

ARTICLE IV.

THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY.

BY REV. J. C. STOCKBRIDGE, D.D., PROVIDENCE, R. I.

THE writer of this Article has no doubt that many of the readers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* have some knowledge of the valuable collection of books known as the "John Carter Brown Library," and are acquainted with some of the leading facts in the life of the gentleman from whom the library takes its name. There must, however, be not a few individuals, who may with propriety regard themselves as scholars, who are ignorant of both the founder of the library of which we shall speak, as well as of the library itself. To such there may be a satisfaction in learning some of the outlines in the history of one who did such noble service to the cause of letters, and whose costly collection of books is a better monument to his fame than sculptured granite or marble.

John Carter Brown was born in Providence, Rhode Island, August 28, 1797. He was the second son of Hon. Nicholas Brown, whose munificent gifts to the university which bears his name have placed him among the most distinguished benefactors of his native State. In 1841 he came into possession of a large patrimony, and succeeded to the position which his deceased father had held for so many years, as the senior partner of the well known firm of Brown and Ives. His love for books, showing itself in a taste for those which were rare and costly, early developed itself; and the ample fortune which was at his command enabled him to gratify this taste. He spared no pains and no expense in procuring the best works in different departments of literature; and there were found in his library, even many years ago, copies of the most elaborate editions of the classics, and some of the most complete Polyglot Bibles that have ever been pub-

lished. But his attention began to be turned early in life to what, with him, became almost a passion for gathering from every possible source any and every thing that could throw light upon American history. It is in this department, as we shall have occasion hereafter to see, that his library became so valuable. Our purpose is not to dwell at length on the details of the life of Mr. Brown or to attempt to give a portrait of his character. It is only as a bibliophile — a lover of books — that we now allude to him. Year after year saw additions made to his singularly valuable collection of the best works illustrative of the themes in which he took a special interest. He could, in the riper years of his life, refer with an honest pride to the result of his long and unwearied efforts, reaching over a period of fifty years, to bring together from every quarter the best materials for adding to the stock of our historical knowledge, and preserving, in the safest way, the records of races and deeds which, but for his loving care and lavish expenditure, might have passed into oblivion. It is pleasant to know that this passion for collecting books bore no resemblance to the selfish passion of the miser in gathering into his coffers the gold and silver which he clutches with greedy hands. Professor Gammell has well said that “it has not been with him, as is sometimes true of such collections, a mere hoarding, for personal gratification, of the historic treasures of past centuries. This collection has always been accessible to scholars and authors who were studying the subjects to which it relates. Eminent men from other States, and even from Europe, have visited Providence on purpose to consult or to study some work which they could find nowhere else than in Mr. Brown’s library. So great, indeed, has been his readiness to make this collection useful to historians, even in other countries, that, in at least three instances, he has sent across the Atlantic books which, if they had been lost, could never have been replaced. In one instance this was done to meet the wishes of Sir Arthur Helps, the historian of the Spanish Conquest in America, who, in one of the volumes of that work, makes

a graceful and glowing acknowledgment of the unexampled courtesy which he had thus experienced." I cannot forbear to quote the words of Sir Arthur in which he makes this "graceful and glowing acknowledgment." They are found in the third volume of the elegantly bound copy of his "Conquest" which Sir Arthur presented to Mr. Brown. On p. 128 of this volume is a foot-note, as follows :

"Puga's Collection of Ordinances, printed in Mexico in 1563, in folio, is the earliest summary of Spanish colonial law, relating to the New World. It is a work of the highest rarity; there is not a copy known to exist in England. The one I have made use of, belongs to John Carter Brown, Esq., of Providence, R. I., in America, who kindly sent it over to his friend Mr. Henry Stevens, in order that I might be permitted to consult it. As far as I have been able to judge, the American collectors of books are exceedingly liberal and courteous in the use of them, and seem really to understand what the object should be in forming a great library."

