

"Pipe Contests" are also intensely Highland, and naturally provoke no little enthusiasm among players and listeners alike—among players because they know all the mysteries of the art, and among listeners because they are more or less interested in the individual players. A Highland gentleman would as soon think of going to dinner without his kilt as eating it without the accompaniment of his "own piper." Every chief has his hereditary piper, and even Her Gracious Majesty and the Prince of Wales have been obliged to accustom themselves to the "chanter" when they spend their autumn on Deeside. And the piper is a "personage" in the Celtic household neither to be lightly treated nor to be spoken to without due formality; but he is nothing away from his native hills or the ancient clan homestead. Heard in the streets of the metropolis, the pipes are only a wild, unmeaning mixture of shriek and groan to English ears; but were the sounding-board formed by granite cliffs, or the sound is borne on the wind down some wild pass, they are in consonance with nature. The Highlander, so to speak, is born, married, and buried to the sound of the pipes. They are associated with his highest sorrows, his deepest griefs, and his bravest deeds. The tunes are histories in brief to the cultivated ear, telling as they do of wild clan warfare, or on the distant battle-field nerving his heart to demean himself worthily of the renown of his name. How the pipes weep in the coronach, thunder in the march, lilt in the strathspey, croon in the legendary air, or shout for joy at the wedding feast, only the true Highlander knows. Every Celt knows something of the Highland instrument *par excellence*, most of them play it, so that a pipe contest interests all. The intricacies of fingering, especially with "the lower hand," the true balance of all the "chanters," the bearing of the man as he steps to his tune, and the furniture of the instrument

itself, are all elements to be taken into consideration by the judges, as well as the choice of tune, the light and shade in expression, and the quality of the sounds emitted. That there are pathos, humour, and music in the Highland tunes such a master of the craft as Mendelssohn knows, and has shown; but the real judge of pipe-playing is a first-rate player. Nothing is more keenly contested at a Highland gathering than this, nothing creates more enthusiasm, and no one is more honoured than he who has been adjudicated winner.

There are other minor and less frequent sports and games which need not be particularised here, but one or two may be mentioned. For instance, all readers are sufficiently acquainted with the "Reel," "Sword Dance," and "Highland Fling;" and we shall, therefore, forbear describing them. Often at the close of the day's sports there is a general muster of competitors, in order that the best-dressed man may be rewarded. Occasionally we have seen the dogs admitted to trials of skill, batches of sheep being left in charge of lads some distance from the meeting-place, the "collies" sent in search of them, and the first to bring its flock in having a collar bound round its throat. But from first to last in such a gathering everything is thorough, good-humoured, and the rivalry frank and honourable.

One word must be said about the prizes. There are not, as in more scientific contests, silver flagons, cups, belts, or medals. Rarely are jewels or merely ornamental articles given; a plaid for the gillie's wife, a piece of tartan to make a kilt for the boys or a petticoat for the girls, a new crook for the shepherd, a bag of flour, a piece of meat, some crockery, or a useful tea-service in common metal, or a few shillings in a piece of paper towards paying the rent at Candlemas, being some of the favourite honours to be striven for.

W. GIBSON.



### READING AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



O a person of literary tastes, one of the most interesting departments in our great national Museum is the reading-room. Visitors are not allowed to enter the vast hall dedicated to study and research, but they may stand at the entrance and survey the scene. Accordingly, not an hour passes, especially in the summer months, without numbers of sight-seers assembling behind the plate-glass screen which fronts the readers' entrance, in order to get a peep into this sanctum of literature, where some proportion of the literary work of London is done from day to day.

American ladies are great readers of good English authors, and therefore it is not surprising to find that they are frequent spectators of the still interior of this immense library. Perhaps they come in the secret hope of getting a glimpse at the snowy head of Carlyle, the dark tangled locks of Tennyson, or the pale intellectual face of George Eliot. If such be their aim, they will ordinarily be disappointed; for, although occasionally these master spirits do pay a flying visit to the reading-room on some exceptional quest or other, their calls are very few and far between. Every day, however, the Museum is filled with busy workers in the field of literature, science, and art. These are of both sexes, young as well as old, and

