

"By the almanac, sir. I wouldn't marry on that day if I were ever so deeply smitten by 'Cupid's arrow,' as they call it on the valentines, and if it were a choice between then and never; and I won't start at a new job on Monday next for any master in the country. Sorry to disoblige, sir."

Remonstrance and ridicule were alike vain. "No, no; I mayn't be able to explain it—there's a heap o' things in the world that we can't tell just the why and the wherefore of—but I've proved it, and that's better than explaining it," he cried; "in fact, there's a proof here in this little bit of business. My almanac told me I was to have changes this year. I looked all round, but couldn't so much as guess where they were to come from. But you see that after all the almanac was right; and I've noticed it scores of times."

This same artisan stood sponsor on another occasion for a statement so curious as to be worth reproducing, as a specimen of the humours not simply of rural, but of technical superstition also. He was descanting on various occult influences of the heavenly bodies—a favourite topic with a congenial audience.

"The moon's power is very remarkable," he said; "as is well known and admitted, it rules the tides. And it likewise makes a wonderful difference to timber. You may hardly credit this, but it's a matter of experience again. Timber felled when the moon is waxing planes or cuts up nigh as easy again as the very same sort, and age, and growth of timber felled when the moon is on the wane. It's queer, but true."

The country doctor is a person who, if he has a keen sense of humour—as every member of the profession should have, for his own sake—will encounter abundant opportunities of a genial laugh at these lingering superstitions—superstitions in connection

with the hour of birth and the hour of death, with illness and with progressing convalescence, with nurses and with medicaments. Some of the latter especially, trivial as they may be, occasion him in the discharge of his duties not a little difficulty, and even annoyance. The provincial poor are rich in the possession of some pet panacea for almost every ill to which flesh is subject, and upon these they are prone obstinately to rely. The value of recipes—however intrinsically absurd—handed down by oral tradition from sire to son is in their eyes not lightly to be depreciated. The village surgeon may be "a clever mon" even in their exacting estimation, but his patient will often add to such an acknowledgment the important rider:—

"An' yet, after all's said an' done, I don't put a deal o' faith in any doctor's stuff. Yon mixture"—in a black bottle on the corner shelf—"cured my feyther, an' I reckon it'll cure me."

One of these favourite prescriptions may stand as the representative of a large class.

The lubricating properties of "goose-grease" may scarcely be disputed; but its value as a sovereign remedy for all external ailments whatsoever is an article of the rural creed which before now has amazed and confounded a young medical practitioner fresh from the culture and light of a great city.

"It is their single, indiscriminate resource," groaned one scandalised surgeon. "If a child has a sore throat, they use—goose-grease; if the father suffers from whitlow, they use—goose-grease; if the grandfather sprains a limb, they use—goose-grease. It would be difficult to say under what conditions they would hesitate to apply it."

And rebuke, however stinging, is met by obsequious deference at the moment, and by stolid obstinacy when the mentor's back is turned.

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THE ADVOCATES' LIBRARY, EDINBURGH.

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descended; but, oh! through what a subterranean world had I to guide my steps, and with difficulty keep my guides in view! What corridors, passages, rectangular wainscotings, all stuffed with tomes; and then, although in the blaze of noon, the sight, the smell of burning gas!" Such is the vivid, if exaggerated, description by Dibdin, the bibliographer, of his visit to the Advocates' Library, fifty years ago. If the learned doctor could but take a temporary lease of life and renew his acquaintance with the Library, he would find the tomes, the corridors, and the passages all there, but would experience considerably less difficulty in wending his way through the laby-

rinths of "Cimmerian darkness," as he was pleased to describe the underground solitudes.

Although the Library of the Faculty of Advocates (*Anglicæ*, barristers) cannot boast the antiquity of the British Museum, or the Bodleian at Oxford, its progress and history are, perhaps, more remarkable than those of the larger and older collections. Hampered through lack of funds since the day of its establishment, and forced at one time to sell a portion of the building to acquire the means of subsistence; latterly put to manifold straits through want of space, and all along supported entirely by a small body of between four and five hundred members (considerably less in the early period of its existence), its 300,000 volumes form the grandest national monument that could be erected in Scotland. "*Si monu-*

*mentum quaeris, circumspice*" would be no inappropriate epitaph here for Sir George Mackenzie, of Rosehaugh, who figures so unfavourably in the pages of Macaulay as the terror of the Covenanters, as the man "whose eloquence and learning, long prostituted to the service of tyranny, had made him more odious to the Presbyterians than any other man of the gown." Mackenzie, as Dean of Faculty (head of the Scotch bar), took the initiative, two centuries ago, in the founding of the Library; and for this good deed alone his name deserves to be kept in memory.

