

Books.

The following interesting article appeared in a recent number of the *Orillia Express*, and we reproduce it here for the benefit of our readers:—

What pleasant company they are. I look around the room, and find myself in the presence of the good and great of all ages. You introduce yourself to them, without any formality, and dismiss them without any feeling of rudeness. Unlike living friends, they never disappoint, and never bid you "good-bye" without leaving some good impression behind.

The more passion for accumulating wealth is the meanness that can cause mankind. But a love of good books, and of works full of grand ideas, is one of the noblest of human feelings. To gather together a library of the best and most esteemed works of all ages, is a pursuit worthy of any man. Even if it be impossible to read all of them, you cannot open one without picking up something fresh and instructive. The very names of Homer and Horodotus, Virgil and Cicero, Milton and Shakespeare, Cowper and Thompson, Alison and Macaulay, conjoined with a multitude that no man can number, excite thoughts that breathe and words that burn. How careful, therefore, we ought to be in the selection of our reading companions. As a good book refreshes both the mental and moral nature, so a bad volume is the very incarnation of evil, and leaves behind its perusal serpent-like tracks and corrupt moral sores that are never healed. What reader cannot recall some sceptical, yet plausible work, that has pierced deeply into the very core of the heart, and left sticking there the arrow-head of unbelief, to fester and agonize the sufferer for years. Who cannot remember the reading of some foul pages, whose dark and loathsome shadows, permeated with the miasma of moral filth, still, to his horror, sit across his wayward fancy.

How essential then it is that one's selection of these dear silent and uncomplaining friends be made with great care. In making our choice, a safe course is to constitute as the centre and monarch of our reading storehouse, that book, called pre-eminently *The Bible*. In grandeur of conception, in sublimity of idea, in vigor and style, in high moral tone, in the strange and startling information which it furnishes, and in the comfort and moral strength which it imparts, it stands so incomparably superior to all other productions, as to be called with good reason the "God of Books." For one who had the leisure, it would be an interesting study to examine the numerous libraries, ranging from ten to a thousand volumes, scattered throughout the wild domain of the Dominion. Among them would be found not a few works of immense value to the man of science and literature, as well as numbers that possess a strange and eventful history. A cursory examination of a few of the small libraries in our neighborhood will prove of interest, and may lead to many other important discoveries.

In a ministerial collection in the village there was a small unpretending Psalter, in Hebrew and English, about 180 years old, and dedicated to Eliot, the famous Indian Missionary and 24 native Indian Ministers in North America. It has now been ascertained that the little work is of unwonted importance and value. It has been found to be the only copy of the work extant on this continent; and the only other copy in existence in the world belongs to the Library of Cambridge University, England. The little brown volume, being of such consequence, has been deposited for safe keeping in the Museum of Knox College, Toronto.

For many years there was found in a small log shanty in the Township of Oro a venerable tolo copy of the Scriptures, the property of Mr. George Brown, one of the early settlers. It is a massive, venerable volume, in a nearly perfect state, and bears the date of 1588. It is known usually as the Geneva Version of the Scriptures, and has ample and terse notes in the margin. It is also called the "Brown's," and the "Treacle" Bible from its peculiar rendering of Genesis in 7, and Jeremiah viii. 22, as "Breeches" instead of "Aprons," and "Treacle" instead of "Balm." It was regarded as a version in some respects preferable to our present revised version, and was so esteemed by the Puritans, that it took years to displace it from the hearts and homes of the people with our present and imitable translation. Mr. Brown does well to cherish a literary treasure handed down from his Puritan ancestors. How strange that a book, published in the days of the masculine Queen Bess, live years before the invasion of England by the Spanish Armada, should, after the wear and tear of 300 years, and being transported across the stormy Atlantic, be found in a well preserved state, in what is now the comfortable home of a Canadian yeoman near Iugby. We hope that Mr. Brown will arrange to deposit so precious a treasure in the library of some public institution, that it may be kept from destruction.

