

Tours, history and essays—poems, memoirs and romance,
I journeyed through them all, and yet was ever in advance.
The cheerful and spontaneous "Yes" not once my lips for-
sook,
When asked the welcome question—"Have you read the last
new book?"

Those palmy days are over, yet I study as before,
But altered are the rank and file of literary lore;
Tourists, biographers and bards spring up in every nook,
And publishers in every street announce a last new book.

My paper knife unceasingly its active duty plies,
Yet still fresh publications come, still Alps on Alps arise;
The leaves are damp as I could wish, yet am I doomed to brook
A doubt if I have actually obtained the last new book.

Sometimes I fancy that I hold the treasure that I seek,
When I hear in consternation that it left the press last week;
Nine works in three succeeding days a like excursion took.
And the *Athenaeum* warns us of a coming-out new book.

They slit round me like shadows, and like shadows they depart,
I stand like panic-struck Macbeth with aching eyes and heart,
Exclaim with him, "I'll see no more," yet cast a shuddering
look

On the phantom of "another and another" last new book.

Yet the trials that I suffer, other readers must endure,
They tell me of their troubles, and they ask me for a cure;
"Must we," impatiently they ask, "such disappointments
brook?"

"And pass our lives in vain attempts to grasp the last new
book?"

Alas! my friends, expect me not to aid you with a scheme,
Ye cannot multiply your hours, ye cannot read by steam;
Fairies and Genii long ago their leave of mortals took,
And none will show you where to find the *real* last new book.

Go, fix the eagle in his flight, the sunbeam in its slope,
Catch a firm cloud before it fall (a plan advised by Pope),
Suspend the forest's leafy growth, enchain the bounding brook,
Then, boast in fearless triumph, 'I have read the last new
book!'

H. M.

RESULTS OF DOUBTING.

A doubting doubter doubled long,
His doubts at first seemed very strong;
But soon he doubted of his doubt,
And then a host of doubts broke out;
Could he these doubts his own doubts call?
Had he felt any doubts at all?
Was his first doubt a doubt or not?
Were all the rest true doubts or what?
So midst these doubtful ins and outs,
These doubts and doubts about his doubts,
Doubt upon doubt his doubts did shake,
Fresh doubts did doubtful answers make,
Till this was all he could find out,
That he undoubt.dly did doubt.

AN OLD COLLEGE LIBRARY.

(Continued.)

A liking for things that are old ought to need no
apology, yet these days are so degenerate as almost to
command such. When the immediate present seems to
demand one's every thought, it may appear to many
that hours spent communing leisurely with the past in
an old library are hours wasted. Your professor of

History or of Literature may be forgiven if he pores
over ancient tomes. That is his *metier*. He can
devour the crabbed print and faded parchment, for
therein is his sustenance, his daily bread—and dry.
But he whose calling is quite otherwise must explain
himself.

My apology is simple. The fondness for whatsoever
is antique is to some of us born in the flesh, and cannot
be gainsaid; to others it comes as an antidote against
the rush of this latter day existence. It is good for a
man to remember that the discoveries of modern
science are not everything; that they are an evolution,
not a revolution; that indeed they are based on and owe
themselves to what has gone before, so that to gain the
truest appreciation of the present with its seeming new-
ness it is necessary to understand the past, and thereby
to possess a right perspective. Nor can I imagine any
better method of entering into the past than by spending
a few odd hours among books that have been collected
together by those of various tastes at various periods,
and dipping into one after the other as they come to
hand,—now into an early edition of one of the classics
or of the Fathers of the church (1); now into a collection
of monkish legends or an illuminated service book;
now, on another shelf, into the vigorous polemics of the
seventeenth century, Catholics and Protestants, Round-
heads and Cavaliers, Episcopals and Presbyterians,
so hammering at one another, that did the written word
kill, the race of writers would in that century have as-
suredly died out in totality. On these scarce visited
shelves their works slumber on, leading as it were a life
in death. Here is a collection of old law books, folios
voluminous as their modern successors; there a collec-
tion of the writers of the Renaissance, and in one alcove
a goodly assortment of sixteenth and seventeenth
works upon strategies and fortification such as old
Mr. Shandy loved to study. Mr. Shandy's creator
knew this Library, for his grandfather, the archbishop,
had been Master of the college, and he, an undergra-
duate of the same; but these books, I fancy, judging
from the book plates, found their way hither after
Tristram's most eventful birth.

In roaming around thus, one gains insensibly a love
for books as books, and becomes interested in their
development. One sees that the printed leaf began as a
servile imitation of the manuscript folio, the early
printers, who were at the same time publishers, aiming
astutely at the increased production of a valuable article
at lessened cost—and greater profit. And every genera-
tion of authors has in sadness discovered that this idea
of great profit has been passed down unaltered by
successive generations of the race of publishers. So
perfect was the imitation, that at a bound printing
touched its highest point of perfection; the paper, type

(1) I do not by this mean for a moment to declare myself a
classical scholar—would that I were. But it is remarkable how
in fumbling through these old books the eye seems to be
arrested at interesting passages. I shall not easily forget how a
volume of Tertullian opened at the very page which bore that
most perfect of paradoxes, 'Certum est quia impossibile,' the
paradox that comforted old Sir Thomas Brown, and which, by-
the-by, I see misquoted by a canon of the church in last month's
contemporary.