From what has been said, the reader will be able to form a good conception of the character of Mr. Brown. He was a "merchant prince" of generous culture, deepened and broadened by foreign travel and intercourse with gentlemen of literary taste; courteous in his manners, simple and modest in his bearing, and ever ready to throw open to the seeker after knowledge the vast stores of the best information which he had gathered on subjects which will never cease to interest and instruct scholars. His library was to him one of the dearest spots on earth, and as he looked around on its well-filled shelves, he might reasonably pride himself in seeing a collection of books which, in some respects, is without a rival in this or in any other country. Mr. Brown died at his own mansion in the city of Providence, June 10th, 1874, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

We now pass from the collector to the collection itself. It is not the large number of books which arrests our attention as we enter the cheerful room in which the writer sits while preparing this Article. Not a few private libraries can count up many more volumes than we now look upon. But it is the value of the library, as estimated by the exceeding rarity

and intrinsic worth of so many of these costly books, that awakens our admiration, — I will not say, excites our envy, — since, for all practical purposes, these treasures of knowledge are at our free and ready command. One heaves an involuntary sigh, even in the midst of the glow of delight of which he is conscious, as he gazes upon treasures so rich, that he can have but the most superficial acquaintance with such a mine of intellectual wealth. Although a constant visitor for several months to this most charming of all literary retreats, the writer confesses his utter inability to prepare such an Article as this, but for information derived from other sources than his own investigations. Especially is he indebted to the Hon. J. R. Bartlett, the cherished friend of Mr. Brown, and better acquainted with the library, even to its minutest details, than any living person, and whose catalogue, with biographical and other annotations, is among the best contributions that has ever been made to bibliography. Indeed, it is in part with the desire of preserving in a more permanent form information presented by Mr. Bartlett in a newspaper article in the Providence Journal of July 22, 1874, that this Article has been prepared. The writer will not charge himself with having committed plagiarism, if he draws largely on the interesting facts which he finds in this sketch. He hopes, also, to present some other facts not contained in the article alluded to, which may gratify lovers of good books.

Some years after his graduation from Brown University in 1816, Mr. Brown went abroad; and his taste for rare books was one of the things which gave a peculiar charm to his travels, for it led him to make such literary retreats as the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the British Museum in London the favorite places of his resort. It would hardly be just to Mr. Brown to say that he was beginning to show the symptoms of the disease which Dibdin, in his amusing way, has described in his *Bibliomania*. This malady, it will be remembered, he discusses under three heads. 1. The history of the disease; 2. The nature or symptoms of the

disease ; and 3. The probable means of its cure. There is certainly something quite pertinent to our present subject in what he says under the first head. "The disease will be found to have been attended with this remarkable circumstance, namely, that it has almost uniformly confined its attacks to the *male* sex, and among these, to people in the higher and middling classes of society, while the artificer, laborer, and peasant have escaped wholly uninjured. It has raged chiefly in palaces, castles, halls, and gay mansions ; and those things which in general are supposed not to be inimical to health, such as cleanliness, spaciousness and splendor, are only so many inducements towards the introduction and propagation of the Bibliomania ! What renders its character particularly formidable is, that it rages in all seasons of the year, and at all periods of human existence. The emotions of friendship or of love are weakened or subdued as old age advances ; but the influence of this passion, or rather disease, admits of no mitigation ; 'it grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength ;' and is oft-times

'The ruling passion in death.'

As affording proof of the hopelessness of cure in cases of confirmed Bibliomania, Dibdin quotes the saying of Seneca, found in chap. iii. of his treatise, *De Tranquillitate*. "If you are fond of books, you will escape the ennui of life ; you will neither sigh for evening, disgusted with the occupations of the day, nor will you live dissatisfied with yourself or unprofitable to others." The younger Pliny was a downright Bibliomaniac. "I am quite transported and comforted," says he, "in the midst of my books ; they give a zest to the happiest, and assuage the anguish of the bitterest, moments of existence ! Therefore, when distracted by the cares or the losses of my family or my friends, I fly to my library as the only refuge in distress ; here I learn to bear adversity with fortitude." Under the head of the symptoms of the disease, there is, first, a definition of Bibliomania which is said to be a passion for possessing books, not so much to be instructed by them, as to gratify the eye by looking on them.

