

An Old Bookseller's Soliloquy.

THE *City News* of November 26th contained a curious advertisement of an old Manchester bookseller. Here follow some lines inscribed to another old Manchester bookseller, Mr. William Ford, on parting with his library and collection :—

To sell, or not to sell, that is the question—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The stings and arrows of outrageous dunnings,
Or to take pen against this sea of volumes,
And by exposing, sell them? To sell—to part,—
No more? And by that sale to say we end
The heart-ache and a thousand natural shocks
Poverty's heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To mark, to sell;
To sell—perchance to trust; aye, there's the rub;
For in that sale of sales, what debts may come,
When I have shuffled off this dirty pile,
Must give me pause; there's the respect
That makes my catalogue have such slow birth.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Bookbinder's wrongs, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of agents, and the spurns
That country biblios twice a year must take,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a grey goose quill? Who would folios bear
And groan and sweat under a heavy stock,
But that the dread of something when 'tis sold—
That vile insatiate credit from whose grasp
No volume e'er returns—puzzles the will
And rather makes one keep those books I have,
Than wait for others that I know not of.

FRED LEARY.

Tipping-street, Ardwick.
