it must have required to have amassed a collection so brilliant and superb in those days of book scarcity. Surprise and wonder almost surpass the admiration we feel at beholding this proud testimonial of monkish industry and early bibliomania. Many a choice scribe, and many an *Amator Librorum* must have devoted his pen and purse to effect so noble an acquisition. Like most of the monastic libraries, it possessed a great proportion of biblical literature—copies of the Bible whole and in parts, commentaries on the same, and numerous glossaries and concordances show how much care the monks bestowed on the sacred writings, and how deeply they were studied in those old days. In patristic learning the library was unusually rich, embracing the most eminent and valuable writings of the Fathers, as may be

* MS. Cot. Galba. E. iv.

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seen by the following names, of whose works the catalogue enumerates many volumes :

Augustine.	Bernard.	Gregory.
Ambroise.	Bede.	Hillarius.
Anselm.	Beranger.	Isidore.
Alcuin.	Chrysostom.	Jerome.
Aldelm.	Eusebius.	Lanfranc.
Benedict.	Fulgentius.	Origen.

Much as we may respect them for all this, our gratitude will materially increase when we learn how serviceable the monks of Canterbury were in preserving the old dead authors of Greece and Rome. We do not, from the very nature of their lives being so devoted to religion and piety, expect this ; and knowing, too, what " heathen dogs " the monks thought these authors of idolatry, combined with our notion, that they, far from being the conservers, were the destroyers, of classic MSS., for the sake, as some tell us, of the parchment on which they were inscribed, we are somewhat staggered in our opinion to find in their library the following brilliant array of the wise men of the ancient world :

Aristotle,	Josephus,	Prosper,
Boethius,	Lucan,	Prudentius,
Cicero,	Martial,	Suetonius,
Cassiodorus,	Marcianus,	Sedulus,
Donatus,	Macrobius,	Seneca,
Euclid,	Orosius,	Terence,
Galen,	Plato,	Virgil,
Justin,	Priscian,	Etc., etc.

Nor were they mere fragments of these authors, but, in many cases, considerable collections ; of

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Aristotle, for instance, they possessed numerous works, with many commentaries upon him. Of Seneca a still more extensive and valuable one; and in the works of the eloquent Tully, they were also equally rich. Of his *Paradoxa, de Senectute, de Amiticia,* etc., and *his Offices*, they had more copies than one, a proof of the respect and esteem with which he was regarded. In miscellaneous literature, and in the productions of the middle age writers, the catalogue teems with an abundant supply, and includes:

Rabanus Maurus,	Robert Grosetete,
Thomas Aquinas,	Gerlandus,
Peter Lombard,	Gregory Nazianzen,
Athelard,	History of England,
William of Malmsbury,	Gesti Alexandri Magni,
John of Salisbury,	Hystoria Longobardos,
Girald Barry,	Hystoriæ Scholasticæ,
Thomas Baldwin,	Chronicles *Latine et Anglice*,
Brutus,	Chronographia Necephori.

But I trust the reader will not rest satisfied with these few samples of the goodly store, but inspect the catalogue for himself. It would occupy, as I said before, too much space to enumerate even a small proportion of its many treasures, which treat of all branches of literature and science, natural history, medicine, ethics, philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, poetry, and music; each shared the studious attention of the monks, and a curious "*Liber de Astronomia*" taught them the rudiments of that sublime science, but which they were too apt to confound with its offspring, astrology, as we may infer, was the case with the monks of Canterbury,

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for their library contained a "*Liber de Astrolœbus*," and the "Prophesies of Merlin."

Many hints connected with the literary portion of a monastic life may sometimes be found in these catalogues. It was evidently usual at Christ Church Monastery to keep apart a number of books for the private study of the monks in the cloister, which I imagine they were at liberty to use at any time.*

A portion of the catalogue of monk Henry is headed "*Lib. de Armariole Claustre*,"† under which it is pleasing to observe a Bible, in two volumes, specified as for the use of the infirmary, with devotional books, lives of the fathers, a history of England, the works of Bede, Isidore, Boethius, Rabanus Maurus, Cassiodorus, and many others of equal celebrity. In another portion of the manuscript, we find a list of their church books, written at the same time;‡ it affords a brillant proof of the plenitude of the gospels among them; for no less than twenty-five copies are described. We may judge to what height the art of bookbinding had arrived by the account here given of these precious volumes. Some were in a splendid coopertoria of gold and silver, and others exquisitely ornamented with figures of our Saviour and the four Evangelists.§ But this extravagant costliness rendered them attractive objects to pilfering hands, and somewhat accounts for the lament of the industrious Somner,

* See what has been said on this subject in the previous chapter.

† MS. Galla, E. iv. fol. 133.

‡ MS. fol. 122.

§ *Textus Magnus auro coopertus et gemmis ornatus, cum majistate in media, et 4 Evangelistis in 4 Angulis. Ibid.*

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who says that the library was "shamefully robbed and spoiled of them all."*

Our remarks on the monastic library at Canterbury are drawing to a close. Henry Chicleley, archbishop in 1413, an excellent man, and a great promoter of learning, rebuilt the library of the church, and furnished it with many a choice tome.† His esteem for literature was so great, that he built two colleges at Oxford.‡ William Sellinge, who was a man of erudition, and deeply imbued with the book-loving mania, was elected prior in 1472. He is said to have studied at Bonania, in Italy; and, during his travels, he gathered together "all the ancient authors, both Greek and Latine, he could get," and returned laden with them to his own country. Many of them were of great rarity, and it is said that a Tully *de Republica* was among them. Unfortunately, they were all burnt by a fire in the monastery.§

I have said enough, I think, to show that books were eagerly sought after, and deeply appreciated, in Canterbury cloisters during the middle ages, and when the reader considers that these facts have been preserved from sheer accident, and, therefore, only enable us to obtain a partial glimpse of the

* Somner Antiq. Cant. 4to. 1640, p. 174, he is speaking of books in general.

† Duck Vita Chich. p. 104.

‡ Dugdale, vol. i. p. 86. Dart, p. 158, and Somner Ant. Cant. 174.

§ Somner, 294 and 295; see also Leland Scriptor. He was well versed in the Greek language, and his monument bears the following line:

"Doctor theologus Selling Græca atque Latina,
Linqua perdoctus."—See Warton's Hist. Poet., ii. p. 425.

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actual state of their library, he will be ready to admit that bibliomania existed then, and will feel thankful, too, that it did, for to its influence, surely, we are indebted for the preservation of much that is valuable and instructive in history and general literature.*

We can scarcely leave Kent without a word or two respecting the church of the Rochester monks. It was founded by King Ethelbert, who conferred upon it the dignities of an episcopal see, in the year 600; and, dedicating it to St. Andrew, completed the good work by many donations and emoluments. The revenues of the see were always limited, and it is said that its poverty caused it to be treated with kind forbearance by the ecclesiastical commissioners at the period of the Reformation.

I have not been able to meet with any catalogue of its monastic library, and the only hints I can obtain relative to their books are such as may be gathered from the recorded donations of its learned prelates and monks. In the year 1077, Gundulph, a Norman bishop, who is justly celebrated for his architectural talents, rebuilt the cathedral, and considerable remains of this structure are still to be seen in the nave and west front, and display that profuse decoration united with ponderous stability, for which the Norman buildings are so remarkable. This munificent prelate

* There is a catalogue written in the sixteenth century, preserved among the Cotton MS., containing the titles of seventy books belonging to Catherbury Library. It is printed in Leland Collect. vol. iv. p. 120, and in Dart's Hist. Cant. Cath.; but they differ slightly from the Cott. MS. Julius, c. vi. 4, fol 99.

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also enriched the church with numerous and costly ornaments; the encouragement he gave to learning calls for some notice here. Trained in one of the most flourishing of the Norman schools, we are not surprised that in his early youth he was so studious and inquisitive after knowledge as to merit the especial commendation of his biographer.* William of Malmsbury, too, highly extols him "for his abundant piety," and tells us that he was not inexperienced in literary avocations; he was polished and courageous in the management of judicial affairs, and a close, devoted student of the divine writings;† as a scribe he was industrious and critical, and the great purpose to which he applied his patience and erudition was a careful revisal of the Holy Scriptures. He purged the sacred volume of the inadvertencies of the scribes, and restored the purity of the text; for transcribing after transcribing had caused some errors and diversity of readings to occur, between the English and foreign codices, in spite of all the pious care of the monastic copyists; this was perplexing, an uniformity was essential and he undertook the task;‡ labors so valuable deserve the highest praise, and we bestow it more liberally upon him for this good work than we should have done had he been the compiler of crude homilies or the marvellous legends of saints. The high veneration in which Gundulph held the patristic writings induced him to bestow his attention in a similar manner upon them, he compared

* Monachus Roffensis de Vita Gundulphi, 274.
† Will. Malms. de Gest. Pont. Ang. ap Rerum. Ang. Script, 133.
‡ Histoire Littéraire de Fr., tom. vii. p. 118.

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copies, studied their various readings and set to work to correct them. The books necessary for these critical researches he obtained from the libraries of his former master, Bishop Lanfranc, St. Anselm, his schoolfellow, and many others who were studying at Bec, but besides this, he corrected many other authors, and by comparing them with ancient manuscripts, restored them to their primitive beauty. Fabricius* notices a fine volume, which bore ample testimony to his critical erudition and dexterity as a scribe. It is described as a large Bible on parchment, written in most beautiful characters, it was proved to be his work by this inscription on its title page, "*Prima pars Bibliæ per bona memoriæ Gundulphum Rossensem Episcopum.*" This interesting manuscript, formerly in the library of the monks of Rochester, was regarded as one of their most precious volumes. An idea of the great value of a Bible in those times may be derived from the curious fact that the bishop made a decree directing "excommunication to be pronounced against whosoever should take away or conceal this volume, or who should even dare to conceal the inscription on the front, which indicated the volume to be the property of the church of Rochester." But we must bear in mind that this was no ordinary copy, it was transcribed by Gundulph's own pen, and rendered pure in its text by his critical labors. But the time came when anathemas availed nought, and excommunication was divested of all terror. "Henry the Eighth," the "Defender of the Faith," frowned destruction upon the monks,

* Biblioth. Latine, b. vii. p. 519.

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and in the tumult that ensued, this treasure was carried away, anathema and all. Somehow or other it got to Amsterdam, perhaps sent over in one of those "shippes full," to the bookbinders, and having passed through many hands, at last found its way into the possession of Herman Van de Wal, Burgomaster of Amsterdam; since then it was sold by public auction, but has now I believe been lost sight of.* Among the numerous treasures which Gundulph gave to his church, he included a copy of the Gospels, two missals and a book of Epistles.† Similar books were given by succeeding prelates; Radolphus, a Norman bishop in 1108, gave the monks several copies of the gospels beautifully adorned.‡ Earnulphus, in the year 1115, was likewise a benefactor in this way; he bestowed upon them, besides many gold and silver utensils for the church, a copy of the gospels, lessons for the principal days, a benedictional, or book of blessings, a missal, handsomely bound, and a capitular.§ Ascelin, formerly prior of Dover, and made bishop of Rochester, in the year 1142, gave them a Psalter and the Epistles of St. Paul, with a gloss.‖ He was a learned man, and excessively fond of books; a passion which he had acquired no doubt in his monastery of Dover which possessed a library of no mean extent.¶ He

* Hist. Litt. de Fr., tom. ix. p. 373.
† Thorpe Regist. Roffens, fol. 1769, p. 118.
‡ Wharton Angl. Sacr., tom. 1, p. 342.
§ Thorpe Regist. Rof., p. 120. Dugdale's Monast., vol. 1, p. 157.
‖ Thorpe Reg. Rof., p. 121.
¶ A catalogue of this library is preserved among the Bodleian MSS. No. 920, containing many fine old volumes. I am not aware that it has been ever printed.

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wrote a commentary on Isaiah, and gave it to the monastery; Walter, archdeacon of Canterbury, who succeeded Ascelin, gave a copy of the gospels bound in gold, to the church;* and Waleran, elected bishop in the year 1182, presented them with a glossed Psalter, the Epistles of Paul, and the Sermons of Peter.†

Glanvill, bishop in the year 1184, endeavored to deprive the monks of the land which Gundulph had bestowed upon them; this gave to rise to many quarrels‡ which the monks never forgave; it is said that he died without regret, and was buried without ceremony; yet the curious may still inspect his tomb on the north side of the altar, with his effigies and mitre lying at length upon it.§ Glanvill probably repented of his conduct, and he strove to banish all animosity by many donations; and among other treasures, he gave the monks the five books of Moses and other volumes.‖

Osbern of Shebey, who was prior in the year 1189, was a great scribe and wrote many volumes for the library; he finished the Commentary of Ascelin, transcribed a history of Peter, a Breviary for the chapel, a book called *De Claustra animæ*, and wrote the great Psalter which is chained to the choir and window of St. Peter's altar."¶ Ralph de Ross, and Heymer de Tunebregge,**

* "Textum Evangeliorum aureum." Reg. Rof., p. 121.
† *Ibid.*, p. 121.
‡ Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. 1, p. 156.
§ Wharton's Ang. Sac., tom. 1, p. 346.
‖ Thorpe Reg. Rof., p. 121.
¶ Thorpe Reg. Rof., 121. Dugdale's Monast., vol. i. p. 158.
** Reg. Rof., pp. 122, 123.

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also bestowed gifts of a similar nature upon the monks; but the book anecdotes connected with this monastic fraternity are remarkably few, barren of interest, and present no very exalted idea of their learning.*

* In a long list of gifts by Robert de Hecham, I find "librum Ysidore ethimologiarum possuit in armarium claustri et alia plura fecit."—*Thorpe Reg. Rof.*, p. 123.

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CHAPTER V.

Lindesfarne.—St. Cuthbert's Gospels.—Destruction of the Monastery. — Alcuin's Letter on the occasion. — Removal to Durham. — Carelepho.— Catalogue of Durham Library. — Hugh de Pusar. — Anthony Bek. — Richard de Bury and his Philobiblon, etc.

THE Benedictine monastery of Lindesfarne, or the Holy Island, as it was called, was founded through the instrumentality of Oswald, the son of Ethelfrith, king of Northumberland, who was anxious for the promulgation of the Christian faith within his dominions. Aidan, the first bishop of whom we have any distinct account, was appointed about the year 635. Bede tells us that he used frequently to retire to the Isle of Farne, that he might pray in private and be undisturbed.* This small island, distant about nine miles from the church of Lindesfarne, obtained great celebrity

* Bede's Eccles. Hist., B. iii. c. xvi.

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from St. Cuthbert, who sought that quiet spot and led there a lonely existence in great continence of mind and body.* In 685 he was appointed to the see of Lindesfarne, where, by his pious example and regular life, he instructed many in their religious duties. The name of this illustrious saint is intimately connected with a most magnificent specimen of calligraphical art of the eighth century, preserved in the British Museum,† and well known by the name of the Durham Book, or Saint Cuthbert's Gospels; it was written some years after the death of that Saint, in honor of his memory, by Egfrith, a monk of Lindesfarne, who was made bishop of that see in the year 698. At Egfrith's death in 721, his successor, Æthilwald, most beautifully bound it in gold and precious stones, and Bilfrid, a hermit, richly illuminated it by prefixing to each gospel a beautiful painting representing one of the Evangelists, and a tesselated cross, executed in a most elaborate manner. He also displayed great skill by illuminating the large capital letters at the commencement of each gospel.‡ Doubtless, the hermit Bilfrid was an eminent artist in his day. Aldred, the Glossator, a priest of Durham, about the year 950, still more enriched this precious volume by interlining it with a Saxon Gloss, or version of the Latin text of St. Jerome, of which the original manuscript is a copy. § It is

* Bede, B. iv. c. xxvii.

† Marked Nero, D. iv. in the Cottonian collection.

‡ The illuminations are engraved in Strutt's *Horda.*

§ There is prologue to the Canons and Prefaces of St. Jerome and Eusebius, and also a beautiful calendar written in compartments, elaborately finished in an architectural style.

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therefore, one of the most venerable of those early attempts to render the holy scriptures into the vernacular tongue, and is on that account an interesting relic to the Christian reader, and, no doubt, formed the choicest volume in the library of Lindesfarne.*

But imperfectly, indeed, have I described the splendid manuscript which is now lying, in all its charms, before me. And as I mark its fine old illuminations, so bright in color, and so chaste in execution, the accuracy of its transcription, and the uniform beauty of its calligraphy, my imagination carries me back to the quiet cloister of the old Saxon scribe who wrote it, and I can see in Egfrith, a bibliomaniac, of no mean pretensions, and in Bilfrid, a monkish illuminator, well initiated in the mysteries of his art. The manuscript contains 258 double columned folio pages, and the paintings of the Evangelists each occupy an entire page. We learn the history of its production from a very long note at the end of the manuscript, written by the hand of the glossator.†

But sad misfortunes were in store for the holy monks, for about 793, or a little earlier, when Highbald was abbot, the Danes burnt down the monastery and murdered the ecclesiastics; "most

* He also transcribed the Durham Ritual, recently printed by the Surtee Society; when Alfred wrote this volume he was with bishop Alfsige, p. 185, 8vo. *Lond.* 1840.

† For an account of this rare gem of Saxon art, see *Selden Præf. ad. Hist. Angl.* p. 25. *Marshall Observat. in Vers. Sax. Evang.*, 491. *Dibdin's Decameron, p.* lii. *Smith's Bibl. Cotton. Hist. et Synop.*, p. 33.

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dreadful lightnings and other prodigies," says Simeon of Durham, "are said to have portended the impending ruin of this place; on the 7th of June they came to the church of Lindesfarne, miserably plundered all places, overthrew the altars, and carried away all the treasures of the church, some of the monks they slew, some they carried away captives, some they drowned in the sea, and others much afflicted and abused they turned away naked."* Fortunately some of the poor monks escaped, and after a short time returned to their old spot, and with religious zeal set about repairing the damage which the sacred edifice had sustained; after its restoration they continued comparatively quiet till the time of Eardulfus, when the Danes in the year 875, again invaded England and burned down the monastery of Lindesfarne. The monks obtained some knowledge of their coming and managed to effect their escape, taking with them the body of St. Cuthbert, which they highly venerated, with many other honored relics; they then set out with the bishop Eardulfus and the abbot Eadrid at their head on a sort of pilgrimage to discover some suitable resting place for the remains of their saint; but finding no safe locality, and becoming fatigued by the irksomeness of the journey, they as a last resource resolved to pass over to Ireland. For this purpose they proceeded to the sea, but no sooner were they on board the ship than a terrific storm arose, and had it not been for the fond care of their patron saint, a watery grave would have been forever their

* Simeon of Durham translated by Stevens, p. 87.

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resting place; but, as it was, their lives were spared, and the holy bones preserved to bless mankind, and work wondrous miracles in the old church of the Saxon monks. Nevertheless, considerable damage was sustained, and the fury of the angry waves forced them back again to the shore. The monks deeming this an indication of God's will that they should remain, decided upon doing so, and leaving the ship, they agreed to proceed on their way rejoicing, and place still greater trust in the mercy of God and the miraculous influence of St. Cuthbert's holy bones; but some whose reliance on Divine providence appears not so conspicuous, became dissatisfied, and separated from the rest till at last only seven monks were left besides their bishop and abbot. Their relics were too numerous and too cumbersome to be conveyed by so small a number, and they knew not how to proceed; but one of the seven whose name was Hanred had a vision, wherein he was told that they should repair to the sea, where they would find a book of Gospels adorned with gold and precious stones, which had been lost out of the ship when they were in the storm; and that after that he should see a bridle hanging on a tree, which he should take down and put upon a horse that would come to him, which horse he should put to a cart he would also find, to carry the holy body, which would be an ease to them. All these things happening accordingly, they travelled with more comfort, following the horse, which way soever he should lead. The book above mentioned was no ways damaged by the water, and is still

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preserved in the library at Durham,* where it remained till the Reformation, when it was stript of its jewelled covering, and after passing through many hands, ultimately came into the possession of Sir Robert Cotton, in whose collection, as we have said before, it is now preserved in the British Museum.

I cannot refrain, even at the risk of incurring some blame for my digression, presenting the reader with a part of a letter full of fraternal love, which Alcuin addressed to the monks of Lindesfarne on this sad occasion.

"Your dearest fraternity," says he, "was wont to afford me much joy. But now how different! though absent, I deeply lament the more your tribulations and calamities; the manner in which the Pagans contaminate the sanctuaries of God, and shed the blood of saints around the altar, devastating the joy of our house, and trampling on the bodies of holy men in the temple of God, as though they were treading on a dunghill in the street. But of what effect is our wailing unless we come before the altars of Christ and cry, 'Spare me, O Lord! spare thy people, and take not thine inheritance from them;' nor let the Pagans say, 'Where is the God of the Christians?' Besides who is to pacify the churches of Britain, if St. Cuthbert cannot defend them with so great a number of saints? Nevertheless do not trouble the mind about these things, for God chasteneth all the sons whom he receiveth, and therefore perhaps afflicts you the more, because he the more

* Simeon of Durham, by Stevens.

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loveth you. Jerusalem, the delightful city of God, was lost by the Chaldean scourge; and Rome, the city of the holy Apostles and innumerable martyrs, was surrounded by the Pagans and devastated. Well nigh the whole of Europe is evacuated by the scourging sword of the Goths or the Huns. But in the same manner in which God preserved the stars to illuminate the heavens, so will He preserve the churches to ornament, and in their office to strengthen and increase the Christian religion."*

Thus it came to pass that Eardulphus was the last bishop of Lindesfarne and the first of Cunecacestre, or Chester-upon-the-Street, to which place his see was removed previous to its final settlement at Durham.

After a succession of many bishops, some recorded as learned and bookish by monkish annalists, and nearly all benefactors in some way to their church, we arrive at the period when Aldwine was consecrated bishop of that see in the year 990. The commotions of his time made his presidency a troubled and harassing one. Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olauis, king of Norway, invaded England, and spreading themselves in bodies over the kingdom, committed many and cruel depredations; a strong body of these infested the northern coast, and approached the vicinity of Chester-on-the-Street. This so alarmed Aldwine, that he resolved to quit his church—for the great riches and numerous relics of that holy place were attractive objects to the plundering propensities of

* Ep. viii.

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the invaders. Carrying, therefore, the bones of St. Cuthbert with them—for that box of mortal dust was ever precious in the sight of those old monks—and the costly treasures of the church, not forgetting their books, the monks fled to Ripon, and the see, which after similar adversities their predecessors one hundred and thirteen years ago had settled at Chester, was forever removed. It is true three or four months after, as Symeon of Durham tells us, they attempted to return, but when they reached a place called Werdelan, "on the east and near unto Durham," they could not move the bier on which the body of St. Cuthbert was carried, although they applied their united strength to effect it. The superstition, or perhaps simplicity, of the monks instantly interpreted this into a manifestation of divine interference, and they resolved not to return again to their old spot. And we are further told that after three days' fasting and prayer, the Lord vouchsafed to reveal to them that they should bear the saintly burden to Durham, a command which they piously and cheerfully obeyed. Having arrived there, they fixed on a wild and uncultivated site, and making a simple oratory of wattles for the temporary reception of their relics, they set zealously to work—for these old monks well knew what labor was—to cut down wood, to clear the ground, and build an habitation for themselves. Shortly after, in the wilderness of that neglected spot, the worthy bishop Aldwine erected a goodly church of stone to the honor of God, and as a humble tribute of gratitude and love; and so it was that Aldwine,

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the last bishop of Chester-on-the-Street, was the first of Durham.

When William Carelepho, a Norman monk, was consecrated bishop, the church had so increased in wealth and usefulness, that fresh wants arose, more space was requisite, and a grander structure would be preferable; the bishop thereupon pulled the old church of Aldwine down and commenced the erection of a more magnificent one in its place, as the beauty of Durham cathedral sufficiently testifies even now; and will not the lover of artistic beauty award his praise to the Norman bishop—those massive columns and stupendous arches excite the admiring wonder of all; built on a rocky eminence and surrounded by all the charms of a romantic scenery, it is one of the finest specimens of architecture which the enthusiasm of monkish days dedicated to piety and to God. Its liberal founder however did not live to see it finished, for he died in the year 1095, two years after laying its foundation stone. His book-loving propensities have been honorably recorded, and not only was he fond of reading, but kept the pens of the scribes in constant motion, and used himself to superintend the transcription of manuscripts, as the colophon of a folio volume in Durham library fully proves.* The monkish bibliophiles of his church received from him a precious gift of about 40 volumes, containing among other valuable books Prosper, Pompeii, Tertullian, and a great Bible in two volumes.†

* Tertia Quinquagina Augustini, marked B. ii. 14.
† Surtee publications, vol. i. p. 117.

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It would have been difficult perhaps to have found in those days a body of monks so "bookish" as those of Durham; not only did they transcribe with astonishing rapidity, proving that there was no want of vellum there, but they must have bought or otherwise collected a great number of books; for the see of Durham, in the early part of the 12th century, could show a library embracing nearly 300 volumes.*

Nor let the reader imagine that the collection possessed no merit in a literary point of view, or that the monks cared for little else save legends of saints or the literature of the church; the catalogue proves them to have enjoyed a more liberal and a more refined taste, and again display the cloistered students of the middle ages as the preservers of classic learning. This is a point worth observing on looking over the old parchment catalogues of the monks; for as by their Epistles we obtain a knowledge of their intimacy with the old writers, and the use they made of them, so by their catalogues we catch a glimpse of the means they possessed of becoming personally acquainted with their beauties; by the process much light may be thrown on the gloom of those long past times, and perhaps we shall gain too a better view of the state of learning existing then. But that the reader may judge for himself, I extract the names of some of the writers whom the monks of Durham preserved and read:

* This catalogue is preserved at Durham, in the library of the Dean and Chapter, marked B. iv. 24. It is printed in the Surtee publications, vol. i. p. 1.

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Alcuin.	Galen.	Persius.
Ambrose.	Gregory.	Priscian.
Aratores.	Haimo.	Peter Lombard.
Anselm.	Horace.	Plato.
Augustine.	Homer.	Pompeius Trogus.
Aviany.	Hugo.	Quintilian.
Bede.	Juvenal.	Rabanus.
Boethius.	Isidore.	Solinus.
Bernard.	Josephus.	Servius.
Cassian.	Lucan.	Statius.
Cassiodorus.	Marcianus.	Terence.
Claudius.	Maximian.	Tully.
Cyprian.	Orosius.	Theodulus.
Donatus.	Ovid.	Virgil.
Esop.	Prudentius.	Gesta Anglorum.
Eutropius.	Prosper.	Gesta Normanorum.

Hugh de Pussar,* consecrated bishop in 1153, is the next who attracts our attention by his bibliomanical renown. He possessed perhaps the finest copy of the Holy Scriptures of any private collector; and he doubtless regarded his "*unam Bibliam in* iv. *magnis voluminibus*," with the veneration of a divine and the fondness of a student. He collected what in those times was deemed a respectable library, and bequeathed no less than sixty or seventy volumes to the Durham monks, including his great Bible, which has ever since been preserved with religious care; from a catalogue of them we learn his partiality for classical literature; a Tully, Sedulus, Priscian, and Claudius, are mentioned among them.†

* "King Stephen was vncle vnto him."—*Godwin's Cat. of Bishops*, 511.

† He died in 1195.—Godwin, p. 735. He gave them also another Bible in two volumes; a list of the whole is printed in the Surtee publications, vol. i. p. 118.

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Anthony Bek, who was appointed to the see in the year 1283, was a most ambitious and haughty prelate, and caused great dissensions in his church. History proves how little he was adapted for the responsible duties of a bishop, and points to the field of battle or civil pomp as most congenial to his disposition. He ostentatiously displayed the splendor of a Palatine Prince, when he contributed his powerful aid to the cause of his sovereign, in the Scottish war, by a retinue of 500 horse, 1000 foot, 140 knights, and 26 standard bearers,* rendered doubly imposing in those days of saintly worship and credulity, by the patronage of St. Cuthbert, under whole holy banner they marched against a brave and noble foe. His arbitrary temper caused sad quarrels in the cloister, which ultimately gave rise to a tedious law proceeding between him and the prior about the year 1300;† from a record of this affair we learn that the bishop had borrowed some books from the library which afterwards he refused to return; there was among them a Decretal, a history of England, a Missal, and a volume called "The book of St. Cuthbert, in which the secrets of the monastery are written," which was alone valued at £200,‡ probably in consideration of the important and delicate matters contained therein.

* Surtee's Hist. of Durham, vol. i. p. xxxii. "He was wonderfull rich, not onely in ready money but in lands also, and temporall revenues. For he might dispend yeerely 5000 marks."—*Godwin's Cat. Eng. Bish.* 4to. 1601, p. 520.

† Robert de Graystane's ap. Wharton's Angl. Sacr. p. 748, tom. i. —*Hutchinson's Durham*, vol. i. p. 244.

‡ Surtee publ. vol. i. p. 121.

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These proceedings were instituted by prior Hoton, who was fond of books, and had a great esteem for learning; he founded a college at Oxford for the monkish students of his church.* On more than one occasion he sent parcels of books to Oxford; in a list of an early date it appears that the monks of Durham sent at one time twenty volumes, and shortly after fifteen more, consisting principally of church books and lives of saints.† The numbers thus taken from their library the monks, with that love of learning for which they were so remarkable, anxiously replaced, by purchasing about twenty volumes, many of which contained a great number of small but choice pieces.‡

Robert de Graystane, a monk of Durham, was elected bishop by the prior and chapter, and confirmed on the 10th of November, 1333, but the king, Edward III., wishing to advance his treasurer to that see, refused his sanction to the proceeding; monk Robert was accordingly deposed, and Richard Angraville received the mitre in his stead. He was consecrated on the 19th of December in the same year, by John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, and installed by proxy on the 10th of January, 1334.

Angraville, Aungerville, or as he is more commonly called Richard de Bury, is a name which every bibliophile will honor and esteem; he was indeed a bibliomaniac of the first order, and a sketch of his life is not only indispensable here,

* Raine's North Durham, p. 85.
† Surtee public. vol. 1. p. 39–40.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 41.

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but cannot fail to interest the book-loving reader. But before entering more at large into his bookish propensities and talents, it will be necessary to say something of his early days and the illustrious career which attended his political and ecclesiastical life. Richard de Bury, the son of Sir Richard Angraville, was born, as his name implies, at Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, in the year 1287.*

Great attention was paid to the instruction of his youthful mind by his maternal uncle, John de Willowby, a priest, previous to his removal to Oxford. At the university he obtained honorable distinction, as much for his erudition and love of books as for the moral rectitude of his behavior. These pleasing traits were the stepping stones to his future greatness, and on the strength of them he was selected as one fully competent to undertake the education of Edward Prince of Wales, afterwards the third king of that name; and to Richard de Bury "may be traced the love for literature and the arts displayed by his pupil when on the throne. He was rewarded with the lucrative appointment of treasurer of Gascony."†

When Edward, the prince of Wales, was sent to Paris to assume the dominion of Guienne, which the king had resigned in his favor, he was accompanied by queen Isabella, his mother, whose criminal frailty, and afterwards conspiracy, with Mortimer, aroused the just indignation of her royal husband; and commenced those civil dissensions which ren-

* Chambre Contin. Hist. Dunelm. apud Wharton Angliæ Sacra, tom. i. p. 765.

† Lord Campbell's Lives of the Lord Chancellors, vol. i. p. 219.

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dered the reign of Edward II. so disastrous and turbulent. It was during these commotions that Richard de Bury became a zealous partizan of the queen, to whom he fled, and ventured to supply her pecuniary necessities from the royal revenues; for this, however, he was surrounded with imminent danger; for the king, instituting an inquiry into these proceedings, attempted his capture, which he narrowly escaped by secreting himself in the belfry of the convent of Brothers Minor at Paris.*

When the "most invincible and most magnificent king" Edward III. was firmly seated upon the throne, dignity and power was lavishly bestowed on this early bibliomaniac. In an almost incredible space of time he was appointed cofferer to the king, treasurer of the wardrobe, archdeacon of Northampton, prebendary of Lincoln, Sarum, Litchfield, and shortly afterwards keeper of the privy seal, which office he held for five years. During this time he twice undertook a visit to Italy, on a mission to the supreme pontiff, John XXII., who not only entertained him with honor and distinction, but appointed him chaplain to his principal chapel, and gave him a bull, nominating him to the first vacant see in England.

He acquired whilst there an honor which reflected more credit than even the smiles of his holiness—the brightest of the Italian poets, Petrarch of never dying fame—bestowed upon him his acquaintance and lasting friendship. De Bury entered Avignon for the first time in the same

* Absconditus est in Campanili fratrum minorum.—*Chambre ap. Wharton*, tom. i. p. 765

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year that Petrarch took up his residence there, in the house of Colonna, bishop of Lombes: two such enlightened scholars and indefatigable book collectors, sojourning in the same city, soon formed an intimacy.* How interesting must their friendly meetings have been, and how delightful the hours spent in Petrarch's library, which was one of great extent and rarity; and it is probable too that De Bury obtained from the poet a few treasures to enrich his own stores; for the generosity of Petrarch was so excessive, that he could scarcely withhold what he knew was so dearly coveted. His benevolence on one occasion deprived him and posterity of an inestimable volume; he lent some manuscripts of the classics to his old master, who, needing pecuniary aid, pawned them, and Cicero's books, *De Gloria*, were in this manner irrecoverably lost.† Petrarch acted like a true lover of learning; for when the shadows of old age approached, he presented his library, full of rare and ancient manuscripts, many of them enriched by his own notes, to the Venetian Senate, and thus laid the foundation of the library of Saint-Marc; he always employed a number of transcribers, who invariably accompanied him on his journeys, and he kept horses to carry his books.‡ His love of reading was intense. "Whether," he writes in one of his epistles, "I am being shaved, or having my hair cut, whether I am riding on horseback or taking my meals, I either read myself or get some one to

* In one of his letters Petrarch speaks of De Bury as *Virum ardentis ingenii*, Pet. ep. 1-3.

† Epist. Seniles, lib. xvi. ep. 1.

‡ Foscolo's Essays on Petrarch, p. 151.

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read to me; on the table where I dine, and by the side of my bed, I have all the materials for writing.* With the friendship of such a student, how charming must have been the visit of the English ambassador, and how much valuable and interesting information must he have gleaned by his intercourse with Petrarch and his books. At Rome Richard de Bury obtained many choice volumes and rare old manuscripts of the classics; for at Rome indeed, at that time, books had become an important article of commerce, and many foreign collectors besides the English bibliomaniac resorted there for these treasures: to such an extend was this carried on, that the jealousy of Petrarch was aroused, who, in addressing the Romans, exclaims: "Are you not ashamed that the wrecks of your ancient grandeur, spared by the inundation of the barbarians, are daily sold by your miscalculating avarice to foreigners? And that Rome is no where less known and less loved than at Rome?"†

The immense ecclesiastical and civil revenues which Aungraville enjoyed, enabled him whilst in Italy to maintain a most costly and sumptuous establishment: in his last visit alone he is said to have expended 5,000 marks, and he never appeared in public without a numerous retinue of twenty clerks and thirty-six esquires; an appearance which better became the dignity of his civil office, than the Christian humility of his ecclesiastical functions. On his return from this distinguished sojourn, he was appointed, as we have said before,

* Foscolo's Essays on Petrarch, p. 156. Famil. ep. lxxii.
† Hortatio ad Nicol. Laurent Petrar., Op. vol. i. p. 596.

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through the instrumentality of Edward III., to the bishopric of Durham. But not content with these high preferments, his royal master advanced him to still greater honor, and on the 28th of September, 1334, he was made Lord Chancellor of England, which office he filled till the 5th of June, 1335, when he exchanged it for that of high treasurer. He was twice appointed ambassador to the king of France, respecting the claims of Edward of England to the crown of that country. De Bury, whilst negociating this affair, visited Antwerp and Brabant for the furtherance of the object of his mission, and he fully embraced this rare opportunity of adding to his literary stores, and returned to his fatherland well laden with many choice and costly manuscripts; for in all his perilous missions he carried about with him, as he tells us, that love of books which many waters could not extinguish, but which greatly sweetened the bitterness of peregrination. Whilst at Paris he was especially assiduous in collecting, and he relates with intense rapture, how many choice libraries he found there full of all kinds of books, which tempted him to spend his money freely; and with a gladsome heart he gave his dirty lucre for treasures so inestimable to the bibliomaniac.

