

BOOKS PRIOR TO THE ART OF PRINTING.

The two fac-simile pages which we have reproduced this week are from a couple of volumes of the 13th century, lately exhibited at the Caxton Celebration Exhibition, held in this City, in commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the introduction of printing into England by William Caxton, and deserve more than a passing notice, as among the number exhibited they were notable as representing the two styles of writing then in vogue, and are among the finest specimens now extant, both as to preservation and character of the Augustan age of Caligraphic literature. Such monuments of the past exist in very small numbers, and smaller still in such perfect preservation as the two volumes we have before us. The labour attending the production of a book, prior to the art of printing, cannot be better presented to us than by the pages we illustrate, and as some facts remain of record relative to the work entailed, it may not be uninteresting to recapitulate them.

In the early days of Greece, when literature was so much encouraged, it is not surprising to find that the art of book-making was taken hold of by a large class of the community. First, we have a body of men whose duty it was to prepare parchment and vellum that its surface might be utilized for writing. A second body of men were required as writers or copyists, and a third as bookbinders, who usually acted as booksellers.

It required for these professions men of ability and learning, and it is a well-known fact that Demosthenes began life as a parchment maker, then copyist; it is to this latter trade that he owes his celebrity, as he himself admits that having written eight transcriptions successively of the text of Thucydides, he formed his almost inimitable style of clear diction so characteristic of his writings and speeches. It may thus be well surmised that the art of book making was brought to great perfection, and under the enlightened rulers of the people, so much encouraged that we would infer, at this distant day, we are far behind that age in our appreciation of books and their contents, though not behind them in our collecting mania, as bibliomania seems to have been as prevalent then as now, for did not "Platon" pay 9000 francs for three small tracts written by Philolaus of Crotona; and Aristotle purchased the library of Zeuxippe, consisting of a very few volumes, for 16,000 francs. In fact, the mania was so great that it had to be met by a contrary remedy, scribes finding it impossible to supply the demand; circulating libraries were formed, and books loaned, at what would now be considered fabulous prices—biblioplists thus having an advantage over those of our times by receiving interest on their large outlays for uncommon books, this feature of bibliomania being one which the introduction of the printing press has eradicated. Rome, which followed in the wake of Greece, seems to have made some innovations in book making, probably engendered by the want of learned men to undertake the various branches, for we find that the three distinct trades of the Greeks are merged into a single hand, who was called "librarian." However, as the demand for books increased the trade of the "librarian" became divided into copyists (*scriptor librarius*) and booksellers (*bibliopoli*), the copyists doing their work in a large hall, under the dictation of a reader, a time-saving though laborious duty, but accomplishing the object it had in view most effectually. The copyists were paid by the "hundred lines," the reader, being a Government official, received a stated salary, the owner of the copyright, in his turn, paying royalty to the Government on each copy thus obtained. It may not be uninteresting to mention that from this system had our origin of "Schools."

In the days of the Caesars, and during their epoch, books were made in rolls, each page being glued together at the bottom, in the form of petitions as written in the present day, and the last leaf solidly attached to a cover of ebony wood, usually highly ornamented with precious stones and metals, the button invariably consisting of gold and precious stones, according to the caprice of the owner. It may, therefore, well be inferred that it was not only requisite that a bookseller (who usually was the publisher) should possess intellectual discernment, but also great wealth to cope with the fashions of the periods, as may be judged from the fact that Pliny was offered \$12,000 for a copyright, which he refused, preferring to publish his own works. From elaborate ornamentation of the covers it was but a thought to advance the interior of the work itself, the first change being effected in the vellum. Hitherto parchment was merely scraped and sized; it was now suggested that colouring might improve the appearance, consequently, each leaf was more carefully prepared, and dyed with a bright though light shade of purple, which was adopted, as most pleasing to royalty, and then finished off with cedar oil, to which latter process we owe the retention of the beautiful fresh appearance of the parchment in the books we have now before us. The next step was the illuminating of the initial letter of each chapter in vermilion or cinnamon colour, which remained in constant use during a period of 1500 years, only ceasing with the rapid improvements inaugurated by the printing press, when the work of the "illuminator," which became a separate branch from that of the "copyist," was no longer serviceable, and dropped.

