

ment was ruled to keep the lines straight. Mistakes were rubbed out by pumice stone, and a weight was used to keep the skin flat. A knife also was at hand for the monks to cut the parchment when necessary.

The monastery librarians were the guardian of books,—of book-rolls. They had to take care of the precious things on which so much time and labour had been spent, and as the rolls became injured or worn, they had to mend and repair them, as well as to replenish the stock.

Books were then very valuable, and very rare. I came across an old book this morning where I read that the library of Bolton Abbey had bought three books in forty years, and I know that one monk spent twenty-two years in copying out one book for the Emperor Charlemagne.

They were usually copied by order from kings, nobles, and church dignitaries, and the common people never saw them. A great man might borrow one if he gave an additional copy in return, and a heavy penalty was inflicted if it were lost.

Some of these ancient monastery libraries had gathered as many as from six hundred to one thousand volumes or rolls. They were all rolled as we do our maps now. If you asked for a book you got a roll. Being so rare and so costly, they were each kept in a round box with a lid. This box was made of cedar to keep moths away. Moths seem to be ancient as well as modern.

#### A ROMAN BOOK-SHOP

was therefore a collection of scrolls, and a monastery library was a large collection of round cedar boxes. In these boxes you might have seen the Holy Scriptures, Prayer Books, Missals, Psalters, Legends of the Saints, Classics Latin and Greek, and a little of what was then called philosophy. That was about all. No nice Stories, no Books of Adventure, no Boys' Books, or Girls' Books,—and no YOUNG CANADIAN.

I can scarcely tell you all the materials that books have been made of. Sheets of lead, very thin and quite flat, were fashionable. By and by thin sheets of wood came in as a rival. They were clasped at the back with rings to keep them in trim order. Books of this kind also have been found in Herculaneum, and in beautiful condition.

These patient and pious laborers did not confine their attention to the usefulness of the books they made, but shewed their ingenuity and their taste in decoration. They made fancy capitals. They used colours and gold leaf. They covered the wood with leather, and velvet. They embellished them with precious stones. They made clasps for them in gold and silver. They made special designs in metal to decorate the front. In every way that the science and art of the day permitted, an

#### ANCIENT BOOK

was a work of art, as well as a labour of love.

How terrible to think that but for wars, and the fires that resulted from wars, we should have had many of them to this day!

Do you wonder that I ask you to prize your books?

Are you surprised that in setting out upon our Reading Club I should first of all have drawn your attention to the relation that ought to exist between you and your books?

In those old days neither you nor I would have been wealthy or influential enough even to have a book in our hands.

Now when we can have them so easily, let us tenderly handle them, daintily open them, reverently read them, and regretfully close them.

PATER.



#### HOW, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY WE GOT OUR BIBLE.

A Book of the Bible may be—1st, *genuine*; 2nd, *corrupt*; or 3rd, *spurious*. It is said to be *genuine* when it is proved to have been written by the author whose name it bears. It is spoken of as *corrupt* when the present text varies from what we believe it once was. It is considered *spurious* when there is reason to believe it was not written by the author whose name is associated with it.

Printed copies of the Old Testament in Hebrew are to be found as far back as 1488; and of the New Testament in Greek, dated 1516; and in Greek and Latin, 1514. At the time these volumes were printed, *manuscript* copies of the Scriptures, that is, copies *written by the hand*, were in the possession of most of the public libraries of Europe. They occupy the largest share of space in library catalogues of the 15th century. Dr. Kennicott, who edited a critical edition of the Bible in Hebrew, gathered 630 of these written copies; and another scholar, De Rosse, for a similar work, collected 734 more.

An ancient Greek or Roman book is believed to be accurate if 20, or even in some cases if 10, manuscripts have been examined in its preparation. A very fair average for these ancient works is 15 manuscripts. For Herodotus, for example, we have only 15 MSS., and the oldest dates only as far back as the 10th century. Yet Herodotus is called "The Father of History," and his writings are talked of as immortal—that is, they *cannot die*. Compare this to the abundance of the manuscripts of the Book of Books, and their much greater age. Those of their Hebrew Scriptures date chiefly from A.D. 1000 to 1457, though some belong to the 9th and even to the 8th century. The MSS. of the New Testament are older still. The British Museum possesses a celebrated one, called the *Alexandrian*, containing both Old and New Testaments in four volumes, which must have been written before the close of the 5th century. The *Vatican MS.*, in the library of the Vatican at Rome, belongs to the 4th century.

As we reach back to these ancient days, we derive additional evidence of the genuineness of the Books of the Bible from the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. These venerated men were the teachers of the new laws of Christ. Their duty was to explain them and to enforce them upon their disciples and students. In their writings quotations are made with the greatest care. The very words of the Sacred Writers are used, and are the subject of much explanation and discussion. Back to the 2nd century after Christ Himself, we can trace the writings of these Fathers, among whom Gregory, Origen, Jerome, Augustine, are names more or less known to all of us.

In not fewer than 180 writers, whose works are still existing, we find quotations from the New Testament, so numerous, that it has been asserted that, even if the originals had been destroyed, the full text of the New Testament might be recovered from books which were written before the 7th century. The experiment has actually been tried by an eminent theologian, who confirms the statement.