

## Finds Books, Letters of Century Ago



*James H. Sines.*

"**B**ELIEVE me as a friend and a man of long experience that nothing will prosper that has not a foundation on the immutable principles of truth and justice."

That was the way they talked business 100 years ago, and James H. Sines, 80 Clarendon avenue, above, has the proof right at his elbow.

For he has a letter written Oct. 28, 1830, by one John Cross, who resided or did business at 10 Charterhouse Square, London, England, addressed to George Cowen, Wellington Quay, Dublin, Ireland.

Sines found the letter along with a number of other aged and interesting documents last week, when helping in the repair of the old Edward D. Clarke residence at Pataskala. Sines' sister-in-law, Mrs. Nellie B. Tipton, of near Pataskala, had purchased the 85-year-old property, and as Sines went through the upstairs he found most of the books and papers stored in an old bookcase which had been kept in a closet.

Evidently, from the tone of the old letter, Cowen owed Cross some £286, and Cross plainly said so, asking that settlement be made speedily. But, in concluding the letter, Cross took the opportunity to instruct his youthful business acquaintance of the correct manner of conducting his enterprise.

**N**EWSPAPER clippings, quaint sketches, crests and coats-of-arms, silhouettes, and even crudely reproduced colored drawings, were among the many papers found. Several books of great age were found, some of which Sines is shown holding in the above photo.

A Holy Bible, published by the American Bible society in 1853, was one of the books. Another was a small introduction to the study of geography compiled by J. Olney and published in 1841 in New York.

From other papers, it was plain that Clarke lived in Ireland, New York and, eventually, in Ohio. It is presumed he died at Pataskala, as his widow, evidently a devout member of the Methodist Episcopal church, kept the property until her death and had amassed the collection of old books, papers and magazines which Sines discovered last week.

Sines is a veteran of both the Spanish - American and World wars and makes the collection of old curiosities a hobby.

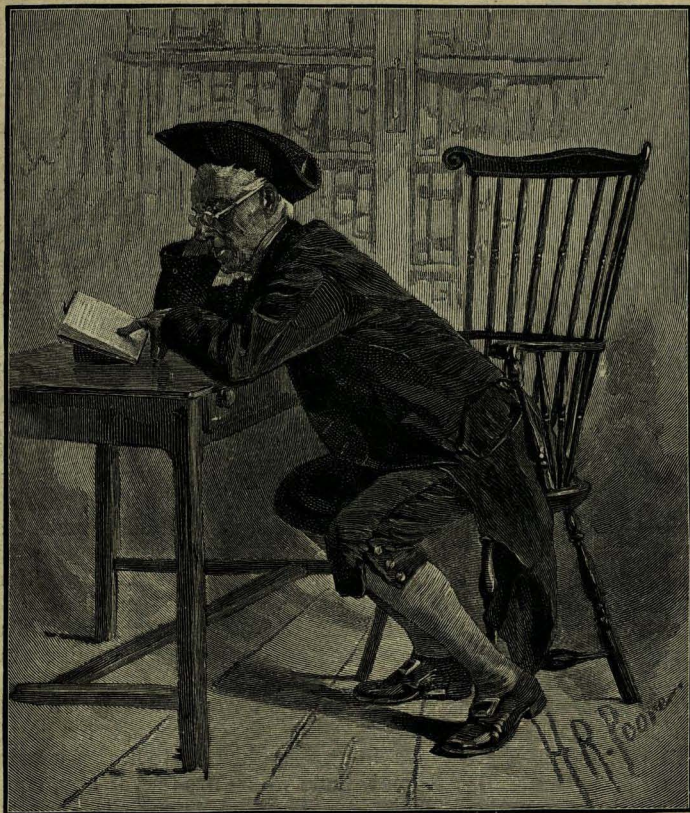
February 16, 1931.

**Q.** What is the oldest known book in the world?—N. I.

**A.** The oldest volume known to exist is the Egyptian papyrus known as the Papyrus Prisse.



## THE FATHER OF AMERICAN LIBRARIES.



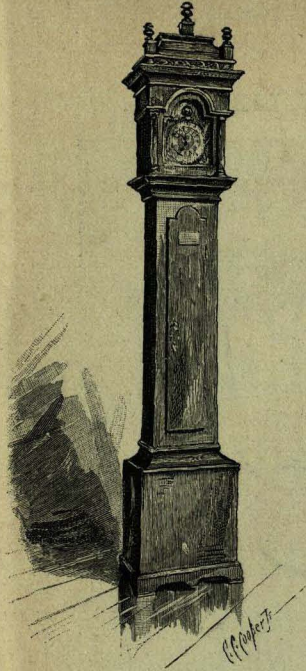
A BOOK-WORM.

It was in the year 1731, the fourth of King George the Second's reign, that the Philadelphia, the oldest American library, and, so far as is known, the first of all lending libraries, took its beginning. Fifty young men, artisans and gentlemen of that town, joined themselves into a literary association, and subscribed a hundred pounds for the purchase of books, agreeing also to pay each ten shillings annually during fifty years for the same purpose. It has lasted through changes of government and fashion, and possesses an interest beyond its mere local importance, from the historic associations which gather around it. Polished granite and enameled brick might tower around, but its dark old red brick front maintained an unshaken dignity as did Franklin's statue—"with a gown for his dress, and a Roman head," as the Doctor, when asked his wishes, quaintly expressed them. Banks might chink their money; courts, post-office, and custom-house disgorge their bustling crowds

next door,—but as you passed through its vestibule, embellished with old leathern fire-buckets, and the door swung noiselessly behind you, all became quiet. You might have been miles from the life outside, for any information coming through your ears. A repose fell on you insensibly. Old pictures looked down on you, and soberly bound books. The wired cases, and the old green tables in the alcoves, seemed to have been there always. Its habitués all knew one another, as well as all about one another's great-great-grandfathers. They laughed decorously over old jokes;—a new joke would have seemed hardly in order. Everything breathed quiet and long-continued good understanding. The epithet "old" came naturally to one's lips. "That good old library," Thackeray calls it, writing to Mr. William B. Reed.