It naturally followed that the embellishment, afforded by the introduction of one colour, soon gave way to a more extended use, illustrations and pictorial pages being inserted here and there. It, however, is generally conceded that the Greeks were the first to adopt hand coloured illustrations, as explanatory of their writings. Pliny mentions Metrodorus, Cretevas, and Dionysius, illustrating their joint medical works by a profuse representation of plants, but it does not seem that any general use of illustrating was adopted until the reign of Nero, when Varro wrote a treatise on the subject, which had great weight in causing its general adoption. About the beginning of the third century initial letters were first made of gold, and in the ninth century the use of it had become so great, that a pictorial bible, prepared for "Charles the Bald" of France, may, literally, be said to be of solid gold, fragments of the work being yet in existence in the archives of the "Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris;" there is also in the possession of the cathedral at Puy, a "New Testament," written on ordinary vellum, in alternate black, red and gold letters, and a part written on purple vellum in gold and silver letters, the capitals being most elaborate, and of a byzantine character; this is also of workmanship of the ninth century. It is a well authenticated fact that a copy of the "Evangelists," written at this period, in gold letters, was also bound in solid gold, weighing 15 lbs., and ornamented with precious stones.

Under Charlemagne the art was much encouraged in France, and though chiefly in the hands of the "Monasteries," it was found to be so profitable that lay monks were educated, whose sole duty it was to act as copyists. Their workmanship was not so gaudily illustrated as adopted in the "East," but yet it was of a costly nature. It was further a law of the realm that that each Abbé, Bishop and Count, should have in his service a notary or secretary, who must be able to write correctly and in latin letters, which form of letter was ordained by Charlemagne to be used in all works relative to the Holy Scriptures. It might not be uninteresting to mention the progress of elongating capitals, which in the decline of the art of illuminating, as money became scarcer and dearer, gradually receded to their first proportions. Prior to the sixth century, it has already been mentioned that capitals or initial letters were formed of a size larger than the ordinary letters, and were of one colour, usually vermilion; in the sixth century the capitals were of the same size, but of different colours. In the seventh century the hand of the illuminator freed itself, and issued out into more frequent capitals, some occupying the whole of a page in ornamentation, which at the ninth century consisted of representation of animals, birds, or human designs, so ingeniously wafted into the capital letters, that we are led away by the belief that it would have been impossible to have formed the letter otherwise. As an illustration, we might mention having seen a volume of this period in which the letter H was formed by two human beings—man and woman—dressed in Roman character, standing facing each other, with the leg raised so as to form an equal height, thus forming the bar of the H, the feet resting on an urn, from which sweet incense is rising. The letter T is likewise formed by a wolf, standing upright on his two hind feet, holding in his mouth a stick, to which is suspended at each end a "cock." This was followed by, perhaps, the most appropriate and handsome form of letter yet adopted, consisting of "marquetry" work, done in different colours, and so finished as to present, even at this day, a high enamel surface—of this class the "Dominical Benedictions," of which we present a fac-simile page, is a most beautiful specimen; the colours throughout the book harmonize and blend so well together, that it is a real pleasure to the eye to scan its pages, and it is quite a relief to the profuse use of gold, with which each page is enriched, that this introduction of other colors affords: from this period, the thirteenth century, gold was gradually allowed to fall into disuse, and be supplemented by colours far better adapted to books and less costly.

It is remarkable how proficient our ancestors were in the art of enamelling; as in this volume each letter, whether of gold or colours, is so glossy as to present the aspect of a raised letter, the gold being laid on in solid scales, the whole now presenting as bright and fresh an appearance as the day it was first illuminated. It is confidently asserted that this process of enamelling is entirely lost to the present generation. The book, as its title implies, gives full instructions and particulars in the various ceremonies necessary to the Roman Catholic church, introducing in a full page and a half the music of a Psalm, which is indicative of the music of the day is quaint and curious in the extreme: the absence of clefs, bars, measures, rests, division of notes, and the staff consisting of four lines only, at once renders incomprehensible the manner and practice of music at that epoch. The music is accompanied by words of the Psalm, each semibreve representing a word. From the first attempt in the volume at abbreviations being here made, we would infer that to music may be attributed the origin of that most objectionable feature of the literature of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, consisting of unnecessary abbreviations of words, which, in some cases are so frequent, as to render the reading of a book of that period a great task, and anything but a pleasant pastime. The book is a folio of 180 pages, each leaf being a sheet of

pure white parchment, consisting of twenty-one lines, written in a composition ink of a brownish black, with occasional lines in vermilion ink. Here and there interspersed, as shown in the fac-simile, are illuminated letters of various sizes and designs.