Before the commencement of the war which arose from the disputed claims of Edward, Richard de Bury returned to enjoy in sweet seclusion his bibliomanical propensities. The modern bibliophiles who know what it is to revel in the enjoyment of a goodly library, luxuriant in costly bindings and rich in bibliographical rarities, who are

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fully susceptible to the delights and exquisite sensibilities of that sweet madness called bibliomania, will readily comprehend the multiplied pleasures of that early and illustrious bibliophile in the seclusion of Auckland Palace; he there ardently applied his energies and wealth to the accumulation of books; and whilst engaged in this pleasing avocation, let us endeavor to catch a glimpse of him. Chambre, to whom we are indebted for many of the above particulars, tells us that Richard de Bury was learned in the governing of his house, hospitable to strangers, of great charity, and fond of disputation with the learned, but he principally delighted in a multitude of books, *Iste summe delectabatur multitudine librorum*,* and possessed more books than all the bishops put together, an assertion which requires some modification, and must not be too strictly regarded, for book collecting at that time was becoming a favorite pursuit; still the language of Chambre is expressive, and clearly proves how extensive must have been his libraries, one of which he formed in each of his various palaces, *diversis maneriis*. So engrossed was that worthy bishop with the passion of book collecting, that his dormitory was strewed *jucebant* with them, in every nook and corner choice volumes were scattered, so that it was almost impossible for any person to enter without placing his feet upon some book.† He kept in regular employment no small assemblage of antiquaries, scribes, bookbinders, correctors, illuminators, and all such persons who

* *Apud Wharton Ang. Sac.* tom. i. p. 765.
† *Ibid.*

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were capable of being useful in the service of books, *librorum servitiis utiliter.**

During his retirement he wrote a book, from the perusal of which the bibliomaniac will obtain a full measure of delight and instruction. It is a faithful record of the life and experience of this bibliophile of the olden time. He tells us how he collected his vellum treasures—his "crackling tomes" so rich in illuminations and calligraphic art!—how he preserved them, and how he would have others read them. Costly indeed must have been the book gems he amassed together; for foreign countries, as well as the scribes at home, yielded ample means to augment his stores, and were incessantly employed in searching for rarities which his heart yearned to possess. He completed his Philobiblon at his palace at Auckland on the 24th of January, 1344.†

* MS. Harleian, No. 3224, fo. 89, b.

† There are two MSS. of the Philobiblon in the British Museum, which I quote in giving my Latin Extracts. The first is in the Cotton collection, marked Appendix iv. fol. 103. At the end are these lines, *Ric. de Aungervile cognominato de Bury, Dunelm. Ebisc. Philobiblon completum in Manerio de Auckland, d.* 24 *Jan.* 1344, fol. 119, b. The other is in the Harleian Collection, No. 3224, both are in fine preservation. The first printed edition appeared at Cologne, 1473, in 4to, without pagination, signatures, or catchwords, with 48 leaves, 26 lines on a full page; for some time, on account of its excessive rarity, which kept it from the eyes of book-lovers, bibliographers confused it with the second edition printed by John and Conrad Hüst, at Spires, in 1483, 4to, which, like the first, is without pagination, signatures, or catchwords, but it has only 39 pages, with 31 lines on a full page. Two editions were printed in 1500, 4to, at Paris, but I have only seen one of them. A fifth edition was printed at Oxford by T. J(ames), 4to, 1599. In 1614 it was published by Goldastus in 8vo, at Frankfort, with a *Philologicarium Epistolarum Centuria una.* Another edition of this same book was printed in 1674, 8vo, at Leipsic, and a still better edition appeared in 1703

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We learn from the prologue to this rare and charming little volume how true and genuine a biblomaniac was Richard de Bury, for he tells us there, that a vehement love *amor excitet* of books had so powerfully seized all the faculties of his mind, that dismissing all other avocations, he had applied the ardor of his thoughts to the acquisition of books. Expense to him was quite an afterthought, and he begrudged no amount to possess a volume of rarity or antiquity. Wisdom, he says, is an infinite treasure *infinitus thesaurus*, the value of which, in his opinion, was beyond all things; for how, he asks, can the sum be too great which purchases such vast delight. We cannot admire the purity of his Latin so much as the enthusiasm which pervades it; but in the eyes of the bibliophile this will amply compensate for his minor imperfections. When expatiating on the value of his books he appears to unbosom, as it were, all the inward rapture of love. A very *helluo librorum*—a very Maliabechi of a collector, yet he encouraged no selfish feeling to alloy his pleasure or to mingle bitterness with the sweets of his avocation. His knowledge he freely imparted to others, and his books he gladly lent. This is apparent in the Philobiblon; and his generous spirit warms his diction—not always chaste—into a fluent eloquence. His composition overflows with figurative expressions, yet the rude, ungainly form on which they

by Schmidt, in 4to. The Philobiblon has recently been translated by Inglis, 8vo, *Lond.* 1834, with much accuracy and spirit, and I have in many cases availed myself of this edition, though I do not always exactly follow it.

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are moulded deprive them of all claim to elegance or chastity; but while the homeliness of his diction fails to impress us with an idea of his versatility as a writer, his chatty anecdotal style rivets and keeps the mind amused, so that we rise from the little book with the consciousness of having obtained much profit and satisfaction from its perusal. Nor is it only the bibliomaniac who may hope to taste this pleasure in devouring the sweet contents of the Philobiblon; for there are many hints, many wise sayings, and many singular ideas scattered over its pages, which will amuse or instruct the general reader and the lover of olden literature. We observe too that Richard de Bury, as a writer, was far in advance of his age, and his work manifests an unusual freedom and independence of mind in its author; for although living in monkish days, when the ecclesiastics were almost supreme in power and wealth, he was fully sensible of the vile corruptions and abominations which were spreading about that time so fearfully among some of the cloistered devotees—the spotless purity of the primitive times was scarce known then—and the dark periods of the middle ages were bright and holy, when compared with the looseness and carnality of those turbulent days. Richard de Bury dipped his pen in gall when he spoke of these sad things, and doubtless many a revelling monk winced under the lashing words he applied to them; not only does he upbraid them for their carelessness in religion, but severely reprimands their inattention to literature and learning. "The monks," he says, "in the present day seem to be occupied in

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emptying cups, not in correcting codices, *Calicibus epotandis, non codicibus emendandis*, which they mingle with the lascivious music of Timotheus, and emulate his immodest manners, so that the sportive song *cantus ludentis*, and not the plaintive hymn, proceeds from the cells of the monks. Flocks and fleeces, grain and granaries, gardens and olives, potions and goblets, are in this day lessons and studies of the monks, except some chosen few.* He speaks in equally harsh terms of the religious mendicants. He accuses them of forgetting the words and admonitions of their holy founder, who was a great lover of books. He wishes them to imitate the ancient members of that fraternity, who were poor in spirit, but most rich in faith. But it must be remembered, that about this time the mendicant friars were treated with undeserved contempt, and much ill feeling rose against them among the clergy, but the clergy were somewhat prejudiced in their judgment. The order of St. Dominic, which a century before gloried in the approbation of the pope, and in the enjoyment of his potential bulls, now winced under gloomy and foreboding frowns. The sovereign Pontiff Honorius III. gratefully embraced the service of these friars, and confirmed their order with important privileges. His successor, Gregory IX., ratified these favors to gain their useful aid in propping up the papal power, and commanded the ecclesiastics by a bull to receive these "well-beloved children and preaching friars" of his, with

* "Greges et Vellera, Fruges et honea, Porri et Olera, Potus et Patera rectiones sunt hodie et studio monachorum."—MS. Harl. 2324, fol. 79, a; MS. Cot. ap. iv. fo. 108, a.

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hospitality and respect. Thus established, they were able to bear the tossings to and fro which succeeding years produced; but in Richard de Bury's time darker clouds were gathering—great men had severely chastized them with their pens and denounced them in their preachings. Soon after a host of others sprang up—among the most remarkable of whom were Johannes Poliaco, and Fitzralph, Archbishop of Armagh, who was a dear friend and chaplain of Richard de Bury's and many learned disputations were carried on between them.* The celebrated oration of Fitzralph's, cited in the presence of the pope, was a powerful blow to the mendicant friars—an examination of the matter has rather perplexed than cleared the subject, and I find it difficult which side to favor, the clergy seem to denounce the begging friars more from envy and interested motives, for they looked with extreme jealousy at the encroachments they had made upon their ecclesiastical functions of confession, absolution, etc., so profitable to the church in those days. In these matters the church had hitherto reserved a sole monopoly, and the clergy now determined to protect it with all the powers of oratorial denunciation; but, looking beyond this veil of prejudice, I am prone to regard them favorably, for their intense love of books, which they sought for and bought up with passionate eagerness. Fitzralph, quite unintentionally, bestows a bright compliment upon them, and as it bears upon our subject and illustrates the learning of

* Wharton Ang. Sac., tom, i. p. 766, he is called *Ricardus Fitz-Rause postomodum Archiepiscopus Armachanus.*

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the time, I am tempted to give a few extracts; he sorely laments the decrease of the number of students in the university of Oxford; "So," says he, "that yet in my tyme, in the universitie of Oxenford, were thirty thousand Scolers at ones; and now beth unnethe* sixe thousand."† All the blame of this he lays to the friars, and accuses them of doing "more grete damage to learning." "For these orders of beggers, for endeless wynnynges that thei geteth by beggyng of the forseide pryvyleges of schriftes and sepultures and othere, thei beth now so multiplyed in conventes and in persons. That many men tellith that in general studies unnethe, is it founde to sillynge a profitable book of ye faculte of art, of dyvynyte, of lawe canon, of phisik, other of lawe civil, but alle bookes beth y-bougt of Freres, so that en ech convent of Freres is a noble librarye and a grete,‡ and so that ene rech Frere that hath state in scole, siche as thei beth nowe, hath an hughe librarye. And also y-sent of my Sugettes§ to scole thre other foure persons, and hit is said me that some of them beth come home azen for thei myst nougt‖ finde to selle ovn goode Bible; nother othere couenable¶ books." This strange accusation proves how industriously the friars collected books, and we cannot help regarding them with much esteem for doing so. Richard de Bury fully admits his obligations to the mendicants, from whom he obtained many choice transcripts. "When indeed," says he, "we hap-

* Scarcely.
† Translated by Trevisa, MS. Harleian, No. 1900, fol 11, b.
‡ The original is *grandis et nobilis libraria.*
§ Chaplain. ‖ Could not. ¶ Profitable.

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pened 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 satchells and baskets, 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 in itself all that is delectable; and moreover, he says, that he found these friars "not selfish hoarders, but meet professors of enlightened knowledge."*

In the seventh chapter of his work, he deplores the sad destruction of books by war and fire, and laments the loss of the 700,000 volumes, which happened in the Alexandrian expedition; but the eighth chapter is the one which the bibliomaniac will regard with the greatest interest, for Richard de Bury tells us there how he collected together his rich and ample library. "For although," he writes, "from our youth we have ever been delighted to hold special and social communion with literary men and lovers of books, yet prosperity attending us, having obtained the notice of his majesty the king, and being received into his own family, we acquired a most ample facility of visiting at pleasure and of hunting, as it were, some of the most delightful covers, the public and private libraries *privatas tum communes*, both of the regulars and seculars. Indeed, while we performed the duties of Chancellor and Treasurer of the most invincible and ever magnificently triumphant king of England, Ed-

* Philobiblon, transl. by Inglis, p. 56.

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ward III., of that name after the conquest, whose days may the Most High long and tranquilly deign to preserve. After first inquiring into the things that concerned his court, and then the public affairs of his kingdom, an easy opening was afforded us, under the countenance of royal favor, for freely searching the hiding places of books. For the flying fame of our love had already spread in all directions, and it was reported not only that we had a longing desire for books, and *especially for old ones*, but that any one could more easily obtain our favors by quartos than by money.* Wherefore, when supported by the bounty of the aforesaid prince of worthy memory, we were enabled to oppose or advance, to appoint or discharge; crazy quartos and tottering folios, precious however in our sight as well as in our affections, flowed in most rapidly from the great and the small, instead of new year's gift and remunerations, and instead of presents and jewels. Then the cabinets of the most noble monasteries *tunc nobilissimos monasterios* were opened, cases were unlocked, caskets were unclasped and sleeping volumes *soporata volumina* which had slumbered for long ages in their sepulchres were roused up, and those that lay hid in dark places *in locis tenebrosis* were overwhelmed with the rays of a new light. Books heretofore

* "Curiam deinde vero Rem. publicam Regni sui Cacellarii, viz.: est ac Thesaurii fugeremur officiis, patescebat nobis aditus faciles regal favoris intuitu, ad libros latebras libere perscruta tandas amoris quippe nostri fama volatitis jam ubiqs. percreluit tam qs. libros *et maxime veterum* ferabatur cupidite las vestere posse vero quemlibet nostrum per quaternos facilius quam per pecuniam adipisa favorem." —MS. Harl. fo. 85, a. MS. Cott. 110, b.

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most delicate now become corrupted and abominable, lay lifeless, covered indeed with the excrements of mice and pierced through with the gnawing of worms; and those that were formerly clothed with purple and fine linen were now seen reposing in dust and ashes, given over to oblivion and the abode of moths. Amongst these, nevertheless, as time served, we sat down more voluptuously than the delicate physician could do amidst his stores of aromatics, and where we found an object of love, we found also an assuagement. Thus the sacred vessel of science came into the power of our disposal, some being given, some sold, and not a few lent for a time. Without doubt many who perceived us to be contented with gifts of this kind, studied to contribute these things freely to our use, which they could most conveniently do without themselves. We took care, however, to conduct the business of such so favorably, that the profit might accrue to them; justice suffered therefore no detriment." Of this, however, a doubt will intrude itself upon our minds, in defiance of the affirmation of my Lord Chancellor; indeed, the paragraph altogether is unfavorable to the character of so great a man, and fully proves the laxity of opinion, in those days of monkish supremacy, on judicial matters; but we must be generous, and allow something for the corrupt usages of the age, but I cannot omit a circumstance clearly illustrative of this point, which occurred between the bibliomanical Chancellor and the abbot of St. Alban's, the affair is recorded in the chronicle of the abbey, and transpired during the time Richard de Bury held the privy seal; in

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that office he appears to have favored the monks of the abbey in their disputes with the townspeople of St. Alban's respecting some possessions to which the monks tenaciously adhered and defended as their rightful property. Richard de Wallingford, who was then abbot, convoked the elder monks *convocatis senioribus*, and discussed with them, as to the most effectual way to obtain the goodwill and favor of de Bury; after due consideration it was decided that no gift was likely to prove so acceptable to that father of English bibliomania as a present of some of their choice books, and it was at last agreed to send four volumes, "that is to say Terence, a Virgil, a Quintilian, and Jerome against Ruffinus," and to sell him many others from their library; this they sent him intimation of, and a purchase was ultimately agreed upon between them. The monks sold to that rare collector, thirty-two choice tomes *triginta duos libros*, for the sum of fifty pounds of silver *quinginta libris argenti.** But there were other bibliophiles and bookworms than Richard de Bury in old England then; for many of the brothers of St. Alban's who had nothing to do with this transaction, cried out loudly against it, and denounced rather openly the policy of sacrificing their mental treasures for the acquisition of pecuniary gain, but fortunately the loss was only a temporary one, for on the death of Richard de Bury many of these volumes were restored to the monks, who in return

* MS. Cottonian Claudius, E. iv. fol. 203, b. *Warton's Hist. of Poetry, Dissert. ii.;* and *Hallam's* Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 611. Both notice this circumstance as a proof of the scarcity of books in De Bury's time.

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became the purchasers from his executors of many a rare old volume from the bishop's library.* To resume our extracts from the Philobiblon, De Bury proceeds to further particulars relative to his book-collecting career, and becomes quite eloquent in detailing these circumstances; but from the eighth chapter we shall content ourselves with one more paragraph. "Moreover," says he, "if we could have amassed cups of gold and silver, excellent horses, or no mean sums of money, we could in those days have laid up abundance of wealth for ourselves. But we regarded books not pounds, and valued codices more than florens, and preferred paltry pamphlets to pampered palfreys.† In addition to this we were charged with frequent embassies of the said prince of everlasting memory, and owing to the multiplicity of state affairs, we were sent first to the Roman chair, then to the court of France, then to the various other kingdoms of the world, on tedious embassies and in perilous times, carrying about with us that fondness for books, which many waters could not extinguish."‡ The booksellers found Richard de Bury a generous and profitable customer, and those

* *Ibid.* Among the MSS. in the Royal Library, there is a copy of John of Salisbury's *Ententicus* which contains the following note, "Hunc librum fecit dominus Symon abbas S. Albani, quem postea venditum domino *Ricardo* de Bury. Episcope Dunelmensi emit Michael abbas S. Albani ab executoribus prædicti episcopi, A. D. 1345." Marked 13 D. iv. 3. The same abbot expended a large sum in buying books for the library, but we shall speak more of Michael de Wentmore by and bye.

† "Sed revera libros non libras maluimus, Codicesque plus quam florenos, ac pampletos exiguos incrussatis prœtulimus palafridis."—MS. Harl. fo. 86, a. MS. Cott. fo. 111, a.

‡ Inglis's Translation, p. 53.

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residing abroad received commissions constantly from him. "Besides the opportunities," he writes, "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."*

Such was bibliomania five hundred years ago! and does not the reader behold in it the very type and personification of its existence now? does he not see in Richard de Bury the prototype of a much honored and agreeable bibliophile of our own time? Nor has the renowned "Maister Dibdin" described his book-hunting tours with more enthusiasm or delight; with what a thrill of rapture would that worthy doctor have explored those monastic treasures which De Bury found hid in *locis tenebrosis*, antique Bibles, rare Fathers, rich Classics or gems of monkish lore, enough to fire the brain of the most lymphatic bibliophile, were within the grasp of the industrious and eager Richard de Bury—that old "Amator Librorum," like his imitators of the present day, cared not whither he went to collect his books—dust and dirt were no barriers to him; at every nook and corner where a stationer's stall† appeared, he

* Inglis's Translation, p. 58.

† The Stationers or Booksellers carried on their business on open Stalls.—*Hallam, Lit. Europe*, vol. i. p. 339. It is pleasing to think that the same temptations which allure the bookworm now, in his perambulations, can claim such great antiquity, and that through so many centuries, bibliophiles and bibliopoles remain unaltered in their habits and singularities; but alas! this worthy relic of the middle ages I fear is passing into oblivion. Plate-glass fronts and bulky expensive catalogues form the bookseller's pride in these days of

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would doubtless tarry in defiance of the cold winds or scorching sun, exploring the ancient tomes reposing there. Nor did he neglect the houses of the country rectors; and even the humble habitations of the rustics were diligently ransacked to increase his collections, and from these sources he gleaned many rude but pleasing volumes, perhaps full of old popular poetry! or the wild Romances of Chivalry which enlivened the halls and cots of our forefathers in Gothic days.

We must not overlook the fact that this Treatise on the Love of Books was written as an accompaniment to a noble and generous gift. Many of the parchment volumes which De Bury had collected in his "*perilous embassies*," he gave, with the spirit of a true lover of learning, to the Durham College at Oxford, for the use of the Students of his Church. I cannot but regret that the names of these books, *of which he had made a catalogue*,* have not been preserved; perhaps the document may yet be discovered among the vast collections of manuscripts in the Oxonian libraries; but the book, being written for this purpose, the author thought it consistent that full directions should be given for the preservation and regulation of the library, and we find the last chapter devoted to this matter; but we must not close the Philobiblon without noticing his admonitions to the students, some of whom he upbraids for the care-

speed and progress, and offer more splendid temptations to the collector, but sad obstacles to the hungry student and black-letter bargain hunters.

* *Philob.* xix.

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lessness and disrespect which they manifest in perusing books. "Let there," says he, with all the veneration of a passionate booklover, "be a modest 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." * Loving and venerating a book as De Bury did, it was agony to see a volume suffering under the indignities of the ignorant or thoughtless student whom he thus keenly satirizes: "You will perhaps see a stiffnecked 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;" nor is he "ashamed to eat fruit and cheese over an open book, or to transfer his empty cup from side to side; he reclines his elbow on the volume, turns down the leaves, and puts bits of straw to denote the place he is reading; he stuffs the book with leaves and flowers, and so pollutes it with filth and dust." With this our extracts from the Philobiblon must close; enough has been said and transcribed to place the Lord Chancellor of the puissant King Edward III. among the foremost of the bibliomaniacs of the past, and to show how valuable were his efforts to literature and learning; indeed, like Petrarch in Italy was Richard De Bury in

* Inglis, p. 96. "In primis quidam circa claudenda et apienda volumina, sit matura modestia; ut nec præcipiti festinatione solvantur, nec inspectione finita, sina clausura debita dimittantur." *MS. Harl.* fol. 103.

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England: both enthusiastic collectors and preservers of ancient manuscripts, and both pioneers of that revival of European literature which soon afterwards followed. In the fourteenth century we cannot imagine a more useful or more essential person than the bibliomaniac, for that surely was the harvest day for the gathering in of that food on which the mind of future generations were to subsist. And who reaped so laboriously or gleaned so carefully as those two illustrious scholars?

Richard de Bury was no unsocial bookworm; for whilst he loved to seek the intercourse of the learned dead, he was far from being regardless of the living. Next to his clasped vellum tomes, nothing afforded him so much delight as an erudite disputation with his chaplains, who were mostly men of acknowledged learning and talent; among them were "Thomas Bradwardyn, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; and Richard Fitz-Raufe, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh; Walter Burley, John Maudyt, Robert Holcote, Richard of Kilwington, all Doctors in Theology, *omnes Doctores in Theologia;* Richard Benworth, afterwards Bishop of London, and Walter Segraffe, afterwards Bishop of Chester;"* with these congenial spirits Richard de Bury held long and pleasing conversations, doubtless full of old bookwisdom and quaint Gothic lore, derived from still quainter volumes; and after meals I dare say they discussed the choice volume which had been read during their repast, as was the pious custom of those old days, and which was not neglected by De Bury, for "his manner

* *Chambre ap. Wharton*, tom. i. p. 766.

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was at dinner and supper time to have some good booke read unto him."*

And now in bidding farewell to the illustrious Aungraville—for little more is known of his biography—let me not forget to pay a passing tribute of respect to his private character, which is right worthy of a cherished remembrance, and derives its principal lustre from the eminent degree in which he was endowed with the greatest of Christian virtues, and which, when practised with sincerity, covereth a multitude of sins; his charity, indeed, forms a delightful trait in the character of that great man; every week he distributed food to the poor; eight quarters of wheat *octo quarteria frumenti*, and the fragments from his own table comforted the indigent of his church; and always when he journeyed from Newcastle to Durham, he distributed twelve marks in relieving the distresses of the poor; from Durham to Stockton eight marks; and from the same place to his palace at Aukeland five marks; and and when he rode from Durham to Middleham he gave away one hundred shillings.† Living in troublous times, we do not find his name coupled with any great achievement in the political sphere; his talents were not the most propitious for a statesman among the fierce barons of the fourteenth century; his spirit loved converse with the departed great, and shone more to advantage in the quite closet of the bibliomaniac, or in fulfilling the benevolent duties of a bishop. Yet he was successful in all that the ambition of a statesman could desire,

* Godwin Cat. of Bish. 525.
† *Chambre ap. Wharton*, tom. i. p. 766.

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the friend and confidant of his king; holding the highest offices in the state compatible with his ecclesiastical position, with wealth in abundance, and blessed with the friendship of the learned and the good, we find little in his earthly career to darken the current of his existence, or to disturb the last hours of a life of near three score years. He died lamented, honored, and esteemed, at Aukeland palace, on the fourteenth of April, in the year 1345, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and was buried with all due solemnity before the altar of the blessed Mary Magdalene, at the south angle of the church of Durham. His bones are now mingled with the dust and gone, but his memory is engraven on tablets of life; the hearts of all bibliomaniacs love and esteem his name for the many virtues with which it was adorned, and delight to chat with his choice old spirit in the Philobiblon, so congenial to their bookish souls. No doubt the illustrious example of Richard de Bury tended materially to spread far and wide the spirit of bibliomania. It certainly operated powerfully on the monks of Durham, who not only by transcribing, but at the cost of considerable sums of money, greatly increased their library. A catalogue of the collection, taken some forty years after the death of De Bury, is preserved to this day at Durham, and shows how considerably they augmented it during a space of two hundred years, or from the time when the former list was written. If the bibliomaniac can obtain a sight of this ancient catalogue, he will dwell over it with astonishment and delight —immaculate volumes of Scripture—fathers and

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classics bespeak its richness and extent, and Robert of Langchester, the librarian who wrote it, with pious preference places first on the list the magnificent Bible which bishop Hugo gave them many years before. This rare biblical treasure, then the pride and glory of the collection, is now in the Durham Library; but to look upon that fair manuscript will make the blood run cold—barbarous desecration has been committed by some bibliopegistical hand; the splendid illuminations so rich and spirited, which adorned the beauteous tomes, dazzled an ignorant mind, who cut them out and robbed it of half its interest and value.

From near 600 volumes which the list enumerates, I cannot refrain from naming two or three. I have searched over its biblical department in vain to discover mention of the celebrated "Saint Cuthbert's Gospels." It is surprising they should have forgotten so rich a gem, for although four copies of the Gospels appear, not one of them answers to its description; two are specified as "*non glos;*" it could not have been either of those, another, the most interesting of the whole, is recorded as the venerable Bede's own copy! What bibliophile can look unmoved upon those time-honored pages, without indeed all the warmth of his booklove kindling forth into a very frenzy of rapture and veneration! So fairly written, and so accurately transcribed, it is one of the most precious of the many gems which now crowd the shelves of the Durham Library, and is well worth a pilgrimage to view it.* But this cannot be St. Cuthbert's Gospels,

* It is marked A, ii. 16, and described in the old MS. catalogue as *De manus Bedæ*, ii. fol. *Baptizatus.*

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and the remaining copy is mentioned as "*Quarteur Evangelum,*" fol. ii." "*se levantem;*" now I have looked at the splendid volume in the British Museum, to see if the catchword answered to this description, but it does not; so it cannot be this, which I might have imagined without the trouble of a research, for if it was, they surely would not have forgotten to mention its celebrated coopertoria.

Passing a splendid array of Scriptures whole and in parts, for there was no paucity of sacred volumes in that old monkish library, and fathers, doctors of the Church, schoolmen, lives of saints, chronicles, profane writers, philosophical and logical treatises, medical works, grammars, and books of devotion, we are particularly struck with the appearance of so many fine classical authors. Works of Virgil (including the Æneid), Pompeius Trogus, Claudius, Juvenal, Terence, Ovid, Prudentius, Quintilian, Cicero, Bœthius, and a host of others are in abundance, and form a catalogue rendered doubly exciting to the bibliophile by the insertion of an occasional note, which tells of its antiquity,* rarity, or value. In some of the volumes a curious inscription was inserted, thundering a curse upon any who would dare to pilfer it from the library, and for so sacrilegious a crime, calling down upon them the maledictions of Saints Maria, Oswald, Cuthbert, and Benedict.† A volume

* The attractive words "*Est vetus Liber*" often occur.

† From a volume of Thomas Aquinas, the following is transcribed: "Lib. Sti. Cuthberti de Dunelm, ex procuratione fratis Roberti de Graystane quem qui aliena verit maledictionem Sanctorum Mariæ, Oswaldi, Cuthberti et Benedicti incurrat." See *Surtee publications*, vol. i. p. 35, where other instances are given.

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containing the lives of St. Cuthbert, St. Oswald, and St. Aydani, is described as "*Liber speciales et preciosus cum signaculo deaurato.*"

Thomas Langley, who was chancellor of England and bishop of Durham in the year 1406, collected many choice books, and left some of them to the library of Durham church; among them a copy of Lyra's Commentaries stands conspicuous; he also bequeathed a number of volumes to many of his private friends.

There are few monastic libraries whose progress we can trace with so much satisfaction as the one now under consideration, for we have another catalogue compiled during the librarianship of John Tyshbourne, in the year 1416,* in which many errors appearing in the former ones are carefully corrected; books which subsequent to that time had been lost or stolen are here accounted for; many had been sent to the students at Oxford, and others have notes appended, implying to whom the volume had been lent; thus to a "*Flores Bernardi,*" occurs "*Prior debit, I Kempe Episcopi Londoni.*" It is, next to Monk Henry's of Canterbury, one of the best of all the monkish catalogues I have seen; not so much for its extent, as that here and there it fully partakes of the character of a catalogue *raisonné;* for terse sentences are affixed to some of the more remarkable volumes, briefly descriptive of their value; a circumstance seldom observable in these early attempts at bibliography.

In taking leave of Durham library, need I say

* Surtee publ. vol. i. p. 85.

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that the bibliomaniacs who flourished there in the olden time, not only collected their books with so much industry, but knew well how to use them too. The reader is doubtless aware how many learned men dwelled in monkish time within those ancient walls; and if he is inquisitive about such things has often enjoyed a few hours of pleasant chat over the historic pages of Symeon of Durham,* Turgot and Wessington,† and has often heard of brothers Lawrence,‡ Reginald,§ and Bolton; but although unheeded now, many a monkish bookworm, glorying in the strict observance of Christian humility, and so unknown to fame, lies buried beneath that splendid edifice, as many monuments and funeral tablets testify and speak in high favor of the great men of Durham. If the reader should perchance to wander near that place, his eye will be attracted by many of these memorials of the dead; and a few hours spent in exploring them will serve to gain many additional facts to his antiquarian lore, and perhaps even something better too. For I know not a more suitable place, as far as outward circumstances are concerned, than an old sanctuary of God to prepare the mind and lead it to think of death and immortality. We read the names of great men long gone; of wealthy worldlings, whose fortunes have long been spent; of ambitious states-

* He wrote The Chronicle of Durham Monastery in 1130.

† His book on the Rights and Privileges of Durham Church is in the Cottonian Library, marked *Vitellius*, A, 9.

‡ Lawrence was elected prior in 1149, "a man of singular prudence and learning, as the many books he writ manifest." *Dugdale's Monast.* vol. 1. p. 230.

§ Wrote the Life and Miracles of St. Cuthbert, the original book is in the Durham Library.

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men and doughty warriors, whose glory is fast fading as their costly mausoleums crumble in the hands of time, and whose stone tablets, green with the lichens' hue, manifest how futile it is to hope to gain immortality from stone, or purchase fame by the cold marble trophies of pompous grief; not that on their glassy surface the truth is always faithfully mirrored forth, even when the thoughts of holy men composed the eulogy; the tombs of old knew as well how to lie as now, and even ascetic monks could become too warm in their praises of departed worth; for whilst they blamed the great man living, with Christian charity they thought only of his virtues when they had nothing but his body left, and murmured long prayers, said tedious masses, and kept midnight vigils for his soul. For had he not shown his love to God by his munificence to His Church on earth? *Benedicite*, saith the monks.

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CHAPTER VI.

Croyland Monastery.—Its Library increased by Egebric.—Destroyed by Fire.—Peterborough.—Destroyed by the Danes.—Benedict and his books.—Anecdotes of Collectors.—Catalogue of the Library of the Abbey of Peterborough.—Leicester Library, etc.

THE low marshy fens of Lincolnshire are particularly rich in monastic remains; but none prove so attractive to the antiquary as the ruins of the splendid abbey of Croyland. The pen of Ingulphus has made the affairs of that old monastery familiar to us; he has told us of its prospering and its misfortunes, and we may learn moreover from the pages of the monk how many wise and virtuous men, of Saxon and Norman days, were connected with this ancient fabric, receiving education there, or devoting their lives to piety within its walls. It was here that Guthlac, a Saxon warrior, disgusted with the world, sought solitude

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and repose; and for ten long years he led a hermit's life in that damp and marshy fen; in prayer and fasting, working miracles, and leading hearts to God, he spent his lonely days, all which was rewarded by a happy and peaceful death, and a sanctifying of his corporeal remains—for many wondrous miracles were wrought by those holy relics.

Croyland abbey was founded on the site of Guthlac's hermitage, by Ethelred, king of Mercia. Many years before, when he was striving for the crown of that kingdom, his cousin, Crobrid, who then enjoyed it, pursued him with unremitting enmity; and worn out, spiritless and exhausted, the royal wanderer sought refuge in the hermit's cell. The holy man comforted him with every assurance of success; and prophesied that he would soon obtain his rights without battle or without bloodshed;* in return for these brighter prospects, and these kind wishes, Ethelred promised to found a monastery on that very spot in honor of God and St. Guthlac, which promise he faithfully fulfilled in the year 716, and "thus the wooden oratory was followed by a church of stone." Succeeding benefactors endowed, and succeeding abbots enriched it with their learning; and as years rolled by so it grew and flourished till it became great in wealth and powerful in its influence. But a gloomy day approached—the Danes destroyed that noble structure, devastating it by fire, and besmearing its holy altars with the blood of its hapless inmates. But zealous piety and monkish perseverance again restored it, with new and additional lustre; and

* Gough's Hist. Croyland in Bibl. Top. Brit. xi. p. 3.

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besides adding to the splendor of the edifice, augmented its internal comforts by forming a library of considerable importance and value. We may judge how dearly they valued a *Bibliotheca* in those old days by the contribution of one benevolent book-lover—Egebric, the second abbot of that name, a man whom Ingulphus says was "far more devoted to sacred learning and to the perusal of books than skilled in secular matters,"* gladdened the hearts of the monks with a handsome library, consisting of forty original volumes in various branches of learning, and more than one hundred volumes of different tracts and histories,† besides eighteen books for the use of the divine offices of the church. Honor to the monk who, in the land of dearth, could amass so bountiful a provision for the intellect to feed upon; and who encouraged our early literature—when feeble and trembling by the renewed attacks of rapacious invaders—by such fostering care.

In the eleventh century Croyland monastery was doomed to fresh misfortunes; a calamitous fire, accidental in its origin, laid the fine monastery in a heap of ruins, and scattered its library in blackened ashes to the winds.‡ A sad and irre-

* Inguph. in Gale's Script. tom. i. p. 53.

† Debit iste Abbas Egebricus communi bibliothecæ clanstralium monachorum magna volumina diversorum doctorum originalia numero quadraginta; minora vero volumina de diversæ tractatibus et historiis, quæ numerum centenarium excedibant." Ingul. p. 53.

‡ The fire occurred in 1091. Ingulphus relates with painful minuteness the progress of the work of destruction, and enumerates all the rich treasures which those angry flames consumed. I should have given a longer account of this event had not the Rev. Mr. Maitland already done so in his interesting work on the "*Dark Ages.*"

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parable loss was that to the Norman monks and to the students of Saxon history in modern times; for besides four hundred Saxon charters, deeds, etc., many of the highest historical interest and value beautifully illuminated in gold (*aureis pictures*) and written in Saxon characters,* the whole of the choice and ample library was burnt, containing seven hundred volumes, besides the books of divine offices—the Antiphons and Grailes. I will not agonize the bibliophile by expatiating further on the sad work of destruction; but is he not somewhat surprised that in those bookless days seven hundred volumes should have been amassed together, besides a lot of church books and Saxon times?

Ingulphus, who has so graphically described the destruction of Croyland monastery by the Danes in 870, has also given the particulars of their proceedings at the monastery of Peterborough, anciently called Madeshamsted, to which they immediately afterwards bent their steps. The monks, on hearing of their approach, took the precaution to guard the monastery by all the means in their power; but the quiet habits of monastic life were ill suited to inspire them with a warlike spirit, and after a feeble resistance, their cruel enemies (whom the monks speak of in no gentle terms, as the reader may imagine), soon effected an entrance; in the contest however Tulla, the brother of Hulda, the Danish leader, was slain by a stone thrown by one of the monks from the walls; this tended to kindle the fury of the besiegers, and

* Gale's Remin. Ang. Scrip. i. p. 98.

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so exasperated Hulda that it is said he killed with his own hand the whole of the poor defenceless monks, including their venerable abbot. The sacred edifice, completely in their hands, was soon laid waste; they broke down the altars, destroyed the monuments, and—much will the bibliophile deplore it—set fire to their immense library "*ingens bibliotheca*," maliciously tearing into pieces all their valuable and numerous charters, evidences, and writings. The monastery, says the historian, continued burning for fifteen days.* This seat of Saxon learning was left buried in its ruins for near one hundred years, when Athelwold, bishop of Winchester, in the year 966, restored it; but in the course of time, after a century of peaceful repose, fresh troubles sprang up. When Turoldus, a Norman, who had been appointed by William the Conqueror, was abbot, the Danes again paid them a visit of destruction. Hareward de Wake having joined a Danish force, proceeded to the town of Peterborough; fortunately the monks obtained some intelligence of their coming, which gave Turoldus time to repair to Stamford with his retinue. Taurus, the Sacrist, also managed to get away, carrying with him some of their treasures, and among them a text of the Gospels, which he conveyed to his superior at Stamford, and by that means preserved them. On the arrival of the Danes, the remaining monks were prepared to offer a somewhat stern resistance, but without effect; for setting fire to the buildings, the Danes entered through the flames and smoke, and pillaged the monastery of all its

* Ingulph. ap. Gale i. p. 25.

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valuable contents; and that which they could not carry away, they destroyed: not even sparing the shrines of holy saints, or the miracle-working dust contained therein. The monks possessed a great cross of a most costly nature, which the invaders endeavored to take away, but could not on account of its weight and size; however, they broke off the gold crown from the head of the crucifix, and the footstool under its feet, which was made of pure gold and gems; they also carried away two golden biers, on which the monks carried the relics of their saints; with nine silver ones. There was certainly no monachal poverty here, for their wealth must have been profuse; besides the above treasures, they took twelve crosses, made of gold and silver; they also went up to the tower and took away a table of large size and value, which the monks had hid there, trusting it might escape their search; it was a splendid affair, made of gold and silver and precious stones, and was usually placed before the altar. But besides all this, they robbed them of that which those poor monkish bibliophiles loved more than all. Their library, which they had collected with much care, and which contained many volumes, was carried away, "with many other precious things, the like of which were not to be found in all England."* The abbot and those monks who fortunately escaped, afterwards returned, sad and sorrowful no doubt; but trusting in their Divine Master and patron Saint, they ultimately succeeded in making their old house habitable again, and well fortified it with a strong wall,

* See Gunter's Peterborough, suppl. 263.

