

be well, in connection with the topic before us, to go into some useful details, if circumstances permitted. The papers manufactured in the present day are undoubtedly superior to those made two or three hundred years ago. The well known writer *Fuller* quaintly says, complaining of the preference given to foreign manufactures: "We do not enough encourage the making of paper amongst us; but, considering the vast sums expended in our land for paper out of Italy, France and Germany, our *home-spun* paper might be found beneficial. Paper participates, in some sort, of the characters of the country which makes it,—the Venetian being neat, subtile and court-like; the French, light, slight and slender; the Dutch, thick, corpulent and gross, sucking up the ink with the sponginess thereof."

But whatever may be the relative merits of the papers used at different periods, the composition of our inks is inferior to that of our forefathers. Modern records, in this respect, do not compare favourably with those made many hundred years ago. Having had occasion, during the last few years, to inspect written documents, including some despatches prepared in England and sent out to this country, and other records or copies written in Canada within the last hundred years, I have been struck by the indistinctness of many. Some, not even forty years old, present a pale, faded appearance, owing undoubtedly to the use of poor ink. On the other hand, persons who have had an opportunity in London of inspecting some of the ancient Saxon manuscripts, and the rolls and records which have been preserved of the period from the year 400 to the 12th century, see that the written characters are bright and clear, and in the finest state of preservation; while, in this respect, there is a great falling-off in records belonging to the 15th, 16th and subsequent centuries. That ancient register of the lands of England, called the "*Domes-day Book*," prepared by the order of William the Conqueror, bears, as the date of its completion, 1086. The first volume, a large folio of 382 pages, written in the same hand, in double column on each page, and the second, a quarto of 450 pages, single column, are both preserved to this day in their pristine freshness, "fair and legible as when first written." Sir Francis Palgrave, formerly the Deputy-Keeper of Records, says of *Domes-day Book*: "In early times, precious as it was always deemed, it 'occasionally travelled like other records, to distant parts. Till 1496, 'it was usually kept with the King's Seal at Westminster, with other 'valuable records, under three locks and keys, in charge of the auditor, chamberlains, and deputy-chamberlains of the Exchequer. In 'that year it was deposited in the Chapter-House at Westminster, in a 'vaulted porch never warmed by fire. From its first deposit in the 'Treasury at Winchester, in the reign of the Conqueror, it never felt 'or saw a fire; yet, every page is bright, sound, and perfect."

It has been reasonably suggested that the less durable quality of modern inks, compared with those employed in writing the earlier records, is dependent on the neglect to use, in their composition, ingredients calculated to resist destruction by air and moisture. They are the same with respect to certain colouring matters and gum; but