We now dismiss the "Dominical Benedictions" of Latin manufacture, and turn to the "New Testament," a contemporary volume, but of German hands. This book is a marvel of the patience exhibited by the copyist, who, on a computation, must have taken at least two years steady and close application in its preparation. The work is written in an exceedingly neat gothic letter, perfectly uniform throughout, and in double columns. The initial letter beginning the chapters is enlarged and illuminated in various colours, but of a like design, the scroll or ornamentation being generally carried above and below the body of the letter occupying the whole margin of the page; this embellishment has certainly a very pretty effect, and we cannot but commend the good taste of the writer in choosing for himself a new style of lettering and embellishing, so much better adapted to the "Holy Scriptures" than the gaudy and flippant character prevailing at the period, and which is so well shown in the "Dominical Benedictions." Another striking feature is the vellum on which the book is written; it consists of a carefully prepared sheet, so kid-like and fine, that it has every appearance at first sight and feel of thin tissue paper, the finish of pumice stone and cedar oil tending to this silken character. The writing is in Indian or sepia ink, and as black to-day as the day it was first written. Each page had a heading in Roman letter of different colours denoting the respective Gospels and Epistles. The chapters are numbered (probably a first instance of this division, as the Scriptures are said to have been divided into chapters by Cardinal Hugo, of Germany, in the thirteenth century), and run continuously, being undivided into verse; it consists of 154 pages of 51 lines each, without an error or erasure, and perfectly legible. The volume is a small octavo, and its value may be judged from the fact, quoted in Eadie's "Biblical Cyclopaedia," that in the reign of Edward I. of England, about the year 1250, the price of a fairly written bible was thirty-seven pounds, equivalent to a present valuation of £2,220 sterling, taking the value of a laborer's services at 7s. 6d. per diem, as compared with his then wages of 13d. A laborer would thus have had to give 154 years steady toil to acquire a single volume of the Scriptures, which he can now obtain for a sixpence. Such is the relative bearing of our days of civilization with the epoch of this "Testament." G. E. H.

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

"THAT'S the only wedding trip I shall probably ever take," said an old bachelor, as he stumbled over a bride's train.

It is said that the kind mothers of the East are grown so affectionate that they give their children chloroform previous to whipping them.

WHILE woman was made the equal of man, he was made dissimilar, and was found to be subject to him, and not for him to be subject to her.

"As soon as the novelty wears off," sententiously observed Mr. Bloggs, "a man never wakes up a baby for the purpose of making it laugh."

"How is it that you have never kindled a flame in any man's heart?" asked a rich lady of her portionless niece. "I suppose, aunt, it is because I'm not a good match," meekly replied the poor niece.

A CERTAIN young lady boasts of having ten grown-up brothers to watch over her; but a certain other young lady prefers to have only one brother to watch over her—provided he is the brother of some other girl.

AMOROUS pedagogue: "Jane, what letter in the alphabet do you like best?" Jane: "Well, I don't like to say, Mr. Snobbs." Snobbs: "Nonsense!—speak out." Jane: "I like U because it always comes after T."

A COUNTRY girl wrote to her lover—"Now, George, don't you fail to be at the Nightingales' Retreat to-night." George wrote back that "in the bright lexicon of youth—Worcester's Unabridged—there's no such word as 'fale.'"

THE owner of a pair of bright eyes says that the prettiest compliment she ever received came from a child of four years. The little fellow, after looking intently at her eyes a moment, inquired naively, "Are your eyes new ones?"