generally of various nationalities. Here one may see a swarthy Greek reading old mediæval MSS. in his mother-tongue; there a yellow-haired German poring over a pile of dusty tomes, and making rapid notes for a work on English ballads. Without ranging many seats further, we may notice a young Hungarian studying Japanese, and now at his ten-thousandth character, having mastered twenty each day; a member of Parliament consulting ancient files of some half-forgotten newspaper; and a young lady artist making sketches of Persian costumes. Although one does not often see a famous person amongst the readers, there is abundance of character to be observed and food for thought any day at the British Museum Reading-room. You wonder, for instance, who is that handsome woman with the classic head crowned with red-gold Titian hair, and gracefully poised over a kerchief of old lace, or what ambitions excite the heart of that young poet with the dreamy eye and beautiful sloping brow. Nor does the picture lack its tragic side too; and the sad hopeless face of that poor hack in the seamy coat haunts you, in spite of yourself, with fancies of a lost life and broken fortunes.

The national library of the British Museum, which is the largest collection of books in England, if not in the world, now numbers over 1,000,000 volumes. It may be said to have been founded by the acquisition of the 50,000 books and 4,130 MSS. collected by Sir Hans Sloane; the 10,200 books and 2,000 MSS. of our earlier kings and queens, which were presented to the nation by George II.; the 85 MSS. collected by Sir R. Cotton soon after the dissolution of the monasteries; and the 8,000 MSS. and 1,600 charters and rolls forming the Harleian collection. The Sloane books were miscellaneous in kind, and the manuscripts were chiefly medical and historical. Those of the King's Library were principally Bibles, psalters, and copies of the classics, richly bound and illuminated, one of the writings being the most precious MS. in the library—namely, the "Codex Alexandrinus," which is, with one exception, the oldest extant copy of the Scriptures, and is particularly valuable as containing the only genuine copy of the Epistles of Clement. In this collection also are the "Meditations of Catherine Parr," which were translated, it will be remembered, into Latin, French, and Italian by Queen Elizabeth; and the first edition of the "Assertio Septem Sacramentorum," which gained for Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith. The Cottonian collection contains the celebrated "Durham Book"—a folio of the Gospels in Latin, with an interlinear Anglo-Saxon version or gloss. It was made and ornamented by Bishop Eadfrith, of Lindisfarne, between the years 698 and 720, and is considered the finest known example of Anglo-Saxon illumination as practised in the eighth century. Nor should we omit to mention the famous Magna Charta of King John, dated A.D. 1215, which is exhibited in the museum, as belonging to this collection, together with the bull of Pope Leo X., conferring on King Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith. The Harleian group is

rich in documents relating to heraldic arms, grants, and pedigrees, country histories and surveys; besides including the manual of prayer that was used by Lady Jane Grey on the scaffold in 1553-4, which is bound in vellum, illuminated with miniatures, and inscribed also on the margin with her own notes and comments.

On this foundation the library has been gradually built up, partly by donation, partly by purchase, and partly by the Parliamentary power, vested in the Museum, to obtain a copy of every book or other publication entered at Stationers' Hall. In 1820 Sir Joseph Banks, the famous naturalist, bequeathed 16,000 volumes, mostly on natural history, to the library. This royal collection contained the first book printed in English by William Caxton, and the celebrated Mazarin Bible, which was printed by Gutenberg and Fust at Mentz in 1455, and is the earliest complete printed book known. In 1823 King George IV., on coming to the throne, presented the nation with his father's magnificent collection of 60,000 volumes. With the Bridgewater or Egerton collection were purchased the well-known Shakespearian autograph seen in the Museum, and also the letter Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton on the eve of the battle of Trafalgar. The splendid collection purchased for £54,000 by the Right Honourable Thomas Grenville, and bequeathed by him to the nation, comprises the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, entitled "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, printed in 1623," with the engraved portrait of Shakespeare, by Martin Droeshout, remarkable for the high domed forehead, the large placid eyes, stubby beard, and long hair.

During the ten years ending 1864, over £100,000 were spent in purchasing books and manuscripts for the library, and over £80,000 were utilised in binding alone. More than 300,000 complete works were added to the department of printed books, and upwards of 70,000 pamphlets and documents. Since then the work of accumulation has been actually going on at the rate of 20,000 volumes annually, thanks chiefly to the zeal and ability of the late Sir Anthony Panizzi, who not only availed himself to the utmost of English resources, but ransacked the Continent for foreign treasures during his holidays. The British Museum catalogue—probably the largest of its kind that ever existed—is due to the resolute perseverance, skill, and interest of Panizzi.