He who is affected by this mania knows books only by their titles and dates, and is rather seduced by the exterior than interior." D'Israeli, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, remarks that "Bruyère has touched on this mania with humor; 'of such a collector' (one who is fond of superb bindings only) he says, 'as soon as I enter his house, I am ready to faint on the stair-case from a strong smell of morocco leather. In vain he shows me fine editions, gold leaves, Etruscan bindings, etc., naming them one after another, as if he were showing a gallery of pictures.'" Eight symptoms of the disease are enumerated. A passion for, 1. large paper copies; 2. uncut copies; 3. illustrated copies; 4. unique copies; 5. copies printed upon vellum; 6. first editions; 7. true editions; 8. a general desire for the black letter.

It is gratifying to know that while Mr. Brown was a passionate lover of good books, his was never "a zeal without knowledge." He had definite aims to accomplish in making up his library, and he was himself familiar with the books which came into his hands. In short, he was a *bibliophile*, but never a *bibliomaniac*. In his early visit to Europe it was his good fortune to make the acquaintance of one of the most eminent book collectors in London, the late Henry Perkins, and, without doubt, the examination which he made of the magnificent library which belonged to this gentleman quickened his own tastes, and awakened an emulation to surround himself also with the best books. Mr. Bartlett alludes to the delight with which, as Mr. Brown assured him, he turned over the leaves of the famous Mazarin Bible, which, at the sale of Mr. Perkins' library in 1873, realized the great sum of £3,400. Mr. Brown made purchases of valuable books in Paris and London, in his first visits to these cities, and forwarded them to his home in Providence. Not long after this there came into his hands a catalogue of Mr. O. Rich, of London, a bookseller who had given special attention to the collection of all the works he could find relating to America. Another distinguished bookseller of Paris, Mr. Henri Ternaux, had, in like manner, made a speciality of collecting

books on America. Making himself familiar with the titles and general contents of these books, Mr. Brown sent out his orders to book collectors in Europe to spare no pains nor reasonable expense in securing the coveted treasures for his library. When the libraries collected by Messrs. Rich and Ternaux were thrown upon the market, many of the most valuable of their books found what we trust will prove to be a permanent home in the library of Mr. Brown. Some of them were so rare, that in no subsequent sale of books in Europe, has it been possible to purchase a single one of them. From Mr. Rich's collection there came several hundred books and pamphlets, published during the ten years preceding the revolutionary war, and presenting to the reader the general drift of opinion and discussion during that important period when American affairs occupied the thoughts of men, and became the theme of so much earnest controversy, on both sides of the Atlantic. A large number of pamphlets also embraces the whole period of the revolutionary war, and several years after the struggle was over. These pamphlets have all been put into substantial bindings, and at this centennial period of our history they possess a value which can hardly be estimated. Besides these pamphlets, having a special interest as relating to American affairs, there are scores of others, dating back as far as the year 1701, the topics discussed by the writers of which cover a large ground, and are of the most various characters. Probably some of them may be of little worth, while others are doubtless so rare, that each passing year will greatly enhance their value.

It may not be amiss to devote a short space in this Article to a reference to some of the more important of these many hundred pamphlets. "An Essay upon the Government of the English Plantations on the Continent of America," published in 1701, presents a picture of the general aspect of affairs in this country at that early period. "Proposals for carrying on an effectual War in America against the French and Spaniards," 1702, an elegantly bound pamphlet of twenty-

four pages, has much historical interest. "An Account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," 1706, gives a sketch of the doings of that venerable association founded by William III. George Keith's "Journal of Travels from New Hampshire to Caratuck on the Continent of North America," 1706, is one of the earliest American itineraries of which we have any knowledge. Its author shows himself especially bitter against the Quakers and their peculiar doctrines. There are several pamphlets on the "South Sea Trade," that bubble which cost the financial ruin of so many English people. "An Historical Account of the Voyages and Adventures of Sir Walter Raleigh," 1719, a pamphlet of some historical value. "The Chimera; or the French Way of paying National Debts laid open," explaining one of the famous schemes of the notorious John Law for extricating a burdened people from their pecuniary difficulties with the least possible trouble. "A full and impartial Account of the Company of Mississippi, otherwise called the French India Company; projected and settled by Mr. Law," 1720. This pamphlet is referred to in the catalogue as *scarce* and *curious*—very rare. "A Proposal for the better supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations, and for converting the Savage Americans to Christianity, by Bishop Berkeley," 1725. The scheme set forth by Bishop Berkeley, he attempted to carry out himself. "The Speech of Mr. John Checkley upon his Tryal at Boston in New England." Mr. John Checkley reprinted and sold in Boston, Leslie's well-known work entitled "Short and Easie Method with Deists," first published in London in 1699; to which he prefixed "A Discourse concerning Episcopacy, in defence of Christianity and the Church of England against the Deists and Dissenters." In this Discourse he endeavors to show that Dissenters, not being episcopally ordained, are no ministry. Having used severe terms towards the Dissenters in New England, he gave great offense, and was, in consequence, prosecuted at the Inferior Court, in 1724, for publishing "a false and scandalous libel." Being convicted, he appealed to the Superior Court. In his

