APPLETONS' HOME BOOKS; THE HOME LIBRARY

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Appletons' Home Books; The Home Library by Arthur Penn

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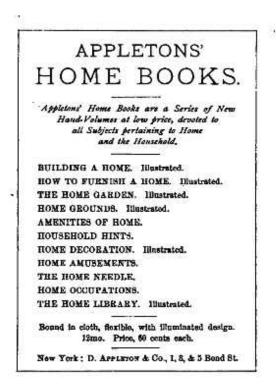
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ARTHUR PENN

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HOME LIBRARY.

BY ARTHUR PENN, EDITOR OF "THE BELLEMENTER."

(J. Brander Malthews)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

NEW YORK: D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, 1, 8, and 5 BOND STREET. 1883. COPURIENT BY D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, 1883.

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THE HOME LIBRARY.

I,

A PLEA FOR THE BEST BOOKS.

ONE library differs from another library just as one book differs from another book. The "Franklin Square Library" is a wholly different affair from the Bloomsbury Square Library, perhaps better known to fame as the British Museum. The library of the late Mr. Lenox, which he gave more or less to the citizens of New York, and which has hundreds of Bibles, old and new, in all tongues, bears but little resemblance to the library of a certain free-thinking and free-living gentleman in Paris, who does not own a single book that the Society for the Suppression of Vice would not seize with avidity and destroy with alacrity. There was even an Englishman whose taste was akin both to the late Mr. Lenox's and to the unnamed Parisian collector; and of this copious library of Lord Guilford his sister, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, used to say, aptly enough, that "Frederick's library

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contains but two sorts of books-books that can not be read, and books that ought not to be read !"

All three of these libraries differ greatly from one which Mr. Thackeray mentions somewhere in one of his stirring romances-at least we think it was the author of that gay military novel, "Vanity Fair," who introduces us to a young gentleman whose library " consisted principally of old boots." Of course, this last is an extreme case of biblio-poverty, yet it is not quite as extreme as it may seem at first glance. Anecdotes are not wanting to show that to many people boots are as fitting furniture for a library as books. A New York paper recently told a story of an enriched couple who were about to decorate their new mansion in the highest style of the latest art, and who, therefore, went about seeking hints that they might devour and digest to their own profit. Among the houses which they got leave to examine was the home of a prominent publisher; and the sight of the library therein was suggestive to the lady, for she turned to her lord with the pertinent query, " Don't you think we might have some books, too."

Right in the middle of one of the most bookish quarters in New York, right under the shadow of the Astor and the Mercantile Libraries, close to the treasuries of old books guarded by Bouton and Scribner, in Broadway just by Astor Place, a store not long ago was occupied by a "book-butcher"; it was some sort of a literary "dollar-store." Beneath the flaming and incendiary placards which offered a million volumes within, for a mere song, and on an improvised stand in the