A COUPLE celebrated their silver wedding the other day, of whom it was said that they never exchanged a harsh word during their wedded life of twenty-five years. The most incredulous will believe it when it is stated that they are deaf mutes.

At a party, while a young lady was playing with peculiar brilliancy of touch, a by-stander bachelor exclaimed, "I'd give the world for those fingers!" "Perhaps you might get the whole hand by asking," said the young lady's observant mamma.

LADIES who take young girls into their service will not be doing their duty to the young people under their care if they do not endeavor to occupy and amuse them rationally in their leisure hours; if they do not guard them from evil, and encourage them by advice and example to go on in the good way in which they had been brought up.

"MY LOVE," said Mrs. Fozzle to her husband, "oblige me with five pounds to-day, to purchase a new dress?" "Shan't do any such thing, Agnes; you called me a bear yesterday!"—"Law, love, that was nothing; I only meant b' it you were very fond of hugging." "You're a saucy little puss," (sound heard very much like kissing), "but here's a five pound note."

WOMEN often fancy themselves to be in love when they are not. The love of being loved, fondness of flattery, the pleasure of giving pain to a rival, and a passion for novelty and excitement—are frequently mistaken for something far better and holier, till marriage disenchant the fair self-deceiver, and leaves her astonished at her own indifference and the evaporation of her romantic talent.

THERE is an evil fashion of speech and theory that a man's love for a woman lasts better and is stronger if he is never fully assured of hers for him. This is a base and shallow theory. Nothing under heaven can so touch, so hold, so make eternally sure the tenderness, the loyalty, the passion of a manly man as a consciousness in every act of life that the woman he has chosen for his wife lives for him and in him absorbingly.

Men and women often say "Yes" when they ought to say "No," for want of consideration. A young man offers his hand in marriage to a young woman, and, if she would only stop to inquire, she would find that he is a shiftless, good-for-nothing fellow, who will never make her happy, and that a union with him must entail upon her untold miseries. But, because he is good-looking, or has a plausible tongue, and pleads his case eloquently, or because she thinks she may never have another chance, she says "Yes" to his proposal, and walks in darkness and gloom all the rest of her life.

ORIGINAL SCRAPS.

Why is the *Fortnightly Review* published monthly?—Give it up.

The Honest Watch Dog was not the only "barker" to be seen on the 12th.

The Americans say that Josephus Orange Blossom is a British subject.

Wanted, a map of the seat of war that will explain the seat of future operations.

A suit that will never wear out. The celebrated million dollar Tweed suit.

A carpenter thinks the rule to live by ought to measure twelve inches to the foot.

What's the difference between the Mayor and the Aldermen?—Two thousand dollars a year.

A reader suggests that St. François Xavier Street be re-named, and called the street of Bons secure.

When is the Board of Health most likely to be pitted? When the small-pox breaks out again.

The hazy aspect of United States politics have become less hazy since Hayes hazarded his new policy.

Why is the Craig Street tunnel likely to become an intolerable nuisance? Because it is a growing bore.

"Why is the Montreal Police Force below par?" asked a visitor from Kingston. "Because its coppers isn't worth a cent."

An inflammatory newspaper's sheets should be first soaked in nitrate of ammonia before they come from the press.

"Can you give me any work?" said an unemployed labourer to an Alderman. "Why?" "Because the city owes me a living."

"Did you ever see an operation?" asked a medical student of a young broker. "No, but I've bled freely at many a speculation."

Did you ever see a short-hand reporter boasting he could write two hundred and thirty words a minute who could read his own notes?

"Whose system do you use in reporting?" asked a young reporter to another. "Hav'n't got any any system," replied his friend.

The American office seekers who hung around the ex-President in London invariably commenced their petitions with "Grant, we beseech thee."

"Is there anything new?" said a reporter of a cotem to a *Gazette* man the other day. "Yes," replied the other, "I didn't notice a single item stolen from our paper to-day."

"Can yer change a ten dollar bill?" said a seedy passenger to the conductor of a St. Catharine Street car. "Well, I guess so," he replied. "Glad to hear it," returned the passenger, coolly. "I always thought that this comp'ny was a bloated monopoly, and I ain't goin' to encourage it—I haven't got five cents anyway."