In the Library at Paules.

The Library of St. Paul’s is situated in the south-west corner of the Cathedral adjoining the clock tower, well up above the clatter of the streets, which only reaches it in a subdued murmur similar to the distant moaning of the in-rolling sea. It is a weary climb up the circular staircase, at least it seemed so to us as we trudged up beside the Rev. Dr. Simpson, the librarian, who having just come out of a serious illness found the stairs “longer than they used to be,” a remark in which we concurred, for looking back to the days of our boyhood, we can remember racing up those same stairs against time, and carrying up and down huge piles of spongy folios to and from the binders where we were apprenticed. Ah me! it is hard work to carry ourselves now. But we can almost feel an affection for those old books, having had a hand in smoothing out their musty and wrinkled leaves, patching up their broken and worm-eaten corners, and raspering off the powdered leather on their backs to make way for a fresh protection. And that puts us in mind of one of our boyish larks: we once saved up a half handful of the dry gritty powder formed of the dusty decaying leather, and surreptitiously conveyed it into the great snuff-box which stood on the counter of “The Chapter House” bar for the benefit of the customers, and gleefully watched the strange contortions of those who tried a pinch of the vile mixture, with an impish delight. Oh you books of Paules, you have amused us with your quaint many-worded titles; you have given us fun out of your mouldering remains; you have made our back ache many a time; and now shall you bring us profit.

The library is a handsome square lofty chamber, lined with oaken shelves and presses, with a gallery running round it, supported by most magnificently carved oak brackets, the work of Grinling Gibbons, such oak brackets as are rarely to be met with, estimated to be worth about £150 apiece; but owing to the strong light that comes slanting into the room from the great south windows, the visitor is almost dazzled and only sees the opposite side under the gallery in deep gloom. To see the library properly, one must be allowed to cross the polished oak floor—over which we once slipped with a load of books—and stand back towards the south, when the light shows up the library to advantage. In the centre of the room there used to stand an old Psalterium chained to a desk, but now there is a glass case filled with some of the more curious or precious works which the present librarian has discovered among the collection.

Before Dr. Simpson took the office, in 1862, the library had been sadly neglected; the books were shockingly out of repair, and there seems to have been no special pains taken to procure such works as would be naturally sought within its walls. Works concerning the history of the cathedral were noticeably absent, save only Dugdale’s “History of St. Paul’s Cathedral,” but now there is a very valuable series of works on this subject, besides a collection of nearly a thousand plates, plans, views, etc., of St. Paul’s and of London, especially such as give distant views of the cathedral towering high above the other buildings.

From Dugdale’s history we learn that the library was originally founded by Walter Shyrington, clerk, and that there were attached both scribes and binders and is evident from some of the manuscripts still in existence. Dugdale gives a catalogue of the books in the library in the year 1458, but nearly the whole of these manuscripts were consumed in the fire of 1561, or the more general conflagration of 1666. A few were saved, how, no one knows; probably they were lent out at the time, and thus escaped the general destruction. One is “Avicenna. Canon Medicinae,” a MS. of the fourteenth century, identified as one of those mentioned by Dugdale; there is also one at Aberdeen and one at Lambeth. There are also two other fourteenth century manuscripts, a “Psalterium” and “Petrì Archidiaconi Londinensis Liber Remediarium Conversorum,” believed to have belonged to the cathedral. None of the early printed books were saved, and there are very few in the library, the only representative of the London printers being one by Wynkyn de Worde. There are, however, quite a number of manuscript records of matters pertaining to the old cathedral and see, chartularies, visitations of clergy, etc.

“Liber I.,” with records dating from 1315 to 1389, is in a beautiful clear hand, and was written and bound in the cathedral. The binding is apparently in deer hide, tanned, with a deep flap in Arabic style, the tooling is finely executed, and across the covers and flap there is a raised band of leather, with shorter ones at head and tail, laced with vellum strips to the cover just the same as in Russia banded work of modern account-book binders.

“Liber Pilosis,” a fourteenth century chartulary, is in deer hide with some of the hair still remaining over the deeply bevelled wooden boards.

“Statuta Majora,” in a large bold hand, is another fourteenth century manuscript on vellum, bound in deer hide, and on the lower cover there is a specimen of the horner’s workmanship. The title is written on vellum, covered over with a thin sheet of horn and fastened to the side with copper nails.

“Statuta Minor a,” is a similar book in a small hand, and on this book there is a similar title covered with horn, but on the front side. These two specimens are probably the earliest specimens extant of horners’ work as applied to the preservation of writing, the writing on the label and the copper nails both testifying to a greater antiquity than that of any known horn book.

Here is also an “Index of Documents and Chartularies,” dating from the middle of the fifteenth century, bound in a very thick leather, glazed, with a grain somewhat like crocodile; the book has no boards; the cover is
fastened to the back by cords passing through the leather and down the back for a short distance over each section, at head and tail, and in the centre; and the under side is provided with a flap like eastern books, to cover the foreedge.