The little fiction of the English law, that the king can never die, might almost be applied in the same sense to many members





BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S CLOCK IN THE PHILADELPHIA LIBRARY.

of the library whose shares, like the English throne, have never been vacant, one of the family always inheriting it. Out of a bead-roll as long as that of Homer's ships a few instances may be given of this curious persistency of shares in families. Colonel William Bradford became a shareholder in 1769. His son, William Bradford, Attorney-General of the United States under Washing-

ton, next held the share, which is still in the family. Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, lieutenant-governor of the province, and father of the two Revolutionary officers, General John and Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, was one of the original directors in 1731, and his descendants are still shareholders. Governor Thomas McKean, one of the signers of the Declaration, acquired in 1777 a share, which his family still holds.

In fact, it might have been thought that as it had existed, so it would always exist. With its ease, its long existence, and connection with men whose names belong to the history of their age, it had become a sort of conservative social influence. It was unagitated by questions of cataloguing, undisturbed by debates whether a library should be merely a reservoir, or should also assume the function of a filter. In brief, its periods of existence were unmarked by any of those interrogations with which, nowadays, we see fit to punctuate every experience of life. Nevertheless, the Library Company underwent, as shall presently be told, an entire change of scene. The old building has been abandoned to the Philistines and now flaunts a large gilded sign—a sign of the times—on its astonished front. And a void exists in the breasts of many ancient Philadelphians, unsatisfied by the knowledge that the cultured Bostonian or the scornful New Yorker, as he emerges from the railroad station on Broad street, is confronted by the finest building wholly devoted to library uses in America, and one which has few, if any, equals in Europe.

The library was well sponsored, being f-

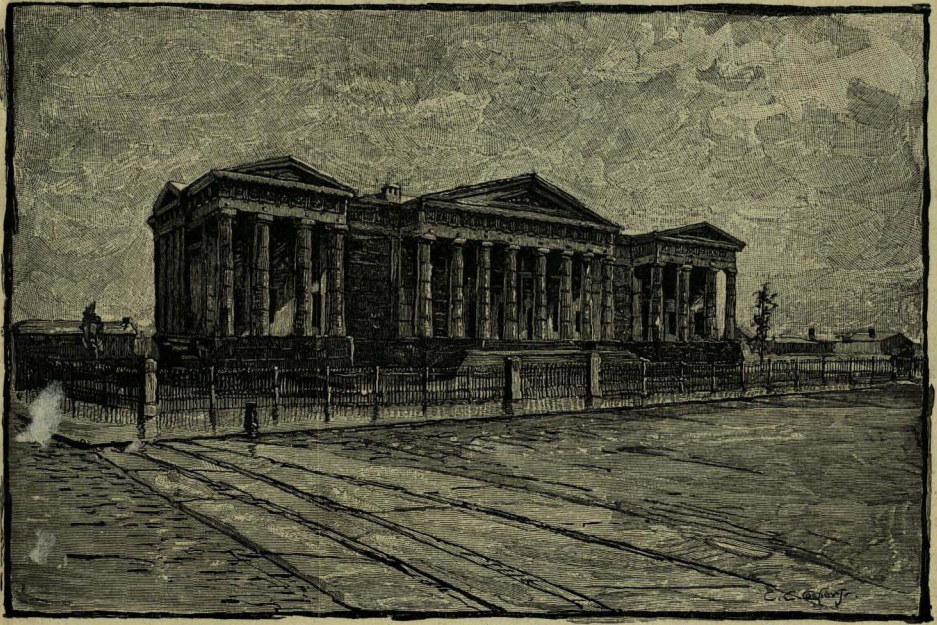


THE OLD LIBRARY, FIFTH AND LIBRARY STREETS, PHILADELPHIA.



lin's "first project of a public nature." John Dickinson, Godfrey the mathematician, Benjamin Rush, Charles Thomson, Secretary of Congress, and Franklin himself,—who was also at one time librarian,—were among its

few years Philadelphia took a decided lead in the art of printing, in amount as well as execution, and that it had a larger number of newspapers. From direct testimony, including that of the Rev. Jacob Duche, who, though



THE RIDGWAY BRANCH OF THE PHILADELPHIA LIBRARY.

early directors, and it was cradled in buildings whose names now form part of our fund of national recollections. Franklin says :

"At the time I established myself in Philadelphia there was not a good bookstore in any of the colonies southward of Boston. In New York and Philadelphia, the printers were indeed stationers; they sold only paper, etc., almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who loved reading were obliged to send for their books from England; the members of the Junto (his club) had each a few. We had hired a room to hold our club in. I proposed that we should each of us bring our books to that room, where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wished to read at home. \* \* \* This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us. \* \* \* Yet some inconveniences occurring, each took his books home again. And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. The institution soon manifested its ability, was imitated in other towns and in other provinces. \* \* \* Reading became fashionable, and our people having no amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books, and in a few years were observed by strangers to be better instructed and more intelligent than people of the same rank in other countries."

That the heaven did indeed work as Franklin said we may infer from the fact that in a

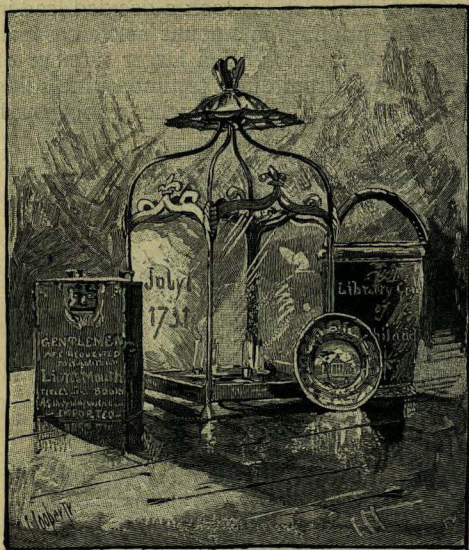
of foreign extraction, became himself a director of the Library, and afterward made himself notorious by an attempt to persuade Washington to forsake the American cause, we would infer that the character of the society was decidedly literary. He writes, in 1774 :

"There is less distinction among the citizens of Philadelphia than among those of any other city in the world. \* \* \* Literary accomplishments here meet with deserved applause. But such is the taste for books, that almost every man is a reader."