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so that formerly it used to be remarked that this building looked more like a military establishment than a house of God.

Eminently productive was the monastery of Peterborough in Saxon bibliomaniacs. Its ancient annals prove how enthusiastically they collected and transcribed books. There were few indeed of its abbots who did not help in some way or other to increase their library. Kenulfus, who was abbot in the year 992, was a learned and eloquent student in divine and secular learning. He much improved his monastery, and greatly added to its literary treasures.* But the benefactors of this place are too numerous to be minutely specified here. Hugo Candidus tells us, that Kinfernus, Archbishop of York, in 1056, gave them many valuable ornaments; and among them a fine copy of the Gospels, beautifully adorned with gold. This puts us in mind of Leofricus, a monk of the abbey, who was made abbot in the year 1057. He is said to have been related to the royal family, a circumstance which may account for his great riches. He was a sad pluralist, and held at one time no less than five monasteries, viz. Burton, Coventy, Croyland, Thorney, and Peterborough.† He gave to the church of Peterborough many and valuable utensils of gold, silver, and precious stones, and a copy of the Gospels bound in gold.‡

* Hugo Candid. p. 31; Tamer Bib. Brit. et Hib. p. 175. Candidus says, "Flos literaris disciplina, torrens eloquentiæ, decus et norma rerum divinarum et secularium."

† Hugo Candid. ap. Sparke, Hist. Ang. Scrip. p. 41. Gunter's Peterboro, p. 15, ed. 1686.

‡ Hugo Candid. p. 42.

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But in all lights, whether regarded as an author or a bibliophile, great indeed was Benedict, formerly prior of Canterbury, and secretary to Thomas à Becket,* of whom it is supposed he wrote a life. He was made abbot of Peterborough in the year 1177; he compiled a history of Henry II. and king Richard I.;† he is spoken of in the highest terms of praise by Robert Swapham for his profound wisdom and great erudition in secular matters.‡ There can be no doubt of his book-loving passion; for during the time he was abbot he transcribed himself, and ordered others to transcribe, a great number of books. Swapham has preserved a catalogue of them, which is so interesting that I have transcribed it entire. The list is entitled:

DE LIBRIS EJUS.

Plurimos quoque libros 3 scribere fecit, quorum nomina subnotantur.

Vetus et Novum Testamentum in uno volumine.

Vetus et Novum Testamentum in 4 volumina.

Quinque libri Moysi glosati in uno volumine.

Sexdecim Prophetæ glosati in uno volumine.

Duodecim minores glosati Prophetæ in uno volumine.

Liber Regum glosatus, paralipomenon glosatus. Job, Parabolæ Solomonis et Ecclesiastes, Cantica Canticorum glosati in uno volumine.

Liber Ecclesiasticus et Liber Sapientiæ glosatus in uno volumine.

Tobyas, Judith, Ester et Esdras, glosati in uno volumine.

Liber Judicum glosatus.

Scholastica hystoria.

* Leland de Scrip. Brit. p. 217.

† Published by Hearne, 2 vol. 8vo. *Oxon.* 1735.

‡ Rt. Swap. ap. Sparke, p. 97. "Erat. enin literarum scientiæ satis imbutus; regulari disciplina optime instructus; sapientia seculari plenissime eruditus.

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Psalterium glosatum.
Item non glosatum.
Item Psalterium.
Quatuor Evangelia glosata in uno volumine.
Item Mathæus et Marcus in uno volumine.
Johannes et Lucas in uno volumine.
Epistolæ Pauli glosatæ Apocalypsis et Epistolæ Canonicæ glosata in uno volumine.
Sententiæ Petri Lombardi.
Item Sententiæ ejusdem.
Sermones Bernardi Abbatis Clarevallensis.
Decreta Gratiani.
Item Decreta Gratiani.
Summa Ruffini de Decretis.
Summa Johannes Fuguntini de Decretis.
Decretales Epistolæ.
Item Decretales Epistolæ.
Item Decretales Epistolæ cum summa sic incipiente; Olim. Institutiones Justiniani cum autenticis et Infortiatio Digestum vetus.
Tres partes cum digesto novo.
Summa Placentini.
Totum Corpus Juris in duobus voluminibus.
Arismetica.
Epistolæ Senecæ cum aliis Senecis in uno volumine.
Martialis totus et Terentius in uno volumine.
Morale dogma philosophorum.
Gesta Alexandri et Liber Claudii et Claudiani.
Summa Petri Heylæ de Grammatica, cum multis allis rebus in uno volumine.
Gesta Regis Henrica secunda et Genealogiæ ejus.
Interpretatione Hebraicorum nominum.
Libellus de incarnatione verbi. Liber Bernardi Abbatis ad Eugenium papam.
Missale.
Vitæ Sancti Thomæ Martyris.*
Miracula ejusdem in quinque voluminibus.
Liber Richardi Plutonis, qui dicitur, unde Malum Meditationes Anselmi.

* Swapham calls this "Egregium volumen," p. 98.

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Practica Bartholomæi cum multis allis rebus in uno volumine.
Ars Physicæ Pantegni, et practica ipsius in uno volumine.
Almazor et Diascoridis de virtutibus herbarum.
Liber Dinamidiorum et aliorum multorum in uno volumine.
Libellus de Compoto.

Sixty volumes! perhaps containing near 100 separate works, and all added to the library in the time of one abbot; surely this is enough to controvert the opinion that the monks cared nothing for books or learning, and let not the Justin, Seneca, Martial, Terence, and Claudian escape the eye of the reader, those monkish bookworms did care a little, it would appear, for classical literature. But what will he say to the fine Bibles that crown and adorn the list? The two complete copies of the *Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, and the many glossed portions of the sacred writ, reflect honor upon the Christian monk, and placed him conspicuously among the bible students of the middle ages; proving too, that while he could esteem the wisdom of Seneca, and the vivacity of Terence, and feel a deep interest in the secular history of his own times, he did not lose sight of the fountain of all knowledge, but gave to the Bible his first care, and the most prominent place on his library shelf. Besides the books which the abbots collected for the monastery, they often possessed a private selection for their own use; there are instances in which these collections were of great extent; some of which we shall notice, but generally speaking they seldom numbered many volumes. Thus Robert of Lyndeshye, who was abbot of Peterborough in 1214, only possessed six volumes, which were such

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as he constantly required for reference or devotion; they consisted of a Numerale Majestri W. de Montibus cum alliis rebus; Tropi Majestri Petri cum diversis summis; Sententiæ Petri Pretanensis; Psalterium Glossatum; Aurora; Psalterium;* Historiale. These were books continually in requisition, and which he possessed to save the trouble of constantly referring to the library. His successor, abbot Holdernesse, possessed also twelve volumes,† and Walter of St. Edmundsbury Abbot, in 1233, had eighteen books, and among them a fine copy of the Bible for his private study. Robert of Sutton in 1262, also abbot of Peterborough, possessed a similar number, containing a copy of the Liber Naturalium Anstotelis; and his successor, Richard of London, among ten books which formed his private library, had the Consolation of Philosophy, a great favorite in the monasteries. In the year 1295 William of Wodeforde, collected twenty volumes, but less than that number constituted the library of Adam de Botheby, who was abbot of Peterborough many years afterwards, but among them I notice a Seneca, with thirty-six others contained in the same volume.‡

Abbot Godfrey, elected in the year 1299, was a great benefactor to the church, as we learn from Walter de Whytlesse, who gives a long list of donations made by him; among a vast quantity of valuables, "he gave to the church *two Bibles*, one of which was written in France," with about twenty

* Now preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries.
† Gunter, Peterborough, p. 29.
‡ Ibid, p. 37.

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other volumes. In the war which occurred during his abbacy, between John Baliol of Scotland and Edward I. of England, the Scots applied to the pope for his aid and council; his holiness deemed it his province to interfere, and directed letters to the king of England, asserting that the kingdom of Scotland appertained to the Church of Rome; in these letters he attempt to prove that it was opposed to justice, and, what he deemed of still greater importance, to the interests of the holy see, that the king of England should not have dominion over the kingdom of Scotland. The pope's messengers on this occasion were received by abbot Godfrey; Walter says that "He honorably received two cardinals at Peterborough with their retinues, who were sent by the pope to make peace between the English and the Scotch, and besides cheerfully entertaining them with food and drink, gave them divers presents; to one of the cardinals, named Gaucelin, he gave a certain psalter, beautifully written in letters of gold and purple, and marvellously illuminated, *literis aureis et assuris scriptum et mirabiliter luminatum.** I give this anecdote to show how splendidly the monks inscribed those volumes designed for the service of the holy church. I ought to have mentioned before that Wulstan, archbishop of York, gave many rare and precious ornaments to Peterborough, nor should I omit a curious little book anecdote related of him. He was born at Jceritune in Warwickshire, and was sent by his parents to Evesham, and afterwards to Peterborough, where he gave great indications of

* Walter de Whytlesse apud Sparke, p. 173.

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learning. His schoolmaster, who was an Anglo-Saxon named Erventus, was a clever calligraphist, and is said to have been highly proficient in the art of illuminating; he instructed Wulstan in these accomplishments, who wrote under his direction a sacramentary and a psalter, and illuminated the capitals with many pictures painted in gold and colors; they were executed with so much taste that his master presented the sacramentary to Canute, and the psalter to his queen.*

From these few facts relative to Peterborough Monastery, the reader will readily perceive how earnestly books were collected by the monks there, and will be somewhat prepared to learn that a catalogue of 1,680 volumes is preserved, which formerly constituted the library of that fraternity of bibliophiles. This fine old catalogue, printed by Gunton in his history of the abbey, covers fifty folio pages; it presents a faithful mirror of the literature of its day, and speaks well for the bibliomanical spirit of the monks of Peterborough. Volumes of patristic eloquence and pious erudition crowd the list; chronicles, poetry, and philosophical treatises are mingled with the titles of an abundant collection of classic works, full of the lore of the ancient world. Although the names may be similar to those which I have extracted from other catalogues, I must not omit to give a few of them; I find works of—

Augustine.	Cassiodorus.	Seneca.
Ambrose.	Gregory.	Prosper.
Albinus.	Cyprian.	Tully.

* Gunter's Hist. of Peterborough, p. 259.

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Bede.	Bernard.	Socrates.
Basil.	Anselm.	Ovid.
Lanfranc.	Alcuinus.	Priscian.
Chrysostom.	Honorius.	Hippocrates.
Jerome.	Donatus.	Horace.
Eusebius.	Macer.	Sedulus.
Bœthius.	Persius.	Theodulus.
Isidore.	Virgil.	Sallust.
Origin.	Isagoge of Porphry.	Macrobius.
Dionysius.	Aristotle.	Cato.
Cassian.	Entyci Grammatica	Prudentius.

But although they possessed these fine authors and many others equally choice, I am not able to say much for the biblical department of their library, I should have anticipated a goodly store of the Holy Scriptures, but in these necessary volumes they were unusually poor. But I suspect the catalogue to have been compiled during the fifteenth century, and I fear too, that in that age the monks were growing careless of Scripture reading, or at least relaxing somewhat in the diligence of their studies; perhaps they devoured the attractive pages of Ovid, and loved to read his amorous tales more than became the holiness of their priestly calling.* At any rate we may observe a marked change as regards the prevalence of the Bible in monastic libraries between the twelfth and the fifteenth century. It is true we often find them in those of the later age; but sometimes they are entirely without, and frequently only in detached portions.†

* At any rate, we find about thirty volumes of Ovid's works enumerated, and several copies of "de Arte Amandi," and "de Remedis Amoris."

† Let the reader examine Leland's Collect., and the Catalogues printed in Hunter's Tract on Monastic Libraries. See also Catalogue

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I may illustrate this by a reference to the library of the Abbey of St. Mary de la Pré at Leicester, which gloried in a collection of 600 volumes, of the choicest and almost venerable writers. It was written in the year 1477, by William Chartye,* prior of the abbey, and an old defective and worn out Bible, *Biblie defect et usit*, with some detached portions, was all that fine library contained of the Sacred Writ. The bible *defect et usit* speaks volumes to the praise of the ancient monks of that house, for it was by their constant reading and study, that it had become so thumbed and worn; but it stamps with disgrace the affluent monks of the fifteenth century, who, while they could afford to buy, in the year 1470,† some thirty volumes with a Seneca, Ovid, Claudian, Macrobius, Æsop, etc., among them, and who found time to transcribe twice as many more, thought not of restoring their bible tomes, or adding one book of the Holy Scripture to their crowded shelves. But alas! monachal piety was waxing cool and indifferent then, and it is rare to find the honorable title of an *Amator Scripturarum* affixed to a monkish name in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

of Canterbury Library, MS. Cottonian Julius, c. iv. 4., in the British Museum.

* Printed by Nichols, in Appendix to Hist. of Leicester, from a MS. Register. It contains almost as fine a collection of the classics and fathers as that at Peterborough, just noticed, Aristotle, Virgil, Plato, Ovid, Cicero, Euclid, Socrates, Horace, Lucan, Seneca, etc., etc. are among them, pp. 101 to 108. It is curious that Leland mentions only six MSS. as forming the library at the time he visited the Abbey of Leicester, all its fine old volumes were gone. He only arrived in time to pick up the crumbs.

† At least during the time of William Charteys priorship. See Nichols, p. 108.

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CHAPTER VII.

King Alfred an "amator librorum" and an author.

THE latter part of the tenth century was a most memorable period in the annals of monkish bibliomania, and gave birth to one of the brightest scholars that ever shone in the dark days of our Saxon forefathers. King Alfred, in honor of whose talents posterity have gratefully designated the Great, spread a fostering care over the feeble remnant of native literature which the Danes in their cruel depredations had left unmolested. The noble aspirations of this royal student and patron of learning had been instilled into his mind by the tender care of a fond parent. It was from the pages of a richly illuminated little volume of Saxon poetry, given to him by the queen as a reward for the facility with which he had mastered its contents, that he first derived that intense love of books which never forsook him, though the

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sterner duties of his after position frequently required his thoughts and energies in another channel. Having made himself acquainted with this little volume, Alfred found a thirst for knowledge grow upon him, and applied his youthful mind to study with the most zealous ardor; but his progress was considerably retarded, because he could not, at that time, find a Grammaticus capable of instructing him,* although he searched the kingdom of the West Saxons. Yet he soon acquired the full knowledge of his own language, and the Latin it is said he knew as well, and was able to use with a fluency equal to his native tongue; he could comprehend the meaning of the Greek, although perhaps he was incapable of using it to advantage. He was so passionately fond of books, and so devoted to reading, that he constantly carried about him some favorite volume which, as a spare moment occurred, he perused with the avidity of an *helluo librorum.* This pleasing anecdote related by Asser† is characteristic of his natural perseverance.

When he ascended the throne, he lavished abundant favors upon all who were eminent for their literary acquirements; and displayed in their distribution the utmost liberality and descrimination. Asser, who afterwards became his biographer, was during his life the companion and associate of his studies, and it is from his pen we

* Flor. Vigorn. sub. anno. 871. Brompton's Chron. in Alferi, p. 814.

† Asser de Alfredi Gestis., Edit. Camden i. p. 5. William Malmsbury, b. ii. c. iv.

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learn that, when an interval occurred inoccupied by his princely duties, Alfred stole into the quietude of his study to seek comfort and instruction from the pages of those choice volumes, which comprised his library. But Alfred was not a mere bookworm, a devourer of knowledge without purpose or without meditation of his own, he thought with a student's soul well and deeply upon what he read, and drew from his books those principles of philanthropy, and those high resolves, which did such honor to the Saxon monarch. He viewed with sorrow the degradation of his country, and the intellectual barrenness of his time; the warmest aspiration of his soul was to diffuse among his people a love for literature and science, to raise them above their Saxon sloth, and lead them to think of loftier matters than war and carnage. To effect this noble aim, the highest to which the talents of a monarch can be applied, he for a length of time devoted his mind to the translation of Latin authors into the vernacular tongue. In his preface to the Pastoral of Gregory which he translated, he laments the destruction of the old monastic libraries by the Danes. "I saw," he writes, "before alle were spoiled and burnt, how the churches throughout Britain were filled with treasures and books,"* which must have presented a striking contrast to the illiterate darkness which he tells us afterwards spread over his dominions, for there were then very few *paucissimi* who could translate a Latin epistle into the Saxon language.

When Alfred had completed the translation of

* Preface to Pastoral.

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Gregory's Pastoral, he sent a copy to each of his bishops accompanied with a golden stylus or pen,* thus conveying to them the hint that it was their duty to use it in the service of piety and learning. Encouraged by the favorable impression which this work immediately caused, he spared no pains to follow up the good design, but patiently applied himself to the translation of other valuable books which he rendered into as pleasing and expressive a version as the language of those rude times permitted. Besides these literary labors he also wrote many original volumes, and became a powerful orator, a learned grammarian, an acute philosopher, a profound mathematician, and the prince of Saxon poesy; with these exalted talents he united those of an historian, an architect, and an accomplished musician. A copious list of his productions, the length of which proves the fertility of his pen, will be found in the Biographica Britannica,† but names of others not there enumerated may be

* Much controversy has arisen as to the precise meaning of this word. *Hearne* renders this passage "with certain macussus or marks of gold the purest of his coin," which has led some to suppose gold coinage was known among the Saxons. *William of Malmsbury* calls it a golden style in which was a maucus of gold. "In Alfred's Preface it is called an Æstel of fifty macuses.—*V. Asser a Wise*, 86 to 175; but the meaning of that word is uncertain. The stylus properly speaking was a small instrument formerly used for writing on waxen tablets, and made of iron or bone, see *Archæologia*, vol. ii. p. 75. But waxen tablets were out of use in Alfred's time. The Æstel or style was most probably an instrument used by the scribes of the monasteries, if it was not actually a pen. I am more strongly disposed to consider it so by the evidence of an ancient MS. illumination of Eadwine, a monk of Canterbury, in Trinity Coll. Camb.; at the end of this MS. the scribe is represented with a *metal pen in his hand.*

† Vol. i. pp. 54, 55.

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found in monkish chronicles; of his Manual, which was in existence in the time of William of Malmsbury, not a fragment has been found. The last of his labors was probably an attempt to render the psalms into the common language, and so unfold that portion of the Holy Scriptures to our Saxon ancestors.

Alfred, with the assistance of the many learned men whom he had called to his court, restored the monasteries and schools of learning which the Danes had desecrated, and it is said founded the university of Oxford, where he built three halls, in the name of the Holy Trinity; for the doctors of divinity, philosophy, and grammar. The controversy which this subject has given rise to among the learned is too long to enter into here, although the matter is one of great interest to the scholar and to the antiquary.

In the year 901, this royal bibliophile, "the victorious prince, the studious provider for widows, orphanes, and poore people, most perfect in Saxon poetrie, most liberall endowed with wisdome, fortitude, justice, and temperance, departed this life;"* and right well did he deserve this eulogy, for as an old chronicle says, he was "a goode clerke and rote many bokes, and a boke he made in Englysshe, of adventures of kynges and bataylles that had bene wne in the lande; and other bokes of gestes he them wryte, that were of greate wisdome, and of good learnynge, thrugh whych bokes many a man may him amende, that well them rede, and

* Stowe's Annals, 4to. 1615, p. 105.

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upon them loke. And thys kynge Allured lyeth at Wynchestre."*

* Cronycle of Englonde with the Fruyte of Tymes, 4to. 1515.



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CHAPTER VIII.

Benedict Biscop and his book tours.—Bede.—Ceolfrid.—Wilfrid.—Boniface the Saxon Missionary —His love of books.—Egbert of York.—Alcuin. —Whitby Abbey.—Cædmon.—Classics in the Library of Withby.—Rievall Library.—Coventry.—Worcester.—Evesham.—Thomas of Marleberg, etc.

THE venerable Bede enables us to show that in the early Saxon days the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow possessed considerable collections of books. Benedict Biscop, the most enthusiastic bibliomaniac of the age, founded the monastery of Wearmouth in the year 674, in honor of the "Most Holy Prince of the Apostles." His whole soul was in the work, he spared neither pains or expense to obtain artists of well known and reputed talent to decorate the holy edifice; not finding them at home, he journeyed to Gaul in search of them, and returned accompanied by numerous expert and ingenious workmen. Within a year the

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building was sufficiently advanced to enable the monks to celebrate divine service there. He introduced glass windows and other ornaments into his church, and furnished it with numerous books of all descriptions, *innumerabilem librorum omnis generis.* Benedict was so passionately fond of books that he took five journeys to Rome for the purpose of collecting them. In his third voyage he gathered together a large quantity on divine erudition; some of these he bought, or received them as presents from his friends, *vel amicorum dono largitos retulit.* When he arrived at Vienne on his way home, he collected others which he had commissioned his friends to purchase for him.* After the completion of his monastery he undertook his fourth journey to Rome; he obtained from the Pope many privileges for the abbey, and returned in the year 680, bringing with him many more valuable books; he was accompanied by John the Chantor, who introduced into the English churches the Roman method of singing. He was also a great *amator librorum*, and left many choice manuscripts to the monks, which Bede writes "were still preserved in their library." It was about this time that Ecgfrid† gave Benedict a portion of land on the other side of the river Wire, at a place called Jarrow; and that enterprising and indus-

* "Rediens autem, ubi Viennam pervenit, eruptitios sibi quos apud amicos commendaverat, recepit." p. 26. *Vit. Abbat. Wear.* 12*mo edit. Ware.*

† The youngest son of Oswy, or Oswis, king of Northumbria, who succeeded his father in the year 670, Alfred his elder brother being for a time set aside on the grounds of his illegitimacy; yet Alfred was a far more enlightened and talented prince than Ecgfrid, and much praised in Saxon annals for his love of learning.

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trious abbot, in the year 684, built a monastery thereon. No sooner was it completed, than he went a fifth time to Rome to search for volumes to gratify his darling passion. This was the last, but perhaps the most successful of his foreign tours, for he brought back with him a vast quantity of sacred volumes and curious pictures.* How deeply is it to be regretted that the relation of the travels which Ceolfrid his successor undertook, and which it is said his own pen inscribed, has been lost to us forever. He probably spoke much of Benedict in the volume and recorded his book pilgrimages. How dearly would the bibliomaniac revel over those early annals of his science, could his eye meet those venerable pages—perhaps describing the choice tomes Benedict met with in his Italian tours, and telling us how, and what, and where he gleaned those fine collections; sweet indeed would have been the perusal of that delectable little volume, full of the book experience of a bibliophile in Saxon days, near twelve hundred years ago! But the ravages of time or the fury of the Danes deprived us of this rare gem, and we are alone dependent on Bede for the incidents connected with the life of this great man; we learn from that venerable author that Benedict was seized with the palsy on his return, and that languishing a few short years, he died in the year 690; but through pain and suffering he often dwelt on the sweet treasures of his library, and his solemn thoughts of

* Magnâ quidem copiâ voluminum sacrorum; sed non minori sicut et prius sanctorum imaginum numere detatus." *Vit. Abb.* p. 38.

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death and immortality were intermixed with many a fond bookish recollection. *His most noble and abundant library which he brought from Rome* he constantly referred to, and gave strict injunctions that the monks should apply the utmost care to the preservation of that rich and costly treasure, in the collection of which so many perils and anxious years were spent.*

We all know the force of example, and are not surprised that the sweet mania which ruled so potently over the mind of Benedict, spread itself around the crowned head of royalty. Perhaps book collecting was beginning to make "a stir," and the rich and powerful among the Saxons were regarding strange volumes with a curious eye. Certain it is that Egfride, or Ælfride, the proud king of Northumbria,† fondly coveted a beautiful copy of the geographer's (*codice mirandi operis*), which Benedict numbered among his treasures; and so eagerly too did he desire its possession, that he gave in exchange a portion of eight hides of land, near the river Fresca, for the volume; and Ceolfrid, Benedict's successor, received it.

How useful must Benedict's library have been in ripening the mind that was to cast a halo of im-

* Bibliothecam, quam de Roma nobillissimam copiosessimanque advenaret ad instructionem ecclesiæ necessariam sollicite servari integram, nec per incuriam fœdari aut passim dissipari præcepit."

† Bede says that he was "learned in Holy Scriptures." Dr. Henry mentions this anecdote in his *Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 287, 8vo. ed. which has led many secondary compilers into a curious blunder, by mistaking the king here alluded to for Alfred the Great: even Didbin, in his Bibliomania, falls into the same error although he suspected some mistake; he calls him *our immortal Alfrid*, p. 219, and seems puzzled to account for the anachronism, but does not take

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mortality around that old monastery, and to generate a renown which was long to survive the grey walls of that costly fane; for whilst we now fruitlessly search for any vestiges of its former being, we often peruse the living pages of Bede the venerable with pleasure and instruction, and we feel refreshed by the breath of piety and devotion which they unfold; yet it must be owned the superstition of Rome will sometimes mar a devout prayer and the simplicity of a Christian thought. But all honor to his manes and to his memory! for how much that is admirable in the human character —how much sweet and virtuous humility was hid in him, in the strict retirement of the cloister. The writings of that humble monk outlive the fame of many a proud ecclesiastic or haughty baron of his day; and well they might, for how homely does his pen record the simple annals of that far distant age. Much have the old monks been blamed for their bad Latin and their humble style; but far from upbraiding, I would admire them for it; for is not the inelegance of diction which their unpretending chronicles display, sufficiently compensated by their charming simplicity. As for myself, I have sometimes read them by the blaze of my cheerful hearth, or among the ruins of some old monastic abbey,* till in imagination I beheld the events which they

the trouble to enquire into the matter; Heylin's little Help to History would have set him right, and shown that while Alfrede king of Northumberland reigned in 680, Alfred king of England lived more than two centuries afterwards, pp. 25 and 29.

* The reader may perhaps smile at this, but it has long been my custom to carry some 8vo edition of a monkish writer about me, when time or opportunity allowed me to spend a few hours among the ruins

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attempt to record, and could almost hear the voice of the "*goode olde monke*" as he relates the deeds of some holy man—in language so natural and idiomatic are they written.

But as we were saying, Bede made ample use of Benedict's library; and the many Latin and Greek books, which he refers to in the course of his writings, were doubtless derived from that source.* Ceolfrid, the successor of Benedict, "a man of great zeal, of acute wisdom, and bold in action," was a great lover of books, and under his care the libraries of Wearmouth and Jarrow became nearly doubled in extent; of the nature of these additions we are unable to judge, but probably they were not contemptible.†

Wilfrid, bishop of Northumbria, was a dear and intimate friend of Biscop's, and was the companion of one of his pilgrimages to Rome. In his early youth he gave visible signs of a heart full of religion and piety, and he sought by a steady perusal of the Holy Scriptures, in the little monastery of Lindesfarne, to garnish his mind with that divine lore with which he shone so brightly in the Saxon church. It was at the court of Ercenbyrht, king

of the olden time. I recall with pleasure the recollection of many such rambles, and especially my last—a visit to Netley Abbey. What a sweet spot for contemplation; surrounded by all that is lovely in nature, it drives our old prejudices away, and touches the heart with piety and awe. Often have I explored its ruins and ascended its crumbling parapets, admiring the taste of those Cistercian monks in choosing so quiet, romantic, and choice a spot, and one so well suited to lead man's thoughts to sacred things above.

* Bede, *Vit. Abb. Wear.* p. 46.

† The fine libraries thus assiduously collected were destroyed by the Danes; that of Jarrow in the year 793, and that of Wearmouth in 867.

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of Kent, that he met with Benedict Biscop; and the sympathy which their mutual learning engendered gave rise to a warm and devoted friendship between them. Both inspired with an ardent desire to visit the apostolic see, they set out together for Rome;* and it was probably by the illustrious example of his fellow student and companion, that Wilfrid imbibed that book-loving passion which he afterwards displayed on more than one occasion. On his return from Rome, Alfred of Northumbria bestowed upon him the monastery of Rhypum† in the year 661, and endowed it with certain lands. Peter of Blois records, in his life of Wilfrid, that this "man of God" gave the monastery a copy of the gospels, a library, and many books of the Old and New Testament, with certain tablets made with marvellous ingenuity, and ornamented with gold and precious stones.‡ Wilfrid did not long remain in the monastery of Ripon, but advanced to higher honors, and took a more active part in the ecclesiastical affairs of the time.§ But I am not about to pursue his history, or to attempt to show how his hot and imperious temper, or the pride and avarice of his disposition, wrought many grievous animosities in the Saxon church; or how by his prelatical ambition he deservedly lost the friendship of his King and his ecclesiastical honors.‖

* Emer, Vita. ap. Mab. Act. SS. tom. iii. 199.

† Bede's Eccles. Hist. b. iii. c. xxv.

‡ "Idemque vir Dei quatuor Evangelica et Bibliothecam pluresque libros Novi et Veteris Testamenti cum tabulis tectis auro purissimo et pretiosis gemmis mirabili artificio fabricatis ad honorem Dei." Dugdale's Monast. vol. ii. p. 133.

§ In 665 he was raised to the episcopacy of all Northumbria.

‖ He was deprived of his bishopric in the year 678, and the see

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About this time, and contemporary with Bede, we must not omit one who appears as a bright star in the early Christian church. Boniface, * the Saxon missionary, was remarked by his parents to manifest at an early age signs of that talent which in after years achieved so much, and advanced so materially the interests of piety and the cause of civilization. When scarcely four years old his infant mind seemed prone to study, which growing upon him as he increased in years, his parent placed him in the monastery of Exeter. His stay there was not of long duration, for he shortly after removed to a monastery in Hampshire under the care of Wybert. In seclusion and quietude he there studied with indefatigable ardor, and fortified his mindwith that pious enthusiasm and profound erudition, which enabled him in a far distant country to render such service to the church. He was made a teacher, and when arrived at the necessary age he was ordained priest. In the year 710, a dispute having occurred among the western church of the Saxons, he was appointed to undertake a mission to the archbishop of Canterbury on the subject. Pleased perhaps with the variety and bustle of travel, and inspired with a holy ambition, he determined to attempt the conversion of the German

was divided into those of York and Hexham. But for the particulars of his conduct see *Soame's Anglo. Sax. Church*, p. 63, with *Dr. Lingard's Ang. Sax. Church*, vol. i. p. 245; though without accusing either of misrepresentation, I would advise the reader to search (if he has the opportunity), the original authorities for himself, it is a delicate matter for a Roman or an English churchman to handle with impartiality.

* His Saxon name was Winfrid, or Wynfrith, but he is generally called Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz.

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people, who, although somewhat acquainted with the gospel truths, had nevertheless deviated materially from the true faith, and returned again to their idolatry and paganism. Heedless of the danger of the expedition, but looking forward only to the consummation of his fond design, he started on his missionary enterprise, accompanied by one or two of his monkish brethren.

He arrived at Friesland in the year 716, and proceeded onwards to Utrecht; but disappointments and failures awaited him. The revolt of the Frieslanders and the persecution then raging there against the Christians, dissipated his hopes of usefulness; and with a heavy heart, no doubt, Boniface retraced his steps, and re-embarked for his English home. Yet hope had not deserted him—his philanthropic resolutions were only delayed for a time; for no sooner had the dark clouds of persecution passed away than his adventurous spirit burst forth afresh, and shone with additional lustre and higher aspirations. After an interval of two years we find him again starting on another Christian mission. On reaching France he proceeded immediately to Rome, and procured admission to the Pope, who, ever anxious for the promulgation of the faith and for the spiritual dominion of the Roman church, highly approved of the designs of Boniface, and gave him letters authorizing his mission among the Thuringians; invested with these powers and with the pontifical blessing, he took his departure from the holy city, well stored with the necessary ornaments and utensils for the performance of the ecclesiastical rites, besides a

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number of books to instruct the heathens and to solace his mind amidst the cares and anxieties of his travels. After some few years the fruits of his labor became manifest, and in 723 he had baptized vast multitudes in the true faith. His success was perhaps unparalleled in the early annals of the church, and remind us of the more recent wonders wrought by the Jesuit missionaries in India.* Elated with these happy results, far greater than even his sanguine mind had anticipated, he sent a messenger to the Pope to acquaint his holiness of these vast acquisitions to his flock, and soon after he went himself to Rome to receive the congratulations and thanks of the Pontiff; he was then made bishop, and entrusted with the ecclesiastical direction of the new church. After his return, he spent many years in making fresh converts and maintaining the discipline of the faithful. But all these labors and these anxieties were terminated by a cruel and unnatural death; on one of his expeditions he was attacked by a body of pagans, who slew him and nearly the whole of his companions, but it is not here that a Christian must look for his reward—he must rest his hopes on the benevolence and mercy of his God in a distant and far better world. He who would wish to trace more fully these events, and so catch a glimpse of the various incidents

* The mere act of baptizing constitutes "*conversion*" in Jesuitical phraseology; and thousands were so converted in a few days by the followers of Ignatius. A similar process was used in working out the miracles of the Saxon missionary. He was rather too conciliating and too anxious for a "converting miracle," to be over particular; but it was all for the good of the church papal, to whom he was a devoted servant; the church papal therefore could not see the fault.

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which touch upon the current of his life, must not keep the monk constantly before his mind, he must sometimes forget him in that capacity and regard him as a *student*, and that too in the highest acceptation of the term. His youthful studies, which I have said before were pursued with unconquerable energy, embraced grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and the exposition of the Holy Scriptures; the Bible, indeed, he read unceasingly, and drew from it much of the vital truth with which it is inspired; but he perhaps too much tainted it with traditional interpretation and patristical logic. A student's life is always interesting; like a rippling stream, its unobtrusive gentle course is ever pleasing to watch, and the book-worms seems to find in it the counterpart of his own existence. Who can read the life and letters of the eloquent Cicero, or the benevolent Pliny, without the deepest interest; or mark their anxious solicitude after books, without sincere delight. Those elegant epistles reflect the image of their private studies, and so to behold Boniface in a student's garb, to behold his love of books and passion for learning, we must alike have recourse to his letters.

The epistolary correspondence of the middle ages is a mirror of those times, far more faithful as regards their social condition than the old chronicles and histories designed for posterity; written in the reciprocity of friendly civilities, they contain the outpourings of the heart, and enable us to peep into the secret thoughts and motives of the writer; "for out of the fulness of the hearth the mouth speaketh." Turning over the letters of Boniface,

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we cannot but be forcibly struck with his great knowledge of Scripture; his mind seems to have been quite a concordance in itself, and we meet with epistles almost solely framed of quotations from the sacred books, in substantiation of some principle, or as grounds for some argument advanced. These are pleasurable instances, and convey a gentle hint that the greater plenitude of the Bible has not, in all cases, emulated us to study it with equal energy; there are few who would now surpass the Saxon bishop in biblical reading.

Most students have felt, at some period or other, a thirst after knowledge without the means of assuaging it—have felt a craving after books when their pecuniary circumstances would not admit of their acquisition, such will sympathize with Boniface, the student in the wilds of Germany, who, far from monastic libraries, sorely laments in some of his letters this great deprivation, and entreats his friends, sometimes in most piteous terms, to send him books. In writing to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, he asks for copies, and begs him to send the book of the six prophets, clearly and distinctly transcribed, and in large letters because his sight he says was growing weak; and because the book of the prophets was much wanted in Germany, and could not be obtained except written so obscurely, and the letters so confusedly joined together, as to be scarcely readable *ac connexas litteras discere non possum.** To "Majestro Lul" he writes for the productions

* Ep. iii. p. 7, Ed. 4to.—*Moguntiæ*, 1629.

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of bishop Aldhelm, and other works of prose, poetry, and rhyme, to console him in his peregrinations *ad consolationem peregrinationis meæ.** With Abbess Eadburge he frequently corresponded, and received from her many choice and valuable volumes, transcribed by her nuns and sometimes by her own hands; at one period he writes in glowing terms and with a grateful pen for the books thus sent him, and a another time he sends for a copy of the Gospels. "Execute," says he, "a glittering lamp for our hands, and so illuminate the hearts of the Gentiles to a study of the Gospels and to the glory of Christ; and intercede, I pray thee, with your pious prayers for these pagans who are committed by the apostles to our care, that by the mercy of the Saviour of the world they may be delivered from their idolatrous practices, and united to the congregation of mother church, to the honor of the Catholic faith, and to the praise and glory of His name, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.†

All this no doubt the good abbess faithfully fulfilled; and stimulated by his friendship and these encouraging epistles, she set all the pens in her monastery industriously to work, and so gratified the Saxon missionary with those book treasures, which his soul so ardently loved; certain it is, that we frequently find him thanking her for books, and with famishing eagerness craving for more; one of his letters,‡ full of gratitude, he accompanies with a present of a silver graphium, or writing instru-

* Ep. iv. p. 8.
† Ep. xiii.
‡ Ep. vii. p. 11.

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ment, and soon after we find him thus addressing her :

"To the most beloved sister, Abbess Eadburge, and all now joined to her house and under her spiritual care. Boniface, the meanest servant of God, wisheth eternal health in Christ."