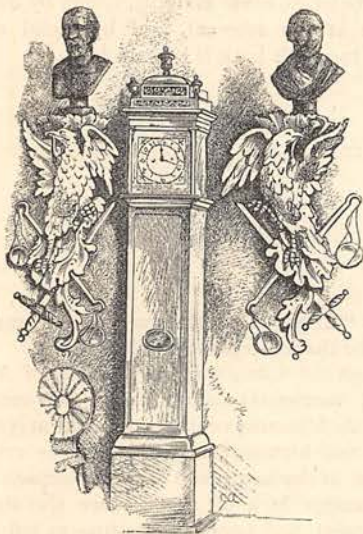
According to the Mackenzie catalogue, the number of books on the Library shelves in 1692—the end of its first decade—was but 3,140. The collection increased slowly and steadily, principally through donations, till 1709, when the Faculty secured the privilege—since continually enjoyed—of claiming a copy of every work published at Stationers' Hall. This right was, at the same time, accorded to four other libraries in Scotland—the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Andrews; but each of these institutions in 1837 commuted the right in consideration of the payment of an annual sum. The Advocates refused to part with their privilege, with the result that their Library rapidly shot ahead of all others in Scotland, and now ranks in importance next to the British Museum and the Bodleian. When the state of their exchequer allowed it, a fillip was given by the Faculty to the augmentation by an occasional purchase, such as that of the great Spanish library of the Marquis of Astorga, bought, in 1824, on the recommendation of John Gibson Lockhart, Sir Walter

of about 800 pages each, was printed by the Faculty at a cost of £5,285, the money being raised by subscription among the members themselves.

To obtain admission to the building, the visitor enters the Parliament House by a door opposite the brass slab behind St. Giles's Cathedral, which is pointed out as the last resting-place of John Knox. This is within a stone's-throw of the "Mercat Cross," recently restored by Mr. Gladstone. Passing through the doorway the visitor finds himself in a hall—a miniature copy of the Great Hall at Westminster—through a small door at the far side of which we reach the upper corridor of the Library, described by Dibdin as "one of the most quiet, composed, and book-looking rooms in Christendom," the sides of which are lined with works mainly devoted to English and Scotch topography and history; for throughout the Library, in spite of the continued pressure on the space, each room and case has its own special class of literature placed on the shelves. Above the door is hung the standard of the Earl Marshal of Scotland, carried by the "black Skirving" on Flodden's fatal field. Passing down-stairs, the Library proper is reached. Facing the visitor is the Business Room, where the wants of advocates and readers are attended to by the Library staff, and where every book is stamped and catalogued before being placed on the shelves, a copy of the title-page being made of all the works which enter the Library. Beyond this room is that reserved for readers, as may be guessed from the litter of books and papers scattered on the table at which they sit. To the left is a long hall, with massive stone pillars, and books, books, books from floor to ceiling.

In the centre of the hall are exhibited in glass cases several of the rarities of the Library. Here is the original manuscript of "Waverley," in the clear handwriting of the "Wizard of the North." How few the corrections, how fewer the interlineations in this first draft of his first novel! As if to guard the treasure, Sir Walter sits in effigy a few yards from the manuscript. Beside this volume lies a shabby tome, old, but worth its weight in gold to the student of Scottish history, for within its boards are found the earliest known letters of Mary, Queen of Scots—addressed to her mother from France, when she was a child of eleven, under the care of her uncle the Cardinal de Lorraine. It is interesting in these letters to notice how "notre petite Reine Écossaise," as Catherine de Medici called her, submits in everything to her mother's views. "I entreat you never to speak," she writes, "but to command me as your very humble and very obedient daughter and servant, for otherwise I should not think I could hold a place in your regard. As to my master, I do as I am directed." How respectful the subscription of all the fourteen letters—"Votre très humble et très obéissante fille, Marie." Not, as in the nineteenth century, "Your affectionate Mary," but, "Your very humble and very obedient daughter, Marie."