“Plea in arrest of Judgment” he says in conclusion: “Be that as it will, the Dissenters are affirmed to be no *ministers*, to be *schismatics*, and excommunicate by the canons of the Church of England, which are part of the law of the land; therefore to say the same things of them, I humbly hope, shall not be deemed a libel.” The court, however, found Checkley guilty, and sentenced him to pay a fine of fifty pounds. “South Carolina: a New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia; with many curious and useful Observations on the Trade, Navigation, and Plantations of Great Britain, compared with her most powerful maritime neighbors in ancient and modern times,” 1732. This tract, as we learn from Mr. Bartlett’s annotation, is reprinted in the first volume of the “Collections of the Georgia Historical Society,” and is supposed to have been the production of the illustrious founder of Georgia, General Oglethorpe. As such, it will ever command an attentive perusal, and though “the gorgeous and utopian descriptions he gives of these provinces have ceased to influence the visionary and the avaricious, yet it is interesting to behold the medium through which he viewed his darling project, and the means by which he prosecuted his designs.” “Whitefield’s Journal of a Voyage from London to Savannah, 1739”; a valuable relic. Original editions of Whitefield’s Journals are found among these bound pamphlets, and quite a number of controversial tracts written by himself or his opponents. “An accurate Journal and Account of the Proceedings of the New England Land Forces during the late Expedition against the French Settlements on Cape Breton to the Time of the Surrender of Louisbourg,” 1746; valuable for historical reference. “The Journal of Major George Washington, sent by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, etc., 1754,” said to be “an excessively rare tract, the existence of which has been doubted by many collectors, who have never been able to find a copy.” There are four of Benjamin Franklin’s tracts of the date of 1760. “A Description of South Carolina,” the authorship of which is attributed to Governor Glen, is said,

with one exception, to be the most complete early history of the State we have.

The above titles of pamphlets, issued between the years 1701 and 1764, are samples, representing the character of the subjects which are discussed in some three hundred of these little books. As we approach revolutionary times we find a large number of them which treat of matters connected with our great struggle with the mother country. We note a few of these: "Sentiments of a British American," 1764, "in which the writer presents arguments against taxing the colonies, and gives his reasons for his opinion. He shows that the war with France was more for the advantage of Great Britain than for the colonies; that the colonies contributed their full proportion towards the conquest of French territories; that they are no particular gainers by these acquisitions, while Great Britain gained immensely." "Considerations relative to the North American Colonies, London," 1765, said to be one of the most important pamphlets of the period. A London edition of James Otis's "The Rights of the British Colonies asserted and proved," 1765. "Considerations on the American Stamp Act, and on the Minister who planned it, London," 1766. The author recommends the repeal of the Stamp Act, as the only means to reconcile the colonists to their mother country, and to restore peace, plenty, and cordiality to every part of the British empire. "The Justice and Necessity of Taxing the American Colonies, demonstrated; together with a Vindication of the Authority of Parliament," 1766. The Monthly Review calls the author "a most fiery politician," and his pamphlet a "mere fire-brand," and adds, that the colonists "have need of the *gentlemen of the blade* to polish and refine their manners, and rub off the rust of Puritanism." There are other pamphlets, bearing date of 1766, which throw light on the state of American affairs at that date, and several of great interest on the stamp act. We cannot enumerate others which we find written in the succeeding three or four years. Of tracts published in 1770, we notice several relating to the famous

“Boston massacre”; and as we pass on to the several years so memorable in our national history, the number of these pamphlets is literally hundreds, in which are discussed *pro* and *con* the topics which, in the days of our forefathers, were of such thrilling interest. The perusal of these little waifs, which have been preserved from destruction by the care and forethought of one who was always a true patriot, gives us a distinct view of the spirit and temper of the times in which they were written, and makes us acquainted with the conflicting opinions which stirred men’s passions, and developed themselves in living action in the events which marked the epoch of our great contest with the mother country.

