

## SOME GREAT LIBRARIES.

The New World has the Greatest Number but Europe the Most Complete.

New York is soon to have one of the greatest libraries in the world, says the Philadelphia Press. The coalition of the Astor, Lenox, and Tilden libraries, under one great roof and one management, will form an institution with a million and a half volumes and manuscripts, and will give the country at large a library of which it may well be proud. At present this wonderful country of ours has no library which can compare in extent with the British Museum of London, or the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. Of course, in the number of libraries the United States compares favorably with any in the universe. But it is in the matter of completeness and the antiquity of works that it is lacking.

Cincinnati and Boston both have libraries, and the other large cities of the country, like Chicago and Philadelphia, are well equipped. The great advantage that the European libraries have over the ones in this country is that they are government institutions, and the local authorities of St. Petersburg, Paris, and London have the power to compel all publishers to donate copies of everything they publish. This of itself is a great aid, and the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris gains at least 20,000 volumes a year by these methods. In New York city is the oldest library in the New World. It is hidden away in University place, and few of the generality of New Yorkers know of its existence. The library was started in 1700 by Richard Earl of Bellamont, who had been appointed in 1698 Governor of New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. In those days New York was a thriving little place of 5,300 inhabitants, 750 of whom were negro slaves.

The British Museum ranks in importance before all the great libraries of the world, with the exception of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, and far exceeds the latter institution in the systematic arrangement and accessibility of its contents. The library consists of over 1,550,000 printed volumes and 50,000 manuscripts.

The foundation of the British Museum dates from 1753, when £20,000 was paid the executors of Sir Hans Sloane in exchange for his books, manuscripts, and curiosities, which were to be held by trustees for the benefit of the nation. A bill was passed through Parliament for the purchase of the Sloane collection and of the Harleian MSS., costing £10,000. To these, with the Cottonian MSS., acquired by the country in 1700, was added by George III., in 1757, the royal library of the former Kings of England, coupled with the privilege, which the royal library had for many years enjoyed, of obtaining a copy of every publication entered at Stationers' Hall. This addition was of great importance, as it enriched the museum with the old collections of Archbishop Cranmer, Henry, Prince of Wales, and other patrons of literature, while the transfer of the privilege with regard to the acquisition of new books a right which had been secured by successive copyright acts, secured a large and continuous augmentation, the yearly average of which is something like 10,000 volumes. In 1726, when Didcot and d'Almeida were boys at school, there was printed at Peking the "Kin Ting Ku Kin tu shu tsih Ching"; or, Complete Thesaurus of Writings Ancient and Modern, under the auspices of Kang Hi, the enlightened and scholarly Emperor of China. The fruit of forty years' labor, it filled no fewer than 5,020 volumes, with maps, plans, and illustrative designs, but was restricted to 100 copies, one of which found its way in 1878 to the shelves of the great British Museum Library.

Berlin is well supplied with libraries, seventy-two being registered in 1875. The largest is the Royal Library, founded by the great Elector Frederick William, and opened by him in 1661. The largest library in Austria, and one of the most important collections in Europe, is the Imperial Public Library, founded by Emperor Frederick III. in 1440, although its illustrious librarian, Lambecius, attributes this honor to Frederick's son Maximilian. The sum devoted annually to the purchase of books is 26,250 florins.

As the old center of civilization, Italy is of course the country where the oldest libraries are found and where the most valuable MSS. are preserved. The Vatican Library at Rome, and the Laurentian Library at Florence, are sufficient to rank Italy before most of the states in that respect. In spite of long centuries of persecution and suffering, Italy is still rich in books and MSS.—New York Mail and Express.

At the Czar's Funeral.

A feature of every dead Czar's funeral is the appearance of two men in medieval armor, one mounted and the other on foot. The mounted knight wears an armor of burnished gold, and visor up. He symbolizes Life. The knight on foot wears an armor of coalblack steel. His visor is closed and he bears a drawn sword, two-handed and shrouded in crape. He symbolizes Death. The weight of these suits may be imagined when it is remembered that a fallen knight had usually to wait to be lifted, it being impossible to raise the weight of his own armor. The most powerful men of the imperial guard are selected to wear the symbolic suits, therefore, but on every occasion the burden of the knight on foot has proved beyond human endurance. The soldier who served at the obsequies of Nicholas I. fell dead of exhaustion on reaching the Church of St. Peter and Paul, where the royal mausoleum is.

At the funeral of his successor, Alexander II., the unfortunate black knight fainted during the march from the Winter Palace, and died that night at the hospital, whether he was borne.

During the progress of the funeral procession of the late Czar, it was noticed that the black knight dragged himself with ever-increasing difficulty, and on reaching the fortress he sank to the ground unconscious and died soon after.

Perhaps the new Czar will be content to die without exacting a spectacular victim when his time shall come.—Youth's Companion.

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## MENTAL TELEGRAPHY.

Curious Instance of Second Sight in the Experience of Mark Twain.