The Company, in its first choice of reading matter, took the advice of James Logan, the confidential friend of Penn, "esteeming him to be a gentleman of universal learning and the best judge of books in these parts." It is noticeable that, in their list of about fifty authors, the only ones which may be said to belong to light literature are the "Guardian," "Tatler," "Spectator," and Addison's works. The books were imported from England, and with them came the first gift to the Library. Peter Collinson, a London mercer, wrote :

"Gentlemen, I am a stranger to most of you, but not to your laudable intention to erect a public library.





RELICS OF THE OLD LIBRARY.

I beg your acceptance of my mite, 'Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy' and 'Philip Miller's Gardener's Dictionary.' It will be an instance of your candour to accept the intention and good-will of the giver and not regard the meanness of the gift."

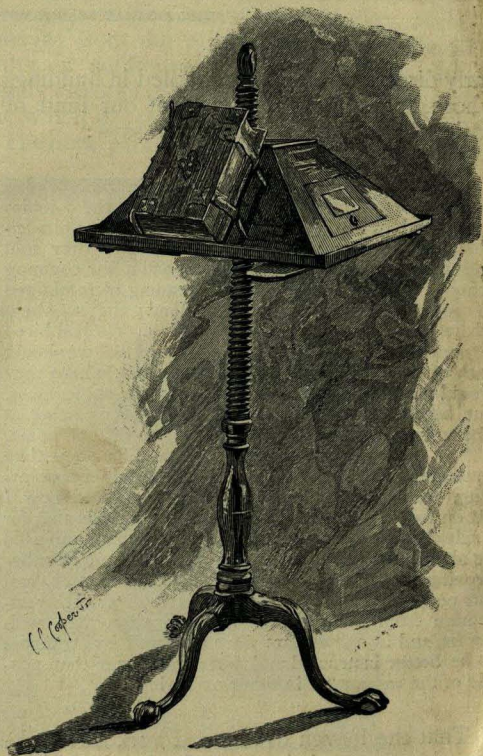
The books were at first kept in the house of Robert Grace, whom Franklin characterizes as "a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively, and witty, a lover of punning and of his friends." Afterward they were allotted a room in the State-House; and, in 1742, a charter was obtained from the Proprietaries. In 1790, having in the interval absorbed several other associations and sustained a removal to Carpenter's Hall, where its apartment had been used as a hospital for wounded American soldiers, the Library was at last housed in a building especially erected for it at Fifth and Chestnut streets, where it remained until within the last few years.

It brought only about eight thousand volumes into its new quarters, for it had languished somewhat during the Revolution and the war of words which attended our political birth. But it had received no injury. Two meetings had been called to consider measures of removal to a safe place, but whether its members were engaged in taking care of their country or of themselves, they did not attend the meetings, and the red-coats marching in on the little visit they paid us after Germantown, found the books, and read them, too. But the red-coats behaved, in this instance, at least, peaceably, paying loyally for their use and not damaging nor confiscating nor carrying away a single volume.

Many relics of the Revolutionary time are stored in the Library, among them a colos-

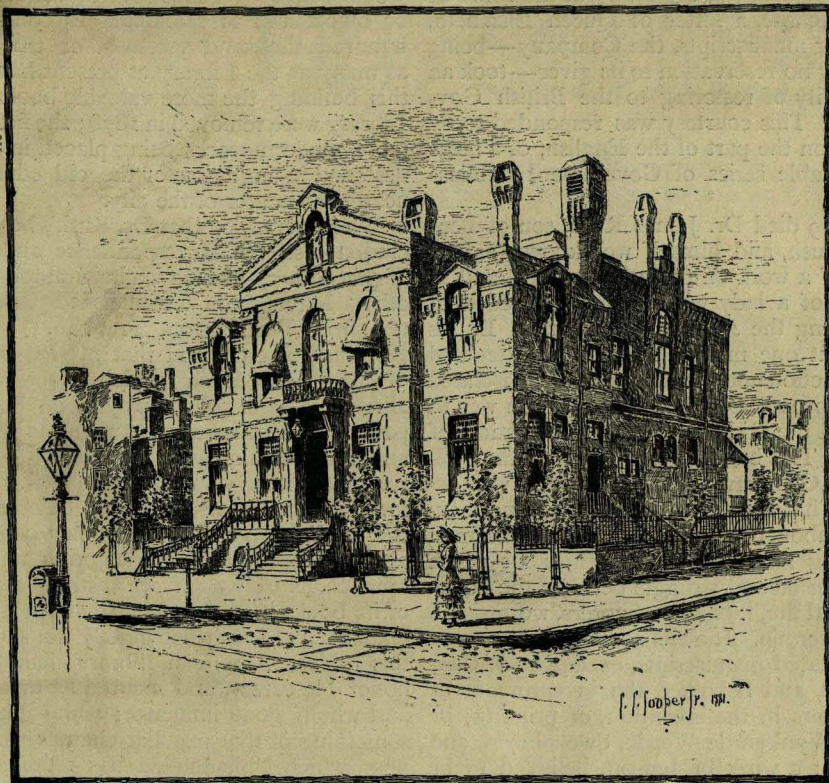
sal bust of Minerva, which stood behind the chair of the Speaker of the first Congress that met in Philadelphia. The writer of this paper is at Logan's library-table, sitting in a chair used by Washington, while Dickinson's writing-desk holds some books on the right, West's portrait of Franklin looks from overhead, and a lock of Washington's hair hangs near his left hand. Penn's and Cromwell's clocks, too, keep remembrance of other times, and go on ticking, as if reckless of a balance. Besides memories, however, the library gathered little during those sad days of the Revolution. But when the scene changed, and the weeping women who tended the wounded in churches and on door-steps after the defeat at Germantown were replaced by the triumphing cavalry who rode through the shouting streets to the State-House to lay at the feet of Congress the captured standards of Cornwallis, our Company felt the reaction, and in a little while sent an order to London for books—its first importation in nine years.