Resuming now our sketch of the steps taken by Mr. Brown in laying the foundations for the building up of his library, we remark that he proceeded with the orderly methods of a man of business. In London and Paris he had his correspondents, who were ever on the alert to obtain information respecting rare and valuable books, which was at once transmitted across the Atlantic, and orders returned to secure everything that was deemed worth purchasing. Catalogues of the collections of booksellers in Berlin, Leipsic, Amsterdam, London, and Paris, as well as catalogues of great private libraries, were sent to him, that from them he might cull out such works as he thought worthy of a place on his shelves. It is said that for many years there were no important sales in Europe from which he did not secure something of importance. As illustrations of this statement we are told that the library of the late Emperor Maximilian, sold at auction in Leipsic, particularly rich in Spanish literature, and that of M. Sobolewski, a learned Russian of Moscow, furnished many treasures for his collection. The library of M. Sobolewski was especially rich in works which related to the discovery and settlement of the Spanish and Portuguese possessions in America, and a considerable number of these valuable books are on the shelves of the John Carter Brown Library. Mr. Bartlett, who is competent authority, ventures the assertion that Mr. Brown was enabled, during the period

of half a century, to form a library of books relating to America, printed before the year 1800, unsurpassed in the world.

The principle of classification which has been adopted in the library is to divide it into two great parts, the one including all books printed before the year 1700, and the other, works published in the eighteenth century. Smaller subdivisions include histories of North America in general, and of the United States in particular. Writers on the history of almost any or all of the older states of the Union, would find ample resources from which to draw, in the preparation of their histories, in this library. Thus, we have counted between fifty and sixty volumes large and small, having reference to the State of Georgia, and between eighty and ninety referring to Pennsylvania. There are several most valuable works on California, treating particularly of its early history. New England history in all its earlier phases is largely represented, the best works on the subject being found in the library. The old French empire in North America has its story told in what is said to be the most complete known collection of the "Jesuit relations," beginning with the year 1632, and reaching on to the year 1688. These "relations" correspond somewhat to the letters and journals of our modern missionaries, and give us a faithful account of the transactions of the Jesuits, in their attempts to propagate the Roman Catholic faith in Canada, large sections of New York, Western Pennsylvania, the country north of the Ohio, and all the Western States. "The Protestant missionaries," says Mr. Bartlett, "have left us nothing that can compare in historical value with these records of the labors of these early Jesuit missionaries. They are exceedingly simple in their style, but this simplicity has not contributed less to give them a great celebrity than the curious and edifying matter they contain."

As may be readily supposed, the John Carter Brown Library is rich in Puritan literature; all the leading fathers of New England being largely represented. There are in it between

seventy and eighty works of Increase and Cotton Mather, from forty to fifty of John Cotton, and the productions of the pens of John Eliot, Shepard, Hooker, Wise, Cobbet, Robinson, Winslow, Chauncey, and Pynchon; every known work of Roger Williams, Coddington, Gorton, John Clark, and other Rhode Island writers. Not a few of the editions of these works are first editions, and are very rare and valuable. I find two copies of Eliot's Indian Bible; one of the edition of 1663, a small quarto. It is a fine copy, and is one of the twenty-six copies which are known to exist in this country. The printing of this Bible was begun in 1660 and finished in September 1663. The edition was one thousand copies. The other copy is of the edition of 1685. According to the testimony of a correspondent of the New York Times, it is an odd coincidence that there are just twenty-six copies of this edition, and they are distributed very nearly as are those of 1663. "It is a remarkable event, not only in the propagation of the gospel in America, but in the history of printing in the New World, that a second edition of Eliot's Indian Bible should have been printed in 1685, when that art was but in its infancy here, and when scarcely anything above a pamphlet had then come from the press. The proposition for the printing of this edition was submitted to the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England for their consideration in 1678-79 by Mr. Eliot, who among his several appeals said, that King Philip had sent to him for books to read. The work, which was commenced the following year, proceeded but slowly, as there was but one man, the Indian printer, who was able to compose the sheets and correct the press. In 1684, Mr. Eliot, writing to the Hon. Robert Boyle, says, "We have but few hands, one Englishman, and a boy, and one Indian." It was completed the following year, and two thousand copies printed. In this second edition of Eliot's Bible lies a single loose sheet, the history of which will be interesting to those who were acquainted with the late George Livermore of Cambridge, one of the most enthusiastic collectors of rare editions of the holy scriptures