Several years ago I made a campaign on the platform with Mr. George W. Cable, says Mark Twain. In Montreal we were honored with a reception. It began at two in the afternoon in a long drawing-room in the Windsor hotel. Mr. Cable and I stood at one end of the room, and the ladies and gentlemen entered it at the other end, crossed it at that end, then came up the long left-hand side, shook hands with us, said a word or two, and passed on, in the usual way. My sight is of the telescopic sort, and I presently recognized a familiar face among the throng of strangers drifting in at the distant door, and I said to myself, with surprise and gratification, "That is Mrs. R.; I had forgotten that she was a Canadian." She had been a great friend of mine in Carson City, Nevada, in the early days. I had not seen her or heard of her for twenty years; I had not been thinking about her; there was nothing to suggest her to me, nothing to bring her to my mind; in fact, to me she had long ago ceased to exist, and had disappeared from my consciousness. But I knew her instantly; and I saw her so clearly that I was able to note some of the particulars of her dress, and did note them, and they remained in my mind. I was impatient for her to come. In the midst of hand-shakings I snatched glimpses of her and noted her progress with the slow moving file across the end of the room, then I saw her start up the side, and this gave me a full front view of her face. I saw her last when she was within twenty-five feet of me. For an hour I kept thinking she must still be in the room somewhere and would come at last, but I was disappointed.

When I arrived in the lecture hall that evening some one said: "Come into the waiting-room; there's a friend of yours there who wants to see you. You'll not be introduced—you are to do the recognizing without help if you can." I said to myself, "It is Mrs. R.; I shall have any trouble." There were perhaps ten ladies present, all seated. In the midst of them was Mrs. R. as I had expected. She was dressed exactly as she was when I had seen her in the afternoon. I went forward and shook hands with her and called her by name, and said:

"I knew you the moment you appeared at the reception this afternoon."

She looked surprised, and said: "But I was not at the reception. I have just arrived from Quebec, and have not been in town an hour."

It was my turn to be surprised now. I said: "I can't help it. I give you my word of honor that it is as I say. I saw you at the reception, and you were dressed precisely as you are now. When they told me a moment ago that I should find a friend in this room, your image rose before me, dressed and all just as I had seen you at the reception."

Those are the facts. She was not at the reception at all, or anywhere near it; but I saw her there nevertheless, and most clearly and unmistakably. To that I could make cath. How is one to explain this? I was not thinking of her at the time; had not thought of her for years. But she had been thinking of me, no doubt; did her thoughts flit through leagues of air to me, and bring with it that clear and pleasant vision of herself? I think so. That was and remains my sole experience in the matter of apparitions—I mean apparitions that come when one is (ostensibly) awake. I could not have been asleep for a moment; the apparition could have been the creature of a dream. Still, that is nothing to the point; the feature of interest is the happening of the thing just at that time, instead of at an earlier or later time, which is argument that its origin lay in thought-transference.

## Typesetting Machines.

In typesetting machinery the application of mechanics to the art of printing is reaching a culmination. It is stated that during the last twenty years upwards of \$9,000,000 has been expended in bringing the art of setting type by machinery up to its present state. For all plain work, typesetting machines are available. In the London Times office a curious arrangement has been adopted for the composition of the stenographic notes of the parliamentary reports in the House of Commons, in which typesetting machines play an important part. The stenographic notes are read to the operators of the machines, instead of being transcribed, as was formerly the case. Men at telephones at the House of Commons read these notes to men stationed at receivers in the Times composing room, who in turn read them to the typesetters. In this way these notes can be set up in type almost as rapidly as they could be transcribed by an expert typewriter; and it is said that the number of errors that creep in are not so numerous as to make the work of correcting proof much greater than the old system, while a considerable saving in time and expense is effected.—Engineering Magazine.

## Aristocratic English Names.

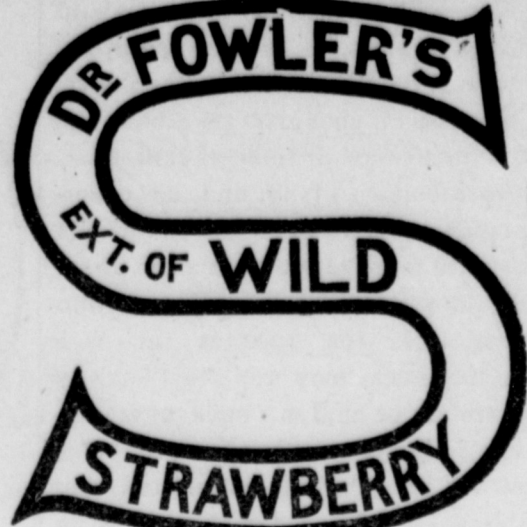
Some of the names among the upper ten in English society look as if they had been taken from playbills, though of course the assumption is that playwrights depend, as Dickens did, on directories and peerages for the names of their characters. Among the persons of high degree at a recent wedding in London were Lady Lurgan, Lady Minn, Lady Leo Sturt, Mrs. Willie Grenfell, Dorothy Lady Canteluse, Lady Eden, Mrs. Atta Hay, and Lady Kathleen Cuffe. With such names are these glistening in the columns of the society journals the invention of odd cognomens for novels and plays is a sheer waste of time and brains.—Buffalo Courier.

