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CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

PAGE

I. Harvard College Library, (illustrated)	81
II. The School System in the principal German States.	84
III. PAPERS ON PRACTICAL EDUCATION.—1. Modes of Examining Scholars. 2. Tone of Examination. 3. The true dignity of the teachers's profession.	87
IV. EDITORIAL.—Circular to Clerks, and apportionment for 1856. The Oxford Commemoration. Successful Men.	88
V. MISCELLANEOUS.—1. Pleasant weather. 2. Great truths. 3. Boys and Men. 4. Mechanics. 5. Popular Similes.	94
VI. EDUCATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.	95
VII. DEPARTMENTAL NOTICES.	96

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY,

MASSACHUSETTS.

In resuming the illustrations of foreign libraries and museums, we select as the first of this second, or American series, the Library of Harvard College, as being one of the oldest, largest, and most valuable public libraries in the New World.

The University of Harvard College was founded in 1638, by a grant of £400 sterling (afterwards increased to £1,200) from the Rev. John Harvard, an Englishman. From this circumstance the infant institution was called Harvard College, and the name of the town was changed from Newton to Cambridge, the name of the famous seat of learning in England.

The present library of Harvard College dates its origin from the destruction of Harvard Hall, with its valuable contents,* by fire, on the night of the 24th of January, in the year 1764. The General Court, which in consequence of the prevalence of the small-pox in Boston, was then sitting in Cambridge, and occupying the room appropriated to the library, immediately voted to erect a new building; and Harvard Hall was in a short time fully replaced by another edifice of the same name. A corresponding zeal was manifested by other friends of the institution, to furnish the new hall with a library and philosophical apparatus. The General Court of New Hampshire, which at that time had no college of its



GORE HALL—HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY.

own to provide for, granted, at the instance of Governor Wentworth, £300 sterling towards restoring the library. "The Society for Propagating the Gospel in New England and parts adjacent," gave the same sum, and "The Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," £100 sterling; Thomas Hollis, Esq., of London, rewarded his generous efforts to assist the College in its distress; other public spirited and enlightened individuals came forward with their contributions upon the occasion; so that a very few years supplied the loss of what had been the accumulation of more than a century. The library increased so rapidly, that in 1790, it consisted of about twelve thousand volumes.

Harvard College Library is almost entirely the fruit of individual munificence. Its records exhibit a long list of donors, whose names are indissolubly associated with the establishment. The first and most generous is that of Thomas Hollis. Next to that of the Founder of the University, his

* Library, philosophical apparatus, &c. The library was a very valuable collection of more than 5,000 volumes. Among the principal contributors to it were the Rev. John Harvard, the founder of the University, the Hollises, and several other names of great celebrity, as Sir Kenelm Digby, Richard Baxter, Governor Winthrop, Dr. Gale, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Watts, Dr. Mead, Bishop Berkeley, Bishop Sherlock, Dr. Hales.