"My dearest sister, may your assistance be abundantly rewarded hereafter in the mansions of the angels and saints above, for the kind presents of books which you have transmitted to me. Germany rejoices in their spiritual light and consolation, because they have spread lustre into the dark hearts of the German people; for except we have a lamp to guide our feet, we may, in the words of the Lord, fall into the snares of death. Moreover, through thy gifts I earnestly hope to be more diligent, so that my country may be honored, my sins forgiven, and myself protected from the perils of the sea and the violence of the tempest; and that He who dwells on high may lightly regard my transgression, and give utterance to the words of my mouth, that the Gospel may have free course, and be glorified among men to the honor of Christ."*

Writing to Egbert, Archbishop of York, of whose bibliomaniacal character and fine library we have yet to speak, Boniface thanks that illustrious collector for the choice volumes he had kindly sent him, and further entreats Egbert to procure for him transcripts of the smaller works *opusculi* and other tracts of Bede, "who, I hear," he writes, "has, by the divine grace of the Holy Spirit, been

* Ep. xiv. See also Ep. xxviii. p. 40.

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permitted to spread such lustre over your country."* These, that kind and benevolent prelate sent to him with other books, and received a letter full of gratitude in return, but with all the boldness of a hungry student still asking for more! especially for Bede's Commentary on the Parables of Solomon.† He sents to Archbishop Nothelm for a copy of the Questions of St. Augustine to Pope Gregory, with the answers of the pope, which he says he could not obtain from Rome; and in writing to Cuthbert, also Archbishop of Canterbury, imploring the aid of his earnest prayers, he does not forget to ask for books, but hopes that he may be speedily comforted with the works of Bede, of whose writings he was especially fond, and was constantly sending to his friends for transcripts of them. In a letter to Huetberth he writes for the "most sagacious dissertations of the monk Bede,"‡ and to the Abbot Dudde he sends a begging message for the Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Corinthians§ by the same. In a letter to Lulla, Bishop of Coena, he deplores the want of books on the phenomena and works of nature, which, he says, were *omnio incognitum* there, and asks for a book on Cosmography;‖ and on another occasion Lulla supplied Boniface with many portions of the Holy Scriptures, and Commentaries upon them.¶ Many more of his epistles might be quoted to illustrate the Saxon missionary as an "*amator librorum*," and to display his profound

* Ep. viii. p. 12.
† Ep. lxxxv. p. 119.
‡ Ep. ix. p. 13.
§ Ep. xxii. p. 36.
‖ Ep. xcix. p. 135.
¶ Ep. cxi. p. 153.

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erudition. In one of his letters we find him referring to nearly all the celebrated authors of the church, and so aptly, that we conclude he must have had their works on his desk, and was deeply read in patristical theology. Boniface has been fiercely denounced for his strong Roman principles, and for his firm adherence to the interests of the pope.* Of his theological errors, or his faults as a church disciplinarian, I have nothing here to do, but leave that delicate question to the ecclesiastical historian, having vindicated his character from the charge of ignorance, and displayed some pleasing traits which he evinced as a student and book-collector. It only remains to be mentioned, that many of the membranous treasures, which Boniface had so eagerly searched for and collected from all parts, were nearly lost forever. The pagans, who murdered Boniface and his fellow-monks, on entering their tents, discovered little to gratify their avarice, save a few relics and a number of books, which, with a barbarism corresponding with their ignorance, they threw into the river as useless; but fortunately, some of the monks, who had escaped from their hands, observing the transaction, recovered them and carried them away in safety with the remains of the martyred missionary, who was afterwards canonized Saint Boniface.

The must remarkable book collector contemporary with Boniface, was Egbert of York, between

* The accusation is not a groundless one. Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments*, warmly upbraids him; and Aikins in his *Biog. Dict.*, has acted in a similar manner. But the best guides are his letters—they display his faults and his virtues too.

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whom, as we have seen, a bookish correspondence was maintained. This illustrious prelate was brother to King Egbert, of Northumbria, and received his education under Bishop Eata, at Hexham, about the year 686. He afterwards went on a visit to the Apostolic See, and on his return was made Archbishop of York.* He probably collected at Rome many of the fine volumes which comprised his library, and which was so celebrated in those old Saxon days; and which will be ever renowned in the annals of ancient bibliomania. The immortal Alcuin sang the praises of this library in a tedious lay; and what glorious tomes of antiquity he there enumerates! But stay, my pen should tarry whilst I introduce that worthy bibliomaniac to my reader, and relate some necessary anecdotes and facts connected with his early life and times.

Alcuin was born in England, and probably in the immediate vicinity of York; he was descended from affluent and noble parents; but history is especially barren on this subject, and we have no information to instruct us respecting the antiquity of his Saxon ancestry. But if obscurity hangs around his birth, so soon as he steps into the paths of learning and ranks with the students of his day, we are no longer in doubt or perplexity; but are able from that period to his death to trace the

* This was in the year 731. *Goodwin* says he "sate 36 years, and died an. 767." He says, "This man by his owne wisedome, and the authority of his brother, amended greatly the state of his church and see. He procured the archiepiscopall pall to be restored to his churche againe, and erected a famous library at York, which he stored plentifully with an infinite number of excellent bookes." p. 441.

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occurrences of his life with all the ease that a searcher of monkish history can expect. He had the good fortune to receive his education from Egbert, and under his care he soon became initiated into the mysteries of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence; which were relieved by the more fascinating study of poetry, physics, and astronomy.* So much was he esteemed by his master the archbishop, that he entrusted him with a mission to Rome, to receive from the hands of the Pope his pall; on his return he called at Parma, where he had an interview with Charles the Great; who was so captivated with his eloquence and erudition that he eagerly entreated him to remain, and to aid in diffusing throughout his kingdom the spirit of that knowledge which he had so successfully acquired in the Saxon monasteries. But Alcuin was equally anxious for the advancement of literature in his own country; and being then on a mission connected with his church, he could do no more than hold out a promise of consulting his superiors, to whose decisions he considered himself bound to submit.

During the dominion of Charles, the ecclesiastical as well as the political institutions of France, were severely agitated by heresy and war: the two great questions of the age—the Worship of Images and the Nature of Christ—divided and perplexed the members of a church which had hitherto been permitted to slumber in peace and quietude. The most prominent of the heretics was Felix, Bishop of Urgel, who maintained in a

* De Pontificibus et Sanctis Ecclesiæ Eboracensis.

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letter to Elipand, Bishop of Toledo, that Christ was only the Son of God by adoption. It was about the time of the convocation of the Council of Frankfort, assembled to consider this point, that Alcuin returned to France at the earnest solicitation of Charlemagne. When the business of the council was terminated, and peace was somewhat restored, Alcuin began to think of returning to his native country; but England at that time was a land of bloodshed and tribulation, in the midst of which it would be vain to hope for retirement or the blessings of study; after some deliberation, therefore, Alcuin resolved to remain in France, where there was at least a wide field for exertion and usefulness. He communicates his intention in a letter to Offa, King of Mercia. "I was prepared," says he, "to come to you with the presents of King Charles, and to return to my country; but it seemed more advisable to me for the peace of my nation to remain abroad; not knowing what I could have done among those persons with whom no man can be secure or able to proceed in any laudable pursuit. See every holy place laid desolate by pagans, the altars polluted by perjury, the monasteries dishonored by adultery, the earth itself stained with the blood of rulers and of princes."*

After the elapse of many years spent in the brilliant court of Charles, during which time it surpassed in literary greatness any epoch that preceded it, he was permitted to seek retirement within the walls of the abbey of St. Martin's at Tours. But

* Alcuini Oper., tom. i. vol. 1, p. 57, translated in Sharpe's William of Malmsbury, p. 73.

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in escaping from the bustle and intrigue of public life he did not allow his days to pass away in an inglorious obscurity; but sought to complete his earthly career by inspiring the rising generation with an honorable and christian ambition. His cloistered solitude, far from weakening, seems to have augmented the fertility of his genius, for it was in the quiet seclusion of this monastery that Alcuin composed the principal portion of his works; nor are these writings an accumulation of monastic trash, but the fruits of many a solitary hour spent in studious meditation. His method is perhaps fantastic and unnatural; but his style is lively, and often elegant. His numerous quotations and references give weight and interest to his writings, and clearly proves what a fine old library was at his command, and how well he knew the use of it. But for the elucidation of his character as a student, or a bibliomaniac, we naturally turn to the huge mass of his epistles which have been preserved; and in them we find a constant reference to books which shew his intimacy with the classics as well as the patristical lore of the church. In biblical literature he doubtless possessed many a choice and venerable tome; for an indefatigable scripture reader was that great man. In a curious little work of his called "*Interrogationes et Responsiones sui Liber Questionorum in Genesim*," we find an illustration of his usefulness in spreading the knowledge he had gained in this department of learning. It was written expressly for his pupil and dearest brother (*carissime frater*), Sigulf, as we learn from a letter which accompanies

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it. He tells him that he had composed it "that he might always have near him the means of refreshing his memory when the more ponderous volumes of the sacred Scriptures were not at his immediate call."* Perhaps of all his works this is the least deserving of our praise; the good old monk was apt to be prolix, if not tedious, when he found the *stylus* in his hand and a clean skin of parchment spread invitingly before him. But as this work was intended as a manual to be consulted at any time, he was compelled to curb this propensity, and to reduce his explications to a few concise sentences. Writing under this restraint, we find little bearing the stamp of originality, not because he had nothing original to say, but because he had not space to write it in; I think it necessary to give this explanation, as some critics upon the learning of that remote age select these small and ill-digested writings as fair specimens of the literary capacity of the time, without considering why they were written or compiled at all. But as a scribe how shall we sufficiently praise that great man when we take into consideration the fine Bible which he executed for Charlemagne, and which is now fortunately preserved in the British Museum. It is a superb copy of St. Jerome's Latin version, freed from the inaccuracies of the scribes; he commenced it about the year 778, and did not complete it till the year 800, a circumstance which indicates the great care he bestowed upon it. When finished he sent it to Rome by his friend and disciple, Nathaniel, who presented it to Charlemagne on the day of his

* Opera, tom. i. p. 305.

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coronation : it was preserved by that illustrious monarch to the last day of his life. Alcuin makes frequent mention of this work being in progress, and speaks of the labor he was bestowing upon it.* We, who blame the monks for the scarcity of the Bible among them, fail to take into consideration the immense labor attending the transcriptions of so great a volume; plodding and patience were necessary to complete it. The history of this biblical gem is fraught with interest, and well worth relating. It is supposed to have been given to the monastery of Prum in Lorraine by Lothaire, the grandson of Charlemagne, who became a monk of that monastery. In the year 1576 this religious house was dissolved, but the monks preserved the manuscript, and carried it into Switzerland to the abbey of Grandis Vallis, near Basle, where it reposed till the year 1793, when, on the occupation of the episcopal territory of Basle by the French, all the property of the abbey was confiscated and sold, and the MS. under consideration came into the possession of M. Bennot, from whom, in 1822, it was purchased by M. Speyr Passavant, who brought it into general notice, and offered it for sale to the French Government at the price of 60,000 francs; this they declined, and its proprietor struck of nearly 20,000 francs from the amount; still the sum was deemed exorbitant, and with all their bibliomanical enthusiasm, the conservers of

* In a letter to Gisla, sister to the emperor, he writes "Totius forsitan evangelii Johannis expositionem direxissem vobis, si me non occupasset Domini Regis præceptum in emendatione Veteri Novique Testamenti."—*Opera*, tom. i. vol. 7, p. 591.

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the Royal Library allowed the treasure to escape. M. Passavant subsequently brought it to England, where it was submitted to the Duke of Sussex, still without success. He also applied to the trustees of the British Museum, and Sir F. Madden informs us that "much correspondence took place; at first he asked 12,000*l.* for it; then 8,000*l.*, and at last 6,500*l.*, which he declared an *immense sacrifice!!* At length, finding he could not part with his MS. on terms so absurd, he resolved to sell it if possible by auction; and accordingly, on the 27th of April, 1836, the Bible was knocked down by Mr. Evans for the sum of 1,500*l.*, but for the proprietor himself, as there was not one real bidding for it. This result having brought M. Speyr Passavant in some measure to his senses, overtures were made to him on the part of the trustees to the British Museum, and the manuscript finally became the property of the nation, for the comparatively small sum of 750*l.*" There can be no doubt as to the authenticity of this precious volume, the verses of Alcuin's, found in the manuscript, sufficiently prove it, for he alone could write—

> "Is Carolus qui jam Scribe jussit eum."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Hæc Dator Æternus cunctorum Christe bonorum,
> Munera de donis accipe sancta tuis,
> Quæ Pater Albinus devoto pectore supplex
> Nominus ad laudem obtulit ecce tui."

Other proofs are not wanting of Alcuin's industry as a scribe, or his enthusiasm as an *amator librorum.* Mark the rapture with which he describes the library of York Cathedral, collected by Egbert:

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" Illic invenies veterum vestigia Patrum,
Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,
Græcia vel quidquid transmisit Clara Latinis.
Hebraicus vel quod populus bibet imbre superno
Africa lucifluo vel quidquid lumine sparsit.
Quod Pater Hieronymus quod sensit Hilarius, atque
Ambrosius Præsul simul Augustinus, et ipse
Sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius, edit avitus:
Quidquid Gregorius summus docet, et Leo Papa;
Basilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque coruscant
Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Johannes:
Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda Magister,
Quæ Victorinus scripsêre, Boetius; atque
Historici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipse
Acer Aristoteles, Rhetor quoque Tullius ingens;
Quidquoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse Invencus,
Alcuinus, et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator.
Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius edunt;
Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus, et auctor
Artis Grammaticæ, vel quid scripsêre magistri;
Quid Probus atque Focas, Donatus, Priscian usve,
Sevius, Euticius, Pompeius, Commenianus,
Invenies alios perplures, lector, ibidem
Egregios studiis, arte et sermone magistros
Plurima qui claro scripsêre volumina sensu:
Nomina sed quorum præsenti in carmine scribi
Longius est visum, quam plectri postulet usus."*

Often did Alcuin think of these goodly times with a longing heart, and wish that he could revel among them whilst in France. How deeply would he have regretted, how many tears would he have shed over the sad destruction of that fine library, had he have known it; but his bones had mingled with the dust when the Danes dispersed those rare gems of ancient lore. If the reader should doubt the ardor of Alcuin as a book-lover, let him read

* Alcuini, ap. Gale, tom. iii. p. 730.

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the following letter, addressed to Charlemagne, which none but a bibliomaniac could pen.

"I, your Flaccus, according to your admonitions and good-will, administer to some in the house of St. Martin, the sweets of the Holy Scriptures, *Sanctarum mella Scripturarum:* others I inebriate with the study of ancient wisdom; and others I fill with the fruits of grammatical lore. Many I seek to instruct in the order of the stars which illuminate the glorious vault of heaven; so that they may be made ornaments to the holy church of God and the court of your imperial majesty; that the goodness of God and your kindness may not be altogether unproductive of good. But in doing this I discover the want of much, especially those exquisite books of scholastic learning, which I possessed in my own country, through the industry of my good and most devout master (Egbert). I therefore intreat your Excellence to permit me to send into Britain some of our youths to procure those books which we so much desire, and thus transplant into France the flowers of Britain, that they may fructify and perfume, not only the garden at York, but also the Paradise of Tours; and that we may say, in the words of the song, '*Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit;*' and to the young, '*Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink, abundantly, O beloved;*' or exhort, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, '*every one that thirsteth to come to the waters, and ye that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*'

"Your Majesty is not ignorant how earnestly

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we are exhorted throughout the Holy Scriptures to search after wisdom; nothing so tends to the attainment of a happy life; nothing more delightful or more powerful in resisting vice; nothing more honorable to an exalted dignity; and, according to philosophy, nothing more needful to a just government of a people. Thus Solomon exclaims, '*Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.*' It exalteth the humble with sublime honors. '*By wisdom kings reign and princes decree justice: by me princes rule; and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. Blessed are they that keep my ways, and blessed is the man that heareth me.*' Continue, then, my Lord King, to exhort the young in the palaces of your highness to earnest pursuit in acquiring wisdom; that they may be honored in their old age, and ultimately enter into a blessed immortality. I shall truly, according to my ability, continue to sow in those parts the seeds of wisdom among your servants; remembering the command, '*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.*' In my youth I sowed the seeds of learning in the prosperous seminaries of Britain; and now, in my old age, I am doing so in France without ceasing, praying that the grace of God may bless them in both countries."*

Such was the enthusiasm, such the spirit of bibliomania, which actuated the monks of those *bookless* days; and which was fostered with such zealous care by Alcuin, in the cloisters of St. Martin

* Alcuini, Oper. tom. i. p. 52. Ep. xxxviii. It was written about 796.

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of Tours. He appropriated one of the apartments of the monastery for the transcription of books, and called it the *museum*, in which constantly were employed a numerous body of industrious scribes: he presided over them himself, and continally exhorted them to diligence and care; to guard against the inadvertencies of unskilful copyists, he wrote a small work on orthography. We cannot estimate the merits of this essay, for only a portion of it has been preserved; but in the fragment printed among his works, we can see much that might have been useful to the scribes, and can believe that it must have tended materially to preserve the purity of ancient texts. It consists of a catalogue of words closely resembling each other, and consequently requiring the utmost care in transcribing.*

In these pleasing labors Alcuin was assisted by many of the most learned men of the time, and especially by Arno, Archbishop of Salzburgh, in writing to whom Alcuin exclaims, "O that I could suddenly translate my *Abacus*, and with my own hands quickly embrace your fraternity with that warmth which cannot be compressed in books. Nevertheless, because I cannot conveniently come, I send more frequently my unpolished letters (*rusticitatis meæ litteras*) to thee, that they may speak for me instead of the words of my mouth." This Arno, to whom he thus affectionately writes, was no despicable scholar; he was a true lover of literature, and proved himself something of an *amator*

* He was also very careful in instructing the scribes to punctuate with accuracy, which he deemed of great importance. See Ep. lxxxv. p. 126.

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librorum, by causing to be transcribed or bought for his use, 150 volumes,* but about this period the bookloving mania spread far and wide—the Emperor himself was touched with the enthusiasm; for, besides his choice private collections,† he collected together the ponderous writings of the holy fathers, amounting to upwards of 200 volumes, bound in a most sumptuous manner, and commanded them to be deposited in a public temple and arranged in proper order, so that those who could not purchase such treasures might be enabled to feast on the lore of the ancients. Thus did bibliomania flourish in the days of old.

But I must not be tempted to remain longer in France, though the names of many choice old book collectors would entice me to do so. When I left England, to follow the steps of Alcuin, I was speaking of York, which puts me in mind of the monastery of Whitby,‡ in the same shire, on the banks of the river Eske. It was founded by Hilda, the virgin daughter of Hereric, nephew to King Edwin, about the year 680, who was its first abbess. Having put her monastery in regular order, Hilda set an illustrious example of piety and virtue, and

* Necrolog. MS. Capituli, Metropolitani Salisburgensis, *apud* Froben, tom. i. p. lxxxi.

† Charlemagne founded several libraries;—see *Koeler, Dissert. de Biblio. Caroli Mog.* published in 1727. Eginhart mentions his private collection, and it is thus spoken of in the emperor's will; "Similiter et de libris, quorum magna in bibliotheca sua copiam congregavit: statuit ut ab iis qui eos habere uellet, justo pretio redimeretur, pretin in pauperes erogaretur." Echin. Vita Caroli, p. 366, edit. 24mo. 1562. Yet we cannot but regret the dispersion of this imperial library.

‡ Formerly called *Streaneshalch.*

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particularly directed all under her care to a constant reading of the holy Scriptures. After a long life of usefulness and zeal she died deeply lamented by the Saxon Church,* an event which many powerful miracles commemorated.

In the old times of the Saxons the monastery of Whitby was renowned for its learning; and many of the celebrated ecclesiastics of the day received their instruction within its walls. The most interesting literary anecdote connected with the good lady Hilda's abbacy, is the kind reception she gave to the Saxon poet Cædmon, whose paraphrase of the Book of Genesis has rendered his name immortal. He was wont to make "pious and religious verses, so that whatever was interpreted to him out of Scripture, he soon after put the same into poetical expression of much sweetness and humility in English, which was his native language. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world and to aspire to heaven. Others after him attempted in the English nation to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him, *for he did not learn the art of poetry from man but from God.*"† He was indeed, as the venerable Bede says, a poet of nature's own teaching: originally a rustic herdsman, the sublime gift was bestowed upon him by inspiration, or as it is recorded, in a dream. As he slept an unknown being appeared, and commanded him to sing. Cædmon hesitated to make the attempt, but the apparition retorted, "Nevertheless, thou shalt sing—sing

* At the age of 66, *Bede*, b. iv. cxxiii.
† Bede, b. iv. c. xxiv.

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the origin of things." Astonished and perplexed, our poet found himself instantaneously in possession of the pleasing art; and, when he awoke, his vision and the words of his song were so impressed upon his memory, that he easily repeated them to his wondering companions.* He hastened at daybreak to relate these marvels and to display his new found talents to the monks of Whitby, by whom he was joyfully received, and as they unfolded the divine mysteries, "The good man," says Bede, "listened like a clean animal ruminating; and his song and his verse were so winsome to hear, that his teachers wrote them down, and learned from his mouth."†

Some contend that an ancient manuscript in the British Museum is the original of this celebrated paraphrase.‡ It is just one of those choice relics which a bibliomaniac loves to handle, but scarcely perhaps bears evidence of antiquity so remote. It is described in the catalogue as, "The substance of the Book of Genesis, with the Acts of Moses and Joshua, with brief notes and annotations, part in Latin and part in Saxon by Bede and others." The notes, if by Bede, would tend to favor the opinion that it is the original manuscript, or, at any rate, coeval with the Saxon bard. The volume,

* John de Trevisa says, "Cædmon of Whitaby was inspired of the Holy Gost, and made wonder poisyes an Englisch, meiz of al the Storyes of Holy Writ." *MS. Harleian*, 1900, fol. 43, a.

† Ibid.

‡ Cottonian Collection marked *Claudius*, B. iv. There is another MS. in the Bodleian (*Junius* XI.) It was printed by Junius in 1655, in 4to. Sturt has engraved some of the illuminations in his *Saxon Antiquities*, and they were also copied and published by J. Greene, F. A. S., in 1754, in fifteen plates.

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as a specimen of calligraphic art, reflects honor upon the age, and is right worthy of Lady Hilda's monastery. There are 312* fine velum pages in this venerable and precious volume, nearly every one of which dazzles with the talent of the skilful illuminator. The initial letters are formed, with singular taste and ingenuity, of birds, beasts, and flowers. To give an idea of the nature of these pictorial embellishments—which display more splendor of coloring than accuracy of design—I may describe the singular illumination adorning the sixth page, which represents the birth of Eve. Adam is asleep, reclining on the grass, which is depicted as so many inverted cones; and, if we may judge from the appearance of our venerable forefather, he could not have enjoyed a very comfortable repose on that memorable occasion, and the grass which grew in the Garden of Paradise must have been of a very stubborn nature when compared with the earth's verdure of the present day; for the weight of Adam alters not the position of the tender herb, which supports his huge body on their extreme summits. As he is lying on the left side Eve is ascending from a circular aperture in his right; nor would the original, if she bore any resemblance to her monkish portraiture, excite the envy or the admiration of the present age, or bear comparison with her fair posterity. Her physiognomy is anything but fascinating, and her figure is a repulsive monstrosity, *adorned* with a profusion of luxurious hair of a brilliant blue!

It is foreign to our subject to enter into any

* It is unfortunately imperfect at the end, and wants folio 32.

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analysis of the literary beauties of this poem; let it suffice that Cædmon, the old Saxon herdsman, has been compared to our immortal Milton; and their names have been coupled together when speaking of a poet's genius.* But on other grounds Cædmon claims a full measure of our praise. Not only was he the "Father of Saxon poetry," but to him also belongs the inestimable honor of being the first who attempted to render into the vulgar tongue the beauties and mysteries of the Holy Scriptures; he unsealed what had hitherto been a sealed book; his paraphrase is the first translation of the holy writ on record. So let it not be forgotten that to this Milton of old our Saxon ancestors were indebted for this invaluable treasure. We are unable to trace distinctly the formation of the monastic library of Whitby. But of the time of Richard, elected abbot in the year 1148, a good monk, and formerly prior of Peterborough, we have a catalogue of their books preserved. I would

* Take the following as an instance of the similarity of thought between the two poets. Sharon Turner thus renders a portion of Satan's speech from the Saxon of Cædmon:

> "Yet why should I sue for his grace?
> Or bend to him with any obedience?
> I may be a God as he is.
> Stand by me strong companions."
>
> *Hist. Anglo Sax.* vol. ii. p. 314.

The idea is with Milton:

> . . . . . To bow to one for grace
> With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
> Who from the terror of this arm so late
> Doubted his empire; that were low indeed!
> That were an ignominy, and shame beneath
> This downfall!
>
> *Paradise Lost*, b. i.

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refer the reader to that curious list,* and ask him if it does not manifest by its contents the existence of a more refined taste in the cloisters than he gave the old monks credit for. It is true, the legends of saints abound in it; but then look at the choice tomes of a classic age, whose names grace that humble catalogue, and remember that the studies of the Whitby monks were divided between the miraculous lives of holy men, and the more pleasing pages of the "Pagan Homer," the eloquence of Tully, and the wit of Juvenal, of whose subject they seemed to have been fond; for they read also the satires of Persius. I extract the names of some of the authors contained in this monkish library:

Ambrose.	Plato.	Rabanus Maurus.
Hugo.	Homer.	Origen.
Theodolus.	Cicero.	Priscian.
Aratores.	Juvenal.	Gregory Nazianzen.
Bernard.	Persius.	Josephus.
Avianus.	Statius.	Bede.
Gratian.	Sedulus.	Gildas.
Odo.	Prosper.	Isidore.
Gilda.	Prudentius.	Ruffinus.
Maximianus.	Boethius.	Guido on Music.
Eusebius.	Donatus.	Diadema Monachorum.

Come, the monks evidently read something besides their *Credo*, and transcribed something better than "monastic trash." A little taste for literature and learning we must allow they enjoyed, when they formed their library of such volumes as the above. I candidly admit, that when I commenced these researches I had no expectations of

* He will find it in Charlton's History of Whitby, 4to. 1779, p. 113.

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finding a collection of a hundred volumes, embracing so many choice works of old Greece and Rome. It is pleasant, however, to trace these workings of bibliomania in the monasteries; and it is a surprise quite agreeable and delicious in itself to meet with instances like the present.

At a latter period the monastery of Rievall, in Yorkshire, possessed an excellent library of 200 volumes. This we know by a catalogue of them, compiled by one of the monks about the middle of the fourteenth century, and now preserved in the library of Jesus College, Cambridge.* A transcript of this manuscript was made by Mr. Halliwell, and published in his "Reliqua Antiqua,"† from which it may be seen that the Rievall monastery contained at that time many choice and valuable works. The numerous writings of Sts. Augustine, Bernard, Anselm, Cyprian, Origin, Haimo, Gregory, Ambrose, Isidore, Chrysostom, Bede, Aldhelm, Gregory Nazienzen, Ailred, Josephus, Rabanus Maurus, Peter Lombard, Orosius, Boethius, Justin, Seneca, with histories of the church of Britain, of Jerusalem, of King Henry, and many others equally interesting and costly, prove how industriously they used their pens, and how much they appreciated literature and learning. But in the fourteenth century the inhabitants of the monasteries were very industrious in transcribing books at a period coeval with the compilation of the Rievall catalogue, a monk of Coventry church was plying his pen with unceasing energy; John de Bruges wrote with his own hand

* Marked MS. N. B. 17.
† Wright and Halliwell's Rel. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 180.

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thirty-two volumes for the library of the benedictine priory of St. Mary.

The reader will see that there is little among them worthy of much observation. The MS. begins, "These are the books which John of Bruges, monk of Coventry, wrote for the Coventry church. Any who shall take them away from the church without the consent of the convent, let him be anathema."

In primis, ymnarium in grossa littera.
Halmo upon Isaiah.
A Missal for the Infirmary.
A Missal.
Duo missalia domini Prioris Rogeris, scilicet collectas cum secretis et postcommunione.
A Benedictional for the use of the same prior.
Another Benedictional for the use of the convent.
Librum cartarum.
Martyrologium, Rule of St. Benedict and Pastoral, in one volume.
Liber cartarum.
A Graduale, with a Tropario, and a Processional.
Psaltar for Prior Roger.
Palladium de Agricultura.
Librum experimentorum, in quo ligatur compotus Helprici.
A book containing Compotus manualis et Merlin, etc.
An Ordinal for the Choir.
Tables for the Martyrology.
Kalendarium mortuorum.
Ditto.
Table of Responses.
Capitular.
Capitular for Prior Roger.
A Reading Book.
A book of Decretals.

* It is printed in Hearne's History of Glastonbury, from a MS. in the Bodleian Library, Ed. *Oxon*, 1722, *Appendix* x. p. 291.

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Psalter for the monks in the infirmary.
Generationes Veteris et Novi Testamenti; ante scholasticam hystoriam et ante Psalterium domini Anselmi.
Pater noster.
An Ordinal.
Tables for Peter Lombard's Sentences.
Tables for the Psalter.
Book of the Statutes of the Church.
Verses on the praise of the blessed Mary.

The priory of St. Mary's was founded by Leofricke, the celebrated Earl of Mercia and his good Lady Godiva, in the year 1042. "Hollingshead says that this Earl Leofricke was a man of great honor, wise, and discreet in all his doings. His high wisdome and policie stood the realme in great steed whilst he lived... He had a noble ladie to his wife named Gudwina, at whose earnest sute he made the citie of Couentrie free of all manner of toll except horsses, and to haue that toll laid downe also, his foresaid wife rode naked through the middest of the towne without other couerture, saue onlie her haire. Moreouer partlie moued by his owne deuotion and partlie by the persuasion of his wife, he builded or beneficiallie augmented and repared manie abbeies and churches as the saide abbie or priorie at Couentrie—the abbeies of Wenlocke, Worcester, Stone, Evesham, and Leot, besides Hereford."

The church of Worcester, which the good Earl had thus "beneficiallie augmented," the Saxon King Offa had endowed with princely munificence before him. In the year 780, during the time of Abbot Tilhere, or Gilhere, Offa gave to the church Croppethorne, Netherton, Elmlege Cuddeshe,

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Cherton, and other lands, besides a "large Bible with two clasps, made of the purest gold."* In the tenth century the library of Exeter Church was sufficiently extensive to require the preserving care of an amanuensis; for according to Dr. Thomas, Bishop Oswald granted in the year 985 three hides of land at Bredicot, one yardland at Ginenofra, and seven acres of meadow at Tiberton, to Godinge a monk, on condition of his fulfilling the duties of a librarian to the see, and transcribing the registers and writings of the church. It is said that the scribe Godinge wrote many choice books for the library.† I do not find any remarkable book donation, save now and then a volume or two, in the annals of Worcester Church; nor have I been able to discover any old parchment catalogue to tell of the number or rarity of their books; for although probably most monasteries had one compiled, being enjoined to do so by the regulations of their order, they have long ago been destroyed; for when we know that fine old manuscripts were used by the bookbinders after the Reformation, we can easily imagine how little value would be placed on a mere catalogue of names.

But to return again to Godiva, that illustrious

* Bibliothecam optimam cum duobus armillis ex auro purissimo fabricatis.—*Heming. Chart*, p. 95.

† Thomas's Survey, of Worcester Church, 4to, 1736, p. 46. The Scriptorium of the monastery was situated in the cloisters, and a Bible in Bennet College, Cambridge, was written therein by a scribe named Senatus, as we learn from a note printed in Nasmith's Catalogue, which proves it to have been written during the reign of Henry II. It is a folio MS. on vellum, and a fine specimen of the talent of the expert scribe.—See *Nasmith's Catalogus Libr. MSS.*, 4to, *Camb.* 1777, p. 31.

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lady gave the monks, after the death of her lord, many landed possessions, and bestowed upon them the blessings of a library.*

Thomas Cobham, who was consecrated Bishop of Worcester in the year 1317, was a great "*amator librorum*," and spent much time and money in collecting books. He was the first who projected the establishment of a public library at Oxford, which he designed to form over the old Congregation House in the churchyard of St. Mary's, but dying soon after in the year 1327, the project was forgotten till about forty years after, when I suppose the example of the great bibliomaniac Richard de Bury drew attention to the matter; for his book treasures were then "deposited there, and the scholars permitted to consult them on certain conditions."†

Bishop Carpenter built a library for the use of the monastery of Exeter Church, in the year 1461, over the charnal house; and endowed it with £10 per annum as a salary for an amanuensis.‡ But the books deposited there were grievously destroyed during the civil wars; for on the twenty-fourth of September, 1642, when the army under the Earl of

* Since writing the above, which I gave on the authority of Green (*Hist. of Worc.* vol. i. p. 79), backed with the older one of Thomas (*Survey Ch. Worc.* p. 70), I have had the opportunity of consulting the reference given by them (*Heming, Chart.* p. 262), and was somewhat surprised to find the words "*Et bibliothecam, in duobus partibus divisam*," the foundation of this pleasing anecdote. "*Bibliothecam*," however, was the Latin for a Bible in the middle ages: so that in fact the Lady Godiva gave them a Bible divided into two parts, or volumes.

† Chalmer's Hist. of the Colleges of Oxford, p. 458. Wood's Hist. Antiq. of Oxon, lib. ii. p. 48.

‡ Green's Hist. Worc. p. 79.

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Essex came to Worcester, they set about "destroying the organ, breaking in pieces divers beautiful windows, wherein the foundation of the church was lively historified with painted glass;" they also "rifled the library, with the records and evidences of the church, tore in pieces the Bibles and service books pertaining to the quire."* Sad desecration of ancient literature! But the reader of history will sigh over many such examples.

The registers of Evesham Monastery, near Worcester, speak of several monkish bibliophiles, and the bookish anecdotes relating to them are sufficiently interesting to demand some attention here. Ailward, who was abbot in the year 1014, gave the convent many relics and ornaments, and what was still better a quantity of books.† He was afterwards promoted to the see of London, over which he presided many years; but age and infirmity growing upon him, he was anxious again to retire to Evesham, but the monks from some cause or other were unwilling to receive him back; at this he took offence, and seeking in the monastery of Ramsey the quietude denied him there, he demanded back all the books he had given them.‡ His successor Mannius was celebrated for his skill in the fine arts, and was an exquisite worker in metals, besides an ingenious scribe and illuminator.

* Sir W. Dugdale's View of the Troubles in England, *Folio*, p. 557. We can easily credit the destruction of the organ and painted windows, so obnoxious to Puritan piety; but with regard to the *Bibles*, we may suspect the accuracy of the Royalist writer, col. 182.

† Symeon Dunelm. Tweyed. Script. x.

‡ Habingdon, MSS. Godwin de Præf, p. 231.

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He wrote and illuminated with his own hand, for the use of his monastery, a missal and a large Psalter.*

Walter, who was abbot in the year 1077, gave also many books to the library,† and among the catalogue of sumptuous treasures with which Reginald, a succeeding abbot, enriched the convent, a great textus or gospels, with a multitude of other books, *multa alia libros*, are particularly specified.‡ Almost equally liberal were the choice gifts bestowed upon the monks by Adam (elected A. D. 1161); but we find but little in our way among them, except a fine copy of the "Old and New Testament with a gloss." No mean gift I ween in those old days; but one which amply compensated for the deficiency of the donation in point of numbers. But all these were greatly surpassed by a monk whom it will be my duty now to introduce; and to an account of whose life and bibliomanical propensities, I shall devote a page or two. Like many who spread a lustre around the little sphere of their own, and did honor, humbly and quietly to the sanctuary of the church in those Gothic days, he is unknown to many; and might, perhaps, have been entirely forgotten, had not time kindly spared a document which testifies to his piety and book-collecting industry. The reader will probably recollect many who, by their shining piety and spotless life, maintained the purity of the Christian faith in a church surrounded by danger and ignorance, and many a bright name, renowned for their virtue or

* Tindal's Hist. of Evesham, p. 248. † *Ibid.* p. 250.
‡ MS. Harl., No. 3763, p. 180.

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their glory of arms, who flourished during the early part of the thirteenth century; but few have heard of a good and humble monk named Thomas of Marleberg. Had circumstances designed him for a higher sphere, had affairs of state, or weighty duties of an ecclesiastical import, been guided by his hand, his name would have been recorded with all the flourish of monkish adulation; but the learning and the prudence of that lowly monk was confined to the little world of Evesham; and when his earthly manes were buried beneath the cloisters within the old convent walls, his name and good deeds were forgotten by the world, save in the hearts of his fraternity.

> "But past is all his fame. The very spot
> Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot."

In a manuscript in the Cotton Library there is a document called "The good deeds of Prior Thomas," from which the following facts have been extracted.*

From this interesting memorial of his labors, we learn that Thomas had acquired some repute among the monks for his great knowledge of civil and canon law; so that when any difficulty arose respecting the claims or privileges of the monastery, or when any important matter was to be transacted, his advice was sought and received with deference and respect. Thus three years after his admission the bishop of Worcester intimated his intention of

* MS. Cot. Vesp. b. xxiv. It is printed in Latin in *Nash's Worcestershire*, vol. i, p. 419, and translated in *Tindal's Hist. of Worcs.* p. 24, all of which I have used with *Dugdale's Monast.* vol. ii. p. 5.