Two years after removal to its quarters on Fifth street, the Library received the most valuable gift of books it has as yet had. James Logan, friend and adviser of Penn and of the celebrated Colonial Governor, Thomas Lloyd, President of Council, and holding other high trusts in the Province,



JOHN DICKINSON'S DESK.



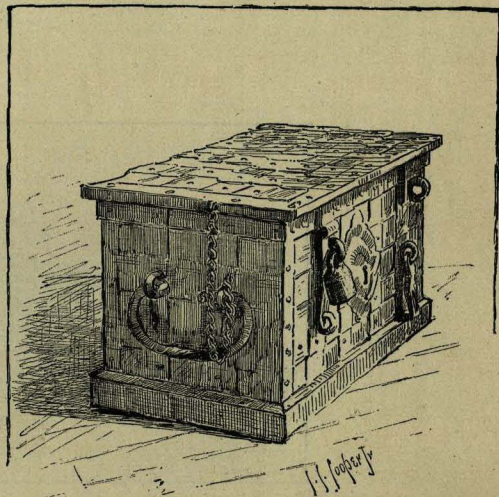


THE PRESENT BUILDING.

had gathered a most important collection of books. Mr. Logan was translator of Cicero's "Cato Major," the first classic published in America, beside being versed in natural science. His library comprised, as he tells us, "over one hundred volumes of authors, all in Greek, with mostly their versions; all the Roman classics without exception; all the Greek mathematicians. \* \* \* Besides there are many of the most valuable Latin authors, and a great number of modern mathematicians." These, at first bequeathed as a public library to the city, became a branch of the Philadelphia Library under certain conditions, one of which was that, barring contingencies, one of the donor's descendants should always hold the office of trustee. And to-day his direct descendant fills the position, and is perhaps the only example in this country of an hereditary office-holder.

The Library lost a few books by its one experience of fire, in 1831, and nearer our own times gained an important addition by a courtesy it was enabled to do the British Government. The story takes us back to the Revolution of 1688. On the flight of James II. from his throne, his lord high chancellor of

Ireland converted the state papers of which he had custody into family papers; in other words, he kept them. His grandson, on leaving America about the beginning of this century, presented them to the Library of Philadelphia. This gift, containing the private correspondence of James I. with the Privy



DR. RUSH'S STRONG BOX.



Council of Ireland, the Diary of the Marquis of Clanricarde, a letter of Queen Elizabeth, and other manuscripts, the Company—being bound by no reservation to its giver—took an opportunity of restoring to the British Government. This courtesy was responded to by the gift, on the part of the English, of a large and valuable series of Government publications.

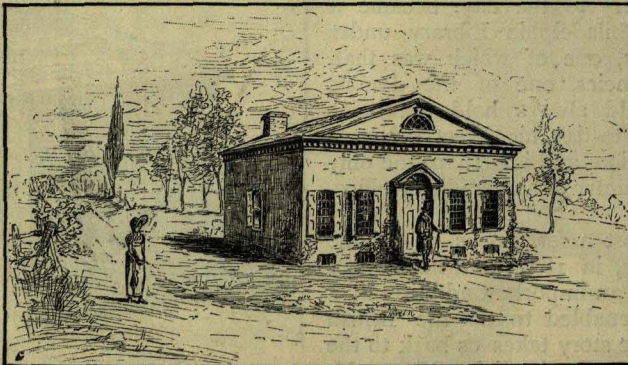
In 1869 died Dr. James Rush, son of Benjamin Rush, and himself well known as the author of a work on the human voice, and as husband of a lady who almost succeeded in naturalizing the *salon* in this country. By his will about one million dollars were devoted to the erection and maintenance of an isolated and fire-proof library-building, which was to be named the Ridgway Library, in memory of his wife. This building was offered to the Philadelphia Company, and the bequest was accepted. That institution had by this time accumulated about one hundred thousand volumes, containing many of those rarities for which there is an eternal struggle between the book-hunter and fire, rats, plate-hunters, worms, and kindred vermin. It owns some fine specimens of illuminated manuscripts, exemplars of Caxton, Fust, and Schœffer, the inventors, or at least sharers in the invention, of printing; of Pynson, Wynkyn de Worde, Sweynheym, and Pannartz; a work of Jenson, believed to be unique; of Koburger, and other works irreplaceable if lost. It is therefore gratifying to those who are aware of the heavy toll fire has levied on knowledge to know that the collection has been, in so far as may be, placed out of reach of a danger which the original "twelve leathern fire buckets and a ladder," procured by the directors, might not have averted.

A building of the Doric order was erected,

which with its grounds covers an entire square or block, and is calculated to contain four hundred thousand volumes, or three times as many as the Library at present has, and to this building the more valuable books of the Library were removed in 1878; the fiction and more modern works being placed in another designed in imitation of the old edifice, and nearer the center of the city.

