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Veritas summum est optimum. - Cic.

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

The following extracts are taken from an article in the London Quarterly Review, and will convey some idea of the magnitude and value of the British Museum:

The British Museum is insufficient to accommodate a vast portion of its treasures. Either this great national establishment must become a gigantic warehouse of unpacked goods, or it must be enormously enlarged, or there must be some division of its multifarious contents, and a single building, be no longer made the receptacle for almost everything which man has executed and nature produced from generation to generation and from one end of the earth to the other. Literature, art and science are each interested in the solution which may be given to the problem, and as all persons are agreed upon the necessity of an immediate remedy, and as there is a difference of opinion as to what that remedy should be, we shall endeavour to assist the public in arriving at a decision.

The British Museum has not been formed upon any well-matured plan. It has become what it is because the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, which in conjunction with the Cottonian and Harleyan libraries, constituted its nucleus, happened to be of an exceedingly miscellaneous character, and that the casual bequests of its numerous benefactors were equally various. All the curiosities which were brought to the door of the building in Great Russell Street found a home there, and its contents have been regulated in a great degree by the chance fancy of the contributors, and not from a previous consideration of what objects were to be grouped together. An account of the manner in which the Museum has grown up will best explain how things have been brought into juxtaposition in this country which in every other capital in Europe are kept distinct.

In the year 1753 the Act of Parliament was passed by which the museum of Sir Hans Sloane was ordered to be purchased and placed, together with the Cottonian and Harleyan Libraries, in one 'General Repository.' The books and manuscripts of Sir Hans Sloane were estimated at 30,000 volumes, which was, no doubt, a great exaggeration; but the number must have been large, and, combined with the Cottonian and Harleyan collections, they constituted the principal feature of the Museum. In consequence, the framers of the Act gave to the person in whom the 'care and custody' of the General Repository was vested, the title of Principal Librarian, while all other employes are styled 'officers and servants.' The preponderance however of the book department caused the whole of the subordinates to be technically termed under and assistant librarians. From the recital of the will of Sir Hans Sloane in the Act of Incorporation, it appears that in addition to books, drawings and manuscripts, he had gathered together 'prints, medals, and coins, ancient and modern, seals, cameos and intaglios, precious stones, agates, jaspers, vessels of agate and jasper, crystals, mathematical instruments, drawings, and pictures; and it might have been added, stuffed birds, beasts, and fishes, together with anatomical preparations, and divers reptiles, monsters, and abortions, very fit for the museum of a learned physician, but rather offensive than pleasing to the general public. It is evident from the silence with which the natural history department is passed over, that it was then thought of subordinate importance, and in truth, science had seldom much share in those days in the formation of collections from the animal kingdom, which were generally regarded by educated men with contempt. Sir Hans Sloane expressed a desire that his medals of curiosities might be kept together, if it were possible. As it bore about the same proportion to the present establishment that a Thames wherry does to the Leviathan, there was then no difficulty in complying with this request, and Parliament acceded to it without foreseeing the result.

It was the wish of Sir Hans Sloane that his collection should remain at his manor-house at Chelsea, and therefore rather at a distance from town than close to the metropolis; but as this was incompatible with the formation of a General Repository, Montague House was purchased. Thither the whole was removed in the year 1757, and opened to the public 1759. Large additions were contemplated by the Act of Incorporation; but it never appears to have occurred to the Trustees that either their Institution embraced too wide a field, or Montague House must soon become too narrow for the purpose. No prophetic eye foresaw what treasures from every quarter of the globe would be rapidly accumulated, and it is not probable that the managers thought more of filling the cistern than of providing against its overflow. The immediate result was to attract fresh contributions. King George III. led the way in 1757 and presented the old royal library, which comprised a very valuable collection of about 2000 manuscripts and upwards of 9000 books, formed by the suc-

cessors of England from Henry VIII. to the time of the royal donor. In 1789 Mr. Solomon's collection presented 130 Hebrew books, which had been collected and bound for King Charles II., though from some circumstance not explained they never became the property of that monarch, perhaps because he was unable to pay for them. Always needy, he had tastes which he cared much more to indulge than the possession of books in the Hebrew tongue.

In 1762 a large and unique collection of tracts, relating to the period of the great Rebellion and the Commonwealth, was presented by King George III. In 1706, Dr. Bingham bequeathed a collection rich in biography. Mr. Speaker Onslow bequeathed a collection of Bibles in the year 1768; and in 1773 and 1783 Sir Joseph Banks presented a considerable number of books printed in Iceland. In 1778 and 1798 Sir John Hawkins presented several works on music. In 1780, the remarkable collection of English plays, formed by Mr. Garrick and bequeathed by him to the nation, were received; and above 900 volumes, chiefly classics, were bequeathed by Mr. Tyrwhitt in 1786. In 1790 and 1799 about 1900 works chiefly biographical, were obtained by gift and bequest from Sir W. Musgrave; and in 1799 the library was enriched by the splendid collection of Mr. Cracherode, who bequeathed to the Museum all his books, consisting of nearly 5000 of the most choice volumes, together with his prints, gems, minerals, &c. This was the last acquisition of importance by gift or bequest to the library of printed books within the first half century of its existence.