in the country. The sheet to which I refer, is the Dedication to the Hon. Robert Boyle, Esq. Mr. Livermore writes to Mr. Brown under date of Boston, August 7th 1854, the following note :

"My Dear Sir,—I have just sent to you by Earle's Express two parcels of books which came in a case to me from Henry Stevens, London. Please inform me if they arrive safe. I have had a fac-simile executed of the rare dedication to Robert Boyle, found only (as far as I can learn) in the copy of Eliot's Indian Bible, formerly belonging to Rev. Thomas Prince. A few impressions only were taken, and I send you one of them to perfect your copy. The notice of Cromwell's Bible may interest you.

Truly yours,
GEORGE LIVERMORE."

Besides the full Bible there are two copies of the New Testament of the edition of 1661. Pasted on the inside of the cover of one of these copies, I find a slip on which is written the following :

"Sunday, Jan. 25th 1795. — I took this Testament from the Prince of Orange's Library in his palace at Loo which was abandoned to pillage, as a memorial of the melancholy scene.
H. TURNER."

The appearance of the book, which is bound in a very strong style, does not justify the belief that it had ever been very devoutly read. Indeed, it is quite certain that his high mightiness could not have been very profoundly versed in the Indian dialect, not being able, probably, to read a word of this Testament except as the word was a literal transfer of the English, or found in some familiar passage where the remembered idea gave the clue to the meaning of the Indian expression.

The two Bibles and Testaments to which reference has been made, by no means exhaust the Indian literature of the library. I find over forty books, some of which are in the Indian language. The larger part of the collection, however, is made up of works relating to Indian matters. Of the former may be mentioned "The Massachuset Psalter," published in 1709. The first verse of the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd," is herewith given as illustrating the construction of the language: "Jehovah nuffohkommoonuk oowaeneum matta pish nukquenawehuhkoo." There is also

a copy of Capt. Joseph Brant's translation of the Book of Common Prayer into Mohawk, 1787; a copy of "Some Communications of Christianity" in the Iroquois tongue, 1707, and a copy of the "Practice of Piety" in Indian, 1685, elegantly bound in red morocco, with gilt edges, bought from the Ternaux collection. The following letter in a manuscript note is prefixed :

Letter from John Eliot to the Hon. Robert Boyle :

"Roxbury, August 29th, 1686 (third month of our overthrow).

"Right Honorable, unwearible, and nursing father :

"I have nothing new to write but lamentations, and I am loath to grieve your loving and noble soul.

"Our Indian work yet liveth, praised be God. The Bible is come forth; many hundreds bound up and dispersed to the Indians, whose thankfulness I intimate and testify to your honor. *The Practice of Piety* is also finished and beginneth to be bound up, and my humble request to your honour is, that we may again reimpose the Primer and Catechism; for though the last impression be not quite spent, yet quickly they will; and I am old, ready to be gone, and desire to leave as many books as I can. I know not what to add in this distressing day of our overthrow; so I commit your honour to the Lord, and rest

Your honors, to serve you, in Jesus Christ,

JOHN ELIOT.

Of the other works relating to the Indians, all, with three or four exceptions, are in English. The latest in date is a richly bound copy, with gilt edges, of "Dictionnaire de la langue des Cris, par le Rev. Pere Alb. Lacombe, Ptre. Oblat de Marie Immaculée, Montreal," 1874. Another monument of the zeal of the Roman Catholics in the work of converting the Indians to the Christian faith.