When it is added that Dr. Rush's bequest included also the correspondence and papers of his father,—which contain among many others letters from distinguished persons, letters from Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Kosciuszko, etc., and that mysterious diary of Benjamin Rush which John Adams alludes to, and which played an important part in the controversy between Mr. Bancroft and Mr. William B. Reed, but which nobody seems to have viewed,—it will be seen that few more valuable gifts have been made to the public. To the public, it may be said, for although this library is in its origin and maintenance entirely a private institution, the use of its books is freely given to any respectable reader. I have tried briefly to show that this oldest American library has had an honorable career, and exerted an appreciable and wholly good influence; while illustrating something of that peculiar character of quietness which Philadelphia has retained since Penn directed that the people should so build their houses "that there may be ground on each side for gardens, or orchards, or fields, that it may be a green country town, which will never be burnt and always wholesome." Indeed, few institutions have been more naturally the growth of a community, or better illustrate the good effects of such unstimulated growth, than the old Philadelphia Library.

*Bunford Samuel.*



LOGANIAN LIBRARY, SIXTH AND WALNUT STREETS.



# THE OLD SQUIRE'S BOOK

By C.A. Stephens

THE book is out of print now, and I do not know where a copy of it could be picked up. I have been to the old bookshops in Boston and in Portland, and also to the public libraries; and I have advertised in a literary journal; but I have not come across a single copy of it.

That is not so very strange, after all, for the book was not published to sell. If I remember correctly, only seven hundred copies were printed, and the old squire gave no copies to editors, reviewers or libraries. As long ago as 1888, he had given away his last copy to a boy who asked for one; for that was what he had the book printed for—to give to boys.

When he was a lad, in 1820, one of the old-time schoolmasters of Maine gave him a little book called *Facts of Useful Knowledge*—a curious volume that contained a miscellaneous collection of reading matter, beginning with Eclipses and Comets, going on to The Atmosphere, The Months of the Year, The Sources of the Mississippi, Insect Life, Washington's Personal Habits, The Grain Fields of the West, Remarkable Books in Chinese, Latin and Labor, Educate Yourself, and so on for fully two hundred different topics.

There were not many books in great-grandfather's pioneer cabin. The Bible, the Catechism, the Hymn Book and the Farmer's Almanac were almost the only volumes to which when a lad the old squire had access. So this little volume of useful facts was a bonanza to him. He pored over it until he nearly knew it by heart; and he often said, in later years, that that quaint little book had done more to foster his tastes and to stimulate his ambition to learn than any textbook he studied subsequently at Hebron Academy. The book came to him at a time when his boyish mind was eager for information.

Remembering what good that book had done him, the old squire, at the age of seventy, determined to write a similar but more comprehensive book, and to give it to boys who did not have many advantages at home.

About the time that he retired from the lumber business and gave up the care of the farm, he set to work on his book. From week to week his interest in it grew. He went walking round the house and the farm with his face alight with the new ideas for the book that kept coming into his mind. He sent off for works on a great variety of subjects and borrowed books from his friends at Portland. He had, I am sure, a tremendously good time with that book, for he was firm in his faith that it would accomplish a great work.

The old gentleman was a year or more in compiling it. At first he had planned a volume of about two hundred pages; but more and

more things suggested themselves to him as he went on, and he added page after page, until the final work contained four hundred and fifty

pages of fine, nonpareil type. He started the book with an account of the sun, the earth, the moon, the planets, the Milky Way, the fixed stars, the constellations and the signs of the zodiac. Then came a description of the world. He explained the causes of earthquakes and volcanoes and described some of the historic catastrophes and eruptions. He told how coal, petroleum and fossils came to exist; and he wrote extensively about metals,—gold, silver, copper, iron, and so forth,—and also about insect life, trees, flowers, reptiles, fishes and mammals.

After that he described the different races of mankind. He gave an account of the Indians of America, and told ten lively stories of Indian war times. He also told of the Aztecs of Mexico and of the Incas of Peru and described the conquest of those countries by Cortes and Pizarro. Much of this the old gentleman condensed and wrote out himself—a task in which he showed not a little skill in selecting the points of greatest interest.

Afterwards came accounts of the four great empires of antiquity; the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian and the Roman, with brief biographies of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander the Great and the Cæsars. The history of Egypt and Greece, the wars of Rome and Carthage, made thirty pages. Mythology came next, and, following that, the great religions of mankind, what each taught, with sketches of their founders—Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius and Jesus. He added selections from the Bible, the Koran and the Vedas, and pointed out how greatly the Christian creed excelled others.

Then came a hundred pages of ancient literature, beginning with the Roman, the Greek and the Hebrew alphabets. He included examples of Greek from Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Homer's *Iliad*, and of Latin from *Cæsar's Commentaries* on the Gallic War and from *Vergil*, in order that boys might see how those languages looked and be stimulated to study them further. Translations from other classic authors followed.

He next took up modern literature, English, French, Italian, German and Spanish; he gave citations from the most celebrated authors, and suggested what was most worth reading.

Finally came what was really the most remarkable part of the book: two hundred and



ten pages of a truly wonderful miscellany; a veritable thesaurus of everything the old squire had ever seen that interested him or piqued his fancy. Where he had gathered all the facts I cannot imagine. This miscellany included accounts of remarkable epochs, episodes and crises of history, dates of all great achievements and inventions and of birthdays of historic characters, wise sayings, last words of the departing great, quotations from famous speeches, and the Constitution of the United States. There followed a brief history of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War, with accounts of the great battles on land and sea, and also accounts of certain other great battles of the world.

That was not all, or the half, or the quarter, of what was compressed into those four hundred and fifty pages. I do not believe that anything equaling it was ever done before, or has been done since. It contained an education in itself.

I forgot to say that among all those different topics were sandwiched short anecdotes and stories, generally pertaining to the subject last treated. In short, from start to finish, it was what Horace Greeley would have called "mighty interesting reading."

The old squire had planned to have illustrations made for the book; but because of the difficulty of getting good pictures, he finally decided to use only a few portraits of famous personages. If set up in ordinary long-primer type, the book would have made nine or ten hundred pages; that was why he chose nonpareil, for he wanted to make it a book that a boy could carry in his pocket.

At the village, six miles from the old farm, there was a printer named Drake who published the county paper, and also a book-binder named Noyes. To them the old squire applied, and after many conferences he contracted for the printing and the binding of seven hundred copies of *The Book for Boys and Girls*.