A short time ago we gazed with deep interest on a small collection of valuable British Classical Authors, bound, and tucked gilt in the plain and substantial manner common about half a century ago. These volumes, now found reposing in a cottage adjoining the village, had the foundation of what is one of the most extensive establishments in the world. They are thus referred to by W. Chambers, in his *Autobiography of himself and his brother Robert*:—

"A gentleman who happened to see one of my specimens of calligraphy, was pleased to think better of it than it deserved, and without solicitation patronized my humble business establishment. He was about to be married, and wished to procure a quantity of books of a superior kind in the finest bindings for his library. One day he came to inquire as to the practicability of my supplying his wants. Satisfied with the information, he gave an order of such rapidity as astonished me, and raised serious doubts as to how, with my miserable resources, it was to be executed. Approaching some difficulty on this score, he relieved all anxieties by stating that I should bring the books in parcels from time to time, and that each parcel would be paid for on de-

livery. This fortunate transaction gave me a lift upward and stimulated to new efforts. The fact that I had unexpectedly benefited in a large degree by a gentleman seeing one of my small pieces of penmanship, suggests the reflection, that in business, as in human affairs generally, incidents which are seemingly insignificant often lead to important results. Young men are apt to treat what appears a small matter with indifference, if not disdain, without being conscious that in commerce nothing is small or to be passed over as of no moment. I once heard a merchant who had risen to great wealth say, that civility in serving a woman in humble circumstances with a pennyworth of tape, has led, by a remarkable chain of circumstances, to dealings to the extent of hundreds of pounds. In my own case, as just stated, a small piece of transcription with a crow pen had, by an unforeseen current of events, terminated in a manner much more advantageous than I had any reason to expect."

It will appear strange to the numerous readers of *Chambers' Journal*, and the possessors of their Encyclopedias and other literary productions, that they are indebted for these valuable works to a few beautifully bound volumes in the Library of "Orillia Cottage," and the property of the late James Dallas. These Books are such notable proofs of a special Providence and so full of instructive lessons that they ought to be procured, if practicable, by W. Chambers, and preserved in his famous Peebles Library. It is another strange circumstance that Robert Chambers subsequently married a cousin of Mr. Dallas. What a singular chain of coincidences is that by which the fortunes of a large British Publishing House are closely connected with a few books found in a family Library, in a retired part of Canada.

We have penned this paper in the hope that it may lead others to disentomb literary treasures in their possession. Several of a similar kind are known to us.

The Great City of the World.

On the banks of the Thames mediæval and modern architecture blend in a somewhat artistic discordance. In the gray, dim cells of the Tower, but little better than the stone huts of our prehistoric ancestors, one sees the savage abodes of Norman and perhaps Saxon kings. The palace of Stephen, Henry, and John was little more comfortable than a den of wild beasts. Cold, dark and narrow niches in walls of rude masonry, and chambers of stone, where the air and light were scarcely felt; the dim, gaunt chapel of St. John, the finest example of Norman taste, yet scarcely fitted, one might suppose, for a modern prison; stairways that run in the solid walls, steep and confined, like the entrance to the hut of the Esquimaux, and chilling towers that must have frozen the blood of anything but a wild boar or a panther, were the fitting abodes for the men of blood who inhabited them. Every cell of the Tower is suggestive of the habits of its inmates. It is no wonder that the occupants of these dens cut off the heads of gentlewomen and modest men; that they had the passions of savages and the selfishness of the brute; and the more carefully one studies this relic of the chivalric age the more plainly does its extreme barbarism appear. If the victims of the Tower could stand forth upon its battlements, they would form a strange and discordant multitude. Hundreds of intelligent and industrious Jews, the wisest of their contemporaries, have suffered in these awful cells, and perished at the hands of the most chivalric of English kings. Wycliffites and Puritans, papists and republicans, have endured in turn the terrors of the Tower dungeons. The pains of imprisonment were often increased by the sharpest tortures, and it is not so long ago that the rack and the thumbscrew were banished from English law. On the walls of these miserable dungeons are written in carvings that are sometimes almost beautiful the faint and few ideas of their speechless victims. One just coming from the rack exclaims, "By torture strange my truth was tried." John Dudley has carved the initials of his four brothers in a graceful device—the acorn, the rose, geranium, honeysuckle; and Lord Guilford Dudley apparently the touching memorial "Jane."