The next volume is of more interest to English visitors, who will find before them a school-boy letter



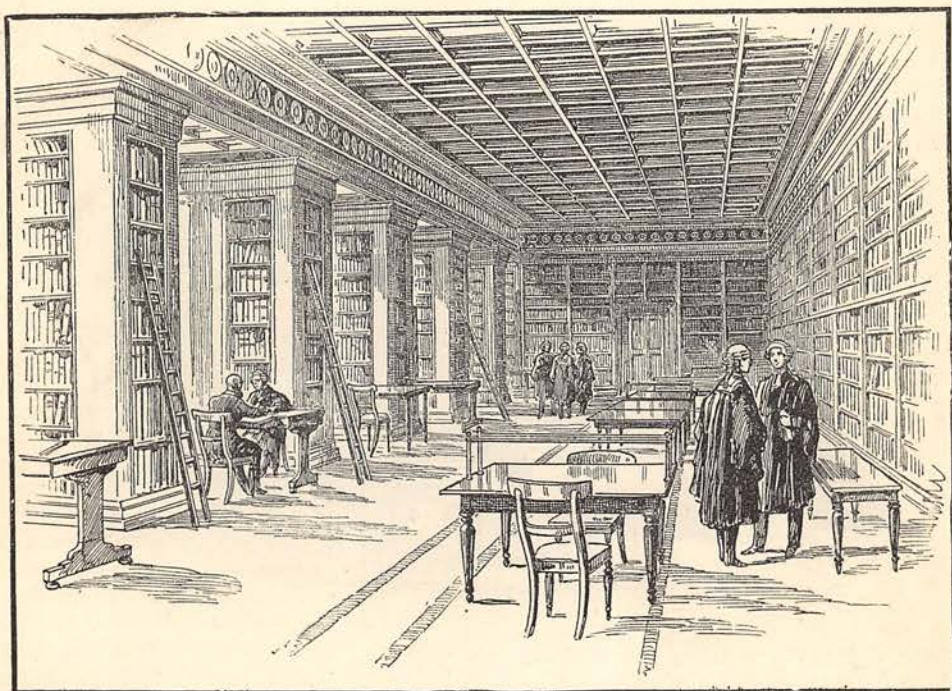
ON THE STAIRCASE.

Scott's son-in-law, for the sum of £4,000. This collection, rich in early editions of Cervantes and the classics of Spain, is now worth more than £10,000. The catalogue of 1692 consisted of 152 pages; the present catalogue, forming seven handsome volumes

from the Duke of York (afterwards James II.) to his father. It quaintly runs: "Swete Father. i learne to decline substantives and adjectives. give me your blessing. i thank you for my best man. Your loving sone, York." From this it would appear as if the youthful York had been undergoing the pleasant experience of being "tipped." The letter following, in equally elegant Latin and penmanship, is from Charles I. to his father, to whom he subscribes himself, "Tuæ m<sup>ti</sup>s filius observantissimus." Beside this precious volume lie several exquisitely illuminated Bibles and missals, with the colours as bright as on

the Prince wore for four or five days when he was obliged to disguise himself in a female dress, under the name of Bettie Burk."

Not far off two frames catch the eye, one containing "The King's Confession, 1580," when James I. and his household solemnly renounced the "errors of Popery;" and below it stands "The National Covenant, 1638," when Scotland abjured Episcopal Church government, and Jenny Geddes flung her stool at the head of the Dean in St. Giles's Cathedral, as a quiet reminder that the English liturgy was far from acceptable to a Scotch congregation.



THE CORRIDOR.

the day when they were executed. So fresh are the strawberries on this "De Civitate Dei" that they might have been plucked this morning. Modern scribes, with all their ingenuity, have not inherited the old monks' secret how to make the colours last for centuries.

Another curiosity in this case is the first stereotype plate ever produced. The inventor was an Edinburgh goldsmith named William Ged, who little dreamt when he printed by his new process this little copy of Sallust in 1739, that in the next century every newspaper in the kingdom would be taking advantage of his great invention. Close at hand is displayed a manuscript volume entitled "The Lyon in Mourning," to the inside boards of which are affixed some relics of "bonnie Prince Charlie," with their descriptions annexed: "This is a piece of the Prince's garter." "The above is a piece of that identical gown which

