

full of good titles. In 1515 the Lateran Council appointed censors to examine books before they were published, "as if," as Milton says, "St. Peter had bequeathed to them the keys of the press as well as of paradise." Even Philip II. had an index of his own published at Antwerp in 1570. The books of Copernicus and Galileo and Milton and Fénelon have been among the books suppressed by edict, but made immortal by truth. Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" was forbidden in Spain; and of all things, up to 1870, that could not pass the walls into Rome was the Bible, as though it had the nature of an infectious plague from which the Pope and the cardinals might sicken and die. The habit of burning books did not begin with the papacy. A street of Ephesus was once illumined by the flames of the books belonging to those who practised curious arts. Diocletian's edict in 303 sought to consume all the Christian writings. The whole Czech literature was destroyed in the sixteenth century, one Jesuit, Anton Koniasch (1637), boasting he had burned over 60,000 volumes. In 1410 Archbishop Shenko presided over the burning of Wiclif's writings at Prague, where, as in Bohemia at large, he was called "the fifth evangelist." But the Puritans also had their turn, and in 1644 burned the king's "Book of Sports." The last volume which Parliament subjected to this kind of treatment was Defoe's "Shortest Way with the Dissenters" in 1703. The Bible has furnished more food for the flames than all other volumes together. To possess it was, by act of Inquisition, a sufficient ground for the charge of heresy; and the Bible societies which in these modern days seek to circulate it have been anathematized more than once from the chair of St. Peter, as among the pests of society.

No one goes to St. Paul's, London, without recalling the great conflagration of Tyndale's New Testaments, Bishop Tonstall presiding, and Bishop Fisher prefacing the scene by a sermon. In 1468 Bertholdt, Archbishop of Mainz,

went so far as to prohibit the publication of all religious books in the German tongue, on the ground that the "language was not adapted to convey religious truth." How much of time and labor might have been saved those who fight against Wellhausen and all the brood of German critics if only Bertholdt's edict had been permanently effective! And yet in spite of these mistakes a quarantine for bad books and their makers every sound and good mind must establish, while public censorship would be apt to interfere with the rights of that sacred thing called "personal liberty." In Beirut I saw expurgated editions of American textbooks, whole paragraphs and pages rudely obliterated with ink. Think of it, the Turkish exciseman turned literary arbiter as against President Bliss, Dr. Jessup, and the whole faculty of the Syrian Protestant College!

Books should be like sign-posts and stars which guide us, like phials of drugs which exhilarate and freshen the blood. No other inscription for a library has been found so good as the one Diodorus Siculus reports as being over the entrance to the Egyptian library (probably at Thebes), the "Dispensary of the Soul." There is a pathetic history connected with the papyrus "Iliad" in the Ashmolean Library at Oxford. For sixteen hundred years it formed the pillow of an Egyptian girl, from the time she was placed in the tomb asleep till a few months ago, when she was removed from her long resting-place, her tresses fragrant with ancient wisdom! There are some books upon which we do well to pillow our heads, as there are some friends to whom we may safely make known our hearts.

Who, then, has right to make a book that may walk to and fro in the earth? All who have something good and useful to tell, new or old, that will make for human recreation and wisdom and righteousness. The world is very rich through the single contribution from the pen of some devout writer. So it is with Thomas à Kempis's book.