Yet the people of London, instead of tearing down their Bastille in a passionate tenderness for its victims, have preserved it as an instructive memorial. The Tower, in fact, may have served to stimulate that resolute love of freedom which has never failed to mark the Saxon throngs of Cheap side and London City. Always a centre of liberal thought, the influence of the Saxon metropolis has been felt in many lands in the strife between the people and the ruling castes, and in some has proved more effective than in its own. Wycliffe filled London with the conception of religious progress; Chaucer chanted to his willing audience the liveliest satires upon clerks and pardoners. It was in London that the Reformation fixed itself most deeply; it was Smithfield that blazed with the fires of Mary; it was the metropolis that gave the Bible to Elizabeth. London even held the imperious queen in some discredit awe, and London theatres aimed their keen thrusts at her depraved companions. Saxon London opposed the pedantic tyranny of James, and brought Charles to the block—the first strong appeal against the divine mission of kings. In London, Pym, St. John, Eliot, Vane, founded a republic that struck down church, caste, and royalty, and over Saxon London, Cromwell, to Milton "first of men," ruled with such discretion as he was capable of. Its Saxon throngs rose in the fierce madness of the Popish plot against Charles, expelled the ultramarine James II., and called in from Holland the most discreet of English sovereigns. London repelled the popish pretender, sustained Wilkes and free speech, Fox and human freedom; trembled at the universal sway of Napoleon, and overthrow him. And in our own day London is the sure refuge of liberal politicians, and the centre of advancing thought. Nor is it impossible that the Saxon city, the birthplace of Chaucer and Milton, may again take the lead in the union of the Saxon family, and lend its immense strength to the formation of a community of nations that shall make a fresh stride toward humanity and peace.

Below the Tower, along the low shore of the Thames, stretches for twenty-five miles the most wonderful of modern sewers. Since Tarquin nothing so fine has been done for the purification of a city. A broad pathway of stone and a solid embankment and wall restrain the fitful stream that sometimes flows with a full current, and sometimes at low tide seems to shrink into a muddy ditch. The people through the new street, and wander along the shore that a few years ago was a noisome marsh. The river is gay with swift steamers shooting the bridges, and from the broad promenade opens a long spectacle of palace, cathedral, the ancient abbey, the new Parliament Houses, the vast port filled with the commerce of the world, and above the towers and roofs of a city that has exceeded the grandeur of Senaramis and Hadrian. Below in the broad stone channel a wide conduit receives the converging sewers of the metropolis, and impelled by a series of pumping-machines, and a most ingenious mode of dispersion, bears off the refuse of millions twenty-five miles down the Thames. The sewers run on both sides of the river, and have already cost more than \$12,000,000. They may well serve as models for all the cities of the Saxon race, and excite the emulation of New York and Philadelphia. Yet London has not a tolerable aqueduct, and its people envy the unfasting streams that pour into the chief of the transatlantic cities.

One can scarcely wander among the busy throngs of Cheapside without a thrill of historic interest. Around him are the homes and the haunts of those who have made the Saxon race the parent of modern progress. In Bread Street, just out of Cheapside, Milton was born; in Milk Street, opposite, he kept his school; in St. Giles, Cripplegate, is his modest grave. Around his obscure home seem clustered these stern republicans who first pierced the mediæval darkness with an excess of light. Eastcheap and its ancient houses look conscious that Shakespeare and his companions not long ago passed that way. Yonder is White-chapel and Ainstia, Smithfield, where the martyrs' ashes have blossomed into deathless fruits, and old Jewry, where commerce was planted by persecuted Israelites. You pass under Temple Bar, once crowned with its grim array of bleeding heads. Not long ago it retained the posts on which they were exposed. You are conscious that around you kings, priests, and barons have made age after age groan with the afflictions of the people, yet you feel that the people are slowly escaping from their toils, that the ideas that were once banished to the New World with Puritan and republican, are returning to rule in Piccadilly and Pall Mall. Here runs a narrow lane where Addison and Steele supped together. Yonder is Bolt Court, where Johnson lived, and through whose dark and winding alleys one may fancy in the shades of evening Goldsmith and Boswell, Reynolds and Burke, gliding merrily along. Within a brief compass, under the shadow of St. Paul's, not far from Amen Corner and Paternoster Row, Creed Alley and Friday Lane, in the varied genius of England's authors from Chaucer to Bacon, from Dryden to Byron, from Milton to Locke and Mill, the fertility of the Saxon intellect has surpassed that of all other lands; and the narrow scene is hallowed with a mental glory of which the Saxon republics of the future will claim no small share as their just inheritance.—Eugene Lawrence, in *Harper's Weekly*.

Suitableness in Marriage.

From a little book on *Love, Courtship, and Marriage*, we extract a few sentences, containing a good deal of sound sense. The young lady says to her would-be lover:—

"Marriage involves so very much, I should want to know a great deal more of a man first than I know of you. I must understand his temper, his history, his mode of life, and all he thinks about certain moral and social questions, and whether he has a religion, and what it is; and on some of the same points you want, or ought to want, to be satisfied with me. And you want to know also whether I am a housekeeper, and can darn stockings, which is all fair."