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paying the monastery a visitation; a practice which the bishops of that see had not enforced since the days of abbot Alurie. The abbot and convent however considered themselves free from the jurisdiction of the bishop; and acting on the advice of Thomas of Marleberg, they successfully repulsed him. The affair was quite an event, and seems to have caused much sensation among them at the time; and is mentioned to show with what esteem Thomas was regarded by his monkish brethren. After a long enumeration of "good works" and important benefactions, such as rebuilding the tower and repairing the convent, we are told that "In the second year of Randulp's abbacy, Thomas, then dean, went with him to Rome to a general council, where, by his prudence and advice, a new arrangement in the business of the convent rents was confirmed, and many other useful matters settled." Here I am tempted to refer to the *arrangements*, for they offer pleasing illustrations of the monk as an "*amator librorum.*" Mark how his thoughts dwelt—even when surrounded by those high dignitaries of the church, and in the midst of that important council—on the library and the scriptorium of his monastery.

"*To the Prior belongs the tythes of Beningar the both great and small, to defray the expenses of procuring parchment, and to procure manuscripts for transcription.*"

And in another clause it is settled that

"*To the Office of the Precentor belongs the Manner of Hampton, from which he will receive five*

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shillings annually, besides ten and eightpence from the tythes of Stokes and Alcester, with which he is to find all the ink and parchment for the Scribes of the Monastery, colours for illuminating, and all that is necessary for binding the books."*

Pleasing traits are these of his bookloving passion; and doubtless under his guidance the convent library grew and flourished amazingly. But let us return to the account of his "good works."

"Returning from Rome after two years he was elected sacrist. He then made a reading-desk behind the choir,† which was much wanted in the church, and appointed stated readings to be held near the tomb of Saint Wilsius... Leaving his office thus rich in good works, he was then elected prior. In this office he buried his predecessor, Prior John, in a new mausoleum; and also John, surnamed Dionysius; of the latter of whom Prior Thomas was accustomed to say, 'that he had never known any man who so perfectly performed every kind of penance as he did for more than thirty years, in fasting and in prayer; in tears and in watchings; in cold and in corporeal inflictions; in coarseness and roughness of clothing, and in denying himself bodily comforts, far more than any other of

* *MS. Cottonian Augustus II.* No. 11. "Ex his debet invenire præcentor incaustum omnibus scriptoribus monasterii; et Pergamenum ad brevia, et colores ad illuminandum, et necessaria ad legandum libros." See *Dugdale's Monast.* vol. ii. p. 24.

† After the elapse of so many years, the research of the antiquarian has brought this desk to light; an account of it will be found in the Archeologia, vol. xvii. p. 278.

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the brethren; all of which he rather dedicated in good purposes and to the support of the poor."

Thus did many an old monk live, practising all this with punctilious care as the essence of a holy life, and resting upon the fallacy that these cruel mortifyings of the flesh would greatly facilitate the acquisition of everlasting ease and joy in a better world; as if God knew not, better than themselves, what chastisements and afflictions were needful for them. We may sigh with pain over such instances of mistaken piety and fanatical zeal in all ages of the church; yet with all their privations, and with all their macerations of the flesh, there was a vast amount of human pride mingled with their humiliation. But He who sees into the hearts of all—looking in his benevolence more at the intention than the outward form, may perhaps sometimes find in it the workings of a true christian piety, and so reward it with his love. Let us trust so in the charity of our faith, and proceed to notice that portion of the old record which is more intimately connected with our subject. We read that

"Thomas had brought with him to the convent, on his entering, many books, of both canon and civil law; as well as the books by which he had regulated the schools of Oxford and Exeter before he became a monk. He likewise had one book of Democritus; and the book of Antiparalenion, a gradual book, according to Constantine; Isidore's Divine Offices, and the Quadrimum of Isidore; Tully's de Amicitia; Tully de Senectute et de Paradoxis; Lucan, Juvenal, and many other authors, *et multos alios auctores*, with a great number of

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sermons, with many writings on theological questions; on the art and rules of grammar and the book of accents. After he was prior he made a great breviary, better than any at that time in the monastery, with Haimo, on the Apocalypse, and a book containing the lives of the patrons of the church of Evesham; with an account of the deeds of all the good and bad monks belonging to the church, in one volume. He also wrote and bound up the same lives and acts in another volume separately. He made also a great Psalter, *magnum psalterium*, superior to any contained in the monastery, except the glossed ones. He collected and wrote all the necessary materials for four antiphoners, with their musical notes, himself; except what the brothers of the monastery transcribed for him. He also finished many books that William of Lith, of pious memory, commenced—the Marterologium, the Exceptio Missæ, and some excellent commentaries on the Psalter and Communion of the Saints in the old antiphoners. He also bought the four Gospels, with glosses, and Isaiah and Ezekiel, also glossed;* the Pistillæ upon Matthew; some Allegories on the Old Testament; the Lamentations of Jeremiah, with a gloss; the Exposition of the Mass, according to Pope Innocent; and the great book of Alexander Necham, which is called *Corrogationes Promethea de partibus veteris testamenti et novæ...* He also caused to be transcribed in large letters the book concerning the offices of the abbey, from the Purification of St.

* "Emit etiam quator evangelia glosata, et Yaiam et Ezechielem glossatos."

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Mary to the Feast of Easter; the prelections respecting Easter; Pentecost, and the blessings at the baptismal fonts. He also caused a volume, containing the same works, to be transcribed, but in a smaller hand; all of which the convent had not before. He made also the tablet for the locutory in the chapel of St. Anne, towards the west. After the altar of St. Mary in the crypts had been despoiled by thieves of its books and ornaments, to the value of ten pounds, he contributed to their restoration."

Thomas was equally liberal in other matters. His whole time and wealth were spent in rebuilding and repairing the monastery and adding to its comforts and splendor. He had a great veneration for antiquity, and was especially anxious to restore those parts which were dilapidated by time; the old inscriptions on the monuments and altars he carefully re-inscribed. It is recorded that he renewed the inscription on the great altar himself, without the aid of a book, *sine libro;* which was deemed a mark of profound learning in my lord abbot by his monkish surbordinates.

With this I conclude my remarks on Thomas of Marleberg, leaving these extracts to speak for him. It is pleasing to find that virtue so great, and industry so useful met with its just reward; and that the monks of Evesham proved how much they appreciated such talents, by electing him their abbot, in 1229, which, for seven years he held with becoming piety and wisdom.

The annals of the monastery* testify that "In

* Harleian MSS., No. 3763.

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the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and ninety-two, and the fifteenth of the reign of King Richard the Second, on the tenth calends of May, died the venerable Prior Nicholas Hereford, of pious memory, who, as prior of the church of Evesham, lived a devout and religious life for forty years." He held that office under three succeeding abbots, and filled it with great honor and industry. He was a dear lover of books, and spent vast sums in collecting together his private library, amounting to more than 100 volumes; some of these he wrote with his own hand, but most of them he bought *emit.* A list of these books is given in the Harleian Register, and many of the volumes are described as containing a number of tracts, bound up in one, *cum aliis tractatibus in eodem volumine.* Some of these display the industry of his pen, and silently tell us of his Christian piety. Among those remarkable for their bulk, it is pleasurable to observe a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which was doubtless a comfort to the venerable prior in the last days of his green old age; and which probably guided him in the even tenor of that *devout and religious life*, for which he was so esteemed by the monks of Evesham. He possessed also some works of Bernard Augustin, and Boethius, whose Consolation of Philosophy few book-collectors of the middle ages were without. To many of the books the prices he gave for them, or at which they were then valued, are affixed: a "*Summa Prædicantium*" is valued at eight marks, and a "*Burley super Politices*" at seven marks. We may suspect monk Nicholas of being rather a curi-

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ous collector in his way, for we find in his library some interesting volumes of popular literature. He probably found much pleasure in perusing his copy of the marvelous tale of "Beufys of Hampton," and the romantic "Mort d'Arthur," both sufficiently interesting to relieve the monotonous vigils of the monastery. But I must not dwell longer on the monastic bibliophiles of Evesham, other libraries and bookworms call for some notice from my pen.



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CHAPTER IX.

Old Glastonbury Abbey.—Its Library.—John of Taunton.—Richard Whiting.—Malmsbury.—Bookish Monks of Gloucester Abbey.—Leofric of Exeter and his private library.—Peter of Blois. Extracts from his letters.—Proved to have been a great classical student, etc., etc.

THE fame of Glastonbury Abbey will attract the steps of the western traveller; and if he possess the spirit of an antiquary, his eye will long dwell on those mutilated fragments of monkish architecture. The bibliophile will regard it with still greater love; for, in its day, it was one of the most eminent repositories of those treasures which it is his province to collect. For more than ten hundred years that old fabric has stood there, exciting in days of remote antiquity the veneration of our pious forefathers, and in modern times the admiration of the curious. Pilgrim! tread lightly on that hallowed ground! sacred to the memory of the

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most learned and illustrious of our Saxon ancestry. The bones of princes and studious monks closely mingle with the ruins which time has caused, and bigotry helped to desecrate. Monkish tradition claims, as the founder of Glastonbury Abbey, St. Joseph of Arimathea, who, sixty-three years after the incarnation of our Lord, came to spread the truths of the Gospel over the island of Britain. Let this be how it may, we leave it for more certain data.

After, says a learned antiquary, its having been built by St. Davis, Archbishop of Menevia, and then again restored by "twelve well affected men in the north;" it was entirely pulled down by Ina, king of the West Saxons, who "new builded the abbey of Glastonburie* in a fenny place out of the way, to the end the monks mought so much the more give their mindes to heavenly thinges, and chiefely use the contemplation meete for men of such profession. This was the fourth building of that monasterie."† The king completed his good work by erecting a beautiful chapel, garnished with numerous ornaments and utensils of gold and silver; and among other costly treasures, William of Malmsbury tells us that twenty pounds and sixty marks of gold was used in making a coopertoria for a book of the Gospels.‡

* See Speed's Chron. p. 228. Samme's Antiq. p. 578.

† Stowe's Annales, 4to. 1605, p. 97. See also Hearne's Hist. Glastonbury.

‡ *Will. Malm. ap. Gale Script.* 311.—Coopertoria Librorum Evangelii. For many other instances of binding books in gold, and sometimes with costly gems, I refer the reader to *Du Cange* verb. Capsæ, and to *Mr. Maitland's Dark Ages.*

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Would that I had it in my power to write the literary history of Glastonbury Abbey; to know what the monks of old there transcribed would be to acquire the history of learning in those times; for there was little worth reading in the literature of the day that was not copied by those industrious scribes. But if our materials will not enable us to do this, we may catch a glimpse of their well stored shelves through the kindness and care of William Britone the Librarian, who compiled a work of the highest interest to the biographer. It is no less than a catalogue of the books contained in the common library of the abbey in the year one thousand two hundred and forty-eight. Four hundred choice volumes comprise this fine collection;* and will not the reader be surprised to find among them a selection of the classics, with the chronicles, poetry, and romantic productions of the middle ages, besides an abundant store of the theological writings of the primitive Church. But I have not transcribed a large proportion of this list, as the extracts given from other monastic catalogues may serve to convey an idea of their nature; but I cannot allow one circumstance connected with this old document to pass without remark. I would draw the reader's attention to the fine bibles which commence the list, and which prove that the monks of Glastonbury Abbey were fond and devoted students of the Bible. It begins with—

Bibliotheca una in duobus voluminibus.
Alia Bibliotheca integra vetusta, set legibilis.

* Warton says, that this library was at the time the "*richest in England.*" In this, however, he was mistaken.

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Bibliotheca integræ minoris litteræ.
Dimidia pars Bibliothecæ incipiens à Psalterio, vetusta.
Bibliotheca magna versificata.
Alia versificata in duobus voluminibus.
Bibliotheca tres versificata.*

But besides these, the library contained numerous detached books and many copies of the Gospels, an ample collection of the fathers, and the controversal writings of the middle ages; and among many others, the following classics—

Aristotle.	Tully.	Marcianus.
Livy.	Boethius.	Horace.
Orosius.	Plato.	Priscian.
Sallust.	Isagoge of Porphyry.	Prosper.
Donatus.	Prudentius.	Aratores.
Sedulus.	Fortuanus.	Claudian.
Virgil's Æneid.	Persius.	Juvenal.
Virgil's Georgics.	Pompeius.	Cornutus.
Virgil's Bucolics.	Isidore.	
Æsop.	Smaragdius.	

I must not omit to mention that John de Taunton, a monk and an enthusiastic *amator librorum*, and who was elected abbot in the year 1271, collected forty choice volumes, and gave them to the library, *dedit librario*, of the abbey; no mean gift, I ween, in the thirteenth century. They included—

Questions on the Old and New Law.
St. Augustine upon Genesis.
Ecclesiastical Dogmas.
St. Bernard's Enchiridion.
St. Bernard's Flowers.
Books of Wisdom, with a Gloss.
Postil's upon Jeremiah and the lesser Prophets.
Concordances to the Bible.

* John of Glast. p. 423.

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Postil's of Albertus upon Matthew, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah and others, in one volume.
Postil's upon Mark.
Postil's upon John, with a Discourse on the Epistles throughout the year.
Brother Thomas Old and New Gloss.
Morabilius on the Gospels and Epistles.
St. Augustine on the Trinity.
Epistles of Paul glossed.
St. Augustine's City of God.
Kylwardesby upon the Letter of the Sentences.
Questions concerning Crimes.
Perfection of the Spiritual Life.
Brother Thomas' Sum of Divinity, in four volumes.
Decrees and Decretals.
A Book of Perspective.
Distinctions of Maurice.
Books of Natural History, in two volumes.
Book on the Properties of Things.*

Subsequent to this, in the time of one book-loving abbot, an addition of forty-nine volumes was made to the collection by his munificence and the diligence of his scribes; and time has allowed the modern bibliophile to gaze on a catalogue of these treasures. I wish the monkish annalist had recorded the life of this early bibliomaniac, but unfortunately we know little of him. But they were no mean nor paltry volumes that he transcribed. It is with pleasure I see the catalogue commenced by a copy of the Holy Scriptures; and the many commentaries upon them by the fathers of the church enumerated after it, prove my Lord Abbot to have been a diligent student of the Bible. Nor did he seek God alone in his written word;

* John of Glastonbury Edt., Hearne, Oxon, 1726, p. 451. Steven's Additions to Dugdale, vol. i. p. 447.

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but wisely understood that his Creator spoke to him also by visible works; and probably loved to observe the great wisdom and design of his God in the animated world; for a Pliny's Natural History stands conspicuous on the list, as the reader will perceive.

THE BIBLE.
Pliny's Natural History.
Cassiodorus upon the Psalms.
Three great Missals.
Two Reading Books.
A Breviary for the Infirmary.
Jerome upon Jeremiah and Isaiah.
Origen upon the Old Testament.
Origen's Homilies.
Origen upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.
Jerome upon the Epistles to the Galatians, to Ephesians, to Titus, and to Philemon.
Lives of the Fathers.
Collations of the Fathers.
Breviary for the Hospital.
An Antiphon.
Pars una Moralium.
Cyprian's Works.
Register.
Liber dictus Paradisus.
Jerome against Jovinian.
Ambrose against Novatian.
Seven Volumes of the Passions of the Saints for the circle of the whole year.
Lives of the Cæsars.
Acts of the Britons.
Acts of the English.
Acts of the Franks.
Pascasius.
Radbert on the Body and Blood of the Lord.
Book of the Abbot of Clarevalle *de Amando Deo.*
Hugo de S. Victore de duodecim gradibus Humilitatis et de Oratione.

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Physiomania Lapedarum et Liber Petri Alsinii in uno volumine.
Rhetoric, two volumes.
Quintilian *de Causes*, in one volume.
Augustine upon the Lord's Prayer and upon the Psalm *Miserero mei Deus.*
A Benedictional.
Decreta Cainotensis Episcopi.
Jerome upon the Twelve Prophets, and upon the Lamentations of Jeremiah.
Augustine upon the Trinity.
Augustine upon Genesis.
Isidore's Etymology.
Paterius.
Augustine on the Words of our Lord.
Hugo on the Sacraments.
Cassinus on the Incarnation of our Lord.
Anselm's *Cui Deus Homo.**

The reader, I think, will allow that the catalogue enumerates but little unsuitable for a christian's study; he may not admire the principles contained in some of them, or the superstition with which many of them are loaded; but after all there were but few volumes among them from which a Bible reading monk might not have gleaned something good and profitable. These books were transcribed about the end of the thirteenth century, after the catalogue of the monastic library mentioned above was compiled.

Walter Taunton, elected in the year 1322, gave to the library several volumes; and his successor, Adam Sodbury,† elected in the same year, increased

* Printed in *Tanner's Notitia Monastica*, 8vo. Edit. 1695, p. 75, and in *Hearne's History of Glastonbury*, p. 141; but both these works are scarce, and I have thought it worth reprinting; the reader will perceive that I have given some of the items in English—the original of course is in Latin.

† John of Glas. p. 262.

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it with a copy of the whole Bible,* a Scholastic history, Lives of Saints, a work on the Properties of Things, two costly Psalters, and a most beautifully bound Benedictional.

But doubtless many a bookworm nameless in the page of history, dwelled within those walls apart from worldly solicitude and strife; relieving what would otherwise have been an insupportable monotony, with sweet converse, with books, or the avocations of a scribe.

Well, years rolled on, and this fair sanctuary remained in all its beauty, encouraging the trembling christian, and fostering with a mother's care the literature and learning of the time. Thus it stood till that period, so dark and unpropitious for monkish ascendency, when Protestant fury ran wild, and destruction thundered upon the heads of those poor old monks! A sad and cruel revenge for enlightened minds to wreck on mistaken piety and superstitious zeal. How widely was the fine library scattered then. Even a few years after its dissolution, when Leland spent some days exploring the book treasures reposing there, it had been broken up, and many of them lost; yet still it must have been a noble library, for he tells us that it was "scarcely equalled in all Britain;" and adds, in the spirit of a true bibliomaniac, that he no sooner passed the threshold than the very sight of so many sacred remains of antiquity struck him with awe and astonishment. The reader will naturally wish that he had given us a list of what he found there; but he merely enumerates a selection of

* Librario dedit. bibliam preciosam.—*John of Glast.* p. 262.

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thirty-nine, among which we find a Grammatica Eriticis, formerly belonging to Saint Dunstan; a life of Saint Wilfrid; a Saxon version of Orosius, and the writings of William of Malmsbury.* The antiquary will now search in vain for any vestige of the abbey library; even the spot on which it stood is unknown to the curious.

No christian, let his creed be what it may, who has learnt from his master the principles of charity and love, will refuse a tear to the memory of Richard Whiting, the last of Glastonbury's abbots. Poor old man! Surely those white locks and tottering limbs ought to have melted a Christian heart; but what charity or love dwelt within the soul of that rapacious monarch? Too old to relinquish his long cherished superstitions; too firm to renounce his religious principles, Whiting offered a firm opposition to the reformation. The fury of the tyrant Henry was aroused, and that grey headed monk was condemned to a barbarous death. As a protestant I blush to write it, yet so it was; after a hasty trial, if trial it can be called, he was dragged on a hurdle to a common gallows erected on Torr Hill, and there, in the face of a brutal mob, with two of his companion monks, was he hung! Protestant zeal stopped not here, for when life had fled they cut his body down, and dividing it into quarters, sent one to each of the four principal towns; and as a last indignity to that mutilated clay, stuck his head on the gate of the old abbey, over which he had presided with judicious care in

* Among them was a "Dictionarum Latine et Saxonicum."—*Leland Collect.* iii. p. 153.

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the last days of his troubled life. It was Whiting's wish to bid adieu in person to his monastery, in which in more prosperous times he had spent many a quiet hour; it is said that even this, the dying prayer of that poor old man, they refused to grant.*

On viewing the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, so mournful to look upon, yet so splendid in its decay, we cannot help exclaiming with Michael Dayton,—

"On whom for this sad waste, should justice lay the crime."

Whilst in the west we cannot pass unnoticed the monastery of Malmsbury, one of the largest in England, and which possessed at one time an extensive and valuable library; but it was sadly ransacked at the Reformation, and its vellum treasures sold to the bakers to heat their stoves, or applied to the vilest use; not even a catalogue was preserved to tell the curious of a more enlightened age, what books the old monks read there; but perhaps, and the blood runs cold as the thought arises in the mind, a perfect Livy was among them, for a rare *amator librorum* belonging to this monastery, quotes one of the lost Decades.† I allude to William of Malmsbury, one of the most enthusiastic bibliomaniacs of his age. From his youth he dwelt within the abbey walls, and received his education

* Leland, in his MSS. preserved in the Bodleian Library, calls Whiting "*Homo sane candidissimus et amicus meus singularis,*" but he afterwards scored the line with his pen. See *Arch Bodl.* A. Dugdale Monast. vol. i. p. 6.

† See Hume's Hist. Engl.; Moffat's Hist. of Malmsbury, p. 223, and Will. Malms. Novellæ Hist. lib. ii.; Sharpe's translation, p. 576.

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there. His constant study and indefatigable industry in collecting and perusing books, was only equalled by his prudence and by his talents; he soon rose in the estimation of his fellow monks, who appointed him their librarian, and ultimately offered him the abbacy, which he refused with Christian humility, fearing too, lest its contingent duties would debar him from a full enjoyment of his favorite avocation; but of his book passion let William of Malmsbury speak for himself: "A long period has elapsed since, as well through the care of my parents as my own industry, I became familiar with books. This pleasure possessed me from my childhood; this source of delight has grown with my years; indeed, I was so instructed by my father, that had I turned aside to other pursuits, I should have considered it as jeopardy to my soul, and discredit to my character. Wherefore, mindful of the adage, 'covet what is necessary,' I constrained my early age to desire eagerly that which it was disgraceful not to possess. I gave indeed my attention to various branches of literature, but in different degrees. Logic, for instance, which gives arms to eloquence, I contented myself with barely learning: medicine, which ministers to the health of the body, I studied with somewhat more attention. But now, having scrupulously examined the various branches of ethics, I bow down to its majesty, because it spontaneously inverts itself to those who study it, and directs their minds to moral practice, history more especially; which by a certain agreeable recapitulation of past events, excites its readers by example, to frame their lives to the

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pursuit of good or to aversion from evil. When, therefore, at my own expense I had procured some historians of foreign nations, I proceeded during my domestic leisure, to inquire if anything concerning our own country could be found worthy of handing down to posterity. Hence it arose, that not content with the writings of ancient times, I began myself to compose, not indeed to display my learning, which is comparatively nothing, but to bring to light events lying concealed in the confused mass of antiquity. In consequence, rejecting vague opinions, I have studiously sought for chronicles far and near, though I confess I have scarcely profited anything by this industry; for perusing them all I still remained poor in information, though I ceased not my researches as long as I could find anything to read."*

Having read this passage, I think my readers will admit that William of Malmsbury well deserves a place among the bibliomaniacs of the middle ages. As an historian his merit is too generally known and acknowledged to require an elucidation here. He combines in most cases a strict attention to fact, with the rare attributes of philosophic reflection, and sometimes the bloom of eloquence. But simplicity of narrative constitute the greatest and sometimes the only charm in the composition of the monkish chroniclers. William of Malmsbury aimed at a more ambitious style, and attempted to adorn, as he admits himself, his English history with Roman art; this he does sometimes with

* William of Malmsbury, translated by the Rev. J. Sharpe, 4to. *Lond.* 1815, p. 107.

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tolerable elegance, but too often at the cost of necessary detail. Yet still we must place him at the head of the middle age historians, for he was diligent and critical, though perhaps not always impartial; and in matters connected with Romish doctrine, his testimony is not always to be relied upon without additional authority; his account of those who held opinions somewhat adverse to the orthodoxy of Rome is often equivocal; we may even suspect him of interpolating their writings, at least of Alfric, whose homilies had excited the fears of the Norman ecclesiastics. His works were compiled from many sources now unknown; and from the works of Bede, the Saxon chronicles, and Florilegus, he occasionally transcribes with little alteration.

But is it not distressing to find that this talented author, so superior in other respects to the crude compilers of monkish history, cannot rise above the superstition of the age? Is it not deplorable that a mind so gifted could rely with fanatical zeal upon the verity of all those foul lies of Rome called "Holy" miracles; or that he could conceive how God would vouchsafe to make his saints ridiculous in the eyes of man, by such gross absurdities as tradition records, but which Rome deemed worthy of canonization; but it was then, as now, so difficult to conquer the prejudices of early teaching. With all our philosophy and our science, great men cannot do it now; even so in the days of old; they were brought up in the midst of superstition; sucked it as it were from their mother's breast, and fondly cradled in its belief; and as soon as the infant mind

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could think, parental piety dedicated it to God; not, however, as a light to shine before men, but as a candle under a bushel; for to serve God and to serve monachism were synonymous expressions in those days.

The west of England was honored by many a monkish bibliophile in the middle ages. The annals of Gloucester abbey record the names of several. Prior Peter, who became abbot in the year 1104, is said to have enclosed the monastery with a stone wall, and greatly enriched it with many books "*copia librorum.*"* A few years after (A. D. 1113), Godemon the Prior was made abbot, and the Saxon Chronicle records that during his time the tower was set on fire by lightning and the whole monastery was burnt; so that all the valuable things therein were destroyed except a "few books and three priest's mass-hackles."† Abbot Gamage gave many books to the library in the year 1306;‡ and Richard de Stowe, during the same century, gave the monks a small collection in nine or ten volumes; a list of them is preserved in an old manuscript.§

But earlier than this in the eleventh century, a bishop of Exeter stands remarkable as an *amator librorum.* Leofric, the last bishop of Crediton, and

* MS. *Cottonian Domit.* A. viii. fol. 128 b.

† Saxon Chron. by Ingram, p. 343.

‡ Dugdale's *Monastica*, vol. i. p. 534. Leland gives a list of the books he found there, but they only number about 20 volumes. See *Collect.* vol. iv. p. 159.

§ MS. Harleian, No. 627, fol. 8 a. "Liber Geneseos versificatus" probably Cædmon's Paraphrase was among them, and Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy.

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"sometime lord chancellor of England,"* received permission from Edward the Confessor to translate the seat of his diocese to the city of Exeter in the year 1050. "He was brought up and studied in *Lotharingos*," says William of Malmsbury,† and he manifested his learning and fondness for study by collecting books. Of the nature of his collections we are enabled to judge by the volumes he gave to the church of Exeter. The glimpse thus obtained lead us to consider him a curious book-collector; and it is so interesting to look upon a catalogue of a bishop's private library in that early time, and to behold his tastes and his pursuits reflected and mirrored forth therein, that I am sure the reader will be gratified by its perusal.‡ After enumerating some broad lands and a glittering array of sumptuous ornaments, he is recorded to have given to the church "Two complete mass books; 1 Collectarium; 2 Books of Epistles (*Pistel Bec*§); 2 complete *Sang Bec;* 1 Book of *night sang;* 1 Book *unus liber*, a Breviary or Tropery; 2 Psalters; 3 Psalters according to the Roman copies; 2 Antiphoners; A precious book of blessings; 3 others; 1 Book of Christ *in English;* 2 Summer Reading bec; 1 Winter ditto; Rules and Canons; 1 Martyrology; 1 Canons in Latin; 1 Confessional *in*

* Godwin Cat. of Bishops, p. 317.

† Will. of Malms. de Gestis Pont. Savile Script. fol. 1601, p. 256, *apud Lotharingos altus et doctus.*

‡ I use a transcript of the Exeter MS. collated by Sir F. Madden. *Additional MSS.* No. 9067. It is printed in Latin and Saxon from a old MS. In the Bodl. Auct. D. 2. 16. fol. 1 a; in Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. ii. p. 257, which varies a little from the Exeter transcript.

§ Bec is the plural of boc, a book.

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English; 1 Book of Homilies and Hymns for Winter and Summer; 1 Boethius on the Consolation of Philosophy, *in English* (King Alfred's translation); 1 Great Book of Poetry in English; 1 Capitular; 1 Book of very ancient nocturnal *sangs;* 1 Pistel bec; 2 Ancient ræding bec; 1 for the use of the priest; also the following books in Latin, viz., 1 Pastoral of Gregory; 1 Dialogues of Gregory; 1 Book of the Four Prophets; 1 Boethius Consolation of Philosophy; 1 Book of the offices of Amalar; 1 Isagoge of Porphyry; 1 Passional; 1 book of Prosper; 1 book of Prudentius the Martyr; 1 Prudentius; 1 Prudentius (*de Mrib.*); 1 other book; 1 Ezechael the Prophet; 1 Isaiah the Prophet; 1 Song of Songs; 1 Isidore Etymology; 1 Isidore on the New and Old Testament; 1 Lives of the Apostles; 1 Works of Bede; 1 Bede on the Apocalypse; 1 Bede's Exposition on the Seven Canonical Epistles; 1 book of Isidore on the Miracles of Christ; 1 book of Orosius; 1 book of Machabees; 1 book of Persius; 1 Sedulus; 1 Avator; 1 book of Statius with a gloss."

Such were the books forming a part of the private library of a bishop of Exeter in the year of grace 1073. Few indeed when compared with the vast multitudes assembled and amassed together in the ages of printed literature. But these sixty or seventy volumes, collected in those times of dearth, and each produced by the tedious process of the pen, were of an excessive value, and mark their owner as distinctly an *amator librorum*, as the enormous piles heaped together in modern times would do a Magliabechi. Nor was Leofric an

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ordinary collector; he loved to preserve the idiomatic poetry of those old Saxon days; his ancient *sang bec*, or song books, would now be deemed a curious and precious relic of Saxon literature. One of these has fortunately escaped the ravages of time and the fate of war. "The great boc of English Poetry" is still preserved at Exeter—one of the finest relics of Anglo Saxon poetry extant. Mark too those early translations which we cannot but regard with infinite pleasure, and which satisfactorily prove that the Gospels and Church Service was at least partly read and sung in the Saxon church in the common language of the people; let the Roman Catholics say what they will.* But without saying much of his church books, we cannot but be pleased to find the Christian Boethius in his library with Bede, Gregory, Isidore, Prosper, Orosius, Prudentius, Sedulus, Persius and Statius; these are authors which retrieve the studies of Leofric from the charge of mere monastic lore.

But good books about this time were beginning to be sought after with avidity. The Cluniac monks, who were introduced into England about the year 1077, more than one hundred and sixty years after their foundation, gave a powerful impetus to monastic learning; which received additional force by the enlightened efforts of the Cistercians, instituted in 1098, and spread into Britain about the year 1128. These two great branches

* See *Dr. Lingard's Hist. Anglo Sax. Church*, vol. i. p. 307, who cannot deny this entirely; see also *Lappenberg Hist. Eng.* vol. i. p. 202, who says that the mass was read partially in the Saxon tongue. *Hallam* in his *Supplemental Notes*, p. 408, has a good note on the subject.

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of the Benedictine order, by their great love of learning, and by their zeal in collecting books, effected a great change in the monkish literature of England. "They were not only curious and attentive in forming numerous libraries, but with indefatigable assiduity transcribed the volumes of the ancients, *l'assiduité infatigable à transcrire les livres des anciens*, say the Benedictines of St. Maur,* who perhaps however may be suspected of regarding their ancient brethren in rather too favorable a light. But certain it is, that the state of literature became much improved, and the many celebrated scholars who flourished in the twelfth century spread a taste for reading far and wide, and by their example caused the monks to look more eagerly after books. Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of London, is one of the most pleasing instances of this period, and his writings have even now a freshness and vivacity about them which surprise as they interest the reader. This illustrious student, and truly worthy man, was born at Blois in the early part of the twelfth century. His parents, who were wealthy and noble, were desirous of bestowing upon their son an education befitting their own rank; for this purpose he was sent to Paris to receive instruction in the general branches of scholastic knowledge. He paid particular attention to poetry, and studied rhetoric with still greater ardor.† But being designed for the bar, he left Paris for Bologna, there to study civil law; and succeeded in mastering all the dry technicalities of

* Hist. Litt. de la France, ix. p. 142.
† Pet. Blesensis Opera, 4to. Mogunt. 1600. Ep. lxxxix.

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legal science. He then returned to Paris to study scholastic divinity,* in which he became eminently proficient, and was ever excessively fond. He remained at Paris studying deeply himself, and instructing others for many years. About the year 1167 he went with Stephen, Count de Perche, into Sicily, and was appointed tutor to the young King William II., made keeper of his private seal, and for two years conducted his education.† Soon after leaving Sicily, he was invited by Henry II. into England,‡ and made Archdeacon of Bath. It was during the time he held that office that he wrote most of these letters, from which we obtain a knowledge of the above facts, and which he collected together at the particular desire of King Henry; who ever regarded him with the utmost kindness, and bestowed upon him his lasting friendship. I know not a more interesting or a more historically valuable volume than these epistolary collections of Archdeacon Peter. They seem to bring those old times before us, to seat us by the fire-sides of our Norman forefathers, and in a pleasant, quiet manner enter into a gossip on the passing events of the day; and being written by a student and an *amator librorum*, they moreover unfold to us the state of learning among the ecclesiastics at least of the twelfth century; and if we were to take our worthy archdeacon as a specimen, they possessed a far better taste for these matters than we usually give them credit for. Peter of Blois was no ordinary man; a churchman, he was free from the prejudices of churchmen—a visitant of courts and the associate

* Ep. xxvi. † Ep. lxvi. ‡ Ep. cxxvii.

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of royalty, he was yet free from the sycophancy of a courtier—and when he saw pride and ungodliness in the church, or in high places, he feared not to use his pen in stern reproof at these abominations. It is both curious and extraordinary, when we bear in mind the prejudices of the age, to find him writing to a bishop upon the looseness of his conduct, and reproving him for his inattention to the affairs of his diocese, and upbraiding another for displaying an unseemly fondness for hunting,* and other sports of the field; which he says is so disreputable to one of his holy calling, and quotes an instance of Pope Nicholas suspending and excluding from the church Bishop Lanfred for a similar offence; which he considers even more disgraceful in Walter, Lord Bishop of Winchester, to

* Ep. lvi. Yet we find that Charlemagne, in the year 795, granted the monks of the monastery of St. Bertin, in the time of Abbot Odlando, the privilege of hunting in his forests for the purpose of procuring leather to bind their books. "Odlando Abbate hujus loci abbas nonus, in omni bonitate suo prædecessori Hardrado coæqualis anno primo sui regiminis impetravit à rege Carolo privilegium venandi in silvis nostris et aliis ubicumque constitutis, ad volumina librorum tegænda, et manicas et zonas habendas. Salvis forestis regiis, quod sic incipit. Carolus Dei gratia Rex Francorum et Longobardorum ac patricius Romanorum, etc., data Septimo Kal. Aprilis, anno xxvi. regni nostri." Martene Thasaurus Nov. Anecdotorum iii. 498. *Warton* mentions a similar instance of a grant to the monks of St. Sithin, *Dissert.* ii. *prefixed to Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, but he quotes it with some sad misrepresentations, and refers to *Mabillon De re Diplomatica*, 611. Mr. Maitland, in his *Dark Ages*, has shown the absurdity of Warton's inferences from the fact, and proved that it was to the servants, or *eorum homines*, that Charlemagne granted this uncanonical privilege, p. 216. But I find no such restriction in the case I have quoted above. Probably, however, it was thought needless to express what might be inferred, or to caution against a practice so uncongenial with the christian duties of a monk.

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whom he is writing, on account of his advanced age; he being at that time eighty years old. We are constantly reminded in reading his letters that we have those of an indefatigable student before us; almost every page bears some allusion to his books or to his studies, and prove how well and deeply read he was in Latin literature; not merely the theological writings of the church, but the classics also. In one of his letters he speaks of his own studies, and tells us that when he learnt the art of versification and correct style, he did not spend his time on legends and fables, but took his models from Livy, Quintus Curtius, Trogus Pompeius, Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and other classics; in the same letter he gives some directions to the Archdeacon of Nantes, who had undertaken the education of his nephews, as to the manner of their study. He had received from the archdeacon a flattering account of the progress made by one of them named William, to which he thus replies—"You speak," says he, "of William—his great penetration and ingenious disposition, who, without grammar or the authors of science, which are both so desirable, has mastered the subtilties of logic, so as to be esteemed a famous logician, as I learn by your letter. But this is not the foundation of a correct knowledge—these subtilties which you so highly extol, are manifoldly pernicious, as Seneca truly affirms,—*Odibilius nihil est subtilitate ubi est solæ subtilitas.* What indeed is the use of these things in which you say he spends his days—either at home, in the army, at the bar, in the cloister, in the church, in the court,

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or indeed in any position whatever, except, I suppose, the schools? Seneca says, in writing to Lucalius, "*Quid est, inquit acutius arista et in quo est utiles!*"* In many letters we find him quoting the classics with the greatest ease, and the most appropriate application to his subject; in one he refers to Ovid, Persius, and Seneca,† and in others, when writing in a most interesting and amusing manner of poetic fame and literary study, he extracts from Terence, Ovid, Juvenal, Horace, Plato, Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, etc.‡ In another, besides a constant use of Scripture, which proves how deeply read too he was in Holy Writ, he quotes with amazing prodigality from Juvenal, Frontius, Vigetius, Dio, Virgil, Ovid, Justin, Horace, and Plutarch.§ Indeed, Horace was a great favorite with the archdeacon, who often applied some of his finest sentences to illustrate his familiar chat and epistolary disquisitions.‖ It is worth noticing that in one he quotes the Roman history of Sallust, in six books, which is now lost, save a few fragments; the passage relates to Pompey the Great.¶ We can scarcely refrain from a smile at the eagerness of Archdeacon Peter in persuading his friends to relinquish the too enticing study of frivolous plays, which he says can be of no service to the interest of the soul;** and then, for-

* Ep. ci. p. 184. He afterwards quotes Livy, Tacitus, and many others.