In 1759 the national library consisted of a corner room in the base storey of Montagu House, furnished with a wainscot table and twenty chairs, and here Dr. Johnson, Hume, and the poet Gray would come to read in quiet; but now (1879) it is a magnificent and spacious hall, the daily resort of some 300 readers.

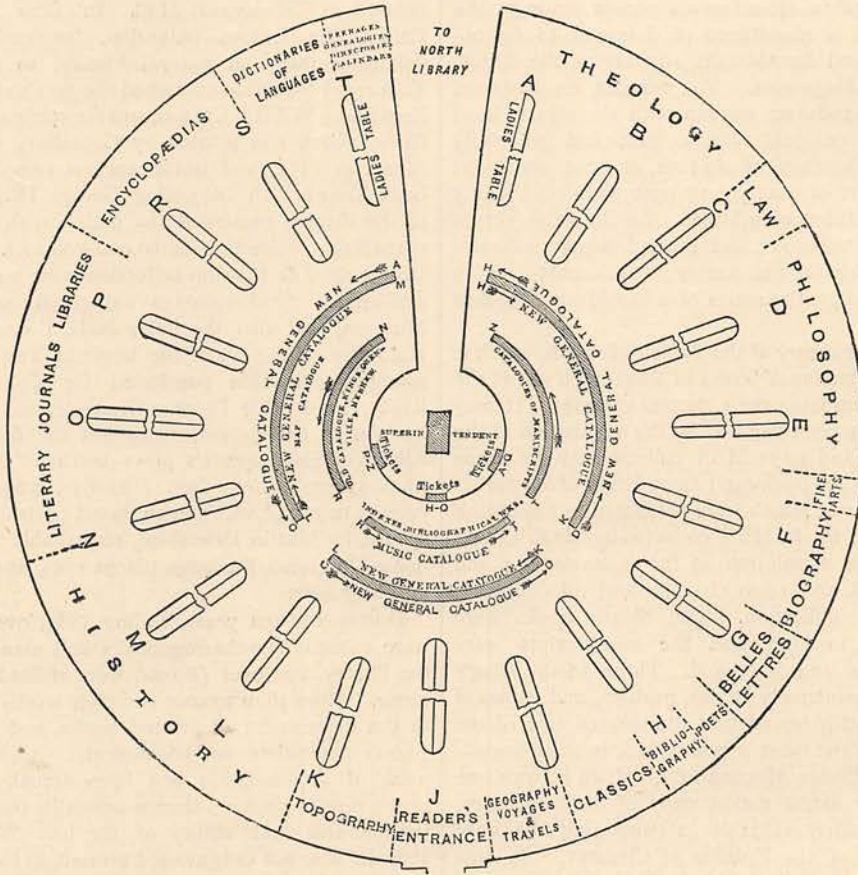
The use of the reading-room is restricted to the purposes of study, reference, or research. It is kept open every day of the week, except Sunday, Ash-Wednesday, Good Friday, Christmas Day, or any Fast or Thanksgiving Day appointed by authority, except also from the 1st to the 7th of February, the 1st to

the 7th of May, and the 1st to the 7th of October inclusive. The hours are from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. in the months of November, December, January, and February, and from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. in the months of September, October, March, and April, and from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m. in the months of May, June, July, and August.

Persons under twenty-one years of age are not permitted to become readers, except under a special

only necessary to fill in these forms as required, and forward them to the principal librarian. If the application be satisfactory, a ticket will be sent to the applicant, which entitles him to the use of the reading-room. This ticket is renewable at the discretion of the librarian, and is not transferable.

The general plan of the reading-room is shown in the accompanying diagram. The readers' entrance from the hall of the Museum is marked by the letter J,



PLAN OF THE READING-ROOM AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

order from the trustees. Intending readers make application to the principal librarian, specifying their profession, place of abode, and the purpose for which they seek admission. This application must be made two days at least before admission is required, and must be accompanied by a written recommendation from a householder or a person of known position, mentioning in full his or her name and address, and stating that he or she possesses a personal knowledge of the applicant, and of his or her intention to make a proper use of the reading-room. A printed form of application, with the declaration of the householder annexed, can be obtained at the office within the entrance to the Museum, on the right-hand side. It is