He had really intended the book for boys; but he wished to be liberal and on reflection determined that girls should be included in the title. He dedicated

his book, I remember, "To all the Boys and Girls whom I know."

After further discussions at the printing office, they agreed on a book six inches long and four inches wide, with the margins of the pages cut narrow; the paper selected was thin but of very good quality. Mr. Noyes contracted to bind the book well and strongly in firm cloth—a binding that would stand hard usage.

I have forgotten the exact sum that the book cost, but it was so large that Grandmother Ruth murmured against so much expense.

"If you must give books to boys, you had better give them to the old lady," the old lady argued. "That will do her good and make better men."

The old squire's reflection on the character of his literary effort. "Yes, Bibles are good," said, and his blue eyes twinkled. "If you give them the Bibles, Ruth, I've got quite a lot of money laid away."

Grandmother replied that she had never had any idea of giving away books to all creation; and there the argument hung fire.

Setting the type and printing and binding the book took nearly seven months, and in the course of the work the rural composers suffered much distress of mind. The old squire read and corrected the proof sheets himself.

For hours and days he sat by the sitting window with his glasses far down on his nose, his pencil between thumb and forefinger, carefully and painstakingly going over each page, and referring now and then to the dictionary. In spite of his scrutiny, however, a good many typographical errors escaped him. Proof reading is exacting work for a man wholly unaccustomed to it. But he toiled through it conscientiously; and afterwards, when the book was printed, he went over each copy and corrected the mistakes with pen and ink.

I feel sure that he drove to the village fifty times before that book was finally printed. When it was done and the books had lain four weeks under pressure for the binding to "set," the old gentleman went after them himself with the farm wagon and drew the three heavy boxes home. I helped him to unload them and to put them away in his room. Grandmother said nothing; she was far from pleased.

For years afterwards whenever the old squire drove out he carried one of those books in his pocket. If he met a boy on the road, he always asked him to get in and ride. That, in fact, had always been his custom. He knew most of the boys in our rural town and a good many in adjoining towns. He liked to talk with boys and to find out what they were interested in. If the lad appeared fairly intelligent, the old gentleman would say when they came to part:

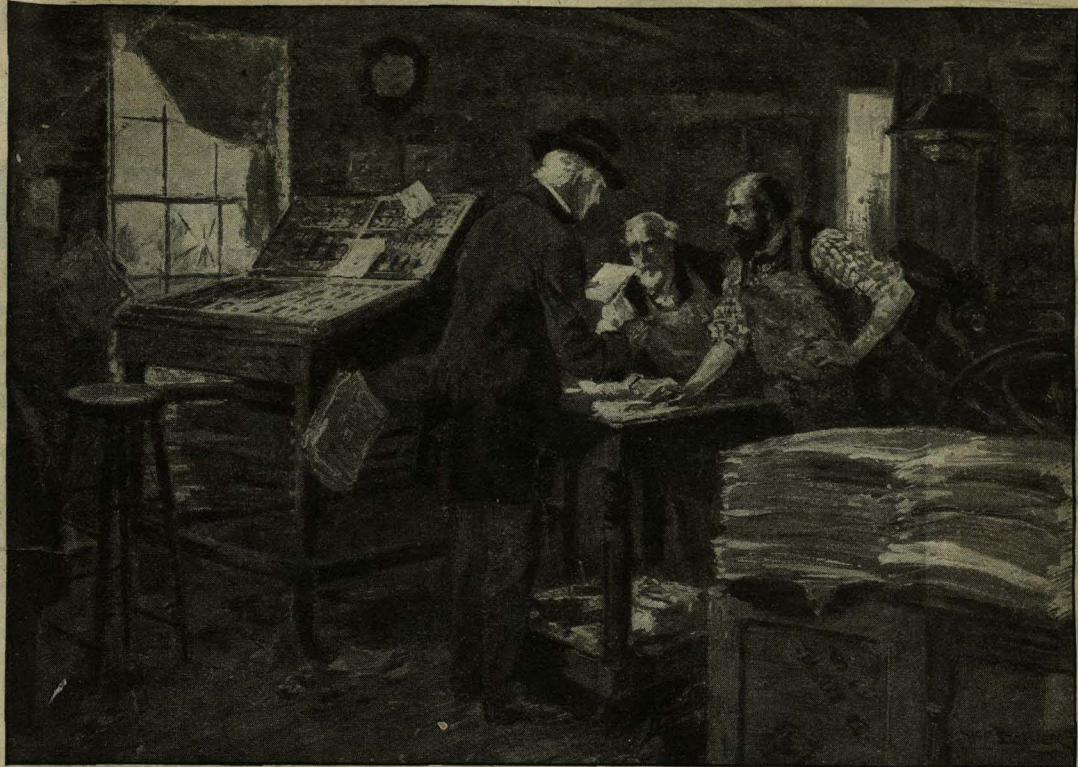
"Oh, I've got a book here that perhaps you'd like to read. It tells a lot about the things we've been talking of. If you will read it, I'll give it to you; and next time we happen to meet you can tell me how you like it."

He was six or seven years in giving those books away. Most of them went to boys, but now and then he gave one to a girl, if she seemed to have a taste for reading and study. He had intended to keep three copies at home.

but he finally gave those away—the last one to a lame boy who was very eager to have it.

Years passed, and the book appeared to be wholly forgotten. The old squire lived for twenty-eight years after he had had the book printed, reaching the advanced age of ninety-eight years and five months; but it was not until after he had died that the work that his book had done began to show.





AFTER MANY CONFERENCES HE CONTRACTED FOR THE PRINTING AND THE BINDING  
OF SEVEN HUNDRED COPIES

It now appears that his effort to interest boys in acquiring useful knowledge and to stimulate them to get an education has been steadily and silently at work all that time. Within the past year we have heard of the book more than a score of times from men now prominent in business or professional life. The old squire's book, they declare, first started them on their way upward.

