

first edition of our great early poet, only two perfect copies are known, one of which is in the British Museum.

Caxton continued his literary and typographical labors up to the last, and died at an advanced age with his harness on his back, having, as we are informed by his assistant and successor Wynkyn de Worde, finished his translation of the Lives of the Fathers from the French, on the last day of his life. This translation was published by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1495.

Other eminent printers were exercising their art in London at this time, the most remarkable of whom after Wynkyn de Worde, both for the number of books issued and for the beauty of his type, was Richard Pynson.

The first book printed on paper of English manufacture, was Glanville de Proprietatibus Rerum, translated into English by John Trevisa, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde at Westminster, about 1495. The paper was manufactured at Herford, by John Tate; the first paper mill having been set up at that place in the reign of Henry the Seventh.

Oxford and St. Albans were the next places in England in which printing presses were established, in the former place in 1478, and in the latter in 1480.

#### LIBRARIES—COLLECTIONS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

I shall now take my leave of this portion of my subject, and proceed briefly to consider the principal Libraries, or depositories in which books, whether ancient or modern manuscript or printed, have been at different times collected.

The earliest public library of which we have anything like an authentic record, is that of Osymannyas, who is supposed to have reigned in Egypt six hundred years after the deluge. We are told by Diodorus Siculus, that the magnificent edifice which contained it, bore the inscription of *latreion psuches*, or Treasury of Medicine for the soul. A noble library is said to have been deposited in the Temple of Vulcan at Memphis, and some of the early detractors of Homer accused him of having stolen his poems from it, and afterwards asserted his claim to them as original productions. But the finest library of Egypt, and perhaps of the ancient world, was that founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter, in connexion with the Academy which he founded there and called the Museum.

The tyrant, Pisistratus, is said to have been the first to establish a library in the city of Athens, about 550 years before the Christian era. The library thus formed was increased with much care and pains, until Xerxes seized its contents during his short occupation of Athens and carried them off to Persia. They were afterwards restored to the Athenians by Seleucus Nicanor, and the emperor Adrian is said long afterwards to have been a liberal benefactor to the public library of Athens.

The library of Pergamus was celebrated for its extent, and was at length presented to Cleopatra by Mark Antony, as the nucleus for the formation of a second library at Alexandria.

Rome, at the earliest period of her history, thought more of arms than of books, and it was not until intercourse with Greece had begun to smooth the ruggedness of her mould, and until the conquest of Macedon by Paulus Æmilius, in the year B. C. 167, that the first foundation of a public library was laid. This was subsequently increased by Sylla, after his visit to Athens.

It was reserved for Augustus Cæsar to inaugurate a more important work than had been done before his time; by erecting two public libraries, called the Octavian and the Palatine. The latter is said to have survived all the various revolutions of the Roman Empire until the time of Gregory the great.

Successive Emperors embellished the city with other libraries, among which the Ulpian, founded by the Emperor Trajan, was the most remarkable.

When Byzantium, or Constantinople, became the seat of empire, Constantine proceeded to form a valuable library there, which was successively enlarged by the Emperors Julian and Theodosius the younger, the latter of whom increased it to 100,000 volumes. Among the treasures of this collection are said to have been the only authentic record of the proceedings of the Council of Nice, a copy of Homer written in golden letters, and a magnificent copy of the Gospels, bound in gold and enriched with precious stones. Leo, the Isaurian, is said to have burned one half of it in the seventh century, in order to destroy the evidence that might be quoted against the Iconoclastic tenets which he had adopted. The capture of Constantinople by Mohammed the Second, in the year 1453, dispersed the Greek men of letters who had congregated there over the whole of Europe; but the Imperial Library was preserved by the express command of the conqueror, until Amurath the Fourth, in a fit of devotion sacrificed all the books in it to his hatred against the Christians.

I have thus given a hasty sketch of the fate of the more important ancient libraries, and it cannot be better concluded than in the words of Gibbon, who says—"I sincerely regret the more valuable

libraries which have been involved in the ruin of the Roman empire, but when I seriously compute the lapse of ages, the waste of ignorance, and the calamities of war, our treasures rather than our losses are the object of my surprise."

