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## The book-hunter, etc.,

*John Hill Burton*

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1887 edition. Excerpt: ...the chronic mouldering away of the treasures preserved so obstinately by the lazy monks of the Levant, who were found by Mr Curzone at their public devotions laying down priceless volumes which they could not read to protect their dirty feet from the cold floor. In the wildest times the book repository often partakes in the good fortune of the humble student whom the storm passes over. In the hour of danger too, some friend who keeps a quiet eye upon its safety may interpose at the critical moment. The treasures of the French libraries were certainly in terrible danger when Robespierre had before him the draft of a decree, that " the books of the public libraries of Paris and the departments should no longer be permitted to offend the eyes of the republic by shameful marks of servitude." The word would have gone forth, and a good deal beyond the mere marks of servitude would have been doubtless destroyed, had not the emergency called forth the courage and energies of Renouard and Didot. There are probably false impressions abroad as to the susceptibility of literature to destruction by fire. Books are not good fuel, as, fortunately, many a housemaid has found, when, among other frantic efforts and' failures in fire-lighting, she has reasoned from the false data of the inflammability of a piece of paper. In the days when heretical books were burned, it was necessary to place

them on large wooden stages, and after all the pains taken to demolish them, considerable readable masses were sometimes found in the embers; whence it was supposed that the devil, conversant in fire and its effects, gave them his special protection. In the end it was found easier and cheaper to burn the heretics themselves than their books. Thus books can be burned, but they...