† Ep. xiv. He was fond of Quintus Curtius, and often read his history with much pleasure. Ep. ci. p. 184.

‡ Ep. lxxvii. p. 81. § Ep. xciv.

‖ Ep. xcii. and also lxxii. which is redundant with quotations from the poets.

¶ Ep. xciv. p. 170. ** Ep. lvii.

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getting this admonition, sending for tragedies and comedies himself, that he might get them transcribed,* This puts one in mind of a certain modern divine, whose conduct not agreeing with his doctrine, told his hearers not to do as he did, but as he told them. It appears also equally ludicrous to find him upbraiding a monk, named Peter of Blois, for studying the pagan authors: "the foolish old fables of Hercules and Jove," their lies and philosophy;† when, as we have seen, he read them so ravenously, and so greatly borrowed from them himself. But then we must bear in mind that the archdeacon had also well stored his mind with Scripture, and certainly always deemed *that* the first and most important of all his studies, which was perhaps not the case with the monk to whom he writes. In some of his letters we have pleasing pictures of the old times presented to us, and it is astonishing how homely and natural they read, after the elapse of 700 years. In more than one he launches out in strong invectives against the lawyers, who in all ages seems to have borne the indignation of mankind; Peter accuses them of selling their knowledge for hire, to the direct perversion of all justice; of favoring the rich and oppressing the poor.‡ He reproves Reginald, Archdeacon of Salisbury, for occupying his time with falconry, instead of attending to his clerical duties; and in another, a most interesting letter, he gives a description of King Henry II., whose character he extols in panegyric terms, and proves how much superior he was in learning to Wil-

* Ep. xii. † Ep. lxxvi. p. 132. ‡ Ep. cxl. p. 253.

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liam II. of Sicily. He says that "Henry, as often as he could breathe from his care and solicitudes, he was occupied in secret reading; or at other times joined by a body of clergy, would try to solve some elaborate question *quæstiones laborat evolvere.** Frequently we find him writing about books, begging transcripts, eagerly purchasing them; and in one of his letters to Alexander, Abbot of Jenniege, *Gemiticensem*, he writes, apologizing, and begging his forgiveness for not having fulfilled his promise in returning a book which he had borrowed from his library, and begs that his friend will yet allow him to retain it some days longer.† The last days of a scholar's life are not always remarkable, and we know nothing of those of Archdeacon Peter; for after the death of Henry II., his intellectual worth found no royal mind to appreciate it. The lion-hearted Richard thought more of the battle axe and crusading than the encouragement of literature or science; and Peter, like many other students, grown old in their studies, was left in his age to wander among his books, unmolested and uncared for. With the friendship of a few clerical associates, and the archdeaconry of London, which by the bye was totally unproductive,‡ he died, and for many ages was forgotten. But a student's worth can never perish; a time is certain to arrive when his erudition will receive its due reward of human praise. We now, after a slumber of many hundred years, begin to appreciate his value, and to entertain a hearty friendship and esteem for the venerable Archdeacon Peter.

* Ep. lxvi. p. 115. † Ep. xxxvii. p. 68. ‡ Ep. cli.

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CHAPTER X.

Winchester famous for its Scribes.—Ethelwold and Godemann.—Anecdotes.—Library of the Monastery of Reading—The Bible.—Library of Depying Priory.—Effects of Gospel Reading.—Catalogue of Ramsey Library.—Hebrew MSS.—Fine Classics, etc.—St. Edmund's Bury.—Church of Ely.—Canute, etc.

IN the olden time the monks of Winchester* were renowned for their calligraphic and pictorial art. The choice book collectors of the day sought anxiously for volumes produced by these ingenious scribes, and paid extravagant prices for them. A superb specimen of their skill was executed for Bishop Ethelwold; that enlightened and benevolent prelate was a great patron of art

* Those learned in such matters refer the foundation of Winchester cathedral and monastery to a remote period. An old writer says that it was "built by King Lucius, who, abolishing Paganisme, embraced Christ the first yere of his reigne, being the yeere of our Lord 180."—*Godwin's Cat.* p. 157. See also *Usher de Primordiis.* fo. 126.

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and literature, and himself a grammaticus and poet of no mean pretensions. He did more than any other of his time to restore the architectural beauties which were damaged or destroyed by the fire and sword of the Danish invaders. His love of these undertakings, his industry in carrying them out, and the great talent he displayed in their restoration, is truly wonderful to observe. He is called by Wolstan, his biographer, "a great builder of churches, and divers other works."* He was fond of learning, and very liberal in diffusing the knowledge which he acquired; and used to instruct the young by reading to them the Latin authors, translated into the Saxon tongue. "He wrote a Saxion version of the Rule of Saint Benedict, which was so much admired, and so pleased King Edgar, that he granted to him the manor of Sudborn,† as a token of his approbation."

Among a number of donations which he bequeathed to this monastery, twenty volumes are enumerated, embracing some writings of Bede and Isidore.‡ As a proof of his bibliomanical propensities, I refer the reader to the celebrated Benedictional of the Duke of Devonshire; that rich gem, with its resplendent illuminations, place it beyond the shadow of a doubt, and prove Ethelwold to

* Ecclesiarum ac diversorum operum magnus ædificator, et dum esset abbas et dum esset episcopus."—*Wolstan. Vita Æthelw. ap. Mabillon Actæ S. S. Benedict, Sæc.* v. p. 614.

† Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. i. p. 614.

‡ MS. belonging to the Society of Antiquaries, No. 60, fo. 34. See Dugdale Monast. vol. i. p. 382. He gave to the monks of Abingdon a copy of the Gospels cased in silver, ornamented with gold and precious stones.

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have been an *amator librorum* of consummate taste. This fine specimen of Saxon ingenuity is the production of a cloistered monk of Winchester, named Godemann, who transcribed it at the bishop's special desire, as we learn, from the following lines :—

> "*Presentem Biblum iusset prescribere Presul.*
> *Wintoniæ Dus que fecerat esse Patronum*
> *Magnus Æthelwoldus.*"*

Godemann, the scribe, entreats the prayers of his readers, and wishes "all who gaze on this book to ever pray that after the end of the flesh I may inherit health in heaven : this is the fervent prayer of the scribe, the humble Godemann." This talented illuminator was chaplain to Ethelwold, and afterwards abbot of Thorney.† The choice Benedictional in the public library of Rouen is also ascribed to his elegant pen, and adds additional lustre of his artistic fame.‡

Most readers have heard of Walter, (who was prior of St. Swithin in 1174,) giving twelve measures of barley and a pall, on which was embroidered in silver the history of St. Berinus converting a Saxon king, for a fine copy of Bede's Homilies and St. Austin's Psalter;§ and of Henry, a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Hyde, near there, who transcribed, in the year 1178, Terence, Boethius, Seutonius and Claudian; and richly illuminated and

* *Archæologia*, vol. xxiv. p. 22; and *Dibdin's* delightful "*Decameron*," vol. i. p. lix.

† Wuls. Act. S. S. Benedict. p. 616.

‡ Archæolog. vol. xxiv.

§ Regist. Priorat. S. Swithin Winton.—*Warton* II, *Dissert.*

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bound them, which he exchanged with a neighboring bibliophile for a life of St. Christopher, St. Gregory's Pastoral Care, and four Missals.* Nicholas, Bishop of Winchester, left one hundred marks and a Bible, with a fine gloss, in two large volumes, to the convent of St. Swithin. John de Pontissara, who succeeded that bishop in the year 1282, borrowed this valuable manuscript to benefit and improve his biblical knowledge by a perusal of its numerous notes. So great was their regard for this precious gift, that the monks demanded a bond for its return; a circumstance which has caused some doubt as to the plenitude of the Holy Scriptures in the English Church during that period; at least among those who have only casually glanced at the subject. I may as well notice that the ancient Psalter in the Cottonian Library† was written about the year 1035, by the "most humble brother and monk Ælsinus," of Hyde Abbey. The table prefixed to the volume records the deaths of other eminent scribes and illuminators, whose names are mingled with the great men of the day;‡ showing how esteemed they were, and how honorable was their avocation. Thus under the 15th of May we find "*Obitus Ætherici mº picto;*" and again, under the 5th of July, "*Obit Wulfrici mº pictoris.*" Many were the choice transcripts made and adorned by the Winchester monks.

The monastery of Reading, in Berkshire, possessed during the reign of Henry the Third a

* *Ibid.* † *Marked Titus*, D. 27.

‡ It is called "*Calendarium, in quo notantur dies obitus plurimorum monachorum, abbatum, etc.; temp. regum Anglo-Saxonum.*"

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choice library of a hundred and fifty volumes. It is printed in the Supplement to the History of Reading, from the original prefixed to the Woollascot manuscripts. But it is copied very inaccurately, and with many grievous omissions; nevertheless it will suffice to enable us to gain a knowledge of the class of books most admired by the monks of Reading; and the Christian reader will be glad to learn that the catalogue opens, as usual, with the Holy Scriptures. Indeed no less than four fine large and complete copies of the Bible are enumerated. The first in two volumes; the second in three volumes; the third in two, and the fourth in the same number which was transcribed by the *Cantor*, and kept in the cloisters for the use of the monks. But in addition to these, which are in themselves quite sufficient to exculpate the monks from any charge of negligence of Bible reading, we find a long list of separate portions of the Old and New Testament; besides many of the most important works of the Fathers, and productions of mediæval learning, as the following names will testify :—

Ambrose.	Cassidorus.	Jerome.	Origen.
Augustine.	Eusebius.	Josephus.	Plato.
Basil.	Gregory.	Lombard.	Prosper.
Bede	Hilarius.	Macrobius.	Rabanus Maurus.

They possessed also the works of Geoffry of Monmouth; the *Vita Karoli et Alexandri et gesta Normannorum;* a "Ystoria Rading," and many others equally interesting; and among the books given by Radbert of Witchir, we find a Juvenal,

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the Bucolics and Georgics of Virgil, and the "Ode et Poetria et Sermone et Epistole Oratii.,' But certainly the most striking characteristic is the fine biblical collection contained in their library, which is well worthy our attention, if not our admiration: not but that we find them in other libraries much less extensive. In those monasteries whose poverty would not allow the purchase of books in any quantity, and whose libraries could boast but of some twenty or thirty volumes, it is scarcely to be expected that they should be found rich in profane literature; but it is deeply gratifying to find, as we generally do, the Bible first on their little list; conveying a proof by this prominence, in a quiet but expressive way, how highly they esteemed that holy volume, and how essential they deemed its possession. Would that they had profited more by its holy precepts!

We find an instance of this, and a proof of their fondness for the Bible, in the catalogue of the books in Depying Priory,* in Lincolnshire; which, containing a collection of twenty-three volumes, enumerates a copy of the Bible first on the humble list. The catalogue is as follows :—

These are the books in the library of the monks of Depying.†

The Bible.
The first part of the Morals of Pope St. Gregory.
The second part of the Morals by the same.
Book of Divine Offices.

* It was a little cell dependant on the Abbey of Thorney.

† MS. *Harleian*, No. 3658, fo. 74, b. It will be found printed in *Dugdale's Monasticon*, vol. iv. p. 167. The catalogue was evidently written about the year 1350.

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Gesta Britonorum.
Tracts of Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, on Confession, with other compilations.
Martyrologium, with the Rules of St. Benedict; Passion of St. James, with other books.
Constitutions of Pope Benedict.
History of the Island of Ely.
Hugucio de dono fratris Johannis Tiryngham.
Homilies of the blessed Gregory.
Constitutions of Pope Clement XII.
Book of the Virtues and Vices.
Majester Historiarum.
Sacramentary given by Master John Swarby, Rector of the Church of St. Guthlac.
One great Portoforium for the use of the Brothers.
Two ditto.
Two Psalters for the use of the Brothers.
Three Missals for the use of the Brothers.

There is not much in this scanty collection, the loss of which we need lament; nor does it inspire us with a very high notion of the learning of the monks of Depying Priory. Yet how cheering it is to find that the Bible was studied in this little cell; and I trust the monk often drew from it many words of comfort and consolation. Where is the reader who will not regard these instances of Bible reading with pleasure? Where is the Christian who will not rejoice that the Gospel of Christ was read and loved in the turbulent days of the Norman monarchs? Where is the philosopher who will affirm that we owe nothing to this silent but effectual and fervent study? Where is he who will maintain that the influence of the blessed and abundant charity—the cheering promises, and the sweet admonitions of love and mercy with which the Gospels overflow—aided nothing in the progress

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of civilization? Where is the Bible student who will believe that all this reading of the Scriptures was unprofitable because, forsooth, a monk preached and taught it to the multitude?

Let the historian open his volumes with a new interest, and ponder over their pages with a fresh spirit of inquiry; let him read of days of darkness and barbarity; and as he peruses on, trace the origin of the light whose brightness drove the darkness and barbarity away. How much will he trace to the Bible's influence; how often will he be compelled to enter a convent wall to find in the gospel student the one who shone as a redeeming light in those old days of iniquity and sin; and will he deny to the Christian priest his gratitude and love, because he wore the cowl and mantle of a monk, or because he loved to read of saints whose lives were mingled with lying legends, or because he chose a life which to us looks dreary, cold, and heartless. Will he deny him a grateful recollection when he reads of how much good he was permitted to achieve in the Church of Christ; of how many a doubting heart he reassured; of how many a soul he fired with a true spark of Christian love; when he reads of how the monk preached the faith of Christ, and how often he led some wandering pilgrim into the path of vital truth by the sweet words of the dear religion which he taught; when he reads that the hearts of many a Norman chief was softened by the sweetness of the gospel's voice, and his evil passions were lulled by the hymn of praise which the monk devoutly sang to his Master in heaven above. But speaking of the existence of

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the Bible among the monks puts me in mind of the Abbey of Ramsey and its fine old library of books, which was particularly rich in biblical treasures. Even superior to Reading, as regards its biblical collection, was the library of Ramsey. A portion of an old catalogue of the library of this monastery has been preserved, apparently transcribed about the beginning of the fourteenth century, during the warlike reign of Richard the Second. It is one of the richest and most interesting relics of its kind extant, at least of those to be found in our own public libraries; and a perusal of it will not fail to leave an impression on the mind that the monks were far wealthier in their literary stores than we previously imagined. Originally on two or three skins, it is now torn into five separate pieces,* and in other respects much dilapidated. The writing also in some parts is nearly obliterated, so as to render the document scarcely readable. It is much to be regretted that this interesting catalogue is but a portion of the original; in its complete form it would probably have described twice as many volumes; but a fragment as it is, it nevertheless contains the titles of more than *eleven hundred books*, with the names of many of their donors attached. A creditable and right worthy testimonial this, of the learning and love of books prevalent among the monks of Ramsey Monastery. More than seven hundred of this goodly number

* Cottonian Charta, 11-16. I am sorry to observe so little attention paid to this curious fragment, which, insignificant as it may appear to some, is nevertheless quite a curiosity of literature in its way. Its tattered condition calls for the care of Sir Frederick Madden.

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were of a miscellaneous nature, and the rest were principally books used in the performance of divine service. Among these there were no less than seventy Breviaries; thirty-two Grails; twenty-nine Processionals; and one hundred Psalters! The reader will regard most of these as superstitious and useless; nor should I remark upon them did they not show that books were not so scarce in those times as we suppose; as this prodigality satisfactorily proves, and moreover testifies to the unceasing industry of the monkish scribes. We who are used to the speed of the printing press and its fertile abundance can form an opinion of the labor necessary to transcribe this formidable array of papistical literature. Four hundred volumes transcribed with the plodding pen! each word collated and each page diligently revised, lest a blunder or a misspelt syllable should blemish those books so deeply venerated. What long years of dry tedious labor and monotonous industry was here!

But the other portion of the catalogue fully compensates for this vast proportion of ecclesiastical volumes. Besides several *Biblia optima in duobus voluminibus*, or complete copies of the Bible, many separate books of the inspired writers are noted down; indeed the catalogue lays before us a superb array of fine biblical treasures, rendered doubly valuable by copious and useful glossaries; and embracing many a rare Hebrew MS. Bible, *bibliotheca hebraice*, and precious commentary. I count no less than twenty volumes in this ancient language. But we often find Hebrew manuscripts in the monastic catalogues after the eleventh century.

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The Jews, who came over in great numbers about that time, were possessed of many valuable books, and spread a knowledge of their language and literature among the students of the monasteries. And when the cruel persecution commenced against them in the thirteenth century, they disposed of their books, which were generally bought up by the monks, who were ever hungry after such acquisitions. Gregory, prior of Ramsey, collected a great quantity of Hebrew MSS. in this way, and highly esteemed the language, in which he became deeply learned. At his death, in the year 1250, he left them to the library of his monastery.* Nor was my lord prior a solitary instance; many others of the same abbey, inspired by his example and aided by his books, studied the Hebrew with equal success. Brother Dodford, the Armarian, and Holbeach, a monk, displayed their erudition in writing a Hebrew lexicon.†

The library of Ramsey was also remarkably rich in patristic lore. They gloried in the possession of the works of Ambrose, Augustine, Anselm, Basil, Boniface, Bernard, Gregory, and many others equally voluminous. But it was not exclusively to the study of such matters that these monks applied their minds, they possessed a taste for other branches of literature besides. They read histories of the church, histories of England, of Normandy, of the Jews; and histories of scholas-

* Leland Script. Brit. p. 321, and MSS. Bibl. Lambeth, Wharton, L. p. 661. Libris Prioris Gregorii de Ramsey, *Prima pars Bibliothecæ Hebraice*, etc. Warton Dissert ii. Eng. Poetry.

† Bale, iv. 41, et ix. 9. Leland. Scrip. Brit. p. 452.

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tic philosophy, and many old chronicles which reposed on their shelves. In science they appear to have been equally studious, for the catalogue enumerates works on medicine, natural history, philosophy, mathematics, logic, dialects, arithmetic and music! Who will say after this that the monks were ignorant of the sciences and careless of the arts? The classical student has perhaps ere this condemned them for their want of taste, and felt indignant at the absence of those authors of antiquity whose names and works he venerates. But the monks, far from neglecting those precious volumes, were ever careful of their preservation; they loved Virgil, Horace, and even Ovid, "heathen dogs" as they were, and enjoyed a keen relish for their beauties. I find in this catalogue the following choice names of antiquity occur repeatedly:—

Aristotle.	Macrobius.
Arian.	Orosius.
Boethius.	Ovid.
Claudius.	Plato.
Dionysius.	Priscian.
Donatus.	Prudentius.
Horace.	Seneca.
Josephus.	Sallust.
Justin.	Solinus.
Lucan.	Terence.
Martial.	Virgil.

Here were rich mines of ancient eloquence, and fragrant flowers of poesy to enliven and perfume the dull cloister studies of the monks. It is not every library or reading society even of our own time that possess so many gems of old. But other treasures might yet be named which still further

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testify to the varied tastes and literary pursuits of these monastic bibliophiles; but I shall content myself with naming Peter of Blois, the Sentences of Peter Lombard, of which they had several copies, some enriched with choice commentaries and notes, the works of Thomas Aquinas and others of his class, a "Liber Ricardi," Dictionaries, Grammars, and the writings of "Majestri Robi Grostete," the celebrated Bishop of Lincoln, renowned as a great *amator librorum* and collector of Grecian literature. I might easily swell this notice out to a considerable extent by enumerating many other book treasures in this curious collection: but enough has been said to enable the reader to judge of the sort of literature the monks of Ramsey collected and the books they read; and if he should feel inclined to pursue the inquiry further, I must refer him to the original manuscript, promising him much gratification for his trouble.* It only remains for me to say that the Vandalism of the Reformation swept all traces of this fine library away, save the broken, tattered catalogue we have just examined. But this is more than has been spared from some. The abbey of St. Edmunds Bury† at one time must have enjoyed a copious library, but we have no catalogue that I am aware of to tell of its nature, not even a passing

* Alward, Bishop of London, gave many books to the library of Ramsey monastery, *Hoveden Scrip. post. Bedam.* 1596, fol. 252. Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. ii.

† In the year 1327, the inhabitants of Bury besieged the abbey, wounded the monks, and "bare out of the abbey all the gold, silver ornaments, *bookes, charters, and other writings.*" Stowe Annals, p. 353.

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notice of its well-stored shelves, except a few lines in which Leland mentions some of the old manuscripts he found therein.* But a catalogue of their library in the flourishing days of their monastery would have disclosed, I imagine, many curious works, and probably some singular writings on the "*crafft off medycyne,*" which Abbot Baldwin, "*phesean*" to Edward the Confessor,† had given the monks, and of whom Lydgate thus speaks—

> "Baldewynus, a monk off Seynt Denys,
> Gretly expert in crafft of medycyne;
> Full provydent off counsayl and right wys,
> Sad off his port, functuons off doctryne;
> After by grace and influence devyne,
> Choose off Bury Abbot, as I reede
> The thyrdde in order that did ther succeade."‡

We may equally deplore the loss of the catalogue of the monastery of Ely, which, during the middle ages, we have every reason to suppose possessed a library of much value and extent. This old monastery can trace its foundation back to a remote period, and claim as its foundress, Etheldredæ,§ the daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles, she was the wife of King Ecgfrid,‖ with whom she lived for twelve long years, though during that time she preserved the glory of perfect virginity, much to the annoyance of her royal

* He particularly notices a Sallust, a very ancient copy, *vetustis simus.*

† And also to Lanfranc, he was elected in the year 1065.

‡ Harleian MS. No. 2278.

§ Or Atheldryth.

‖ The youngest son of Osway, King of Northumbria; he succeeded to the throne on the death of his father in the year 670.

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spouse, who offered money and lands to induce that illustrious virgin to waver in her resolution, but without success. Her inflexible determination at length induced her husband to grant her oft-repeated prayer; and in the year 673 she retired into the seclusion of monastic life,* and building the monastery of Ely, devoted her days to the praise and glory of her heavenly King. Her pure and pious life caused others speedily to follow her example, and she soon became the virgin-mother of a numerous progeny dedicated to God. A series of astounding miracles attended her monastic life; and sixteen years after her death, when her sister, the succeeding abbess, opened her wooden coffin to transfer her body to a more costly one of marble, that "holy virgin and spouse of Christ" was found entirely free from corruption or decay.†

A nunnery, glorying in so pure a foundress, grew and flourished, and for "two hundred years existed in the full observance of monastic discipline;" but on the coming of the Danes in the year 870, those sad destroyers of religious establisments

* She seems to have been principally encouraged in this fanatical determination by Wilfrid; probably this was one of the causes of Ecgfrid's displeasure towards him. So highly was the purity of the body regarded in the early Saxon church, that Aldhelm wrote a piece in its praise, in imitation of the style of Sedulius, but in most extravagant terms. Bede wrote a poem, solely to commemorate the chastety of Etheldreda.

> "Let Maro wars in loftier numbers sing
> I sound the praises of our heavenly King;
> Chaste is my verse, nor Helen's rape I write,
> Light tales like these, but prove the mind as light."
>
> *Bede's Eccl. Hist. by Giles*, b. iv. c. xx.

† Bede's Eccl. Hist. b. iv. c. xx.

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laid it in a heap of ruins, in which desolate condition it remained till it attracted the attention of the celebrated Ethelwold, who under the patronage of King Edgar restored it; and endowing it with considerable privileges appointed Brithnoth, Prior of Winchester, its first abbot.*

Many years after, when Leoffin was abbot there, and Canute was king, that monarch honored the monastery of Ely with his presence on several occasions. Monkish traditions say, that on one of these visits as the king approached, he heard the pious inmates of the monastery chanting their hymn of praise; and so melodious were the voices of the devotees, that his royal heart was touched, and he poured forth his feelings in a Saxon ballad, commencing thus:

> "Merry sang the monks of Ely,
> When Canute the king was sailing by;
> Row ye knights near the land,
> And let us hear these monks song.†

It reads smoother in Strutt's version; he renders it

> "Cheerful sang the monk of Ely,
> When Canute the king was passing by;
> Row to the shore knights, said the king,
> And let us hear these churchmen sing."‡

In addition to the title of a poet, Canute has also received the appellation of a bibliomaniac. Dibdin, in his bibliomania, mentions in a cursory manner a few monkish book collectors, and intro-

* Saxon Chronicle translated by Ingram, p. 118. Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. i. p. 458.
† Sharon Turner's Hist. of the Anglo-Saxons, vol. ii. p. 288.
‡ Strutt's Saxon Antiquities, vol. i. p. 83.

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duces Canute among them.* The illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels in the Danish tongue, now in the British Museum, he writes, "and once that monarch's own book leaves not the shadow of a doubt of his bibliomanical character!" I cannot however allow him that title upon such equivocal grounds; for upon examination, the MS. turns out to be in the Theotisc dialect, possessing no illuminations of its own, and never perhaps once in the hands of the royal poet.†

From the account books of Ely church we may infer that the monks there enjoyed a tolerable library; for we find frequent entries of money having been expended for books and materials connected with the library; thus in the year 1300 we find that they bought at one time five dozen parchment, four pounds of ink, eight calf and four sheep-skins for binding books; and afterwards there is another entry of five dozen vellum and six pair of book clasps, a book of decretals for the library, 3s., a Speculum Gregor, 2s., and "*Pro tabula Paschalis fac denova et illuminand*," 4s.‡ They frequently perhaps sent one of the monks to distants parts to purchase or borrow books for their library; a curious instance of this occurs under the year 1329, when they paid "the pre-

* *Dibdin's Bibliomania*, p. 228.

† Dibdin alludes to the "Harmony of the Four Gospels," preserved among the Cotton MSS. *Caligula*, A. vii. and described as "*Harmonia Evangeliorum, lingua Francica capitulis, 71, Liber quondam* (*dicit Jamesius*) *Canuti regis*." See also Hicke's Gram. Franco-Theotisca, p. 6. But there is no ground for the supposition that it belonged to Canute; and the several fine historical illuminations bound up with it are evidently of a much later age.

‡ An entry occurs of 6s. 8d. for writing two processionals.

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centor for going to Balsham to enquire for books, 6s. 7d." The bookbinder two weeks' wages, 4s.; twelve iron chains to fasten books, 4s.; five dozen vellum, 25s. 8d. In the year 1396, they paid their librarian 53s. 4d., and a tunic for his services during one year.*

Nigel, Bishop of Ely, by endowing the Scriptorium, enabled the monks to produce some excellent transcripts; they added several books of Cassiodorus, Bede, Aldelem, Radbert, Andres, etc., to the library;† and they possessed at one time no less than thirteen fine copies of the Gospels, which were beautifully bound in gold and silver.‡

* Stevenson's Suppl. to Bentham's church of Ely, p. 52. "It is worth notice," says Stevenson, "that in the course of a few years, about the middle of the 14th century, the precentor purchased upwards of seventy dozen parchment and thirty dozen vellum."

† Spelman Antiquarii Collectanea, vol. iii. p. 273. Nigel, who was made bishop in 1133, was plundered by some of King Stephen's soldiers, and robbed of his own copy of the Gospels which he had adorned with many sacred relics; see *Anglia Sacra*, i. p. 622.

‡ *Warton's Anglia Sacra*, it is related that William Longchamp, bishop in 1199, sold them to raise money towards the redemption of King Richard, *pro Regis Ricardi redemptione*, tom. i. 633. Dugd. Monast. i. p. 463.

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CHAPTER XI.

St. Alban's.—Willigod.—Bones of St. Alban.—Eadmer.—Norman Conquest.—Paul and the Scriptorium.—Geoffry de Gorham.—Brekspere the "Poor Clerk."—Abbot Simon and his "multis voluminibus."—Raymond the Prior.—Wentmore.—Whethamstede.—Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.—Lydgate.—Guy, Earl of Warwick.

THE efficacy of "Good Works" was a principle ever inculcated by the monks of old. It is sad to reflect, that vile deeds and black intentions were too readily forgiven and absolved by the Church on the performance of some *good deed;* or that the monks should dare to shelter or to gloss over those sins which their priestly duty bound them to condemn, because forsooth some wealthy baron could spare a portion of his broad lands or coffered gold to extenuate them. But this forms one of the dark stains of the monastic system; and the monks, I am sorry to say, were more readily inclined to overlook the blemish, be-

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cause it proved so profitable to their order. And thus it was, that the proud and noble monastery of St. Alban's was endowed by a murderer's hand, and built to allay the fierce tortures of an assassin's conscience. Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, fell by the regal hand of Offa, king of Mercia; and from the era of that black and guilty deed many a fine monastery dates its origin and owes its birth.

St. Alban's was founded, as its name implies, in honor of the English protomartyr, whose bones were said to have been discovered on that interesting site, and afterwards preserved with veneration in the abbey. In the ancient times, the building appears to have covered a considerable space, and to have been of great magnitude and power; for ruins of its former structure mark how far and wide the foundation spreads.

"The glorious king Offa," as the monks in their adulation style him, richly endowed the monastery on its completion, as we learn from the old chronicles of the abbey; and a succession of potent sovereigns are emblazoned on the glittering parchment, whose liberalty augmented or confirmed these privileges.*

Willigod, the first abbot, greatly enriched the monastery, and bestowed especial care upon the relics of St. Alban. It is curious to mark how many perils those shrivelled bones escaped, and with what anxious care the monks preserved them.

* See a fine manuscript in the Cotton collection marked Nero D. vii., and another marked Claudius E. iv., both of which I have consulted.

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In the year 930, during the time of Abbot Eadfrid, the Danes attacked the abbey, and after many destroying acts broke open the repository, and carried away some of the bones of St. Alban into their own country. The monks took greater care than ever of the remaining relics; and their anxiety for their safety, and the veneration with which they regarded them, is curiously illustrated by an anecdote of Abbot Leofric, elected in the year 1006. His abbacy was, therefore, held in troubled times; and in the midst of fresh invasions and Danish cruelties. Fearing lest they should a second time reach the abbey, he determined to protect by stratagem what he could not effect by force. After hiding the genuine bones of St. Alban in a place quite secure from discovery, he sent an open message to the Abbot of Ely, entreating permission to deposit the holy relics in his keeping; and offering, as a plausible reason, that the monastery of Ely, being surrounded by marshy and impenetrable bogs, was secure from the approaches of the barbarians. He accompanied this message with some false relics—the remains of an old monk belonging to the abbey enclosed in a coffin—and sent with them a worn antiquated looking mantle, pretending that it formerly belonged to Amphibalus, the master of St. Alban.† The monks of Ely joyfully received these precious bones, and displayed perhaps too much eagerness in doing so. Certain it is, that when the danger was past and the quietude of the

* Matthew Paris' Edit. Wats, tom. i. p. 39.

† "Asserens ad cantelam, ipsum fuisse beati Amphibali, beate Albini magistri, caracellam."—Mat. Paris, p. 44.

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country was restored, Leofric, on applying for the restitution of these "holy relics," found some difficulty in obtaining them; for the Abbot of Ely attempted by equivocation and duplicity to retain them. After several ineffectual applications, Leofric was compelled, for the honor of his monastery, to declare the "pious fraud" he had practised; which he proved by the testimony of several monks of his fraternity, who were witnesses of the transaction. It is said, that Edward the Confessor was highly incensed at the conduct of the Abbot of Ely.

I have stated elsewhere, that the learned and pious Ælfric gave the monastery many choice volumes. His successor, Ealdred, abbot, about the year 955, was quite an antiquary in his way; and no spot in England afforded so many opportunities to gratify his taste as the site of the ancient city of Verulam. He commenced an extensive search among the ruins, and rescued from the earth a vast quantity of interesting and valuable remains. He stowed all the stone-work and other materials which were serviceable in building away, intending to erect a new edifice for the monks: but death prevented the consummation of these designs. Eadmer, his successor, a man of great piety and learning, followed up the pursuit, and made some important accessions to these stores. He found also a great number of gold and silver ornaments, specimens of ancient art, some of them of a most costly nature, but being idols or figures connected with heathen mythology, he cared not to preserve them. Matthew Paris is prolix in his account of

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the operations and discoveries of this abbot; and one portion of it is so interesting, and seems so connected with our subject, that I cannot refrain from giving it to the reader. "The abbot," he writes, "whilst digging out the walls and searching for the ruins which were buried in the earth in the midst of the ancient city, discovered many vestiges of the foundation of a great palace. In a recess in one of the walls he found the remains of a library, consisting of a number of books and rolls; and among them a volume in an unknown tongue, and which, although very ancient, had especially escaped destruction. This nobody in the monastery could read, nor could they at that time find any one who understood the writing or the idiom; it was exceedingly ancient, and the letters evidently were most beautifully formed; the inscriptions or titles were written in gold, and encircled with ornaments; bound in oak with silken bands, which still retained their strength and beauty; so perfectly was the volume preserved. But they could not conceive what the book was about; at last, after much search and diligent inquiry, they found a very feeble and aged priest, named Unwon, who was very learned in writings *literis bene eruditum*, and imbued with the knowledge of divers languages. He knew directly what the volume was about, and clearly and fluently read the contents; he also explained the other *Codices* found in the same library *in eodem Almariolo* of the palace with the greatest ease, and showed them to be written in the characters formerly in use among the inhabitants of Verulam, and in the language of the ancient Britons.

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Some, however, were in Latin; but the book beforementioned was found to be the history of Saint Alban, the English proto-martyr, according to that mentioned by Bede, as having been daily used in the church. Among the other books were discovered many contrivances for the invocation and idolatrous rites of the people of Verulam, in which it was evident that Phœbus the god Sol was especially invoked and worshipped; and after him Mercury, called in English Woden, who was the god of the merchants. The books which contained these diabolical inventions they cast away and burnt; but that precious treasure, the history of Saint Alban, they preserved, and the priest beforementioned was appointed to translate the ancient English or British into the vulgar tongue.* By the prudence of the Abbot Eadmer, the brothers of the convent made a faithful copy, and diligently explained it in their public teaching; they also translated it into Latin, in which it is now known and read; the historian adds that the ancient and original copy, which was so curiously written, instantaneously crumbled into dust and was destroyed for ever.†

Although the attention of the Saxon abbots was especially directed to literary matters, and to the affairs connected with the making of books, we find no definite mention of a Scriptorium, or of manuscripts having been transcribed as a regular and systematic duty, till after the Norman con-

* Abjectis igitur et combustis libris, in quibus commenta diaboli continabantur.

† MS. Cottonian, E. iv. fo. 101; Mat. Paris, Edit. Wat. i. p. 41.

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quest. That event happened during the abbacy of Frederic, and was one which greatly influenced the learning of the monks. Indeed, I regard the Norman conquest as a most propitious event for English literature, and one which wrought a vast change in the aspect of monastic learning; the student of those times cannot fail to perceive the revolution which then took place in the cloisters; visibly accomplished by the installation of Norman bishops and the importation of Norman monks, who in the well regulated monasteries of France and Normandy had been initiated into a more general course of study, and brought up in a better system of mental training than was known here at that time.

But poor Frederic, a conscientious and worthy monk, suffered severely by that event, and was ultimately obliged to seek refuge in the monastery of Ely to evade the displeasure of the new sovereign; but his earthly course was well nigh run, for three days after, death released him from his worldly troubles, and deprived the conqueror of a victim. Paul, the first of the Norman abbots, was appointed by the king in the year 1077. He was zealous and industrious in the interest of the abbey, and obtained the restitution of many lands and possessions of which it had been deprived; he rebuilt the old and almost ruined church, and employed for that purpose many of the materials which his predecessors had collected from the ruins of Verulam; and even now, I believe, some remnants of these Roman tiles, etc., may be discerned. He moreover obtained many important grants and

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valuable donations; among others a layman named Robert, one of the Norman leaders, gave him two parts of the tythes of his domain at Hatfield, which he had received from the king at the distribution.