Only last month a man from the Pacific Coast, now a Member of Congress, wrote to ask whether we could get him another copy.

"I lost my first one, the one the old squire gave me, in the fire that burned my house four years ago," he writes. "I felt worse about

losing that book than about losing anything else that burned; seeing the Greek alphabet in it, and reading those extracts from Xenophon's *Anabasis*, led me to fit for college.

"My folks lived in Maine then, and we had very few books. One June morning when I was about eleven I started to walk three miles to the store to buy firecrackers for the Fourth of July. On the way the old squire overtook me and asked me to ride. I told him where I was going and what for. He asked me whether I knew where firecrackers were made and then

told me about China and the Chinese. I suppose I looked interested, for when we came to the store he gave me that book. I used to spend hours reading it; but I don't believe I ever thought to come and thank him for it. Two years after that my folks moved West.

"I suppose the old squire can hardly be living at this time; but if he is, I shall be much inclined to come to Maine on purpose to see him and thank him for that book. I want to take his hand and look into his kind face and tell him how much I owe to him."

March 13, 1919

**Q.** Why was Shakespeare's play given the name, "As You Like It?"—**D. R.**

**A.** Various commentators have advanced different theories as to the name. Braithwait, however, in his *Barnaby's Journal*, speaks of "As You Like It" as a proverbial motto, and this seems more likely to imply the true explanation of the title of Shakespeare's play. The title of the comedy may, on this supposition, be exactly parallel with that of "Much Ado About Nothing." The proverbial title of the play implies the freedom of thought and indifference to censure which characterizes the sayings and doings of most of the actors in this comedy of human nature in a forest.

**Q.** Which of Hawthorne's books is considered his best?—**G. S.**

**A.** Opinions differ, but some authorities say that in "The Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne reached the fullness of his power.



# Poet's Corner;

**T**O Mr. Robert Lounsbury Black, president of the Mercantile Library belongs the latest inspiration to thrill the literary wing of society. Mr. Black is going to provide a "poet's corner" at the library. Already a corner overlooking the far and shining river has been selected for this spot, plans are made for its dedication and the books of poetry of the library are being moved into the corner.

Mr. Black's fine idea is backed by that ardent poetry lover and literary patron of his board, Mr. W. T. H. Howe. The poet's corner of the library will be dedicated during the visit to Mr. Howe of Mr. and Mrs. John Galsworthy the last of March. Its easy chairs and poetic surroundings will give hostel to the tired business man and to the busy shopper downtown alike for a few moments of poetry in the midst of the strain and stress of everyday life, and thereby serve a great purpose in this machine age.

Living with poetry has long been a theme with the poets themselves and their preachment. Now comes Mr. Black and offers to Cincinnati a poet's corner with the best modern verse and the best classics and more, a restful spot in which to pause an hour or so and enjoy this beauty. Miss Elizabeth Kellogg is the first to make a gift to the poet's corner.

She has presented a complete file of the Gypsy, the Cincinnati all-poetry magazine to it. Early volumes of this little magazine are scarce and now bibliophile loot. The first copy not so long ago, inscribed by James Stephens, from whose pen it contained original poems and with a letter from the poet's wife, Cynthia Stephens, "laid in," brought in the neighborhood of \$50. The purchase was made for the library of Owen Johnson. So Miss Kellogg has made quite a gift.

Mr. Black is now busy with his plans for the poet's corner and its dedication, to which all the poets of the town will be asked en bloc, as the "housewarming" tea will interest especially those who write verses, of course. Committees from the various poetry groups about the city will assist Mr. Black and his board on the auspicious day of the opening of the Poet's corner.

## "Public Library Too Crowded for Good Service"

Trustees' Chairman Says Complaints Are Received.

**T**HE total number of persons who went into the main building of the Public Library last week was 33,390," said James A. Green, president of the board of trustees, Thursday. "That was a daily average of 5,565. Friday 863 persons went in between noon and 1 p. m.

"Of course, that means that every facility, both of the staff and the building, is overtaxed, and so strange is the inconsistency of some persons that we had a complaint from one man. He said it was ridiculous for the Public Library to be asking a new building when it was not taking proper care of its patrons. He found fault because he wanted to read and had not been able to find a place to sit down.

"No doubt he felt aggrieved and that he felt it right and proper in a Public Library to be provided with a chair and a place to read. That is just the point. He should have found a chair and should have been able to read his book in quiet. And the library now is so hopelessly overcrowded that scores every day must have the same experience that I have described.

"But this is the very reason why we need a new and adequate building. Cincinnati has outgrown the present one. In 1872, when it was built, it was well adapted to the size of the city. Now it is thirty years out of date.

"We well can be proud of the Public Library system, but we can't be proud of the old main building. I think this community should not be obliged to apologize for any of our great communal undertakings. When strangers come to town and they see the library they may be polite enough to say nothing. But we Cincinnatians blush, and we blush with reason, for in this day and generation a Public Library should be a visible expression of the good taste and high intelligence of the people."

### TODAY IN HISTORY.

1667—Milton disposed of the copyright of "Paradise Lost" for \$25. Had hard time finding publisher for this immortal classic.

APRIL 27, 1929—





LEBANON PUBLIC  
LIBRARY.

### THE GAPS IN YOUR LIBRARY.

**M**OST private libraries are one-sided. The average book-owner has a more or less jumbled collection of books. He has added new books without regard to system. Perhaps he has been over-persuaded to purchase the books which he does not need. Perhaps he has been attracted to some particular branch of study, and has bought books accordingly. But there are great departments of literature which have no representation on his shelves. Other departments are represented by books that are hopelessly lacking in breadth and power.

How shall the gaps be filled? They ought to be filled with the right books. Some books already there should be heroically weeded out to make room for books which possess insight and strength. But the ordinary book catalogue offers little help in this direction. It is a mere trade-list, not always compiled with the needs of the book-buyer in view so much as the needs of the bookseller.