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## WEALTH IN THE PEAT BOG.

Processes for Turning It Into Clothing and Machine Bearings.

According to recent discoveries of German investigators, Ireland possesses in her peat bogs a remunerative and extensive field for the employment of capital and labor. These Germans have formed a syndicate and are at present exhibiting in London new products of peat, which range from antiseptic wool for dressing wounds to bearings and journals for machinery.

The labor of the chemist and mechanician is needed to effect the transformation of peat. The first process which the raw peat goes through, after being dried, is that of being thoroughly teased or "devilled" by machinery, when it presents the appearance of an exceedingly coarse brown fibre. After further teasings and cardings it changes to a delicate creamy, chocolate colored fibre, which can be spun into yarn or woven into woollen goods. The fibre for the finer purposes is mixed with 15 per cent of ordinary wool, but in most of the materials only the pure peat fibre is used. The fibre can be bleached to a snowy whiteness and dyed any color. It can be produced for one-third the cost of shoddy it is claimed, and in the finer makes the appearance is equal to tweed. Several members of the royal family, including the Duchess of York, have purchased dresses of it.

The wool is proving a great aid to the surgeon, as well as the weaver, as it is an antiseptic and possesses absorbent qualities so great that it will soak up nine times its own weight of moisture. The French government has adopted it for use in the army, and 12,000 kilograms of it was sent out to Madagascar for use during the expedition to that island.

By another process the light spongy peat is made as hard as ebony and capable of taking a high polish. It is chemically treated and then subjected to great pressure, forming a material from which any article requiring hardness or durability can be produced. Made from it in the exhibition are axle boxes, insulators, machinery bearings, gun stocks, table and pianoforte legs, and numerous other articles that reveal its possibilities. The value of peat fibre as a non-conductor of heat has been long known in this country, where it is used in the lining of refrigerators and cold storage rooms, and also as a covering for steam pipes. The processes of the Germans are entirely new.

## SAVING THE WASTE.

Unconsidered Trifles That Amount To No Small Sum When Collected.

For the privilege of picking out rags, bones, bottles, tin cans, etc., at the various dumps, Italian contractors pay to the city of New York about \$80,000 a year; from which it is inferred that if there were a complete system for the separation and collection of these articles in the houses where they are discarded much more would be recovered. Mr. Waring, chief of the New York Street Cleaning Bureau, thinks it safe to assume that "with a universal and well-regulated collection and sale, there might be recovered, in cash, one cent per diem for each member of the population, beyond the cost of collection and sale. This would amount annually to over \$7,000,000, enough to pay all the cost of street cleaning and street sprinkling, and, in addition thereto, to repave the whole city within a few years, so far as this is needed, and to keep the pavements in repair perpetually." It is stated that a large amount of solder is obtained by sprinkling old tin cans with cool oil and firing them in a kettle. Tin from scrap tin plate is obtained by placing it in a solution of sulphate of copper, which dissolves the tin in the state of sulphate, while at the same time metallic copper is deposited. In the presence of the iron sulphate of tin is decomposed in turn with the setting of metallic tin at liberty and the formation of a solution of copperas. In reality, it is found that the solution of copper corrodes the iron and detaches the tin that is fixed to it. Beneath a double bottom, upon which the tin clippings are deposited, there collects a mixture of tin and copper, which is separated, or which is utilized directly for the manufacture of stanniferous brasses or bronzes.

## His Idea of Red Tap.

The late Chief Justice Watts was one of the famous characters of New Mexico in early days. He had occasion at one time to address a communication to the Secretary of the Interior on the subject of Indian affairs in the Territory. When he had covered some forty pages of legal cap with his views he concluded as follows:

"Now, Mr. Secretary, will you ever see this communication? Not a bit of it. I will tell you the probable fate of this communication: It will arrive in Washington by due course of mail; it will then be taken from the Postoffice to the Interior Department, where it will fall into the hands of some clerk, who will take it from the envelope, glance over it, place it in a pigeon hole, and go out to take a drink. When he returns he will have forgotten this communication; but some fine morning, after he has cocked up his feet on the government mahogany and read the morning papers, provided at the expense of the government, he will remember this communication; will take it from the pigeon-hole and read it, or glance over it, and in due season, 'This is a communication from John S. Watts, of New Mexico, on the subject of Indian Affairs. John S. Watts not being officer of this department and not being officially connected with the conduct of Indian affairs, this communication requires no action.' It will then be replaced in the pigeon hole, where it will remain until the crack of doom. Very respectfully, etc."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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