With this good understanding, these two began a courtship in serious earnestness. They found themselves suited to each other, and were in due time happily married. Their home is the nest of their affections. "The wit and sympathy of host and hostess, their unity of heart and purpose, and over-growing social graces, combine to make an atmosphere where people of widely-differing views and traditions forget their mannerisms, feel their keenest, think and talk their best."

A beautiful picture indeed of a beautiful home—not oppressed by luxury, nor weighted down with material cares, nor ravaged by reckless fashion; but dedicated to love, and culture, and friendship, and considerate beneficence.

We have no doubt that in our favored land there is a multitude of homes most like unto the pattern above described. In them are husbands and wives, matched and mated, married in soul as well as in body, unified by kindred tastes; yet each developing that distinctive individuality of character which is so necessary to mutual helpfulness, inspiration, and encouragement.

Dr. Johnson has said, in the  *Rambler*, that "most people fall in love as one falls down-stairs." And certain it is that love is described as the blind goddess. Yet we fear there are as many marriages nearly, of convenience or of a calculation of advantages, as there are of blind, infatuated love. And both kinds ought, if possible, to be avoided.

That marriage which is based on a fair mutual estimate of character, which is the union of kindred minds, the concurrence of two natures suited to each other, the interblending of two hearts made by one pure and holy affection, is indeed the nearest approach to heaven that can be made on earth through any human relationship. Marriage does indeed involve so much, that the wonder is that it should be treated so lightly in common talk, and its estate often entered upon as though it were but a lottery, with a few prizes and many blanks.—*Christian Intelligence*.

Woman's Position in Burmah.

Women in Burmah have been from time immemorial in full possession of all the rights that the "strong-minded woman's rights associations" are compassing heaven and earth to obtain. The wife is the treasurer and keeps the cash. When money is wanted, the husband goes to the wife, and not the wife to the husband. The women do most of the trading, superintend farms, advise in law cases, and occasionally help their husbands on the judicial bench. Married women often trade independently of their husbands, and can acquire and hold property in their own names. They can sue and be sued, and whenever they are weary of their husbands, they can obtain legal divorces on no stronger plea than "incompatibility of disposition;" still the "suits relating to marriage, dowry, and divorce," in all the courts of British Burmah, for 1869-70, were only 1,178 in a population of two millions and a half.

Notwithstanding these masculine features of female society in Burmah, they are in nowise incompatible with commendable female traits. The characteristics of a good wife are, according to the Books: "She knows when her husband is hungry, and that he may eat, puts before him the best food in the kindest way; and dresses him becomingly, seeing that his clothes are not old or dirty; and keeps him in mind of his work and his duty. As friends consult each other regarding their mutual profit and happiness, and assist each other, she, having consulted her husband, lends her assistance and looks on; and behaves to her husband's relations as to her own, and does not dispute his authority; and if he goes to the chief's house or other place, she waits till his return, and eats not her meal till she eats it in company with him."—Rev. F. Mason, D.D.

The Music of Heaven.

Our knowledge of the kind of delight afforded by the experience of earthly music may enable us to form a conception of the higher degree. The conception may be inadequate, and yet, so far as it can reach, it may be an approximation to the reality. And so, in like manner, with the beautiful in scenery. It would be folly to attempt to describe the details of heavenly scenery, but the general idea stands sufficiently out to justify belief. The most glorious bursts of harmony that ever thrilled and quivered through the brain of Handel, the pealing triumphs of "Hallelujah Chorus," the glowing snatches of Mozart, the gorgeous sonatas of Beethoven, the almost speaking melodies of Mendelssohn, and all the exquisite conceptions of the most gifted masters, may be only faint and far-off echoes of the grander performances above; yet as echoes they bring down something of heavenly music to the conceptions of men on earth, and make us yearn and bend before the thought, "if these be echoes, what must the realities be?"—*Eternal Home*.

Progress in Persia.

Already (*The Friend of India* says), before the Shah had left or even reached England, the breath of the new order of things had begun to stir in Persia. Mr. Bruce, who has given himself to that country, and fed thousands of people last year during the famine from his mission-house at Julfa, in the suburbs of Isfahan, writes full of hope. First of all, the wheat harvest is so good this year that prices have fallen to 2s. a pound for good broad, while last year 5s. was given for the same quantity of a compound of straw, earth and brim. "The Shah's visit to Europe, the railroad, the very increased interest now shown by very many Persians in Isfahan in the study of the Christian Scriptures and many other things, especially the great desire for religious liberty manifested by the numerous Mohammedan sects here, and the very enlightened policy (though, perhaps, not always accompanied by sufficient wisdom and caution) adopted by the present Grand Wuzer—these all show that great changes must occur before long in this country." 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