The manuscripts obtained during the same period were principally derived from two sources. In 1796 the trustees purchased the collection of Oriental manuscripts formed by Brasseur Halked, Esq., for £450; and in 1803 the Museum came into possession of the large and important collection relating to topography and biography, bequeathed by the Rev. William Cole.

In 1765 Gustavus Brander presented a collection of fossils, obtained principally by himself in Hampshire, and to which he afterwards made considerable additions. In 1798 a large and valuable collection of minerals of every class was purchased from Charles Hatchett, Esq., which received an interesting accession under the will of the Rev. C. M. Cracherode, besides a considerable number of the volcanic productions of Mount Vesuvius, presented by Sir W. Hamilton. An extensive collection of stuffed birds, which had been exhibited for some time by a person named Greenwood, was purchased for £160 in the year 1769.

The antiquities received an important addition in 1772 by the purchase, for the sum of £3410 of the collection of Etruscan, Grecian and Roman antiquities, formed in Italy by Sir Wm. Hamilton, who also presented many objects of a similar character; and in 1802 a large collection of coins, formed by Mr. Samuel Tyson, and containing the most complete series of Saxon coins, perhaps, at that time in the kingdom, was bought for £2620. About the year 1773 Sir Joseph Banks presented the collection of dresses, implements, &c., from the South Sea Islands which has become the nucleus of the Ethnographical collection. In 1804 the Egyptian antiquities acquired by the capitulation of Alexandria in 1801, were directed by George III. to be deposited in the British Museum. In 1805 the House of Commons granted 20,000*l.* for the purchase of the Townley collection of sculptured marbles, terracottas, and bronzes and gems; and in 1799, under the bequest of the Rev. C. M. Cracherode, a collection of prints, valued at £6000 was received. During the first fifty years of its existence the Museum was divided into three departments, manuscripts, printed books, and natural history; each of which was from time to time fostered or neglected according to circumstances. To such an extent did the antiquities increase that, instead of continuing to be classed with the library—an incongruity only to be accounted for by the fact that the library was considered the main feature of the institution—they were formed into a separate department of Antiquities and Art in 1807, and placed under the care of Mr. Taylor Combe.

Twenty years later another department, that of botany, was called into existence. But this arose rather from accident than necessity. Sir Joseph Banks by his will bequeathed about 16,000 volumes to the Museum, subject to the use of them for his life by Mr. Robert Brown. This distinguished botanist allowed the specimens and library to be at once transferred to the Museum, on condition of his accompanying them as one of the under librarians of the institution, or, more plainly, as keeper of the botany. Thither he came, and, to use his own words, 'brought his department with him.'

If you hit a lie on the head, somebody will take offence, because we are sorry to say almost everybody has, or thinks he has, some interest in it.

THE LION AND THE BUFFALO.

The African lion is of a tawny colour, that of some mastiffs. The mane in the male is large, and gives the idea of great power. In some lions the ends of the hair of the mane are black; these go by the name of black-maned lions, though, as a whole, all look of the yellow tawny colour. At the time of the discovery of the lake, Messrs. Oswell and Wilson shot two specimens of another variety. One was an old lion, whose teeth were mere stumps, and his claws worn quite blunt; the other was full-grown, in the prime of life, with white perfect teeth. Both were entirely destitute of mane. The lions in the country near the lake gave tongue less than those farther south. We scarcely ever heard them roar at all. The lion has other checks on inordinate increase besides man. He seldom attacks full-grown animals; but, frequently, when a buffalo calf is caught by him, the cow rushes to the rescue, and a toss from her often kills him. One we found was killed thus; and on the Leeambye another, which died near Sesheke had all the appearance of having received his death-blow from a buffalo. It is questionable if a single lion ever attacks a full-grown buffalo. The amount of roaring heard at night on occasions when a buffalo is killed, seems to indicate there are always more than one lion engaged in the onslaught. On the plain, south of Sebitouane's ford, a herd of buffaloes kept a number of lions from their young by the males turning their heads to the enemy. The young and the cows were in the rear. One toss from a bull would kill the strongest lion that ever breathed. I have been informed that, in one of India, even the tame buffaloes feel the superiority to some wild animals, let him be they have been seen to chase a tiger up the hills, bellowing as if they enjoyed the sport. Lions never go near any elephants, except the calves, which, when young are sometimes torn by them. Every living thing retires before the lordly elephant, yet the full-grown one would be an easier prey than the rhinoceros. The lion rushes off at the mere sight of the latter beast.—[Dr. Livingstone's Missionary Travels.]