"This he assigned," says Matthew Paris, "to the disposal of Abbot Paul, who was a lover of the Scriptures, for the transcription of the necessary volumes for the monastery. He himself indeed was a learned soldier, and a diligent hearer and lover of Scripture; to this he also added the tythes of Redburn, appointing certain provisions to be given to the scribes; this he did out of "charity to the brothers that they may not thereby suffer, and that no impediment might be offered to the writers. The abbot thereupon sought and obtained from afar many renowned scribes, to write the necessary books for the monastery. And in return for these abundant favors, he presented, as a suitable gift to the warlike Robert, for the chapel in his palace at Hatfield, two pair of vestments, a silver cup, a missal, and the other needful books (*missale cum aliis libris necessariis*). Having thus presented to him the first volumes produced by his liberality, he proceeded to construct a scriptorium, which was set apart (*præelectos*) for the transcription of books; Lanfranc supplied the copies. They thus procured for the monastery twenty-eight notable volumes (*volumina notabilia*), also eight psalters, a book of collects, a book of epistles, a volume containing the gospels for the year, two copies of the gospels complete, bound in gold and silver, and ornamented with gems; besides ordinals, constitutions, missals,

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troapries, collects, and other books for the use of the library.*

Thus blessed, we find the monks of St. Albans for ages after constantly acquiring fresh treasures, and multiplying their book stores by fruitful transcripts. There is scarce an abbot, whose portrait garnishes the fair manuscript before me, that is not represented with some goodly tomes spread around him, or who is not mentioned as a choice "*amator librorum*," in these monkish pages. It is a singular circumstance, when we consider how bookless those ages are supposed to have been, that the illuminated portraits of the monks are most frequently depicted with some ponderous volume before them, as if the idea of a monk and the study of a book were quite inseparable. During my search among the old manuscripts quoted in this work, this fact has been so repeatedly forced upon my attention that I am tempted to regard it as an important hint, and one which speaks favorably for the love of books and learning among the cowled devotees of the monasteries.

Passing Richard de Albani, who gave them a copy of the gospels, a missal written in letters of gold, an other precious volumes whose titles are unrecorded,† we come to Geoffry, a native of Gorham, who was elected abbot in the year 1119. He had been invited over to England (before he became a priest) by his predecessor, to superintend the school of St. Albans; but he delayed the voyage

* MS. Cottanian Claudius, E. iv. fo. 105 b., and MS. Cott. Nero, D. vii. fo. 13, b.

† He was elected in 1093.—See MS. Cott. Claud. E. iv. fo. 107.

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so long, that on his arrival he found the appointment already filled; on this he went to Dunstable, where he read lectures, and obtained some pupils. It was during his stay there that he wrote the piece which has obtained for him so much reputation. *Ubi quendam ludum de Sancta Katarinæ quem miracula vulgariter appellamus fecit*, says the Cotton manuscripts, on the vellum page of which he is portrayed in the act of writing it.* Geoffry, from this passage, is supposed to be the first author of dramatic literature in England; although the title seems somewhat equivocal, from the casual manner in which his famous play of St. Catherine is thus mentioned by Matthew Paris. Of its merits we are still less able to form an opinion; for nothing more than the name of that much talked of miracle play has been preserved. We may conclude, however, that it was performed with all the paraphernalia of scenery and characteristic costume; for he borrowed of the sacrist of St. Albans some copes for this purpose. On the night following the representation the house in which he resided was burnt; and, says the historian, all his books, and the copes he had borrowed were destroyed. Rendered poor indeed by this calamity, and somewhat reflecting upon himself for the event, he assumed in sorrow and despair the religious habit, and entered the monastery of St. Albans; where by his deep study, his learning and his piety, he so gained the hearts of his fraternity, that he ultimately became their abbot. He is said to have been very industrious in the transcription of books; and he

* Got. MS. Claud. E. iv. fo. 108.

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"made a missal bound in gold, *auro ridimitum*, and another in two volumes; both incomparably illuminated in gold, and written in a clear and legible hand; also a precious Psalter similarly illuminated; a book containing the Benedictions and the Sacraments; a book of Exorcisms, and a Collectaria."*

Geoffry was succeeded by Ralph de Gebium in the year 1143: he was a monk remarkable for his learning and his bibliomanical pursuits. He formerly remained some time in the services of Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, and gained the esteem of that prelate. His book-loving passion arose from hearing one "Master Wodon, of Italy, expound the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures." He from that time became a most enthusiastic *amator librorum;* and collected, with great diligence, an abundant multitude of books.†

The matters in which he was concerned, his donations to the monastery, and the anecdotes of his life, are all unconnected with my subject; so that I am obliged to pass from this interesting monk, an undoubted bibliophile, from sheer want of information. I cannot but regret that the historian does not inform us more fully of his book collecting pursuits; but he is especially barren on that subject, although he highly esteems him for prosecuting that pleasing avocation. He died in the year 1151, in the fourteenth of King Stephen, and was followed by Robert de Gorham, who is

* MS. Cot. Nero, D. vii. fo. 15, a; and MS. Cot. Claud. e. iv.

† Cot. MS. Claud. E. iv. fo. 113. "Ex tunc igitur amator librorum et adquisiter sedulus multio voluminibus habundavit.

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also commemorated as a bibliophile in the pages of the Cotton manuscripts; and to judge from his portrait, and the intensity with which he pores over his volume, he was a hard and devoted student. He ordered the scribes to make a great many books; indeed, adds Paris the historian, who was himself somewhat of an *amator librorum*, "more by far than can be mentioned."* From another source we learn that these books were most sumptuously bound.†

During the days of this learned abbot a devout and humble clerk asked admission at the abbey gate. Aspiring to a holy life, he ardently hoped, by thus spending his days in monastic seclusion, to render his heart more acceptable to God. Hearing his prayer, the monks conducted him into the presence of my Lord Abbot, who received him with compassionate tenderness, and kindly questioned him as to his qualifications for the duties and sacred responsibilities of the monkish priesthood; for even in those dark ages they looked a little into the learning of the applicant before he was admitted into their fraternity. But alas! the poor clerk was found wofully deficient in this respect, and was incapable of replying to the questions of my Lord Abbot, who thereupon gently answered, "My son, tarry awhile, and still exercise thyself in study, and so become more perfect for the holy office."

Abashed and disappointed, he retired with a

* Fecit etiam scribi libros plurimos; quos longum esset enarrare.—*Mat. Paris Edit. Wat.* p. 89.

† Cot. MS. Nero D. vii. fo. 16, a.

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kindling blush of shame; and deeming this temporary repulse a positive refusal he left his fatherland, and started on a pilgrimage to France.* And who was this poor, humble, unlettered clerk? Who this simple layman, whose ignorance rendered him an unfit *socius* for the plodding monks of old St. Albans Abbey? No less than the English born Nicholas Brekespere, afterwards his Holiness Adrian IV., Pope of Rome, Vicar-apostolic and successor of St. Peter!

Yes; still bearing in mind the kind yet keen reproof of the English abbot, on his arrival in a foreign land he studied with all the depth and intensity of despair, and soon surpassed his companions in the pursuit of knowledge; and became so renowned for learning, and for his prudence, that he was made Canon of St. Rufus. His sagacity, moreover, caused him to be chosen, on three separate occasions, to undertake some important embassies to the apostolic see; and at length he was elected a cardinal. So step by step he finally became elevated to the high dignity of the popedom. The first and last of England's sons who held the keys of Peter.

These shadows of the past—these shreds of a forgotten age—these echoes of five hundred years, are full of interest and instruction. For where shall we find a finer example—a more cheering instance of what perseverance will accomplish—or a more satisfactory result of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties? Not only may these curious facts cheer the dull student now, and inspire

* MS. Claud. E. iv. fo. 114, a.

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him with that energy so essential to success, but these whisperings of old may serve as lessons for ages yet to come. For if *we* look back upon those dark days with such feelings of superiority, may not the wiser generations of the future regard *us* with a still more contemptuous, yet curious eye? And when they look back at our Franklins, and our Johnsons, in astonishment at such fine instances of what perseverance could do, and what energy and plodding industry could accomplish, even when surrounded with the difficulties of *our* ignorance; how much more will they praise this bright example, in the dark background of the historical tableaux, who, without even our means of obtaining knowledge—our libraries or our talent—rose by patient, hard and devoted study, from Brekespere the humble clerk—the rejected of St. Albans—to the proud title of Vicar-apostolic of Christ and Pope of Rome!

Simon, an Englishman, a clerk and a "man of letters and good morals," was elected abbot in the year 1167. All my authorities concur in bestowing upon him the honor and praise appertaining to a bibliomaniac. He was, says one, an especial lover of books, *librorum amator speciales:* and another in panegyric terms still further dubs him an *amator scripturarum.* All this he proved, and well earned the distinction, by the great encouragement he gave to the collecting and transcribing of books. The monkish pens he found moving too slow, and yielding less fruit than formerly. He soon, however, set them hard at work again; and to facilitate their labors, he added materially to the comforts of the

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Scriptorium by repairing and enlarging it; "and always," says the monk from whom I learn this, "kept two or three most choice scribes in the Camera (Scriptorium,) who sustained its reputation, and from whence an abundant supply of the most excellent books were continually produced.* He framed some efficient laws for its management, and ordered that, in subsequent times, every abbot should keep and support one able scribe at least. Among the 'many choice books and authentic volumes,' *volumina authentica*, which he by this care and industry added to the abbey library, was included a splendid copy of the Old and New Testament, transcribed with great accuracy and beautifully written—indeed, says the manuscript history of that monastery, so noble a copy was nowhere else to be seen.† But besides this, Abbot Simon gave them all those precious books which he had been for a 'long time' collecting himself at great cost and patient labor, and having bound them in a sumptuous and marvellous manner,‡ he made a library for their reception near the tomb of Roger the Hermit.§ He also bestowed many rich ornaments and much costly plate on the monastery; and by a long catalogue of good deeds, too ample to be inserted here, he gained the affections and gratitude of his fraternity, who loudly praised his virtues and lamented his loss when they laid him in his costly tomb. There is a curious illumination of this monkish bibliophile in the Cotton manuscript. He is represented deeply engaged

* MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fo. 125 b.
† *Ibid.*
‡ MS. Cot. Nero D. vii. fo. 16 a.
§ MS. Cot. Claud. iv. fo. 124.

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with his studies amidst a number of massy volumes, and a huge trunk is there before him crammed with rough old fashioned large clasped tomes, quite enticing to look upon."*

After Simon came Garinus, who was soon succeeded by one John. Our attention is arrested by the learned renown of this abbot, who had studied in his youth at Paris, and obtained the unanimous praise of his masters for his assiduous attention and studious industry. He returned with these high honors, and was esteemed in grammar a Priscian, in poetry an Ovid, and in physic equal to Galen.† With such literary qualifications, it was to be expected the Scriptorium would flourish under his government, and the library increase under his fostering care. Our expectations are not disappointed; for many valuable additions were made during his abbacy, and the monks over whom he presided gave many manifestations of refinement and artistic talent, which incline us to regard the ingenuity of the cloisters in a more favorable light. Raymond, his prior, was a great help in all these undertakings. His industry seems to have been unceasing in beautifying the church, and looking after the transcription of books. With the assistance of Roger de Parco, the cellarer, he made a large table very handsome, and partly fabricated of metal. He wrote two copies of the Gospels, and bound them in silver and gold adorned with

* Claud. E. iv. fo. 124.

† "In grammatica Priscianus, in metrico Ovidius, in physica censori potuit Galenus." *MS. Cot. Claud.* E. iv. f. 129, b. *Matt. Paris' Edit. Wat.* p. 103.

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various figures. Brother Walter of Colchester, with Randulph, Gubium and others, produced some very handsome paintings comprising the evangelists and many holy saints, and hung them up in the church. "As we have before mentioned, by the care and industry of the lord Raymond, many noble and useful books were transcribed and given to the monastery. The most remarkable of these was a Historia Scholastica, with allegorics, a most elegant book—*liber elegantissimus* exclaims my monkish authority.* This leads me to say something more of my lord prior, for the troubles which the conscientious conduct of old Raymond brought upon himself—

"Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

Be it known then that William de Trompington succeeded to the abbacy on the death of John; but he was a very different man, without much esteem for learning; and thinking I am afraid far more of the world and heaven or the *Domus Dei*. Alas! memoirs of bad monks and worldly abbots are sometimes found blotting the holy pages of the monkish annals. *Domus Dei est porta cœli*, said the monks; and when they closed the convent gates they did not look back on the world again, but entered on that dull and gloomy path with a full conviction that they were leaving all and following Christ, and so acting in accordance with his admonitions; but those who sought the convent to forget in its solitude their worldly cares and worldly disappointments, too often found how futile and

* MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fo. 131. b.

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how ineffectual was that dismal life to eradicate the grief of an overburdened heart, or to subdue the violence of misguided temper. The austerity of the monastic rules might tend to conquer passion or moderate despair, but there was little within those walls to drive painful recollections of the outward world away; for at every interval between their holy meditations and their monkish duties, images of the earth would crowd back upon their minds, and wring from their ascetic hearts tributes of anguish and despair; and so we find the writings and letters of the old monks full of vain regrets and misanthropic thoughts, but sometimes overflowing with the most touching pathos of human misery. Yet the monk knew full well what his duty was, and knew how sinful it was to repine or rebel against the will of God. If he vowed obedience to his abbot, he did not forget that obedience was doubly due to Him; and strove with all the strength that weak humanity could muster, to forget the darkness of the past by looking forward with a pious hope and a lively faith to the brightness and glory of the future. By constant prayer the monk thought more of his God, and gained help to strengthen the faith within him; and by assiduous and devoted study he disciplined his heart of flesh —tore from it what lingering affection for the world remained, and deserting all love of earth and all love of kin, purged and purified it for his holy calling, and closed its portals to render it inaccessible to all sympathy of blood. If a thought of those shut out from him by the monastic walls stole across his soul and mingled with his prayer, he

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started and trembled as if he had offered up an unholy desire in the supplication. To him it was a proof that his nature was not yet subdued; and a day of study and meditation, with a fast unbroken till the rays of the morrow's sun cast their light around his little cell, absolved the sin, and broke the tie that bound him to the world without.

If this violence was experienced in subduing the tenderest of human sympathy; how much more severe was the conflict of dark passions only half subdued, or malignant depravity only partially reformed. These dark lines of human nature were sometimes prominent, even when the monk was clothed in sackcloth and ashes; and are markedly visible in the life of William de Trompington. But let not the reader think that he was appointed with the hearty suffrages of the fraternity, he was elected at the recommendation of the "king," a very significant term in those days of despotic rule, at which choice became a mere farce. "Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and the monks soon began to perceive with regret and trembling the worldly ways of the new abbot, which he could not hide even under his abbatical robes. In a place dedicated to holy deeds and heavenly thoughts, worldly conduct or unbridled passion strikes the mind as doubly criminal, and loads the heart with dismay and suffering; at least so my lord Prior regarded it, whose righteous indignation could no longer endure these manifestations of a worldly mind. So he gently remonstrated with his superior, and hinted at the impropriety of such conduct. This was received not in Christian fellow-

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ship, but with haughty and passionate displeasure; and from that day the fate of poor Raymond was irrevocably sealed. The abbot thinking to suppress the dissatisfaction which was now becoming general and particularly inconvenient, sent him a long distance off to the cell of Tynmouth in Northumberland, where all were strangers to him. Nor could the tears of the old man turn the heart of his cruel lord, nor the rebellious murmurings of the brothers avail. Thank God such cases are not very frequent; and the reader of monkish annals will not find many instances of such cold and unfeeling cruelty to distress his studies or to arouse his indignation. But obedience was a matter of course in the monastery; it was one of the most imperative duties of the monk, and if not cheerfully he was compelled to manifest alacrity in fulfilling even the most unpleasant mandate. But I would have forgiven this transaction on the score of *expediency* perhaps, had not the abbot heaped additional insults and cruelties upon the aged offender; but his books which he had transcribed with great diligence and care, he forcibly deprived him of, *violenter spoliatum*, and so robbed him, as his historian says, of all those things which would have been a comfort and solace to his old age.*

The books which the abbot thus became dishonestly possessed of—for I cannot regard it in any other light—we are told he gave to the library of the monastery; and he also presented some books to more than one neighboring church.†

* MS. Cot. Claud. E. iv. fol. 135 b.
† Ibid. fol. 141.

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But he was not bookworm himself, and dwelt I suspect with greater fondness over his wealthy rent roll than on the pages of the fine volumes in the monastic library. The monks, however, amidst all these troubles retained their love of books; indeed it was about this time that John de Basingstoke, who had studied at Athens, brought a valuable collection of Greek books into England, and greatly aided in diffusing a knowledge of that language into this country. He was deacon of Saint Albans, and taught many of the monks Greek; Nicholas, a chaplain there, became so proficient in it, that he was capable of greatly assisting bishop Grostete in translating his Testament of the twelve patriarchs into Latin.*

Roger de Northone, the twenty-fourth abbot of Saint Albans, gave "many valuable and choice books to the monastery," and among them the commentaries of Raymond, Godfrey, and Bernard, and a book containing the works and discourses of Seneca. His bibliomaniacal propensities, and his industry in transcribing books, is indicated by an illumination representing this worthy abbot deeply engrossed with his ponderous volumes.†

I have elsewhere related an anecdote of Wallingford, abbot of St. Albans, and the sale of books effected between him and Richard de Bury. It appears that rare and munificent collector gave many and various noble books, *multos et varios libros nobiles*, to the monastery of St. Albans whilst

* MS. Reg. Brit. Mus. 4 D. viii. 4. Wood's Hist. Oxon. 1-82, and Matt. Paris. Turner's Hist. of Eng. vol. iv. p. 180.

† MS. Cot. Nero, D. vii. fol. 19 a.

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he was bishop of Durham.* Michael de Wentmore succeeded Wallingford, and proved a very valuable benefactor to the monastery; and by wise regulations and economy greatly increased the comforts and good order of the abbey. He gave many books, *plures libros*, to the library, besides two excellent Bibles,† one for the convent and one for the abbot's study, and to be kept especially for his private reading; an ordinal, very beautiful to look upon, being sumptuously bound.‡ Indeed, so *multis voluminibus* did he bestow, that he expended more than 100*l.* in this way, an immense sum in those old days, when a halfpenny a day was deemed fair wages for a scribe.§

Wentmore was succeeded by Thomas de la Mare, a man of singular learning, and remarkable as a patron of it in others; it was probably by his direction that John of Tynmouth wrote his Sanctilogium Britannæ, for that work was dedicated to him. A copy, presented by Thomas de la Mare to the church of Redburn, is in the British Museum, much injured by fire, but retaining at the end the following lines:

> "Hunc librum dedet Dominus Thomas de la Mare, Albas monasterii S. Albani Anglorum Proto martyris Deo et Ecclesiæ B. Amphibali de Redburn, ut fratris indem in cursu existentus per ejus lecturam poterint cœlestibus instrui, et per Sanctorum exempla virtutibus insignixi."‖

But there are few who have obtained so much reputation as John de Whethamstede, perhaps the

* Ibid. fol. 86.
† Duos bonas biblias.
‡ MS. Cot. Claud, E. iv. fo. 229 b.
§ MS. Cot. Nero D. vii. fo. 20 b.
‖ MS. Cot. Tiberius, E. i.

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most learned abbot of this monastery. He was formerly monk of the cell at Tynmouth, and afterwards prior of Gloucester College at Oxford, from whence he was appointed to the government of St. Albans. Whethamstede was a passionate bibliomaniac, and when surrounded with his books he cared little, or perhaps from the absence of mind so often engendered by the delights of study, he too frequently forgot, the important affairs of his monastery, and the responsible duties of an abbot; but absorbed as he was with his studies, Whethamstede was not a mere

> ..... "Bookful blockhead ignorantly read
> With loads of learned lumber in his head."

It is true he was an inveterate reader, amorously inclined towards vellum tomes and illuminated parchments; but he did not covet them like some collectors for the mere pride of possessing them, but gloried in feasting on their intellectual charms and delectable wisdom, and sought in their attractive pages the means of becoming a better Christian and a wiser man. But he was so excessively fond of books, and became so deeply engrossed with his book-collecting pursuits, that it is said some of the monks showed a little dissatisfaction at his consequent neglect of the affairs of the monastery; but these are faults I cannot find the heart to blame him for, but am inclined to consider his conduct fully redeemed by the valuable encouragement he gave to literature and learning. Generous to a fault, abundant in good deeds and costly expenditure, he became involved in pecuniary

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difficulties, and found that the splendor and wealth which he had scattered so lavishly around his monastery, and the treasures with which he had adorned the library shelves, had not only drained his ample coffers, but left a large balance unsatisfied. Influenced by this circumstance, and the murmurings of the monks, and perhaps too, hoping to obtain more time for study and book-collecting, he determined to resign his abbacy, and again become a simple brother. The proceedings relative to this affair are curiously related by a contemporary, John of Amersham.* In Whethamstede's address to the monks on this occasion, he thus explains his reasons for the step he was about to take. After a touching address, wherein he intimates his determination, he says,† "Ye have known moreover how, from the first day of my appointment even until this day, assiduously and continually without any intermission I have shown singular solicitude in four things, to wit, in the erection of conventual buildings, *in the writing of books*, in the renewal of vestments, and in the acquisition of property. And perhaps, by reason of this solicitude of mine, ye conceive that I have fallen into debt; yet that you may know, learn and understand what is in this matter the certain and plain truth, and when ye know it ye may report it unto others, know ye for certain, yea, for most

* MS. Cot. Claud, D. i. fo. 165, "Acta Johannis Abbatis per Johannem Agmundishamensem monachum S. Albani."

† Gibson's Hist. Monast. Tynmouth, vol. ii. p. 62, whose translation I use in giving the following extract. If the reader refers to Mr. Gibson's handsome volumes, he will find much interesting and curious matter from John of Amersham relative to this matter.

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certain, that for all these things about which, and in which I have expended money, I am not indebted to any one living more than 10,000 marks; but that I wish freely to acknowledge this debt, and so to make satisfaction to every creditor, that no survivor of any one in the world shall have to demand anything from my successor."

The monks on hearing this declaration were sorely affected, and used every persuasion to induce my lord abbot to alter his determination, but without success; so that they were compelled to seek another in whom to confide the government of their abbey. Their choice fell upon John Stokes, who presided over them for many years; but at his death the love and respect which the brothers entertained for Whethamstede, was manifested by unanimously electing him again, an honor which he in return could not find the heart to decline. But during all this time, and after his restoration, he was constantly attending to the acquisition of books, and numerous were the transcripts made under his direction by the scribes and enriched by his munificence, for some of the most costly copies produced in that century were the fruits of their labor; during his time there were more volumes transcribed than in that of any other abbot since the foundation of the abbey, says the manuscript from whence I am gleaning these details, and adds that the number of them exceeded eighty-seven. He commenced the transcription of the great commentary of Nicholas de Lyra upon the whole Bible, which had then been published some few years. "Det Deus, ut in nostris felicem habere valeat

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consummacionem,"* exclaims the monk, nor will the reader be surprised at the expression, if he for one moment contemplates the magnitude of the undertaking.

But not only was Whethamstede remarkable as a bibliomaniac—he claims considerable respect as an author. Some of his productions were more esteemed in his own time than now; being compilations and commentaries more adapted as a substitute for other books, than valuable as original works. Under this class I am inclined to place his Granarium, a large work in five volumes; full of miscellaneous extracts, etc., and somewhat partaking of the encyclopediac form; his Propinarium, in two volumes, also treating of general matters; his Pabularium and Palearium Poetarium, and his Proverbiarium, or book of Proverbs; to which may be added the many pieces relating to the affairs of the monastery. But far different must we regard many of his other productions, which are more important in a literary point of view, as calling for the exercise of a refined and cultivated mind, and no small share of critical acumen. Among these I must not forget to include his Chronicle,† which spreading over a space of twenty years, forms a valuable historical document. The rest are poetical narratives, embracing an account of Jack Cade's insurrection—the battles of Ferrybridge, Wakefield, and St. Albans.‡

* Otterb. cxvi.; see also MS. Cot. Nero. vii. fo. 32 a.

† Otterbourne Hist. a Hearne, *edit.* Oxon, 1732, tom. i. 2.

‡ Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, vol. ii. pt. 11, p. 205. For a list of his works see Bale; also Pits. p. 630, who enumerates more than thirty.

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A Cottonian manuscript contained a catalogue of the books which this worthy abbot compiled, or which were transcribed under his direction: unfortunately it was burnt, with many others forming part of that inestimable collection.* From another source we learn the names of some of them, and the cost incurred in their transcription.† Twenty marks were paid for copying his Granarium, in four volumes; forty shillings for his Palearium; the same for a Polycraticon of John of Salisbury; five pounds for a Boethius, with a gloss; upwards of six pounds for "a book of Cato," enriched with a gloss and table; and four pounds for Gorham upon Luke. Whethamstede ordered a Grael to be written so beautifully illuminated, and so superbly bound, as to be valued at the enormous sum of twenty pounds: but let it be remembered that my Lord Abbot was a very epicure in books, and thought a great deal of choice bindings, tall copies, immaculate parchment, and brilliant illuminations, and the high prices which he freely gave for these book treasures evince how sensible he was to the joys of bibliomania; nor am I inclined to regard the works thus attained as "mere monastic trash."‡

The finest illumination in the Cotton manuscript is a portrait of Abbot Whethamstede, which for artistic talent is far superior to any in the volume. Eight folios are occupied with an enumeration of

* Marked Otho, b. iv.

† MS. Arundel. Brit. Mus. clxiii. c. A curious Register, "per magistrum Johannem Whethamstede et dominum Thoman Ramryge," fo. 74, 75. Upwards of fifty volumes are specified, with the cost of each.

‡ Julius Cæsar was among them.—Cot. MS. Claud. d. i. fo. 156.

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the "good works" of this liberal monk: among the items we find the sum of forty pounds having been expended on a reading desk, and four pounds for writing four Antiphoners.* He displayed also great liberality of spirit in his benefactions to Gloucester College, at Oxford, besides great pecuniary aid. He built a library there, and gave many valuable books for the use of the students, in which he wrote these verses:

Fratribus Oxonicæ datur in minus liber iste,
Per patrem pecorem prothomartyris Angligenorum:
Quem si quis rapiat ad partem sive reponat,
Vel Judæ loqueum, vel furcas sentiat; Amen.

In others he wrote—

Discior ut docti fieret nova regia plebi
Culta magisque deæ datur hic liber ara Minerva,
Hic qui diis dictis libant holocausta ministrias.
Et cirre bibulam sitiunt præ nectare lympham,
Estque librique loci, idem datur, actor et unus.†

If we estimate worth by comparison, we must award a large proportion to this learned abbot. Living in the most corrupt age of the monastic system, when the evils attendant on luxurious ease began to be too obvious in the cloister, and when

* MS. Cod. Nero, D. vii. fo. 28 a. He "enlarged the abbot's study," fo. 29, which most monasteries possessed. Whethamstede had a study also at his manor at Tittinhanger, and had inscribed on it these lines:

"Ipse Johannis amor Whethamstede ubique proclamor
Ejus et alter honor hic lucis in auge reponer."

See also MS. Cot. Claud. D. i. fo. 157, for an account of his many donations.

† Weever's Funerall Monuments, p. 562 to 567. I have forgotten to mention before that Whethamstede built a new library for the abbey books, and expended considerably more than £120 upon the building.

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complaints were heard at first in a whispering murmur, but anon in a stern loud voice of wroth and indignant remonstrance—when in fact the progressive, inquiring spirit of the reformation was taking root in what had hitherto been regarded as a hard, dry, stony soil. This coming tempest, only heard as yet like the lulling of a whisper, was nevertheless sufficiently loud to spread terror and dismay among the cowled habitants of the monasteries. That quietude and mental ease so indispensable to study—so requisite for the growth of thought and intellectuality, was disturbed by these distant sounds, or dissipated by their own indolence. And yet in the midst of all this, rendered still more anxious and perplexing by domestic troubles and signs of discontent and insubordination among the monks. Whethamstede found time, and what was better the spirit, for literary and bibliomanical pursuits. Honor to the man, monk though he be, who oppressed with these vicissitudes and cares could effect so much, and could appreciate both literature and art.

Contemporary with him we are not surprised that he gained the patronage and friendship of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, to whom he dedicated many of his own performances, and greatly aided in collecting those treasures which the duke regarded with such esteem. It is said that noble collector frequently paid a friendly visit to the abbey to inspect the work of the monkish scribes, and perhaps to negociate for some of those choice vellum tomes for which the monks of that monastery were so renowned.

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But we must not pass the "good duke" without some slight notice of his "ryghte valiant deedes," his domestic troubles and his dark mysterious end. Old Foxe thus speaks of him in his Actes and Monuments: "Of manners he seemed meeke and gentle, louing the commonwealth, a supporter of the poore commons, of wit and wisdom, discrete and studious, well affected to religion and a friend to verity, and no lesse enemy to pride and ambition, especially in haughtie prelates, which was his undoing in this present evil world. And, which is seldom and rare in such princes of that calling, he was both learned himselfe and no lesse given to studie, and also a singular favourer and patron to those who were studious and learned."* To which I cannot refrain from adding the testimony of Hollingshed, who tells us that "The ornaments of his mind were both rare and admirable; the feats of chiualrie by him commensed and atchiued valiant and fortunate; his grauitie in counsell and soundnesse of policie profound and singular; all which with a traine of other excellent properties linked together, require a man of manifold gifts to aduance them according to their dignitie. I refer the readers unto Maister Foxe's booke of Actes and Monuments. Onelie this I ad, that in respect of his noble indowments and his demeanor full of decencie, which he dailie used, it seemeth he might wel haue giuen this prettie poesie:"

"Virtute duce non sanguine nitor."†

* Foxe's Actes and Monuments, folio, Lond. 1576, p. 679.
† Holingshed Chronicle, fol. 1587, vol. ii. p. 627.

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But with all these high qualities, our notions of propriety are somewhat shocked at the open manner in which he kept his mistress Eleanor Cobham; but we can scarcely agree in the condemnation of the generality of historians for his marrying her afterwards, but regard it rather as the action of an honorable man, desirous of making every reparation in his power.* But the "pride of birth" was sorely wounded by the espousals; and the enmity of the aristocracy already roused, now became deeply rooted. Eleanor's disposition is represented as passionate and unreasonable, and her mind sordid and oppressive. Be this how it may, we must remember that it is from her enemies we learn it; and if so, unrelenting persecution and inveterate malice were proceedings ill calculated to soothe a temper prone to violence, or to elevate a mind undoubtedly weak. But the vindictive and haughty cardinal Beaufort was the open and secret enemy of the good duke Humphrey; for not only did he thwart every public measure proposed by his rival, but employed spies to insinuate themselves into his domestic circle, and to note and inform him of every little circumstance which malice could distort into crime, or party rage into treason. This detestable espionage met with a too speedy success. The duke, who was especially fond of the society of learned men, retained in his family many priests and clerks, and among them one Roger Bolingbroke, "a famous necromancer and astronomer." This was a sufficient ground for the enmity of the cardinal to feed upon, and he deter-

* See Stowe, p. 367.

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mined to annihilate at one blow the domestic happiness of his rival. He arrested the Duchess, Bolingbroke, and a witch called Margery Gourdimain, or Jourdayn, on the charge of witchcraft and treason. He accused the priest and Margery of making, and the duchess for having in her possession, a waxen figure, which, as she melted it before a slow fire, so would the body of the king waste and decay, and his marrow wither in his bones. Her enemies tried her, and of course found her and her companions guilty, though without a shred of evidence to the purpose. The duchess was sentenced to do penance in St. Paul's and two other churches on three separate days, and to be afterwards imprisoned in the Isle of Man for life. Bolingbroke, who protested his innocence to the last, was hung and quartered at Tyburn; and Margery, the witch of Eye, as she was called, was burnt at Smithfield. But the black enmity of the cardinal was sorely disappointed at the effect produced by this persecution. He reasonably judged that no accusation was so likely to arouse a popular prejudice against duke Humphrey as appealing to the superstition of the people who in that age were ever prone to receive the most incredulous fabrications; but far different was the impression made in the present case. The people with more than their usual sagacity saw through the flimsy designs of the cardinal and his faction; and while they pitied the victims of party malice, loved and esteemed the good duke Humphrey more than ever.

But the intriguing heart of Beaufort soon resolved upon the most desperate measures, and

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shrunk not from staining his priestly hands with innocent and honorable blood. A parliament was summoned to meet at St. Edmunds Bury, in Suffolk, on the 10th of February, 1447, at which all the nobility were ordered to assemble. On the arrival of Duke Humphrey, the cardinal arrested him on a groundless charge of high treason, and a few days after he was found dead in his bed, his enemies gave out that he had died of the palsy; but although his body was eagerly shown to the sorrowing multitude, the people believed that their friend and favorite had been foully murdered, and feared not to raise their voice in loud accusations at the Suffolk party; "sum sayed that he was smouldered betwixt two fetherbeddes,"* and others declared that he had suffered a still more barbarous death. Deep was the murmuring and the grief of the people, for the good duke had won the love and esteem of their hearts; and we can fully believe a contemporary who writes—

"Compleyne al Yngland thys goode Lorde's deth."†

Perhaps none suffered more by his death than the author and the scholar; for Duke Humphrey was a munificent patron of letters, and loved to correspond with learned men, many of whom dedicated their works to him, and received ample encouragement in return.‡ Lydgate, who knew him well,

* Leland Collect. vol. i. p. 494.

† MS. Harleian, No. 2251, fol. 7 b.

‡ Capgrave's Commentary on Genesis, in Oriel College, Cod. MSS. 32, is dedicated to him. Aretine's Trans. Aristotle's Politics, MS. Bodl. D. i. 8-10. Pet. de Monte de Virt. de Vit. MS. Norvic. More, 257. Bibl. publi Cantab. Many others are given in Warton's Hist. of Poetry, 4to, vol. ii. pp. 48-50.

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composed some of his pieces at the duke's instigation. In his Tragedies of Ihon Bochas he thus speaks of him:

" Duke of Glocester men this prynce call,
And not withstandyng his estate and dignitie,
His courage neuer dothe appall
To study in bokes of antiquitie;
Therein he hath so great felicitie,
Virtuously him selfe to occupye,
Of vycious slouthe, he hath the maistry.

And for these causes as in his entent
To shewe the untrust of all worldly thinge,
He gave to me in commandment
As him seemed it was ryghte well fittynge
That I shoulde, after my small cunning,
This boke translate, him to do pleasaunce,
To shew the chaung of worldly variaunce.

And with support of his magnificence
Under the wynges of his correction,
Though that I lacke of eloquence
I shall proceede in this translation.
Fro me auoydyng all presumption,
Louyly submittying every houre and space,
My rude language to my lorde's grace.

Anone after I of eutencion,
With penne in hande fast gan me spede,
As I coulde in my translation,
In this labour further to procede,
My Lorde came forth by and gan to take hede;
This mighty prince right manly and right wise
Gaue me charge in his prudent auyle.

That I should in euery tragedy,
After the processe made mencion,
At the ende set a remedy,
With a Lenuoy, conveyed by reason;
And after that, with humble affection,
To noble princes lowly it dyrect,
By others fallying them selues to correct.

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And I obeyed his biddyng and pleasaunce
Under support of his magnificence,
As I coulde, I gan my penne aduaunce,
All be I was barrayne of eloquence,
Folowing mine auctor in substance and sétence,
For it sufficeth playnly unto me,
So that my lorde my makyng take in gre."*

Lydgate often received money whilst translating this work, from the good duke Humphrey, and there is a manuscript letter in the British Museum in which he writes—

" Righte myghty prynce, and it be youre wille,
Condescende leyser for to take,
To se the contents of thys litel bille,
Whiche whan I wrote my hand felt qquake."†

Duke Humphrey gave a noble instance of his great love of learning in the year 1439, when he presented to the University of Oxford one hundred and twenty-nine treatises, and shortly after, one hundred and twenty-six *admirandi apparatus;* and in the same year, nine more. In 1443, he made another important donation of one hundred and thirty volumes, to which he added one hundred and thirty-five more,‡ making in all, a collection of five hundred and thirty-eight volumes. These treasures, too, had been collected with all the nice acumen of a bibliomaniac, and the utmost attention was paid to their outward condition and internal purity. Never, perhaps, were so many costly copies

* Tragedies of Ihon Bochas. Imp. at London, by John Wayland, fol. 38 b.

† MS. Harleian, No. 2251, fol. 6. Lydgate received one hundred shillings for translating the Life of St. Alban into English verse for Whethamstede.

‡ See Wood's Hist. and Antiq. of Oxford, vol. ii. p. 914.

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seen before, dazzling with the splendor of their illuminations, and rendered inestimable by the many faithful miniatures with which they were enriched. A superb copy of Valerius Maximus is the only relic of that costly and noble gift, a solitary but illustrious example of the membraneous treasures of that ducal library.* But alas! those very indications of art, those exquisite illuminations, were the fatal cause of their unfortunate end; the portraits of kings and eminent men, with which the historical works were adorned; the diagrams which pervaded the scientific treatises, were viewed by the zealous reformers of Henry's reign, as damning evidence of their Popish origin and use; and released from the chains with which they were secured, they were hastily committed to the greedy flames. Thus perished the library of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester! and posterity have to mourn the loss of many an early gem of English literature.†

But in the fourteenth century many other honorable examples occur of lay collectors. The magnificent volumes, nine hundred in number, col-

* MSS. Bodl. N. E. vii. ii. Warton, vol. ii. p. 45. I find in the Arundel Register in the British Museum (MSS. Arund. clxiii. c.) that a fine copy of Valerius, in two volumes, with a gloss, was transcribed in the time of Whethamstede at St. Albans, at the cost of £6 13 4, probably the identical copy.

