

"Sold at the Foundery."

BY THOMAS HAYES, OF THE ALLAN LIBRARY.



THE CHARM of these words is known only to a collector of old Methodist literature. I appeal for the truth of this to my worthy friends: Mr. Smith, of Whitechurch; the Rev. Rd. Green, of Didsbury; Mr. Stampe, of Great Grimsby; and others.

The first mention of the Foundery as a place where Mr. Wesley's publications were to be had was in 1740, on the title-page of "Hymns and Sacred Poems" of that date, and this may be regarded as the origin of the Methodist Book Room. The history of the Foundery is too well known to Methodists to need repeating here. The late Mr. Stevenson in his "History of City-road Chapel," to which I am indebted for some of these jottings, says that it was situated on the boundary of Moorfields, in a bye-path called Windmill-hill. I may add that it was on the east side of the present Tabernacle-street, near the corner of Worship-street. Mr. Wesley's first bookseller was James Hutton, the Moravian, whose shop was in the Strand, just through the old Temple Bar; but it was at Mr. Bray's house, in Little Britain, that the unsold books were stored, till the Foundery was taken, repaired, and made ready for occupation, the end of the band room being fitted up with shelves. Here, for forty years Mr. Wesley carried on what soon became an extensive book store. Thomas Butts and William Briggs were the first book agents. They were succeeded by Samuel Francks, of whom Charles Wesley speaks well in his journal, both as a man of business and as a Christian. Sad to say, "poor Francks," as John Wesley calls him, yielded to the pressure of disease, and hanged himself in the Foundery in 1773. Strangely enough, a fortnight afterwards Matthews, the Foundery schoolmaster, followed his sad example. What a gruesome business!

John Atlay was the first book steward appointed by Mr. Wesley. His business qualifications, however, did not recommend him. He told Mr. Wesley that his stock of books in London was worth more than £13,000, but in reality it was not of more value than £5,000, as estimated by two booksellers employed by Mr. Wesley to ascertain the worth. He was in office for five years; George Whitefield followed, from 1779 till 1804; Robert Lomas, from 1804 to 1808; Thomas Blanshard, from 1808 till 1823; and John Kershaw, from 1823 till 1827.

Mr. Mason, whose praise cannot be sufficiently set forth, and who may be regarded as the saviour of the book room from its financial difficulties, occupied the stewardship for nearly thirty-seven years: from 1827 to 1864; he attended to his duties to within half an hour of his death. He was succeeded by the late Dr. Jobson, who died in 1881.

In 1777, when City-road Chapel was built, the book-selling was removed thither to the house adjoining the morning chapel, which was afterwards the residence of Mr. Benson. The packing room and warehouse for storage of the books was under the morning chapel. What a contrast between such a dungeon and the present noble warehouse!

In 1808 No. 14 City-road was taken, with premises in the rear, largely increasing the space occupied. It was in 1839, the centenary year, that the most extensive alterations and additions were made. In 1882 the house now occupied as the saloon was taken, the windows of which form one of the sights of City-road. In 1889 the lease of the three or four houses extending to Castle-street was secured, mainly for the erection of the building containing the Allan Library.

The book room has been largely benefited by a succession of good business men as book stewards and managers. Many of the clerks and warehousemen have grown grey in the service. The present manager, Mr. Strange, a few years ago completed his jubilee of labour. Packing time, at the end of each month, is a sight worth seeing. The warehouse is a perfect bee-hive, and the mass of books, magazines, &c., sent away every month is enormous. It fills one with surprise, while going through the premises, to see the mass of paper and books stored up in the rooms. Few publishing houses can report such a successful career.—*Methodist Recorder*.

The Book Louse.

IN his interesting book (Longmans; 6/-) on "Our Household Insects," Mr. E. A. Butler has the following to say about these pests of the book lover:—

They are very interesting little things to watch the movements of, and this is easily done by enclosing them in a glass-topped box and examining them under a low power, say a two-inch objective, of the compound microscope. There is a sprightliness and apparent intelligence about their actions which is quite surprising in creatures of such very minute size; and as one gazes at them down the tubes of the instrument, one cannot help thinking that if they were but a little larger, they might be made pets of, and become quite companionable. One habit they have which is extremely curious: after running about for a time they will suddenly stop, arch up the body, and raising one hind-leg, bend it under the arched body, and, like the earwig, turn it round towards the mouth, pressing the foot close against the jaws; what they do with it there it is difficult to make out, but they remain in this position for some seconds, and seem to be occupied in nibbling at the foot, like a dog biting the nails of its hind-foot, and are apparently either cleaning it or using it to clean the jaws and other parts immediately round the mouth. That a fore-foot should be used in this way would not be at all surprising, but it is certainly a curious acrobatic feat thus to employ a hind-foot.

How playful and innocent! But the reaction to hatred will be all the fiercer for the short truce. Acrobatic feats are all very well in their way, but no bookman cares to see his own shelves turned into a gymnasium of this sort.

I TAKE this opportunity of expressing my very high appreciation of the worth and value of THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER as a trade journal. I have derived much benefit and information from the study of its varied pages and illustrations, and wish for it continued success and prosperity.—JAS. A. PATRICK, Glasgow.