"Liber K." is bound in deer hide, stained red, which has faded into pink.

A manorial roll of Belcham St. Paul, 1576, is a fine folio example of roll borders, the design being a portcullis, Tudor rose, and pomegranate, with the mark of the binder, the letter E, with a stem through the centre supporting a figure like 4.

There is also one of the copies of the "Septpartite Deed of Penalties for non-performance of services in the chapel of Henry VII, Westminster," made between Henry VII, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Winchester, the Abbot and Prior of Westminster, the Dean and Canons of St. Stephen's, Westminster, the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, and the Mayor and Commonalty of London, on the 16th of July, 1504. This is bound in damask velvet with green satin lining, bound round with green silk and gold thread, and with green silk tassels at the corners. The velvet projects below the tail nearly a foot, to enclose and wrap up the seals which are in silver cases. The sides have four circular silver mounts, with a sunk panel in the centre of each enamelled with the portcullis of Westminster, and in the centre is the king's arms. The three clasps are very beautiful specimens of silver and enamelled work, but the silver has slightly oxidised. The first page of this deed has a miniature of the king presenting the book, bound exactly as this one is, to Islip, Abbot of Westminster. A similar volume is in the British Museum.

The present library was founded by Henry Compton, Bishop of London, who bequeathed to it 1,892 volumes for a part. Partly by gift and partly by purchase, the books of Dr. Thomas Mangey, Prebendary of Durham, and of his son, the Rev. John Mangey, Prebendary of St. Paul's, were also acquired in 1783. Since then very great assistance has been rendered by the families of Dean Milman, Dean Mansel, and Dean Church. It contains at the present time 10,446 volumes of printed books, 10,730 separate pamphlets, and many manuscripts, and is particularly rich in councils, patristic literature, and theology.

Of Bibles and parts thereof there are a goodly number, but most of the early copies are imperfect.

Here are the eight folio volumes of the Royal Polyglott, printed by Christopher Plantin at Antwerp at the expense of Philip II. of Spain, 1569-1572, containing the whole of the Complutensian Polyglott, a Chaldee paraphrase of part of the Old Testament, a Syriac version of the New Testament and the Latin translation of Santes Pagninus, revised by Arias Montanus, the chief editor of the work.


Biblia Sacra. Basilic. Joannes Hervagius, 1545; a very rare and little known Greek version, following the text of Lonicerus, with a preface by Melanthon.


A rare Spanish version, known as the "Bear Bible," on account of the cut upon the title-page, a bear sucking honey from a tree. Date 1569, but no place or name of the printer.

The 1537 "John Rogers' Bible" is wanting twenty-one leaves, including the title and prologue.

The "Great Bible," or Cranmer's, 1539, is also imperfect by a few leaves, but the edition of 1544 is a fine and perfect copy, having the rare leaf "CC" at the end of the Psalms. This is the edition which Henry VIII. ordered to be set up in every parish church throughout England.

The Bible: London, Edwarde Whytchurche, 1553. A manuscript note in the British Museum copy states that the greater part of this impression was destroyed by order of Queen Mary.

The "Bishops' Bible," 1568, is very imperfect and mutilated.

The "Royal Version," 1640. Originally this book was bound in silver gilt, representing the Temple with Moses and Aaron in the intervals between the columns, and Jacob's dream on one side, and on the other Eliah fed by a raven; but when the Cathedral was robbed in 1810 the thieves tore off and carried away the massive covers.

One very interesting feature of the library is the collection of about 135 sermons preached at St. Paul's Cross between the years 1550 and 1569, constituting a curious commentary upon the times and manners of the people. Also a large number of the sermons preached within the Cathedral from 1511 to 1851, including the two sermons for which Henry Sacheverell, D.D., was impeached: "On the evils of False Brethren both in Church and State," preached in the cathedral on 5th November, 1709. The other, "On the Communication of Sin," preached at the Assizes at Derby on 15th August, 1709, is also in the library, together with many pamphlets and records of this case, among which we find one by John Dunton: "The Bull-Baiting: or Sach - - - ll dress'd up in Fire-Works, lately brought over from the Bear-Garden in Southwark; and expos'd for the diversion of the Citizens of London at Six Pence a piece. By John Dunton. Being remarks on a scandalous Sermon Bellow'd out at S. Paul's on the Fifth of November last before the . . . Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen by Dr. Sach - - - ll." London, 1709.

Here, too, may be found eleven of the plays acted by the children of St. Paul's between the years 1601 and 1877; the title of one reads "Nobody and Somebody. With the true Chronicle Historie of Eldyure, who was fortunately three seuerall times crowned King of England. The true copy thereof as it hath been acted by the Queens Majesties Servants." The copy in the cathedral library is, however, the reprint of 1877.