But we must hasten to glance at another class of books which treat of matters pertaining to American history. We allude to the productions of writers in Spanish and Portuguese. In this class are included most of the works printed previous to the year 1800, on Mexico, Yucatan, Central America, Chili, Peru, Paraguay, Brazil, Surinam, Guiana, and other parts of South America; a perfect storehouse of reliable information to the scholar who wishes to go to the original sources for knowledge. In the department of voyages

and travels, the library is very rich. All the early navigators who sailed from the Old to the New World are here represented, and in some cases by very rare and costly editions of their works. A special illustration of this class of works is found in a copy of a Dutch translation of some of the letters of Americus Vesputius which was sent to the order of Mr. Brown, by F. Muller of Amsterdam. It is doubtful if the book could be replaced if it should be lost.

The very early date at which some of these books of which we now make note were printed, is worthy of remark. A few of them were published before the discovery of America, such as the *Cosmographies* and *Geographies* of Claudius Ptolemy, and Pomponius Mela; the "Imago Mundi" of Peter d'Ailly, a great favorite with Columbus, whose copy, filled with marginal notes in his hand-writing, is still preserved in the "Bibliotheca Columbina" at Seville. The date of the copy of this last work, in the John Carter Brown Library, is wanting, but it is supposed to be 1483. The letter of Columbus, has, of course, a peculiar charm. There are seven editions of it, all published, it is supposed, in the year 1493. All these editions are represented in the library, four being original copies, and three fac-similes. We are told that all the editions of the Columbus letter are now very rare. A copy was priced by Messrs. Ellis and Greene, London, in 1872, at one hundred and forty pounds. A copy, beautifully bound, of what was once a popular book, now not easily found, Brant's *Stultifera Navis*, or Ship of Fools, is in this library. It is a German satire upon the follies of all ranks. The writings of Americus Vesputius, to one of which reference has already been made, are quite numerous represented. They will always be of interest to all students of the early history of America.

Time and space would fail us to glance at even a tithe of the works embraced in the class of which we are now speaking. They relate to the discovery and conquest of all the countries in South America which were subdued by Spanish arms, and are among the very best of the original documents

upon which writers rely in their compilations of the history of those countries. But the most valuable, in some respects, is the De Bry collection. The conception and beginning of this truly magnificent series is due to Theodoric De Bry, an engraver and bookseller of Frankfort on the Main. After his death, in 1598, the work which he had commenced was carried on by his widow and two sons; and the collection, as fast as it was made up, was published at Frankfort. The publication of the whole series covers a period of forty-five years. Nearly one hundred pages of Mr. Bartlett's last "Catalogue of Books relating to North and South America" are devoted to the titles and brief annotations on the different volumes in the collection. In summing up what he has said, Mr. Bartlett remarks: "Each part and volume of the copy of De Bry's collection, described in the preceding pages, is full bound in crimson morocco, in a uniform style, by Mr. Francis Bedford of London, and is without a stain or other blemish. The set of the Great Voyages (so designated on account of the size of the volumes) is particularly tall, and nearly uncut, most of the volumes being from fourteen and a quarter to fourteen and one half inches in height. It was not obtained as now found, but was made up from a number of copies and odd volumes, in every possible condition, during a period of thirty years." The whole of the Great Voyages, in Latin, German, English, and French, is included in fifty-seven volumes; and of the various editions of the Smaller Voyages, in Latin and German, there are thirty-five volumes; and of the Latin and German abridgments of the Great and Small Voyages there are five; making a total of ninety-seven volumes. These books fill one section, nearly two feet by seven in size, of a mahogany case, and at once arrest the attention of every visitor of the library. What the pecuniary value of the De Bry collection is, it is difficult to say. We presume a good many thousand dollars could not purchase it. Few, if any sets of it, have been put into such costly and beautiful binding; and it is probably true that the De Bry of the John Carter Brown Library is without a rival in the world.

But if the class of books relating to the more southerly sections of America is a large and valuable one, not less worthy of attention is the department which contains the best works on Greenland and the Polar regions, written previous to the more modern explorations into these Arctic lands and seas. Not the English tongue alone is represented, but I find valuable works in the French, German, Dutch, and Swedish languages. The whole domain of nature in this Polar country had been subjected to careful study before the present century, and the results of long and unwearied investigation are here at the ready command of the curious scholar. There is one work on Greenland, published in Skalhølte, Iceland, in the year 1688. A century earlier, in 1580, was published "A shorte and brief Narration of the two Navigations and Discoveries to the Northwest Partes called Newe France." Of course such works as the narratives of Frobisher, Baffin, and Hudson have found a home in this Arctic collection. Nine volumes, some of them gotten up in the highest style of the binder's art, contain the story of Frobisher's adventures. This glance, necessarily very cursory, at this single department will show how rich it is. It embraces not far from two hundred volumes.

