

During the early epochs of the Christian era, literature underwent the most devastating vicissitudes; religious intolerance and fanaticism destroyed some of the most precious annals of the past; Jew, Christian and Pagan alike vented their malice on the productions of genius. Said Omar, "Either these books are in conformity with the Koran, or they are not; if they are, they are useless; and if not, they are evil; in either event, therefore, let them be destroyed." Such was the logic that devoted to destruction 700,000 manuscript volumes of the Alexandrian library! The earliest public library of which we have any record was that of Osymandyas, who reigned in Egypt 600 years after the deluge. That of Pisisiratus, in Athens, dates 550 years B. C. The next was the great Alexandrian collection. Then followed in the order of time the several great libraries of Europe.

Among the earliest illuminated MSS. is the renowned Codex Argenteus, so named from its being written in liquid silver upon violet-colored vellum. Within a few years an ancient MS. copy of a portion of the New Testament, written in the Franca language, has been discovered at Rheims Cathedral. Its date is the eleventh century, and it is supposed to have been used in administering the coronation oath to the Kings of France.

Among the numerous rare and costly relics contained in the library of the Vatican is the magnificent Latin Bible of the Duke of Urbino; Olfric, the Saxon monk, deserves especial mention as having achieved the good work of rendering portions of the old Testament into his vernacular tongue. Lanfranc was another laborious, erudite scribe to whose toils the Christian world owes much.

There were upwards of 6,000 early copies of the Bible and portions of the Sacred Scriptures, in various languages, in the library of the late Duke of Sussex.—*Exchange*.

SAYINGS AND WHO FIRST SAID THEM.

(Selected.)

Many of our common sayings, so trite and pithy, are used without the least idea from whose mouth or pen they first originated. Probably the works of Shakspeare furnish us with more of these familiar maxims than any other writer, for to him we owe: "All is not gold that glitters," "Make a virtue of necessity," "Screw your courage to the striking-place" (not point), "They laugh that win," "This is the short and long of it," "Comparisons are odious," "As merry as the day is long," "A Daniel come to judgment," "Frailty, thy name is woman," and a host of others.

Washington Irving gives us "The Almighty Dollar," Thomas Morton queried long ago "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" while Goldsmith answers, "Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no fibs." Charles C. Pinckney gives "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute." "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of the fellow-citizens" (not countrymen), appeared in the resolutions presented to the House of Representatives in Dec., 1790, prepared by Gen. Henry Lee.

From the same we cull, "Make assurance doubly sure" "Christmas comes but once a year," "Count their chickens ere they are hatched," and "Look before you leap."

Thomas Tasser, a writer in the sixteenth century, gives us, "It's an ill wind that turns no good," "Better late than never," "Look ere you leap," and "The stone that is rolling can gather no moss." "And cry and no wool" is found in Butler's "Hudibras."

Dryden says: "None but the brave deserve the fair," "Men are but children of a larger growth," and "Through thick and thin," "No pent up Utica contracts our power," declared Jonathan Sewell.