directly opposite to the passage-way of the assistants into the North Library. The room, as will be seen, is in shape an immense circle, and is covered with a domed roof, ribbed with iron, and bayed with numerous windows. There are three tiers of bookshelves round the walls, reached by two galleries. The supports of the shelves and rails of the galleries are gilded, and, with the gold-lettered volumes of red, blue, and green morocco on the shelves, lend a rich effect to the scene. The wall-space is divided into sections, according to the subject treated of in the volumes which line them, as shown: for example, Belles Lettres, Biography, Fine Arts, Philosophy. It is to be understood, however, that these books belong only to the reference library, and

any reader may take those that are handy down from the shelves himself and consult them. The national library proper is contained in a great oblong building, which encloses the reading-room all round; and in order to get a book from this collection it is necessary to make a formal application to the assistants. The catalogue is contained on shelves under the two outer concentric tables in the middle of the room, and each of the large MS. volumes composing it bears the surnames of the authors whose works it comprises. Indeed, the catalogue of the British Museum Library clearly demonstrates that one cannot mention a surnames which does not count an author to its credit or discredit. If a man wishes to feel proud of his patronymic, he has only to examine the inscriptions on this roll of forgotten fame.

To obtain a book, therefore, it is necessary to know the name of the author, and to turn up the catalogue until its proper description is found. It is then necessary to fill up a printed form of request, transcribing on it from the catalogue all the particulars necessary for the assistant to identify the work wanted. The particulars are, for example:—

Name of Author, or other Heading of Work wanted—T. Nichols.  
 Title—A Handy Book of the British Museum for Every-day Readers.\*  
 Press-mark—7702, b. 9.  
 Place—London.  
 Date—1870.  
 Size—8vo.  
 Date.      Signature.      Number of Reader's seat.

This form, so filled up, is left by the reader in one of the three flat baskets which stand on the innermost or superintendent's counter. He can then return to his seat, where the work in demand will be brought to him by an assistant in course of time, say fifteen or twenty minutes.

When the reader has done with a book from the reference library he must return it to the place from

which he took it, and when it is from the principal library he must present it at the ticket box which comprises the initial letter of his surname: for example, if his name begins with M, at the middle box, which includes names from H to O. The attendant receives the book and returns to him the request form which he left in order to get it. The form is cancelled and will not serve for another day, unless a special arrangement is made with the attendant about keeping the book laid out, to save time on the next occasion the reader will require it. So long as the ticket is uncanceled the reader is responsible for the book.

The reading seats radiate between the central tables and the walls in double rows, seven seats in a row. Each division of seats is marked by a distinctive letter of the alphabet, and each seat in the division is numbered. A comfortable stuff-bottomed chair, a hat-rack, and foot-bar are provided for each reader, together with two pens, one of quill and one of steel, an ink-bottle, and a wiper. The writing-table which runs in front of the seats is covered with thick patent leather, and on it lies a blotting-book and paper-knife for individual use. On the reader's right hand a shelf folds down for the purpose of holding his extra volumes, and on his left a soft padded bookholder opens out at any angle most convenient to his taste or posture in the chair. The floor of the room is carpeted with some noiseless material, and a strict silence is observed, so that altogether it would be difficult to study under more favourable conditions than are to be found any day at the British Museum. Jablochhoff's electric light was tried during last winter for a short time, to determine whether the room could not be kept open till eight or nine o'clock every night; and we believe it is in contemplation to test next winter a new system of electric illumination, with a view to extending the winter hours of reading, at least beyond four o'clock in the afternoon.

## HOW WE MADE BREAD AT HOME.



**W**HEN we first married, my husband and myself lived with his father in a luxurious London home, where the question of expense was hardly thought of, and the enjoyment of all that money could buy came as a matter of course. But circumstances arose under which we gladly

availed ourselves of a kind friend's offer to occupy for a time a small house only twenty miles from London, but three from the

nearest town and railway station, entailing a long daily walk on my husband and many small difficulties in housekeeping for me.

The owners of Burne Cottage had been in the habit of running down to it from Saturday to Monday in the summer and living there in a sort of picnic fashion, being waited on by an old servant and her husband who lived rent free, and cultivated the garden for their own profit, selling to their employers such vegetables as were wanted, at market prices. We adopted the same plan, and the husband being old and infirm, Mrs. Medger would have had rather more than she could manage, had I not assisted her to the best of my abilities, which in truth were very small. I could paint dainty china, sing, act charades, and design dados and doyleys, but of ordinary domestic work I knew absolutely nothing. I had to begin at the very beginning, and I could hardly have found a more patient teacher.

\* Published by Messrs. Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co.