† There are many volumes formerly belonging to duke Humphrey, in the public libraries, a fine volume intitled "Tabulas Humfridi ducis Glowcester in Judicus artis Geomantie," is in the Brit. Mus., MSS. Arund. 66, fo. 277, beautifully written and illuminated with excessive margins of the purest vellum. See also MSS. Harl. 1705. Leland says, "Humfredus multaties scripsit in frontispiecis librorum suorum, *Moun bien Mondain*," Script. vol. iii. 58.

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lected by Charles V. of France, a passionate bibliomaniac, were afterwards brought by the duke of Bedford into England. The library then contained eight hundred and fifty-three volumes, so sumptuously bound and gorgeously illuminated as to be valued at 2,223 livres!* This choice importation diffused an eager spirit of inquiry among the more wealthy laymen. Humphrey, the "good duke," received some of these volumes as presents, and among others, a rich copy of Livy, in French.† Guy Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, also collected some choice tomes, and possessed an unusually interesting library of early romances. He left the whole of them to the monks of Bordesley Abbey in Worcestershire, about the year 1359.‡ As a specimen of a private library in the fourteenth century, I am tempted to extract it.

"A tus iceux, qe ceste lettre verront, ou orrount, Gwy de Beauchamp, Comte de Warr. Saluz en Deu. Saluz nous aveir baylé e en la garde le Abbé e le Covent de Bordesleye, lessé à demorer a touz jours touz les Romaunces de sonz nomes; ceo est assaveyr, un volum, qe est appelé Tresor. Un volum, en le quel est le premer livere de Lancelot, e un volum del Romaunce de Aygnes. Un Sauter de Romaunce. Un volum des Evangelies, e de Vie des Seins. Un volum, qe p'le des quatre principals Gestes de Charles, e de dooun, e de Meyace e de

* Bouvin, Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscrip., ii. 693.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Printed in Todd's Illustrations to Gower and Chaucer, 8vo. p. 161, from a copy by Arch Sancroft, from Ashmole's Register of the Earl of Ailesbury's Evidences, fol. 110. Lambeth, MSS., No. 577. fol. 18 b.

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Girard de Vienne e de Emery de Nerbonne. Un volum del Romaunce Emmond de Ageland, e deu Roy Charles dooun de Nauntoyle. E le Romaunce de Gwyoun de Nauntoyl. E un volum del Romaunce Titus et Vespasien. E un volum del Romaunce Josep ab Arimathie, e deu Seint Grael. E un volum, qe p'le coment Adam fust eniesté hors de paradys, e le Genesie. E un volum en le quel sount contenuz touns des Romaunces, ceo este assaveir, Vitas patrum au comencement; e pus un Comte de Auteypt; e la Vision Seint Pol; et pus les Vies des xii. Seins. E le Romaunce de Willame de Loungespe. E Autorites des Seins humes. E le Mirour de Alme. Un volum, en le quel sount contenuz la Vie Seint Pére e Seint Pol, e des autres liv. E un volum qe est appelé l'Apocalips. E un livere de Phisik, e de Surgie. Un volum del Romaunce de Gwy, e de la Reygne tut enterement. Un volum del Romaunce de Troies. Un volum del Romaunce de Willame de Orenges e de Teband de Arabie. Un volum del Romaunce de Amase e de Idoine. Un volum del Romaunce de Girard de Viene. Un volum del Romaunce deu Brut, e del Roy Costentine. Un volum de le enseignemt Aristotle enveiez au Roy Alisaundre. Un volum de la mort ly Roy Arthur, e de Mordret. Un volum en le quel sount contenuz les Enfaunces de Nostre Seygneur, coment il fust mené en Egipt. E la Vie Seint Edwd. E la Visioun Seint Pol. La Vengeaunce n're Seygneur par Vespasien a Titus, e la Vie Seint Nicolas, qe fust nez en Patras. E la Vie Seint Eustace. E la Vie Seint Cudlac. E la Passioun n're Seygneur. E la Meditacioun

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Seint Bernard de n're Dame Seint Marie, e del Passioun sour deuz fiz Jesu Creist n're Seignr. E la Vie Seint Eufrasie. E la Vie Seint Radegounde. E la Vie Seint Juliane. Un volum, en le quel est aprise de Enfants et lumière à Lays. Un volum del Romaunce d'a Alisaundre, ove peintures. Un petit rouge livere, en le quel sount contenuz mons diverses choses. Un volum del Romaunce des Mareschans, e de Ferebras e de Alisaundre. Les queus livres nous grauntons par nos heyrs e par nos assignes qil demorront en la dit Abbeye, etc."

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CHAPTER XII.

The Dominicans.—The Franciscans and the Carmelites.—Scholastic Studies.—Robert Grostest.—Libraries in London.—Miracle Plays.—Introduction of Printing into England.—Barkley's Description of a Bibliomaniac.

THE old monastic orders of St. Augustine and St. Benedict, of whose love of books we have principally spoken hitherto, were kept from falling into sloth and ignorance in the thirteenth century by the appearance of several new orders of devotees. The Dominicans,* the Franciscans,† and the Carmelites were each renowned for their profound learning, and their unquenchable passion for knowledge; assuming a garb of the most abject poverty, renouncing all

* Thirteen Dominicans were sent into England in the year 1221; they held their first provincial council in England in 1230 at Oxford, three years before St. Dominic was canonized by pope Gregory.

† Four clercs and five laymen of the Franciscan order were sent into England in 1224; ten years afterwards we find their disciples spreading over the whole of England.

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love of the world, all participation in its temporal honors, and refraining to seek the aggrandizement of their order by fixed oblations or state endowments, but adhering to a voluntary system for support, they caused a visible sensation among all classes, and wrought a powerful change in the ecclesiastical and collegiate learning of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and by their devotion, their charity, their strict austerity, and by their brilliant and unconquerable powers of disputation, soon gained the respect and affections of the people.*

Much as the friars have been condemned, or darkly as they have been represented, I have no hesitation in saying that they did more for the revival of learning, and the progress of English literature, than any other of the monastic orders. We cannot trace their course without admiration and astonishment at their splendid triumphs and success; they appear to act as intellectual crusaders against the prevailing ignorance and sloth. The finest names that adorn the literary annals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the most prolific authors who flourished during that long period were begging friars; and the very spirit that was raised against them by the churchmen, and the severe controversal battles which they had between them, were the means of doing a vast amount of

* Edward the Second regarded them with great favor, and wrote several letters to the pope in their praise; he says in one, "Desiderantes itaque, pater sancte ordinis fratrum prædicatorum Oxonii, ubi religionis devotio, et honestatis laudabilis decer viget, per quem etiam honor universitatis Oxoniensis, et utilitas ibidem studentium, etc." Dugdale's Monast. vol. vi. p. 1492.

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good, of exposing ignorance in high places, and compelling those who enjoyed the honors of learning to strive to merit them, by a studious application to literature and science; need I do more than mention the shining names of Duns Scotus, of Thomas Aquinas, of Roger Bacon, the founder of experimental philosophy, and the justly celebrated Robert Grostest, the most enlightened ecclesiastic of his age.*

We may not admire the scholastic philosophy which the followers of Francis and Dominic held and expounded; we may deplore the intricate mazes and difficulties which a false philosophy led them to maintain, and we may equally deplore the waste of time and learning which they lavished in the vain hope of solving the mysteries of God, or in comprehending a loose and futile science. Yet the philosophy of the schoolmen is but little understood, and is too often condemned without reason or without proof; for those who trouble themselves to denounce, seldom care to read them; their ponderous volumes are too formidable to analyze; it is so much easier to declaim than to examine such sturdy antagonists; but we owe to the schoolmen far more than we are apt to suppose, and if it were possible to scratch their names from the page of history, and to obliterate all traces of their bulky

* A list of celebrated authors who flourished in England, and who were members of the Dominican Order, will be found in *Steven's Monasticon*, vol. ii. p. 193, more than 80 names are mentioned. A similar list of authors of the Franciscan order will be found at p. 97 of vol. i. containing 122 names; and of the Carmelite authors, vol. ii. p. 160, specifying 137 writers; a great proportion of their works are upon the Scriptures.

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writings from our libraries and from our literature, we should find our knowledge dark and gloomy in comparison with what it is.

But the mendicant orders did not study and uphold the scholastic philosophy without improving it; the works of Aristotle, of which it is said the early schoolmen possessed only a vitiated translation from the Arabic,* was, at the period these friars sprung up, but imperfectly understood and taught. Michael Scot, with the assistance of a learned Jew,† translated and published the writings of the great philosopher in Latin, which greatly superseded the old versions derived from the Saracen copies.

The mendicant friars having qualified themselves with a respectable share of Greek learning, then taught and expounded the Aristotelian philosophy according to this new translation, and opened a new and proscribed field‡ for disputation and enquiry; their indomitable perseverance, their acute powers of reasoning, and the splendid popularity which many of the disciples of St. Dominic

* Dr. Cave says, "In scholis Christianis pene unice regnavit scholastica theologia, advocata in subsidium Aristotelis philosophia, eaque non ex Græcis fontibus *sed ex turbidis Arabum lacunis, ex versionibus male factis, male intellectis, hansta. Hist. Liter*, p. 615. But I am not satisfied that this has been proved, though often affirmed.

† It was probably the work of Andrew the Jew. *Meiners*, ii. p. 664.

‡ At a council held at Paris in the year 1209, the works of Aristotle were proscribed and ordered to be burnt. *Launvius de Varia Aristotelis fortuna.* But in spite of the papal mandate the friars revived its use. Richard Fizacre, an intimate friend of Roger Bacon, was so passionately fond of reading Aristotle, that he always carried one of his works in his bosom. *Stevens Monast.*, vol. ii. p. 194.

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and St. Francis were fast acquiring, caused students to flock in crowds to their seats of learning, and all who were inspired to an acquaintance with scholastic philosophy placed themselves under their training and tuition.*

No religious order before them ever carried the spirit of inquiry to such an extent as they, or allowed it to wander over such an unbounded field. The most difficult and mysterious questions of theology were discussed and fearlessly analyzed; far from exercising that blind and easy credulity which mark the religious conduct of the old monastic orders, they were disposed to probe and examine every article of their faith. To such an extent were their disputations carried, that sometimes it shook their faith in the orthodoxy of Rome, and often aroused the pious fears of the more timid of their own order. Angell de Pisa, who founded the school of the Franciscans or Grey Friars at Oxford, is said to have gone one day into his school, with a view to discover what progress the students were making in their studies; as he entered he found them warm in disputation, and was shocked to find that the question at issue was "*whether there was a God;*" the good man, greatly alarmed, cried out, "Alas, for me! alas, for me! simple brothers pierce the heavens and the learned dispute whether there be a God!" and with great indignation ran out of the house blaming himself for having established a school for such fearful disputes; but he afterwards returned and remained among his pupils, and purchased for ten

* See what has been said of the Mendicants at p. 79.

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marks a corrected copy of the decretals, to which he made his students apply their minds.* This school was the most flourishing of those belonging to the Franciscans; and it was here that the celebrated Robert Grostest†, bishop of Lincoln, read lectures about the year 1230. He was a profound scholar, thoroughly conversant with the most abstruse matters of philosophy, and a great Bible reader.‡ He possessed an extensive knowledge of the Greek, and translated, into Latin, Dionysius the Areopagite, Damascenus, Suida's Greek Lexicon, a Greek Grammar, and, with the assistance of Nicholas, a monk of St. Alban's, the History of the Twelve Patriarchs. He collected a fine library of Greek books, many of which he obtained from Athens. Roger Bacon speaks of his knowledge of the Greek, and says, that he caused a vast number of books to be gathered together in that tongue.§ His extraordinary talent and varied knowledge caused him to be deemed a conjuror and astrologer by the ignorant and superstitious; and his enemies, who were numerous and powerful, did not refuse to encourage the slanderous report. We find him so represented by the poet Gower:—

* Steven's additions to Dugdale's Monasticon from the MSS. of Anthony a Wood in the library at Oxford, vol. i. p. 129. Agnell himself was "*a man of scarce any erudition.*"—*Ibid.*

† He is spoken of under a multitude of names, sometimes Grosthead, Grouthead, etc. A list of them will be found in Wood's Oxford by Gutch, vol. i. p. 198.

‡ He gives strict injunctions as to the study of the Scriptures in his *Constitutiones.*—See Pegge's Life of Grostest, p. 315.

§ Utilitate Scientiarum, cap. xxxix.

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"For of the grete clerk Grostest,
I rede how redy that he was
Upon clergye, and bede of bras,
To make and forge it, for to telle
Of suche thynges as befelle,
And seven yeres besinesse.
Ye ladye, but for the lackbesse
Of 'a balfe a mynute of an houre,
Fro tyrst that he began laboure,
Ye lost al that he had do."*

The Franciscan convent at Oxford contained two libraries, one for the use of the graduates and one for the secular students, who did not belong to their order, but who were receiving instruction from them. Grostest gave many volumes to these libraries, and at his death he bequeathed to the convent all his books, which formed no doubt a fine collection. "To these were added," says Wood, "the works of Roger Bacon, who, Bale tells us, writ an hundred Treatises. There were also volumes of other writers of the same order, which, I believe, amounted to no small number. In short, I guess that these libraries were filled with all sorts of erudition, because the friars of all orders, and chiefly the Franciscans, used so diligently to procure all monuments of literature from all parts, that wise men looked upon it as an injury to laymen, who, therefore, found a difficulty to get any books. Several books of Grostest and Bacon treated of astronomy and mathematics, besides some relating

* De Confess. Amantis, lib. iv. fo. 70, *Imprint.* Caxton *at Westminster*, 1483. The bishop is said to have taken a journey from England to Rome one night on an infernal horse.—Pegge's Life of Grostest, p. 306.

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to the Greek tongue. But these friars, as I have found by certain ancient manuscripts, bought many Hebrew books of the Jews who were disturbed in England. In a word, they, to their utmost power, purchased whatsoever was anywhere to be had of singular learning."*

Many of the smaller convents of the Franciscan order possessed considerable libraries, which they purchased or received as gifts from their patrons.† There was a house of Grey Friars at Exeter,‡ and Roger de Thoris, Archdeacon of Exeter, gave or lent them a library of books in the year 1266, soon after their establishment, reserving to himself the privilege of using them, and forbade the friars from selling or parting with them. The collection, however, contained less than twenty volumes, and was formed principally of the scriptures and writings of their own order. "Whosoever," concludes the document, "shall presume hereafter to separate or destroy this donation of mine, may he incur the malediction of the omnipotent God! dated on the day of the purification, in the year of our Lord MCCLXVI."§

The library of the Grey Friars in London was of more than usual magnificence and extent. It was founded by the celebrated Richard Whittington.

* Stephen's additions to Dugdale's Monasticon from Anthony a Wood's MSS. vol. i. p. 133.

† The Mendicant orders, unlike the monks, were not remarkable for their industry in transcribing books: their roving life was unsuitable to the tedious profession of a scribe.

‡ Leland's Itin. vol. iii. p. 59.

§ Oliver's Collections relating to the Monasteries in Devon, 8vo. 1820, appendix lxii.

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Its origin is thus set forth in an old manuscript in the Cottonian library:*

"In the year of our Lord, 1421, the worshipful Richard Whyttyngton, knight and mayor of London, began the new library and laid the first foundation-stone on the 21st day of October; that is, on the feast of St. Hilarion the abbot. And the following year before the feast of the nativity of Christ, the house was raised and covered; and in three years after, it was floored, whitewashed, glazed,† adorned with shelves, statues, and carving, and furnished with books: and the expenses about what is aforesaid amount to £556: 16: 9; of which sum, the aforesaid Richard Whyttyngton paid £400, and the residue was paid by the reverend father B. Thomas Winchelsey and his friends, to whose soul God be propitious.—Amen."

Among some items of money expended, we find, "for the works of Doctor de Lyra contained in two volumes, now in the chains,‡ 100 marks, of which B. John Frensile remitted 20s.; and for the Lectures of Hostiensis, now lying in the chains, 5 marks."§ Leland speaks in the most enthusiastic terms of this library, and says, that it far surpassed all others for the number and antiquity of its volumes. John Wallden bequeathed as many manu-

* Cottonian MSS. Vittel, F. xii. 13. fol. 325, headed "*De Fundacione Librarie.*"

† The library was 129 feet long and 31 feet broad, and most beautifully fitted up.—*Lelandi Antiquarii Collectanea*, vol. i. p. 109.

‡ This refers to the custom then prevalent of chaining their books, especially their choice ones, to the library shelf, or to a reading desk.

§ MS. *ibid.* fo. o. 325 b.

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scripts of celebrated authors as were worth two thousand pounds.*

The library of the Dominicans in London was also at one time well stored with valuable books. Leland mentions some of those he found there, and among them some writings of Wicliff;† indeed those of this order were renowned far and wide for their love of study; look at the old portraits of a Dominican friar, and you will generally see him with the pen in one hand and a book in the other; but they were more ambitious in literature than the monks, and aimed at the honors of an author rather than at those of a scribe; but we are surprised more at their fertility than at their style or originality in the mysteries of bookcraft. Henry Esseburn diligently read at Oxford, and devoted his whole soul to study, and wrote a number of works, principally on the Bible; he was appointed to govern the Dominican monastery at Chester; "being remote from all schools, he made use of his spare hours to revise and polish what he had writ at Oxford; having performed the same to his own satisfaction, he caused his works to be fairly transcribed, and copies of them to be preserved in several libraries of his order.‡ But they did not usually pay so much attention to the duties of transcribing. The Dominicans were fond of the physical sciences, and have been accused of too much partiality for occult philosophy. Leland tells

* Script. Brit. p. 241, and Collectanea, iii. 52.

† Leland's Collect. vol. iii. p. 51. He found in the priory of the Dominicans at Cambridge, among other books, a *Biblia in lingua vernacula.*

‡ Steven's Monast. vol. ii. p. 194.

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us that Robert Perserutatur, a Dominican, was over solicitous in prying into the secrets of philosophy,* and lays the same charge to many others.

The Carmelites were more careful in transcribing books than the Dominicans, and anxiously preserved them from dust and worms; but I can find but little notice of their libraries; the one at Oxford was a large room, where they arranged their books in cases made for that purpose; before the foundation of this library, the Carmelites kept their books in chests, and doubtless gloried in an ample store of manuscript treasures.†

But in the fifteenth century we find the Mendicant Friars, like the order religious sects, disregarding those strict principles of piety which had for two hundred years so distinguished their order. The holy rules of St. Francis and St. Dominic were seldom read with much attention, and never practised with severity; they became careless in the propagation of religious principles, relaxed in their austerity, and looked with too much fondness on the riches and honors of the world.‡ This diminution in religious zeal was naturally accompanied by a proportionate decrease in learning and

* His works were of the impressions of the Air—of the Wonder of the Elements—of Ceremonial Magic—of the Mysteries of Secrets—and the Correction of Chemistry.

† Sieben's Monast. vol. i. p. 183, from the MSS. of Anthony a Wood, who says, "What became of them (their books) at the dissolution unless they were carried into the library of some college, I know not."

‡ They obtained much wealth by the sale of pardons and indulgences. Margaret Est, of the convent of Franciscans, ordered her letters of pardon and absolution, to partake of the indulgences of the convent, to be returned as soon she was buried. *Bloomfield's Hist. of Norfolk,* vol. ii. p. 565.

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love of study. The sparkling orator, the acute controversialist, or the profound scholar, might have been searched for in vain among the Franciscans or the Dominicans of the fifteenth century. Careless in literary matters, they thought little of collecting books, or preserving even those which their libraries already contained; the Franciscans at Oxford "sold many of their books to Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, about the year 1433,* which he gave to the libraries of Lincoln, Durham, Baliol, and Oriel. They also declining in strictness of life and learning, sold many more to other persons, so that their libraries declined to little or nothing."†

We are not therefore surprised at the disappointment of Leland, on examining this famous repository; his expectations were raised by the care with which he found the library guarded, and the difficulty he had to obtain access to it: but when he entered, he did not find one-third the number of books which it originally contained; but dust and cobwebs, moths and beetles he found in abundance, which swarmed over the empty shelves.‡

The mendicant friars have rendered themselves famous by introducing theatrical representations§ for the amusement and instruction of the people. These shows were usually denominated miracles,

* And among others of St. Augustine's books, *De Civitate Dei*, with many notes in the margins, by Grostest. *Wood's Hist. Oxon*, p. 78.

† Anthony a Wood in Steven's Monast. vol. i. p. 133.

‡ Script. Brit. p. 286.

§ Le Bœuf gives an instance of one being represented as early as the eleventh century, in which Virgil was introduced. *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. p. 295. The case of Geoffry of St. Albans is well known, and I have already mentioned it.

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moralities, or mysteries, and were performed by the friars in their convents or on portable stages, which were wheeled into the market places and streets for the convenience of the spectators.

The friars of the monastery of the Franciscans at Coventry are particularly celebrated for their ingenuity in performing these pageants on Corpus Christi day; a copy of this play or miracle is preserved in the Cottonian Collection, written in old English rhyme. It embraces the transactions of the Old and New Testament, and is entitled *Ludus Corpus Christi.* It commences—

A PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI.*

How gracyous God groundyd of all goodnesse,
As thy grete glorie neuyr begynnyng had;
So you succour and save all those that sytt and sese,
And lystenyth to our talkyng with sylens stylle and sad,
For we purpose no pertly stylle in his prese
The pepyl to plese with pleys ful glad,
How lystenyth us lowly both mar and lesse
Gentyllys and zemaury off goodly lyff lad,
Pis tyde,
We call you shewe us that we kan,
How that yis werd fyrst began,
And howe God made bothe worlde and man
If yt ye wyll abyde.

These miracles were intended to instruct the more ignorant, or those whose circumstances placed the usual means of acquiring knowledge beyond

* MS. Cottonian Vespasian, D. viii. fo. 1. Codex Chart. 225 folios, written in the fifteenth century. Sir W. Dugdale, in his Hist. of Warwick, p. 116, mentions this volume; and Stevens, in his Monast. has printed a portion of it. Mr. Halliwell has printed them with much care and accuracy.

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their reach; but as books became accessible, they were no longer needed; the printing press made the Bible, from which the plots of the miracle plays were usually derived, common among the people, and these gaudy representations were swept away by the Reformation; but they were temporarily revived in Queen Mary's time, with the other abominations of the church papal, for we find that "in the year 1556 a goodly stage play of the Passion of Christ was presented at the Grey Friers in London on Corpus Christi day," before the Lord Mayor and citizens;* but we have nothing here to do with anecdotes illustrating a period so late as this.

We have now arrived at the dawn of a new era in learning, and the slow, plodding, laborious scribes of the monasteries were startled by the appearance of an invention with which their poor pens had no power to compete. The year 1472 was the last of the parchment literature of the monks, and the first in the English annals of printed learning; but we must not forget that the monks with all their sloth and ignorance, were the foremost among the encouragers of the early printing press in England; the monotony of the dull cloisters of Westminster Abbey was broken by the clanking of Caxton's press; and the prayers of the monks of old St. Albans mingled with the echoes of the pressman's labor. Little did those barefooted priests know what an opponent to their Romish rites they were fostering into life; their

* MS. Cottonian Vitel. E. 5. *Warton's Hist. Eng. Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 326.

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love of learning and passion for books, drove all fear away; and the splendor of the new power so dazzled their eyes that they could not clearly see the nature of the refulgent light just bursting through the gloom of ages.

After the invention of the printing art, bibliomania took some mighty strides; and many choice collectors, full of ardor in the pursuit, became renowned for the vast book stores they amassed together. But some of their names have been preserved and good deeds chronicled by Dibdin, of bibliographical renown; so that a chapter is not necessary here to extol them. We may judge how fashionable the avocation became by the keen satire of Alexander Barkley, in his translation of Brandt's *Navis Stultifera* or Shyp of Folys,* who gives a curious illustration of a bibliomaniac; and thus speaks of those collectors who amassed their book treasures without possessing much esteem for their contents.

"That in this shyp the chiefe place I gouerne,
By this wide sea with fooles wandring,
The cause is plain & easy to discerne
Still am I busy, bookes assembling,
For to haue plentie it is a pleasaunt thing
In my conceyt, to haue them ay in hand,
But what they meane do I not understande.

"But yet I haue them in great reuerence
And honoure, sauing them from filth & ordure
By often brushing & much diligence
Full goodly bounde in pleasaunt couerture
Of Damas, Sattin, or els of velvet pure

* The original was written in 1494.

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I keepe them sure, fearing least they should be lost,
For in them is the cunning wherein I me boast.

"But if it fortune that any learned man
Within my house fall to disputation,
I drawe the curtaynes to shewe my bokes them,
That they of my cunning should make probation
I love not to fall in altercation,
And while the commen, my bokes I turne and winde
For all is in them, and nothing in my minde.

"Ptolomeus the riche caused, longe agone,
Over all the worlde good bookes to be sought,
Done was his commandement—anone
These bokes be had, and in his studie brought,
Which passed all earthly treasure as he thought,
But nevertheless he did him not apply
Unto their doctrine, but lived unhappily.

"Lo, in likewise of bookes I have store,
But fewe I reade and fewer understande,
I folowe not their doctrine nor their lore,
It is ynough to beare a booke in hande.
It were too muche to be in such a bande,
For to be bounde to loke within the booke
I am content on the fayre coveryng to looke.

"Why should I studie to hurt my wit therby,
Or trouble my minde with studie excessiue.
Sithe many are which studie right busely,
And yet therby shall they never thrive
The fruite of wisdome can they not contriue,
And many to studie so muche are inclinde,
That utterly they fall out of their minde.

"Eche is not lettred that nowe is made a lorde,
Nor eche a clerke that hath a benefice;
They are not all lawyers that pleas do recorde,
All that are promoted are not fully wise;
On suche chaunce nowe fortune throwes her dice
That though we knowe but the yrishe game,
Yet would he have a gentleman's name.

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"So in like wise I am in suche case,
Though I nought can, I would be called wise,
Also I may set another in my place,
Whiche may for me my bokes exercise,
Or els I shall ensue the common guise,
And say concedo to euery argument,
Least by much speache my latin should be spent.

"I am like other Clerkes, which so frowardly them gyde,
That after they are once come unto promotion,
They give them to pleasure, their study set aside,
Their auarice couering with fained deuotion;
Yet dayly they preache and have great derision
Against the rude laymen, and all for couetise,
Through their owne conscience be blended with that vice,

"But if I durst truth plainely utter and expresse,
This is the speciall cause of this inconvenience,
That greatest of fooles & fullest of lewdness,
Having least wit and simplest science,
Are first promoted, & have greatest reverence;
For if one can flatter & bear a bauke on his fist,
He shall be made Parson of Honington or of Elist.

"But he that is in study ay firme and diligent,
And without all favour preacheth Christe's love,
Of all the Cominalite nowe adayes is sore shent,
And by estates threatned oft therfore.
Thus what anayle is it to us to study more,
To knowe ether Scripture, truth, wisdome, or virtue,
Since fewe or none without fauour dare them shewe.

"But O noble Doctours, that worthy are of name,
Consider oure olde fathers, note well their diligence,
Ensue ye to their steppes, obtayne ye suche fame
As they did living; and that, by true prudence
Within their heartes, thy planted their science,
And not in pleasaunt bookes, but noue to fewe suche be,
Therefore to this ship come you & rowe with me.

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"The Lennoy of Alexander Barclay,
Translatour, exhorting the fooles accloyed
with this vice, to amende their foly.

"Say worthie Doctours & Clerkes curious,
What moneth you of bookes to have such number,
Since diuers doctrines through way contrarious,
Doth man's minde distract and sore encomber.
Alas blinde men awake, out of your slumber;
And if ye will needes your bookes multiplye,
With diligence endeuor you some to occupye."*

* Ship of Fooles, folio 1570, Imprynted by Cawood, fol. 1.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Conclusion.

WE have traversed through the darkness of many long and dreary centuries, and with the aid of a few old manuscripts written by the monks in the *scriptoria* of their monasteries, caught an occasional glimpse of their literary labors and love of books; these parchment volumes being mere monastic registers, or terse historic compilations, do not record with particular care the anecdotes applicable to my subject, but appear to be mentioned almost accidentally, and certainly without any ostentatious design; but such as they are we learn from them at least one thing, which some of us might not have known before—that the monks of old, besides telling their beads, singing psalms, and muttering their breviary, had yet one other duty to perform—the transcription of books. And I think there is sufficient evidence that they fulfilled this obligation with as much zeal as those of a more strictly monastic or religious nature. It is

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true, in casting our eye over the history of their labors, many regrets will arise that they did not manifest a little more taste and refinement in their choice of books for transcribing. The classical scholar will wish the holy monks had thought more about his darling authors of Greece and Rome; but the pious puritan historian blames them for patronizing the romantic allurements of Ovid, or the loose satires of Juvenal, and throws out some slanderous hint that they must have found a sympathy in those pages of licentiousness, or why so anxious to preserve them? The protestant is still more scandalized, and denounces the monks, their books, scriptorium and all together as part and parcel of popish craft and Romish superstition. But surely the crimes of popedom and the evils of monachism, that thing of dry bones and fabricated relics, are bad enough; and the protestant cause is sufficiently holy, that we may afford to be honest if we cannot to be generous. What good purpose then will it serve to cavil at the monks forever? All readers of history know how corrupt they became in the fifteenth century; how many evils were wrought by the craft of some of them, and how pernicious the system ultimately waxed. We can all, I say, reflect upon these things, and guard against them in future; but it is not just to apply the same indiscriminate censure to all ages. Many of the purest Christians of the church, the brightest ornaments of Christ's simple flock, were barefooted cowled monks of the cloister; devout perhaps to a fault, with simplicity verging on superstition; yet nevertheless faithful, pious men, and holy. Look at all

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this with an eye of charity; avoid their errors and manifold faults: but to forget the loathsome thing our minds have conjured up as the type of an ancient monk. Remember they had a few books to read, and venerated something more than the dry bones of long withered saints. Their God was our God, and their Saviour, let us trust, will be our Saviour.

I am well aware that many other names might have been added to those mentioned in the foregoing pages, equally deserving remembrance, and offering pleasing anecdotes of a student's life, or illustrating the early history of English learning; many facts and much miscellaneous matter I have collected in reference to them; but I am fearful whether my readers will regard this subject with sufficient relish to enjoy more illustrations of the same kind. Students are apt to get too fond of their particular pursuit, which magnifies in importance with the difficulties of their research, or the duration of their studies. I am uncertain whether this may not be my own position, and wait the decision of my readers before proceeding further in the annals of early bibliomania.

Moreover as to the simple question—Were the monks booklovers? enough I think as been said to prove it, but the enquiry is far from exhausted; and if the reader should deem the matter still equivocal and undecided, he must refer the blame to the feebleness of my pen, rather than to the barrenness of my subject. But let him not fail to mark well the instances I have given; let him look at Benedict Biscop and his foreign travels after

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books; at Theodore and the early Saxons of the seventh century; at Boniface, Alcuin, Ælfric, and the numerous votaries of bibliomania who flourished then. Look at the well stored libraries of St. Albans, Canterbury, Ramsey, Durham, Croyland, Peterborough, Glastonbury, and their thousand tomes of parchment literature. Look at Richard de Bury and his sweet little work on biographical experience; at Whethamstede and his industrious pen; read the rules of monastic orders; the book of Cassian; the regulations of St. Augustine; Benedict Fulgentius; and the ancient admonitions of many other holy and ascetic men. Search over the remnants and shreds of information which have escaped the ravages of time, and the havoc of cruel invasions relative to these things. Attend to the import of these small still whisperings of a forgotten age; and then, letting the eye traverse down the stream of time, mark the great advent of the Reformation; that wide gulf of monkish erudition in which was swallowed "whole shyppes full" of olden literature; think well and deeply over the huge bonfires of Henry's reign, the flames of which were kindled by the libraries which monkish industry had transcribed. A merry sound no doubt, was the crackling of those "popish books" for protestant ears to feed upon!

Now all these facts thought of collectively—brought to bear one upon another—seem to favor the opinion my own study has deduced from them; that with all their superstition, with all their ignorance, their blindness to philosophic light—the monks of old were hearty lovers of books; that

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they encouraged learning, fostered and transcribed repeatedly the books which they had rescued from the destruction of war and time; and so kindly cherished and husbanded them as intellectual food for posterity. Such being the case, let our hearts look charitably upon them; and whilst we pity them for their superstition, or blame them for their "pious frauds," love them as brother men and workers in the mines of literature; such a course is far more honorable to the tenor of a christian's heart, than bespattering their memory with foul denunciations.

Some may accuse me of having shown too much fondness—of having dwelt with a too loving tenderness in my retrospection of the middle ages. But in the course of my studies I have found much to admire. In parchment annals coeval with the times of which they speak, my eyes have traversed over many consecutive pages with increasing interest and with enraptured pleasure. I have read of old deeds worthy of an honored remembrance, where I least expected to find them. I have met with instances of faith as strong as death bringing forth fruit in abundance in those sterile times, and glorying God with its lasting incense. I have met with instances of piety exalted to the heavens—glowing like burning lava, and warming the cold dull cloisters of the monks. I have read of many a student who spent the long night in exploring mysteries of the Bible truths; and have seen him sketched by a monkish pencil with his ponderous volumes spread around him, and the oil burning brightly by his side. I have watched him in his

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little cell thus depicted on the ancient parchment, and have sympathized with his painful difficulties in acquiring true knowledge, or enlightened wisdom, within the convent walls; and then I have read the pages of his fellow monk—perhaps, his book-companion; and heard what *he* had to say of that poor lonely Bible student, and have learnt with sadness how often truth had been extinguished from his mind by superstition, or learning cramped by his monkish prejudices; but it has not always been so, and I have enjoyed a more gladdening view on finding in the monk a Bible teacher; and in another, a profond historian, or pleasing annalist.

As a Christian, the recollection of these cheering facts, with which my researches have been blessed, are pleasurable, and lead me to look back upon those old times with a student's fondness. But besides piety and virtue, I have met with wisdom and philanthrophy; the former, too profound, and the latter, too generous for the age; but these things are precious, and worth remembering; and how can I speak of them but in words of kindness? It is these traits of worth and goodness that have gained my sympathies, and twined round my heart, and not the dark stains on the monkish page of history; these I have always striven to forget, or to remember them only when I thought experience might profit by them; for they offer a terrible lesson of blood, tyranny and anguish. But this dark and gloomy side is the one which from our infancy has ever been before us; we learnt it when a child from our tutor; or at college, or at school; we learnt it in the pages of our best and purest

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writers; learnt that in those old days nought existed, but bloodshed, tyranny, and anguish; but we never thought once to gaze at the scene behind, and behold the workings of human charity and love; if we had, we should have found that the same passions, the same affections, and the same hopes and fears existed then as now, and our sympathies would have been won by learning that we were reading of brother men, fellow Christians, and fellow-companions in the Church of Christ. We have hitherto looked, when casting a backward glance at those long gone ages of inanimation, with the severity of a judge upon a criminal; but to understand him properly we must regard them with the tender compassion of a parent; for if our art, our science, and our philosophy exalts us far above them, is that a proof that there was nothing admirable, nothing that can call forth our love on that infant state, or in the annals of our civilization at its early growth?

But let it not be thought that if I have striven to retrieve from the dust and gloom of antiquity, the remembrance of old things that are worthy; that I feel any love for the superstition with which we find them blended. There is much that is good connected with those times; talent even that is worth imitating, and art that we may be proud to learn, which is beginning after the elapse of centuries to arrest the attention of the ingenious, and the love of these, naturally revive with the discovery; but we need not fear in this resurrection of old things of other days, that the superstition and weakness of the middle ages; that the venera-

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tion for dry bones and saintly dust, can live again. I do not wish to make the past assume a superiority over the present; but I think a contemplation of mediævel art would often open a new avenue of thought and lead to many a pleasing and profitable discovery; I would too add the efforts of my feeble pen to elevate and ennoble the fond pursuit of my leisure hours. I would say one word to vindicate the lover of old musty writings, and the explorer of rude antiquities, from the charge of unprofitableness, and to protect him from the sneer of ridicule. For whilst some see in the dry studies of the antiquary a mere inquisitiveness after forgotten facts and worthless relics; I can see, nay, have felt, something morally elevating in the exercise of these inquiries. It is not the mere fact which may sometimes be gained by rubbing off the parochial whitewash from ancient tablets, or the encrusted oxide from monumental brasses, that render the study of ancient relics so attractive; but it is the deductions which may sometimes be drawn from them. The light which they sometimes cast on obscure parts of history, and the fine touches of human sensibility, which their eulogies and monodies bespeak, that instruct or elevate the mind, and make the student's heart beat with holier and loftier feelings. But it is not my duty here to enter into the motives, the benefits, or the most profitable manner of studying antiquity; if it were, I would strive to show how much superior it is to become an original investigator, a practical antiquary, than a mere borrower from others. For the most delightful moments of the student's course is when he rambles person-

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ally among the ruins and remnants of long gone ages; sometimes painful are such sights, even deeply so; but never to a righteous mind are they unprofitable, much less exerting a narrowing tendency on the mind, or cramping the gushing of human feeling; for cold, indeed, must be the heart that can behold strong walls tottering to decay, and fretted vaults, mutilated and dismantled of their pristine beauty; that can behold the proud strongholds of baronial power and feudal tyranny, the victims of the lichen or creeping parasites of the ivy tribe; cold, I say, must be the heart that can see such things, and draw no lesson from them.



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