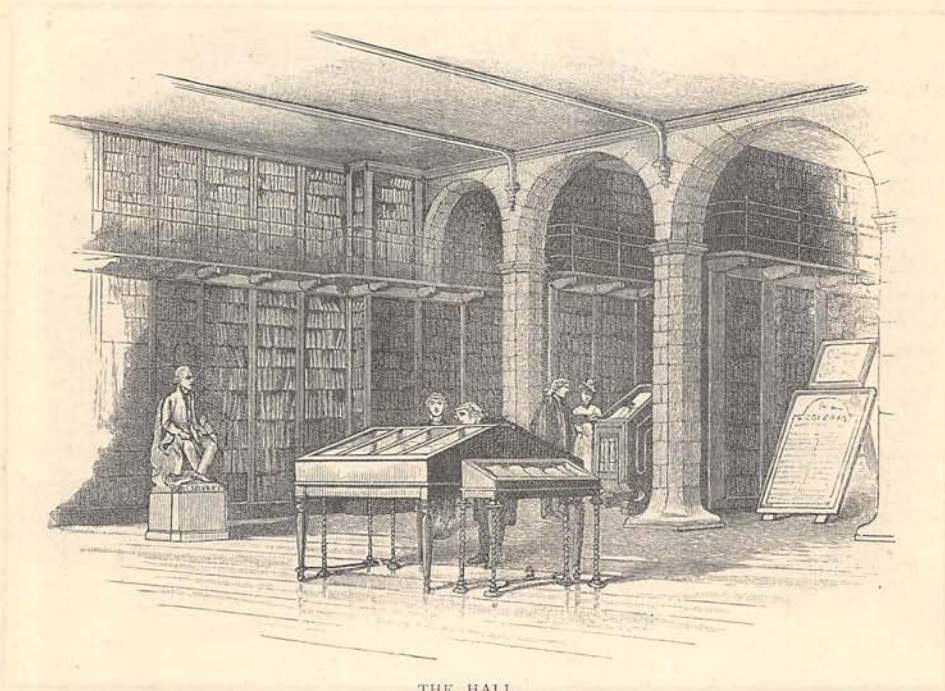
Here on the shelves can be inspected a set of the earliest and smallest of newspapers—*The Edinburgh Courant*, each number consisting of six pages measuring eleven inches by seven!

In the next room, separated from this by glass doors, long cases occupy the centre of the floor. In these, arranged on trays, lie several thousand ordnance maps of Scotland, on the scale of twenty-five inches to the mile. Here a country cousin may look upon his dwelling in the far north, the duke survey his castle with the elms in front, and the crofter his hut with the cabbages behind!

The door near the end of the room is the entrance to the large fireproof stronghold of the Library, containing over 3,000 valuable manuscripts, and a copy of the famous Mazarine Bible—the first book printed from movable metal type by the inventors of printing, Gutenberg and Fust, 1450-55. The king of all

black-letter editions of the Scriptures is called the Mazarine Bible, as the first copy was discovered in the library of the famous cardinal. A perfect copy, such as the one in the Advocates' Library, is worth £4,000. But in this Library we have Bibles of all sorts and sizes—from the portly tomes of the Complutensian, to the modest sixpenny edition carried in the pedlar's pack. Among others there is a grand edition of the "Vinegar" Bible, grangerised with large etchings and engravings illustrating sacred history. The Albert Dürers and Lucas van Leydens, in their finest states, are an endless source of delight to the eyes of art connoisseurs.

The Scotch bar, the Scotch public, and the Scotch publishers have every reason to be proud of their great Library. That the bar has profited by its possession is shown by the fact that it has produced such literary giants as Sir Walter Scott, Lord Brougham, Lord Jeffrey, John Gibson Lockhart, Francis Horner, "Christopher North," and Sir William Hamilton; while for librarians it has had the services of scholars like Thomas Ruddiman, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, and David Irving. The present literary reputation of the bar is safe in the hands of Professor Blackie, Laurence Oliphant, and Robert Louis Stevenson. That the public has benefited by this Library



THE HALL.

Then we have the Caxton Memorial Bible, described by Mr. Gladstone as "the climax and consummation of the art of printing." Within the space of twelve hours the sheets of this edition were printed and dried, forwarded from Oxford to London, folded, rolled, collated, sewn, pressed, gilded and bound. This certainly equals the feat accomplished by the gentleman in the North of England, who presided at dinner in the evening in a dress-coat made from the wool of a sheep sheared that morning on the lawn in presence of his guests.

To all their valuable stores, the Faculty are ever ready to grant free access to those engaged in *bonâ fide* research—in fact, to all but *dilettanti* inquirers stepping down for refuge from the rain to pass an idle hour in the Library, and asking the assistants for books with imaginary titles by imaginary authors.

is proved by the constant acknowledgments of the assistance rendered to them, made by writers in the prefaces of their works. As to the privileges accorded to publishers, the following extract from a letter by the late William Chambers, the eminent publisher, speaks for itself: "Publishing may be almost termed the 'staple trade' of Edinburgh. Until now it has been assisted by the liberality of the Faculty of Advocates, and if that has to be withdrawn, a heavy loss will be entailed on the community. I may just say, on behalf of the publishing business with which I am connected, that if the Advocates' Library is shut up to public investigation, we shall probably have to remove to London, and an expenditure of about £20,000 per annum amongst a miscellaneous body of persons will be abstracted from Edinburgh." It is to be hoped this catastrophe will be long deferred.

GEORGE STRONACH, M.A.