Godey's Lady's Book for September says the following should be read by every man who has neglected to take the paper published in his own place. We agree of course:

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead— who never to himself hath said—I will my country please—both for my own and family's sake? If such there be, let him retire, and let his countrymen know that he has advanced should pay the printer."

ALI PASHA AND ENGINEERING DIFFICULTIES.

Ah! said the pasha, laughing, I know all that; I shall have difficulties; what can be done without difficulty? All my life I have been contending; against them; I have overcome them, and inshallah, I will do still! Did you see, he added, with increased animation, a canal that joins the Nile a few miles northward of this spot? Mr. Thorpe had noticed it, but 'had not thought of inquiring whither it led. Well then, continued the pasha, that canal leads to a large village in the middle of the Delta, from which and from the neighboring provinces it brings the produce down to the Nile. How do you think I made that canal? You shall hear. Two years ago I stepped here on my way to Cairo from Alexandria, and having determined to make a canal from the Nile to that village, I sent for the chief engineer of the Province, and having given him the length, breadth, and depth of the canal required, I asked him in what space of time he would undertake to make it. He took out his pen and paper, and having made his calculations, he said that if I gave him an order on the governor of the province for the labor required, he would undertake to finish it in a year. My reply was a signal to my servants to throw him down and give him 200 blows of the stick on his feet. The ceremony being concluded, I said to him, here is the order for the number of laborers you may require; I am going to Upper Egypt, and shall come back in four months; if the canal is not completed by the day of my return, you shall have 300 more. By Allah, the canal was completed when I returned.—[Hassan; and by the Hon. C. A. Murray.]

Sorrows are like tempests clouds—in the distance they look black, but when above us, scarcely grey. As sad dreams indicate coming joy, so will it be with the so often torturing dream of life when it has passed.

Quiet upon the conscience will make a feather-bed hard; the peace of mind will make a straw-bed soft and easy.

VICTORIA BRIDGE, CANADA.

Although the Britannia-bridge, presented the most scientific distribution of material which could be devised at the date of its construction, it has since been improved upon by the same engineer in the Victoria-bridge, now in the course of construction across the river St. Lawrence, near Montreal. The Victoria-bridge is, without exception, the greatest work of the kind in the world. For gigantic proportions and vast length and strength there is nothing to compare with it in ancient or modern times. The entire bridge, with its approaches, is only about sixty yards short of two miles. It is five times longer than the Britannia-bridge across the Menai Straits, seven times and a half longer than the Waterloo bridge, and more than ten times longer than the new Chelsea bridge across the Thames. The Victoria has not less than 24 spans of 249 feet each and one great central span— itself an immense bridge of 330 feet. The road is carried within iron tubes 60 feet above the level of the St. Lawrence, which runs beneath at a speed of about 13 miles an hour, and in winter bring down the ice of some 2,000 miles of lakes and upper rivers, with their numerous tributaries. The weight of iron in the tubes will be upwards of 10,000 tons, supported on massive stone piers, each of solid masonry.

So gigantic a work, involving so great an expenditure, has not been projected without sufficient cause. The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada—one of the greatest national enterprises ever entered on—is upwards of 1100 miles in length, opening up a vast extent of fertile territory for the purpose of future emigration, and, by connecting the settled provinces of Western Canada with the seaboard states of the American Union, calculated to afford full scope for the development of the industrial resources of that magnificent colony. Without the communication would be manifestly incomplete; the extensive series of Canadian railways on the north side of the St. Lawrence, terminating opposite Montreal would, for all purposes of through traffic, be virtually sealed up during the six months of the year that the St. Lawrence is closed against navigation by the ice, and the Grand Trunk system must necessarily have remained to a great extent nugatory, in consequence, of the province being cut off from the coast, to which the commerce of Canada naturally tends.—[Quarterly Review.]

ECHO ANSWERING.

What must be done to conduct a newspaper right?—"Write."
What is necessary for a farmer to assist him?—"System."
What would give a blind man the greatest delight?—"Light."
What is the best council given by a justice of the peace?—"Peace."
Who commits the greatest abominations?—"Nations."
What cry is the greatest terrifier?—"Fire."
What are some women's chief exercise?—"Sighs."

CAPTURE OF A SLAYER BY U. S. BRIG DOLPHIN.

THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN AFRICANS ON BOARD.—The United States brig Dolphin, Lieut John N. Maffei commanding, arrived at Key West on Sunday, the 22d inst., from the coast of Cuba. The Dolphin sailed from Sagua la Grande on the morning of the 21st inst. At daylight she discovered a sail ahead, standing on the same course as the Dolphin, which gained on her very rapidly during the day. At 4 p. m. the sail ahead hauled on the wind, as if trying to get out of the Dolphin's course, which caused her to be considered a suspicious craft. The Dolphin tacked and stood off in pursuit, hoisting the English colors, and fired a blank cartridge, which not being answered by the other vessel another was fired at half past 4 p. m. and this also being unnoticed; at 5 p. m. she fired a shot across the bows of the suspected vessel, which had the effect of producing the American flag at her peak; but she still continued on her course and seemed to be making her best endeavours to escape when a well directed shot from the Dolphin took effect in her fore-rigging, causing her to heave to and lower her colours.

On sending a boat on board, she proved to be a brig from the African coast with three hundred and eighteen negroes.

Her crew were instantly confined and the prize placed in charge of Lieut. J. M. Bradford and Second Charles C. Carpenter and sixteen more from the Dolphin, with orders to proceed to Charleston, S. C.

The captain of the slave brig is on board the Dolphin, which has sailed for Boston. The brig's name was formerly Putnam. Echo was on her stern, but he has been painted over.

THE GREAT CHESS GAME.—The score in the game of chess between Mr. Morphy and Mr. Lowenthal in London, according to the English papers now stands, Morphy five, Lowenthal two, drawn one. The last game lost by Mr. Morphy is spoken of by the London Era as a hard fought game of sixty moves, ending with a contest of pawns, during which Mr. Lowenthal took one hour to deliberate upon a move. The game would have been drawn had not Mr. Morphy made an error in the combination, at the close of which skillful advantage was taken by his opponent, who thus won the game.

A young man named George W. Taylor, formerly of Philadelphia, who lately married a young wife in Franklin county, Mo., blew out his brains with a revolver at a boarding house in St. Louis. Among his papers was a slip written with a pencil, in these words:—"My Dear Wife—I have wronged you. Forgive and pray for me. I am a villain and deserve to die. May God have mercy upon my soul."

A Petrified Forest.

The sandstone rocks of Adersbach, in Bohemia have been visited by persons from all quarters of the globe, on account of their grotesque and fantastic forms. Ten years ago another defile of sandstone rocks was discovered near Weickelsdorf. To this is now to be added the discovery of a grand layer of petrified trees; it stretches to the extent of two miles and a half in length, and half a mile breadth, and there is one point where 20,000 or 30,000 stems of petrified wood may be seen at one glance. All the museums in the world could be supplied from them with splendid specimens. They all appertain to the family of the Conifers, Araucarias.

There is not a heart that has not its moments of longing, yearning for something better, nobler, holier, than it knows how.

"I say Simbo, were you ever intoxicated?"
"No Julius, never, was you?"
"Well I was, Sambo."
"Didn't it make you feel good, Julius?"
"Yah, yah! but, oh golly! next mornin, I thought my head was a wood shed, an all de niggers in christendom were splittin wood in it."

A WEALTHY BRIDE.—Miss Jane Loyd, the wealthiest of English heiresses, is to be married to Col. Lindsay, the "hero of the Alma," who was lucky enough to get nine Russian balls fired into the colors which he carried, without receiving one into his own body. The fortune of Miss Loyd is stated by the London Illustrated News to have from twenty-five to thirty million dollars.

SCRAPS.

A WIFE.—How many temptations would come into the house if she were not there to shut the door against them?
"Ben," said a father the other day to his delinquent son, "I am busy now—but as soon as I can get time, I mean to give you a confounding flogging."
"Don't hurry yourself pa," replied the patient lad, "I can wait."

A Yankee boasting of a visit which he had paid to the Queen, clinched his remarks by declaring, "I should have been invited to stay to dinner, but it was washing day."

A bare-footed urchin being asked what his mother did for a living, promptly answered, "She eats victuals, sir."

A duel came off at Schenectady, recently, between two exquisites. They fought with lucifer matches; one of the parties was slightly killed and the other mortally frightened.

There is a clock in New Haven three hundred and forty-nine years old.

The five great evils of life are said to be standing collars, stove-pipe hats, tight boots, scolding wives and heavy bread.

The army worm has made its appearance at Manchac, La, where they are spreading so rapidly, in some places eating up everything green, at the rate of ten acres per day.

An alchemist, who knew that Leo the Tenth was a great encourager of arts and sciences, addressed him on a discovery he had made of turning other metal into gold.—The pope read his address with great attention. Whilst the philosopher was gaping after remuneration from his holiness, he received from the pope a very large empty purse, with these words:—"You can fill it."

Hallow there, how do you tell wood?
By the cord.
Pshaw!—how long has it been cut?
Four feet.
How dumb?—I mean how long has it been since you cut it.
No longer than it is now.
See here, old fellow, you are too bright to live long.