A few works relating to Sir Christopher Wren and his great work, also to the scandals concerning the frauds and abuses alleged in connection with the building of St. Paul's, and the harsh conduct meted out to the great architect, will be found here. In the glass case may be seen Wren's small compact signature to some bills dated 1701, and there is a pamphlet entitled "Newes from the Dead, or a True and exact narration
of the miraculous deliverance of Anne Greene, who being executed at Oxford Decemb. 14. 1650, afterwards revived; and by the care of certain Physicians there is now perfectly recovered. . . . Written by a Scholler in Oxford. . . . The second impression." 4to; Oxford, 1651. On pages 13 and 14 there are some verses by Christopher Wren.

Large numbers of tracts and sermons relating to the various city parishes and their charities are to be found in this library. A detailed account of the more important of these may be found in the catalogue of St. Paul's Library, prepared by the Rev. Dr. Simpson and published by Mr. Elliot Stock.

Rather curiously, the last book of donations for the repair of the old cathedral is still extant, with dated promises to subscribe up to 1664, two years before the great fire. Also we find a book of donations for rebuilding St. Paul's, with autograph inscriptions: "I will give one thousand pounds a yeare, whithall, 20 March 1678. Charles R."; followed by: "I will give two hundred pounds a yeare to begin from Midsummerday last past July 17. 1678. James."

Let us hope they paid up. At any rate, with or without the fulfilment of royal promises, St. Paul's was built, and has become every day more beautiful, in spite of its outward grime, and more dear to the inhabitants of the greatest city the world ever knew. Thanks to the present librarian, it has a collection of books largely illustrative of that growth, a collection that no student of the life of the metropolis should miss seeing and studying, and which we hope in future may be made even more representative of all the purest types of society which pass beneath the shadows of the mighty cathedral. St. Paul's is our centre; but especially the centre of Protestantism in its religious and social aspect, not only as a religious creed, but by reason of its being a factor in our social progress; so may it be with its library.

Our very hearty thanks are due to the Rev. W. Sparrow Simpson for his kind assistance in our inquiries, assistance most ungrudgingly given, in spite of ill health.

Marbling Bookbinders' Cloth.—An improved process for imparting to bookbinders' cloth, and other material, a variegated or marbled appearance has been patented by H. K. Stephens. His method is as follows:—The surface of the material to be marbled is prepared with a solution of colouring matter, by preference those giving very little colour in themselves or lacking intensity, but capable of yielding several colours—that is to say, very decided and distinct coloured bodies, according to the means employed for their production. The material is then laid with the prepared side upward, on any convenient support, adjusted so that water will slowly trickle from the highest to the lowest side. Then water is splashed over the surface to be marbled so as to cause the mordants or reagents to run or trickle more freely in various directions, and so produce more gradations and softness of tint than could be produced by any other means.

Roman Paper and Ink.

ALTHOUGH the writing materials of the ancient Romans were crude enough, when compared with the elegant stationery of to-day, they wrote charming letters and books whose fame will live for ever. There was no haste in epistolary efforts in those days; writing was a serious business and involved an amount of preparation favourable to thought. The materials used as paper were of three kinds: the rind of a plant or tree called papyrus, parchment made of skins, and wooden tablets covered with wax. Pieces of the thin rind of the papyrus were joined together when damp, pressed, dried in the sun, and rubbed until smooth. Long rolls of sheets pasted together were sold. Some rolls of papyrus sheets nearly fifty yards in length are now preserved in one or two museums in Europe. When a book was finished, a stick was fastened to the last sheet and all the sheets were rolled together in a way similar to that in which we roll our maps. The name of the book was written in red ink on a piece of papyrus which was attached to the roll. The second kind of paper or parchment was made from the skins of sheep and goats. The hair was taken off and the skin made smooth by the use of pumice. A remarkable fact in connection with writing on parchment was that the ancients often used the same piece twice or even three times. They did this by rubbing or washing the writing off. The third kind of writing material was a waxen tablet, used for almost any purpose, but chiefly in writing letters and making notes and by schoolboys for writing exercises or working out problems. The tablets were made of wood, generally beech, fir, or citron wood, covered on one side with wax. In order to prevent the wax of one piece from rubbing against that of the other when they fastened two pieces together with wire, they left a rim around the wood. The wire fastening the backs of the tablets served as a hinge. When a writer had finished his letter he placed the tablets together, bound them with a strong string, tied this into a knot, placed wax upon the knot, and stamped it with his signet ring. The ink used by the Romans was of various kinds. When they used paper made from papyrus they wrote with ink composed of lampblack and gum. With parchment they used a mixture of gum and oak galls. Sometimes they made an ink by boiling the dregs of wine. It is said that occasionally they used as ink the black fluid emitted by the cuttlefish. Ovid tells us that people occasionally wrote with fresh milk, and that the characters could be seen only when coal dust was sprinkled upon the paper. Single and double inkstands, the latter for ink of two kinds, some round in shape, others hexagonal, with covers, were found at Pompeii. Pens were made from a reed of nearly the same shape as our old-time quill pen. It was split like our pens, and named "cloven-footed." Certain Asiatic people use this reed even now. With the waxen tablets, a sharp iron instrument called a stylus was in use. One end was sharpened for scratching on the wax; and the other end was flat and was used as an eraser.