A new sort of catalogue has just been issued by the Methodist Book Concern, which is a real guide to good books. It is aptly called "Best Books," and its lists include besides the publications of the Concern the typical books published by other houses in every department of English literature. It is especially full in the sections of religion and philosophy. In most cases it gives a pithy, descriptive sentence which helps the reader to "place" the book indicated, and to decide on its value for his needs.

The classification of the catalogue by departments, and its system of cross-references, make it possible to discover what are the books one ought to have, in order to cover properly any one subject.

"Best Books" is sent free to all who ask for it. But it may easily be worth many dollars to the thoughtful layman or preacher who desires to build up a working library.

The task of compiling this most valuable catalogue has been performed by a committee representing the merchandise departments of the Book Concern at New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago. The Concern is to be congratulated on the taste and good judgment with which the work has been done. If the patrons of our publishing houses are wise there will be a great demand for the new catalogue, and as a result a wider market for the world's best books.



# LITTLE STORIES OF SUCCESS

*Sauk Center Stops Scoffing and Shows Pride in Its Native Son, Sinclair Lewis, Winner of Nobel Prize in Literature*

OUT in the little village of Sauk Center, Minn., about three decades ago the banker, the preacher, the grocery man, the hardware merchant, and the constable—and just about all the rest of the folks—expected red-headed Sinclair Lewis to be almost anything but successful in his life.

Even when he was graduated from the public school at a rather tender age and then shortly afterward admitted to Yale University, the good folks of Sauk Center refused to believe that anything good would come from him.

Today, though, all is changed. Sauk Center is pleased with Sinclair Lewis—even proud of him. For he has just received the Nobel prize in literature for 1930, won by his book, "Main Street," which has sold more than 800,000 volumes and set new records in the literary field.

And Lewis has announced that he'll use the money to support a worthy young American writer—an announcement which caused much attention in the newspapers until the writer added the statement that the "worthy young American writer" was none other than Sinclair Lewis.

Sauk Center is even so proud of Sinclair Lewis that it has gotten over its pet peeve—the assertion that Lewis held it up to ridicule in the famous novel which won him the \$46,350 Nobel cash prize.

Lewis, once he had completed his education in Yale University, did not return to Sauk Center, where his father was a successful physician. Instead he came to grips with the world in the position of a reporter for newspapers in San Francisco and Kansas City.

From that job he moved upward to a position as editor of a nationally known magazine, and then he decided to do a little writing himself.

He went home to Sauk Center, borrowed \$500 from his father so that he would not have to work for a while, and then wrote his first successful novel.

There were demands for more of his books, so Sinclair launched seriously into his chosen profession. Today he is known the world over for the books he has written in his own inimitable style.

Mr. Lewis travels wherever he chooses to lay the scenes of his stories. In fact, he spends most of his time traveling into distant parts of the world, his vacations being about the only times he actually spends at home. His home, incidentally, is a beautiful farm in New England. Lewis is married and has one son.

Sauk Center sees little of Sinclair Lewis these days. The last time was nine or ten years ago, when he attended the funeral of his mother.

But Sauk Center plans to place a tablet in his honor in the town library now!



SINCLAIR LEWIS

LINCOLN'S  
GETTYSBURG  
ADDRESS AND  
SEVERAL OTHER  
SPEECHES  
ARE IN  
THIS TINY BOOK  
OWNED BY THE  
BROOKLYN  
LIBRARY,  
N.Y.







## The Best of This Story Is That It's True

By H. W. C.

Most every one has heard of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but how many know the story from which Harriet Beecher Stowe fashioned her immortal book? There was an "Uncle Tom" in the flesh, though he did not die under the lash of Simon Legree, but lived to a ripe old age and died under the British flag in Canada.

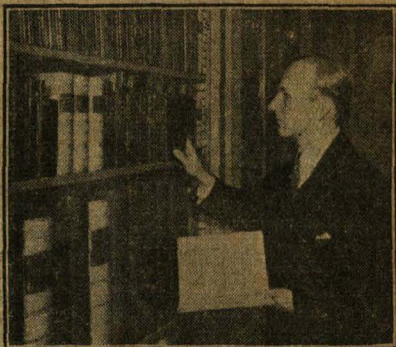
Josiah Henson was born a slave in Maryland and was of pure African blood. When a young man he took all of his master's slaves from Charles County, Md., to Kentucky to prevent their passing into the hands of creditors. There they were hired out to neighboring planters, and for a while he worked for a good-natured master named St. Clair. His arms were crippled, the result of a blow from an overseer in Maryland.

He paid \$500 toward his freedom, but was taken to New Orleans by his master's son to be sold when the latter was attacked by the yellow fever, and the slave accompanied him back to Kentucky and nursed him through his illness.

He finally escaped with his wife, and carrying his two children on his back through the swamps, made his way to Cincinnati, where he had friends among the colored people. Eventually he made his way across the state to Sandusky, whence he and his family were conveyed to Canada by the kind-hearted Captain of a sailing schooner.

Henson settled at Colchester, Ont., learned to read and write at the age of 55 and was the pastor of a church there. Afterward he made several trips to England, where he preached and was entertained in 1876 at Windsor Castle by Queen Victoria.

## Books Worth Millions Held on Four Shelves



ON THESE four shelves is assembled what is believed to be the world's most valuable collection of the works of Shakespeare. The collection, valued at \$2,500,000, is matched only by that in the British Museum. It includes 165 volumes of Shakespeare, there being a first edition of every Shakespeare play with the exception of "Titus Andronicus." This \$2,500,000 shelf of books is in the library at San Marino, Cal., a branch of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery which has recently issued the first of a series of facsimile reproductions of the books.

May 10, 1931

IN 1903 THERE WERE 68 books for each 1,000 of our population; in 1913 there were 89 for every 100; and in 1923, there were 115 for every 100.