I cannot do better than at once introduce to your notice our earliest English Bibliographer, Richard de Bury, who was Bishop of Durham and Lord High Chancellor of England under Edward the Third. He was indeed a passionate lover of books, and I cannot help giving you a very few of the eloquent words in which he pours out his heart in affection to his favorites. "In books," says he, "I see the dead as if alive, in books I foresee the future, in books are regulated the courses of war, from books we learn the rights of peace. All is corrupted and destroyed by time; Saturn ceaseth not to devour his offspring, and all this world's glory would perish in oblivion had not God furnished mortals with books as a remedy."

The result of this life-long attachment to books, was the formation of a library of which he had drawn up an accurate catalogue, which unluckily he has not given us, and the institution of a hall at Oxford for the special object of its preservation, regulated by a code admirably adapted for the purpose. This was Durham Hall, subsequently called Trinity College. Thus we see that at this time the formation of every library must have been the work of an individual of wealth and station.

We will now shift the scene to Hungary, where two hundred years later, but under circumstances even more adverse to the formation of a library than the state of England in the time of Richard de Bury, a collection was made which probably rivalled any that had ever at that time been made in the number, the value, and the beauty of its contents. The library was formed by Matthias Corvinus, elected King of Hungary in the year 1458. The prince whose history reads throughout like a chapter of romance, was not only one of the bravest warriors and most sagacious politicians of his time, but also one of the most liberal patrons of the arts and sciences, and the most splendid book collector of his day. He had erected a magnificent gallery in the citadel of Buda, in which reposed amongst other treasures of art, fifty thousand books, mostly manuscripts, all of them sumptuously bound. To procure these he had emissaries detached over the whole world. The dispersion of the Greek libraries, after the siege of Constantinople, added to his treasures, and no less than thirty copyists were maintained by him in Italy alone. This great man died in 1490, in his forty-seventh year, and in 1527, after the Siege of Buda by the Turks, his library was burnt. The books were stripped by the brutal soldiery for the sake of their precious coverings, and thrown pell-mell into the basement of a tower, where they lay and rotted, until Busbequins, a century after contrived to redeem a few volumes, which are now deposited in the Imperial Library at Vienna.

The sixteenth century marked the dawn of a new æra throughout the European world, when under the liberal and enlightened patronage of that great and generous monarch, Francis the First, the love of books, and of all that they contain, began to flourish with a luxuriance hitherto unknown. There had been an attempt at a Royal collection in France, precious to his time, but it is to Francis that is owed the union and extension of the several libraries which he found distinct and trifling in extent.

It must have been to her brief and happy sojourn at the Court of France, as the wife of the Dauphin, who had a short lived reign as Francis the Second, that the beautiful and accomplished Mary, Queen of Scots, owed her refined taste in books. The catalogue of her library is still extant, embracing a well chosen selection of nearly two hundred volumes, in the several departments of literature, and containing most of the popular French and Italian poets and Romances.

Several private collections of rare magnificence were formed in France about this time, and amongst them that of John Grollier, one of the treasurers of the kingdom, who formed one of the most beautiful libreries that ever existed. He is said to have been the first book-fancier who used Morocco leather in his bindings, which are perfect gems of art, and his volumes are looked upon to this day as among the most cherished acquisitions of the Bibliomaniac. One point in the character of Grollier, as a collector, should always be noticed with applause, namely, the liberality with which he imparted his literary treasures. Each volume of his library was stamped with the words—"In Grollierii et amicorum," "The property of John Grollier and his friends;" and his books stand out in curious contrast to those of another French collector, whose book-plate bears a text from the parable of the Ten Virgins—"Ite ad mercatores et emite vobis." "Go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves;" an ingenious but somewhat ungenerous rebuff to an intending borrower.

The history of society in France from this time teems with notices of book-collectors among the eminent and noble. The great historian, De Thou, or Thuanus, as he is frequently called, was, like his