Returning now to the Southern sections of America, we find a large number of works in the aboriginal languages of Mexico, Yucatan, and all parts of South America. Mr. Bartlett remarks that "of the language of every great nation with which the colonists had intercourse they compiled dictionaries and grammars. The oldest book published in America in this collection is the '*Doctrina Christiana*,' printed in Mexico in 1554, which is of this class." Not only rare treatises in print, but in manuscript, on subjects kindred to those now referred to, are found in the library. One of the most valuable of these is a Dictionary of the Maya or Yucatan language, and the Spanish. The Maya is believed to have been the spoken tongue of that people, who must have made great progress in the arts of civilized life, if we may judge from the appearance of those remarkable ruins in

Yucatan, the knowledge of which, by us, is of a comparatively recent date. Through the kindness of Mr. Brown, a distinguished German scholar, who had for some time been in search of this manuscript, was allowed free access to his library ; and with the patience so characteristic of his nationality, he made a copy of the Maya dictionary, a task which occupied his time for a whole year.

But we have dwelt at sufficient length on this department of literature in the library. Some idea of its great extent may be formed, when we are told that between four and five hundred works pertaining more or less to America, and all printed before the year 1600, are upon its shelves.

All scholars are aware of the great value of the issues from the celebrated Aldine press of Venice, and they will comprehend the richness of the library in the Greek and Roman classics, when told that there are between two and three hundred of these elegant works, the publications of the Aldus family. There is a remarkably fine collection of National Polyglot Bibles, among which is a copy of the " Complutensian " — that marvellous monument of the zeal and sanctity of Cardinal Ximenes. This Polyglot was the production of the best scholars of the age, and the first of the kind ever published. Fifty thousand ducats were expended in its preparation. The purchase of rare and costly manuscripts absorbed a large part of this sum. Only six hundred copies were published. Although it has been superseded by other Polyglots, which, with the ample resources to which biblical scholars have been able to resort, have been made richer and fuller, the Complutensian is still regarded as a work of great value, and will always command a high price as a rare and exceedingly valuable set of books. The ten immense folio volumes of the Paris Polyglot, 1645 ; the Antwerp, in eight volumes, 1539 ; Walton's, published in London, in six volumes, 1654 ; and Hutter's, Nuremberg, 1599, in three volumes ; are all found in the library, and the copies are in an excellent condition.

It will be seen from the imperfect sketch which has been

given, that we may place the John Carter Brown Library among the best private collections of books in the country. Indeed, in the department which he made a specialty, that of works on America, it probably stands, it may be, with one or two exceptions, without a rival in any public or private library in this country, perhaps in the world. But it is not only this department which is so well represented, but other departments hold a prominent place. We find elegant editions of works which may be called American classics. For instance, the copy of Irving's *Life of Washington*, in ten quarto volumes, with upwards of a thousand portraits and other illustrations, probably has not its counterpart in many libraries. The same may be said of Marshall's *Life of Washington*, quarto, in five volumes, with even more illustrations than the Irving. Cunningham's *Life of Nell Gwynn*, in three folios, with three hundred and sixty portraits, and other illustrations, belongs to the same class of books. I have not found a single work of fiction or what may be called a "trashy" book in the whole library. Everything is of the most solid and substantial character, unless we choose to include such works as have just been referred to in the department of "light literature." To preserve the library in its present condition, does not include all that may be said of the intentions of the family of Mr. Brown. It is their purpose, in the spirit and with the zeal of its founder, to go on making additions to its rich stores; especially, to secure every rare work that may throw more light on American history in all its departments, and thus afford every possible facility for the collation of all the facts, and the careful arrangement of all the records which may furnish information respecting the early settlement and growth of all sections of the Western Continent. A work, nobly begun, will be still carried forward, thus perpetuating, in a way worthy of all praise, the name and the memory of one who deserves to take a high rank among the lovers of good learning.